**Follow the King to the Cross**

**Follow the King in Discipleship**

**Matthew 4:18-25**

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Immediately giving us a summary of Jesus’ message, repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand (4:17), Matthew records the calling of the first his disciples in 4:18-22 as example of those who repent and believe and become his disciples. Though not all disciples followed him around literally, they did in principle. Then in 4:23-25 Matthew gives us a summary of Jesus’ ministry, his kingdom words and works and describes how great crowds following Jesus around.

**A Disciples Follows Jesus**

Matthew tells us that while walking on the shore of the sea of Galilee, he calls four brothers who leave everything and follow him, become disciples. When Jesus began his public ministry, he chose his disciples and called them to follow him.[[1]](#footnote-1) Following Jesus, becoming a disciple, is an example of responding positively to Jesus’ message, repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand (Mt 4:17). They immediately left everything to follow Jesus. Andrew and Peter left their net; James and John left their boat, their nets and their father! They abandoned their livelihood, their families, and their assets. This not only impacted them but their families, their family businesses, as well as other responsibilities and obligations.

While their responses might seem abrupt, this was no rash response to a chance encounter with Jesus. Both Andrew and John had been disciples of John the Baptist (Jn 1:35) and were probably with John when he testified that Jesus was the lamb of God who takes away the sons of the world (Jn 1:29), the One anointed by the Spirit as the Christ[[2]](#footnote-2) and is the Son of God (Jn 1:32-34). John’s testimony convinced Andrew that Jesus was the Christ so he brought his brother Peter to Jesus (Jn 1:41-42). John’s ministry was preparing the way for Jesus so it was natural that his disciples shift their allegiance to Jesus. All this happened about a year before this incident on the shores of Galilee. In that year, the Gospel of John tells us that they traveled with Jesus, accompanied him to a wedding at Cana where he turned water into wine and manifested his glory and that his disciples believed in him (Jn 2:1-11), they saw Jesus cleanse the temple (Jn 2:13-17) and also heal an official’s son (Jn 4:46-54). I think they had informally traveled with Jesus prior to him going public and when Jesus did go public and formally started his public ministry, he formally called his disciples. Their response to Jesus shows that they had been considering what was required of them to follow Jesus.

The verb “follow” is used in two ways in the Gospel of Matthew. It is used literally of individuals or crowds who followed Jesus around with no faith commitment to being disciples (Mt 4:25; 8:1, 10; 9:27; 20:29, 34; 21:9; 26:58; 27:55; 9:27; 20:34) and it is used metaphorically to describe those who followed Jesus as disciples (4:20, 22, 8:23; 9:9; 19:27-29).[[3]](#footnote-3) In the former, they followed him because they are enamored by his teaching, they are impressed by his miracles, and he fed them but they are just fans and not disciples. In the latter, following demonstrates two qualities in the individual’s response to Jesus, cost and commitment.[[4]](#footnote-4) Following Jesus requires one to count the cost and make a commitment of faith in Jesus.[[5]](#footnote-5) Counting the personal cost of following him and then giving Jesus our sole allegiance to King Jesus and his kingdom (Mat 6:33). The brothers counted the cost, left everything, and committed themselves to Jesus, giving him their allegiance. Now not every disciple left everything to follow Jesus literally but they did in principle.

Yet the sacrifice displayed by the brothers was far outweighed by the promise of greater gain (Mat 13:44-45; 16:26-27). Even later when Peter complained of all that they have sacrificed to follow him, Jesus reminds him that they will have more than their share in eternity (19:27-29). One does not consider selling all they had to buy a much more valuable treasure a sacrifice; it’s a wise investment (Mt 13:44-45). So, following Jesus requires one to consider the cost and make a commitment of faith in Jesus.[[6]](#footnote-6) So at this point, following Jesus as a disciple is someone who considers the cost and makes a commitment of faith to Jesus.

**A Disciple is Transformed in the Community of Disciples**

Following Jesus in discipleship meant making a commitment to him personally but it also meant, becoming a part of the community of disciples. Jesus was calling these brothers to be with him (Mk 3:14) andto learn from him by sitting under his teaching. It is estimated that Jesus spent 90% of his time with his disciples (Mat 5:1). Why? Because investing in a few is how he would change the world. He made a greater impact on the twelve than he did on the crowds. And his preaching to the crowds was always to call them to discipleship. All of us have a tremendous ability and opportunity to influence a few. It is through his teaching and being with his disciples that Jesus could promise to transform the disciples, I will make you fishers of men. He will make them into something they are not. And that transformation would be an outgrowth of their being with Jesus among the other disciples. So, a disciple is someone who has considered the cost and made a commitment of faith to Jesus. And secondly, a disciple is someone who is being transformed or formed by Jesus.

**A Disciple is Faithful to the Mission of Jesus**

Jesus promised to make them fishers of men, pointing to the mission of Jesus (Mat 28:18-20). When Jesus called his disciples and the very last words he gave his disciples were to make disciples. The line from discipleship to mission is a straight line. Some may think the call to discipleship and the call to make disciples is reserved for super Christians but Matthew gives the mission of Jesus to make disciples and the method of Jesus making disciples by investing in a few as the model for everyone of us. So in short, a disciple follows Jesus, is formed by Jesus, and is faithful to the mission of Jesus.

Questions for Life Groups:

1. Why did Jesus start his ministry in Galilee instead of in Jerusalem?
2. Why did Jesus spend 90% of his time with his disciples?
3. What does it mean to count the cost and make a commitment of faith to Jesus?
4. What does it mean to give our allegiance to Jesus?
5. Are there areas in your life that you struggle with giving allegiance to Jesus?
6. What does it mean to be a fan of Jesus instead of a follower of Jesus?
7. How are we transformed by Jesus?
8. What is the lead indicator for Christians spiritually thriving mentioned?
9. Do you think accountability is necessary in the Christian life?
10. What do you fear about accountability?

**The Light of the World**

**The Glory and Grace of the Incarnation**

**John 1:14-18**

December 22, 2013

**The Incarnation is Glorious (vs. 14-15)**

**The Incarnation is Gracious (vs. 16-18)**

**Take aways . . .**

* Have you experienced new birth?

**Follow the King to the Cross - Follow the Follow the King in Discipleship/METHOD**

**Matthew 4:18-25**

West/US ident great Xn leaders & preacher Jesus ~ fr Naz, base ministry North in Galilee

J is gr8st leader, preacher, prophet, king yet most ministry in North

In Ser 2 Easter, FtK2C – life & min J ~ last Message; method ~ F2KiDisc

Stage - Immed > giv sum J mess, rep 4 K hand, M descr call 1st disc 18-22 as ie those

Tho not all disc F J lit, did in princ – J method invest in few

Then 4:23-25 descr sum J pub ministry w/disc - words & works of K w/gr8 crowds FJ

READ

**A Disc FJ -** Mt ~ while walk shore of C of Gal, J calls 4 bros leave ev & FJ ~disc

When J beg pub min, chose disc & called them 2 FH ~ ie resp + 2 J mess, rep 4 K

They immed left ev 2 FJ - And & Pet left nets(?); Jam & Jn left boat, nets & father!

aband bus/livelihd, fam & assets

While resp ~ abrupt, this no rash resp 2 chance encount w/J

Both A & J been disc JtB & prob w/when test J L of G takes away sin world

Jn- 1 anointed by S as X & S of G

Jn test conv A that J was X so he brot bro Pet 2 J

Jn’s min ~ prep way 4 J as X/pt 2 J so nat disc shift alleg 2 J

All happened ~ yr bf J call 2 FH on shores of Gal

In yr ~ trav w/J - wedd Cana; cleanse temple; heal officals son

As tho trav infor w/J prior 2 go pub & when form went pub & preach

form called disc who been consid what required 2 FJ 4 yr~

J spent time bc most com faith process ie Vanessa; Brenda; Andy; Mom; hospital

follow usd 2 GoM - lit ind/crowd FJ w/no commit b disc (25) & use metap thos FJ as disc

1st ~ FJ bc gr8 preacher; miracles; fed ~ fans but no commit faith, no salv

2nd use demon 2 qual in + resp FJ - cost & commit -count cost & made commit faith 2 J

FJ req 1 2 count cost & giv r sole alleg 2 K J & his K ~ K universe; my reading

FJ – life not yor agenda, Kingdom but his agenda & K

Bros left ev, gave alleg 2 KJ - Now not ev disc left ev 2 FJ lit but did in princ

ie Mattw; women supported; disc families; - u? given J allegiance?

money; business; marriage; dating relat; sports; summers J ask u abandon?

Yet sacr displ by bros far outweigh by prom of > gain (13:44-45).

prom of gain influe dec 2 aband lives as knew it 2 FJ

Even latr Pet compl all they sacr 2 FH J remnd hav > shar in eternity (19:27-29)

1 not consid sell all 2 buy much >valu treas a sacrif; ~ wis invest 13:44-45

So this pt, FJ considrd cost & makes commit faith 2 J

**A Disc is Transformed in the Community of Disc -** FJ ~mak faith commit 2 him

but also meant, bc part of comm of disc, 2b w/J & learn fr J by sit < teach Lead ndicator

Est J spent 90% time w/disc (Mat 5:1). Why? Bc invest in few how chang world.

hag8r impact on few than crwods ~ preaching crowds call 2 disc

Thru teach & comm of disc ~ J prom 2 transf disc ~ will mak fishrs of men - make them

That trans be an outgrowth of being w/J & > disc

Dgroups ~ account; read; intentinal in S life – walk w/J; struggles; learning

So, a disc ~ someone consid cost & made a commit of faith 2 J

2nd a disc is someone who b transfor by J in comm of disc

**A Disc is Faithful 2 Miss of J –** J prom 2 make them fishers of men ~ miss of J 2 MD

When J call disc & last words gave disc ~ 2 MD ~line fr disc 2 miss is a straight line.

J spent bw 3-4 w/his disc & very last words ~ MD of all nations (28:18-20).

As King, J has all pow & auth 2 equip & 2 empow disciples 2 ff his miss

Some may think call 2 disc & call 2 MD reserv 4 super Xns

but Mat gives miss of J 2 MD & method of J MD by invest in few as model 4 all xns

2018 ~ 9 baptisms powrful but not finish line its starting line

So in short, a disc FJ, is formed by J, & is faithful 2 mission of J

Next steps:

* Cont cost?
* Commit of faith
* Community?
* Transformed? – sit < teach; word ~lead indicator
* D group – LG first

“To move from religion to secularism is not so much a loss of faith as a shift into a new set of beliefs and into a new community of faith, one that draws the lines between orthodoxy and heresy in different places.” Keller

Let me try to explain why I believe that, because I think if I can lay my case before you, you would see why we would believe that. The world's major religions are all built on the antithesis of what the Christian religion is built out of. Here's what I mean by that. At the center of most of the world's religions is what is called moralistic deism. Be good enough to be accepted by this God. Here is the list of things that if I do these things, this God will accept me.

That's Islam. That's Judaism. "If you'll just do these things, then God will accept you in." What does that do? That forces us back to self-righteousness. It forces us to try to forge a righteousness of our own. When you do that, you have no choice but to live a duplicitous life. Let me give you a stunning example. The radical Muslims who flew the plane into the towers on 9/11, do you know what they did on 9/10? They stayed in hotels in Boston and in New York. Do you know what they did that night? They rented pornography.

The receipts from those hotel rooms… Here are the most radicalized Muslims imaginable who are so dedicated to earn the approval of their God that they're going to kill thousands of people the next day, and they spend their last night on earth ordering expensive meals and watching porn in seedy hotel rooms. Do you see the duplicity there? "Let me project radical dedication." What's in the background? Seedy wickedness. Look at me. I love you enough to say you're terrible at being good. You just are. You're terrible at it.

psychologist named Martin Seligman, book written about the power of optimism on our neurology, how optimism affects our brains and wires our brains. Here's what he says.

"Events have occurred that so weakened our commitment to larger entities, things like God, as to leave us almost naked before the ordinary assaults of life. Where can one now turn for identity, for purpose, and for hope? When we need spiritual furniture, we look around and see that all of the comfortable leather sofas and stuffed chairs have been removed, and all that is left to sit on is a small, frail, folding chair, the self."

You take God out of the equation. You take the spiritual life out of the equation, and we no longer have the capacity to define our realities. Who are we? What is life about? What am I to do with suffering? Suffering is real. What am I to do with that? How am I to think about that? How am I to interact in relationships?

Cut:

Current longing for justice in the Me Too campaign but even that you see confustion about what is sexualy assault; what is right and wrong between adults because without a Christian foundation of right andwrong, it is left up to the individuals. Ie good guys win There is the longing for joy that seems so elusive in this life points to the fact that we were created for something beyond this world. Our desire for love and affection, human touch iscannot be explained by narturalism and evolution. And the desire for meaning and prupsoe in this life, living forsoemthing greater than ourselves points us to the Chrsitian narrative. When we are empty, pain we seek ways to cover or mask that pain. It may be a relatsihonhip, pornography, drinking, drugs, food. We al lwant to be part of asomething lareger than ourselves, that gives us purppsoe and meansing. Why Star wars is so good. It has so many of these qualities to it.

This rises problems for monotheists, those who believe in one God, and why it was so difficult for Jewish leaders to embrace his teaching and the disciples to understand. We see it explained in the first chapter, In the beginning was the word (he was eternal), the word was with God (in relationship to God) and the word was God (distinct from God the Father). So there is one God yet the Son is God and the Father is God. Jesu later (15-17) say he will promise the Spirit to replace his ministrety. Jesus with be proiset in the Spirit. So we have not only God the Father but God the Son and God the Spirit who are one but three. Jesu holds a distinift divine isdneity in common with the Father as the unique Son of the Father. The Spirit Who is God yest separate relates to the other two descends from the Father to rest on and remain on the Son so that through the Son he may come to rest and remain on Jesus disciepls as well. So we have God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spriti. The FatherSon and spirit are one in essence yet distinict persons, each is fully God, and there is only one God.

1. While some took the initiative to ask to become disciples early in Jesus’ ministry (Jn 1:35-41) from this point forward, Jesus takes the initiative. It was common for Jews to consider their options then approach a Rabbi and ask to become a disciple. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. This occurs at Jesus’ baptism when the Spirit comes down on him and the voice from heaven identified Jesus as God’s Son (Mt 3:16-17). See 1 Sam 16:13 as an example of anointing for service with God’s Spirit and presence. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Follow the Master, 104. Not all those who followed Jesus were truly disciples. The most obvious is Judas (10:4), see also Mt 7:21-23. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. In Matthew 8:18-22 a scribe promised to follow Jesus wherever he goes but Jesus rejected his request because he saw Jesus as just a teacher and did not understand the cost to follow Jesus a Messiah. Hence, he did not meet the requirements of considering the cost and making personal commitment to Jesus as Mess. See Morris 200 [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Kingsbury, 58. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. FM 125? [↑](#footnote-ref-6)