

THE INCREDIBLE STORY OF GOD'S AMAZING LOVE

ACT 3: THE FULFILLMENT

CALLING THE DISCIPLES

Matthew 4:18–22 (NIV)

¹⁸ As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. ¹⁹ "Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will send you out to fish for people." ²⁰ At once they left their nets and followed him. ²¹ Going on from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John. They were in a boat with their father Zebedee, preparing their nets. Jesus called them, ²² and immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.

1. Seeing

...he saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew

And [Andrew] brought [Simon Peter] to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, "You are Simon son of John. You will be called Cephas" (which, when translated, is Peter)... "How do you know me?" Nathanael asked. Jesus answered, "I saw you while you were still under the fig tree before Philip called you." **John 1:42,48 (NIV)**

2. Calling

"Come, follow me"

Then Jesus said to Simon, "Don't be afraid; from now on you will fish for people." So they pulled their boats up on shore, left everything and followed him. **Luke 5:10-11**

One thing I ask from the Lord, this only do I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze on the beauty of the Lord and to seek him in his temple... My heart says of you, "Seek his face!" Your face, Lord, I will seek. **Psalms 27:4–8 (NIV)**

3. Sending

...and I will send you out to fish for people

[Jesus] appointed twelve that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach. **Mark 3:14 (NIV)**

Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." **John 20:21 (NIV)**

Christian vocation is not merely to individual savedness, but to the service of God's mission to bring healing to the nations... God calls a people into discipleship, formation by Jesus, in order to send it out... In Word and sacrament, Jesus encounters us in this central event of inward and focused devotion with the explosive outwardly thrusting commission, "So I send you." —*Called to Witness: Doing Missional Theology*, Darrell L. Guder

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS—WEEK OF JANUARY 19, 2020 THE FULFILLMENT—CALLING THE DISCIPLES

CONNECT

- Reflect on your experience of Advent this year. Where did you experience God, see God at work, or sense God's presence in your personal life? Where did you experience God's blessing or presence throughout Advent in worship or the other events at SBPC?
- If there are new people joining your group, review the Small Group Agreement Form together.

SPIRITUAL PRACTICE: Lectio Divina

Lectio Divina is the practice of reading scripture devotionally, to encounter the living God by listening with the heart and mind. It means reflecting on a text in a way to fully engage with the drama of the passage. The Gospel stories are especially meaningful when we use our imagination to enter into the places and conversations with Jesus. As you listen to the reading, imagine you are the one who is walking, talking, and being with Jesus. Pause between each reading to allow time for journaling your responses to the prompts.

Opening: Take a moment in silence to sit quietly, breathe deeply, and open your heart to the Holy Spirit.

Reader #1: Slowly read Matthew 4:18-22 aloud from the bulletin. To these men, fishing was their security, achievement, and identity.

- How do you think they felt as they held their nets, contemplating dropping them to follow Jesus?
- What are you holding onto for your security, achievement, and identity?

Reader #2: Reread the passage. Imagine Jesus looking at you. He sees you, really sees you.

- What does it feel like to be the one Jesus sees?
- What do you think Jesus sees as he looks into your heart?

Reader #3: Reread the passage. Imagine Jesus turning to you with the invitation, "Come, follow me."

- What would you need to relinquish to say yes to begin a new, deeper, even risky relationship with Jesus?
- Would you welcome such a new beginning in your life? How do you want to respond just now?

Journal: Write down your thoughts as you contemplate being with Jesus in this passage. What would you want to say or to ask Jesus? Consider, what is it you desire? Is it a willingness to say yes to Jesus? Is it to become more enthusiastic about following Jesus? However you want to respond to Jesus, do that now.

(Spiritual Practice continued on the next page)

Group Sharing: How did it feel to enter into this Gospel narrative this way? What did you see, experience, or feel as you put yourself in this passage using your imagination?

SCRIPTURE REFLECTION

- What were you able to see or understand in a new, fresh way from this week's scripture or message?
- What do you think Jesus saw in the fishermen that made him choose them to be a part of his ministry? What do you think the men saw in Jesus that made them so enthusiastic about dropping everything to follow Jesus?
- How risky was it for Peter, Andrew, James, and John to follow Jesus?
- How would you have responded if Jesus had approached you that day and called you to a challenging new adventure with him? What would leaving your nets be for you?
- When or how did you first hear Jesus calling you to follow him? What does it mean for you to follow Jesus today? What would you want to recapture from your early days of following Jesus?
- What do you think it means to "fish for people"? Why was that part of Jesus' invitation to the disciples?
- Read the quote by Darrell Guder from the outline. How do you relate to this understanding of discipleship? What is your response to this challenge?
- What are the risks of "being sent" by Jesus into the world? Who are the people God is calling you to engage with so that they might know Jesus?

PRAYER and BENECTION

Share your requests: Are there personal challenges the group can pray for this week?

Pray for one another: In what new ways do you think God is calling you to follow Jesus?

Closing Benediction: (from Psalm 27:4-8) One thing I ask from the Lord, this only do I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze on the beauty of the Lord and to seek him in his temple...My heart says of you, "Seek his face!" Your face, Lord, I will seek. Amen.

CHALLENGE—Spend time daily (see SBPC Reading Plan or APP)

- Reading and reflecting on scripture: What does God want me to see in this passage?
- Praying for confession and guidance: What does God want me to let go of?
- Listening and solitude with God: What is God saying to me?