

Sermon: *The Calling of God (Revised)*  
Text: *Mark 1:14-20*  
Date: *January 25, 2009 AM*  
Place: *Jesup First UMC*

Sermon: *The Calling of God*  
Text: *Mark 1:14-20*  
Date: *January 22, 2006*  
Place: *Wrightsville First UMC*

When I was 15, I mustered up enough courage to ask Mr. Harold Turner for a job at *G's Drive In* in Bainbridge. Now, G's was a family restaurant where our family went for supper every Saturday. Well, Mr. Harold was a little hesitant, but finally, he hired me and told me when to come to work. And when I got there, he asked if I knew how to wait on tables. I didn't! Then, he asked if I knew how to bust tables. And I didn't!

So, he called Rose over. Now, Rose was a teenager boy's dream. She was cute and she was our favorite waitress. And Mr. Harold said: "*Now, Tucker, you just follow Rose and watch what she does and she'll teach you everything you need to know.*" Well, I thought I had died and gone to heaven. And I followed Rose. Now, it was difficult, but I did it. I watched what she did; I listened to what she said; and I soon learned how to be a waiter.

In our text this morning, Jesus passed by the Sea of Galilee and saw two brothers, Andrew and Peter, and He said: "**Come, be my disciples, and I will show you how to fish for people**" and they followed! Then, they passed by James and John, the sons of Zebedee, while they were mending their nets and said: "**Come, be my disciples, and I will show you how to fish for people**" and they followed too.

Oh, what it must have been like to follow Jesus. In fact, I wonder what that means. What does it mean to follow Jesus? You see, most of us are here this

morning because, at some point along the way, we have heard God's call to follow. It may have come to us in different ways, but praise the Lord, you and I heard the Master's call; we bowed before Him; and we asked him to be Lord and Savior. And we began to follow – following Jesus! But what does it mean to follow Jesus?

If someone came up to you this afternoon and asked: "*Are you a Christian?*" You'd probably say: "*Yes, I am!*" But what if they asked you what that meant; could you tell them what it means to be a disciple of Jesus, to be a Christian, a true follower of Jesus?

### **1. FOLLOWING JESUS MEANS LEARNING!**

In fact, the word "disciples" means student. Now, could you imagine having a teacher like Jesus? That had to be awesome. In fact, the Bible says people responded to Jesus because He taught as one having authority. And what did He teach them?

**Well, He taught them to love God.** Matthew 22:37 says: "*You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment.*" And He modeled for them a life of perfect love of God. In Jesus, they saw a man who made a habit of attending the synagogue, who celebrated the Feasts at the Temple, who got up early in the morning to go out and pray. He taught them to love God by spending time in prayer ... "*Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.*" And He taught them to love God's Word as He preached it, taught it, and lived it out before their very eyes.

He taught them to love God.

***Second, He taught them to love people!***

Nobody has ever loved others the way Jesus did. In fact, Jesus saw people differently than most people do. The Bible says: “He looked at the crowd and He was moved with compassion, because they were like sheep without a shepherd.” In another place, John tells us: “Having loved His own, He showed them the full extent of His love” by getting up from the table and washing their feet.

And don't you think they noticed? Don't you think they noticed when He touched the leper, when He picked up children and put them on His lap, when He treated women with respect, when He ministered to the Gentiles, when He ate with tax collectors and sinners? Absolutely, they did!

He taught them to love others!

***Third, He taught them to be students of God's Word!*** He was always quoting scripture. In fact, in the Sermon on the Mount, He kept saying, “You have heard it said of old ... but I say unto you ...” Then, in Luke 24, two disciples had an encounter with Jesus on the Road to Emmaus. And Luke says: “And beginning with the Law and the Prophets, He explained to them what the scriptures said about Himself.”

He taught them to be students of God's Word!

***Fourth, He taught them to reach out to others!*** In fact, they had 3 years of on-the-job training. Jesus said: “Come, be my disciples, and I will show you how to fish for people” and He taught them how to fish. They were with Him when He passed the

tax collector's booth and called Matthew to follow. They were with Him when He fed the 5000! They were with Him when He ate supper at Simon the Pharisee's house.

You see, it really didn't matter how rich you were or how poor. It didn't really matter if you were a man or a woman. Jesus reached out to others. In fact, within His circle of 12 disciples, there were poor fishermen and a rich tax collector; there was a zealot, a traitor, and one who denied Him three times.

Jesus taught them to reach out to others.

***Fifth, He taught them to serve one another!*** On the last night of His life, Jesus got up from the table, put a towel around His waist and went from one to the other, washing their feet. While they were arguing among themselves about who was the greatest and who would have positions of power and honor in the Kingdom of God, He was quietly living a life of servitude for them to copy. In fact, He finally told them: "*And since I have washed your feet, you ought to wash each other's feet.*"

He taught them to serve one another.

That's what following Jesus means; it means always learning and growing.

## **2. FOLLOWING JESUS MEANS PRACTICING WHAT YOU'VE LEARNED.**

Jesus said: "*Come, be my disciples, and I will show you how to fish for people.*" You see, it isn't enough for disciples to learn; Jesus made them practice what they were learning. One day, He called His followers

together – about 70 of them – and He told them to go into the villages of Galilee and proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom of God. On the day He multiplied the loaves and fish, it was the disciples who were given the responsibility of organizing the crowd and passing out the food.

You see, learning doesn't mean a lot unless you practice what you've learned. What good is knowing the truth if you're not living the truth? What good is claiming to be a Christian if others can't see Christ in your life? You see, Jesus taught them and sent them! He said: *"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you and I will surely be with you always even to the end of the world."*

In the Bible, there is no such thing as a disciple, a student, who is not also an Apostle, one who is sent. Because that's what following Jesus is all about: learning and practicing the truths of the Gospel.

When Bo Schembechler was coach of the Michigan Wolverines, he was known for being especially hard on his players during spring training. His goal during spring training was to separate the men from the boys, the winners from the quitters. So, Bo hung a sign in his locker room that said: *"Those who stay will be champions."* Well, one day, Bo went through the locker room on the way to his office and saw that somebody had written underneath his sign:

*“And those who quit will be doctors, lawyers, and captains of industry.”*

Now, friends, here’s the really sad truth that I have to share with you: not everyone has what it takes to be a disciple. Jesus said it this way: **“Many are called, but few are chosen.”**

I’m afraid there are people within the church who have never answered the call. Oh, they joined the church, but they’re not students. They don’t come to Sunday School; they don’t participate in Bible Study; they don’t have a quiet time. If that’s you, you need to hear His call: **“Come and be my disciple.”**

And then, others have heard the call. In fact, they answered the call. They study God’s Word; they come to Sunday School; they’re in a small group; they have a daily quiet time where they read, study, and meditate on God’s Word and where they commune with God in prayer. But that’s where it ends. They’re like the Dead Sea – with lots coming in but nothing going out. They don’t have a ministry, a place of service within the church where they can use their God-given gifts and talents to serve others.

Some think they’re too old. Some think they’re not talented enough. Some think they don’t have enough time. But the truth is they’re just lazy. They’ve gotten fat from feasting on God’s Word; they’re always eating and never exercising. They’re always learning, but never practicing. Hear God’s call: **“Come, be my disciples, and I will show you how to fish for people.”**

Won't you answer His call? Jesus is ever before us, calling us onward and upward! Let us heed His call and follow Him, learning and practicing the principles of His Kingdom until that day when He calls us home.

**IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE SON AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, AMEN!**