



Shelby Christian Church

BEFORE AND AFTER: THE CALL TO FOLLOW - COME AND SEE
JOHN 1:35-39, MARK 1:16-20, LUKE 9:23 * 3/15/2026

MAIN POINT

Before there was a cross, there was an invitation.

INTRODUCTION

Share briefly how you first heard Christ's call and how you responded.

In what ways has your understanding of that call deepened since you first became a Christian?

When we begin to follow Jesus, we step onto a path that transforms us from the inside out. This has been true since the very beginning. The Gospels of Mark and John introduce Jesus' ministry by showing Him calling Simon, Andrew, James, and John to leave their livelihoods and families behind and follow Him—to become “fishers of people.” They responded in obedience. Like them, we discover that a disciple follows Christ, is shaped by Christ, lives with concern for others, and is willing to surrender everything.

UNDERSTANDING

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ JOHN 1:35-39

What question does Jesus ask the two disciples when they begin following Him?

What question do the disciples ask Jesus in return?

Why is Jesus' invitation “Come and you will see” important for understanding how people come to know Him?

What does this passage teach us about the role of personal encounter in following Christ?

What does this passage teach us about the difference between knowing about Jesus and knowing Him personally?

In this passage, John the Baptist identifies Jesus Christ as the Lamb of God, and two of John's disciples respond by following Jesus. When Jesus notices them, He asks what they are seeking, inviting them to consider their true motives. They express a desire to be with Him, and Jesus responds with the invitation, “Come and see.” They spend the day with Him, marking the beginning of their journey as His disciples. This passage reminds us that becoming a disciple is not simply adopting beliefs, but entering a relationship with Christ. Jesus still asks each person, “What are you seeking?” and still invites, “Come and see.” Those who accept His invitation discover that being with Him changes everything.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ MARK 1:16-20

Why is it important to see that Jesus specifically called these men to follow Him?

Why do you think Jesus chose to use the metaphor of fishing for men?

When someone follows Jesus, that is only the beginning of the journey. Those that follow Jesus are also formed by Jesus. Discipleship is the process by which we become that which Jesus wants us to be. But we are not just becoming something ambiguous; Jesus has a very specific formative purpose in mind for us. His intent for all His followers is that they in turn bring more followers to Him. They are to become fishers of men.

What are you “fishing” for right now in your life?

What about those around you? What do you see people fishing for in the world today?

How do you think the way Jesus views the people you come in contact with every day? How might that be different than the way you view them?

How did you first sense Jesus calling you to follow Him?

What fears or hesitations can keep people from responding immediately to Jesus?

What encourages you most about the disciples’ response in this passage?

This passage records the calling of Jesus’ first disciples and reveals the nature of His authority and the cost and purpose of discipleship. It shows that following Christ involves a personal call, immediate obedience, and a transformed mission. It reminds us that Jesus still calls people into relationship. His call requires trust, surrender, and obedience. He does not call people because they are already qualified, but He qualifies those He calls. When we follow Him, He transforms our lives and uses us to reach others with His truth.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ LUKE 9:23

What do you think Jesus means by “deny yourself”?

What does it mean to “take up your cross” in the context of Jesus’ time? When have you experienced the cost of following Jesus personally?

Why do you think Jesus emphasizes doing this daily rather than once?

How does this verse redefine what it means to be a disciple?

What does this passage teach us about the cost of following Jesus?

What would it look like for me to truly follow Jesus—not just admire Him?

This verse confronts comfortable Christianity. It reminds believers that following Christ requires daily surrender and faithful obedience. Yet the call is not burdensome when understood in light of who Jesus is and what He has done. The One who calls us to take up our cross first carried His own. In following Him, we find true life, even through sacrifice.

APPLICATION

How would you answer Jesus' question, "What are you seeking?" in your life right now?

What does it look like today to "come and see" where Jesus is staying?

How has your personal experience with Jesus strengthened your faith?

Are there any "nets" you are still holding onto? Why?

What are some ways people try to follow Jesus without denying themselves?

What might "denying yourself" look like in your life right now?

What kinds of crosses do Christians carry today?

PRAYER

COMMENTARY

John 1:35-39

This passage marks the beginning of Jesus' gathering of His first disciples and reveals the essence of true discipleship: hearing, seeking, and abiding.

John the Baptist Points Others to Jesus (vv. 35–37)- John the Baptist stands with two of his disciples when he sees Jesus Christ and declares, "Behold, the Lamb of God!" This is significant because John's ministry was never about building his own following, but about preparing people for Christ. His willingness to direct his disciples away from himself demonstrates humility and faithfulness. True spiritual leadership always points people to Jesus, not to oneself. When the two disciples hear this testimony, they immediately follow Jesus. Their response shows that genuine faith begins with hearing truthful witness about Christ and responding in trust.

Jesus' First Words: A Question of the Heart (v. 38)- Jesus turns and asks them, "What are you seeking?" This is the first recorded question Jesus asks in this Gospel, and it goes beyond simple curiosity. Jesus is probing their motives and desires. Discipleship begins with examining what we truly want. Some seek comfort, others answers, others purpose—but Jesus invites people to seek Him. Their reply, "Rabbi, where are you staying?" reveals their desire not merely for information, but for relationship. They want to be with Him. This shows that discipleship is not primarily about learning ideas, but about knowing a person.

Jesus' Invitation: "Come and See" (v. 39)- Jesus responds with a simple invitation: "Come and you will see." This invitation emphasizes that faith grows through personal experience. Jesus does not offer them a lecture or argument, but an opportunity to be with Him. They came, saw where He was staying, and remained with Him that day. This is the beginning of a life-changing relationship. The detail about the time of day reflects the vivid memory of the encounter—this moment was unforgettable.

Discipleship grows through relationship. - Jesus' invitation to "come and see" shows that knowing Him comes through spending time with Him.

Discipleship requires personal response. - The disciples did not merely listen—they followed and stayed. Faith is active, not passive.

Mark 1:16-20

Jesus Takes the Initiative (v. 16) - As Jesus Christ walks along the Sea of Galilee, He sees Simon and Andrew casting their nets. They are ordinary fishermen engaged in their daily work. This reminds us that Jesus calls people in the midst of their everyday lives. They were not religious leaders or scholars but working men. Jesus' call is based not on human qualifications, but on His sovereign choice and purpose.

The Call and the Promise (v. 17)- Jesus says, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." This statement contains both a command and a promise. The command is "Follow me." Discipleship begins with personal allegiance to Jesus. It means trusting Him, submitting to His authority, and walking in His ways. The promise is "I will make you fishers of men." Jesus assures them that He Himself will transform them. Just as they once gathered fish, they will now gather people into the kingdom of God. Their purpose will shift from an earthly occupation to an eternal mission. This also shows that spiritual growth is the work of Christ in the life of the disciple.

Immediate Obedience (v. 18)- Simon and Andrew immediately leave their nets and follow Him. Their response demonstrates faith and trust. They do not delay, question, or negotiate. Their nets represent their livelihood, security, and identity. Leaving them behind shows that following Jesus takes priority over everything else. Their obedience illustrates that true faith responds promptly when Jesus calls.

A Greater Sacrifice (vv. 19–20)- Jesus then calls James and John, who are in a boat with their father, Zebedee, repairing their nets. When Jesus calls them, they leave not only their occupation but also their father and the family business. This shows that following Jesus may require leaving behind even the most important earthly relationships and securities. It does not mean dishonoring family, but it does mean that Jesus must come first.

Luke 9:23

"If anyone would come after Me"- Jesus opens with an invitation that is both universal and conditional. "If anyone" shows that the call to discipleship is open to all. Yet "would come after Me" implies intentional pursuit. Discipleship is not automatic; it requires a conscious decision to follow Christ.

"Let him deny himself"- To deny oneself does not mean self-hatred or neglect, but refusing to place oneself at the center of life. It means surrendering personal control, ambitions, and preferences to Christ's authority. In a culture that often promotes self-fulfillment and self-promotion, Jesus calls for self-surrender. The disciple shifts from saying "my will" to "Your will."

"Take up his cross daily"- In the first-century Roman world, the cross was an instrument of execution and shame. To "take up a cross" meant walking toward death. Jesus uses this striking image to describe total commitment. It involves dying to sin, pride, and self-rule. Luke alone includes the word "daily," emphasizing that discipleship is not a one-time heroic act but an ongoing lifestyle. Each day presents new opportunities to choose obedience over comfort and faithfulness over convenience.

"And follow Me"- The goal of self-denial and cross-bearing is not suffering for its own sake but following Jesus. Christianity is not merely about moral discipline; it is about relationship and allegiance to a living Lord. The disciple walks in Christ's footsteps—learning from Him, trusting Him, and obeying Him.