

WEEK 2 (Feb 16-22) THE CALL TO FOLLOW-the call to believe Christ.

OPTIONAL READING: Mark Chapters 6-10

“No one but Christ Himself can call us to discipleship. It never consists in a decision for this or that specific action; it is always a decision for or against Christ.” Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Day 1 Read the following scriptures:

John 1:35-39. ³⁵The following day John was again standing with two of his disciples. ³⁶As Jesus walked by, John looked at him and declared, “Look! There is the Lamb of God!”³⁷ When John’s two disciples heard this, they followed Jesus. ³⁸Jesus looked around and saw them following. “What do you want?” he asked them. They replied, “Rabbi” (which means “Teacher”), “where are you staying?” ³⁹“Come and see,” he said. It was about four o’clock in the afternoon when they went with him to the place where he was staying, and they remained with him the rest of the day. Jesus asked them to “come & see”. His call is unconditional and usually immediate.

Matthew 4:19-20 ¹⁹Jesus called out to them, “Come, follow me, and I will show you how to fish for people!” ²⁰ And they left their nets at once and followed him.

Jesus invites them, requiring a **relationship** of trust. He offers **training** “I will make you” and a **vision** to become “fishers of men”.

Things to consider: is your relationship with Christ, one of trust?

Prayer: ask God to help you trust Him. Think of an event when He has shown you His love.

Day 2 Read the following scriptures:

Mark 2:14-17: ¹⁴As he walked along, he saw Levi son of Alphaeus sitting at his tax collector's booth. "Follow me and be my disciple," Jesus said to him. So Levi got up and followed him. ¹⁵Later, Levi invited Jesus and his disciples to his home as dinner guests, along with many tax collectors and other disreputable sinners. (There were many people of this kind among Jesus' followers.) ¹⁶But when the teachers of religious law who were Pharisees^[a] saw him eating with tax collectors and other sinners, they asked his disciples, "Why does he eat with such scum?^[b]" ¹⁷When Jesus heard this, he told them, "Healthy people don't need a doctor—sick people do. I have come to call not those who think they are righteous, but those who know they are sinners."

Jesus worked with 4 groups: crowds, disciples, enemies and friends of His disciples. He focused on those that KNEW they were sinners, people who were willing to hear the Gospel.

Mark 8:31-37, ³¹Then Jesus began to tell them that the Son of Man^[a] must suffer many terrible things and be rejected by the elders, the leading priests, and the teachers of religious law. He would be killed, but three days later he would rise from the dead.³²As he talked about this openly with his disciples, Peter took him aside and began to reprimand him for saying such things.^[b]³³Jesus turned around and looked at his disciples, then reprimanded Peter. "Get away from me, Satan!" he said. "You are seeing things merely from a human point of view, not from God's."³⁴Then, calling the crowd to join his disciples, he said, "If any of you wants to be my follower, you must give up your own way, take up your cross, and follow me.³⁵If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake and for the sake of the Good News, you will save it. ³⁶And what do you benefit if you gain the whole world but lose your own soul?^[c] ³⁷Is anything worth more than your soul?

Jesus is calling them to a life of rejection and hardship. We are all called to abandon our selfish ways and embrace the alternative - a life of suffering and sacrifice. We cannot shape Christ to fit our agenda. When we realize the value of our personal connection with Him, we will willingly reject our own desires.

Things to consider: are you willing to work with anyone willing to hear?

Prayer: ask God to embolden you to abandon your selfishness by connecting with Him and help those who know they need God.

Day 3 Read the following scriptures:

John 3:1-8 New American Standard Bible (NASB)

3 Now there was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews; ²this man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, "Rabbi, we know that You have come from God as a teacher; for no one can do these ^[a]signs that You do unless God is with him." ³Jesus answered and said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born ^[b]again he cannot see the kingdom of God." ⁴Nicodemus *said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? He cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born, can he?" ⁵Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. ⁶That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. ⁷Do not be amazed that I said to you, 'You must be born ^[c]again.' ⁸The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit." We are born again causing our spirit to become alive, and we should be directed by the Holy Spirit from that point on.

Matthew 19:16-22 New American Standard Bible (NASB)

¹⁶And someone came to Him and said, "Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may obtain eternal life?" ¹⁷And He said to him, "Why are you asking Me about what is good? There is *only* One who is good; but if you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments." ¹⁸*Then* he *said to Him, "Which ones?" And Jesus said, "YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT MURDER; YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY; YOU SHALL NOT STEAL; YOU SHALL NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS; ¹⁹HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER; and YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF." ²⁰The young man *said to Him, "All these things I have kept; what am I still lacking?" ²¹Jesus said to him, "If you wish to be ^[a]complete, go *and* sell your possessions and give to *the* poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me." ²²But when the young man heard this statement, he went away grieving; for he was one who owned much property.

We must be willing to give up the most precious things to our flesh to follow Jesus.

Things to consider: are you willing to give up whatever Jesus asks, to follow Him?

Prayer: ask God to help you give up anything that is an idol in your life and worship Him only.

Day 4 Read the following scriptures:

Matthew 28:18-20, ¹⁸ Jesus came and told his disciples, "I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹ Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, ^[a] baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. ²⁰ Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

Every believer has the responsibility and the authority to make disciples according to Christ's general call to all His followers.

²You have heard me teach things that have been confirmed by many reliable witnesses. Now teach these truths to other trustworthy people who will be able to pass them on to others.

Part of obeying the general call is multiplication, we pass it on.

Things to consider: are you making disciples by sharing the gospel and teaching the truths of scripture?

Prayer: ask God to reveal those He would have you reach & teach.