

Daily Discipleship

Third Sunday after Epiphany (B) – Mark 1:14-20

An Attitude of Discipleship: *Responsive*

Focus Question: *How do you respond to Jesus on a daily basis?*

word of life

“Follow me, and I will make you fish for people.” Mark 1:17 (NRSV)

Read Mark 1:14-20

The Gospel of Mark was written several decades after the death and resurrection of Jesus. For those early Christians, it was not an easy thing to be associated with the teachings or life of Jesus. Christians were persecuted and sometimes killed. To choose to follow Jesus was a critical decision – one that could mean imprisonment or sacrificing your very life.

Mark is the shortest of the four Gospels, noted by a sense of immediacy and urgency. This author seems to have no time for adjectives, adverbs, and extra words. Instead, Mark urges the listener to hear the core message of the gospel of Jesus captured in verse 15, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news.” (Mark 1:15 NRSV)

1. *What do you think Jesus meant by the phrase “good news”?*
2. *Rephrase Mark 1:15 and put in your own words.*

In the first chapter of the Gospel, Mark quickly jumps into a description of Jesus calling his first disciples. There is no time for details about Jesus being born in the manger — on to the ministry and mission. Jesus begins by calling people to serve as partners in mission.

First, Jesus passes through the Sea of Galilee and sees fishermen at work. This scene is not of a summer vacation with two men holding a fishing pole for recreation. Instead, brothers Simon and Andrew are casting nets into the sea to catch a quantity of food. It is their livelihood. Jesus interrupts their work with a two-part invitation. These fishermen are invited to follow Jesus *and* to invite others to follow Jesus. Note how quickly Simon and Andrew respond. It is immediate!

3. *How do you picture this scene?*
4. *How might friends have reacted to the response of these fishermen?*
5. *Imagine how Simon and Andrew’s lives might have changed.*

Next, Jesus walks further. He sees more fishermen, James and John, the sons of Zebedee. These brothers are mending their nets, probably doing needed work for the family business. Jesus calls them *immediately*. Their response appears to be *immediate* as well as they leave their father and the hired workers.

6. *What surprises you about this whole passage?*

Mark’s description is sparse without digression. The disciples take no time to ponder or procrastinate. Jesus calls and they respond. Even if these fishermen knew Jesus from earlier experiences and anticipated his calling of them to serve, it is still very impressive. It is a call to follow and also a call to invite others to learn about Jesus.

7. *Which is harder: to follow or to invite others to follow? Explain your answer.*

word among us

When we were children many of us played the game “Simon says.” The leader would give a command, and if it began with the word “Simon,” then all were to promptly follow the directions. Otherwise, each person was to remain frozen. The leader would try to trick others into moving without the key word “Simon” being uttered. It was a fun game and taught listening skills.

As we got older and entered school, listening to directions became an important tool in getting through school. Teachers expected attentiveness and follow-through.

1. *As a student, how were you at listening and following directions?*
2. *What helped you to listen and to follow directions?*

Following directions may or may not be your forte. Perhaps you like to give the directions with others following you. Or, maybe you have an ornery, independent streak. Or, maybe you thrive in creative settings where you do not fit in any box. That’s reality for many people.

3. *Today, how are you at following others?*
4. *What criteria do you use when you decide to follow someone?*
5. *How easy is it for you to follow Jesus? Explain.*

Each of us is created with a big “ME” burning deep in our spirit. Some call it sin, spelled with a capital “I”. Unfortunately, that “I” can take over our lives, leaving no room to follow Christ. Thus, we daily are called to confess and ask for guidance.

Imagine Jesus finding you on this Tuesday at 10:35 a.m. Imagine Jesus saying to you the same words as he said to the fishermen, “Follow me.”

6. *Where will you probably be on Tuesday at 10:30 a.m.?*
7. *What would it mean to leave what you are doing to follow Christ?*
8. *How is that similar or different than the response of the first disciples?*

Jesus adds another level. Not only are we to follow Jesus, but we are to invite others to follow him. Sometimes we invite by allowing people to see how we live, observe our choices, and note our values. Hopefully, our lives become a witness to the incredible love of Christ. Other times, we overtly ask people to learn about Christ and to follow him. We turn from an inward posture to looking at the needs beyond ourselves . . . the need for Christ.

9. *Jesus talked in terms of “fishing for people.” How might you invite others to follow Christ?*

Prayer

O Christ, give me a heart and spirit to follow you and courage to invite others to do the same.

Dig Deeper

Mark 8: 34 - 9:1

last word

Invite someone this week
to come to your church
or to talk with you about Jesus.



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