

“Following Him: What it Means to Be a Disciple” (part 2)

Matthew 4:12-25

In his book “UnChristian,” George Barna reports that 65% of 18-42 year olds in America have made a personal commitment to Jesus Christ that they feel is important. On the surface, this seems to be encouraging. But how many of those are truly followers? Barna’s research also shows that only 23% of those people believe that sex outside of marriage is wrong. Only 13% said getting drunk is a sin. The list goes on. In other words, 65% say they are committed to Jesus Christ, but the majority of that number show no commitment to Him through their lifestyle and worldview.

Jesus never left open the option of ‘selective’ commitment. We don’t get to say, “I will follow Jesus, but when it comes to this area of my life, I do things my way!”

A disciple follows Jesus in every area of his or her life.

Philippians 3:7-9 - “But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ, and be found in Him.”

“Rubbish” - *literally means dung or manure*

Paul is saying, “Everything I had, everything I was, everything I wanted, I now consider it to be manure that I might follow Christ!”

Jesus Christ is the disciple’s motive for living. A disciple’s life revolves around knowing Jesus and making Him known.

In this passage, Matthew records the account of Jesus extending the call to His first followers.

Francis Chan - *“When Jesus called His first disciples, they may not have understood where Jesus would take them or the impact it would have on their lives, but they knew what it meant to follow. They took Jesus’ call literally and began going everywhere He went and doing everything He did. It’s impossible to be a disciple or a follower of someone and not end up like that person.”*

- These disciples INSTANTLY forsake everything to follow Jesus. Matthew tells us that they immediately turn their backs on everything else and follow Jesus.

- These disciples IMITATE Christ with their life. What He does, they do. Where He goes, they go.
- These disciples INFLUENCE their world with the gospel. After spending some three and a half years with Jesus, He sends them out to impact the world.

From this text, four central truths emerge to show us what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ. Matthew tells us that a disciple is one who:

1. REPENTS of sin and embraces Christ's gospel (4:17)

2. RELIES fully upon Christ's grace (4:18-19)

“And Jesus, walking by the Sea of Galilee, saw two brothers, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. Then He said to them, ‘Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.’”

That Jesus called these men had nothing to do with the good in them, but rather had everything to do with the grace in Him.

He INITIATES the call to follow

“And Jesus, walking by the Sea of Galilee, saw two brothers...Then He said to them...”

These men are out minding their own business when Jesus passes by their way. They were completely in the dark as to the current trajectory of their life, but Jesus had His own purpose in mind.

Grace is all about Jesus Christ doing for us what we cannot do for ourselves. Every other religion in the world has some way of “earning” or “working” for salvation. Religion says “DO” whereas a relationship with Jesus says “DONE.”

I have often heard it said, “God helps those who help themselves.” In fact, the opposite is true. God helps the one who understands that he is totally helpless when it comes to helping himself or saving himself.

By His grace, Jesus Christ has done all that is necessary to provide salvation for the one who turns from sin and trusts Him.

“Grace” - God's Riches At Christ's Expense

God's grace is His unmerited, unearned, undeserved favor.

G.W. Knight - *“When a person works an eight-hour day and receives a fair day's pay for his time, that is a wage. When a person competes with an opponent and receives a trophy for his performance, that is a prize. When a person receives appropriate recognition for his long service or high achievements, that is an award. But when a person is not capable of earning a wage, can win no prize, and deserves no award--yet receives such a gift anyway--that is unmerited favor. This is what we mean when we talk about the grace of God.”*

God, in His grace, has provided salvation through Jesus Christ. When we were helpless and hopeless to save ourselves, He came to where we are in order to meet us at our point of need.

1 John 4:10 - **“In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.”**

Titus 2:11 - **“For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present age, looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.”**

Amazing grace, how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me! I once was lost, but now am found, was blind, but now I see!

Luke 19:10 - **“For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.”**

Jesus came to seek and to save those who are lost, not just point out how bad it was that people are lost. In Luke 15, He talked about a lost sheep, a lost coin, and a lost son. Each of those parables were designed to show how excited heaven gets when lost people are found. When the lost start getting found, heaven gets excited, and the church starts growing.

He INSTRUCTS and shapes His followers

“Then He said to them, ‘Follow Me, and I will make you...”

Just as much as salvation is by God's grace, so also is our being conformed to Christ's image by His grace. As these men surrendered their life to His control, He would mold and shape them into what He intended for them to become.

Romans 12:2 - **“And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.”**

“Transformed” - *word is metamorphoo*

The word is one of the most beautiful, interesting, meaningful words in the Bible.

Metamorphosis is one of the most fascinating processes of nature. Here's how it works:

- A caterpillar wraps itself in what is called a cocoon
- The caterpillar enters a phase known as chrysalis
- Out of that cocoon there bursts a beautiful, beautiful butterfly

It has been transformed from an ugly caterpillar to a beautiful butterfly. The word was used in relation to Jesus once.

Matthew 17:1-2 - “Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, led them up on a high mountain by themselves; and He was transfigured before them. His face shown like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light.”

“Transfigured” - *word is metamorphoo*

Jesus Christ was Almighty God wrapped up in a “cocoon” of human flesh. He was God walking around on this earth in a human body. Colossians tells us that He is the fullness of the godhead in bodily form. For a brilliant moment of time, there on that mountain of transfiguration with His disciples, all that Jesus was on the inside was manifested on the outside. All the glory that He was and is was manifested in a brilliant moment of time.

There is another word in the New Testament used to describe a transformation.

1 Corinthians 15:50-52 - “Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed--in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.”

“Changed” - *word is allasso which describes instantaneous change rather than a process of change*

1 John 3:2 - “Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.”

Scripture uses this terminology to describe what happens to you and to me when we are saved and totally surrendered to Jesus.

Jesus says, "Follow Me, and I will make you..." Transformation is Jesus Christ making us like Him so that one day we can go to be with Him.

Ephesians 2:8-10 - "For by grace you have been saved through faith and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works."

Jesus has saved me with an end in mind--works that glorify God.

He takes me through this process of transformation (metamorphoo) by which He transforms me by conforming me to Himself, and one of these days, I am going to experience an instantaneous change (allasso) whereby I shed this cocoon of flesh and become like Christ in His glorified resurrection body.

Ten Stops on the Journey of Transformation (Barna)

1. Ignorance of the concept or existence of sin
2. Aware of and indifferent to sin
3. Concerned about the implications of personal sin
4. Confess sins and ask Jesus Christ to be their Savior
5. Commitment to faith activities
6. Experiencing a prolonged period of spiritual discontent
7. Experiencing personal brokenness
8. Choosing to surrender and submit fully to God through radical dependence
9. Enjoying a profound intimacy with and love for God
10. Experiencing a profound compassion and love for humanity

Barna's research reveals that only 11% of adults get past step 5. Only 2% of adults get past step 7. This means that a majority of professing believers within the local church never get to a place of enjoying profound intimacy with God, nor do they ever experience a profound compassion for their fellow man. Wow!!

2 Corinthians 5:17 - “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.”

John MacArthur - *“For those so transformed, everything changes; the old things have passed away. Old values, ideas, plans, loves, desires, and beliefs vanish, replaced by the new things that accompany salvation.”*

Transformation loves what God loves and hates what God hates. Transformation possesses the mind of Christ and sets his heart on eternal things. It is the working out of what God has worked in.

Renovation vs. Transformation

Illustration - *“A businessman had a warehouse property that he was trying to sale. The building had been empty for months and needed repairs. Vandals had damaged the doors, smashed the windows, and strewn trash around the interior. as he showed the prospective buyer the property, the businessman took great pains to say that he would replace the broken windows, bring in a crew to correct any structural damage, and clean out the garbage. “Forget about the repairs,” the buyer said. “When I buy this place, I’m going to build something completely different in its place. I don’t want the building; I want the site.”*

Renovation spruces up what’s already there; Transformation obliterates what was there and build something brand new in its place.

He INTENDS for His followers to reach others

“Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.”

Their spending time WITH Jesus would result in being transformed BY Jesus so that they could reach the world FOR Jesus.

Fishers of men vs. Keepers of the aquarium

Jesus came to seek and to save the lost. He came to fish for men, and He intends for His followers to do the same.

Fish have to be caught, and that only happens when you put a hook in the water. Lost things cannot find themselves; they are only found by the One doing the searching.

Who are YOU searching for? Who have YOU fished for?

There are multitudes of lost people in High Point for whom Christ died. Is anyone out there fishing? Is anyone out there intentionally searching for them in order to introduce them to One who can bring life?

Disciples live for what Jesus died for!

3. REJECTS this world to follow Christ's person (4:20-22)

"They immediately left their nets and followed Him."

Jesus is worthy infinitely more than what we typically give Him.

David Platt - *"There is only one conclusion to draw when we hear the invitation 'Follow Me:' Jesus is worthy of far more than church attendance and casual association. We have such a dangerous tendency to reduce Jesus to a poor, puny Savior who is just begging for you and me to accept Him into our lives. As if Jesus needs to be accepted by us! Jesus doesn't need our acceptance; He is infinitely worthy of all glory in the whole universe, and He doesn't need us at all. We need Him."*

4. REACHES out to others through Christ's mission (4:23-25)

"And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people. Then His fame went throughout all Syria; and they brought to Him all sick people who were afflicted with various diseases and torments, and those who were demon-possessed, epileptics, and paralytics; and He healed them. Great multitudes followed Him--from Galilee, and from Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and beyond the Jordan."

These disciples modeled what they saw their Master doing.

TEACHING

PREACHING

HEALING