

Encountering Jesus

Timid to Adventurous

Matthew 4:18-22

I want to continue on in our study of encountering Jesus this morning. I think we all understand, that when Jesus walks into your life, you are no longer the same. He has a way of turning things upside down, giving life meaning and purpose, and this morning he has a way of turning simply people like you and me, into brave adventurous soul winners for Christ. Did I say brave and adventurous? How many of us here have stepped out of our comfort zone since Jesus has come into our lives?

Jesus didn't come to challenge you to a life of what our culture calls normal, but he has called us beyond that life to save lost people. I don't know about you, but I want God to use my life so that people's lives are changed. Jesus is all about change.

I have been in so many churches where the idea of change scares them, where people are so rooted in their methodology, their routines, in their sustaining existence, that they have ignored the fact that Jesus changes people. In fact, I believe that you can tell a lot about a church by how much fishing they are doing in their community. By fishing, I mean sharing Jesus. **If a church is truly seeking and saving the lost then there is no time to compare with each other, to complain about method, or to worry about how we go through religious rituals.** Many have lost what it means to be a true disciple of Jesus.

I pray that each of us wakes up each morning with our lives open before God and that we ask him to use us and to change us into his new creation. Let's not get stuck in the past, but progress in our relationship with God. **Jesus is about change.** And Jesus drastically changes people's lives as long as they are willing candidates. We find the impact of Jesus upon a group of men in **Matthew 4:18-22:**

18 One day as Jesus was walking along the shore of the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers—Simon, also called Peter, and Andrew—throwing a net into the water, for they fished for a living. 19 Jesus 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. 21 A little farther up the shore he saw two other brothers, James and John, sitting in a boat with their father, Zebedee, repairing their nets. And he called them to come, too. 22 They immediately followed him, leaving the boat and their father behind.

Peter, Andrew, James and John - the calling of these four disciples here is quite drastic – they immediately stopped what they were doing and followed Jesus. In fact in verse 19, the term follow me is defined in the Greek as “com after me – learn from me, imitate me and my conduct, in every respect be my disciple.” They had to see something unique about Jesus just to give up everything to go with him. In fact, according to scripture we

know that they did. This was not the first time Andrew had contact with Jesus. We know that Andrew was a disciple of John the Baptist. Look at **John 1:37-40**:

*35 The following day John was again standing with two of his disciples. 36 As 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. 38 Jesus 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. 40 **Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, was one of these men** who heard what John said and then followed Jesus. 41 Andrew went to find his brother, Simon, and told him, “We have found the Messiah” (which means “Christ”*). 42 Then **Andrew brought Simon to meet Jesus**. Looking intently at Simon, Jesus said, “Your name is Simon, son of John—but you will be called Cephas” (which means “Peter”*).*

Andrew recognized that Jesus was the Messiah, the Christ, the one whom the Jewish people were waiting for to come as their Savior and Ruler. He then went and told Peter what he had seen and heard, and Simon came and to see it for himself. Andrew and Simon Peter knew who Jesus was and therefore when he called them to be his disciples they gave up everything they had to follow him. We read of another time when not only Andrew and Peter come to this realization but then James and John in **Luke 5:1-11**:

1 One day as Jesus was preaching on the shore of the Sea of Galilee, great crowds pressed in on him to listen to the word of God. 2 He noticed two empty boats at the water’s edge, for the fishermen had left them and were washing their nets. 3 Stepping into one of the boats, Jesus asked **Simon,* its owner**, to push it out into the water. So he sat in the boat and taught the crowds from there. 4 When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, “Now go out where it is deeper, and let down your nets to catch some fish.” 5 “Master,” Simon replied, “we worked hard all last night and didn’t catch a thing. But if you say so, I’ll let the nets down again.” 6 And this time their nets were so full of fish they began to tear! 7 A shout for help brought their partners in the other boat, and soon both boats were filled with fish and on the verge of sinking. 8 When Simon Peter realized what had happened, he fell to his knees before Jesus and said, “Oh, Lord, please leave me—I’m too much of a sinner to be around you.” 9 For he was awestruck by the number of fish they had caught, as were the others with him. 10 **His partners, James and John, the sons of Zebedee**, were also amazed. Jesus replied to Simon, “Don’t be afraid! From now on you’ll be fishing for people!” 11 And as soon as they landed, they left everything and followed Jesus.*

I have heard many use our text this morning as a means of saying that a persons response to Christ is to be immediate and without questions. Let me present to you that **Jesus wants people to know who he is and what he can do in their lives before he expects them to respond to him**. Jesus was working on the disciples, he spent time with them,

did miracles before them, they saw what had happened at Jesus' baptism and the fulfillment of the Old Testament scriptures. They didn't follow him blindly but realized who he was and what he was capable of doing. In order for one to go from being a timid person to one who is willing to take a risk, they must have confidence in who they are following.

Let's apply it to our current day – people need to hear about who Jesus is and what he can do in their lives. Some of it is through the presentation of the Good News, and the rest of it is through what they see in your life and mine. **The change in your life, the confidence in your faith lived out before others, will lead people to Jesus.** Just as Jesus worked on these four men, Jesus wants to work through you in the lives of others, before he expects them to be true follower of him. The disciples gained confidence through what they saw and what they learned.

Notice who Jesus calls to be his disciples – fishermen. They were uneducated, poor, and yet men who knew how to work hard. Again another example of how God roots for the under-dog. **1 Corinthians 1:26-29** tells us:

26 Remember, dear brothers and sisters, that few of you were wise in the world's eyes or powerful or wealthy when God called you. 27 Instead, God chose things the world considers foolish in order to shame those who think they are wise. And he chose things that are powerless to shame those who are powerful. 28 God chose things despised by the world,* things counted as nothing at all, and used them to bring to nothing what the world considers important. 29 As a result, no one can ever boast in the presence of God.*

The underdog know what they are, they know their weaknesses, they know their inabilities, and they know they don't have everything, and so when Jesus works in their lives and through their lives, they know there is no other explanation but Jesus Christ and his power. **God isn't looking for what the world would consider “qualified people”, he is looking for humble, willing, obedient and available people to carry his message of hope.** Jesus didn't come to the Religious Teachers, who knew the Scriptures and the rules and regulations, but to the Fisherman who was willing to follow. We find another great example of this in the life of David. In **Psalms 78:70-72** we read:

70 He chose his servant David, calling him from the sheep pens. 71 He took David from tending the ewes and lambs and made him the shepherd of Jacob's descendants— God's own people, Israel. 72 He cared for them with a true heart and led them with skillful hands.

I want you to notice here that David was promoted from a lower rank of shepherd to a greater rank of shepherd, just as the four disciples we are reading about today were promoted from a lower rank of fishermen, to a greater rank of fishermen. **God wants to take you as you are and promote you by making you a better teacher, a better doctor, a better counselor, a better builder, a better worker by giving you the task of**

doing these things for him and his glory, and to allow your life to shine in the midst of those you find yourselves surrounded by. Look at Acts 4:13:

3 The members of the council were amazed when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, for they could see that they were ordinary men with no special training in the Scriptures. They also recognized them as men who had been with Jesus.

When you follow Jesus, when you learn from him through his word, when you spend time listening to his still small voice, when you walk your life out in faith, people will see that you are normal just like them – the same struggles, the same pain, the same life circumstances, but the one thing that changes everything is that you have been with Jesus.

These four men spent time with Jesus, saw who he was, heard his teachings, and made a choice to give up everything they had and take the promotion of Fishers of men. It was a choice they made and a choice that we face each and everyday. There is a Dr Seuss like poem that talks about making a choice this morning and it goes like this:

*Did I ever tell you about the young Zoad?
Who came to a sign at the fork in the road.
He looked one way and the other way too
The Zoad had to make up his mind what to do
Well, the Zoad scratched his head, and his chin and his pants
And he said to himself, "I'll be taking a chance"
If I go to Place One, that place may be hot
So how will I know if I like it or not
On the other hand, though I'll feel such a fool
If I go to Place Two and find it's too cool
In that case I may catch a child and turn blue
So Place One may be best and not Place Two
"Play safe", cried the Zoad, "I'll place safe, I'm no dunce
I'll simply start off to both places at once.
And that's how the Zoad who would not take a chance
Went no place at all with a split in his pants.*

Taking a chance is a matter of choice. To the disciples they were willing to take a chance. Why? Because of the hope that Jesus was offering them. Look at Jesus words in **Matthew 16:24-27**:

*24 Then Jesus said to his disciples, "If any of you wants to be my follower, you must turn from your selfish ways, take up your cross, and follow me. 25 If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. **But if you give up your life for my sake, you will save it.** 26 **And what do you benefit if you gain the whole world but lose your own soul?*** Is anything worth more than your soul? 27 For the Son of Man*

will come with his angels in the glory of his Father and will reward all people according to their deeds.

28 Peter said, “We’ve left our homes to follow you.”

29 “Yes,” Jesus replied, “and I assure you that everyone who has given up house or wife or brothers or parents or children, for the sake of the Kingdom of God, 30 will be repaid many times over in this life, and will have eternal life in the world to come.” Luke 18:28-30

Obviously, God isn’t calling us to neglect our families, but to love him greater than anything else in our lives. The Disciples followed Jesus and took a chance because they knew God would make their life count and that their efforts would be rewarded in the end. **As human beings we have to see some type of payoff for our commitment to Christ. He has promised to always be with you, to provide for you, to use you to reach others, to give your life meaning and purpose, and to grant you the hope and reward of heaven seeing Jesus face to face. We have to keep the prize always in front of us in order for us to keep going.**

The disciples gave up everything knowing that whatever Jesus was going to do they wanted to be a part of it. I hope we come with that same sense of anticipation, that whatever Jesus wants to do here in Healdsburg or even in our world, we want to be a part of it as well.

I wish I could say that it was a commitment they were willing to keep on their own but there are times when Jesus needed to remind them of the great purpose he had called them to. Peter, after Jesus had died and was raised back to life, found himself discouraged and wandering and wanted to go back to his old way of life, because the commitment he had made to Jesus, he felt was too hard to accomplish, or that he wanted to go back to his old life. In **John 21** we read of how he tried to go back to fishing. Look at **verse 3-19**:

3 Simon Peter said, “I’m going fishing.” “We’ll come, too,” they all said. So they went out in the boat, but they caught nothing all night. 4 At dawn Jesus was standing on the beach, but the disciples couldn’t see who he was. 5 He called out, “Fellows, have you caught any fish?” “No,” they replied. 6 Then he said, “Throw out your net on the right-hand side of the boat, and you’ll get some!” So they did, and they couldn’t haul in the net because there were so many fish in it.*

(Sound familiar, Luke 5 when Jesus calls Simon, John and James). The term “I’m going fishing” literally means “I give up, I am leaving to go back to fishing.” The disciples words to Peter were “We’ll come too” which in the Greek means “we are following you.” They fish and who shows up? Jesus look at verse 7:

7 Then the disciple Jesus loved said to Peter, “It’s the Lord!” When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his tunic (for he had stripped for work), jumped into the water, and headed to shore. 8 The others stayed with the boat and

pulled the loaded net to the shore, for they were only about a hundred yards from shore. 9 When they got there, they found breakfast waiting for them—fish cooking over a charcoal fire, and some bread. 10 “Bring some of the fish you’ve just caught,” Jesus said. 11 So Simon Peter went aboard and dragged the net to the shore. There were 153 large fish, and yet the net hadn’t torn. 12 “Now come and have some breakfast!” Jesus said. None of the disciples dared to ask him, “Who are you?” They knew it was the Lord. 13 Then Jesus served them the bread and the fish. 14 This was the third time Jesus had appeared to his disciples since he had been raised from the dead. 15 After breakfast Jesus asked Simon Peter, “Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?*” “Yes, Lord,” Peter replied, “you know I love you.” “Then feed my lambs,” Jesus told him. 16 Jesus repeated the question: “Simon son of John, do you love me?” “Yes, Lord,” Peter said, “you know I love you.” “Then take care of my sheep,” Jesus said. 17 A third time he asked him, “Simon son of John, do you love me?” Peter was hurt that Jesus asked the question a third time. He said, “Lord, you know everything. You know that I love you.” Jesus said, “Then feed my sheep.*

A reminder of the calling that Jesus had called him to years earlier. Fish for men, feed my sheep. Eventually in verse 19 Jesus says it again:

Then Jesus told him, “Follow me.”

The call to follow Jesus requires a commitment on our part. Not only is following Jesus about learning about him, encouraging other believers in their faith, serving each other, it is also about sharing with others the person of Jesus Christ, what he did in the past through the scriptures, what he has done in your own life, so that they can get to know who he is, so that when the right time comes they are ready to respond to his call of commitment to him. He wants them to develop trust and confidence so that whatever God calls them to they will respond.

Jesus can take anyone and promote them by using their talents, their abilities, their work as a platform to reach others through it – from a lower rank to the highest rank of doing it for the Lord. Finally there will be times when we need to be reminded what we are called to. Jesus challenged his disciples in **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, 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.”*

We are to be a group of people, a church to reaches out to others and who make Jesus known. Jesus changed 4 men from, from timid fishermen to adventurous fishers of men who turned the world upside down. Jesus can still do the same through you, if you are willing to humble yourself, open yourself up, and be willing to go wherever he tells you. Jesus will give your life meaning and purpose, even work with you to make you more

than you ever thought you could become. Keep your eyes on the future hope you have and store up for yourselves treasures in heaven that will never pass away. Let's pray!