

The Good News

Mark 1:16-34

1. Jesus Initiates the Call vs. 16-20

Jesus call to the two group of brothers to receive a new identity and participate in kingdom work was not based upon experience, or because they were the ones pursuing Jesus. Instead, Jesus initiated the searching, and these fishermen were not required to do anything but respond to Jesus' call of participating as His disciples.

Compared to the rabbis and scribes of Judaism, Jesus was a very different leader. The rabbis did not begin a teacher student relationship by summoning by saying "Follow Me". The rabbinical school depended on the initiative of the aspiring student, and not the call of a rabbi. The fishermen were not searching for Jesus.... rather Jesus pursues them.

Each person who has come to Christ was pursued by Jesus' initiative. Only by God's grace can we experience God's saving grace and receive our new identity as we live out the calling to participate in kingdom work. Just like the fisherman, all we need to do is to respond to the calling, as what we need to learn and do can only be learned and done as we follow Jesus.

Questions:

- With knowing that Jesus was the one who initiated your calling, how does this understanding impact your relationship with God?

2. Jesus' Authoritative Word vs. 21-28

Mark unveils that whenever Jesus taught with those who chose to listen, or spoke against demonic oppression, the words he spoke were liberating words, ones that gives life and brings renewal and redemption.

Questions:

- In Scripture, people make themselves vulnerable to the demonic when we choose to allow harboring bitterness, anger, and jealousy to motivate us to become divisive through manipulation, character assassination, destructive competition, evil scheming, and gossip, and refusing to forgive. (Ephesians 4:26-27, James 3:14-17)

What do the Scriptures say about how we should handle those times when we are in vulnerable situations, and what does leaning on God look like when we are struggling?

3. Jesus' Restorative Grace vs. 29-34

Jesus steps across boundaries that have been set in the Jewish culture towards the marginalized people; woman, the poor, the outcasts and the sick. Jesus special attention upon Simon Peter's mother-in-law brought restoration so she could serve, a sign of a genuine disciple.

It does not matter what status or situation that you are in. Jesus steps across the boundaries that our world uses to devalue someone and restores them with His grace. A sign of being restored is through our life in how we serve our Lord and Saviour.

Questions:

- "Churches are outposts of the kingdom of God on earth." (Gombis). As a result, the church would do well to consider how they may be unintentionally making certain people feel unwelcome or like second-class Christian. What does a welcoming church look like? What are the ways that would allow the church to treat people with dignity?