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**Encounters with Jesus**  
***Jesus Calls Apprentices***  
**Jn 1:35-45; Mt. 4:18-22; Mk 1:16-20; Lk 5:1-11;**  
**April 10, 2016, Jeff Germo**

This is just our second sermon in our *Encounters with Jesus series*. Today we are going to talk about discipleship and some encounters some of the first disciples had with Jesus. I want to use a different word than ‘disciple’ though because the word “disciple” is mostly a Christian word. It’s “Christianese,” and many people outside the church may not really understand what it means. The Greek word is *matheteis*.

**[2]**

In it’s simplest form **a disciples is a follower/learner**. It was quite common back in the first century for spiritual gurus or rabbis to have disciples that would literally follow them around and learn from them. The end goal was that they would become like their teacher.

**[3]**

A contemporary synonym is “**apprentice**.” Now, the problem with the word apprentice these days is that it conjures up images of a guy with bad hair who had a TV show called *The Apprentice*, and is now running for president of the United States. **[4]** And, I don’t know about you, but I am trying very hard to keep that image out of my consciousness.

**[5]**

But, we are going to use that word anyway. We all know what an apprentice is. An apprentice carpenter learns from a master, or a journeyman carpenter. We have many tradesmen at CRBC who have apprenticed many of their ‘disciples’ in Campbell River. The journeyman tradesperson is the master and when an apprentice follows them their goal is to become like their teacher, to learn from their experience, to watch how they deal with the diverse challenges of their trade. The master’s job is to ensure that his or her apprentices are learning good habits so the end result is quality workmanship and satisfied customers.

**[6]**

I want to look at two passages today where Jesus calls some of his apprentices. The first one in Mark is very short, the other one is from John and it is quite a bit longer.

**[7]**

**Mark 1:16–20 (NLT) (cf. Matt. 4:18-22)**

***<sup>16</sup>One day as Jesus was walking along the shore of the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew throwing a net into the water, for they fished for a living. <sup>17</sup>Jesus called out to them, “Come, follow me, and I will show you how to fish for people!” <sup>18</sup>And they left their nets at once and followed him. <sup>19</sup>A little farther up the shore Jesus saw Zebedee’s sons, James and John, in a boat repairing their nets. <sup>20</sup>He called them at once, and they also followed him, leaving their father, Zebedee, in the boat with the hired men.***

Before we look at John's Gospel I want to draw out a couple points from this passage in Mark. The first thing I want you to notice is that **[8] 1.) Jesus calls ordinary people.**

Simon, in this passage is actually Peter. We will see in the next passage that Jesus gives Simon a new nickname. Andrew, his brother, and James and John, and Peter were all fishermen. There was nothing extraordinary about any of them. They were average working class people. Peter would be the only one that really stood out, but not because he was exceptional in any positive sense, but simply because he was loud and sort of a bumbling, socially awkward kind of guy.

Jesus calls ordinary people, just like you and me. Not only were they just ordinary folk, but they very well may have been a lot younger than we think. My Israeli tour guide, Eitan Chamberlin, has just finished writing a book called *The Twelve Teenage Disciples*. He is just getting ready to send it to the publisher. His premise is that most of the disciples of Jesus were bar mitzvah age, meaning teenagers. That sort of crushes the image that is often portrayed in movies of a very large hairy Peter doesn't it? Read through the Gospels again thinking about this and see if it makes sense to you.

Don't read the Gospels through your twenty-first century Western cultural filter. You need to read it from a first century Palestinian filter. For instance, the fact that Peter was married doesn't mean he was in his mid-twenties. In Biblical times the boys could get married as young as fourteen and girls as young as twelve with parental consent. Can you imagine allowing your kids to get married that young? It's pretty weird to us, but it was perfectly normal back then.

The fact is, God calls ordinary people, and sometimes people we would write off as unusable or not-yet-ready, or too young. I have heard too many people say things like "Teenagers these days are terrible. Their lives are going nowhere. They don't know how to work." If you have said things like that you need to repent. That is terrible and so far from the truth.

**[9]**

You take a look at the young people in this church who are involved in ministry as an example.

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They are amazing! I am so proud of them and of our staff, Pastor Steve and Leora and Adrian who are calling out many youth and kids and apprenticing them for ministry.

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God is using them to change hearts and lives. They are involved in Christ Kids, Power House, our River Kids sidewalk ministries. We have two sites we do this in Campbell River now and six more sites are asking for us to take the program to them.

**[12]**

That's pretty amazing. I am so proud of them and so excited about what God is doing through these apprentices of Jesus. They are being apprenticed to apprentice others. And they are doing it.

**[13]**

You should hear the excitement in our staff meetings when we talk about these things.

Don't ever say that this new generation is lazy and directionless. They are far from it. God is using them to turn their world upside down. I would encourage you to go and talk to them and ask them what they are doing in River Kids. They are actively and courageously introducing people to Jesus. It's inspiring and, quite frankly, it should cause us to ask if we are allowing Jesus to use us.

[14]

The other thing I want you to notice is that **2.) apprentices follow** their master.

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***17Jesus called out to them, “Come, follow me, and I will show you how to fish for people!” 18And they left their nets at once and followed him. 19A little farther up the shore Jesus saw Zebedee’s sons, James and John, in a boat repairing their nets. 20He called them at once, and they also followed him, leaving their father, Zebedee, in the boat with the hired men.***

They had an encounter with Jesus. He called out to them and they followed — “**at once,**” the Bible says. Now, what does it mean to follow Jesus? Does it mean you have to leave your livelihood and family like it sort of looks like what happened in this passage? Well, we know that they didn't actually completely leave their livelihoods behind because we see other instances of the disciples fishing later on in the Gospels.

But, when Jesus called them, they followed immediately. Simon and his brother, Andrew, dropped their nets and followed. James and his brother John dropped their nets and followed, leaving their father and the hired men in the boat. It sounds impulsive, doesn't it? It sounds like the impulsivity of youth, doesn't it?

Jesus did say,

[16]

**Matthew 18:3 (NLT)**

***3“I tell you the truth, unless you turn from your sins and become like little children, you will never get into the Kingdom of Heaven.***

Sometimes we are too sophisticated and cultured to take a risk for Jesus. We have been acclimatized by our evangelical Baptist church culture to be so orderly and put together that we are afraid to step out of our comfort zones when Jesus calls. We don't want to look stupid, so we live like church happens inside the walls of this building. This, what we are doing right now, in this room that we sometimes, wrongly, call the “sanctuary” is a very small part of what Jesus has called us to. Our job is to break down these walls and get out there and love the people around us so they would see Jesus in us and want to come along on the journey towards the heart of God. When Jesus said, “**Follow me,**” he literally meant, “**Follow me.**”

[17]

[call River Kids team up]

Let's take a look at the next passage. It's actually a continuation of where we left off last week with John the Baptist.

[18]

John 1:35–45 (NLT)

*<sup>35</sup> The following day John was again standing with two of his disciples. <sup>36</sup> As Jesus walked by, John looked at him and declared, “Look! There is the Lamb of God!” <sup>37</sup>When John’s two disciples heard this, they followed Jesus. <sup>38</sup> Jesus looked around and saw them following. “What do you want?” he asked them. They replied, “Rabbi” (which means “Teacher”), “where are you staying?”*

[19]

*<sup>39</sup> “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. <sup>40</sup> Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, was one of these men who heard what John said and then followed Jesus. <sup>41</sup>Andrew went to find his brother, Simon, and told him, “We have found the Messiah” (which means “Christ”).*

[20]

*<sup>42</sup>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”). <sup>43</sup> The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, “Come, follow me.”*

[21]

*<sup>44</sup> Philip was from Bethsaida, Andrew and Peter’s hometown. <sup>45</sup>Philip went to look for Nathanael and told him, “We have found the very person Moses and the prophets wrote about! His name is Jesus, the son of Joseph from Nazareth.”*

[22]

I want to bring out a few things from this passage. Firstly, put yourself in John’s shoes. He spent years with his apprentices, teaching them, training them, mentoring them, correcting them and loving them. He was teaching them to be like him and participate in his ministry. He had invested everything in them. Andrew, Peter’s brother, was one of his apprentices. And likely, Peter was in the inner circle of John’s group. There was another apprentice with Andrew when they saw Jesus. We don’t know who he was, but some speculate that it was Philip.

How would you have felt if you were John? You point out Jesus to a couple of your disciples and they leave you and follow him. It would admittedly be hard for me. I’ve had that happen before. It happens in the ministries internally in the church too. Sometimes Leora, Steve, Adrian, June or Bob will work with someone and mentor them and they go on to work with a different ministry within the church.

[23]

We actually see this quite often. But, **we work hard at having a 3.) theology of abundance as opposed to a theology of scarcity.** We have to constantly remind ourselves that this is not our church. It is the church of Jesus Christ. We are his body on earth doing his work as he directs. We follow Jesus, and sometimes, like John the Baptist, we are going to invest everything we have to train someone who then ends up working in a different ministry. And that’s okay because we are all a part of the body of Christ. We are not in competition, as we said last week.

[24]

Another thing I want to draw out of this passage is how **4.) each of these people who encountered Jesus brought others to him to meet him as well. Do you see that? First of all, John points them to Jesus.** Then Andrew went to get his brother Peter so he could meet Jesus. Then Philip met Jesus and he in turn went to find Nathaniel to introduce him to Jesus. **This chapter is all about people encountering Jesus and being so enthralled with him that they can't help but bring others to him.** That is what God has called us to. God has called us to walk with Jesus daily and be so changed by him that we cannot help but bring others to him as well.

When Ruthie's father, Vic, was in the hospital dying of cancer he was, understandably, quite discouraged. But while laying in his hospital bed with Ruthie's mother sitting beside him he read this chapter in John's Gospel to himself. All of sudden he sat up in his bed and turned to her and said, "Annette, I need to read this to you." He read the chapter and then asked, "What do you notice?" She had no idea what he was getting at so he said, "Don't you see? It's all about people introducing others to Jesus. I can still do that from my hospital bed. I can still do that."

God spoke to Vic, and his Word changed his heart. His Word lifted him from the pit of self-pity and gave him a purpose. That is our purpose. We have a job to do. We have been called by the God who created the heavens and the earth to spend time with Jesus, our Master, Lord and Saviour and allow him to get ahold of our hearts and change us so we are so enthralled with him that we cannot but help introduce others to him. Isn't that exciting? The answer is "Yes, Pastor Jeff. It is!"

One more thing from this passage for those of you who think that God couldn't possibly call you.

**[25]**

**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").**

There is no other person in Biblical history that encourages me more than Peter. Jesus looked intently at Peter and gave him a nickname. Don't miss this. He looked intently at him and gave him a new identity.

**[26]**

He said literally, **"you will be called."** There is one Greek word for this English phrase; *kaleo*. **"You will be called Cephas."** *Cephas* is an Aramaic word that means rock. The Greek word is *Petros*.

What was Peter like in reality? Was he a pillar of strength? Was he someone you would describe as stable and consistent and someone who could be counted on? Far from it. He was a loud mouth, continually putting his foot in in it. He would no sooner remove one foot than the other one would be inserted. He spoke out of turn. He made big promises that he couldn't keep. He was boorish. He was socially awkward. He was far from a rock.

What do you think Peter's perception of himself was? I am sure he carried a lot of shame because of his insecurities. He probably saw himself as worthless, which may be why he seemed to have a need to be noticed.

Jesus looked intently at him and gave him a new name; a new identity. "No, Simon, you are not worthless. You do not have to be defined by your past. I am going to give you a new identity. Your name is now, Rocky."

**[27]**

That is what Jesus does with each of us if we will let him. **5.) He gives us a new identity.** When he looks at you, what do you think he sees? In the Interactive prayer night that Leora planned on the Thursday before Easter, one of the prayer stations that was very meaningful for many people was two mirrors. On one of the mirrors it said, "How you see yourself." On the other one it said, "How God sees you." You were to stand and look at yourself and exchange your old false identity with the identity Jesus has for you.

He looks intently at you, past what you currently believe about yourself, past how you currently behave, to what you will be if you allow him to apprentice you in your encounters with him.

What do you think Jesus would call you? What name would he give you? What false narrative are you living by that he wants to change? He wants to give you a new name, but you need to spend time with him and allow him to make those changes. And when you do, you will become so enthralled with him that you will not be able to stop introducing others to Jesus. That is when life gets exciting.



***Encounters with Jesus  
Jesus Calls Apprentices  
Week of April 10<sup>th</sup>, 2016***

**Objective of this study:** To move from complacently hearing Jesus to active following him.

[Remember, the main goal of each Growth Group is to allow God's Word to change your heart so that others would see Jesus in you and be likewise changed to be like him. He wants to change the world through us]

**Worship (5 – 10 minutes)**

1. Sing a song or two of praise and thanksgiving to God.
2. Spend five minutes in silence asking God to prepare your heart for how he wants to speak to you.
3. After the five minutes have someone interrupt the silence and read **Psalm 18:1-3** meditatively to the group. Pause after each phrase letting God speak to you.

**Welcome**

Who did you follow as a teenager?

**Word (30 - 45 minutes)**

1. What stood out from the sermon?
2. Break up into smaller groups. Each group take one of the passages below and look for the following principles of apprenticing with Jesus: Jn 1:35-45; Mt. 4:18-22; Mk 1:16-20; Lk 5:1-11
  1. **Jesus calls ordinary people**
  2. **Apprentices of Jesus follow him**
  3. **Apprentices of Jesus have a theology of abundance as opposed to a theology of scarcity. (What does this mean?)**
  4. **People who have encounters with Jesus cannot help but bring others to meet him**
  5. **Jesus gives apprentices a new identity**

**Work (30- 45 minutes)**

1. Which of the above aspects of apprenticing with Jesus call out to you and why?
2. Which give you the most hope?
3. How do they meet our deepest needs?
4. What blockages are there in your life that keep you from experiencing Jesus this way?

5. Spend the rest of the time praying for each other that Jesus would give you the grace and courage to follow him.