

Witnessing **Matthew 4:19**

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“And He saith unto them, Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men” (Matthew 4:19).

The first thing that Jesus did when He entered into His public ministry in Galilee was to preach and call people to repent. His second act was to band together a few men who would do likewise. We are told: “He ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach” (Mark 3:14).

Galilee was a remote part of the nation and those who lived there were less cultured and refined than those who served in Herod's court or among the Pharisees of Jerusalem. They had sort of a broad, country accent and were easily identified in Jerusalem. Their speech betrayed them.

Jesus was walking near the sea one day and saw two fishermen casting their nets into the sea. In that setting to those two unlikely men, rough hewn, un-educated working men he threw out a challenge that still rings through the corridors of time. “Follow me and I will make you fishers of men.”

Try to imagine their reaction. Were they startled? Surprised? Frightened? Overjoyed? What if the Lord Jesus were to come to you today with the same challenge. What would your reaction be? Would you begin to make excuse? Why me, Lord! I am not well educated. I am not cultured and refined. I am a plain person, I work for a living, I'm a laborer or a businessman.

Would any of those excuses mean a thing? No, of course not. Because that's exactly who Jesus was talking to: men who were employed in business, accustomed to the hazards and hardships of their trade. So let us set aside the smoke screen of excuses and take a good, long, hard look at what the call of Christ is all about. In these words is a command and a request. The command is to follow Christ now. What does that entail? What is involved?

First of all, let's be clear about one thing. He did not say “listen to me,” but “follow me.” Far more is involved than just hearing and knowing what He wants. It means having his love, concern and compassion flowing through our lives. It means taking the same view toward sin and worldliness that He took.

In other words, it means to be like Him, to have the mind of Christ. How can we do that? How can we be conformed more and more into His image? There are two key words that give the answer: fellowship and obedience. By these means we are transformed more and more into His image, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.

What is the result of all this? The answer is thrilling. He will make us fishers of men. He will do it. Christ Himself will undertake the training to make our lives channels of His love and redemption to a lost world.

Do you want that? Of course you do! Be assured of this fact. Whatever your occupation is, Jesus wants us to follow Him and be involved with Him in reaching others with the Gospel.

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