

“Come Follow Me”

[Part 1]

Matthew 4:19 [NIV] *“Come, follow me,” Jesus said, “and I will make you fishers of men.”*

Notice the result of first following Jesus Christ would be our becoming *“fishers of men.”*

The “fishers of men” was directly connected to Peter and Andrew who were fishermen.

What Jesus is telling us is, if you follow me I will use your natural talents to cause others to follow me, become my disciples.

Matthew 28:18-20 [NIV] *“Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. **Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”***

This disciple making was the end goal that Jesus had, but that was over three years ahead. Over three years after Peter and Andrew had been called to follow Jesus.

Many today who have become Christians, have not become disciples of Jesus Christ.

Many have begun to become disciples but few have progressed to maturity.

Luke 9:57-62 [NIV] *“As they were walking along the road, a man said to him, “I will follow you wherever you go.” Jesus replied, “Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.” He said to another man, “Follow me.” **But the man replied, “Lord, first let me go and bury my father.”** Jesus said to him, “Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and proclaim the kingdom of God.” Still another said, **“I will follow you, Lord; but first let me go back and say good-bye to my family.”** Jesus replied, “No-one who puts his hand to the plough and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God.”*

Many have put their hands to the plough, but many have also looked back at their former life.

Matthew 11:28 [NIV] *“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.”*

Many have answered Christ’s call “come unto me” because of the trials they are facing in life.

Luke 14:25-27 [NIV] *“Large crowds were travelling with Jesus, and turning to them he said: “If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters, yes, even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. And anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple.”*

Very few have accepted these conditions that make them disciples of Jesus Christ.

Many follow Jesus as part of a crowd but few become devoted disciples.

Jesus’ call to “follow me” requires more than a physical following, it requires a complete change of life.

What is demanded by Jesus Christ is a total commitment of our lives to Him.

This decision, this total commitment, is the starting point on the road to becoming a disciple of Jesus Christ.

We have to acknowledge and accept the total Lordship of Jesus Christ over our lives.

There is no middle ground, seeking to become a disciple of Jesus Christ is **not** something we can do as a part-time job.

Matthew 4:17 [NIV] *“From that time on Jesus began to preach, **“Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near.”**”*

“Repent” – means a change of direction.

In the context of becoming a disciple of Jesus Christ it means turning away from a self-centred and self-controlled way of life towards a Jesus Christ centred and Jesus Christ controlled way of life.

Matthew 4:18-22 [NIV] *“As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. **“Come, follow me,” Jesus said, “and I will make you fishers of men.”** At once they left their nets and followed him. Going on from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John. They were in a boat with their father Zebedee, preparing their nets. Jesus called them, and immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.”*

What a life-changing journey these men entered upon when they answered Jesus’ call to “*follow me.*”

It is even more wonderful to know that Jesus is still calling people today as He did Peter, Andrew, James and John.

Jesus is calling you and I.

Jesus calls us by name, not as part of a crowd.

Acts 4:10-12 [NIV] *“then know this, you and all the people of Israel: It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed. **“the stone you builders rejected, which has become the capstone.’ Salvation is found in no-one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.”**”*

Jesus calls us to come to Him for salvation, from the deserved death penalty our sins have earned us.

The call to follow Jesus Christ has four interlocking parts.

The first call that Jesus makes to the lost sheep, the unbeliever.

Luke 15:3-7 [NIV] *“Then Jesus told them this parable: **“Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Does he not leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it? And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbours together and says, ‘Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.’ I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.”**”*

Until we experience a meeting with Jesus Christ we have lost our way in life, not knowing we need saving from the death penalty and not knowing the very reason we have life.

John 15:16-17 [NIV] *“You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. This is my command: Love each other.”*

This call of Jesus is a very personal call with the end goal of producing “lasting” or eternal fruits, becoming a vehicle that Jesus can use to bring others to know Him, worship Him and eventually love Him.

If you are **not** sure that you have had this call to follow Jesus Christ and answered it, what do you need to do in order to say “yes” to this call?

John 1:12 [NIV] *“Yet to all who received him, to **those who believed in his name**, he gave the right to become children of God”*

Believe in the name of Jesus Christ.

What does this mean?

“Jesus” is the transliteration of the Hebrew “Joshua” meaning Jehovah is salvation, is the Saviour.

We believe that Jesus is the One who can save us from eternal death.

“Christ” – the One who is anointed to be a High Priest.

We believe that the resurrected Jesus Christ has been anointed to be our High Priest and is now seated at the right hand of God the Father on His throne.

Mark 16:19 [NIV] *“After the Lord **Jesus** had spoken to them, he was taken up into heaven and **he sat at the right hand of God.**”*

Hebrews 1:3 [NIV] *“**The Son** is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, **he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.**”*

Hebrews 4:14-16 [NIV] *“**Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathise with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are, yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.**”*

Jesus the Son of Man is our High Priest at God’s throne.

We believe that Jesus does understand what it is like to be a human being, so is our perfect High Priest at God’s throne in heaven.

That is what believing in the name of Jesus means.

Romans 10:8-10 [NIV] *“**But what does it say? “The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart,”** that is, the word of faith we are proclaiming: That if you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.”*

Do we now believe that the Christian Bible is God’s Word that all of it was written by men who were directly inspired by the Holy Spirit?

2 Peter 1:20-21 [NIV] *“**Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet’s own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.**”*

If we now believe the two things listed above with our whole heart and mind then God is calling us to follow Jesus Christ.

The Holy Spirit is guiding us, and as we read the scriptures He will give us fuller understanding of God’s Will for us.

John 16:13 [NIV] *“But when he, **the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come.**”*

What is the next part of our calling to “follow” Jesus Christ?

Jesus also calls us to follow Him and become His disciple.

Matthew 11:28-30 [NIV] *“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and **learn from me**, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”*

Jesus will help us to move towards the goal for which He has saved us, to become His disciple.

This yoke that Jesus was using to describe the way He was going to help us on our journey through life.

A yoke was a wooden beam that joined two oxen together to work as a team.

One animal was well trained and mature, the other younger animal was being guided and trained to do a job of work.

John 6:44 [NIV] *“No-one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him, and I will raise him up at the last day.”*

Discipleship does **not** start with our desire or decision to follow Jesus Christ, it **starts with God’s call, to follow Jesus Christ.**

John 1:12-13 [NIV] *“Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, **he gave the right to become children of God**, children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will, but born of God.”*

Only Christ’s call and the working of the Holy Spirit in our life can give us the power to be “born again” as a child of God.

John 3:5-7 [NIV] *“Jesus answered, “I tell you the truth, no-one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the **Spirit gives birth to spirit**. You should not be surprised at my saying, ‘You must be born again.’”*

For us to be “born again” the Holy Spirit must be allowed to enter in our life as the director of our life.

Romans 6:3-4 [NIV] *“Or don’t you know that all of us who were baptised into Christ Jesus were baptised into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, **we too may live a new life.**”*

Our old life has to die, the life when we made our own decisions, now we are to be led by the Holy Spirit.

Romans 8:11-17 [NIV] *“And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you. Therefore, brothers, we have an obligation, but it is not to the sinful nature, to live according to it. For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but **if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live, because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God**. For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, “Abba, Father.” The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs, heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.”*

This entry into our lives by the Holy Spirit is the beginning of our maturing as a disciple of Jesus Christ.

This discipleship of Jesus Christ is a fulltime job not a “once a week event” when we attend a church service.

Luke 14:26-27 [NIV] *“If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters, yes, even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. And anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple.”*

The word “hate” is the Greek word “*misēō*”, meaning to love less.

Jesus Christ is to come first in our affections before our family and friends.

Luke 14:33 [NIV] *“In the same way, any of you who does not give up everything he has cannot be my disciple.”*

The serving and obeying of Jesus Christ has to be first in our lives.

With such a total commitment it is wise if we first sit down and meditate on what such a commitment to become a disciple of Jesus Christ is going to cost us.

Luke 14:28-30 [NIV] *“Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. **Will he not first sit down and estimate the cost to see if he has enough money to complete it?** For if he lays the foundation and is not able to finish it, everyone who sees it will ridicule him, saying, ‘This fellow began to build and was not able to finish.’”*

Once we start out to become a disciple of Jesus Christ there is no turning back.

2 Peter 2:20-22 [NIV] *“If they have escaped the corruption of the world by knowing our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ and are again entangled in it and overcome, **they are worse off at the end than they were at the beginning.** It would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than to have known it and then to turn their backs on the sacred command that was passed on to them. Of them the proverbs are true: “A dog returns to its vomit,” and, “A sow that is washed goes back to her wallowing in the mud.”*

A stark warning for us as we start on the pathway to becoming a disciple of Jesus Christ.

In the next article we will consider the other two aspects of our being called to follow Jesus Christ.