

3. Four Calls and a Commission

As we study the ministry of Christ, we see that He gave His disciples four calls and a commission. These were:

Call One: Come and See – John 1:39-46; Matthew 9:9-10; Mark 1:30-33

Call Two: Come and Grow – Mark 1:16-20

Call Three: Come and Serve – Mark 3:13-15

Call Four: Come and Shepherd – John 21:15-17

The Commission – As you are going, Make Disciples – Matthew 28:19-20

Each of these four calls invited the disciples to a higher level of commitment. These calls also give us a pattern for the development of godly leaders. Today, we will look at the first call. The next three topics will look at the other calls.

Two men were disciples of John the Baptist. One day, John pointed at Christ and said, “Behold the Lamb of God!” Those two men immediately began to follow Christ. In John 1:37-38, we read, “The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. Then Jesus turned, and seeing them following, said to them, ‘What do you seek?’ They said to Him, ‘Rabbi’ (which is to say, when translated, Teacher), ‘where are You staying?’”

Christ responded by giving the first call, in John 1:39, “He said to them, ‘Come and see.’ They came and saw where He was staying, and remained with Him that day (now it was about the tenth hour).” Those two men were Andrew and John. Andrew immediately found his brother Peter and brought him to Christ. As a result of this encounter, Andrew, Peter, James, and John began to spend time with Christ.

This group increased in size the next day, when Christ said to Philip, in John 1:43, “Follow Me.” Philip immediately found his friend, Nathanael, and told him about Christ. Nathanael was more skeptical than Philip and answered, in John 1:46, “And Nathanael said to him, ‘Can anything good come out of Nazareth?’ Philip said to him, ‘Come and see.’” By His invitation to these men to “Come and See”, Christ invited them to just begin spending time with Him.

Christ later gave a similar invitation to a tax collector in Matthew 9:9-10, where we read, “As Jesus passed on from there, He saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax office. And He said to him, ‘Follow Me.’ So he arose and followed Him. Now it happened, as Jesus sat at the table in the house, *that* behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and sat down with Him and His disciples.” Matthew chose to spend time with Christ to get acquainted with Him. Matthew also wanted to make sure his friends got acquainted with Christ, so, he invited both his friends and Christ to dinner at his house. As a result, all of his friends, who were tax collectors and sinners, also got acquainted with Christ.

At this point, Christ did not expect anything of these men. He just invited them to come and spend time with Him. It was not until approximately a year later that Christ gave His second call to those men, given in Mark 1:17-18, “Then Jesus said to them, ‘Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men.’ They immediately left their nets and followed Him.” We will look at that call in

our next topic. However, today, we want to focus on what Christ did in the year between first meeting these men, and the time when He told them He would make them fishers of men.

Christ teaches us a very important principle by His invitation to these men to spend time with Him. Christ knew that those men had to get to know and trust Him before they would ever be ready to serve Him. As a result, Christ just invited these men to spend time with Him in a variety of different situations, so they could see His life and character. The first thing Christ did with these men was invite them to go along with Him to a wedding in Cana. After several days at the wedding, they ran out of wine. As you know, Christ met the need by changing water into wine without telling any of the wedding party. He showed His disciples that He was willing to meet needs.

However, the most important part of that miracle is recorded in John 2:11, where we read, “This beginning of signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory; and His disciples believed in Him.” Christ did meet the need at the wedding, but His purpose was to lead His disciples to believe in Him. These men had to reach the point where they recognized that Christ was who He claimed to be, before they would be ready to serve Him.

Later, Christ went with these same men to the Passover in Jerusalem. After Christ cleansed the temple, we see the impact it had on these disciples, in John 2:17, “Then His disciples remembered that it was written, ‘Zeal for Your house has eaten Me up.’” The disciples also heard Christ say something that they did not understand until after the resurrection. John 2:22 says, “Therefore, when He had risen from the dead, His disciples remembered that He had said this to them; and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had said.”

A few weeks later, the disciples returned with Christ to the city of Jerusalem. On the way back to Galilee, Christ chose to travel through Samaria, because He had another lesson He wanted to teach these men. He wanted to expand their vision and help them begin to become concerned about people of another culture, religion and ethnic group. We all know what happened as Christ talked to the Samaritan woman at the well. It changed a whole town of people, as seen in John 4:1-42. However, the disciples had to be shown a very important lesson about spiritual leadership. The disciples needed their vision expanded, and so Christ said, in John 4:35, “‘Do you not say, “There are still four months and *then* comes the harvest”?’ Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest!” To become effective spiritual leaders, we also need our vision expanded to see people of other cultures, religions and ethnic groups.

Over most of the next year, Christ preached throughout the region of Galilee. Luke 4:14-15 says, “Then Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee, and news of Him went out through all the surrounding region. And He taught in their synagogues, being glorified by all.” Sometimes, His disciples were with Him, and other times they were not with Him. Luke 4:16-30 tells what happened when He taught in the synagogue in His hometown of Nazareth.

Then, Luke 4:31-37 tells what happened when He taught in the synagogue at Capernaum. Later that day, Christ went to the home of Peter, and the whole town gathered at the house of Peter.

Luke 4:42-44 tells us what happened in the following days, “Now when it was day, He departed and went into a deserted place. And the crowd sought Him and came to Him, and tried to keep Him from leaving them; but He said to them, ‘I must preach the kingdom of God to the other cities also, because for this purpose I have been sent.’ And He was preaching in the synagogues of Galilee.”

During this entire year, as the disciples had time, they were able to travel with Christ and observe Him. They had to get to know Christ and learn to follow Him before they could ever become effective leaders. During this time, they were able to observe the character of Christ, because the first thing they needed to develop was godly character. (We see throughout the Gospels that they had much to learn in the area of godly character, just as we also have much we need to learn in this area). People only learn to develop godly character as they see it modeled in the lives of other Christians. Unless new Christians have the opportunity to spend time with other Christians where they live, work and spend their free time, they will not be shown how to develop godly character. This is probably the greatest weakness in Christianity today.

When people show an interest in learning more about Christ, we need to give them the opportunity to spend time with us where we live, work and spend our free time, not just in church services. In this way, they can see the godly character in our lives. As they become Christians, and grow, they will have an example to follow. Paul expressed this thought so well when he said to the Christians in Corinth, in 1 Corinthians 11:1, “‘Imitate me, just as I also *imitate* Christ.’” New Christians will usually only develop godly character as they spend time with godly Christians and imitate them. That was also how the new believers in Thessalonica grew. 1 Thessalonians 1:6-7 says, “And you became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit, so that you became examples to all in Macedonia and Achaia who believe.” The Christians in Thessalonica first followed Paul, Silas and Timothy as examples, and later, they became an example to others.

The Lord will use your life, as you become a godly example to others. May the Lord richly bless you as invite others to spend time with you where you live, work and spend your free time, so they can be given a godly example to follow.