

## *"Fishers of Men" Series*

### Walk with Me - The Foundation of Evangelism

## "Come Ye After Me"

### Mark 1:17

Last week we began this series on becoming fishers of men with an introductory message on what it meant to be a fisher. We found that fishing **was a way of life** for these men, something they did daily. We noticed it would have been **hard work** - early morning, long nights, heavy nets, sore backs, and chapped hands. We also saw that fishing **required patience, skill, and adaptability**. One of the more important aspects of being a fisherman at the time, as an occupation, is that it **was a team effort**. We finished with the thought that fishing meant **letting go of what was caught** - they didn't keep the fish all to themselves. We are to disciple the new converts so that they will go out themselves and become fishers of men.

Before we step into the moment where Jesus says, "Come ye after me" (or "follow me" in Matthew 4), it helps to understand the setting. According to the Gospels, this call comes shortly after Jesus' baptism and His forty days of temptation in the wilderness (Matt. 4:1-11; Mark 1:12-13; Luke 4:1-13). After overcoming Satan's tests, Jesus doesn't immediately begin calling disciples.

Instead, there's a short gap where John the Baptist continues his ministry (John 1:29-34), and some early followers like Andrew and possibly John begin shadowing Jesus. Only **after John is imprisoned** (Matt. 4:12; Mark 1:14) does Jesus begin preaching publicly and call His first disciples.

While the text moves quickly, this call was not rushed. At

minimum, **several weeks or months pass** between the temptation and this invitation. When Jesus told Peter in the fishing boat to “follow Me,” and Peter immediately left his nets and obeyed, Peter **was not following a total stranger**. He had met Jesus previously and had spent time with Him. The same is true for Andrew, James, and John.

Jesus didn’t say at the very beginning when He called the disciples to **“Follow me and go do evangelism”** (He said that three years later). He said, “Follow me (come ye after Me) and I will make you to become...” There’s a transformation here – a process – a journey, you might say.

## I. THE CALL IS PERSONAL – “COME YE AFTER ME”

- A. The words “come ye after me” (Δεῦτε ὀπίσω μου) are translated in Matthew 4:19 as “follow me.” The words are the same, but we find added information in Mark’s Gospel to give a more visualized effect to the call.

These words literally translate as “come behind me” and it captures the command to come and the direction to follow behind. Jesus is calling His first followers to **step out, get behind Him, and be shaped into something new**.

- B. Jesus starts with a personal invitation – not to a religion; not to a program; not to a church – but to Himself.

The first step in evangelism isn’t a **method** or a **message** – it’s **the Master**.

If your evangelism feels dry or burdensome, maybe the issue isn’t your technique – it’s your connection. Perhaps you need to walk closer to the Lord first.

- C. There are at least four other times that Jesus used the command to follow Him found in the Gospels

## as it relates to evangelism.

1. Matthew is called and it leads to an outreach dinner with sinners.

Luke 5:27-32

<sup>27</sup> And after these things he went forth, and saw a publican, named Levi, sitting at the receipt of custom: and he said unto him, **Follow me.** <sup>28</sup> And he left all, rose up, and followed him. <sup>29</sup> And Levi made him a great feast in his own house: and there was a great company of publicans and of others that sat down with them. <sup>30</sup> But their scribes and Pharisees murmured against his disciples, saying, Why do ye eat and drink with publicans and sinners? <sup>31</sup> And Jesus answering said unto them, **They that are whole need not a physician; but they that are sick.** <sup>32</sup> **I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.**

2. Philip is called and he went out and found Nathaniel and brought him to Jesus.

John 1:43

<sup>43</sup> The day following Jesus would go forth into Galilee, and findeth Philip, and saith unto him, **Follow me.**

John 1:45

<sup>45</sup> Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.

3. After reinstating Peter, Jesus tells him again, "Follow me."

John 21:19

<sup>19</sup> This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, **Follow me.**

John 21:22

<sup>22</sup> Jesus saith unto him, *If I will that he tarry till I come, what is **that** to thee? follow thou me.*

4. Jesus gives the foundation for any work done for Him, including evangelism, when He stated:  
**"If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me." (Luke 9:23)**

## II. THE CHANGE IS PROGRESSIVE – "I WILL MAKE YOU TO BECOME"

### A. "I will make you" – ποιήσω

1. This verb means *to make, to do, to form, or to produce*. In this context, it doesn't just mean 'appoint' or 'assign'—it carries the weight of **creative action**.
2. It's a very common verb, appearing nearly 600 times in the New Testament, often emphasizing God's sovereign activity. It is a word of divine initiative and **intentional transformation**, not **passive formation**.

Revelation 21:5

<sup>5</sup> And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I **make** all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful.

3. The Hebrew equivalent is found in Genesis 1:26: "Let us **make** man in our image..."

Jesus is saying here, in essence, *"I will personally craft and shape you into what you are not yet."*

### B. "To become"

1. The Greek word used here for "to become" (γενέσθαι) is in a form to show that the change wasn't an instant one. **It's a process of transformation.**

Jesus didn't say, "I will turn you into evangelists overnight." He said, "I will shape you into something new over time."

2. **Biblical examples with the Apostles themselves:** Peter had boldness but lacked consistency; James and John had zeal but also pride; Thomas doubted. Yet Jesus didn't give up on them - He kept forming them.

You don't have to be great at evangelism to start following Jesus. But you do have to follow Jesus if you want to grow in it.

3. Other supporting scriptural examples:

- a) **2 Corinthians 3:18:** *"But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory..."*

✓ **Key Phrase:** *"are changed... from glory to glory"*

→ Emphasizes a **gradual transformation** into Christ's likeness.

- b) **Philippians 1:6:** *"Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ."*

✓ God initiates the work - but **He keeps performing it** until it's complete.

→ Evangelistic growth is part of that continued shaping.

- c) **Ephesians 2:10:** *"For we are his **workmanship**,*

*created in Christ Jesus unto good works..."*

✓ Greek: workmanship - ποιήμα (poiēma) – same root as ποιήσω ("to become")

→ We are God's "workmanship" (**craftsmanship**), still being worked on and prepared for ministry.

d) **Romans 12:2:** *"Be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind..."*

✓ Transformation is **ongoing** and requires continual surrender.

e) **Luke 6:40:** *"The disciple is not above his master: but every one that is perfect shall be as his master."*

✓ The Greek word *katartizō* (translated "perfect") refers to **being fully trained, completed, or made ready.**

→ Discipleship is a **developmental process**, ending in Christ-likeness.

"Jesus doesn't use us because we're ready - He makes us ready as we follow."

### III. THE COMMISSION IS PURPOSEFUL - "FISHERS OF MEN"

A. The purpose of the commission we've been given is to be fishers of men - it's not a poetic metaphor - it's our mission as a follower of Christ.

This isn't optional - it's **central to the call of discipleship.**

B. The word for "fishers" (ἀλιεύς) refers to working fishermen - those who cast nets, haul in the catch, clean and prepare their fish, and return again the next day.

It's a vivid image of ongoing, active participation in the work needed to build the kingdom of God.

When Jesus says, "fishers of men," He is essentially saying: *"As you once labored to draw fish from the sea, now I will send you to draw souls from the deep waters of sin, despair, and judgment into the life of God."*

### C. Biblical examples:

1. **Luke 5:10** - After the miraculous catch, Jesus says to Peter: "From henceforth thou shalt catch men."
2. **Matthew 28:19-20** - "Go ye therefore and teach all nations..." The Great Commission is the fulfillment of the call to fish for men.
3. **Acts 1:8** - "You shall be witnesses unto me..." The Holy Spirit empowers us not just to grow, but to go.
4. **2 Corinthians 5:20** - "We are ambassadors for Christ..." Sent with a message of reconciliation.

### D. Evangelism isn't for the few - it's the fruit of following Jesus.

As we walk with Him, we begin to see others through His eyes, and He makes us vessels of hope.

**Big Idea:** When Jesus told Peter, James, and John they would become "fishers of men," He wasn't offering them a spiritual hobby. He was inviting them into a **life of hard, patient, messy, and deeply rewarding spiritual work.**

"Jesus didn't say, 'Follow me, and I'll make you into comfortable Christians.' He said, 'I will make you into something like you already know—fishermen—but

instead of fish, you'll be pulling people from the waters of judgment and death into the life of God's Kingdom."

## Conclusion:

When Jesus says, "Follow me, and I will make you to become fishers of men," He's making a promise:

- A promise of **presence**: You get to walk with Him.
- A promise of **process**: He will shape you.
- A promise of **purpose**: You'll become part of His rescue mission.

So don't disqualify yourself because you're not there yet. Just follow.

**Final Challenge:** This week don't try to be a perfect soul-winner. Just spend time with the Lord. Let Him shape you. Ask Him this simple prayer:

*"Lord, who are You shaping me to become? And who are You preparing me to reach?"*

The young salesman was disappointed about losing a big sale, and as he talked with his sales manager he lamented, "I guess it just proves you can lead a horse to water but you can't make him drink." The manager replied, "Son, take my advice: your job is not to make him drink. Your job is to make him thirsty." So it is with evangelism. Our lives should be so filled with Christ that they create a thirst for the Gospel.