

The calling of the disciples

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Date: 01 January 2000

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[0 : 0 0] in verse 16 now as Jesus walked by the sea of Galilee he saw Simon and Andrew his brother casting a net into the sea for they were fishers and Jesus said unto them come after me and I will make you to become fishers of men and straightway they pursued their nets and followed him Jesus said unto them come ye after me or follow me now this morning I'd like us to look just for a short time at this short incident that we read of in Mark's gospel and chapter one this calling of the disciples this incident where Jesus came alongside them at their workplace and said follow me but before we do that we need to realize the context of that calling of Jesus coming up to them and saying follow me and of course the context is in verse 15 and that is in verse 14 and 15 that Jesus was preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God he was saying the time is fulfilled it's at hand repent ye and believe the gospel and so this invite of Jesus to these disciples was in the context of the gospel being preached Jesus was preaching the gospel he was speaking of this good news of the kingdom he was speaking about himself he was speaking about repentance and then he called the disciples this invitation to them was in the light of his preaching and that's important for us to remember by way of introduction this morning that the invite of Jesus to follow him the invite to be one of his disciples is always in the context of the gospel the good news of the kingdom I went out into the streets and said follow Jesus people would ask well what do you mean follow Jesus who's this Jesus but when we have the gospel being preached this is the Jesus who died for our sins this is the Jesus who is the son of God who's come to save us and it's in the light of that gospel that we can go and say to people this is who Jesus is and he bids us to follow him and so this morning I'd like us to look at this invite at this call of Jesus and that's the point of the first thing we can note the call of Jesus and there's four things about this call that he gave the first is this it was clear and simple he went alongside the disciples and said follow me follow me it was clear and simple what Jesus said wasn't elaborate it wasn't spoken in a foreign language which couldn't be understood understood it wasn't complicated it wasn't complicated it wasn't difficult it was simple and he said to the disciples to the two fishermen follow me follow me the wonderful thing about this was that Peter and Andrew couldn't be mistaken they didn't misunderstand Jesus because he was so simple in what he said follow me that's a reminder in many ways of the first world war poster you know the one where you had I think it was Lord Kitchener who was pointing his finger and saying your country needs you that was simple and even a child could understand that poster and the sad thing is that many young people understood it

and there were those who were underage who yes did respond to that picture to that call to come to their country's age the thing is it was so simple that everyone understood it and that's the same with the gospel of Jesus with this call this invite it is so simple follow me maybe in your heart or mind maybe you're older here today maybe you've been in this church for many years and you've heard this call follow me but you haven't done it and it's not because you haven't heard it it's not because you've not understood it it's maybe just because you haven't done it the thing is there can be no excuses that when Jesus calls us that when Jesus calls us he does it in such a simple way as this follow me the wonderful thing about this is that a child can understand it an old person can understand it there's a sense whereby someone can come in from the street from their houses and they can understand that follow me it's simple the second thing we can see about this call of Jesus is this it's not only clear and simple but it's also a command that when Jesus went by the disciples he said to them follow me it was an imperative it was a command it was something to be obeyed and Jesus calls out to these men you follow me now the thing about this is that Peter and Andrew they listened and they followed it's either going to be a case that we follow or we don't or we don't or we don't there's no in between with this invite of Jesus it is either we are following or we are not and in this instance when Jesus gave that command to the disciples they obeyed they listened and they

followed there was no in between there was no thinking about it and it was a case of yes do I follow or no I want and these disciples they followed and again we can apply that to ourselves today we can ask the question have I followed have I obeyed this command of Jesus this command which is so simple have I obeyed it and if we haven't if we aren't following then there's no in between it's a case that we have to be in between there's a case that we are being disobedient to this call the third thing about this call of Jesus this this is comprehensive that means it it's across the board it's all embracing this call this invite it goes out to these disciples it goes out to the other fishermen it goes out to other people it's all embracing it goes out to everyone again that's a wonderful thing in the thing in the first four conversions I think of John's gospel there's Peter and Andrew there's James and John and then there's Matthew he's a tax collector if you were a Scottish nationalist and I mean an ardent nationalist someone like Matthew would be an anathema to you you wouldn't like him because he would be a quizzling he would be someone who is tithing with the enemy but the call went out to him and he received it there was Nicodemus he was a Pharisee self-righteous and many people can see through self-righteous people they see them as being pious I've been those who are better than when they know that underneath there's just the same sin and there was Nicodemus and he was a man who was afraid but yet he came to Jesus you see this invite goes out to everyone it goes out to all the common denominator is this that all these men were sinners that's their common denominator they were all sinners and this invite goes out to them of course the congregation here today the hodgepodge isn't it I'm from the north some of you are from Leith some of you might come from Morningside who knows some of you might come from England or elsewhere and we're a complete hodgepodge but the wonderful thing is that that doesn't count what counts is that this invite goes to every single one of us the reason being is that the common denominator is that we are all sinners you and me that means that we're not excluded because of our education it means we're not excluded from this invite because of our social status it's not we're not excluded because of the clothes we wear we're not excluded because we might have or we might be a one-parent family we're not excluded because we're someone who has sinned the wonderful thing about this call is that it's all embracing and it goes out to all in a clear and simple way it's a command that is there to be received and then the fourth thing in regards to this call it's this it's by verse in its method there are various paths by which souls receive the Lord Jesus there are various ways in which they are led to believe in Christ and to follow him and not everyone is called in the same way not everyone will have the same experience I can't expect my experience to be your experience I can't expect people to come into this church and expect them to have your experience they're all different and the way that the Lord works with people is so different the circumstances their experiences one thing is the same that yes they will hear the gospel and yes they will respond to it but it will be in their own way not my way not your way not our church's way but it will be in God's way for example Peter and Andrew they were at their boats they were fishermen again James and John were mending their nets and Jesus came by them take Nathaniel Nathaniel was someone who was brought by Philip to Jesus maybe he had a slight interest maybe he was a skeptic but he was invited to come along to listen to Jesus and there's Matthew he's at the tax office he's doing that work

[11 : 09] Nicodemus Nicodemus oh Nicodemus that wee man what does he do he climbs the tree I was reading something recently and this is digressing slightly it maybe sets the picture for you when you read about Nicodemus if the queen was to come down Leith Walk I know you've got a few trees they're not very big ones down the middle but you can imagine a youngster and you'll see this in your television screen you have a youngster there's masses and masses of people and they want to see the queen what do they do they climb a tree who climbs the trees very often it's the children and how conspicuous Nicodemus must have been when Jesus passed by no doubt many children have climbed the trees to see because of the crowd and there's Nicodemus up the tree with the children because he wants to see you see how daft it was but that was his way and that was the way that the lord met him and so he responded in his own way so then we have this call of Jesus in the context of the preaching of the gospel it goes out in a clear way it should go out in a clear way to everyone and it's this follow me the second thing we can see about this passage is this there's also the challenge of Jesus the challenge this challenge is twofold many hear the call of Jesus and this call of course is a change to a change in direction

Jesus is coming alongside these disciples and they're working and he's saying to them let me change the direction you're going in you follow me and there was a change in direction for them for

Matthew for others for those who hear the gospel and the invite of Jesus there is always to be a change in direction a change in lifestyle a change in thinking because we now follow him and not someone else now many hear this call of Jesus to follow him and they would like to but then they know the challenge of Jesus the challenge of this call and the sad thing is that many shrink before it they shrink back and they do not obey because the challenge is too great so what is that challenge it's twofold the first is this it is to be a continual walk that's what Jesus asked for a continual walk it is a commitment for life when Jesus was saying to Peter and Andrew follow me he was wanting them to follow him not just to go down to the shop not just to go down to his home but to follow him but to follow him for life because he was the Messiah because he was the one who was the savior because he was the one who was to be the king in this kingdom and he says then follow me and so this was to be a following that was to continue there was to be no turning back there was to be no going back there was to be no apostasy there was to be a continual walk with Jesus you know that can frighten some people it can frighten them because they wonder first of all can i keep it up will i be able to keep up this continual walk the wonderful thing is that when we respond to the gospel the lord Jesus ensures that we will continue but there are those who know of this continual walk and they shrink back because they don't want to follow they're like the parable of the sword it's good for a time so it would seem but then not for me and they turn back but for the person who responds there is to be the continual walk but secondly there's also to be the cost involved and again many people shrink back because of the cost and there is a cost when one follows Jesus and maybe you know that already maybe you've experienced that already but you know one of the greatest costs in following Jesus is the cost to ourselves the cost to sell in Luke's gospel in that short part that we read Jesus asked the disciples who do you say that i am and of course Peter said you're the christ and then Jesus went on to say these words if any man will follow me that's the word that we're thinking of here if any man will follow me he must deny himself he must take up his cross he must follow me and the cross which the christian is asked to bear is the cross which crucifies self first and foremost and that is to be the biggest cost it is that of myself when you go on a journey what do you do well very often you say farewell don't you i said farewell when i left gospel to come here what did i do then well i carried my baggage to the car and then i proceeded with my journey and when we follow Jesus then there's a sense in which we say farewell and we say farewell to self because he is now the lord of our lives and we follow him and we are to be obedient to him and so we say farewell to self then we pick up our baggage and what's our baggage well the daily baggage of the christian is our cross now what is that cross sometimes people will think the cross is something like suffering or it's like an illness that is not the cross that Jesus is speaking of here these are things which happen to everyone you can go down your street and they will all have their burden to bear but the cross that Jesus is speaking of is the suffering suffering that results from our following him that is the cross the suffering that is the result of our faithful following and walking with him then we proceed with our journey and we follow him obediently and faithfully each day of our lives salvation and then finally there is the response to Jesus there is the call of Jesus it's clear it's simple it's a command it goes out to all there's the cost involved and no doubt that we know of that cost ourselves as we faithfully follow him and then there is the response to Jesus when you hear the call of Jesus the challenge of Jesus there's only one of two responses there can be it is either yes I will follow or no I will not but the disciples they followed with the rich young ruler he turned away and there were many people in Jesus ministry on hearing this call and this invitation to follow him turned away they didn't follow him they didn't listen to him but they went their own way but the wonderful thing is this but in the passage that we read the likes of Peter and Andrew Philip there's Nathaniel James and John and others they responded immediately they made haste they waited for nothing they didn't wait for a convenient season when they heard this call they responded because they knew in whom they were believing and as we think of our response to Jesus we can maybe ask ourselves the question has it been as spontaneous as Peter and Andrew and the others have we said yes Lord Jesus I want to follow you or are we just waiting for a convenient season we'll put it off just now I'll wait another year I'll wait until I've had a good time I'll wait until I'm on my deathbed and then I'll do it that's that because that opportunity might not come but the wonderful thing is that today the offer is there again the invite goes out today again and the invite of Jesus is this that in the light of the good news of his death and resurrection in the light of this invite you can respond to him and you can follow him and you can ask him to be Lord of your life you see the disciples that didn't take much immediately we read they left their nets immediately I wonder have we left that which is keeping us back taking us back

have we left behind that which is anchoring us from not following the Lord
today as the invite goes out then it's clear and it's simple have you responded have I responded
well thanks to God that for those who respond he will always receive them nothing excludes us from
the Lord of your life you can answer that it's clear and it's simple have you responded have I
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think of blessed these thoughts to listen