

## WHY WOULD GOD CHOOSE ME?

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Mark 1:14-20

We are being called to be God's disciples; radical disciples.

As quickly as John the Baptist appeared on the scene, he disappeared. The author Mark depicted him as a masterful runner in a relay passing the baton to the one for whom it had been prepared. As John decreased, Jesus increased. The time was right. God had prearranged and then executed his plan at the appointed time; in the fullness of time. God does not operate in chronological time, but in *kairos*, strategic timing: when everything is lined up and ready. The time is come and the kingdom is near **Isa 9:6-7, Jer 23:5-6**.

Jesus had come to establish a new world order; the kingdom of God on earth. The kingdom of God is the reign or rule of God on the earth. Jesus didn't have to drum up interest in his preaching. They expected him to come. But when Jesus came preaching the kingdom of God is near, they were expecting to prepare for war. We also see ourselves as citizens of the kingdom. Ruling and reigning, walking around as if we own the world. But Jesus came preaching first things first. Mat 6:33. We seek the benefits, but the rule of God must be first established in our own hearts and lives. We reign victoriously as He reigns in us.

The way to establish His rule in our hearts is to repent and believe. The people came running to John because of their willingness to repent. Jesus preached the same message, but he added that we must also believe; confessing our sins and putting your trust in Him. It's not enough to resolve to do better. Coupled with our resolve there must be a trust in the righteousness and grace of God to make a change in our lives. The reason so many of us get disappointed is because our faith is misplaced. You need to trust in the One who cannot and will not disappoint you. You need to trust someone who can do what He says. You trust in money and houses and land, that's why you are miserable today. Put your trust in the One who can make your life brand new.

The good news is this: God loves you. God knows what is best for you and will give you the best but you have to learn to let him love you. The problem with some of us is that we've dealt with imitation and cheap love for so long that we don't know how to appreciate true love. Let God love you. Let Him have His way. Throw caution to the wind. He will come in and you'll never be the same again. It's through repentance and faith that we enter into the kingdom. Spiritually you enter into a personal relationship, spatially you enter the kingdom as it is being established on earth in the church.

Jesus knew he could not accomplish this mission alone so he selected disciples; ordinary men. There was nothing special about them, at least not from our perspective. To be a disciple of Christ is to believe in his teaching, to rest on his sacrifice, to take in his spirit and to imitate his example, to have a personal response to his call. Though he preached to crowds he taught individuals. God is calling you. Once you believe, you are expected to leave everything behind and follow Him.

Jesus took the initiative, **John 15:16**. It's always that way in God. **John 4:19, 3:16**. Some people say they found the Lord. You didn't find him, He found you. He wasn't lost, you were lost. Millions of the people in the

world are still lost. We expect people to read our sign and pull into the parking lot. You don't wait for people to ask, "What is it that makes you brand new?" Tell them. Take the initiative. If you're going to be a disciple of Christ you have to take the initiative.

The kingdom is a major enterprise. Staffing it is a serious undertaking. Obviously an undertaking of this magnitude means that Jesus would look for people who would fit certain qualifications. Jesus would look for people he could trust. He needed to know that he had people who could follow through on assignments. He needed people who were teachable. It was imperative that they were serious students. They needed to know the word for themselves and apply it to their lives. They would need to study to show themselves approved. He was calling them to a task. He wasn't calling them to a life of comfort. Kingdom building is not for the lazy. He was calling them to invest their lives in giving to someone else and they would gain in the process. Given these requirements, we have to ask ourselves, "Is he really calling me. Does he have the right person?" Why would He call us? We can be pretty unstable and inconsistent. We make promises that we don't keep. We don't like pain. We don't do well under pressure. If we don't see immediate results, we quit. We expect grace to cover us every time we fall short. Some of us are in retirement so don't ask us to do anything.

Some of us are not close to retirement but we act as if we are. We've retired to this building, we are not going outside these walls and don't expect us to do anything more. Is He really calling us? You may be a minister, an elder, or a deacon but you are retired in your seat. Who have you told about the Lord lately? Is He really calling me? Some of us ask the question, "What do I have to offer?" John McArthur writes: "The first men Jesus called were ordinary men. He didn't choose a Rabbi or a scribe. Not one of the people he chose came from the religious establishment. He chose, instead men who were not theologically trained. The first four were an interesting crew; they were all Galileans."

Not one of them would qualify by anyone's standard, but the good news is this: God doesn't choose us because we have it all together. God chooses weak, foolish, unstable, nobodies **1 Cor 1:26-31**. Why does God call the weak, foolish, nobodies? So that it will be without question that it was through Him and not you. God wants to use you in awesome and mighty ways. He wants you to come as you are. That must be what the songwriter meant when he wrote, Just as I am, without one plea, but that thy blood was shed for me...Oh Lamb of God I come.

He was calling them to a lifelong process of learning and growth. Once you are in the kingdom you never arrive. All of us are still at the beginning stages of understanding the truth and the mysteries of God. God is calling us to complete surrender. He is saying: "I will make you what I need you to be." He's asking us to become like putty or clay in the Master's hands and He will shape us. The key is, we have to leave everything.

Peter and Andrew left their nets and their boats; their occupation for a new preoccupation. James and John left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men. When you follow Jesus, you can't take your staff with you. This is not something you can delegate. You have to do it for yourself. It's time to make up your mind. Is He calling me or not? Am I going to follow? Is the world going to be different because I am in it or am I just taking up space? You have to make a decision. If you have already accepted Jesus as your Lord and savior, the question is: are you His disciple? Are you really following Him? Do you believe His word? Do you rest on His sacrifice? Is His Spirit living in you? Are you following His example? If there is any question about your relationship get it right today. God wants you to know that you belong to Him and He belongs to you. Then He wants everything. He wants to know that you'll make Him number 1.

Peace.

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