



[Note: Our typical service on Wednesdays leaves approximately 35-40 minutes for a preaching a message. This message does have a lot of content and seems like it's long but can certainly be fit into a typical 30-40-minute speaking time.]

I am thankful you are here when there are so many other places you could be I am proud that you chose to be here right now.

Tonight, we are going to look at a passage that you have maybe heard before. It is a commonly looked at passage. How many of you have know that the Bible has many places where it is talked about that as followers of Christ we have a responsibility to share Jesus, and the good news of the gospel with others? Knowing and serving Jesus has was never about keeping it to ourselves. We are to take this great gift and we are to spread the good news and tell others about Him, so as disciples of Christ, He can work through us to make more disciples.

Let's take a look at the text and then we will dive in to it and several other Scriptures along the way as we discuss what God wants to say to us.

*18 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. 19 "Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will send you out to fish for people." 20 At once they left their nets and followed him. 21 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, 22 and immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him. Matthew 4:18-22 NKJV*

Let's pray as we begin.

[Pray]

So, Jesus in this passage was very clear about the goal. He told first Simon and Andrew and then James and John "Follow Me." When Jesus said follow me, He was saying more than "just walk behind me." Jesus was saying, "Go where I go, do what I do, think like I think." He told them, "Be like me." You see, to be a true disciple of Jesus it's about becoming like Him. It is calle the process of sanctification. From the time that we surrender to and accept Jesus, we begin this process of becoming like Jesus. The next thing I want to point out to you in this passage is that in

both instances where He called someone to follow Him, there was no hesitation. When He called Simon and Andrew, the Bible says, “At once they left their nets and followed Him.” When He called to James and John, the passage says “and immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.”

Simon and Andrew were walking away from their careers; what they depended upon for a living, but their faith in what Jesus was about to do kept them from questioning it. James and John did the same and the Scripture says that they left their father. True discipleship requires sacrifice and it requires faith. We must be willing to accept the direction that He leads us in.

No, we see what Jesus meant when He said “Follow Me,” and we see these men that He called in these passages had strong enough faith that there was no hesitation in their decision to take Jesus up on what he was asking them to do. He goes on to say to them in verse 19 “I will send you out to fish for people.” Some of us have heard it said as “Fishers of Men.” That is the main thing we are going to focus on.

Some of you may enjoy fishing experience and some of you may not care for it. But jere. we are not talking about real fishing. Well, we are for one second just as an illustration.

When you fish in public waterways, there are things that you cannot do; things that are illegal and will cause you to have some type of negative consequence such as a fine. Some of those things are using an electrical device to fish, using explosives, or guns, and you may not fish with poison. Just as some things are illegal in fishing, there are also things that are just ineffective, such as fishing with a broken rod or reel, casting a line that has not bait or hook, using line that is very weak and won't hold up to the fish size, or maybe fishing with a bobber in deep water when you are trying to reach the top.

These things would hold us back if we were trying to fish by either being illegal and us running the risk of getting in some trouble and facing negative consequences, or just because we are using methods that are very ineffective and keep us from reaching our full potential in the task at hand.

Likewise, there are some things inside the church that can hinder when it comes to effectively reaching others for Jesus, and carrying out the mission for His Kingdom. We could make a really long list and try and discuss each

of them, but truthfully, all the things we could think of fit into one of three categories: traditionalism, legalism, or antinomianism.

Let's take a look at what those are so we can see how they affect our ability to successfully spread the gospel message and the love of Jesus.

### **Traditionalism**

*8 You have let go of the commands of God and are holding on to human traditions.”9 And he continued, “You have a fine way of setting aside the commands of God in order to observe[a] your own traditions! Mark 7:8-9 NKJV*

Here, Jesus told religious leaders that they have abandoned the commands and teachings of God to focus on the “human traditions” or the rules and practices that had been developed by people over time with an emphasis on them over God’s commands. A clear and simple way to know that traditionalism has crept into a church setting, or your own personal walk is if you hear often, “This is the way we have always done it.” And it refers to practices and policies that are not anchored in biblical truth, but about preferences of church members, or leaders. This can apply to dress code, worship music and styles, or trying to press everyone to one specific Bible translation.

### **Legalism**

*4 They tie up heavy, cumbersome loads and put them on other people’s shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to lift a finger to move them. Matthew 23:4 NKJV*

Again, Jesus was addressing religious leaders, called Pharisees and scribes, about their hypocritical behaviors. They had created a heavy burden for the people with excessive rules and regulations that went above and beyond the Law of Moses. The Pharisees demanded a strict adherence to the laws in this complex system of law and regulations. It created a very overwhelming and oppressive system which was the exact opposite of the true gospel which is one of grace and mercy. Legalism today comes in the form of behavioral codes, or a legalistic approach to tithing with a church requiring financial information to force members into a certain amount of financial commitment based on income. Maybe it is in the form of judgmental attitudes towards, people with tattoos, those who wear a hat, maybe someone’s overall style of dress, judgments people over their past mistakes. When we allow the legalistic attitudes to creep into the

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