

Follow Me
Mark 1:16-20

We live in a day and age where there's lots of technology, and this technology can be very convenient at times. It gives you the ability to keep up with the trends of the day, to understand what is trending, what topics are kind of the hot items, which people are apparently worth tuning into and listening to and actually paying attention to; and this can go from everything, right, anything to musicians, to sports and athletes, to celebrities in terms of movies and TV shows. It's all over, and you have the opportunity to access it all, just at your fingertips. And it's no big deal, really easy. You can follow, literally, any of these people very easily. You can get on Twitter. You can get on Instagram. You can go looking at blogs in Facebook, and you can follow these people and even be their friend, so to speak.

And so there's a lot. There's a lot that you can find. And a lot of these people, they have massive followings. You look at their Twitter or whatever it is, and they just have millions of people following them, millions of people that care so much about what they ate for lunch, and, you know, what they do with their down time and their dog and stuff like that. And so that's what people do; they follow these people, and they love it. Well, there's a reason why these people got to a point... these celebrities got to a point where they have such a large following. Normally, it's some craft, some skill, some ability that got them there. Right? If you're an athlete, what kind of sets you out or sets you apart from the rest is you've done something. Right? You've actually been successful in some way in your sport, in your skill, in your ability. If you're an actor, you've obviously had some success in movies or TV shows. If you're a musician, you've actually put out some music that people actually want to listen to. All right? And then you see it by this following, this massive following that can happen.

But, you know, these aren't the only people to follow. Right? You can find all other types of people that are worth following for different reasons. Take, for instance, this guy. He could be your new hero. His name is Ben Davis, coming from Littlerock, Arkansas, and the reason why he could be your hero (if you want to hop on Instagram right now) is because he's making the journey, sixteen hundred miles, from the Pacific Ocean to the Atlantic Ocean, from the West coast of the United States to the East coast of the United States on foot, the whole thing on foot. And so, he's documenting

this, and as he goes, you know, hits a hundred miles, takes a picture of himself (selfie) in the middle of nowhere and just kind of keeps doing this - this journey, all by foot. And he's got certain rules that he's laid out. You know, he wants to at least try and hit somewhere between twenty-five to thirty miles a day in his walking. He can't get car rides from people, kind of unfair, and in fact, he kind of regrets that decision a little bit because someone offered to take him to the Grand Canyon and then bring him right back and drop him off so he didn't cheat, and he declined, and he looks back on it now, and he regrets that. He wishes he would have taken that because he could bend the rule for that. He actually wants to try and keep it cheap, too, do it for as little money as possible; and so he's just been taking pictures and going. And now, he's got seventeen thousand people following him on Instagram and more. (That was back in May actually, so he's got more I'm sure, by now.) And he's hoping to finish at the end of July in Boston. So, if you want to go to Boston and be a part of the welcoming party, you are more than welcome to do that, obviously. So, it's pretty funny. It just takes one little thing. It takes one idea. It takes one skill, one craft, one thing, to all of a sudden gain this attention and this following.

And so, we think about Jesus as we come back to the gospel of Mark, and He is going to start and get His following today. This is the beginnings of Him getting His following. And so, we kind of ask the question what is it about Jesus? What is it that Jesus does that gets people to following Him, to become interested in Him and want to see more of what He will do? And that's what we're going to encounter today in Mark 1.

And so, as we kind of turn there, and as we look at those verses, just want to remind you what we've seen so far in Mark. We really saw the purpose in the first verse of the book. Right? This is the good news, the gospel of Jesus Christ, Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God. Mark is writing to believers in Rome, and he's giving them a historical account of what they believe in. These believers in Rome have heard this message of good news, have believed, have chosen to believe in this message of good news, and Mark is giving them the historical background for it all. Who is Jesus? What did He do in His life, in His death, in His ministry, in His resurrection? So, Mark is basically laying out the purpose there in verse 1. And down through verse 8, he's giving the preparation of the Messiah as he talks about Old Testament scriptures that prepared the way as John the Baptist comes on the scene and prepares the way for Jesus. And then in verses 9 through 13, we saw more of

this, this revelation of the Messiah as He came and was baptized by John the Baptist. He received the Holy Spirit, and then He went out into the wilderness and was tempted by Satan and endured that temptation. Last time, we saw the message of the Messiah as we looked at verses 14 and 15, and we saw this message summarized in verse 15 very simply. “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.” [“...repent and believe in the...”] good news.

So, this morning we now continue into Jesus’ ministry as it has officially begun in the region of Galilee, and we look at verses 16 through 20. So, you can follow along with me, and we’ll read our verses for this morning beginning in verse 16; “Passing alongside the Sea of Galilee, He saw Simon and Andrew the brother of Simon casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen. And Jesus said to them, “Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men.” And immediately they left their nets and followed Him. And going on a little farther, He saw James the son of Zebedee and John his brother, who were in their boat mending the nets. And immediately He called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants and followed Him.” So, this is the beginning of Jesus gaining His following as we see in these verses. So, what do we learn in this beginning?

The first things that we see, that comes up in our verses, verses 16 and 17, is the call to fish - the call to fish. This is a part of Jesus’ calling these men. We see it’s a call to fish - the call to fish. So, as we look back at verse 16, we see it states, “Passing alongside the Sea of Galilee...” and we’re reminded from last time... last time, there was this shift that took place in Jesus’ ministry. He started down in Judea the southern portion of Israel, down in Judea, where there was the wilderness outside of Jerusalem at the Jordon River, and that’s where John the Baptist was doing his ministry and baptizing people. So that’s where Jesus came onto the scene, down in the south in Judea, being baptized by John the Baptist and then going out into the wilderness down there and being tempted by Satan. So then the shift took place in verse 14 as Jesus went up into the north, the northern portion of Israel, where we have the region of Galilee. That’s where the Sea of Galilee is as well as the cities and the regions surrounding the Sea of Galilee, making all of it as, really, the northern part of Israel - Galilee.

So that’s where Jesus went proclaiming this message, and now we see Him passing along, specifically, the Sea of Galilee as He’s in this region. So,

He's "...alongside the Sea of Galilee..." and He encounters our first set of brothers in this passage. He sees Simon and Andrew. Simon, you also know as Peter. In fact, we'll see him later on in Mark chapter 3; he starts to be called Peter, all right, but for now, he's called Simon. And then his brother Andrew... and what're they doing? It says they're "...casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen." It's a simple scene. Right? We're introduced to these two brothers, Simon and Andrew, and they're fishing, and Mark gives us the detail that they were fishermen. This is who they were. This was their occupation. This is how they got their livelihood. This was their business, and this is what they did. This wasn't a luxurious fishing trip, all right; let's take a vacation and go on a fishing trip in the Sea of Galilee, and then we'll go back to the grind next week. No. This is what they did. All right? This is who they were; they identified as fishermen. And it doesn't specify here... they could have been fishing from the shore. That was a legitimate way to fish. They didn't necessarily have fishing rods that they're using. They were using nets that they would throw with weights on them to trap the fish and then pull it up. So they could have done this from the shore, or as we learn later on in Luke's account, they did have a boat as well. So at some point, they could have been using a boat here even. So either way, this is what they're doing. They're at their job. This is how they spend their time. This is how they make their money. This is what they do for business. They're fishermen, fishermen, by trade.

So, Jesus comes alongside of them. Right? He's just approaching them at the Sea of Galilee, and He comes up to them and speaks to these brothers, to Simon and Andrew, who are in the midst of their job, in the midst of fishing, and what does He say to them? Verse 17; "And Jesus said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men." So, just notice this first phrase, the first part; "Follow me..." "Follow me..." And we have to ask what does Jesus mean by this? What does He mean when He comes up to these guys as they're fishing, and He says, "Follow me...?" Is He simply saying, "Follow me..." and I'll show you a great place for lunch? "Follow me..." and we'll take a siesta nap, you know, at our house or something. What is this? Is this a temporary call to follow Jesus, to show them some location? And as we go on to find out, really, just by the rest of our statement and the rest of the gospel of Mark, Jesus means something far greater than that. This is not a temporary call to follow Him. This is a permanent thing.

This is a permanent call to follow Him in everything He does. These fishermen will follow Jesus as He moves about Galilee from location to location. They'll even follow Him out of Galilee down into Judea, and then other places outside of Galilee in the north. They will continue to follow Jesus. They will be as a synonym for a follower; they will be a disciple. That's really what a follower is; a follower is a disciple. A disciple is one who's following after another. They will, in fact, engage in this kind of mentorship, right, where Jesus will mentor them over time. This permanent following will lead to more opportunities to teach, more opportunities to observe and examine and see how Jesus lives His life, and they will learn in this process. This is a permanent following that Jesus is calling them to; this was a call to discipleship - and this is what discipleship is.

Sometimes we throw out that term discipleship, and you hear it often in the church. You hear it often in Christianity, and it can get convoluted. All right? Discipleship can have a lot of baggage to it; or discipleship looks like meeting for coffee once a week, and that's discipleship. Could be, or it just could not be. You could meet once a week for coffee because you like coffee, and that has nothing to do with discipleship. Discipleship, as we see in the Bible, is really simple; you're just following Jesus. That's discipleship, and so when you have Paul saying follow me as I follow Christ, it's the same idea. It's just links in a chain; as Paul is following Jesus, so Timothy would follow Paul because he's trying to follow Jesus. And that's the same thing that's, hopefully, taking place in the church. We don't need to overcook it and make it more than needs to be, or discipleship has to be once a week or has to be, you know, every other day or has to be, you know, at least an hour long. That's not true. There's no way that that's anywhere in the Scripture at all. It's simply following others as they follow Jesus because that's our aim. Our goal is Jesus, and as we find others alongside of us that are doing that, we can engage with them in this process.

And so, Jesus says, "Follow me..." Simon and Andrew, "Follow me..." Watch how I live. I invite you into My life. "Follow me..." around, so that I can mentor you. And that's exactly what we see, really, takes place in the rest of Mark's gospel. In fact, he uses this term follow, really, as a term for discipleship as we've gone on to see (if we were to cheat and move ahead), you can go into Mark 2, and you see as we move on, "...as he passed by, he saw Levi the son of Alphaeus [So this is Matthew as we come to find out] sitting at the tax booth, and he said to him, "Follow me." [And what does

Matthew do?] And he rose and followed him.” So, this is Matthew responding, Levi responding to this call. And it was such an obvious call, a permanent call, that he abandons his job as a tax collector. How about further on in Mark, Mark 6:1; “He went away from there and came to his hometown, and his disciples followed him.” So, even as Jesus goes out of these cities that are right on the Sea of Galilee and as He comes to Nazareth and other places, the disciples will stay with Him. It’s a permanent call. Mark 8:34 - we get even more in terms of understanding this; “And calling the crowd to Him with His disciples, He said to them, “If anyone would come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me.” Now we see a fuller picture of this, this following.

This discipleship is definitely permanent. In fact, it might even cause some sacrifice, might cause difficulty, it caused self-denial and taking up your cross. And we’ll get to that as we continue through the gospel of Mark - Jesus’ strong words when it comes to what it means to be His disciple and follow after Him. Furthermore, in Mark 10, we see a couple more times this reference. This is Jesus talking to the rich young ruler; “...looking at him, loved him, and said to him, “You lack one thing: go, sell all that you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.” Well, the rich young ruler, he had elevated his riches to a place that was above God. It was, really, his god and Jesus tells him you need to be willing to give that up and permanently “Follow me...” And Mark 20:28; “Peter began to say to Him, “See, we have left everything and followed You.” This is what the disciples knew they were getting themselves into, Jesus calling Peter, right here. As Simon and Peter’s response later on in the gospel of Mark, as he admits, “...we ...left everything...” for the sake of following You. This is discipleship, and this is how Mark talks about it; it is following Jesus. It’s that simple. You simply set aside everything else that there is for the sake of setting your eyes, your goal, your prize, your ambition, upon one thing and, in this case, one person, Jesus, Jesus the Messiah, Jesus Christ. So this is Jesus’ call to the first set of brothers here, Simon and Andrew; “Follow me...” “Follow me...” in a permanent sense, all right, not just for the afternoon, but in a permanent life decision; “Follow me...”

But that’s not it; there’s more in our verse as we look back down in Mark 1:17; “...Jesus said to them, “Follow me, and I will make you become fishers of men.” “...I will make you become fishers of men.” Jesus was not

simply calling them to Himself for the sake of entertainment. Hey, “Follow me...,” and watch some amazing things I’m about to do. “Follow me...,” and just be an eye witness and sit back and enjoy the show. “Follow me...,” and just, you know, have a good time along the ride. That’s not what Jesus was calling them to. Jesus had a purpose with this. There was a purpose beside this. Jesus was calling them for the sake of instruction and learning, development and understanding. Jesus was calling them so they might become fishers of men. In fact, as you continue to read through Mark, this is what Jesus does. He first calls these disciples to Himself. He models it. He shows them what it looks like to fish for men, and then He says your turn; go. I showed you what it looked like. I showed you how to fish for men; now it’s your turn to go.

This is what we find (once again, cheating, looking ahead) in Mark 3. We see Jesus gathering even more to Himself, not just the four we’re going to look at today, but we see the twelve; “...He appointed twelve (whom He also named apostles) so that they might be with Him and He might send them out to preach.” All right? This was His desire when He was gathering these disciples to Himself, these followers, who would permanently follow after Him. It was for a purpose, for a purpose that they might not just be witnesses to what Jesus was doing, but they might also carry out the task that Jesus was doing; they might “...become fishers of men.” And where Jesus actually starts this is in Mark 6. We see He sends out His disciples, and we learn “...they went out and proclaimed that people should repent.” This is Jesus, the first time He’s sending them out, and in Mark 6, really, it’s Jesus sending out His disciples into the nation of Israel. He’s saying go to all the other villages, go to all the other cities in the nation of Israel, and tell them. Right? Tell them about the kingdom. Tell them the kingdom is at hand. Tell them to repent. Tell them to believe in the gospel.

And so, this is what will take place in Jesus’ life and ministry, but I think, if you’re smart enough, you realize that it doesn’t just stop there; Jesus’ plan and calling upon these men’s lives to be fishers of men would not stop with Mark 6. It would not stop with them going out and preaching the good news, preaching the gospel in the nation of Israel alone, it would continue far beyond that. You’re familiar with passages at the end of Christ’s life, passages that we label The Great Commission. After Jesus dies, after He’s resurrected, and He comes back, He meets again with His disciples in Galilee, the Sea of Galilee, the same region where there’s fishing happening,

and He reminds them of the very beginning when He tells them to go into the nations and to "...make disciples..." This is what we learned in Acts 1:8 when He says you're My witnesses, and you're going to be My witnesses to the uttermost parts of the earth, not just Israel anymore. You're going to go beyond Israel; you're going to go to the nations. So, at one point in Jesus's life and ministry, there were fishers of men in Israel alone. But at the end of His life and ministry, when He exists on this earth and goes to heaven, He sends them out to the entire planet, to all the nations. This is a mission that's started to Israel, and then the mission then gets expanded to the world. And so, so many times we emphasize The Great Commission, you know, the last words of Jesus. Wow! Don't forget the last words of Jesus, that's when He sent us out, right, on this mission to make disciples. Well, don't forget the first words of Jesus, too.

Well, the first words of Jesus to His disciples - this has been the plan all along - this wasn't some surprise. It wasn't like Jesus came back from the dead and said surprise! Guess what? Here's the curve ball. Now, go take the gospel to other people. They already knew that was the plan. That's how it all begins. It all begins in this very vein of thought that you will be a fisher of men. Simon and Andrew were called initially, at the beginning, with this purpose, to be "...fishers of men." And so, at the end of Christ's life and ministry, it's the same thing; keep fishing. You keep fishing, and this time, you expand your boundaries, and you go beyond Israel, and you go to the nations and fish for men. Well, what we know is Jesus' mission to fish for men becomes the disciple's mission which, really, turns around and is now our mission. The disciples modeled it for us in the book of Acts, and now we have inherited it, and that's why the New Testament goes on to use the vivid descriptions about the church that it does. That's why the church, you and I, we're described as ambassadors. That's why we're ambassadors for Christ. We're citizens of heaven, of another world, to be here as aliens, to try and proclaim the good news. That's why we've been transferred out of darkness into light, to proclaim the excellencies of God to the people that we encounter every day. This is who we are. It's built into our very identity. This is you and I, right here. We are followers of Jesus, and that means we are fishers of men; that's who we are. This is built into our very identity; it is our mission statement.

Really, to say, briefly, if you aren't fishing, you aren't following. If you can sit back and say that it's not necessary that I fish for men. It's not necessary

that I do evangelism, that I share the gospel. In fact, that's someone else's job. Someone else's pretty good at that and I kind of find my task over here in a different department of the church. I find my abilities somewhere else. Well, that would be to misunderstand what Jesus has called us to. That'd really, be to misunderstand the purpose of the church. The purpose of the church is to fish for men. If you want to be identified, if you call yourself a follower of Jesus Christ, then you are a fisher of men. You cannot separate those things. You cannot compartmentalize your Christianity. You have to embrace it. It is coming right with it. These things are linked perfectly; to follow Jesus is to fish for men. This is what you must do. This is what we must do. Jesus' mission became the disciple's mission which is now our mission, to fish for men. So, this is not something that is for some, it is for all of us, and we can embrace it.

And yeah, it's scary. It's a hard thing. You have to go out of your comfort zone. You have to meet new people. You have to consider and plan how you might talk to them, and where they're at; and really, how do they view the world, and what do they believe? And yeah, that takes time. It takes thought. But if you're a follower of Jesus, you're a fisher of men, and you'll do it. And we try to help with that. That's why we have things like softball starting tonight. That's why we have things like a movie night. That's why we have VBS. That's why we have soccer camp. We want to make this possible. We want to make this possible for all of us to go out and to cast the nets and to fish for these people because they're out there; God has promised us. God has promised us that Lancaster is filled with people that He has chosen and called for Himself, and it's our job if we are followers of Jesus, to fish for those people. We have to do it. This is who we are by nature. This is the role of the church.

So, Jesus calls this first set of brothers, Simon and Andrew, and says, "Follow me..." permanently, and fish for men. I will make you become this. You'll become a fisher of men. This is the call that we all have still today, a call to fish. But that's not it. We see more in our passage this morning. We see the response - the response to follow. This is the response that is simply summarized in verse 18 for us - the response to follow. Almost kind of random how this scene comes about, as Jesus approaches the Sea of Galilee, sees these brothers fishing, and then calls them to follow Himself and fish for men. And then we wonder, how will they respond? Verse 18; "...immediately..." "And immediately they left their nets and

followed him.” [“And immediately they left their nets and followed him.”] This is quick. This is instantaneous. Right? This is right on the spot. Think about this, as Simon and Andrew are there (whether they’re fishing from the shore or the boat, it really doesn’t matter), as they’re in the process of fishing, as they’re in the process of going about this (sometimes, you have one person in the water scaring the fish into the net and the other one pulling the net and trying to trap them), while they are in the midst of that, Jesus approaches them and they immediately just drop it and start following Jesus.

I mean, you try to picture... what did they do? You know, was there a discussion? Did they have a little deliberation among themselves? You know, I think this might be a big catch, but should we just ditch it? I don’t know. We’ve caught a lot earlier today. Maybe we’re fine. I don’t know. There wasn’t any of that. There was no discussion. There was no deliberation. There was no negotiation with Jesus. Okay, Jesus, we’ll follow You if You do something for us. You know, let’s kind of have a two-way street going on here. There was no cleanup of the nets. There was no let’s take some time and make sure we get this all back and organized. In fact, let’s go tell our families. That’s probably a responsible thing to do. There was none of that. We have none of that in our text. In fact, there’s no fear. There’s absolutely no fear of what happened to John the Baptist and how that might happen to them. John the Baptist was just arrested, and now here’s Jesus preaching the same message as John the Baptist, and we’re supposed to follow Him? What if He gets arrested also? This could happen to us. There’s no fear at all. They drop the nets; “...immediately...” they follow Jesus. They don’t need to be convinced. They don’t say, okay, remind us who You are again, Jesus. Why should we follow You? I mean, really, I’m just trying to put it all together still. They “...immediately...” drop the nets. They “...immediately...” drop what they’re doing, and they follow Jesus. This is Jesus’ word to these men, and they respond - instant faith and obedience.

God has spoken to you. God has spoken to myself. God has spoken through His Word, and we have it right here as we study it. We have it to read at our own convenience. How’s our response time? Do we deliberate and discuss? You know, we have simple commands in Scripture that we’re supposed to be patient with everyone, but then we get in small groups with each other and say, yeah, I need to be patient, but you know, I need to think about that. What does that look like to be patient? And I don’t know how should I be

patient. I don't know, maybe not. Maybe, I have some more time to discuss this and think about it. And maybe, maybe, if I'm patient, then God will reward me in another area of my life. I guess I'll give it a shot. And so, we take all this time and we have to meet and talk and deliberate, discuss, negotiate, and finally, we're willing to try patience, give it a shot and see if it works out. That's absolutely unacceptable. That's not obedience, and that's far from faith. We have the Word of God. How is our response time? Are we willing to drop whatever it is we're pursuing? Are we willing to set that aside and recognize that that is nothing in comparison to what God has commanded in His word? What Christ has spoken deserves full attention. It deserves immediate response.

You can't put it off any longer. You need to deal with it. There's no greater priority in your life, and I know there's a lot of things pressing in on you, but this rises to the top. You must respond to what God has said. Don't delay your response to follow Christ. Don't attempt to put Him on the shelf with other masters. Don't find yourself kind of multi-tasking in your worship because God doesn't accept that. The reality is your hesitation to obey, really shows your commitment to God or lack thereof. The distractions that you have in terms of maybe obeying God, but maybe doing something else or giving into your flesh or pursuing what the world has put forth, that shows your devotion, that reveals your lack of devotion for Christ. God has spoken to us in His Word. Jesus spoke to Simon and Andrew. They took no time; "...immediately they left their nets..." their job, their occupation, their livelihood, "...immediately they left their nets and followed Him." God has spoken to us. How's your response time? Do you immediately respond in obedience and faith?

Well, that's not all. We learn of more than just Simon and Andrew who respond in this brilliant fashion of faith and obedience. We learn of two more men, another set of brothers, in this episode that is repeated. We see this take place one more time in very parallel and similar fashion - our last two verses that we find - in verses 19 and 20; "And going on a little farther, He saw James the son of Zebedee and John his brother, who were in their boat mending the nets. And immediately He called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants and followed Him." Once again, very similar, parallel situation and a great response from these men, James and John, another set of brothers, a similar occupation. They're fishermen. In fact, we learn more about them in the details that follow here.

They do have a boat. So, they're obviously successful enough in their fishing to own their own boat. Their father was a part of this as well. This is a family business. They basically had inherited what their father had already done successfully, and on top of that, they had hired servants. So that showed that, clearly, they were successful enough to pay more people to be a part of this fishing business, this fishing industry. So this same scene as these men are out there in a boat fishing, doing what they do, mending the nets, preparing their nets, as they're about to start another fishing tour, another opportunity to get another catch for the day, and Jesus interrupts. Jesus interrupts in the same fashion, and He calls them, and their response is the same - "...immediately..." We see they leave "...their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants and followed Him." ...this repetition of calling and response. So we've seen that Jesus, in calling Simon and Andrew, demanded that they not only follow Him for the sake of being His witnesses, but follow Him for the sake of learning how to fish for men. We saw that that response involves giving up and forsaking everything as Simon and Andrew did. They left their nets. They gave up, and they permanently followed after Christ. And now we see this repeated again with James and John.

But really, we have an outstanding question in our mind. What is it about Jesus that causes these men to follow Him? We have celebrities in our day and age, and they do amazing things. They have amazing talents of singing. They have musicianship that's unparalleled. They're able to compete in sports, and their athletic abilities are beyond, you know, comparison. It's amazing, some of these people. And so, they have this massive following. Well, what've we seen in Mark so far? Has Jesus been interacting with Simon and Andrew? Was there some interaction before this? (We haven't gotten too far in the book, so you can look back and see.) No. All right? Have James and John been following Jesus and seeing His temptation in the wilderness or any of these things? No. There hasn't been an interaction between Jesus and these men. So, we're left with a question. What is it about Jesus that these men just drop what they're doing and follow Him? Did Jesus do a magic trick from the shore? Did He do some miracle that is unspoken here, and that's why they just drop what they're doing? Did He have a lot of money in His hands, and that's why we realize, oh okay, that's why they all gave up what they were doing? What is it? And we don't have the specific details given. We don't have it in our text. We just have Jesus calling men,

and men "...immediately..." responding. That's all we have, immediate response.

Some people try to say that this episode is similar to a rabbi in first century Judaism. Rabbis, you know, they would call out people, and they would say, hey, be my disciple. Follow after me, and we'll study the Old Testament together. I'll show you what I've learned from the Torah and what I've learned from the teachings of Moses, and I'll be your rabbi. I'll be your teacher, your mentor. Some people say that's what Jesus is doing here; He's functioning like a rabbi. He's saying, "Follow Me..." I'll be your rabbi, your mentor, and I'll teach you the Law. And that, really, doesn't do it. That doesn't do it justice because that's not what Jesus wants to do. He's not calling them to Himself to teach them the Law. He's calling them to "...become fishers of men." And they respond "...immediately..." The best parallel to understanding what's happening here is that Jesus' is functioning as One who has the authority and power of God alone. He's speaking supernaturally as God Himself. He is God and He speaks with the power and authority of God, and man cannot resist. What can man do when God speaks? They have to respond. When God calls, it's irresistible.

Think about creation. God spoke. Did Creation rebel? It came into existence. There's nothing else that could happen. This is God and His power. He speaks, and these things come into being as Psalm 33:9 says, "For He spoke, and it came to be; He commanded, and it stood firm." There was no rebellion. There was no resistance from Creation when God spoke. God called Abraham, and God said let Me bring you to a place. Let Me show you a land that I'll bring you to, and Abraham responded in faith, in obedience. This is the same exact kind of call that we have happening here. Jesus is God, and He is calling these men; and according to Mark's gospel, there's no prior experience, there's no prior relationship that these men have. And so, all we know is Jesus talking and them responding "...immediately..." This is Jesus as God. This is Jesus with authority. As Mark will go onto show - each section that follows - Jesus has this authority. He's the one that is casting demons out of people. He has the power and authority over the demonic and spiritual realm. He has the authority and the power over illness, paralysis, leprosy; it doesn't matter. He can speak, and it all has to listen and obey Him. This is the power. This the authority of Jesus. He is God in human form, and so He speaks here. And what we have is a simple account

of Jesus speaking, and men doing nothing but what they can do, respond in faith, in obedience.

We too, possess the word of God. We too, possess the authoritative words of Jesus, God, written in the Bible. How is our response time? Is Jesus worth following? What has Jesus done that makes Him worth following? What has He achieved? What skill does He have? The fact that He alone, He is God and can make that claim, already makes Him worthy to follow; but as we consider the life of Jesus and walk down the path of what Jesus did, we recognize that He ultimately dealt with the sin problem and abolished the power that Satan had through death and sin in His victory of going to the cross and rising again from the dead. This is the authority of Jesus. He is worthy of us forsaking everything that we hold on to, to follow Him and immediately respond. Do not wait any longer. Don't delay. Don't hesitate. Quit being distracted and recognize this is God, God who has called us into a relationship with Himself, God who has done it, who has accomplished redemption in His Son's death on the cross. And so this is our opportunity to respond even now in Communion.