

## Series: Embracing a Radical Faith

VBC

Pastor John Johnson

Matthew 4:18-25

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### “When Jesus Calls a Person”

Last Sunday night my wife and I saw *The King’s Speech*

- the story of the Duke of York—called to be the king of England in a treacherous time
- Nazism was on the rise—the British empire was in its most perilous hour
- the moment called for drastic action
- the kingdom would need a voice—someone to give courage and confidence
- but this king faced an insurmountable obstacle
  - speaking for him was an absolute terror—his worst fear
  - for whenever he stood before a mike, a crowd—he stammered and stuttered

Matthew is the story of a King and another kingdom—one that requires a courageous voice—read vs 17-25

- vs 17 seems to act like a hinge verse—“*from that time*”
- something changed—Jesus’ ministry begins
- with the declaration that something radical is taking place
- something on an immense scale—the largest dimension imaginable
- the kingdom of heaven is “approaching”!!
- what was He saying, announcing?

God’s future is moving into the present—heaven is arriving on earth

- a great door has swung open in the cosmos
- a kingdom defined by justice, spirituality, relationships, and beauty is emerging
- a kingdom offering freedom and redemption and hope is here...sort of
  
- there is an already/not yet tension to it
  - it is here—yet not here
  - visible—yet invisible—like a mustard seed, yeast—it works covertly
  - but wherever Jesus is Lord—His kingdom is present
  
- but for it to advance and impact—it will require drastic, radical action—
  - daily prayer—*Thy kingdom come*
  - that asks for both its present advance and its final coming

But Jesus tells us more here—

1. A SWEEPING REORIENTATION—vs 17

- note He did not say tweak or adjust—rather “repent”
- metanoeo—change your mind
- the word implies a radical reorientation
- a willingness to *be countercultural*

-He will expound on its creed in chap 5-7  
-which will be counterintuitive—set us at odds with many of the pursuits and goals of contemporary culture

-it will also demand—

2. COURAGEOUS FOLLOWERS—vss 18-22

- for to advance this kingdom—it will take kingdom agents, missional people
- people willing to die to self and live for others—live for God

-finally—

3. LIFE IMPACTING MINISTRY—vss 23-25

-followers who will proclaim the good news and give miraculous evidence of His power

-Matthew’s focus is on the second—Jesus followers  
-and here’s what we notice about them—

a. FOLLOWING JESUS IS NOT ABOUT OUR SKILLS—read vs 18

- as Jesus began to create a missional force—establish His kingdom
- He chose His base of operations in a small town—and He focused on ordinary men from the margins of society

-He seemed to ignore the world of power and accomplishment  
-none of His initial followers were known for their scholarship  
-none had a track record as orators, rabbis, seminary students  
-they were mainly blue collar, small businessmen  
-men prone to missteps, lapses of faith, slow learners at times—  
“reclamation projects of the first order”  
-not the kind of people who would give instant credibility to Jesus’ ministry  
-be a world changing task force—read Ogden

b. FOLLOWING JESUS IS NOT ABOUT OUR INITIATIVE—read vs 19

-it's not our choice so much as it is our response  
-from Nazareth to Capernaum—Capernaum to the sea—it is always Jesus closing in

-James White, in his *Serious Times*, tells about a time in his life he began asking

-what do I want to do with the rest of my life?

-having spent his 20's and 30's in pursuit of goal oriented accomplishments

-he started asking—how can I best serve God?

“As I faced such questions as What do I do best? and Where could I make the most impact?, the unmistakable voice of the Spirit whispered, ‘These are the wrong questions.’”—White, Serious Times

-in his search—going back to Scripture—he discovered that *the people God uses are not on some journey of self discovery*

-rather—they are always invited to do something, selected to do something, presented with an opportunity to do something by Him—cf Jeremiah, David, Moses, Esther

-John 15:16—“You did not choose Me, but I chose you, appointed you”

-it may on the surface appear to be all about us, our choices and decisions—but it is His decision before it is ours

-in all of our searching—we are really the ones being pursued

-called by God—not just once—but twice

-first—to respond to Christ's offer of forgiveness for your failures—His offer of eternal life

-second—to how Christ wants you to personally penetrate the world and live for Him

-use your particular gifts to advance His kingdom

APP—at 16—giving my life to Christ—I simply acted on what He was doing

-going into ministry was never my idea—a seed was planted—follow Me

-the right question is—am I be ready when He calls?

-if we have not heard it—it is because we are probably not listening

c. FOLLOWING JESUS IS NOT ABOUT OUR CHOICE

-the imperative here says—when He pursues—and when He calls—it is not an option

- i. Jesus did not ask these men to pray about following Him
  - beg them to think about it
  - plead with them with an extended altar call—six verse of *Just as I am*
- ii. Jesus did not offer rewards or incentives
- iii. confront them with an opportunity they could not resist —the opportunity to follow a Rabbi
- iv. nowhere does it suggest they were struck by the magnetism of Jesus
  - mesmerized by Jesus' words—followed like glassy eyed followers in cult—like obedience
- v. they followed simply because His words were terse and commanding—Follow me!
  - Jesus summons with an irresistible authority
  - giving us no room for excuse or delay

-it's not that this came out of the blue—it doesn't for us—didn't for them

- they had already encountered Jesus
- the book of John indicates these same four were first seekers
- disciples of John checking Jesus out
- Jn 1:38—Jesus asked—what are you looking for?
- He may be asking that of some of you tonight?
- what are you looking for? Is this thing called Christianity true?
- what is it about the Cross? Do I really need a Savior?

Point—*follow me* was first preceded with *come and see*  
-and eventually John 1 tells us they became pretty convinced that Jesus was the Messiah—1:41

But as with all of us who come and see Jesus  
-there comes a defining moment—a summoning moment  
-when Jesus will say—Follow Me!

-it happened all through the book of Matthew  
-8:22—Follow Me and let the dead bury the dead  
-10:38—whoever does not take up his cross and follow Me is not worthy of Me  
-19:21—to the rich young CEO—come, follow Me

-it is integral to the radical theme of Matthew

-there is a call of God that is absolute, sovereign in its authority, radical in its implications—letting God be God

APP—at some point—we all have to transition from come and see to follow and serve

-you can't stay on the sidelines—out on the perimeter

-to be a Christian is to be a follower—nothing less

-if we are not aware of this summons—we're just not listening

d. FOLLOWING JESUS IS NOT ABOUT OUR CONFESSION

-at least mere confession—it is about action—read vs 20-22

-without hesitancy—they acted upon the call—they left

-what is noteworthy is the immediacy in both occurrences—no excuses, no delay, no burying the dead

-suggesting things were left where they were—nets where they were, fish where they were, parents where they were

-there is a certain urgency—the time is now

-the war is intense, the needs are great

-Jesus may not call us to leave our business, our family, our profession

-but then—He may—*we have to hold life with a certain looseness*

-we will have to leave some things for sure

-former ways, values, gods

-but they did not bemoan the costs of profession or relationships

-perhaps because they considered the gain

-a purpose bigger than themselves—a purpose that transcended the earthly level—a better fishing

“Only when we respond to Christ and follow His call do we become our real selves”—Guinness, *The Call*

-this will lead to hardship and peril—but the gain more than compensates—cf 19:27-30

## CONCLUSION

Here's what this text asks—

“Do you know only the soft-gospel invitation of our convenience-loving age, or have you been mastered by the no-concession summons of God's call?”