



SERIES: November – December – Walking with Jesus

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Scripture: Matthew 4:18-22

TITLE: Be Ready to Follow

I'll be honest with you; I wasn't always the most obedient child growing up. Maybe some of you can relate. I can think of several instances where it took me a while to listen or do what I was told. In particular, I can remember many times I was doing something; take, for instance, playing video games, and my sister would call downstairs that it was time to eat dinner. She called downstairs once, twice, maybe even three times, but I wouldn't listen because I wanted to finish the game I was playing! It was serious! But the second I heard my mom or dad call downstairs in an intense voice, I knew it was time to go. I'd set down the controller and make for upstairs because I knew it was in my best interest to obey.

In that scenario, I would listen because I respect my parent's authority, and I knew that they weren't asking me to come to dinner; they were telling me. I see the same sort of interaction between Jesus and His disciples when He calls them to follow Him in Matthew chapter 4. Let's look at Matthew 4:18-22 (ESV)

“While walking by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon (called Peter) and Andrew, his brother, casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen. And he said to them, “Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.” Immediately, they left their nets and followed him. And going on from there, he saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee and John, his brother, in the boat with Zebedee, their father, mending their nets, and he called them. Immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.”

I'm always amazed by the response of James and John. Verse 20 says that they stopped what they were doing and followed Jesus immediately! Jesus calls them while they are literally in the act of fishing! We see God call people in the middle of doing something throughout the Bible. God doesn't wait on us; Matthew was working at the tax collector's table. Moses was tending his father-in-law's flock. Gideon was threshing wheat. God doesn't wait on us; He calls us in His timing. We'd better be ready!

Put yourselves in James and John's shoes for a moment. Fishing in this culture was a decent occupation; they were working in the family business with their dad. They drop everything immediately to follow Jesus. This could not have been easy! But as we find throughout the Gospels, nothing about following Jesus is easy, but it's always worth it. They go immediately and obey the call because they know His voice, and they respect His authority. They know Jesus' way of doing things is better. And He's got a job for them to do, to go out and seek and save the lost, the way that they seek to draw fish into the boat.

James and John here can't wait to follow Jesus, walk alongside Him and absorb His teaching. I can't help but wonder if we have the same desire for Jesus and the same respect for His authority and His calling? Following Jesus is never easy, and it might require us to leave some things behind or do some things that aren't easy or comfortable. To be a Christian is to be a follower of Jesus; our desire should be to go where He leads us and obey His command.