

JESUS CHRIST AND HIS DISCIPLES: THE KIND OF PERSON CALLED MARK 01:16–20

Introduction — Call

Jesus called simple men. Note that they were not...

- religious leaders
- powerful men, not the political leaders of the nation's ruling body, the Sanhedrin (See *Sanhedrin*, Mt. 26:59)
- of the priestly or ministerial profession
- students of schools of higher learning

Very simply, they were ordinary men, simple laymen engaged in the affairs of life just like all the laymen of their day. Having said this, however, a question needs to be asked. If these men were just ordinary people, why did Jesus call them instead of calling the more gifted? The answer lies in some very special qualities that the disciples possessed. They did have some very special qualities that made them stand out from the average layman. This passage gives a picture of these qualities, a picture of the kind of person Jesus calls.

- I. They were industrious, hard-working men (v. 16).
- II. They were visionary men: looking for the Messiah and ready to follow Him (vv. 18-19).
- III. They were collaborative men (v. 19).
- IV. They were successful, but sacrificing and considerate men (v. 20).

MATHEW 26:59 SANHEDRIN

Sanhedrin is the ruling body of the nation of Israel, both the governing council and supreme court of the Jews. It had seventy-one members and was presided over by the High Priest. Its membership was made up of the Pharisees, Sadducees, Scribes or lawyers, and the elders who were leaders from among the people. A quorum was twenty-three. The legal power of the Sanhedrin to pass the death sentence was restricted about twenty some years before the trial of Jesus. However, they did retain the right of excommunication (see Jn. 9:22). To secure Jesus' death, they were forced by law to appeal to the Romans for the death sentence. □

I. *Mark 01:16 Qualities of the Disciples*

The disciples of Jesus were industrious, hard-working men. “[Jesus] saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake.” A little farther up the lake “He saw James... and his brother John... preparing their nets” (v. 19). Jesus has no use for the lazy, slow-moving, sloppy, nonchalant, disinterested, uncommitted workman. The person who Jesus

calls is an industrious, hard-working person. A study of God's call to various persons throughout Scripture will make this fact crystal clear. For example:

=> Compare the call of Amos.

Amos 7:14-15 Amos answered Amaziah, "I was neither a prophet nor a prophet's son, but I was a shepherd, and I also took care of sycamore — fig trees. But the Lord took me from tending the flock and said to me, 'Go, prophesy to my people Israel.'"

=> Compare the call of Elisha.

1 Kng 19:19 So Elijah went from there and found Elisha son of Shaphat. He was ploughing with twelve yoke of oxen, and he himself was driving the twelfth pair. Elijah went up to him and threw his cloak around him.

=> Compare the call of Saul of Tarsus, a man who was anything but lazy (Acts 9: 1f).

1 Cor 15:58 Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labour in the Lord is not in vain.

Thought 1. Note what Jesus said:

Mark 13:34 It's like a man going away: He leaves his house and puts his servants in charge, each with his assigned task, and tells the one at the door to keep watch.

Luke 19:12-13 He said: "A man of noble birth went to a distant country to have himself appointed king and then to return. So he called ten of his servants and gave them ten minas. 'Put this money to work,' he said, 'until I come back.'"

MARK 01:16

SEA OF GALILEE; LAKE GENNESARET; SEA OF TIBERIAS

A fresh water lake in northern Palestine. At its widest points, it was only about 13 miles north to south and 8 miles east to west. It would not be called a sea today because of its small size. There are several important facts to note about the Lake.

1. The Lake was known by several names: the Sea of Galilee (Mt. 4:18; 15:29; Mk. 1:16; 7:31); the Sea of Tiberias (Jn. 6:1; 21:1); the Lake of Gennesaret (Lk. 5:1); and simply the "lake" (Jn. 6:16-25) or "the water's edge" (Lk. 5:2). In the Old Testament it was called the Sea of Kinnereth (meaning harp shaped) (Lk. 8:22; Jn. 6:16-25; Num. 34:11; Deu. 3:17; Jos. 13:27).
2. The Lake was surrounded by some of the richest and most heavily populated areas of Palestine. Large towns flourished along its shores, towns which play a prominent role in Scripture: Capernaum (O & N, Mt. 4:12-13), Bethsaida (Mk. 6:45), Khorazin (Lk. 10:13), Magadan (Mt. 15:39), the region of Gerasenes (Mk. 5:1).

3. The Lake was subject to violent storms. It sat 680 feet below sea level which gave the Lake a warm climate, but it was in a pocket-like basin surrounded by steep, fast-rising hills (2000 feet high) and funnel-like mountains. The funnels or deep ravines running down through the mountains have resulted from eons of erosion. When cold-fronts move in with their fierce winds, the cold whips through the funnel-like gorges and mixes with the warm temperatures of the Lake. Unpredictable and terrifying storms result (Mt. 8:23-27; Mk. 4:35-41; Lk. 8:22-25). □

II. *Mark 01:17–18 Special Qualities of His Disciples*

The disciples of Jesus were visionary men, men who were looking for the Messiah and ready to follow Him no matter the cost. This was the quality that distinguished the disciples from many others. Some lay persons possessed the other qualities of the disciples (as they do in every generation), but this particular quality was found in few, if in any other men. The fourth quality was a willingness to sacrifice all in order to follow Christ. Many were looking for the Messiah, but few were actually ready to follow Him. Few if any others would pay the cost of giving up their businesses and of immediately following Jesus. But these men were willing to follow Jesus, and they did follow Him.

Thought 1. Few people have a strong vision — a vision so strong that they are willing to pay any price to follow Jesus. Giving up their profession or business, home or environment, family or friends is just too costly. They lack the vision.

Mat 10:37-39 “Anyone who loves his father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves his son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; and anyone who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.”

Luke 14:33 “In the same way, any of you who does not give up everything he has cannot be my disciple.”

Phil 3:8 What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ.

Thought 2. Jesus calls a person to a life of work, not to a life of ease and comfort. He calls a person to invest his life, not to waste his life.

Luke 9:23-24 Then he said to them all: “If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will save it.”

John 9:4 “As long as it is day, we must do the work of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work.”

1 Cor 4:2 Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful.

Eccl 9:10 Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might, for in the grave, where you are going, there is neither working nor planning nor knowledge nor wisdom.

Thought 3. Note that the primary call is to become “fishers of men,” not to become teachers, preachers, counsellors, administrators, builders, fund raisers or anything else. Yet, how easily we obscure and camouflage the evangelistic ministry of the church.

Mat 28:19-20 “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” (see Mt.20:28)

Mark 16:15 He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation.”

Luke 19:10 “For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost.”

John 20:21 Again Jesus said, “Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.”

Acts 1:8 “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

2 Tim 2:2-3 And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others. Endure hardship with us like a good soldier of Christ Jesus.

III. *Mark 01:19* The Collaborative Nature of the Disciples

The disciples of Jesus were collaborative men. They were brothers, and yet they were working together. The fact that they were working together says at least three things.

1. They had good parents who had taught them to love and care for one another.
2. They came from a closely knit family, a family that worked together.
3. They followed in the steps of their parents’ teaching, maintaining a brotherly spirit throughout life.

Thought 1. The disciples’ brotherly, collaborative spirit shows us three things.

- 1) The need for a brotherly spirit: the kind of spirit Christ desires of His followers. The kind of kingdom Christ is building is a kingdom of followers with a brotherly spirit.

Mat 22:39 And the second is like it: “Love your neighbour as yourself.”

John 15:12 “My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you.” (see John 13:35; 1 Pet. 1:22)

Rom 12:10 Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honour one another above yourselves.

2) The need for reaching families: brothers and sisters reaching each other.

John 1:41-42 *The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, “We have found the Messiah” (that is, the Christ). And he brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, “You are Simon son of John. You will be called Cephas” (which, when translated, is Peter).*

John 4:53 *Then the father realized that this was the exact time at which Jesus had said to him, “Your son will live.” So he and all his household believed.*

Acts 16:15 *When she and the members of her household were baptised, she invited us to her home. “If you consider me a believer in the Lord,” she said, “come and stay at my house.” And she persuaded us.*

Acts 16:30-31 *He then brought them out and asked, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” They replied, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved — you and your household.”*

3) The need for parents to train up their children in the way they should go (Eph. 6:14; Col. 3:20-21).

Deu 6:7 *Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.*

Prov 22:6 *Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it.*

Eph 6:4 *Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.*

IV. Mark 01:20 The Unique Nature of the Disciples

The disciples of Jesus were successful, but sacrificing and considerate men. Zebedee and his sons, James and John, were successful businessmen. Note: the sons left their father with “hired men.” Perhaps this is the reason John was able to enter the palace of the High Priest when Jesus was being tried for treason (Jn. 18:15f). He probably provided fish for the palace.

Note two significant facts about what is said.

1. James and John, despite their success as fellow workers with their father, sacrificed their part of the business. They were either present owners or would be future owners by inheritance. They gave it all up to follow Jesus. This, too, was a rare quality found in few persons.
2. James and John were considerate to their father. They did not leave him alone; they would have never done that! They cared for him; they left him with “hired men.”

Thought 1. How many would sacrifice their inheritance to follow Jesus?

Mat 6:21 *“For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”*

Mark 10:21 *Jesus looked at him and loved him. “One thing you lack,” he said. “Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.”*

Mat 19:29 *And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or fields for my sake will receive a hundred times as much and will inherit eternal life.*

Thought 2. How many adults care enough for their parents to see to it that they have plenty of help in tending their affairs? The kind of person Jesus calls is a considerate person.

Mark 7:10 *For Moses said, ‘Honour your father and your mother,’ and, ‘Anyone who curses his father or mother must be put to death.’*

1 Tim 5:4 *But if a widow has children or grandchildren, these should learn first of all to put their religion into practice by caring for their own family and so repaying their parents and grandparents, for this is pleasing to God.*

1 Tim 5:8 *If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.*

Lev 19:32 *“Rise in the presence of the aged, show respect for the elderly and revere your God. I am the Lord.” ■*