

21st Century Nets

Mark 1:14-20

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Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, and saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news.'

As Jesus passed along the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake—for they were fishermen. And Jesus said to them, 'Follow me and I will make you fish for people.' And immediately they left their nets and followed him.

As he went a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John, who were in their boat mending the nets. Immediately he called them; and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men, and followed him.

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Do you really think that is the way that it happened?

Did Simon and Peter, James and John really just see Jesus walking by the shoreline while they were cleaning out their tackle-boxes and decide right there on the spot to drop everything and follow when Jesus called?

That's what Mark tells us. About Simon and Peter: "*Immediately* they left their nets and followed him." About James and John: "*Immediately*, [Jesus] called them; and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men, and followed him."

Maybe it's just the way that Mark tells the story. Mark is the shortest of the gospels. Mark speeds through the details. There's no story of Jesus' birth in Mark. No Sermon on the Mount. No appearances of Jesus after the resurrection, even. Mark just seems like he is in a hurry. Maybe that's why he tells the story this way.

But then again, if you read the other three gospels it seems that those whom Jesus calls to follow him have this same tendency to drop what they are doing...immediately...and go.

Maybe James and John and Simon and Andrew decided to follow Jesus because they were sick and tired of fishing. Who wouldn't want to walk away from a lifestyle that required them to wake up before the sun and chase after slimy and stinky fish? I have always had this assumption that the disciples that Jesus called were of a certain station in life. That is to say, I have always thought the disciples were poor.

Sure, dropping everything and deciding to become a disciple of Jesus is admirable, but (if I am being honest and exposing my own ignorance) how hard it is for someone who doesn't have much to decide to give that up?

When it comes to following Jesus, the story that has always haunted me is that of the Rich Young Ruler. You know, the man who comes before Jesus, seeking to follow and to have eternal life. He asks Jesus what he must do. Jesus tells him to follow the commandments. The young man smiles...he's kept them...he's loved his neighbor as himself. Then Jesus says, "go, sell your possessions, and give your money to the poor. Then, come and follow me." And the young man walks away, grieving, because he had many possessions.

That's the story about following Jesus that haunts me because it is the one with which I most resonate. And, in a strange way, it is also a story that comforts me – because it proves that rich – or upper middle class – or upwardly mobile people aren't as radical as the riff raff that ended up following Jesus around during his ministry. And that knowledge kind of lets me off the hook.

This week I discovered that my assumptions have been wrong. Read this morning's scripture closely. When James and John walked off after Jesus they left behind their boat, their father, and their hired help. I wouldn't say that I am an expert in the economics of ancient Palestine, but what I do know is that in a feudal society with Emperors and Kings there wasn't much of a middle class. James and John not only owned a small business, they had a work force to help them run their business. Compared to the rest of the residents of Galilee, James and John's tax bracket was pretty high.

And when Jesus called them, they left it all behind. Immediately.

DIDN'T JUST GET A NEW JOB – THEY GOT A WHOLE NEW WAY OF LIFE.
JESUS TOOK WHAT THEY WERE AND USED IT FOR THE KINGDOM

THERE IS SOMETHING IN YOU THAT YOU HAVE – THAT YOU ALREADY HOLD –
THAT YOU POSSES. YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE A PREACHER OR A MISSIONARY TO
BE CALLED.

FISH FOR PEOPLE – BRING MORE INTO THE FOLD.

EVANGELISM – WHY?

YOU CATCH 'EM – I'LL CLEAN 'EM!

DOESN'T WORK THAT WAY ANYMORE

BOB MANEELE – WALKING THE NEIGHBORHOOD

FRANCES BROWN – WARD McKEITHAN

IMPORTANCE OF INVITATION

SITTING ON AIRPLANE – WHAT DO YOU DO?

CAN'T TAKE FOR GRANTED THAT PEOPLE WANT TO COME TO CHURCH OR
SEE THE POINT IN IT

SHANE CLAIBORNE – EVANGELISM IS “FASCINATING PEOPLE INTO A LOVE OF
GOD”

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

WHY WOULD YOU FOLLOW? GIVE UP YOUR LIFE? (21st Century Nets)