



July 28 & 29, 2018
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Chapel Hill Presbyterian Church

Fishers of Men Matthew 4:18-20

Hi, everyone! I'm Pastor Megan, and we know summer's a time when we have a lot of visitors, so let me introduce myself. My husband, Larry and I, have been pastors here for 6 years. We are both kids of veterans, so nailing down where we're from isn't easy. But we've claimed the Pacific NorthWest. Any other PNW immigrants here?

I work part-time here at Chapel Hill and full-time at home with a toddler named Reed. I've always heard people say that their kids are their shadows, but Reed is rarely behind me. If anything, I'm *his* shadow! I follow him around, running behind him, all the time. I am always hearing, "Run, Mommy, Run!" "Come play with me!" I'm busy running to catch up!

So I'm a pastor and a mom, and I would describe myself as a follower of Jesus. I use that title, Follower of Jesus, instead of Christian, intentionally. If I use the word, Christian, most of the world has already decided who I am, for good or for ill. It's a term that comes with a lot of history and even politics. When you hear me say, I'm a "follower of Jesus" I want it to stir up a curiosity, a new image for you. It's the image of me in the shadow of Jesus as he's walking ahead, going where he is going, and wanting to be just like him.

Today we each have an invitation from Jesus to follow him, to take on the title, "Follower of Jesus." I'm going to let this video introduce our story. I love this video because it brings together a couple of the stories from this series Life on the Water. Let's watch.

Today's story is that last little bit of the story from Matthew 4. Open your Bibles to page 809 and we'll read those couple of verses. Matthew 4, beginning with verse 18:

While walking by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon (who is 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.

Will you read that invitation from Jesus out loud with me? Verse 19: "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men."

This one verse is critical to us here at Chapel Hill, because this one sentence is how we define who a disciple of Jesus is, who a follower of Jesus is. Someone who follows Jesus has answered the invitation, "Follow me." A follower of Jesus is someone Jesus is making into someone new. Jesus says to his followers, "I will make you." And what are we being made into? **Fishers of men.** A follower of Jesus is someone who is a fisher of men, someone who is on mission with Jesus.

Follow me is a Head decision to believe Jesus is who he says he is, and start letting him lead your life. Stop doing life in your way and do your whole life in the way of Jesus. So can you put your hands on your head like this?

I will make you is a Heart transformation, letting Jesus change you from one kind of person into another. So can you put your hands over your heart like this?

Fishers of men is a Hands action where you start doing life on Jesus' mission, to tell people of God's very real presence among us and of his love for him. So can you put your hands out like this?

Follow me Let me share some of what Pastor Larry called my "origin story." I became a follower of Jesus at a summer camp in fifth grade. Who has been to summer camp this year? Is summer camp part of anyone else's story about how they came to know God? It might not look like that was the moment when I first became a follower of Jesus. I had gone to church my whole life. My mom played piano, and so I sat in the choir loft— it was in the back then— on the front row for 2 services, the whole service, all the way through middle school. I knew all the Bible stories. I knew the staff by name. I knew God loved me. That's one of the beautiful things about what it means to be a Presbyterian. We emphasize strongly that Jesus loves us and calls us long before we ever decide ourselves that we are going to love God back.

But at summer camp, I decided that I wanted to love God back. Jesus asks us to follow him. He wants us to decide, to make a mental decision to say yes, God is true. Jesus is God. I believe that. And He is the one I want to follow. I like where God is going. I believe he has the way to make all things right that are wrong, and where he's going, I want to go, too. I'm going to follow Jesus.

That's a decision you need to make. Will you stop going the way you want to go? Stop treating people the way you think they should be treated and start loving them like Jesus? Stop spending money the way you want to spend it? Will you open your calendar for the week and say, Jesus, is this the way you want me to spend my time? And if it's not, will you follow him? Would you put your hands back on your head for me? (Thank you for humoring me.) Have you decided to follow Jesus?

Jesus calls out to some friends catching fish and says to them— will you stop in this line of work and follow me? learn from me? go do miracles with me? feed people with me? will you follow me?

Kids, now is where I want you to have that boat we gave your parents. In the Family Life Letter- that front page of your bulletin, I asked you to think about where you will be at 10am tomorrow. Can you think about that again now? Where will you be Monday morning at 10am? What will you be doing? Who will you be with? I want you to draw that. Jesus gives you the invitation to follow him all the time! When these fishermen were invited by Jesus to follow him, they were fishing. If you were Simon, you'd draw fish on your boat, because you'd be fishing. You might draw legos or the pool, Grandma's house or a doctor's office. Where will you be tomorrow? Take time to draw that and think about Jesus inviting you to follow him even there.

After Jesus called the fishermen in the boat, they just dropped their nets. We don't have any recorded verbal response. I, personally would have a lot of questions, and maybe you would, too. Like, does that include....? Can I just do this first? But what if I can't? What if I'm not good at the things you do?

All our unanswered questions are answered in Jesus' next promise:

I will make you. That heart transformation. Jesus is going to change us. Those of you who want to follow Jesus, want to find his way, Jesus promises— I'm going to change you. I like the way The Message translation of the Bible says this. It says, "Come with me. I'll make a new kind of fisherman out of you. I'll show you how to catch men and women instead of perch and bass."

I told you I decided to follow Jesus when I was in fifth grade. I don't think I let Jesus make good on this promise to change me until college. So what that meant was that I had a lot of years with a lot of head knowledge about Jesus. I wanted to follow him! It's just that the only place I knew Jesus was in church and in the Bible, so I got really good at both! And you know what that made me? Self-righteous and proud. I thought I knew God really well, but there was a lot Jesus wanted to change in me.

That started coming out on a mission trip my freshman year of college. I know Olivia Lott just got back from a mission trip to Poland. I bet you're not the same person, are you? It changed me, that trip and that team. See, I had a real problem with gossip. I liked being in the know, and I liked people to know I was in the know, and I didn't mind exaggerating to have an audience. That sounds ugly, doesn't it? It is! Jesus wanted to change me. And so I surrendered again at the end of that trip thanks to the bold, and loving confrontation of my teammate. I committed again to following Jesus, and he made good on this promise that he will make me. He will change me. Pastor Larry brought that out last week, too. Remember his question, Do you want to change? Jesus can take us and form us into people that look like him.

Can you put your hand over your heart? Are you a follower of Jesus? Is he changing you?

Jesus isn't changing us just for the sake of changing us. Jesus isn't merely the best self-help, self-discovery plan out there. He doesn't change you so that you do you— better! He changes you, remakes you for a very important mission. He remakes you so that you do you for the sake of everyone else. Jesus says, "Come with me. I'll make a new kind of fisherman out of you."

Fishers of Men. Jesus wants Simon and Andrew to understand that they're now on his mission. He wants them to go and catch men. That's a metaphor, a picture, for how he wants them to go and share the love of God with the whole world. He wants Simon and Andrew and us to go and get people that are drowning in their sin, separated from God, and catch them up and gather them together, share God's love with them and let them know that they belong in God's family!

I'm glad Jesus called fishermen so that we could have that image of people being saved out of darkness and brought up into the light and into a community. That's what the Gospel does! That's the Message that those who follow Jesus and are being changed by him bring to the world! You were lost, but you're found. God's caught you. He's got you. He loves you. You're safe and secure for eternity with him! Jesus transformed Simon and Andrew so that they could go out into the world with that message!

And because they were fishing, Jesus used fishing as the image to tell them that. But had Jesus called a bunch of people building a house together, I believe he could have said, "Follow me! And I will make a new kind of builder out of you. I'll show you how to build the kingdom of God!" To a group of parents he could have said, "Follow me! And I will make a new kind of parent out of you. I'll show you how to grow up people into God's family." Do you see?

God wants to take you— where you are — your job, your passions, your loves, your hobbies, and he wants to make a new [fill in the blank] out of you. One that shares the message of the Gospel exactly as *you* would where *you* are.

God is doing in that in the life of Reese Carlson, our pastoral intern. He's been leading us in worship, and now I want him to share with you how he has answered God's call to Follow Jesus and let Jesus make a new football player out of him. Come on up, Reese.

[Reese interview] Reese shares his story using this framework: Follow me, and I will make a new kind of _____ out of you. I'll show you how to _____ instead of _____.

Imagine Jesus were to walk by tomorrow and say, **Follow me, and I will make a new kind of _____ out of you. I'll show you how to _____ instead of _____.** Could you follow him without asking questions? Could you drop what you are doing?

Jesus will likely give that job, that task and those people right back to you. We know Simon and Andrew didn't give up fishing. They spent a lot of time with Jesus in boats and eating fish. But Jesus gives us back

who he has made us to be with a new joy, a new love, a greater sense of urgency and eternity than you would otherwise begin tomorrow with. He gives YOU back —for the sake of others. You do you — in order to share God with everyone else.

Can you hold out your hands for me? Do you want that? Decide today to heed Jesus' call. We believe Jesus is still calling. He's calling everyone. Will you choose to follow him? Can you repeat this after me with our motions? Follow me, and I will make you, fishers of men.

If you want to make that decision today, I want you to take one of those grey connect cards (out of your bulletin or from the pew in front of you) and on the back in the prayer requests, write — I want to follow Jesus.