

Jesus Calls Us Individually and Corporately

Matthew 4:19

Thesis: We are a people who are responding to the call of Jesus upon us individually and corporately. The call of Jesus is an invitation to himself, to transformation, and to his mission.

Text: Matthew 4:19

Matthew 4:19 is one of my favorite passages of Scripture. For me, it succinctly summarizes the good news of the kingdom of God. During last week's UBA Resilient Pastors Retreat, God put another piece together for me from this verse.

"Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will make you fishers of men" (Matthew 4:19).

1. **Invitation:** Jesus calls us to himself. *"Come, follow me."*
 - a. Jesus invites us to come near to him, a person, and to follow him, a person.
 - b. It is an invitation to a relationship that is personal, intimate, and organic (John 15:5).
 - i. *I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing (John 15:5).*
 - c. It is a call to relationship, not just religious duty. *"Come, follow me."*
 - d. It is a call to relationship, not just isolated individuals. Jesus issued the call to individuals and placed them into a committed community of followers of Jesus.
 - e. **The invitation from Jesus is to get close to him, watching what he does and listening to what he says** (Matthew 4:23-25; 9:35-38).
 - i. **Then, we go out to say and to do what our God is saying and doing.**
 - ii. *Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people. 24 News about him spread all over Syria, and people brought to him all who were ill with various diseases, those suffering severe pain, the demon-possessed, those having seizures, and the paralyzed, and he healed them. 25 Large crowds from Galilee, the Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea and the region across the Jordan followed him (Matthew 4:23-25).*

- iii. Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. 36 When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. 37 Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. 38 Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field” (Matthew 9:35-38).
- f. **Jesus is calling you by name** (John 10:3-5). **God the Father is drawing you** (John 6:44). **The Father is looking for you and is ready to run to meet you** (Luke 15:20).
 - i. “The watchman opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. 4 When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice. 5 But they will never follow a stranger; in fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognize a stranger’s voice” (John 10:3-5).
 - ii. “No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him, and I will raise him up at the last day” (John 6:44).
 - iii. “When he came to his senses, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired men have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! 18 I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. 19 I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired men.’ 20 So he got up and went to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him” (Luke 15:17-20).
- g. **How do you know if you are responding to the invitation of Jesus?**
 - i. Are you listening and responding to God’s voice?
 - ii. Are you yielding, letting go, and surrendering to the Lord?
 - iii. Are you turning around and finding your home in God?
 - iv. Or, are you just going through the motions?
 1. We engage in and pursue relationship with the Lord through spiritual practices which are done relationally, intentionally, and intensely.
- 2. **Transformation: Jesus transforms us.** “I will make you...”
 - a. **We become what we behold** (2 Corinthians 3:18).
 - i. And we all, with unveiled face, beholding [as in a mirror NASB] the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit (2 Corinthians 3:18 ESV).

- ii. **So, let's get close to the Lord, let's listen to him, let's behold him, and let's seek to align with his ways, words, and works.**
- b. **When we behold Beauty, we are transformed (Psalm 27:4).**
 - i. *One thing I ask of the LORD, this is what I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and to seek him in his temple (Psalm 27:4).*
 - ii. **We are transformed even more as we realize that Beauty considers us beauty.**
 1. *"Dark am I, yet lovely" (SS 1:5). That is how God sees you (SS 2:14... "your face is lovely").*
 - iii. You might know this truth in your head that God loves you and thinks you are beautiful.
 1. But **do you feel** his pleasure, joy, and passion for you in your heart or inner person, not just in your head?
- c. **How do you know if you are being transformed?** (What are some markers, core competencies, or outcomes?)
 - i. **Awareness of God:** outcome of growing in your intimacy with God.
 - ii. **Authenticity with God and others:** outcome of growing in your ability to embrace community by being open and honest with others intentionally and frequently.
 - iii. **Alignment** with and **action** around the way of Jesus: outcome of growing in your capacity to join Jesus on his mission together with others.
 - iv. **Growing in your ability to love** others, even your enemies.
 - v. **Growing in emotional maturity.** Are you able to individuate, yet stay connected with others?
 - vi. **Making progress.** Look back over the past few years and see if you are making progress and where you are growing, changing, or becoming.
3. **Mission:** Jesus invites us to join him on his mission with others. "...fishers of men."
 - a. **Jesus has a mission.**
 - i. **He came to do and to say** what his Father is doing and saying (John 5:19, 8:28-30).
 - ii. **He always does the will of his Father** because he always pleases the Father (John 8:29).
 - b. **The Father sent Jesus on a mission:**
 - i. He came *to seek and to save that which was lost (Luke 19:10).*
 - ii. He came to restore humanity to its intended design and purpose in God.

- iii. He came to save the lost, deliver the prisoner, heal the sick, and encourage the discouraged (Luke 4:18).
- c. **Jesus sends us on his mission:** *“As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you [y’all] (John 20:21).”*
- d. **How do you know if you are growing in your capacity to join Jesus on his mission?**
 - i. **Are you developing new skills and capacities** to partner with Jesus on his mission together with others (2 Corinthians 10:3-6).
 - 1. **Skill of listening:** active reflection, inquiry; vs. debate and right/ wrong or agree/ disagree listening.
 - 2. **Skill of discerning the voice of the Spirit through dialogue.**
 - 3. **Skill of dealing with anxiety in systems.**
 - ii. **Are you partnering with Jesus and others in your spheres of influence?**
 - 1. to serve the poor, the marginalized, and those in need;
 - 2. to work for the common good;
 - 3. and to restore individuals, social systems, communities, and nations to God’s design.

Group identity:

We are a people who are responding to the call of Jesus upon us individually and corporately. The call of Jesus is an invitation to himself, to transformation, and to his mission.