



Have You Left Your Nets

“Now as Jesus was walking by the Sea of Galilee, He saw two brothers, Simon who was 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. 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.”

Matthew 4:18-22

Every day we must make choices regarding who or what to follow. We follow our favorite sports team, we follow our industry for work, we follow the latest trends in clothing, haircuts, camping gear, technical outerwear, guns, etc. - we even follow each other on Facebook. There is not enough time in the day to follow everything we are interested in, so we typically follow the things that are most important to us. Simon, Andrew, James and John are following the ways of fishing when Jesus shows up in their lives, and we read that they left their nets, boat, and boss (father) to follow Jesus. When Jesus shows up in our lives, we face a similar decision – we must from that point on choose who or what to follow.

When Jesus shows up, some of us are called to actually set everything down, walk away from it all, and follow Jesus by going into full time ministry. But most of us are called to follow Jesus while remaining in our current lives. We have families, jobs, responsibilities – all kinds of things that we must continue to do, while we follow Jesus. This too is following Jesus, and in some respects it may be harder. What does that mean? What does that look like? Are we keeping one foot in the boat while we follow Jesus?

The first thing we notice when Jesus shows up, is that the reaction is immediate. There is no debate, no let me think about it and I'll get back to you tomorrow, no let me ask my parents or friends, no let me get advice from my mentor or rabbi, no let me check the scripture. It says they immediately left their nets and followed Him. The first thing we see is that our response is immediate and without debate. The Lord has shown up in our lives, and we step away from whatever we are doing and follow Him. It is that dramatic when Jesus shows up in our life, and we know it. There is no debate. Our lives change instantly, and we are never the same from that point on.

Secondly, we leave. But if we do not go into full time ministry, what does that mean? It means that our heart has left whatever things we held dear, and it is now set on Jesus. Things that used to be important to us have now faded to gray. We may still do them, but they are not the reason for our existence any more. They are not our life, He is. We no longer strive for fame and fortune in our work, but we strive to know Him more fully and bring honor and glory to him in our work. We are still doing the same things, but we are doing them for a different reason, for a different person. And there lies the key.

To leave our nets and follow Jesus is to leave our self-centered lives of self-service and self-absorption, and to move into a Jesus-centered life of self-sacrifice and service to others. It is to wake up to the vanity, emptiness, and futility of our lives that we lived apart from Him – the meaningless of it all ([Ecclesiastes](#)),

and see for the first time that for our lives to truly have meaning we must live for Him, follow Him, chase hard after Him. It is to stop living for temporal things and to start living for eternal things. It is to walk away from the love of self and follow Him in the love of God and the love of others. The closer we get to Him, the more we see this love show up and express itself in our daily lives. We get to where we feel the love of Jesus for our family, our friends, for people over the phone, for people in the other cars in traffic, for complete strangers even. The love of Jesus fills us more and more each day as we walk away from our nets and follow Him.

What are you living for these days? What are you following? Where do you spend your time? What do you spend your money on? What do you lie awake thinking about? What do you do with your spare time? Where does your mind go when it can wander? What really matters to you? What do you watch on TV or the internet? If you could do anything, what would you do? If you could be anything, what would you be? What would you do if you suddenly had a billion dollars? What is it that draws you away from following Jesus? What is His main competitor in your life? Are you trying to follow Jesus with one foot in the boat, or have you completely walked away from the promises of this world to follow Him with all of your heart? What is your true desire in life? The answer to these questions reveals to us what we are truly following, regardless of what or who we believe we are following. Have you left your nets to follow Jesus, or are you focused on casting your net into the sea, hoping to make that great catch? Is Jesus the most important thing in your life, or are you still in the boat, mending your nets? Have you left your nets? When Jesus shows up today, I encourage you to follow Him immediately - your life will never be the same.

Lord God Almighty, we come before You in Jesus name, and confess to you that we have not completely left our nets to follow You. We still find ourselves caught up in the things of the world, the deceitfulness of riches, sinful thoughts and behavior. We struggle with selfishness, greed, lust, pride, arrogance, laziness, the love of comfort, and a host of other things that draw us away from following you. We pray that each day you would walk by and call us away from our nets. Call us away from these things. Help us to focus and refocus our lives on You all day, every day. Keep us from getting carried away by lust, the deceitfulness of the things of this world, by job success, by our hobbies and sports teams, by pride, and the many other things that draw us away from following You. Teach us to set our desire on You, on knowing You, on walking with You, on following You. We pray that you would show up today, and call us away from our nets, and that we would immediately get up and follow you. We ask this in Jesus name, amen.

“Then Jesus said to His disciples, “If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and will then repay every man according to his deeds.”

Matthew 16:24-27

“My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.”

John 10:27