

Introduction

In 2010 I posted on Facebook that I was going to plant the East Mountain Vineyard Church. One of the pastors I know wrote me and asked why I was going to do that. This particular pastor had seen his fair share of difficulties that a pastor goes through and wanted to know why I was going to do that. Those that have planted a church know the difficulties of planting a church. It is hard work. There are a variety of things that need to be done.

A church planter must have good organizational skills. Most church planters need to be able to work a secular job while doing the church plant, as there is generally not enough funds for the pastor to be supported by the church. Most church planter wives also work to help support the family. Even if the wife does not work, it is vitally important for her to be onboard. A church planter must be visionary and able to invite people to come. A church planter must know that he is called to do the work, because there will be plenty of discouraging moments. A church planter must be able to preach. A church planter must be able to develop leaders. Church plants that have a leadership development plan are 250% more successful. A church planter often must lead worship, so having some musical abilities are very helpful. Church planters must be pioneers that forge new paths.

So, when people ask me why I would think about planting a church, there are some good reasons to ask that question. The fact is that I love church plants. I love the relationships that you develop in church plants. I love the fellowship. I love to train and develop leaders. I love to lay foundations. I love to help people discover and fulfill the calling on their lives.

Paul was that way. In 1 Corinthians 3:6, he said, “I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth.” Paul would go into an area and preach the gospel. He would train and raise up leaders, and then release them into ministry. It was part of the calling that he had been given by God. It is a unique call.

(1 Cor 3:6) “I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth.”

What does this have to do with our text? Jesus was visionary. Jesus laid foundations. Jesus preached the gospel of the kingdom. In our text this week, Jesus is beginning to gather His disciples. He called them to follow Him. He cast vision, telling them that He would make them fishers of men. He told them that He was going to mentor them and train them. We don't normally think of Jesus as a church planter, but He is the head of the church. He role-modeled what church planters must do. They preach the gospel, invite people to follow, cast vision, work hard, train leaders, and stay focused on the work in front of them.

This week we are looking at Mark 1:16-20, and it is about Jesus beginning to gather His disciples. Jesus called Andrew and Peter and they left their nets to follow Jesus. Jesus called to James and John, and they left their father and the hired hands and began to follow Jesus. We will look at the call to become a disciple and the response to become a disciple. Let's read our text.

Jesus Begins To Gather His Disciples

1. The Call
2. The Response

(Mark 1:16-20) “As He was going along by the Sea of Galilee, He saw Simon and Andrew, the brother of Simon, casting a net in the sea; for they were fishermen. {17} And Jesus said to them, “Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men.” {18} Immediately they left their nets and followed Him. {19} Going on a little farther, He saw James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, who were also in the boat mending the nets. {20} Immediately He called them; and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants, and went away to follow Him.”

1. The Call

a. The Call to Simon and Andrew (Mark 1:16-17)

We read that as Jesus was going along by the Sea of Galilee, He saw Simon and Andrew casting a net in the sea, for they were fishermen. He called out to them, “Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men.” He was speaking in a language that they clearly understood. They would become those who fished and caught men. They would be fishing for souls. While Jesus is interested in every aspect of our lives, He is interested in souls. In Peter’s second letter he wrote that the Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.” That is still God’s heart today. He does not want any to perish. He cares about souls and He wants to have fellowship with all. I have a problem with the theology that says that God purposes for some people to spend an eternity in hell, when this verse tells me that His heart is that no one perishes. God’s will is for all to come to repentance. He wants us to preach the gospel to all men. He wants all of us to become fishers of men. We may not have the gift or call of an evangelist, but all of us are to be fishers of men.

(2 Pet 3:9) “The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.”

Jesus first called Andrew and his brother, Peter. They were along the Sea of Galilee, where they lived and worked. I do not believe this was Jesus’ first encounter with them. In John 1, we see that the day after Jesus was baptized, He met Andrew. If you recall, John baptized Jesus in the Jordan, near Bethany (John 1:28). I want to pick it up in verse 35.

(John 1:35-45) “Again the next day John was standing with two of his disciples, {36} and he looked at Jesus as He walked, and *said, “Behold, the Lamb of God!” {37} The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. {38} And Jesus turned and saw them following, and *said to them, “What do you seek?” They said to Him, “Rabbi (which translated means Teacher), where are You staying?” {39} He said to them, “Come, and you will see.” So they came and saw where He was staying; and they stayed with Him that day, for it was about the tenth hour. {40} One of the two who heard John *speak* and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother. {41} He found first his own brother Simon and said to him, “We have found the Messiah” (which translated means Christ). {42} He brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, “You are Simon the son of John; you shall be called Cephas” (which is translated Peter). {43} The next day He purposed to go into Galilee, and He *found Philip. And Jesus said to him, “Follow Me.” {44} Now Philip was from Bethsaida, of the city of Andrew and Peter. {45} Philip found Nathanael and said to him, “We have found Him of whom Moses in the Law and *also* the Prophets wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.”

We see in the text that Andrew was a disciple of John the Baptist. He heard John declare, “Behold the Lamb of God!” Andrew and the other disciple began to follow Jesus. Jesus saw them following and asked them, “What do you seek?” They wanted to find out where Jesus was staying and they went with Him and stayed with Him that day. In verse 41, Andrew found his brother Simon (Peter) and told him that he had found the Messiah. Then, Andrew brought Peter to Jesus. Then, the next day they went to Galilee, where He found Philip and Nathanael. So, Jesus was just south of Galilee when He was baptized. Based on that account, I believe that Jesus called these disciples and then went into the wilderness to be tempted. When He came back, He started preaching and teaching the cities in Galilee. There is a little ambiguity about the exact order and sequence of the events. But, the point I wanted to make here is that Jesus met Andrew and another disciple of John’s at the time He was baptized. Then, Jesus purposed to go to Galilee. I believe Jesus was purposeful in calling these disciples. He did not just call anyone to be His disciple. He purposed to go to Galilee because He was after some particular men to disciple.

b. The Call To James and John (Mark 1:19-20)

After Jesus called to Andrew and Peter, He saw James and John, and He called them. It is interesting that He called Andrew and Peter, and then James and John. He called two different sets of brothers. I believe that there was a real sense of connection. There were family connections; they were sets of brothers. There were work connections; they were all fishermen. They probably all knew each other, being that the town was not that large and they all worked in the same trade. There were lots of connections. In small groups, and Jesus’ twelve disciples were a small group of men that He was going to personally invest in. It really helps to have a people that connect with one another.

(Mark 1:19-20) “Going on a little farther, He saw James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, who were also in the boat mending the nets. {20} Immediately He called them; and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants, and went away to follow Him.”

Before we move on to the responses, I want to look at the call. In Matthew 12:30 and Luke 11:23, Jesus said, “He who is not with Me is against Me; and he who does not gather with Me scatters.” One of the traits of disciples is that they should be gathering. We are all called to make disciples. We should be gathering people for Sunday services. We should be gathering people for our Friday night services. We should be gathering people for Men’s Bible studies. We should be gathering people for one-on-one meetings. A lot of discipleship happens in small groups and in individual meetings.

(Matt 12:30) “He who is not with Me is against Me; and he who does not gather with Me scatters.”

(Luke 11:23) “He who is not with Me is against Me; and he who does not gather with Me, scatters.”

The key question is are you excited? Are you excited about Christ? Are you excited about the answers to prayer in your life? Are you excited about what you are learning? Are you excited about your relationship with Christ? Are you excited about your church? If you are excited, you will tell others.

The woman at the well was excited because Christ had told her about her life. She was excited that she had found the Messiah. So, what did she do? She went and told everyone. She said, “Come...” She was telling people to follow her to Christ. They went out of the city and from that city many of the Samaritans believed in Him because of the word of the woman who testified. I have said for a long time that too many evangelism programs are just that, programs. I think effective evangelism comes from people being excited about Jesus.

(John 4:28-30, 39) “So the woman left her waterpot, and went into the city and *said to the men, {29} “Come, see a man who told me all the things that I *have* done; this is not the Christ, is it?” {30} They went out of the city, and were coming to Him.... {39} From that city many of the Samaritans believed in Him because of the word of the woman who testified, “He told me all the things that I *have* done.”

Take the leper that Jesus healed later in Mark 1. Jesus sternly warned him and sent him away. Jesus said, “See that you say nothing to anyone.” But, the leper “went out and began to proclaim it freely and to spread the news around.” Why did the leper share? He told everyone because he had been touched by the Savior. He had been healed of leprosy. He was an outcast and now he was clean and could go back into the community. This man was excited and he told everyone.

(Mark 1:42-45) “Immediately the leprosy left him and he was cleansed. {43} And He sternly warned him and immediately sent him away, {44} and He *said to him, “See that you say nothing to anyone; but go, show yourself to the priest and offer for your cleansing what Moses commanded, as a testimony to them.” {45} But he went out and began to proclaim it freely and to spread the news around, to such an extent that Jesus could no longer publicly enter a city, but stayed out in unpopulated areas; and they were coming to Him from everywhere.”

Here are a few keys to being excited. Spend time with the Lord in prayer, the word, and in worship. Stir up and kindle the fire. When you do these things, you will grow in your love and passion, and you will also get filled with the Holy Spirit. Then, look for opportunities. Pray for opportunities. Ask God to help you be one that calls out to people, “Come follow me.” Take risks and pray for people. Take some invitation cards and pass them out to people.

2. The Response

a. The decision to leave behind their businesses (Mark 1:18)

In verse 18 Andrew and Peter left their nets and followed Christ. Their nets were their business. They were fishermen. They left the security of an income to follow Christ. It is not an easy choice to leave behind the security of a paycheck. They had to trust God to provide for them.

(Mark 1:18) “Immediately they left their nets and followed Him.”

In verse 20, James and John left their business. They were also fishermen and they were busy mending their nets when Jesus called them. Both sets of brothers “immediately” left when Jesus called them. Mark uses that word ten times in this first chapter. The Greek word is “*euthus*,” and it is used 41 times in the Gospel of Mark. It means straightway, right away, or immediately. There is a sense of urgency, purpose, and business to attend to. In these verses, there was no hesitation on the part of Andrew, Peter, James, or John. They left their nets and immediately

began to follow Jesus. They were not sitting on the fence; they had already made up their mind to follow Jesus.

(Mark 1:20) “Immediately He called them; and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants, and went away to follow Him.”

One of the biggest struggles that I had was in my junior year of college. I was at the Southwest Conference championship, which was being held at Waterwood National Golf Course, outside of Huntsville, Texas. The Lord asked me whether I was going to follow Him or pursue golf. I struggled that day and shot the worst score I can ever remember. I was not like the disciples that immediately left their nets. It was a struggle, and I finally surrendered to Christ. I took golf off of the throne of my life and made Jesus Lord. Interestingly enough, the Lord had given me talent as a golfer and He had no intention of making me give up golf. He just wanted to be first place in my life. He allowed me to play twenty years as a professional.

Danny Daniels was a professional musician when the Lord saved him. The Lord gave Danny a similar question. Is it going to be music or Me? I don't know if Danny struggled like I did, but he gave up music to follow Christ. Then, the Lord said to Danny, “Because you were willing to give up music, pick up your guitar. I am going to use your music to minister to many people.” We have to be willing to leave our businesses to become His disciples.

In 1984 I was playing the best golf of my life. My swing was fantastic. My short game was outstanding. I had been in contention eleven times in 1983 on the PGA Tour. I won seven tournaments on other tours in the first five months of 1984. I accidentally tore the tendons in my left shoulder at the Baltimore Open and took some months off to get rehabilitated. I had fully recovered in the beginning of 1985 and was still playing great golf. But, I had an opportunity to be discipled in relational evangelism. The new pastor at Florida Shores Baptist Church was an expert on relational evangelism and he offered to train me and others. I left my nets (my golf clubs) and immediately began to get discipled in relational evangelism and in other areas. There was no floundering or second guessing. This was an immediate decision. I stayed in golf, taking a club pro job to provide for me. Years later, the Lord allowed me to go back on the PGA Tour. We must be willing to follow Christ and leave our nets behind. This is what Andrew, Peter, James, and John did in order to become Jesus' disciples.

b. The decision to leave their families (Mark 1:20)

In verse 20, James and John left their father, Zebedee when they left to follow Jesus. We don't know if they were married, but there is a strong possibility that they were married and had families that they left behind to follow Jesus. In 1 Corinthians 9:5, Paul is defending his rights as an apostle, and he asked a rhetorical question. “Do we not have a right to take along a believing wife, even as the rest of the apostles and the brothers of the Lord and Cephas?” James and John are part of the “rest of the apostles” that had wives. They probably had wives and children. They not only left their business, but they left their father, their mother, their wives, and their children in order to follow Jesus.

(1 Cor 9:5) “Do we not have a right to take along a believing wife, even as the rest of the apostles and the brothers of the Lord and Cephas?”

Our text does not mention that Andrew and Peter left families, but they are included in 1 Corinthians 9, and Peter is specifically mentioned. In Mark 1:30-31, which we will cover next week, Jesus went to Peter's house and his mother-in-law was lying sick with a fever. They spoke to Jesus about her and He healed her, and she began to wait on them. Peter was already married when this event happened. He probably had children at home. So Andrew and Peter were no different than James and John; they left behind their families to follow Jesus.

(Mark 1:30-31) "Now Simon's mother-in-law was lying sick with a fever; and immediately they *spoke to Jesus about her. {31} And He came to her and raised her up, taking her by the hand, and the fever left her, and she waited on them."

In Luke 14:25-33, Jesus spoke to the crowds about the following Him. He did not preach an easy gospel. He said, "If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple." Jesus was calling Andrew, Peter, James and John to be His disciples. They had to love Jesus and put Jesus above their own families in order to become His disciples. God tells us in Ephesians 5 that husbands are to love their wives. In the Ten Commandments we are told to honor our mother and father. Jesus is not telling people to hate their families. We must love our families. But, our love for God must be above any other relationship, even the closest relationships, like our family members. These disciples immediately left their families to become Jesus' disciples.

(Luke 14:25-33) "Now large crowds were going along with Him; and He turned and said to them, {26} "If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple. {27} "Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. {28} "For which one of you, when he wants to build a tower, does not first sit down and calculate the cost to see if he has enough to complete it? {29} "Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who observe it begin to ridicule him, {30} saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish.' {31} "Or what king, when he sets out to meet another king in battle, will not first sit down and consider whether he is strong enough with ten thousand *men* to encounter the one coming against him with twenty thousand? {32} "Or else, while the other is still far away, he sends a delegation and asks for terms of peace. {33} "So then, none of you can be My disciple who does not give up all his own possessions."

In Luke 9:57-62, we have another passage about the requirements of becoming a disciple of Jesus. Someone told Jesus that they were willing to follow Him wherever He went. He told them that the foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head. These four disciples immediately got up and left their nets and their homes to follow Jesus, who had nowhere to lay His head.

(Luke 9:57-62) "As they were going along the road, someone said to Him, "I will follow You wherever You go." {58} And Jesus said to him, "The foxes have holes and the birds of the air *have* nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head." {59} And He said to another, "Follow Me." But he said, "Lord, permit me first to go and bury my father." {60} But He said to him, "Allow the dead to bury their own dead; but as for you, go and proclaim everywhere the kingdom of God." {61} Another also said, "I will follow You, Lord; but first permit me to say good-bye to those at home." {62} But Jesus said to him, "No one, after putting his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."

Another person said that he would also follow Jesus, but he wanted to go and bury his father first. Again, a disciple must be willing to put the Lord above every other relationship, even family members. I have heard preachers talk about this verse and they have said that this man's father was not dead. Their understanding of this is that they were going to wait for their father to die so that they could get the inheritance, and then they would come follow Jesus. A disciple of Jesus has to put Christ above wealth. We must seek first the kingdom of God and all those things will be added.

The third person said to Jesus that he wanted to say good-bye to those at home. Jesus said to him, "No one, after putting his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." The four disciples left their nets immediately and followed Jesus. They did not look back. Their nets and family businesses did not come before following Christ.

Conclusion and Applications

Jesus was bold in asking Andrew, Peter, James, and John to follow Him. Jesus was always gathering people. He told the disciples that He would make them fishers of men. As we seek to model our lives after Christ, are you inviting people to follow you? Are you excited about your relationship with Christ? Are you excited about the things going on in your life? Are you excited about your church? Are you gathering people? God wants all of us to gather with Him.

His disciples had choices to make. They chose to put Christ before every other relationship, including their fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, and wives. Is following Christ more important than any other relationship in your life? Is He preeminent in your life? The disciples chose to follow Christ above their business and above having a home to go to every night? Have you chosen to put Christ ahead of work? Have you put Christ ahead of school? Have you put Christ above every desire in your life? If any of these things pertain to you, I ask You to repent and tell God that you want to make Him Lord and preeminent in your life.

Perhaps you have never made a decision to follow Christ. The kingdom of God is at hand. No matter where you are or where you are headed in your life, I encourage you this morning to turn to God and make Him Lord of your life. The Bible says that if we believe in our heart that God raised Jesus from the dead and confess Jesus as Lord, we will be saved. If you have never prayed to receive Christ and confessed Him as Lord of your life, may this be the day that you become His disciple. He is calling to you and asking you to follow Him and become His disciple. If that is your desire this morning, pray with me.

Jesus, thank You for dying for my sins and for calling me to become Your disciple. This morning I choose to begin following You. I believe that You died for my sins and rose from the dead. I confess You as the Lord of my life this morning. Please forgive me of my sins. Come into my life and help me to become Your disciple and to model my life after Your life. I ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

If that was your prayer this morning, I ask you to let Karen or I know after the service. We would like a chance to pray with you.

Introduction (1 Cor 3:6, Mark 1:16-20)

1. The Call

a. The Call to Simon and Andrew (Mark 1:16-17, 2 Pet 3:9, John 1:35-45)

b. The Call To James and John (Mark 1:19-20, Matt 12:30, Luke 11:23, John 4:28-30, 39, Mark 1:42-45)

2. The Response

a. The decision to leave behind their businesses (Mark 1:18)

b. The decision to leave their families (Mark 1:20, 1:30-31, 1 Cor 9:5, Luke 14:25-33, 9:57-62)

Conclusion and Applications