

The Mind of Christ - Lesson 51

April 22, 2020

Hello; My name is Rod Myers. It is an honor to be able to teach the Christians who make up the Central Church of Christ in Sarasota, Florida. For over a year we have been studying "The Mind of Christ". It's the result of a 7-year study I did from 2010 to 2017. I call this study "Challenger Deep" after the deepest place in the ocean ... over 36,000 feet deep. The Mind of Christ is deep. Thank you for joining us tonight for class on "The Mind of Christ". We've been doing this class actually, for 50 weeks. If you're just getting in on this, we have covered a lot of ground to this point but you are okay because each lesson is pretty much contained and you will be able to get a lot out of it. We are going to be working our way some texts tonight, so let me give you the three texts we'll be using so you can be prepared to refer to them in your Bible.

Mark 1:16-20

¹⁶ 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.

Matthew 4:18-22

¹⁸ 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. ¹⁹ And He *said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men." ²⁰ Immediately they left their nets and followed Him. ²¹ 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. ²² Immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed Him.

Luke 5:1-11

Now it happened that while the crowd was pressing around Him and listening to the word of God, He was standing by the lake of Gennesaret; ² and He saw two boats lying at the edge of the lake; but the fishermen had gotten out of them and were washing their nets. ³ And He got into one of the boats, which was Simon's, and asked him to put out a little way from the land. And He sat down and began teaching the people from the boat. ⁴ When He had finished speaking, He said to Simon, "Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch." ⁵ Simon answered and said, "Master, we worked hard all night and caught nothing, but I will do as You say and let down the nets." ⁶ When they had done this, they enclosed a great quantity of fish, and their nets began to break; ⁷ so they signaled to their partners in the other boat for them to come and help them. And they came and filled both of the boats, so that they began to sink. ⁸ But when Simon Peter saw that, he fell down at Jesus' feet, saying "Go away from me Lord, for I am a sinful man!" ⁹ For amazement had seized him and all his companions because of the catch of fish which they had taken; ¹⁰ and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus

said to Simon, “Do not fear, from now on you will be catching men.” ¹¹ When they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed Him.

There are some slight variations in these Scriptures and the account in Luke is very different from the accounts in Mark and Matthew, but we’ll sort that out as we go through here tonight.

So, the first factual question that I would like to ask concerning this section which is about calling the first disciples, particularly Peter, Andrew, James and John, is ***what were they doing?*** What were Peter, Andrew, James and John, and their father, Zebedee and the hired men doing when Jesus came upon them?

If you read all three of the texts that’s an important question because there are different kinds of sequential things that you have to get into your mind. Matthew says that Peter and Andrew were casting a net into the sea, and Mark says the same thing. But Luke said the occupants of both boats got out and were washing their nets. So, were they ***casting*** their nets or were they ***washing*** their nets? Matthew says that James and John were in the boat with their father mending the nets. Mark says the same thing.

Mark makes it clear that both sets of brothers were in the boat. One said, “casting their nets”; and the other, “mending their nets.” So the fact must be that Jesus first saw them from some distance; that Peter and Andrew were in the boat, maybe getting in a couple of more casts as they came to shore, while James and John were already finished with their casting and they were mending some of their nets before they got out of the boat. At some point, both sets of the brothers got out of their boats and began washing their nets on the shoreline. One of the reasons I am going into that detail is to show you that the gospel accounts will always harmonize if you will just take some time to think through the sequencing of events. Luke makes it clear that there was a crowd of people pressing around Jesus and He was teaching as He approached the fishermen. Perhaps He was moving along, and the crowd was pressing in a little bit more as He got closer to the shoreline.

By the time He arrived at the boats, which were now empty because they were on the shoreline, He was being more and more pressed by the crowds. So Jesus stepped into one of the boats, Peter’s boat, asking Peter if he would push Him out just a little way from the shore, and Jesus used the boat, kind of, as a podium or a platform from which to preach to the crowd. The two sets of brothers are hearing, of course, what is going on as they are washing their nets.

At some point, Jesus dismisses the crowd and he turns His attention to Peter (as found in the book of Luke). He tells Peter to put out into the deep water and to let down his net again. Now, Peter is tired; he’s very reluctant, but out of respect for Jesus, he says, ‘if you say so, I’ll do it.’ He agrees to do it. Remember, this is not Jesus’ first encounter with these men. We won’t go back and look at this section, but if you go back and look at John Chapter 1, you will see a very detailed encounter that He’d already had with them. They had also been exposed to His miracles in Cana, because they went with Him to Cana of Galilee, and also the miracles that He did in Capernaum. So, they had traveled with Him quite a bit up until this point; but when they went back to Galilee, they went back to their fishing business.

Luke continues the encounter with Peter that leads to a large catch of fish which the brothers haul in ... and we'll be looking at that.

In Matthew, it is 'Simon, who was called Peter'; in Mark he is simply called 'Simon', and in Luke it is both 'Simon' and 'Simon Peter'. The only significance is that 'Simon' somewhat predominates the designation for 'Peter' in the early days of the ministry, and then as you begin to go deeply into the ministry of Jesus, 'Peter' is referred to quite a bit more. In Jesus' first encounter with him (in **John 1:42**), that's when Jesus gave him the name 'Peter'. "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)." That was the very first encounter He had with him, but the writers were still using the name Simon in the earlier parts of the ministry. Also, note that Jesus was staying in Capernaum, while Peter and Andrew lived not in Capernaum but in Bethsaida which was about two or three miles down the beach on the Sea of Galilee from where Jesus was staying. Philip was also from Bethsaida according to **John 1:44**.

In Matthew chapter 8 and Mark chapter 1, and in Luke chapter 4, it seems to indicate that Peter's home was in Capernaum, but it doesn't actually say that his home was in Capernaum. It merely says that when they left the synagogue, they went to Simon's house which could have been about 2 or 3 miles away down the beach so it wasn't that far a walk.

The sea was not a sea, actually, but rather a lake. It is called 'Lake Tiberias, or Lake Kinneret and is about 64 square miles, 14 miles long and anywhere from 3 to 7 miles wide. It is about 700 feet below sea level, and it has many mineral springs that feed this lake. The Jordan River also feeds the lake, and it is saline in character. It is bounded by hills on the east up to about 26,000 feet, and about 200 feet deep at its greatest depth. It is a moderately good-sized lake, about the size of Lake Okeechobee in Florida. Kinneret or Chinneret means harp and that is where they get one of the names for the lake because it is harp-shaped or lyre-shaped. It is also named Gennesaret which comes from a plain on the western side of the Sea of Galilee. The Sea of Galilee is also called the Sea of Tiberius in **John 6:1**.

Josephus, in the first Century A. D. reported once that 200 boats had fished the lake during his time, which is a little bit later than this. The lake, *now*, is one of the main sources of drinking water for all of Israel, and it is only a few miles from Nazareth where Jesus grew up. Jesus must have certainly spend a lot of time here, and may possibly have known these fishermen earlier ... even before He started His public ministry.

The use of the term "immediately" you will notice particularly in Mark, although also in Matthew, it makes the following Jesus and leaving their nets kind of impulsive, but as we have said, this is not their first encounter with Jesus. So don't take the word "immediately" to mean they were being "impulsive". They have had many days to listen to Him, to observe His miracles and His actions; so think of the encounters as Jesus' invitation for them to join Him in His mission of ushering in the Kingdom of God.

Matthew and Mark give the shorter version of the events of that day, and Luke concentrates more on the encounter that Peter had with Jesus. Jesus' invitation to these men as disciples was two-fold. First, he says, 'I want you to follow me', and secondly he says, 'I will make

you fishers of men.’ Let’s look at the first, and then return to the personal struggle that Peter was having with this invitation ... because Peter was struggling.

Back in John 1, Jesus’ invitation was ‘to come and see’. That was what He asked them to do initially; just come and see. Spend time with me and see. Now they had been doing this for many days, including a trip from Judea to Galilee, they stopped for two days in the City of Samaria (remember the woman at the well), and so they stopped for a couple of days with the people of Sychar, and so they have had quite a bit of experience already with Jesus. It is time to *decide* if they are going to follow Him. Jesus knew that he had to show them *who He is*, and *what He came to do* before he could challenge them to leave everything; their business, and to follow Him. And even though He spent a few days, though very concentrated experiences that they had, He got directly to the point on this occasion. He did not “court them” for very long before he “proposed” to them to follow Him.

Jesus gave them sufficient evidence on which to make a life commitment, and I wonder here, do *I* get to the point of decision fast enough with Jesus, do I take too long when I am making decisions as whether or not I am going to follow Him one place or another. Do I give a person significant evidence in order to be able to make a decision, or do I make the invitation plain enough for people? The invitation is simple ... follow me, Jesus would say to the person today. That fact is that exposure to Jesus, must always lead to a decision to follow Him **if** that exposure to Jesus is really going to be “of God.”

So what did Jesus have in mind when He said, “Follow me”? What did He mean by that? Did these fishermen “get it”? Did they understand it? I think it is fair to say that He intended much more than they really understood at that time. If you skip to **John 21:18-23** (I’m not going to take time to read that. This was after Jesus’ resurrection) Jesus was still telling Peter, even on **that occasion**, follow me! Here, He indicates that this includes even dying for Him, and perhaps Peter, at that time, understood a little more of what “follow Me” actually means. Even at this point Peter struggled with what was expected of Him.

What is Jesus really saying when He uses those two words ... follow Me? The Greek phrase is literally, “**come** after me”. The word carries the sense of “**come now**”. It is an imperative; and exhortation; there is an urgency in the word indicating that a decision must be made. The second word means to come **behind** or **after**, at one’s back; the things which are behind. In **Philippians 3:14**, the word is used to describe the things that are behind. I get the idea that “falling in behind Jesus” is what Jesus is wanting them to do. He wants them to “line up”; He wants them to “get ready to go”; He wants them “to watch me, do what I do and what I command.”

It’s interesting in **1 Peter 2:21** Peter writes *much* later on, “**For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps.**” In this section, Peter compares us to sheep who continually stray, but now, returning to the Shepherd and the Guardian of our souls, Peter goes into great detail about what it means to **follow** Jesus; as Peter says in verse 25, “**that we might die to sin and live to righteousness.**”

In His Steps - those words have captured the imaginations of Christians down through the ages of what does it mean to live in the steps of Jesus? It is being *like* Jesus, *walking* with

Him, *going* where He goes and *doing* what He does. This leading has not ended; He's still leading today and is still calling us to follow in His footsteps. He still sets the pace for us. In John 10 Jesus goes into an extensive teaching on the idea of following, again, comparing us to sheep and He being the Shepherd. One principle he describes is our ability to hear His voice and to know it as *His* voice. **The clear unmistakable voice of the Shepherd is essential to our following.**

In a much different context, Paul says it this way. "For if the Bugle produces an indistinct sound, who will prepare himself for battle?" in **1 Corinthians 14:8**. In other words, the sound has to be clear. If I am going to follow someone, I have to recognize who they are and why they are asking me to follow them. Here are the common, simple, blue collar (if you will) fishermen. They are tired. They are fishless. They are being told, "Follow Me". There is an expectation in Jesus' call. It is clear ... no uncertain sound. Although He does not give them a road map or detailed itinerary, *He gives them Himself*. **He is** the way ... they follow **Him**, not merely the map He gives them. **He is** the map, **He is** the road, **He is** the route, **He is** the trail they are to take. These disciples are going to hear Jesus issue His call to follow Him to many other people in the years to come; and they are going to, in turn, issue that call to others. They are going to feel the challenge to stay with Him, to complete their leg of the course, and others will pick up where they leave off. I am following the trail now and hopefully you are following the trail as well. I wish I could say I'm keeping up, but sometimes it's really hard to keep up with Jesus.

We are not told of Andrew's, James', and John's struggle during this particular time about answering the call, but we do have some insights, thanks to Luke, about Peter's struggle in answering this call. Could it be *my* struggle and *your* struggle too? It's a struggle of faith; it's a struggle of obedience against the backdrop of our sinfulness and realizing that we are coming into the presence of Holiness.

It was Simon's boat that Jesus used for a pulpit that day on the banks of the Sea of Galilee. This gave Jesus some distance from the press of the crowd. The text speaks of Jesus getting into the boat, but it does not say when He got out of the boat actually. We know He did. Simon's state of being first of all was He was *tired* having been up all night long fishing. Secondly, he was discouraged for he had nothing to show for that night of fishing. Thirdly, he was being challenged with the *biggest decision* of his life. Fourthly, he had to *face his own sinfulness* in the presence of Glory. A great Light was dawning on him on that early morning on the Sea of Galilee.

When Jesus told Simon to put his boat back into deep water, and to let down his net, there is no indication that Andrew is in the boat at that time. In fact, Jesus may have been in the boat with Simon as he let down the nets ... He probably was. I don't know how far Simon had to go to find 'deep water', but the deepest part of the lake was about 200 feet deep. But at least, this sleepless, tired man who had already cleaned his nets did what he was told by Jesus. He simply said, "At your bidding" ... in other words, "because You say so". This obvious respect for Jesus, to do what to him seemed pointless and unnecessary, sets the tone for a new relationship to be formed. It is important to know which side of the equation we are on in this search for a relationship with Jesus. We are not there for Jesus simply to

‘order us around’. We are Simon, though, being told what to do. And do we recognize who Jesus really is and do we respect Him because He just simply asked us to do it?

Does Jesus expect us to follow Him even when it seems pointless; even when we are tired, even when we are discouraged, even when we have tried it our way over and over even to the point of exhaustion? Jesus tells us to do exactly what we have been doing, but now He’s in it! Now it is at *His* word, not simply at our own desire. Jesus had the intention of supplying a catch of fish, but He did not tell Peter this. He may have implied it, but it is not explicit. He implies, and Peter may have expected it, but faith was still involved. Actually, Jesus did say that the purpose of putting down his net was ‘for a catch’, but the King James Version says, ‘for a draught’... a catching ... things taken; so it is something ‘hauled in’ as compared to ‘something large’. The word is also used in verse 9, “**For amazement had seized him and all his companions because of the catch [draught] of fish which they had taken:**”

Also in verses 6 and 7 the pronoun “they” is used indicating that Andrew, perhaps, **was** in the boat at that time. At first, it doesn’t seem that he is, but when you get down to verses 6 and 7 you see it. That’s why you have to keep on reading ... perhaps he **was** in the boat. But as always, Peter seems to be taking the lead and Jesus’ communication seems to be focused on him.

The quantity of fish was ‘great’, to the point that the nets begin to break. They needed help. Both boats were filled to the point of beginning to sink. If we’re going to fish, then let’s fish. Surely, all this caused a great stir, not only for the fishermen, but for those on the shore. Peter’s response seems so appropriate but unexpected from a fisherman. He fell at Jesus’ feet. This act of submission carries with it a huge implication.

Paul says in **Philippians 2:10** that “**at the name of Jesus, every knee shall bow.**” Paul taught that it is God’s purpose that Jesus *reign* until God has put all enemies at His feet. The last enemy is going to be ‘death’. God **has put all things in subjection under his feet (1 Cor. 15:24** and following). The Hebrew writer addresses this in Chapter 2:5, quoting from Psalm 8. It seems that Peter begins his relationship with Jesus in the right position ... **at Jesus’ feet**, but he will struggle with what it means to stay there.

The words, “**Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord**” tells so much. So, from Peter’s angle, what did he think; or how did Jesus hear this? This was a moment of recognition, I think, for Jesus and Peter. It was a defining moment about the relationship and the nature of that relationship. For Peter, it was the gut reaction that he was in the presence of Someone that he had no right to be near. For Jesus, it was the realization that He was here to make it possible for the “Peter’s” of this world, to not be afraid to come near Him. Listen to what Peter said: “**Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord**”. “Depart from me”. When Jesus tells the story of the judgment scene in **Matthew 25:41**, though using a different word, He says, “Depart. Go away from me, you cursed ones.” Yet another word is used in **Matthew 7:23**, “**depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.**” To those saying “Lord, Lord” but not doing what the Lord says, He says *separate* from me. The idea is clear. “Get away from me.” Isaiah was more than a little uncomfortable in the presence of a holy God because in **Isaiah 6:5** he says, “**Woe to me, for I am ruined because I am a**

man of unclean lips and I live among a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.” The cleansing came from the Lord; and Isaiah could not make himself clean.

Peter was having a similar experience and an appropriately natural experience. The realization that “I shouldn’t be here” or “I don’t belong here” is the humbling of a sinner in the presence of God. The Publican in the book of **Luke 18:10-13** was confident in his own righteousness while the tax collector standing some distance away was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven but was beating his breast saying, “God, be merciful to me, a sinner.” This is what was going on in Peter’s mind. This paradox ... the *arrogant is told to depart*, while the *humble tell Jesus to depart*. Do you “get” that? The arrogant people are told to depart, but the humble tell Jesus He should depart, and leave them. The humbled is afraid to be with God. It is the story of man of old who realized that they were in the presence of angels, and they were afraid.

No man can see God and live! This was a deep-seated fear in the ancient world. It was out of the ordinary for Moses to want to see God’s face. The meetings that God had with Moses were face to face as friends. It’s remarkable, and it shows the intent that God has to make Himself assessable to men. *This is the heart of the incarnation*; the visitation of Jesus to the earth.

This is such a telling story because it makes it so clear that we have the same encounter with Jesus, and when we realize who *He* is, we should be driven to our knees in humble respect, also realize that we are sinners and we don’t have any way to come in to His presence except by invitation. And He *does* invite us, and He *does* say to us still today, “Come. Come and follow Me and I will make you fishers of men.”

In **Isaiah 59:1-2** it says, “Behold, the Lord’s hand is not so short that it cannot save; nor is His ear so dull that it cannot hear. ² But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden His face from you so that He does not hear.” Peter seems typical. We must divide Israel morally between three different groups:

1. There are those who are arrogant religionists who strictly practice the Torah but whose hearts are far from God **Matthew 15:8-9**.
2. Then there are the blatantly wicked people like Barabbas or the thieves on the cross with Jesus.
3. Then there is the working class Jews. They work hard all day; they take care of their families; they throw around some curse words every now and then; they have a few beers perhaps after work, but they have little room for God, perhaps, in their lives. They are the Peters of the world.

The **first** group, even in the presence of deity glorified; find it difficult to bow because they see themselves as righteously ‘self-made men’.

The **second** group who actively practice evil may sometimes change but we see the 50-50 nature of this with the two thieves on the cross. One changed, and the other did not.

But this other group, would be the better group; who is the working-class group; they can be the most dedicated followers or the most difficult to reach.

My question is ‘how did Jesus know *who* to call?’ How did He know which ones would follow Him? How did Jesus ‘vet’ the Apostles, because that’s what He is doing now ... He’s preparing to choose His Apostles?

Peter’s word for sinful is “harmartolos” (αμαρτωλος) in Greek. It is an adjective meaning to “miss the mark”, “to deviate” “to err”. It is used in **Luke 19:7** regarding Zacchaeus, a **sinner** who invited Jesus into his house. It is used in **Luke 24:7** by the angles who remind the women that Jesus had to be delivered into the hands of **sinful** men. The word is used in **John 9:16** where it was alleged by the Pharisees that Jesus was a sinner, and no one could figure out how this “**sinner**” could do these great miracles. The blind man stuck to the one thing he **knew**; that he was blind and now he could see.

The label ‘sinner’ is difficult to apply. It obviously did not apply to Jesus, but what about everyone else? **Romans 3:23** tells us that all have sinned, but do all have to wear the label? Do all have to wear the label of ‘sinner’? There was no one else to call. Those are the only people Jesus **could** call. We are sinners. What was Jesus thinking watching Peter on his knees before Him? Was Peter the first one to literally bow down before Jesus? Did all of this feel right to Jesus? Was this the first confession that Jesus heard directly? **Here is sinfulness at the knees of sinlessness!** The clash of the two worlds is taking place in a small fishing boat on the lake of Galilee. For Jesus to be there, and to partner with Peter and the others, He had to know what it would cost Him.

Did Jesus admire Peter’s honesty? What did Jesus see in Peter at that moment? Jesus perhaps knew that this was only **a first** in a **series** of moments that He and Peter would have during the next three years. This earthen vessel, this instrument before Purity and Love humbled by the power and the wisdom of God ... was this what Jesus was thinking? Did He enjoy the worship? Was this worship? Did Jesus think Peter was sincere? Did He view the act as too impetuous? Did Jesus scream in his head all of the sinful acts of Peter as a verification of his confession? Did this confession put more pressure on Jesus to stay pure ... sinless so He could be a perfect sacrifice for sinners? Was Jesus so focused on His mission of recruitment of fishers of men that He was ready to move on? Did Jesus see this as another ‘Moses at the burning bush’ event where **He would have to convince an unconfident man that he could fulfill the mission with God’s help?** Jesus was moving into a new phase of His mission; the recruitment of a few sinful men to implement the greatest mission that the world had ever seen ... the carrying out of the Gospel into the entire world; the turning of the world upside down. Here is the Commander-in-chief before His first recruits of a rag-tag army like David’s mighty men ... **scoundrels all**.

Peter, you have no idea what you are in for. Just follow me **daily**; every day wherever I lead; hold on ... it’s going to be an adventure.

There was no time to clean the fish. How did Zebedee take this? Did he have to pay the hired men overtime? The general response to the catch of fish was **amazement!** This seized them. The crowd in **Luke 4:36** was amazed at Jesus’ authority and power to command evil

spirits. This is *always* a response to what Jesus does - that seems impossible to do. It means to encompass, to enclose, to embrace, to contain as a writing to seize on the mind. It is contained in Scripture ... this amazement. Amazement contains them to the point of fear. Even though all are seized with amazement, Jesus directs his commands to Simon himself, and He says, “Do not fear. From now on, you will be catching men”. Fear is the emotion that makes you want to run away. This is especially true of Simon because he saw himself as *not belonging* in the presence of Jesus. But Jesus addresses this fear. The way to deal with fear is to take action. The action that Jesus requires of them is to “catch men.”

With our background and the meaning of evangelism and soul-winning we “get” that word and what it means; but how strange that language must have sounded to Peter, Andrew, James and John on that day. He says, “From now on...” This is the line they stepped over. The past is past. Jesus is saying, ‘starting now’; not next week. Again, this is not a totally new thought. They had been with Him already, but *now* they are training and their mission begins. Literally, Jesus says, “Men, thou wilt be taken alive.” In other words, when He is talking about catching men, He’s taking them alive. This is “men” in generic form, “anthropos” ... not just males; and it has the idea of **taking a prisoner in war** as opposed to **killling them**. It means to take captive the eternal, to catch animals and fish in **Luke 5:10** and in **2 Timothy 2:26** our work is to set the captive free to become the captive to another. In other words, we’re setting the captive free, we’re catching men so that they can be released and given over to captivity to someone else ... from the snare of the devil having been held captive by him to do Jesus’ will.

In the narratives of **Matthew 4:19** and in **Mark 1:17** in this event the language was either different or “in addition to” Luke’s language. Here He says, “Follow me and I will make you fishers of men”, and “Follow me and I will make you become fishers of men.” But in the second phrase, He says “I will make you **to become** fishers of men.” The *process of becoming* is injected into this idea. It is a process; a very broad word with many applications; to make, to form, to produce. Jesus will be the *cause* of their becoming fishers of men. He will be the ‘former’, the ‘shaper’, the ‘director’, the ‘mentor’ or the ‘discipler’ or the ‘coach’ who will produce in these disciples the ability to *become* fishers to take men captive or take them alive for Him.

Whether these smelly, tired fishermen knew what this meant or not, and were excited about the training they were going to receive, or they just knew that they wanted to be with Jesus, they were ready to put themselves *into the hands* of the trainer.

I have to reflect on the methodology of Jesus here. Much controversy continues to exist as to the model we should use to realize the fullness of Christ in His church. If Jesus is the model, then what methodology did He use to disciple the disciples? He called them away from their professions, and He established a traveling band, a roving commune, if you will, but at least in some of the parts of His ministry, He intentionally lead them into multiple settings to witness His power and His teaching as well as sending them out two by two to do the same. He did not with the twelve fit this into **their** busy schedules; He took them *away* from their homes and their children and their businesses for a while to travel the countryside and after His death, to travel the world.

But what of the others? What of the “seventy”, or the 120, or the crowds? What form did He call them to? Was it the same one as the twelve? No. What of the 3,000? Were the daily meetings temporary or the sustained?

How did the Kingdom business of spiritual formation and evangelism take place in regard to the form; and if it was essential, why was it not commanded and laid out? In other words, was Jesus setting a pattern here saying that ‘everyone who follows me has to leave their business, leave their home, leave their families and exclusively follow me into the world and preach the gospel’? I don’t think He’s saying that. But in the training of the twelve, He did that for periods of time during the next three years.

The “become” here, reminds me of the “*to leave and to cleave and become*” principle that we have looked at elsewhere. There must be a ‘letting go’ and a ‘grabbing onto’ for ‘becoming’. This is a fundamental operation of the Spirit. In other words, you first have to leave, you have to grab hold of something, and *then* you can become.

In this case, He wants them to catch or capture men. They will become “*men-catchers*”. The word, “make” is a general word here used in many settings to indicate some action that Jesus would perform on them. He would make them fishers of men.

The process of becoming regardless of the outcome is difficult. Process demands change and not merely of the outward, but of the heart, of the values, of the priorities, of the desires and the longings, but Jesus never focused on the forms. He recognized that becoming was not about settings or structures or groupings or scenery or seating arrangements, or group dynamic principles. These are merely tools that apply in different ways to different situations.

To take Peter from a smelly, crude, blue-collar fisherman and make him into an evangelist, commissioned to be an Apostle to the Gentiles and to the Jews, one of the living stones in the foundation of the church, an instrument of the Spirit to carry the Gospel to the first Gentile converts, a writer of Scripture and a martyr for the cause of Christ; Jesus had His work cut out for Him! Peter was impetuous, crude, easily distracted, cognitively distorted, self-centered, stubborn, insensitive, often misguided, prone to discouragement, prejudiced, and vain, yet quick to confess both sin and Jesus; bold even if his focus was off. He was daring even if he let fear and doubt take over, rebukeable when needed, a dominant personality, childlike, a married man, son-in-law with children, and a brother. With all Peter was; Jesus took him *as he was* and He exercised influence on him to form him into a man-catcher.

And Jesus does the same for us, and we are pressed into this mold by the Spirit so that we, too, can call men from the snare of the devil’s nets into captivity to Jesus. The work continues until Jesus comes again.

This is an amazing, amazing part of the life of Christ, and Jesus is showing something of His mind, and teaching us something about how He viewed sinful men, and how He can use sinful men to accomplish some of the most amazing things on the earth; and so I leave you with this lesson tonight.

God bless you.