

**“Accepting Jesus’ Invitation”**

Matthew 4: 18-22

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**Jesus was different.** Nobody spoke like Jesus spoke. Nobody acted as Jesus did. Jesus came to his prospective disciples and invited them to follow him. Rabbis did not normally do that. Jesus was highly educated as the other rabbis were and Jesus was getting known in the community as one educated at the most advanced level. The students of the Torah usually asked the Rabbis if they could follow them and be their disciples. The Rabbis would then decide if the applicants were worthy. The disciples whom Jesus chose to follow him were among the most uneducated and powerless people. Yet, this prominent Rabbi thought they were worthy to be his disciples.

**They were considered valuable.** Peter, Andrew, James, and John were considered valuable by this Rabbi named Jesus, but they did not quite understand it. As we find out later, it was even more than, they were beloved by God, but not loved merely for what they accomplished. How are we following Jesus today by including others, inviting others to the good news? How do those we meet know they are valuable to God and to us?

<sup>19</sup> **And he said to them, “Follow me, and I will make you fish for people.”** Now that they had the knowledge that they were valuable, Jesus made it clear of what it meant to follow him – to invite other people into the abundant life of following Jesus.

**They followed immediately.** It was not as if they had nothing else to do. But, the invitation they received was a ‘once in a lifetime’ opportunity. This was one of those opportunities of being at the right place at the right time and one needed to act. Following Jesus meant Jesus was promising to teach his disciples to be like him. Who would not want to do that? These prospective disciples did not need to be interviewed to see if they were ‘good enough’. This high-ranking rabbi waved that requirement. The good news for each one of us is that Christ waves that requirement for you as well. You are chosen you are beloved and treasured by Christ – period! Accept Jesus’ invitation – it is the most important invitation you will receive. Follow him and be ready to share this

good news of the Gospel!

**We are also called to follow with immediacy.** A significant difference between society at the time of Jesus as compared to our society today is that we live in an affluent society and distracted by the many voices and choices presented to us on a daily basis. Also, Jesus is not physically in front of us, and therefore it can be easier to not pay attention. Jesus' invitation to us today is actually a greater opportunity than the disciples were aware of 2000 years ago. From our perspective in history, Jesus is not only one of the most known and educated rabbis at that time, but also the Messiah who redeems our souls and the world by his victory over sin and death through sacrificing his life on the cross and rising from the dead. As we sang at Christmas time, Jesus was 'born a child but yet a king'.

The disciples immediately responded. This is an opportunity of a lifetime! Come let us respond to Jesus' invitation to follow him and be open and ready to spread the Good news to others.