

“Disciple” // Matthew 4:18–22

// *In Earth as it is in Heaven, 2*

15th Year Anniversary

I didn't know about that—I walked in for the 1st service and just saw all those people who had brought me here 15 years ago and thought they were here to revoke me calling.

That group of people planted a seed of surrender and faith and sacrifice 15 years ago—they laid their church on the altar and God has multiplied that 100x over. **Could you clap for them?**

I didn't know about that... **What I did know** is that today we celebrate our 15th anniversary, because **on your way out** today, you're going to receive a magazine that celebrates our last 15 years.

- This **magazine is a way of us stopping to commemorate** what God has done among us, and where he has brought us.
 - God had his **people do this constantly** throughout the Old Testament—to rehearse the stories, revisit the miracles—not just to congratulate them on the past, but to inspire them to the future.
 - As we often say around here, past grace is evidence of God's intention to bestow future grace.
- So please **pick one up...** it really is fantastic.

Here, I'll give you a few highlights:

Works Consulted:

Eric Metaxas, “Rosa Parks” (from *Seven Women*)

John Piper, “Invincible Joy for the Sake of the Nations”

Martin Luther King, Jr., “Being a Good Neighbor”

Scott Sauls, “In the Image of God”

John Piper, “Abortion and the Narrow Way”

- You'll learn some of **the interesting points about our history**, like why we are called “Summit.” Or how **college students** became such a big part of who we are, or the story of our engagement in our city.
- You'll see some **amazing stats**, like total number of missionaries and church planters we've sent out, growth in diversity over the last decade, and, numbers of people we've reached and baptized...
- Btw, do you know how many baptisms we had last year?
 - **Total # of 2016 baptisms: * 666** (*pause here in putting up on ppt). Somebody was disobedient.
- Most of all, you'll hear some **great stories about clear and amazing ways** that God has been moving—not just last year but for each of the last 15 years. Each of the stories in there are written by people who have been here since the very beginning.

What I most hope you'll see in this is that we've always been a church about one thing—and by God's grace we'll always be primarily about one thing—*reaching people for Jesus*. That may not be everything we do, but it's at the center, the core, of everything we do.

Introduction

Which brings me to today: *We're taking our 1st two weeks of the year to ask: When you strip everything away, what's at the core of who we are and what do we do at this church?*

Got your Bible? Matthew 4.

I want to start today with a **QUESTION**. What comes to your mind when I say the word “Christian”? Let’s do a little word association.

- What comes to your mind when I say... **Bernie/Trump** supporter?
- Vegan/Cross-fit
- **“Duke fan”** (pic of Cameron crazy)
- How about **“Nascar fan”** (Pic of guy with 3 shaved in his back)
- When I say **“Star Wars”** do you think of the new version, or the old? (picture of original trilogy v. first three)
- **“Acting Genius”** (picture of Nicolas Cage)

Now, **what comes to you mind when I say the word “Christian”?**

Andy Stanley says, “If you asked **10 different people**, you’d probably get at least 9 different answers.” If you stop people on the street and asked them, **“Are you a Christian?”**

- You’d get some people who say, **“Yes.”**
- Some would say, **“What do you mean?”**
- Some would say, **“Yes, but...”**
- Others would say, **“No, but...”**
- Some they’d say, **‘Yes, but I’m not like...’**
- Some of you would say that **at some point you became a Christian**—it happened when you prayed a prayer, or got baptized, or took confirmation class; others would say you’ve always been a Christian.
- Some would say—maybe some of you, “No, I’m definitely *not* a Christian.” And if you were asked to define Christian, it would be something like this definition I heard one guy use: **“Christians are judgmental, homophobic moralists who think that they are the only ones going to heaven and secretly relish the fact that everyone else is going to hell.”**¹

Here is a strange fact: the first followers of Jesus didn’t call themselves “Christians.”

¹ Andy Stanley, “Christian,” pt 1. John 13:33–34:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wTXLNdqJzo>

- The term was actually a **derogatory term** used by people outside the Jesus community.
- **Acts 11:26** ...And in Antioch the *disciples* were first called **Christians**.* “Called” – Passive! Christians didn’t **call themselves** Christians.

So, if the first Christians didn’t call themselves Christians, what did they call themselves? You see the answer **right there in Acts 11:26**: *disciples*.

- Consider this: the word **“Christian”** is only used 3x in the whole Bible; disciple is used 281x in the New Testament.

You say, “Well, so what?” *Here’s what.* (Andy Stanley says this and I agree with him) – I want to suggest to you that **in changing the word that we use to describe ourselves**, we lost the clarity the word “disciple” conveyed about what a follower of Jesus actually is!

- (Now, in case you are wondering where this is headed, and you are tensing up a little bit thinking that the end of this message I’m going to tell you, **“So from now on, at the Summit Church, we’re not going to call ourselves Christians, we’re going to call ourselves disciples...”** and you’re thinking, “I don’t know... that feels weird. I’m just going to keep quietly saying ‘Christian.’” That’s **not where we are headed**.)
- But what I want to show you is that **our use of “Christian” today** obscures the fact that ***a lot of people who call themselves Christians are not actually disciples***.

“Disciple” is much clearer—terrifyingly clear, in fact—about what you actually become when you believe in Jesus.

So, we’re going to go back to Matthew 4, the calling of the 1st disciples, to see what a disciple actually was.

Matthew 4:18–22 (The Calling of the First Disciples)

[18] While walking by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon (who is called Peter) and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen. [19] And he said to them, “Follow me,² and I will make you fishers of men.”

[20] Immediately they left their nets and followed him. Instant, absolute obedience. [21] And going on from there he saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee (doo-dah) 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.

OK, so first of all: **Do you ever wonder why these 1st disciples followed him?** All the flannel-graph/B-grade movies I watched as a kid about the life of Jesus made it look like basically you had some guys who were busy at their jobs and all of the sudden this guy whom they never met saunters up to them in a white bathrobe and blue sash and his long, flowing, Rick-Flair-hair flapping in the wind, and he flashes a blue steel look at them and says “Follow me,” and these tractor beam powers kick-in and they say, “Yes, master... we will follow.” It all seemed kind of mysterious, unexplainable. **Like a Jedi Mind trick.**

But **there’s a lot more** going on here. (One of those areas where it helps to know the historical context). *Let me explain...*

² In Aramaic, “*Lay-hach-harai*.” That just sounds tough to me. Not “accept me as your Savior.” Or, “invite me into your heart,” or “be my friend.” “Follow me.”

³ All of the below are based on the research of Ray Vander Laan, *In the Dust of the Rabbi, Discovery Guide*

(Talmid)

All Hebrew boys went to **Torah** school (the 1st 5 books of the Bible), starting at 5.³

- (It began with this special ceremony: Honey on lips.)

By age 10, all young boys knew the Torah⁴

At age 10, there was this weeding out process. Only the very best of students were allowed to continue, and the rest were sent home to work with their fathers in the family business. **If you made the cut**, you went on to learn what we now call the OT, **Joshua through Malachi**, the great Italian prophet.

At about age 17, if you wanted to go on and make a career out of religious studies, your next role was to find a Rabbi you admired, and apply to become his *talmid*. (Talmid is the Hebrew word for disciple.) When you found one, you would go and sit at their feet. That was **your request** to learn. And the Rabbis would examine you with questions and put you through a series of tests to see if you were worthy to be their disciple.

- Now, the Rabbis were able to be **pretty selective because in those days becoming a religious ruler was the best of all jobs**, and almost every Hebrew boy when they were young dreamed of doing this. They didn’t dream of being **basketball players or rock stars—they didn’t have those things**; they dreamed of being rabbis.
 - Thus, **the Rabbis could choose the smartest, most talented boys** to be their disciples—in Aramaic, *talmidim*.⁵

⁴ Which is why Jesus quotes from it so frequently in his teaching and why everybody seems to know what he’s talking about). fairly well (which is why Jesus quotes from it so frequently in his teaching and why everybody seems to know what he’s talking about).

⁵ *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*

- **Another reason the Rabbis were so picky** is that when they chose a disciple, they were choosing someone whom they believed could **become just like them**—to not just know what they knew, but do what they did.
 - For several years, these **talmidim would follow around their Rabbis**, imitating them in every way.
 - Supposedly **the highest compliment** you could give a talmid/disciple was to say, *“The dust of your rabbi is all over you.”* (That didn’t mean, “Bro, you need a shower!”) It meant that you so emulated your Rabbi that whatever he had stepped in, you got covered with.

Now, one more thing: **In Jesus’ day, there was a really rare form of rabbi who possessed a characteristic** called... (this has to be one of my favorite Hebrew words) – **semikhah**.

- Semikhah just translates as **“authority.”**

Rabbis with semikhah were very rare—we know of only a dozen or so recognized in the 1st century (they had names that, if you know anything about Jewish history, you recognize, like Hillel and Gamaliel).

- These guys were masters of the Torah.
- They were mystical and seemed to possess this authority.
- They were thought of as being so close to God that they could give new, un-heard-of interpretations on OT texts.
 - (New stuff were generally frowned upon in Jewish society—what was known had always been known, they assumed).
- **Two other things:**
 - To be regarded as a rabbi with semikhah there had to be evidence you had done miracles.⁶
 - And, finally, you had to have it conferred on you by 2 other rabbis with semikhah.

- All this to say, this was an exclusive club that was pretty hard to get into.

Now, **back to Matthew 4...**

- Here is Jesus, who knows the Torah so well that we find him in the Temple instructing the teachers of the law by age 12 (Luke 2:41–52).
- He frequently says things like, *“You have heard it said, but I say to you...”* He gives new insights with authority.
- Throughout the NT we see that his hearers were constantly amazed by his authority
 - **Matthew 7:29**, *“They were amazed, because he taught them as one with authority, and not as the scribes...”* (who just repeated what had always been written).
 - In **Luke 20** they ask Jesus, “Where did you get your authority?”
- He does **miracles**. **Matthew 4:23**, right after this passages, he goes throughout the region healing every disease among the people.
- Oh, and this is the best part. Right before this account in Matthew 4 Jesus goes out into the wilderness where **John the Baptist**—the camel-skin wearing, locust-and-honey-eating prophet preaching in the wilderness, who was a teacher exuding semikhah if there ever was one—tells everyone that Jesus is so much greater than him that he is not even worthy to untie Jesus’ shoelaces, and at the same moment, God the Father speaks from heaven and says: **“This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”** (At that point, the little **semikhah light on your dashboard** should be going “semikhah, semikhah.”) There are his two affirmations.

So now, get this—**Matthew 4**, Jesus, this new Rabbi oozing with semikhah, chooses Peter and Andrew, who are fishermen.

⁶ The Mishnah records 150-180 miracles done by Rabbis with semikhah.

- The **fact that they are fishermen shows you what?** They were part of the B-team. They hadn't made the first two cuts! They weren't the best of the best.
- **Ladies and gentlemen let that sink in:** When Jesus chose his squad to build his movement, he chose the B-team!

So, of course, they went to follow him! This Rabbi, with all this semikhah, had chosen *them*—guys without much potential or personal power—to follow him and become like him, to know God like he knew God, to know what he knew, do what he did and be filled with his power!

A few things we notice about being a disciple from Matthew 4:

1. He doesn't choose the best, he chooses the willing.

- John MacArthur: *"God skipped all the wise of the day! The great scholars were in Egypt; the great library was in Alexandria; the great philosophers were in Athens; the powerful were in Rome. He passed over Herodotus the historian and Socrates the great thinker and Julius Caesar. He chose men so ordinary it was comical. No Rabbis, no teachers, no religious experts, not even... a synagogue ruler! Half were fisherman, one was essentially an IRS agent, and one was a former terrorist."*⁷
- **He chose the B-team**, because his work in the world wouldn't come from their abilities for him, but from what he would do through him.
 - People with a lot of talent and ability would only get in the way, because they would never learn to lean on his power.
- Jesus taught that his power in the weakest vessel was infinitely greater than the greatest talent without him.
 - I love the promise Jesus gave to his disciples later in Matthew (11): *"Of all those born to women, there has not risen any greater than John the Baptist. But I assure that he who is least*

in my kingdom..." (If you asked Jesus who the greatest preacher was... Least in my kingdom means...

- His Spirit in the mouth of the weakest vessel
- I remember an example of this in college. E.g. Amy and the Bible study
- **God wants to use you in your family, at your workplace.** Stop making excuses that you are not able. He doesn't need your ability; he requires only your availability. As we often say around here, he doesn't call the equipped, he equips the called.
- **Have you made yourself available?**

2. He chose us, not we him.

- As I explained, the **normal way this all went down is that if you were among the best of your class**, you applied to a rabbi, and if he liked what he saw, he'd choose you back.
 - Now, *his selection gave them a great deal of confidence*. If they were struggling, they could say, "Ah, but my rabbi believed in me! He chose me."
- **But Jesus started the process back even further.** They didn't even come to sit at his feet. He came seeking them when they weren't even looking for him. Do you know what *kind of confidence that is supposed to give you?*
- One of the things you notice throughout the New Testament is **how often Jesus and the Apostles bring up this concept** that he chose us as a means of instilling confidence.
 - You'll see this when we start our study of the book of Ephesians in a couple of weeks. The theme of being chosen runs all throughout it as a way of saying, "I chose you... with my choice comes my power and my promise to see it through."
- Jesus, for example, says to his disciples: **"You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear**

⁷ John MacArthur, 2003 Shepherd's Conference, MP3 CD, track 6

fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you.” John 15:16.

- Jesus is **not just trying to say here**, “Hey guys, I’m a Calvinist!”
- He’s saying, “I chose you and appointed you to bring forth fruit, fruit that will last.”
- **When you are not confident in you, be confident in me!**
- Some of you **are struggling now**—marriage, career, as a parent. Believe this, friend: he chose you!
 - You **may not feel confident** about your abilities in the future but you can be confident in his promise to make you what you need to be to do what he has called you to do!
- Usually, when our confidence fails, this is where it fails. We’re not so much losing confidence in Jesus as we are his promises to us.
 - Matthew tells a story that really illustrates this: **Matthew 14, Peter walking on water**. Sinks. We say, “Peter lost confidence in Jesus.” Really? Jesus is still up walking on the water! He lost confidence in Jesus’ promise to hold him up.
 - **Many of you aren’t doubting Jesus**. You’re doubting Jesus’ promise to work through you.
 - If you’re discouraged in your marriage, it’s not that you doubt Jesus’ ability to be a good husband. You know that if Jesus were married to your spouse, he’d be a great husband. But you aren’t sure God can use *you* to be a great husband. **But he can.**
Being a dad/Witness
 - When Jesus chose you, he had a plan. When *you* fall apart, the plan remains! God is still going!
- When you fall, when life smacks you down, when you fail, when you feel like you are up against insurmountable obstacles—in your marriage, with your kids, in your career, in your ministry, you need to remember:
 - Faithful is he who called you...

- Philippians 1:6, He that began
- I know whom I have believed... faithless/faithful. When I let go, he holds on.
- Isaiah 46:11, “What I have said, that I will bring about; what I have planned, that I will do.”

- Whenever someone leaves our church, scared about doing somewhere with no community, no support, no church, invariably I quote to them Ephesians 2:10

3. Our primary call is to be with him.

- **“Follow me.” (vs. 19)**
 - *Lay hach harai*
- He didn’t tell them where they were going or what assignment he had for them. His primary call is not to do something; it is to become like him.
- And **to become like him**, you have to know him. To know him you have to know **his word**.
- We offer **so many outlets** here for this—weekly messages, small groups, special studies.
 - If you are ***really serious about being his disciple, you’ll take advantage of a lot of these!***
 - And ***not just coming to hear me teach once a week***. You’ll be getting in the Word each day and reading books or listening to sermons on podcast or the radio—105.7, I come on every day at 10.
- Do you want “the **dust of your rabbi to be all over you?**” Then get his word inside of you until it dominates all your thinking and all your behavior. Until you think it and talk it and quote it.
- You can’t know Jesus any more than you know his word! When life cuts us, we want to bleed Bible.

4. To follow him, we have to leave it all.

- **“Immediately they left their boat and their father.” (vs. 22)**
- **Why identify these 2 things?** Because these are usually the two most significant things in our lives:

- **Boat:** our careers, how we take care of ourselves.
- **Father:** our most significant relationships
- To follow Jesus, he **has to take precedence** over both.
- Most of you won't literally lose your father and mother over Jesus...
 - Some might. **There is a girl in our church** who was brought to faith in Christ by some of our missionaries (baptized—she is 1 of those numbers you hear)
 - For some, God may tell you to change careers. Maybe God will tell you **transfer your job** to be a part of one of our church plants—even overseas as part of our Global Cities Initiative! Or **leave your job** and carry the gospel overseas.
- For many of you, **it probably won't be that dramatic**. But you'll have moments where you decide which holds greater sway over your life.
 - **College students**, for example: Your parents will tell you that you cannot pursue God with missions for the summer, or the year...
 - **High school students:** you'll be the only one who chooses to follow Jesus out of your friends and you get labeled "that religious girl" or "the virgin" or something like that and you've got decide if you'll sit back and be quiet and be intimidated.
 - **Some of you in business:** you'll face the temptation to cut some corners, which of course everybody does, or if you'll be patient and things only in ways that honor God.
 - **For some of you, it's simply what you do with your income. Scripture teaches**, in unequivocal terms, that you give your first and your best back to him, which usually for Christians starts with 10%.
 - This is the **area where I see most Christians demonstrate** that they have never really become a disciple of Jesus. They won't obey God here.
 - And **I feel so strongly about** this... I often say that if you think me teaching on that is a way to get at

your money for ourselves, I beg you to obey this teaching by giving it somewhere else. We'll be fine financially without you. Honestly. I just know that you can't go on deceiving yourself that you are a disciple of Jesus when you will not obey him in this area.

- To follow Jesus means you subject everything in your life to his Lordship. You forsake all that he has forbidden and pursue all that he has prescribed.

5. He commands us to spiritually reproduce.

- **Vs. 19, "Follow me, and I will make you a fisher of men."** Just like he was a fisher of men, his followers would become fisher of men.
- This is an essential part of being a disciple. It's not something that only a few of us do, it's something that each of us does.
- No such thing as a non-reproducing Christian. **John 15:8, "By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples."**
 - How do you prove you are a disciple? Bearing fruit.
 - And **if you are not bearing** fruit, you have reason to question whether you are a disciple at all.

Summit Church, the "Great Commission" Jesus gave to us was this:

Matthew 28:19 "Go into all the world and MAKE DISCIPLES, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

- In Greek, the words '**go,**' '**baptize,**' and '**teach**' are all participles which derive their force from the **one controlling verb** "make disciples."
- Which means that everything we do grows out of the call to make disciples.
- We have a **lot of ministries at this church**; this is the core of all of them.

- Yes, we **love to show kindness and meet needs** wherever we see them—with the homeless and orphan and underprivileged and unwed mother.
 - Some of you are moved by the needs of the world: the greatest of all needs is the need for people to hear about Jesus.
 - You are **moved by people's suffering** but we know the greatest suffering is eternal suffering, which happens to those who die without Jesus.
- **Jesus summarized his ministry**, Luke 19, by saying, "The Son of Man came to seek and save the lost." If we are his disciples, that's how we'll summarize our lives, too.

This is the **primary thing we do**, and it involves every believer. It's **not just something** we do as a church. It's something that each of you, as followers of Jesus, do. **He has called and appointed you** to go and bring forth fruit.

Robert Coleman, who wrote a book called *The Master Plan of Evangelism* that had a big impact on me in college, said:

- "When will the church learn this lesson? Preaching to the masses, although necessary, will never suffice in the work of preparing leaders for evangelism. Nor can occasional prayer meetings and training classes for Christian workers do this job... *Individual women and men are God's method. God's plan for discipleship is not something, but someone.*"⁸
- **You** are God's method.

We want to see you become this, this year. We want you to commit to it.

- **And don't let it intimidate you.** Disciple-making is simply **teaching someone** to follow Jesus as you follow Jesus with the help of the Holy Spirit.
- **Sometimes it is studying the Bible together** (we're going to give you tools for that), but more than that it is **just opening up your life** to let others in. Our college ministry: "75% of discipleship is informal." Teaching people to follow Jesus as you do.
- And Jesus has promised to help you.

You say, "What do I do?"

- First thing, **get involved** in the church. (**Small group: Grouplink**) Get into a **small group** if you are not yet. *Small groups are we live out these things and put them into action. If you **are not in a small group**, we have a thing called **Grouplink** coming up at every campus that will help you get into one.*
- Second, come to the **Member Night** happening at each of our campuses—**that's the best way to know** to take advantage of all that is going on.
- There you will hear about all kinds of **Training Opportunities** we have coming up for you this year. *How to share your faith, start evangelistic Bible studies, mentor, reach out through your small group...*
- Finally, **identify your 1.** (**Who is your 1?**) **Ask God to help you identify 1 person you can**, with the help of the Holy Spirit, bring to faith in Christ this year.

Summit, can you imagine what would it look like...

- ...If every one of the 10,000 here this weekend did this, and asked God, "God, give me one person that I could bring to Jesus"?
- If every one of our small groups made it their goal to reach one person for Jesus?
- If each one committed to reach one?

⁸ All Coleman's words, but pieced together from various places in *Master Plan of Evangelism*.

- Can you **imagine** what the **effect on the Triangle** would be?

So here is my question for you... (MUSIC)

Are you a *disciple*? Not “*a Christian*,” but a disciple.

- Do you realize who it is who has called you? Talk about **authority...**
 - Commanded the wind and the waves/demons/disease/death
 - More than that, he is before all things, and in him all things hold together; he redeemed them all by his blood and they exist for his glory and according to his purpose they progress
 - He has no rival, no equal
 - If he is who he says he is, he is worthy of more than “church attendance and casual association; he is worthy of total abandonment and supreme adoration.”⁹
- Some of you have never become a disciple...
 - (Maybe some of you consider yourself a Christian, but you’ve never really started to follow Jesus. Maybe you didn’t know.)
 - **The gospel is that you need Jesus came to earth because you couldn’t not save yourself, so he came to save you by dying the death you had been condemned to die, paying your penalty. It’s a gift to all who will receive it, but the one condition is that you leave everything to follow him!)**
- Second, have you **engaged fully in the mission**?
 - You are **not a full disciple** until you have committed to make other disciples.
 - In the **short message** that I gave on the **Snowmageddon** weekend, I mentioned 3 stages in Jesus’ ministry:
 - The first was “**Come and see.**” The first recorded public question of Jesus, John 1, “Where you going,

Lord?” His answer, Come and see. That’s where many of you are.

- In the midst of his ministry, John 12, he turns up the heat: come and die. Be totally committed to me. That’s what some of you need to do today.
- The last command he gave was “go and tell.”
- Come and see, Come and die, go and tell. Have you **moved on to stages 2 and 3**? Some of you seem stuck in stage 1.

Bow heads...

- “I want to commit to becoming a disciple.” If so, say something like, “Every single part of my life I surrender to you. My relationships, my finances, my future... all of it is yours, unconditionally. I receive your gift of forgiveness (if I never have).”
- Now, will you pray, “God, give me 1 person this year that I, with your help can introduce to Jesus.” Maybe you are even thinking of that 1 person right now. Pray for them. Say, “God, help me to share Christ with them *this week.*”

⁹ David Platt, *Follow Me*.

