

Matthew 4:12–23

Calling Us to Follow

January 25, 2026

Christ takes ordinary people and turns their lives toward a kingdom purpose.

Where Jesus Begins His Ministry

- Jesus begins His public ministry after John the Baptist is arrested.
- This is not retreat or fear, but purposeful movement into God's plan.
- Galilee is a borderland, mixed and overlooked, not the religious center.
- Matthew connects this moment to Isaiah's promise: light shines in darkness.
- God's work often begins in places the world considers insignificant.

The Message Jesus Proclaims

- Jesus' message echoes John's: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near."
- Repentance is not about shame, but reorientation and turning toward God.
- The kingdom is not distant or abstract, it is present and active.
- Jesus announces that life is about to be reshaped by God's reign.

The Call of the First Disciples

- Jesus meets Simon Peter and Andrew while they are working.
- They are not seeking Jesus, He seeks them.
- Fishing is their livelihood, identity, and security.
- Jesus calls them to follow Him and promises to give their lives new purpose.
- Leaving their nets is costly and risky, not symbolic or easy.

The Pattern of Discipleship

- Jesus calls James and John in the same way.
- Discipleship involves leaving something behind, even good things.
- The call is relational, not transactional.
- Jesus does not explain everything before asking for trust.

What Jesus Reveals About the Kingdom

- Jesus teaches, proclaims, and heals, showing that word and action belong together.
- The kingdom addresses real suffering, not just spiritual ideas.
- Jesus responds to need, not worthiness.
- Compassion, not control, marks His authority.

Who Jesus Calls

- Jesus does not call the qualified, He qualifies the called.

- Disciples are ordinary people shaped by grace.
- Transformation follows relationship, not perfection.
- Failure does not cancel the call, grace sustains it.

Fishing for People

- Fishing requires patience, trust, and persistence.
- Discipleship is not manipulation, but faithful presence.
- We cast the net of grace and trust God with the results.
- Kingdom growth is often slow and unseen.

Discipleship as Community

- Jesus calls people into shared life, not isolation.
- Faith is personal, but never private.
- Growth happens through relationships that shape and stretch us.
- Following Jesus means learning to love, forgive, and serve together.

Discipleship in Ordinary Life

- Jesus does not erase who we are, He redirects our lives.
- Following happens in daily routines, work, and relationships.
- Discipleship is not escaping ordinary life, but living it with kingdom purpose.
- Christ turns familiar paths into holy ground.

Questions for Reflection

- What “nets” might Jesus be asking you to loosen your grip on?
- Where do you see Christ’s light breaking into ordinary places?
- How might Jesus be redirecting your life toward God’s purposes?
- What does faithful following look like in your daily life right now?

Good News to Carry With You

- Christ still calls ordinary people.
- Grace comes before understanding.
- The kingdom has come near.
- Jesus walks ahead of us, shaping our lives with love.