

sermon study guide

Pastor Ashwin Ramani

Date: May 30 / 31, 2020

Sermon Title: Embracing Discipleship - Part 1: Follow the Call

IN - PURSUE RELATIONSHIP

1. What has been a major opportunity you accepted that you've never regretted?
2. Pastor Ashwin said, "The question is not, 'Are you a disciple (student)?' but 'Whose disciple are you?' You are shaped by whatever gives meaning and purpose to your life." In your life, who or what has disciplined or mentored you the most (people, events, culture)?

UP - PURSUE GOD

Read Matthew 8:18-22 and 9:9

3. Why did Jesus respond to the first two men the way He did? What do His responses teach about commitment in discipleship?
4. What is surprising about Jesus' choice of Matthew as a disciple? Why do you think Matthew responded the way he did?

OUT - PURSUE MISSION

5. From this past season, describe one situation in which you were shaped by Jesus' will, His purpose, His priorities, His Kingdom. For example, what did you have to lay down? What sin were you convicted about? What action were you prompted to take?
6. What has it cost you to follow Jesus? In what areas is Jesus challenging you to leave excuses behind and follow Him?

For Personal Reflection/Prayer:

What may be delaying or hindering your decision to give Jesus first claim to your life? How might the way Jesus lived change your perspective of what is of greater or lesser importance in this life?

For Daily Reflections from CSC Pastors, visit <https://www.cschurch.ca/daily-reflections/>

THE WORD (NIV)

Matthew 8:18-22

¹⁸ When Jesus saw the crowd around him, he gave orders to cross to the other side of the lake. ¹⁹ Then a teacher of the law came to him and said, "Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go."

²⁰ Jesus replied, "Foxes have dens and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head."

²¹ Another disciple said to him, "Lord, first let me go and bury my father."

²² But Jesus told him, "Follow me, and let the dead bury their own dead."

Matthew 9:9

⁹ As Jesus went on from there, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax collector's booth. "Follow me," he told him, and Matthew got up and followed him.

sermon study summary

Embracing Discipleship – Part 1: Follow the Call

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Pastor Ashwin

The next several sermons at CSC will be focusing on a key theme in Matthew's Gospel: Discipleship. 'Disciple' simply means student or apprentice. We are all disciples, shaped by whatever gives meaning and purpose to our life. The question is not, "Are you a disciple?" but "Whose disciple are you?" Jesus calls us not just to believe in Him but to follow Him, committing our life to Him on a life-long journey.

The greatest issue facing today's church is whether those who call themselves Christians are willing to live like disciples: shaped by His will, purpose, priorities and Kingdom, and transformed to radiate the life of Jesus. What does our response to this call look like? In our Scriptures this weekend, we first learn how not to follow Jesus (Matthew 8:18-22) before we look at what truly following Him looks like (Matthew 9:9).

Jesus is very clear - discipleship is costly. Jesus sets the terms for aspiring disciples: to deny themselves, take up the cross and follow Him (Matthew 16:24). Discipleship is all-consuming, requiring our absolute priority. It is easy to be admirers, dazzled by Jesus' power. He challenges us to move from being fans to followers, from spectators who sit on the sidelines to game changers in God's kingdom. He calls us into a deep relationship with Him instead of staying on the fringes.

In New Testament times, disciples looked at and chose which Rabbi they wanted to follow. Matthew 8:19 tells of a scribe, an expert in the Jewish Scriptures, who was eager to offer his services to Jesus. Jesus' response is striking: He discourages him (v. 20). Jesus, as an itinerant preacher did not offer a settled life or an opportunity for status and fame. He offered a hard, challenging life where the objective was not personal fulfillment, but God's purposes. Jim Shaddix makes the observation, "As you read the Gospels you will notice that Jesus spent about the same time talking people out of following Him as He did into following Him." Jesus doesn't guarantee His followers a life of comfort. What He does guarantee is that He will walk with us through this journey. He wants neither shallow commitments nor lofty promises. The second would-be disciple (v. 21) offered an excuse why now was not the right time. Again, Jesus gets to the heart of the matter (v. 22), insisting that now *is* the right time to follow, to focus on life that is eternal, and to give up lesser loyalties. This doesn't mean we ignore responsibilities (e.g. family, work); it means we put Jesus above our family, our career, our hobbies, our finances, and the dreams and visions we have for our life. All our other obligations flow out of our obligation to serve Christ.

Matthew, the writer of this Gospel, is the role model for discipleship. He was a tax collector for the Romans, wealthy but despised, banished from the synagogues, socially grouped with sinners and prostitutes, an outcast. He knew the law, and that his life did not honour God. Yet Jesus looks at him and says, "Follow me!" Matthew asked no questions. He gave up his profession, his wealth, his way of life, and his sins. He understood both the offer and demand Jesus made.

Jesus' demands are uncomfortable: discard ego, give generously, love sacrificially, embrace hospitality, make constructive use of time. His offer is to help us with strength we may not have, giving us the Holy Spirit to empower and enable us with the resources we need.