

# Matthew 4:18-22 - Rediscovering Biblical Discipleship Part 2

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 05 January 2025

Preacher: Simon Lawrenson

[ 0 : 00 ] So there's a question that I want to ask this morning. It's quite a challenging question. Surprise, surprise! It's quite a challenging question.

And I think it would just be helpful for us to frame our time together. And the question is this, and you don't have to answer this, and I would encourage you not to answer this out loud.

But the question is this, if we say that we're following Jesus and we love Jesus, how would others know? So, yeah, silence. And it's good. Silence is good, right?

Because the Bible tells us, right? So it is a setup, and you know it's a setup. You know that the answers are coming. But it's good for us to think about if we say that we're following Jesus and we love Jesus.

What is the testimony in our lives about that that is true? So last week we started looking at what it means to be a disciple maker. We started to unpack this passage in Matthew chapter 4.

[ 1 : 14 ] We started to unpack this, actually this phrase, our mission statement, which can come on the screen, that we want every person to be developing a living faith in Christ.

And so we're trying to begin to understand that. And my prayer is that we start to understand that as a church, rather than just individually.

Like we need to understand it individually. And as we do understand it individually, they'll start to form what we understand as a church. And so this is kind of the center of everything.

Actually, I want to say it's the center of everything that we are doing and will be doing, but it's been the center of everything for 21 years. It's just framed in a different way, right? And so whether it's your first time at Calvary or whether you've been here for a decade or two, we want to be helping you to develop and grow your faith in Christ.

And so the text that we've chosen, I say we, we haven't, I've chosen it, is Matthew 4. That's our springboard. And I told you last week, this is probably going to take about six weeks just to kind of cover the basics.

[ 2 : 31 ] And then we're going to be looking at praying like Daniel, praying like Nehemiah, living on mission like Jonah, or not like Jonah as the case may be, living on mission like Esther, and talking about what it meant to be a disciple for them.

What does it mean for, what does it mean for Paul to be a disciple mentoring Timothy, Titus? And so as a springboard, we just kind of look, we've been looking at Matthew 4 and it begins at verse 18.

And I'll just read the text here, then we'll kind of backtrack a little bit. So it says that, while walking by the Sea of Galilee, he, that is Jesus, saw two brothers, Simon, who's called Peter, Andrew's brother, casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen.

And he said to them, follow me and I will make you fishes of men. And immediately, they left their nets and followed him. Now last week, we saw the context of this passage.

And the context of the passage was the arrival of the king. Makes that very, very clear. You know, the king has come. Jesus says the kingdom is at hand, i.e. the kingdom is right here.

[ 3 : 50 ] And so the first thing that Jesus does, I want you to see this. The first thing that Jesus does, he calls them to respond to the gospel message.

So the king has come, the king has come, the king is here. He calls them to respond to that. And he does so by calling them to action. And the action was to leave their nets.

And look, it's a metaphor, it's an illustration, it's a picture. Did they actually leave their nets? Of course they did. Were they actually fishermen? They were actually fishermen. But there's also this

bigger idea that they just, they left what was behind there.

It was, they left everything that was, what they identified with. Even their father. And we concluded last week that a disciple maker is someone who is growing in there.

you might say that they get, just they're getting better at it, right? They're getting better at leaving behind the customs and ways and behaviors and ways of thinking that dominated the old way.

[ 5 : 02 ] And if you cast your mind all the way back to 2020, 2021, we went through, you know, Paul's thesis on what it means to leave behind and become the new person in Christ and the Baccaronus, right?

And, and he, that's what he talks about. It's about leaving that old way of thinking dominated by the old man. And they were, they were being asked essentially in the context of this passage, at least, is they were, they were being asked to leave their loyalty to the old king.

Because there is another king. And he's a taskmaster. He's a pharaoh. He's an Assyrian. He's a Babylonian, right? Right? There is another king.

And, and Jesus is asking them to leave that king and to leave that kingdom. And it's exactly the same as what Jesus asks us all to be. The, the gospel begins with value changing, right?

World altering truth that the king has arrived and the kingdom is ahead. So change your allegiance.

Change your allegiance from one king to a better king, the true king.

[ 6 : 11 ] Um, so, um, there's something to think about as we, uh, move forward is that in John chapter 12, verse 24, um, Jesus says, truly I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies.

Like, that's our call, isn't it? I mean, he's talking about himself, yes, but he's, he's talking about it in response to the disciples, what they should be doing, what we should be doing. Um, it bears much fruit.

If it does die, it bears much fruit. And so, look, the difficult thing actually is letting go, wasn't it?

Letting go of life itself. Um, letting it die, putting on the altar every day.

That's the only way fruit comes. Um, and look, again, if you weren't here last week, I just recommend you to go and get the video, go and get the audio file, um, have a discussion, meet some eye over coffee, um, find out what's going on.

Um, because look, I don't want to focus on any of that this morning because we focused on that last week. Um, because there's a second essential to being a disciple that I think is highlighted in this, um, in these verses.

[ 7 : 19 ] So a disciple maker is not only growing in leaving their nets, but secondly, a disciple maker is growing in following him. Look at verse 20. It says that, um, they not only immediately left their nets, but it also says that they followed him.

So it didn't, it doesn't mean they just left their nets and just started wandering in the desert. They're like, oh, what do we do now? Right? Um, he specifically says they followed him. And there's, two, um, things, and I hesitate to say two things and you'll see why in a minute, but let's just go with two things for now that I think are really important.

Following Jesus means relationship with him and relationship with others. So following Jesus means relationship with him and relationship with others.

Now immediately when we say the word relationship with Jesus, um, we, we think about, well, I'm going to read my Bible every day and all of that is great and please continue to do that I'm not saying stop.

Right? Um, but look, um, everything that we do as Christians has to come for a relationship with Jesus.

[ 8 : 35 ] And look, I mean, maybe we pause there and just go, do we have a relationship with Jesus? You might say, well, what does that mean? But look, look how personal this is. in the light of the context of that day, um, there in first century Israel, a rabbi would call followers, right?

You know that? That's what they did. They would go around, they would call followers to themselves and the rabbi would begin to teach them and they would learn catechisms that taught them information, right? They would learn, for example, to recite the Jewish law known as the Mishnah.

613 commandments and in how to do that. And they would recite them orally, by rote. And in fact, the Mishnah, the word Mishnah means study by repetition.

It's rules, it's regulations, it's procedures, it's information. It's almost like a manual on how to be a good Jew. And as a disciple of that rabbi, you'd listen and then you'd begin to copy and try out all of those things that are in the law.

But that's not what Jesus is doing to you. Let's not be confused by this. The essence of Jesus' method is fundamentally different.

[ 9 : 48 ] He is, first and foremost, inviting them to give themselves to a relationship with him. This is not information being disseminated, although they do receive information.

Like, I'm not knocking information, right? And, please hear me. What he's calling them to is a life being poured into one another.

And that life is the life of Christ being poured in and then out. this is not invitation to attend seminary.

It's not an invitation to sit around and talk about what Rabbi Gamaliel or other of the famous rabbis thought about this, that, and the other. They weren't logging into YouTube and watching Calvary Chapel Live.

Well, we don't even do that. I don't even know why I said that. And I'm not knocking any of that stuff, right? But, this is not what Jesus is doing here. The life is the life of Jesus given to us through the Spirit.

[ 11 : 02 ] The, the, the life of the follower of Jesus is not an improved version of our old self. Right? It's, it's not like there was Simon 1.0, now there's Simon 2.0 and he's, he's, he loads the dishwasher brilliantly, which is still not true.

Right? So that this is not an upgraded version. No one's rewriting the code. The, the life of the follower of Jesus is the very life of Christ living within us.

Paul, um, captures this beautifully in Galatians 2.20 and you'll know it because I've spoken about it many times. Paul says, I've been crucified with Christ. It's no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me in the life that I now live in the flesh.

I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for. This, this verse reveals the exchange that takes place when we accept the call to follow him.

And last week we saw actually that, um, our old self marked by the nets of the world is crucified with him. Now look, here's, here's the crazy thing.

[ 12 : 15 ] Last, last week we talked about repentance, right? You know what's harder than repentance? Crucifixion. Like, repentance is easy compared to being crucified. And when we accept the call to follow him, that's what we're called to do.

We're called to slay ourselves dead. In our place, then Christ's life becomes our life. And this is the fundamental of a relationship with Jesus.

When we say, what does it mean to have a relationship with Jesus essentially means the life of Christ living, living through me. It's, it is understanding that my old thinking and habits and behaviors are still on the cross.

And the life I now live, I live by faith. So, let me flesh out some things that the New Testament says about that.

And maybe in answer to the question, if you want to bear fruit for the kingdom, listen to what Jesus says in John chapter 15. He says, abide in me and I in you. Right, there's that union right there.

[ 13 : 24 ] I mean, don't miss this, it's all over the place. We could spend the rest of the next six weeks talking about this. Jesus says, abide in me and I in you. That's the union, as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself.

Like, there isn't a 2.0. Unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. He's not saying, well, look, you can have a good shot at it, and maybe you'll almost be there.

No, Jesus says, no, you can't do it. Like, it's one of the impossibilities of the Christian life, is that we think that we can have fruit without abiding in Christ.

Like, there's some kind of shortcut. Like, there's a drive-through that we can get. Like, there's an instant to it, and there's not an instant to it. You want to experience the power of the resurrected life. Listen to what Paul says, Romans chapter 8, but if Christ is in you, well, there he is again. If Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness.

[ 14 : 30 ] If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit dwells in you. Oh, that's great news, isn't it?

You want your moral character changed to be like that of Jesus? Like, who doesn't? Listen to what Paul wrote, 2 Corinthians chapter 3. He says, and we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed, notice this, into the same image, from one degree of glory to another.

And notice this, for this comes from, how does it come from? Keeping rules and regulations and procedures and heaping up vast quantities of information? No. glory. He says, this comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

The Holy Spirit who is in you is the one transforming your life. You want to be defined by your future rather than your past. Listen to what Paul says in 2 Corinthians 5. Therefore, if anyone is what? In Christ. He's a new creation. The old has passed away, behold, the new has come. You want to know for sure that your future is a glorious one?

[15:51] Listen to what Paul wrote to the church at Colossae. He said to them, God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you.

Like, this isn't some theological ramblings that they're going on, going, oh, wouldn't it be nice if you could have this union and we could describe this union theologically as Christ in you and you in Christ, abide in me and me in you.

This is a reality that Paul talks about. See, following Jesus is not just, and I want to emphasize the just, it is not just, it is not only gaining information about him.

This is so different from how we often think about discipleship, isn't it? You know, in many traditions, we often think of a classroom or a curriculum that has information.

And again, I'm not saying that classes are wrong, but the core of what Jesus is modeling here is not that. It's not an event. It's not a program.

[17:02] It's not a series of classes that you attend. You tick it off and go, I know I've done the discipleship class. I'll move on. Well, what's next after the, what is next after the discipleship class?

No one's ever told me that answer. It's not an occasion and it's not an out of the ordinary as well. It's not something we do on a Tuesday night and we give no more thought to it for the rest of the week. Discipleship is about a relationship with Jesus Christ. And it's understanding that it's not, it's not my efforts, it's not my doing, it's not my behaviors, it's the life of Christ in me and through me.

And it's all in context with the king has come. I'm yielding, I'm surrendering to that life.

And so often I find like the Christian life is actually about not whether you're doing the right thing or the wrong thing, it's whether you're yielding to what Christ wants for you.

[18:06] It's slaying that old man and going, well, I'd really like to do this, but I know Christ is calling me to do this. Now look, I think I'll probably lay with that point long enough, but I think the question that haunts me still a little bit is this, because your life, and look, I'm telling you this from a position of being a teacher in the church for I don't know how many years and teaching profession, I'm not dissing information, please understand that.

But the question that haunts me a little bit is this, is your life about information, or is it about living the life of Christ? Do I find myself thinking that I'm holier than I was yesterday, because I've discovered that if I read Leviticus backwards, all of a sudden, I have this information?

And we laugh at that, but as Christians, you believe that. Like, I hear too often, and I hear too often in my own head, but I hear too often out there in the world, in Christian circles, like I was listening to this person, or I was reading this book, or I was listening to this podcast, and they're all great things to do, but listen, Jesus didn't say, by all this people will know that you are my disciples, because you listened to Paul Washer.

He said, by this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another. And so the issue is this, is your life growing in your love for Christ, in being seen in your love for others? So you may say that you love Jesus, and you're following Jesus, how do other people know that? Do you love them? Because this is the second part, I think, and again, I'm hesitant to talk about as a second part, because we think, well, now I'm going to love Jesus, and the second part is I've got to love others, and actually I think they go hand in hand, I think they're one of the same thing.

[20:18] But I'm going to call it the second part, just for clarity, I hope that makes sense. The second part of the essential of being a disciple is not only the life of Jesus in you, and you're surrendering to that, conforming you, so that if you grow in, you'll love to him, but it's also about the relationship with others.

And again, look, I want to caution us against seeing these two, these things as separate things. I think that's the degree to which the life of Jesus is in you, and you're surrendering to that as king, will be the degree to which you love others.

Like, I don't think you can have one, and then go, well, you know, I'm 50% there, 50%. If I got 50% of my math grades in class, I'd be like, well, happy, right?

But we're not marking like that, right? This is all in 100% or you fail. So this is, how do we know? How do people know that we love Jesus and are following Jesus because we love them? And they feel that love, they know that love. And I think, like, we see this, verse 19, check it out, he says, follow me, I'll make you fishes of men.

[ 21 : 34 ] Then look at verse 21, and then going from there, he saw two brothers, James, the son of Zebedee and John, his brother, in the boat with Zebedee, their father, mending their nets, and he called them. And immediately they left their boat and their father and followed him.

So look, the tribe just got bigger. Like, what do the disciples do? What do the disciples of Jesus do? Well, they go with Jesus, then they make the tribe bigger. Don't they?

Right? Isn't that the immediate inference from this verse? So Jesus calls Simon and Andrew and then calls others to join him, which means that the very first thing that these new disciples saw Jesus doing was to call people to join them in what they were doing.

Look, this is radically different. We're called to follow Jesus and invite others to follow Jesus. And I hope that's no surprise to anyone here. Jesus doesn't come along.

I was thinking about this week, like school holidays, I have way too much time to think. But I was thinking about this week, Jesus didn't come and set up a club.

[ 22 : 45 ] This is what I was thinking. August 2022. this is a statistic that may win you a prize one day in a pop quiz.

There were 10 million groups on Facebook with 1.8 billion users every month.

Fake friends. We'll get there. We're going to talk about imaginary friends in a minute. But look, why? Why are people drawn to something like that?

But simply look, in an age that's dominated by isolation, surface level connections, the world is craving relationships. And the world needs is not a Facebook group.

Why, that deserves an amen, right? What the world needs is relationship with people who are being filled with the life of Christ. They don't even need relationship with people.

[ 23 : 59 ] They need relationship with people who are being filled with the life of Christ. On a daily, ongoing basis. Like, out of all of the needs that currently exist in Southampton, I met with another church in Southampton this week.

When church leaders get together, we just kind of moan about the state of the city, right? And then try and end up, but don't worry, keep going. Look, you think of all the needs that are currently in Southampton, don't give them Calvary Chapel.

Give them yourself, filled with the life of Christ. God. That's what we should be doing. As we now pour into them, as we pour into people, just as Jesus has been poured into us.

What did Jesus say in John chapter 20, verse 21, it's not on there. He said, as the Father has sent me, so I'm sending you. As the Father has sent me.

Or how has the Father sent Jesus? Pouring out, pouring in and pouring out. What did Jesus say in Matthew chapter 28?

[ 25 : 13 ] He says, go therefore and do what? Tell everybody how great Calvary Chapel is? No. Make disciples. You might say, well, you know what?

I don't really have any friends. God bless you if that's you. Bill will be your friend. No, that's harsh. Look, you may be in that place and you know, I don't have any friends. I work from home. I don't see anyone. Right? Or I work nights and, you know, I don't see anyone. Look, Jesus answers that question.

Luke chapter 14, go out into the country lanes behind the hedges. Urge anyone that you can find to come so that the house will be full. Let's not use that as an excuse.

I don't know anyone. Really? We're surrounded by nearly a million people. There's someone. Francis Schaefer writes this.

[ 26 : 21 ] Who's never heard of Francis Schaefer? Okay, one of you is just admitting it. And no one else is admitting it. And everybody is like, I don't know whether that's a good thing or a bad thing. If you've never read anything of Francis Schaefer, please do.

It will be good for your brain and for your soul. This is what he says. He says, this is our calling. He might say, well, what is our calling?

Well, this is our calling to show that there is a reality in personal relationship and not just words about it. That's brilliant.

it. What is he saying? He's saying that Christians can have imaginary friends too. That's what he's saying.

But our calling in joining God on his mission is to show the reality not the imaginary. people crave connection.

[ 27 : 22 ] Why? Because it fulfills their God-given desire to live in relationship not only with him but also with each other. And Christians are uniquely positioned to show the reality of a relationship with God.

Well, look, let me address this really quickly. Relationships can be difficult, can't they? Please say yes. Great. I'm like, no, it's just me.

Relationships can be difficult, and I know that, right? I understand that. But you know, in the Gospels, there's ten things, this is just free information for now, all right?

This is just a proof I'm against information. There's ten things in the Gospels that are recorded by all four Gospel Writers. Did you know that?

So, ten things. So, every single Gospel writer talks about the feeling of the 5,000. Every Gospel writer talks about the triumph and entry into Jerusalem.

[ 28 : 31 ] Each one talks about the physical death of Jesus. He actually died on an actual cross. Each one talks about the resurrection of Jesus to life, that he actually rose again from the dead physically.

every single one records how Judas and Peter betrayed him.

Like, I think that's significant. Like, I don't think that the Bible is ever pictured or painted as disjointed from reality.

I don't think he ever paints this picture of like, you know what, if you follow Christ, you've got the life of Christ, the relationships are just a done deal, don't worry about it. Everybody is going to get on immediately. And we know that that's not true.

And we should thank the Bible for that truth. And so, the Apostle Paul falls out with Mark, sends Barnabas. He writes to Timothy and says, Timothy, you know Demas, my good friend Demas, he's left me, he loved the world.

[ 29 : 45 ] it's not, our experiences aren't unique experiences, that's what I'm saying. And this is why we need to let Jesus be the king of every domain in our lives.

Because we might be saying, and I've said it, and I occasionally say it, I probably say it too often, I don't want to relationship with that person, why? Because I might get hurt.

Like, I'm not going to let that, I'm not going to let that happen to me. But that's just not letting King Jesus be king of my life.

I'm not trusting him with that relationship. Because if Jesus is the king, and I've surrendered to him, then even as difficult as relationships can sometimes be, and I'm not for one second discounting how difficult they can be, are surrendered to him and his ways are still valid.

Like, Jesus is no less king because relationships can be difficult. He's just calling us to surrender to us. the king is the king is the king is at hand.

[ 31 : 06 ] And where the kingdom begins to take hold is when the people of God are poured into, with, the life of Christ and being poured out to others.

you see, it's not 50% of one and 50% of the other, it's you're all in. A few years ago I had the privilege of, it was a privilege, of covering myself in mud at the Dead Sea.

If you've never done that, it's an experience, I can tell you. And I learned a few things about the Dead Sea and why they call it the Dead Sea. And the reason they call it the Dead Sea is because nothing grows there.

And then the next question, and also it smells, but the other question to a guy is like, that's just normal. But there's a reason why nothing grows there. And the reason nothing grows there is because there are rivers that flow into it, but there's nothing that flows out of it.

Everything that goes into the Dead Sea stays in the Dead Sea and it rots. and that's where the smell comes from. Everything that flows into the Dead Sea, the Dead Sea keeps.

[ 32 : 28 ] Keeps everything it gets. the water that holds blessing. I mean, just imagine that whole area is pretty much a desert.

The water that holds incredible blessing and life, it holds onto it. Nothing and no one gets it. And my heart for us is that we don't be like that.

and the degree to which the life of Jesus is in you will be the degree to which you love others. As I said, we might say that we are following Jesus and we love Jesus, but if we say we're following Jesus and we love Jesus, how would others know?

we have spent a few moments in reflection like we did last week and this time we are spending time around the Lord's table.

And the interesting thing about the Lord's table is that he invites all to come, but not all should come.

[ 33 : 44 ] this is a place we talked about last week where we see the king slain for us. It's a place where this life is imparted to us.

It's a place where we come again and remember that we need him. And so I want to encourage you to come up and lead us in a couple of songs.

And during the singing just encourage you to come up, take the elements, go back to where you were sat, take between you and the Lord.

But I want to encourage you to really examine yourself. Like Paul says in 1 Corinthians chapter 12, let a man examine himself.

And that examination doesn't stop us coming. That examination is the qualifying for us to come.

Like we examine ourselves, we don't come in a thoughtless manner.

[ 34 : 58 ] God to give us this life.

The life that we have, the life that we are given, ultimately comes from the claustrosism. When he took our death upon himself, when he rose again, he gave us his life.

And so maybe this morning you're in that place where actually you thought maybe Christianity was just like an upgrade.

It's not an upgrade. Jesus would never need to come. He could have just sent another Adam, and it would have been Adam 2.9, like the Mormons teach, or the Jehovah's Witnesses teach.

But he came as himself. and the great exchange took place. My life for his. Father, thank you so much, Lord, that even though we are not perfect and we're far from it, you have planned and initiated a way for us to stop and pause and consider and examine our own hearts as to whether we are of you or not.

[ 36 : 33 ] Not an opportunity for us to be discouraged, not an opportunity for us to flee, but an opportunity for us to come.

Come leaving our necks behind. surrendering to your will. And Lord, maybe amongst us there are situations or things that are going on with us that you've been speaking to us about that we haven't really surrendered to you.

Maybe we've just been keeping hold of them. Maybe we've been trying to work out a new and better upgraded plan. Or maybe we just don't know what to do with it. Paul told us to put these things on an altar and then be a living sacrifice.

I think living sacrifice means that we surrender daily to you. God, Lord, there's things that we have and we're holding on to. But as we come and break this bread and drink from this cup, the body that was broken for us and the blood that was shed for us, it was broken and it was shed for those things.

you might give us the power then to surrender and to give ourselves. So just in the quietness before we start singing or before we come up, Lord, would you just by your spirit speak to our hearts, convict our hearts maybe, but we also want to be encouraged in our hearts.

[ 38 : 28 ] That you're the God who calls us and asks us to come and meet him at the altar and the altar is a place of sacrifice, it's a place of surrender.

So Lord, we want to say, Lord, whatever it is that we're holding on to, Lord, have it, it's yours. Do with it what you may. Be glorified in it, we pray.

in Jesus' man, and now. as Thank you.