

# Answering Christ's Call

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[ 0 : 00 ] We're going to turn now to our Bible readings, and you'll find that in Matthew's Gospel at chapter 4. If you have one of our church visitors' Bibles, that's page 809.

And we are beginning this morning a new study which will take us, I suspect, the next few months through into the summertime, if summer is ever going to come.

And we're going to be looking at the Sermon on the Mount. So today we are really introducing ourselves to that, and we're going to read from Matthew chapter 4 at verse 12 through to chapter 5 verse 12.

Now when Jesus heard that John, that is John the Baptist, had been arrested, he withdrew into Galilee. And leaving Nazareth, he went and lived in Capernaum by the sea, in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali, so that what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah may be fulfilled.

The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, the way of the sea beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles, the people walking in darkness have seen a great light.

[ 1 : 17 ] And for those dwelling in the region, and the shadow of death, on them has the light dawned. From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

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. And he said to them, Follow me, and I will make you fishes of men.

Immediately they left the nets and followed him. And going on from there, he saw two other brothers, James, the son of Zebedee, and John, his brother, in the boat, with Zebedee, their father, mending their nets.

And he called them. Immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him. And he went throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every disease and every affliction among the people.

So his fame spread throughout all Syria, and they brought him all the sick, those afflicted with various diseases and pains, those oppressed by demons, epileptics, and paralytics.

[ 2 : 30 ] And he healed them. And great crowds followed him from Galilee and the Decapolis, and from Jerusalem and Judea, and from beyond the Jordan. Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain.

And when he sat down, his disciples came to him, and he opened his mouth and taught them, saying, Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

Blessed are the people who are persecuted, for their kingdom of heaven. And blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you, and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.

[ 3 : 43 ] Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven. For so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Amen. And may God bless to us this, his word. Amen. Amen. Amen. Well, if you'd turn with me back to Matthew's Gospel, the passage we read, chapter 4 and 5.

I think page 809, if you have one of the church Bibles. There are many things, many things I admire about my friend and predecessor here, Sinclair Ferguson.

But just one of the many areas of life where he leaves me in the shade is the realm of golf. As some of you know, Sinclair is a very, very good golfer. Maybe if you have a brain as big as his, it doesn't take you that long to prepare your sermon, so there's more time for the golf course.

I don't know. But I've not been on the golf course for about 10 years, so that tells you how slow I am. But I recall Sinclair often speaking about golf and on a number of occasions speaking about Jack Nicklaus, who was arguably the greatest golfer of all time.

[ 4 : 56 ] And more than that, actually, a very great sportsman in the true sense of the word. He was a great ambassador, wasn't he? A great role model. Not known for his misdemeanors, as so many sportsmen seem to be these days.

But for his sportsmanship, his generosity. And also for his great faithfulness in his personal life, too. But Jack Nicklaus, at the height of his powers, was an incredible golfer.

And you wouldn't think, would you, that there was really very much that Jack Nicklaus needed to know or to be taught still about the game of golf. But according to Sinclair, every single year, Jack Nicklaus would go back to the very first coach that he had in his earliest days, a man called Jack Grout.

Every single year, he would go back to him and he would say to him, Jack, I want you to teach me how to play golf. That sounds extraordinary, doesn't it? Sounds absolutely out of place.

But you see, what made Jack Nicklaus such a great one was that he knew that the only way he would go on, the only way he would progress, was if he never, ever left behind the basics, the very heart of the game of golf.

[ 6 : 10 ] I think that's a real lesson for us, for all of us, as we think about the Christian life. We must never, ever think that somehow we get beyond the stage where we need to go back to basics, where we need to learn again what it means to be the people of the Lord Jesus, the people who belong to his revolutionary kingdom of grace.

As we sang in that song, it was the daily prayer of the psalmist to say, teach me thy way, O Lord, that I may walk in your truth.

And it's a constant need for every single one of us, no matter how long we've walked with Christ, to keep returning to the basics of the Christian life, to things as basic as the grip and the stance and the swing are to the game of golf.

To go back again and again to the Lord Jesus and say, teach me again, teach me how to be a Christian. Teach me how to be one of your people, how to be part of your heavenly kingdom. Lord, teach me your way. And what better place to do that than to meditate upon the Lord's words in what we call the Sermon on the Mount.

[ 7 : 27 ] Now, we've just finished, haven't we, a long study in the whole of Luke's gospel. And so we've been immersed in a lot of Jesus' teaching. But we've tried to take the gospel in larger chunks of text because if you want to get the message of a gospel as a whole, that's what you have to do.

That's how the gospel writers expected their books to be read because they're telling us the whole story, aren't they, of Christ and his work. And you'll lose the thread. You'll lose the whole sense of the movement if you just take tiny sections of a few verses at a time.

That's not the way to read or to teach the gospels. But, of course, there can also be great use from time to time to slow right down and to take time to meditate on some of the profound detail of Jesus' teaching.

And I think that's especially so where we have deliberately recorded for us by the gospel writer a section of Jesus' teaching that stands together as a clear unity both in focus and in purpose. And, of course, that's exactly what we have in Matthew chapters 5 to 7. In fact, Matthew organizes his whole gospel around five teaching sections just like that where things are grouped together around a clear theme.

[ 8 : 41 ] And this is the first one. You come to chapter 10, you'll find there's a whole chapter all about real kingdom mission. In Matthew 13, there's a whole chapter all about real kingdom expectations, what we're to expect now and not yet.

And in chapter 18, you have a whole section all about real kingdom churches and how the community of Christ is meant to behave. And in chapter 24 and chapter 25, you have a whole section on the real kingdom judgment that is coming at the final coming of Jesus.

But here in Matthew 5 to 7, right at the very start of Jesus' ministry, we have Jesus teaching all about what it means to be real kingdom people.

People of true righteousness. And Jesus spells out unmistakably what are the marks of his true people and what their true mission is in this kingdom age.

It's lights to the world showing the heavenly morality and indeed the heavenly mentality of Christ to the world. And unafraid to declare the true message of the kingdom with that call that it makes to decisive change, to a decision which is fraught with destiny for all life and for all eternity.

[ 9 : 55 ] Well, these are vital things for us to know, aren't they? Vital things for us to keep on knowing. Just as little errors can creep into your golf swing and end up causing you to spend far too much time off the fairway and in the rough and perhaps even out of bounds altogether.

Well, it's just the same, isn't it, in our Christian lives if we drift away from foundational matters. That's when we begin, isn't it, to drift off into the rough, to get dangerously close to being out of bounds, dangerously close to disqualification.

So between now and the early summer, we're going to go back to basics. We're going to be working on our swing, as it were. We're going to say to the Lord Jesus again, Lord, teach us your way.

Teach us what it means to be your people. Show us the portrait that you've painted of what we're to be. Show us again your purpose that you've called us to in this life.

Teach us the true practice of your heavenly ways for us here on earth to exhibit heavenly morality and a heavenly mentality to the people of this world.

[ 11 : 07 ] Help us to preach true Christianity to this world as you've taught us to do. And the handout that you have there this morning, I think will help you to see how we've broken this up into four parts into this series that we're going to look together.

So next time, that's for you to take away so that you hopefully know where we're going and it gives you a bit of a roadmap. And next time, we'll begin to focus on the Beatitudes, where Jesus paints in these evocative words a portrait of true Christianity, showing us the marks of what it means to belong to his kingdom.

But first today, before we get into the detail of it, to keep the golfing metaphor, if you like, we're going to be wagging on the tee. We're going to be getting ourselves just ready to know the game that we're playing.

Because I want us to be absolutely clear, clear in our minds what the Sermon on the Mount really is about and what it's not about, and who it's about and who it's not about.

Because, of course, this teaching doesn't just appear in a vacuum, does it? Unless we pay attention to the context, unless we see to whom Jesus is speaking and who he isn't speaking, we're going to misunderstand it totally.

[ 12 : 22 ] And sadly, that is very, very common for the Sermon on the Mount. It is greatly misunderstood. The name, I suppose, is still pretty well known, even in our culture today.

But I guess the content is only really vaguely familiar to people nowadays. And the meaning, I think, is almost completely lost altogether.

For some, they look at the Sermon on the Mount and see it rather as a blueprint for society, something that with real effort could be attained and would bring about a sort of utopian world.

It's just that society hasn't really properly espoused it, and that's why there's such disappointment.

Those of you who are into literature will know that that was what the novelist Tolstoy seemed to think and wrote about in one of his novels.

For some, I guess for many in our culture today, many who would perhaps still think of themselves as culturally Christian when they fill in a survey, well, for many it's a sort of plan for life that is aimed at finding acceptance with God so that if you do your best and mark up a good enough score, then God will reward you with a place in heaven.

[ 13 : 36 ] For some, of course, there's people who would confidently say, well, of course, that's me. I live by the Sermon on the Mount. That's my motto. Don't judge others and God won't judge you. Live and let live. That's my life.

You see, you just need to begin to think about the ways people talk about the Sermon on the Mount to realize that it's really very popular, mostly among those people who have no real idea what it's about at all.

Because if you really did understand what Jesus is teaching here, I think you would talk very differently from that. Just impossible to speak in those kind of ways if you've really grasped the challenge of this teaching.

So what is the Sermon on the Mount really all about? Well, it's quite simple. It is simply Jesus Christ, the true King of the world, the true King of all worlds, teaching us with complete authority what life in his kingdom is about and what life in his kingdom looks like for those who truly belong to him as kingdom people.

Or to put it another way, it's what the only right and appropriate response is to the news that the kingdom of God has begun on earth because the true King has arrived in the person of Jesus Christ.

[14:58] Look at chapter 4, verse 17, which marks the very beginning of Jesus' proclamation of his kingdom. From that time, Jesus began to preach, saying, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

That is, it's upon you. Look down then to verse 23. Jesus went everywhere doing what? Teaching and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom. And then immediately look at chapter 5, verse 2. We read, He opened his mouth and he taught them. And we have the whole of this great teaching sermon. Until, if you look over to chapter 7, verse 28, you'll see that it says, When he finished all these sayings, the crowds were astonished at his teaching.

Now you see, between these things, these statements, beginning of chapter 5 and the end of chapter 7 there, Matthew has deliberately summarized all these great teaching sessions of Jesus for his readers.

So that we also can have the explanation of what Jesus meant when he said, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

[16:10] In verse 17, he calls for repentance and for the life of God's kingdom. And this, you see, the Sermon on the Mount shows us what that life of true repentance looks like.

It's the life of true kingdom righteousness. You see, for Jesus, in a sense, repentance and righteousness are the same thing. And it's this repentant righteousness or righteous repentance, if you want to put it that way, it's that that is the great mark of his true people, the people of God's kingdom, the people of God's king.

That's why it's vital that we pay attention to the context. Look at chapter 5, verse 1. Matthew makes it very clear, doesn't he, that this teaching is given specifically and deliberately to those that he has already called to be his people.

When he sat down, his disciples came to him and he opened his mouth and taught them. See, that's so important, isn't it? This teaching is for his disciples. In fact, the whole sermon generally and the Beatitudes in particular paint a portrait of a true disciple of Jesus the king, what the disciple of Jesus looks like in the flesh.

And in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus describes this counter-cultural living that real followers of Jesus, that real Christians are called to live out in this world as children of heaven.

[17:35] Because with Jesus coming, the kingdom has begun. And so that must mean kingdom lives for kingdom people lived in the king's presence.

Now remember, Matthew begins his gospel, doesn't he? Announcing the arrival of the king. Long promised, but now here. Jesus Christ, the son of David, the great king, the son of Abraham, the great progenitor of Israel.

In the first two chapters that we know so well from Christmas, they proclaim the arrival of the one who is born king of the Jews. But he's worshipped, isn't he, by Gentile wise men who come from far away.

The world will worship this king. And then in chapters 3 and 4, we have John the Baptist announcing him to the world. Look, says John, your king has come. So repent.

When God's promised king comes, it means that the ultimate rule of God is here on earth, both in salvation and in judgment. That's why John cries repent.

[18:39] Because his winnowing fork is in his hand. He says he's come to judge between the wheat and the chaff in the world of men. And then you have the voice, don't you, from the Father in heaven itself at Jesus' baptism.

And he declares, this is my beloved son. And the clear implication is the same thing as what he says explicitly later on on the Mount of Transfiguration. This is my beloved son, so listen to him. Listen to him. Teach and proclaim the real truth about his kingdom. Exactly as Jesus begins to do here, beginning at Matthew 4, verse 17.

Because he and he alone has got the authority to do that and to tell us what his kingdom is and isn't. Now that's so important to remember, is it not?

Because there's so much confusion today, just as there was confusion in Jesus' day about what the kingdom of God really means. In his day, many people just thought it was to do with earthly things. [ 19 : 39 ] It was to do with political liberation. It was to do with social change. It was to do with economic improvement and so on. Well, it's just the same today, isn't it? For many, that is what the church should be all about.

Social work and politics, all the really important pressing matters of this world, climate change and so on. I'm sure that's one reason why people have become thoroughly bored with the church in this country just as they become thoroughly bored with politics in this country.

But no, says Jesus, look, look at chapter 4, verse 17. It's the kingdom of heaven that he's talking about. It's something far, far greater than your feeble thinking can begin to contemplate.

Now, if you want to hear what is the truth about God's kingdom, the kingdom of heaven, we have to listen to the king of heaven who has come to earth to tell us. It's only he who can tell us about his kingdom.

It's only he who can tell us what it means to be people of that kingdom. And that's what he's doing in this, what we call the Sermon on the Mount. He's teaching his disciples.

[ 20 : 44 ] He's teaching those he has called to follow him as his people. He's teaching them nothing less than the counterculture that brings the way of heaven to earth even now and demonstrates the presence of heaven on earth with unmistakable and distinctive flavor like the challenging tang and sting of salt and brings the clarifying brightness of light that illuminates the very road to heaven itself.

So that's the first thing, the kingdom of heaven. The Sermon on the Mount is about the kingdom of heaven and it's for those who call themselves disciples, Christians.

It's the Lord of heaven himself teaching us about true heavenly righteousness, the righteousness to which we have been called. Teaching us all about true kingdom discipleship, about being what we are as the people of the king.

But notice also in verse 1 of chapter 5, notice also what he says about the crowds. Seeing the crowds, he went and sat down and began to teach his disciples.

So it is his disciples Jesus is teaching directly, but he knows full well, doesn't he, that the crowds are all around listening in. And so of course Jesus is very consciously but indirectly speaking also to the crowds.

[ 22 : 11 ] Think about politicians today, think about David Cameron as he's going all around Europe meeting with the different European leaders trying to broker his new deal for the European Union. And there's a press conference in Belgium or Holland or France or wherever it is and he is speaking directly to the cameras in Belgium or France or whatever it is.

But he knows very well that he is speaking for an audience back home on the 6 o'clock news. So he's speaking to them but for us. And as Jesus expires the wonder of his kingdom, he is also still very consciously appealing to those who are still outside, those who are not yet committed disciples.

disciples. And he's appealing to them to enter his kingdom and to become disciples with the rest.

Not because he's giving them requirements to follow that if they do well enough they'll earn a place among his disciples.

No, not that. No, he's describing the life of those who are already his people because they are penitent people. People who have sought grace and forgiveness in him and have found it in abundance in Jesus Christ.

But you see the paradox of the message of grace in Christ is that it not only comforts the penitent and the humble follower but it also convicts the proud and the impenitent.

[ 23 : 36 ] God's grace not only responds to repentance but God's grace provokes repentance in the human heart. So really there's no divide is there between preaching and teaching that edifies and encourages disciples and that which evangelizes and calls those who are still in the crowds in the outside world because the gospel of the cross of Jesus both shapes entry into the kingdom of God and into the life of discipleship and it goes on shaping the life of true discipleship every single day right till the end of our lives.

And what that means is that there is something vital here in Jesus' teaching on the Sermon on the Mount whoever you are. If you're a Christian of many many years following well he's speaking to you just as Jesus spoke to his first disciples then.

But if you're not a Christian if you're still in the crowd if you're interested if you're listening in wanting to find out more well it's also for you. It's for you to listen in to the teaching of Jesus about his kingdom to his people so that you also will discover all that you need to know about his kingdom so that you also can find the way to life which only Jesus as the king can offer you and show you.

So if that's you let me encourage you to keep coming on Sunday mornings as we study this together. Keep listening and give Jesus Christ the consideration that surely he deserves surely any intelligent inquisitive person deserves to give to Jesus.

well that's really all by way of introduction to our series and it's a necessarily waggle on the tee because we have to understand what we're studying but in the time left this morning I want to concentrate before we get right into the Sermon on the Mount I want to concentrate on more of this issue of what what differentiates the person who is already a disciple of Jesus in verse 1 from those who are still really among the crowds interested as they may be that is a vital question isn't it and it's what verses 18 to 22 of chapter 4 make very clear for us and I want us to focus on that now so we're absolutely clear before we finish this morning on what this difference is let's focus on these verses for a few minutes because they show us so very clearly that the beginning of all true Christian discipleship is in the sovereign call of Jesus himself and it's a call to a life of exclusive loyalty to him alone as king and lord and that loyalty is manifest in submission to his sovereign commands see Matthew here is making an astounding claim he's saying that

[ 26 : 31 ] Jesus alone has the power to call people into the kingdom of heaven follow me is Jesus command to these men and we're told twice immediately they followed him Matthew's telling us that Jesus alone has the authority to command the ways of God's eternal heavenly kingdom he's telling us that this man has the power and the authority of the God of heaven himself to command and to control in his kingdom and disciples people who belong to the kingdom of God are simply people who have answered that call and have submitted to that authority they've heard the voice of Jesus calling them to obey to submit to his kingly rule over their whole life and they have obeyed and they've joined the community of those who gladly live under his exclusive authority under his sovereign rule and what that means according to these verses in Jesus' own words is that they have become both true followers and true fishers because Christ's call has two clear aspects doesn't it it's a call with complete authority and it's a call with a commanding purpose it's very clear in these verses isn't it that Jesus' call is a call with complete authority verse 19 follow me in verse 20 immediately they left the nets and followed him in verse 22 immediately

James and John also left their father their boats and they followed him what amazing authority it's probably not the very first time these men have met Jesus John's gospel suggests to us they've spoken already but here is the decisive moment that changes their future it is a word of command and immediately they respond those of you who have employees can you get your employees to respond immediately like that those of you with children not a chance can your boss get you to respond with that kind of authority and immediacy it's astonishing in itself isn't it it's a call to unique submission but you see there's far more to it than just that this is also a universal call that we're being shown here it's a call for the obedience of all peoples to Jesus Christ and the context here tells us that plainly it's absolutely loaded with significance look at verse 18 we're told and it's emphasized that Jesus is in Galilee and if you look above to verse 12 and verse 15 again we're told there he was in Galilee

Galilee of the Gentiles and we're quoted the promises from the prophets that in the latter days God's saving light would shine and call people from all nations from among the Gentiles and the pagans to join the light of God's Israel on them too has the light shined you see Matthew is saying well this is that it's fulfilled this is the beginning of the climax of world history Jesus is the king of the whole world and he's come and so when he calls you listen you act you follow him immediately and that is what a disciple is that's what a Christian is it's someone who's recognized that in Jesus Christ you hear the call of the eternal ruler of this whole world and so you've bowed the knee to him and acknowledged him as sovereign Lord see there's so much confusion isn't there today even about what a Christian actually is people think it's to do with all sorts of religious things all sorts of moral things all sorts of ceremonial things and so on but no at its heart it's much much more simple than that it's not really to do with religion in that sense at all it's all about relationship isn't it it's

simply about recognizing that the climax of world history has come in the person of Jesus Christ and therefore that people of all nations of all cultures whoever they are must submit to Jesus Christ uniquely whether your background's Jewish like Simon and Andrew and these other men or whether it's Gentiles pagans atheists or Muslims or Hindus or Buddhists or anybody else if the climax of world history has come and the king of heaven has come then you must submit to his supreme authority you must follow him and forsake all others and that's a Christian disciple that's what makes you a citizen of God's heavenly kingdom nothing else and certainly nothing less and notice it's not just some sort of vague intent here it's clear here that this is a whole of life transformation a whole turnaround in life's commitments that is requested and is involved here they leave everything in their life their nets their boats their livelihood their family and they follow Jesus Christ that's what it means to follow Jesus it's a whole life loyalty people sometimes talk about following football I'm sometimes asked people do you follow football well for me it's just a matter of vague interest I look at the scores I read the reports I maybe go to the odd game but there's no real commitment in my life to football but the true fan the people who sing follow follow we will follow Rangers well out in the snow yesterday in the blizzards they were there in the good times and the bad and it's mostly been bad they're there they follow their club of course the sad thing is they follow because their team really is their God in many ways they follow with the zeal of lifelong commitment well it's crazy to do that isn't it it's crazy to devote your life to such complete subjection unless it is to follow one who truly is divine who truly can answer all the needs of human life who truly is the source of meaning in all life and in all eternity well the disciple the true Christian is someone who has said

I will follow Jesus because he is the Lord of heaven and earth because his call is the divine call it is a call of complete authority and notice secondly that it is a call with a commanding purpose it's not just to follow but it is to join the mission of the Messiah himself true disciples true Christians according to Jesus it means becoming verse 19 fishers of men and that's because you see the true disciple understands what the coming of Jesus means for this world and therefore shares with him the urgent task of gathering out of this perishing world those that Jesus the Messiah has come to rescue to rescue from the imminent coming of the judgment of God which Jesus himself proclaims Jesus' mission is a rescue mission it's to fish people out of the coming floods of judgment well we know and we've seen a lot haven't we about people being fished out of the terrible calamity of coming floods that's what Jesus is talking about here and if you doubt me just read on to the end of the sermon in chapter 7 verse 25 to the end you'll see that is his ultimate focus he's talking about coming floods of judgment so don't misunderstand

[ 34 : 40 ] Jesus' talk here about fishing don't think Jesus is painting a picture of gentle fly fishing on a lovely summer day in some pretty river in the highlands where you relax and you switch off and you eat your sandwiches and you enjoy the scenery no, no, no the men he's talking to here were real fishermen they plied their trade in the wind and the waves and the cold and the wet and the dark they put out great nets straining to pull in holes of fish in order to make a living fishing was their livelihood fishing was their whole life they were totally immersed in the strenuous task of fishing but now Jesus says all of that energy all of that effort all of that devotedness must focus on a new kind of fishing a more urgent focus a vital fishing fishing for men fishing to pull them out of the waters of judgment and rescue them into my heavenly kingdom of grace chapter 13 verse 47 of Matthew's gospel

Jesus explicitly says that the kingdom of heaven is like a net being thrown out into the sea to pull out fish and he says that the judgment of God is like the sorting of fish good from the bad that's what he's talking about here and he's saying that the true Christian has someone who has realized all of that and that in Jesus coming and in Jesus gospel urgent intimation to the world is given of the need for worldwide rescue of human beings from the flood of judgment that is to come people of every tribe and tongue and people and nation and so it must be mustn't it all hands on deck it must be everyone to the task of fishing with Jesus for his kingdom of grace fishing like that for a Christian a real Christian can't possibly be a spectator sport can't just be a part time recreation can it it's not that kind of fishing at all no no no it's a whole of life business and that's why for these early disciples their whole previous life was left behind and often it is true like that when Jesus calls someone to follow him very often it does mean a change of direction a change of occupation in their earthly life but for every true follower of Jesus there is a necessary change in direction a necessary change in priority in life even if you you're not necessarily changing your trade or your profession and that's

the real emphasis here it's all about the commanding purpose of Christ's call which is to see that that his mission must now take precedence over every other thing in life whether domestic or personal or professional because Christ's kingdom has begun and nothing else can have priority in our lives and therefore a disciple a real follower of

Jesus a Christian is someone who's grasped that and who acts on it and puts Christ's mission of salvation of men and women from all nations first above everything else in their earthly life devotes their lives to being a disciple and a disciple maker a fisher of men because that is the commanding purpose of Christ's call and it is a call with complete authority so it really is as simple as that isn't it that's not to say of course every one of us can be like Billy Graham some great evangelist like that of course some people do have very special gifts of evangelism whether it's remarkably being a personal evangelist or being able to talk to great crowds like that but mission is the task of the whole church as a body not that some are fishers and others are spectators no the true disciple will always be marked out by making this great priority the priority above everything else in life the true disciple will always be determined to find their place in the fishing boat if you like all hands on deck for all their worth the true disciple will be leaving aside many good and worthwhile other things in order to do that maybe forgoing some work advancements and opportunities some of their spending some of their leisure time some of the travel they could do some of the luxuries they could have whatever it is some of the me time as we say today forgo some of these things in order to give Jesus and his mission and his kingdom work the absolute priority in our lives whether it's bringing others to hear about Jesus at church where they know that the Lord promises to be in the midst to reveal himself to people or to Christianity explored or to doing one-to-one reading the gospel with somebody whether it's giving a night up that you could be reading the paper or watching TV or watching football to come and join in with Christ's people praying for the mission as Christ has commanded us to do whether it means leaving your family at home one night a week and coming and cooking for Christianity explored or release the word or the international bible study or whatever it is so people can hear the gospel and learn Christ whether it's giving money that really stretches you financially not just a token tithe of your income in order to help the mission of the church to bless many to reach more with the gospel see what Jesus is saying is these are all the kinds of things that mark out his disciples his

Christians mark them out from the crowd people who are interested but still not committed still outsiders these are real followers and real fishers or as Jesus puts it himself a little later on real hearers and doers of his word whose lives are actually in reality devoted to being disciples and to making disciples for Jesus Christ so friends as we finish this morning that leaves us with a question doesn't it I think every one of us here is that really me am I actually according to Jesus definition am I a real disciple have I actually answered that call of complete authority have I really understood the urgency of the summons of Christ the king of the world to join him in his mission as the top priority for my earthly life is that really true of me or have I actually just been listening in as a spectator from a distance as if being near to Jesus real mission as if being around

[ 42 : 09 ] Jesus people is actually the only thing that matters well that's not so says Jesus read on to chapter 7 verse 21 and you'll see he says not everyone who says to me Lord Lord will enter my kingdom not everyone who sings songs who hears words who does impressive things no says Jesus it's those who hear my words and do them do what I command the people who belong to Jesus kingdom are the people who have answered his call of complete authority and commanding purpose to follow him and to devote their lives henceforth to fishing with him whatever the cost in terms of family in terms of finance in terms of their future follow me says Jesus and I will make you fishes of mend that's a command and it's a promise from the king of time and eternity so we better listen hadn't we let's pray

Lord may we hear your voice pleading with our hearts in grace and calling our lives with sovereign authority grant us we pray the obedience of faith so that we don't resist you to our eternal loss but rather gladly bow the knee to you as our Lord and our master in whose service is perfect freedom and in whose kingdom alone is to be found ultimate and abundant joy so hear us we pray in Jesus name amen love love him again so