

Full Fellowship

by Paris Reidhead

The call of Jesus Christ is an invitation to full communion with him, a demand for full renunciation of all other interests, and a new sphere of activity under him.

Duration: 38:04

Scripture: Isaiah 59:1, Matthew 4:18-25, Matthew 24:14, John 17:5, Acts 19:11-12, Hebrews 1:1-4, Hebrews 2:3

Topics: "Fellowship"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the call that Jesus Christ issues to men. He highlights the importance of instructing, explaining, heralding, and preaching the word of God. The speaker also mentions that Jesus promises to confirm and demonstrate his power. However, the ultimate purpose of ministry, faith, labor, and suffering is to glorify God. The sermon is based on Matthew 4:18-25, where Jesus calls Peter and Andrew to follow him and become fishers of men.

Transcript

Will you turn, please, to Matthew, chapter 4. I read beginning with the 18th verse, concluding with the 25th verse. And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon, called Peter, and Andrew, his brother, casting a net into the sea, for they were fishers. He saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.

And they straightway left their nets, and followed him. And going on from thence, he saw other two brethren, James, the son of Zebedee, and John, his brother, in a ship with Zebedee, their father, mending their nets. And he called them, and they immediately left the ship, and their father, and followed him.

And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness, and all manner of disease among the people. And his fame went throughout all Syria, and they brought unto him all sick people, that were taken with divers' disease and torments, and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatic, and those that had the palsy, and he healed them. And there followed him great multitudes of people from Galilee, and from Decapolis, and from Jerusalem, and from Judea, and from beyond Jordan.

Last week, we inaugurated a new series of studies in relation to what we have been considering from Hebrews. There, in Hebrews, we heard the Spirit of God say, through the writer, God has spoken unto us by his Son. Wherefore, we ought to take the more earnest heed, lest at any time we should let slip what he

has said by his Son.

How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation as was spoken by his Son? If the ministry of Angel was steadfast, so that men died, how much more the ministry of his Son? Now his Son has been presented. We read in John the first chapter, the ministry of John the Baptist is completed, for he was a forerunner, running on ahead of the sovereign that was following in his train, in his footsteps. He was going to prepare a way for the Lord.

His message was, take down the mountains and fill up the valleys, the mountains of stubbornness and of rebellion and sin, fill up the valleys of unbelief and defeat. Make way for the Lord to come. Repent was his word.

Change your mind, your purpose, your intent from pleasing yourself to pleasing God. And there were those who heard John and were baptized with John's baptism. And among them were the two that the next day, after John had baptized Jesus, were standing there with him, John, when they saw Jesus coming and they heard John say, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.

And immediately they left John and joined themselves to Jesus. And John expected it to be that way. John wanted it that way.

For John said, he must increase, but I must decrease. John, then, was the one that stood by and watched his disciples leave him. Now, we do not know that it was John the Apostle that was there, but there's very strong reasons to feel that the one standing with John that day was Andrew and the Apostle John.

For he never speaks of himself in his gospel in the first person, when he describes himself as the young man who stood there when our Lord was taken before the judge, he said a young man. He didn't identify himself, though elsewhere it is John that is identified as being the young man. And so he says Andrew and another, and we have reason to believe that this was the son of Zebedee.

Andrew did as you would expect him to do, he went and found his brother. And brought him to the Lord Jesus, and presented him to Christ. So on the occasion of which we've read here in the fourth chapter of Matthew, Andrew and Simon were tending their nets.

They had met Christ, they had talked with him, they'd spent time with him. They knew what he had come to do, they knew something about him. James and John knew him also, for we assume that it was John who was with him in the home that afternoon that Andrew and he went.

They knew what he said, they knew what he was doing, they knew who he was, they knew why he was coming, they knew the prophecies or something regarding them concerning Christ. And when John the Baptist had said, Behold the Lamb of God, this too had meaning, fulfilling all the types of the Old Testament. Isn't it like our Lord to allow full time for the issue to be developed so that everyone is clear, everyone understands, everyone is certain.

He'd met Andrew, he'd met Peter, he'd met John, he'd met James, he'd talked with them. But dear friends, just as the Lord very patiently allows us to get the problems out of our mind and the difficulties settled and clarified, there comes a time when he speaks. There comes a time when he calls.

There comes a moment of necessary decision when he is presenting the issue. And we find it here in this fourth chapter. The first thing that I would have you see is the call that Jesus Christ issues to men.

First, what does he offer? It is, as we saw last week, an invitation to full communion with him. He it is that baptizeth you with the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost is God.

He says, Come unto me. He says, Follow me. Not my teachings, not my doctrines, not even my purpose, but follow me.

This is a personal relationship to which the Lord Jesus Christ calls us. He is issuing his invitation now for full fellowship and communion, more than that, union with himself. For ultimately, he speaks to the same company that see him standing on the shore and hear him say, Follow me, and he says, I will dwell in you, and I'll walk in you, and I'll make my habitation in you.

So it is to full fellowship with him that he calls us. But his call demands full and complete renunciation for his sake. Andrew is in business with his brother Simon.

James and John are in business with their father. The Lord understands this, and yet the call that he makes is one that demands that they renounce all of their own personal interests. But you see, they've already heard the message of repentance.

They've already responded to this, so there's no problem, no hesitation. Again, we must understand what we mean by repentance. If it is that when John said, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven was at hand, all they did was to feel sorry for what they had done, there would be very little value at this point.

But there's far more to repentance than sorrow. Inestimable harm has been done to the cause of Christ when Jerome made the unfortunate mistake of translating the Greek word for repentance by the Latin word for sorrow. And ever since that time, people have been thinking that to repent is to be sorry.

Sorrow is an emotion, and repentance is in the will. Sorrow is a sensation, is a feeling, and repentance is in the purpose and the intention of the heart. And the two are not to be confused.

Godly sorrow works repentance. The emotion, the affection, the sensation works the decision of the will, but they're not synonymous. When John said, Repent, what he meant was cease to live to please yourself, cease to make your own purpose the goal of your being, cease to make your pleasure the reason for your living.

Make God's glory, God's will, and God's purpose the goal of your life. These had heard it, and they'd been baptized with John's baptism, and they were disciples of John. In other words, repentance was complete.

Perhaps we could explain the powerlessness of the 20th century church by saying that we have in them so many, and not speaking of the local church, I'm thinking of it as far broader aspects across the country, and perhaps around the world, we have so many in it that give intellectual assent to the doctrines and the teachings and the truths, but have never made the moral change from pleasing themselves to pleasing God. In other words, they've embraced the teachings without having repented. And when Christ comes and says, forsake all and follow me, they've had to fight the issue because they didn't settle it at the threshold.

It's like using a wide gate to get people in and call them Christian. And then down here about half, six years in, we have a narrow gate and say, well, now this is where you have to go through. And so the church mills around out here in this little ambulatory of the Christian life, just sort of like a cattle in a stampede, moving back and forth and never getting into God's way because they've been unwilling to

come in.

Oh, how much better it is to put the narrow gate, the straight gate, right out at the very front. And challenge with all that Christ has to say. He did, he always did to the rich young ruler.

He said, tell all you have, give it to the poor, and come follow me. Leave your family, leave your possessions, and leave your profession. Come follow me.

My Lord will transcend your family. Follow me. That means to forsake them.

My Lord will transcend your business. My Lord will transcend your possessions. This is what you see in Luke 14.

The principles are enunciated there. As our Lord on that day said, if any man hate not his father and his mother, husband and wife, brethren and sisters, he cannot be my disciple. If any man does not take up his cross and come follow me, he cannot be my disciple.

If any man does not forsake all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple. What does he mean? He is meaning, he means this, that he has come to gather to himself a people that put him first. First over all family relationships.

First over all career ambitions. First over all material possessions. And this is the message.

This is the challenge that he brings. This is the gospel. Put me first, and I'll give you my life.

Refuse to put me first, and you'll perish. It's as simple as that. And it can't be changed, it can't be altered, because he demands full renunciation for his sake.

There was one who said, Lord, I'll follow you, but let me go bury my father. He said, let the dead bury the dead. You come and follow me.

You must understand that I am to proceed, or take precedence over all other interests. And then of course the next thing that he says is that there is a new sphere of activity under him for all who come to him. The call first, an invitation to full communion with him, full union with him.

Secondly, a demand for full renunciation of all other interests, and an announcement that hereafter there will be a new sphere of activity for everyone that comes to him. Does this mean that the man whose business is in the marketplace will no longer labor there? Does this mean that the man who's a farmer will no longer tend his stock? Does this mean that the machinist will no longer work with metal? It may. It may mean that.

It may mean that, but it doesn't necessarily mean that there will be a geographical change or an employment change. But what it does mean is that there will be a new sphere, a new level of activity for everyone. It may be that you had chosen as your profession something that is not in the will of God.

He saved us and called us not according to our works, not according to our profession. He didn't say, well now I'm going to call you because you're a doctor. I'm going to save you because you're a teacher and you've gotten your education here in home economics and so I'm going to save you because I want... No, no, no, not according to our works.

He didn't call these because they were fishermen. He called them in spite of the fact they were fishermen. The lowest trade of all, perhaps, was this.

And he wanted to demonstrate that the excellency and the power was not of men but was of him. And so when he called you, he didn't call you because of your skill or because of your personality or because of your talent or because of your training. He called you in spite of it.

He saved you and called you not according to your works but according to his purpose and grace which was in Christ Jesus before the world began. You are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus under good works which God hath before ordained. You must walk in them.

But what it does mean is that when you come to him you lay your profession on the altar. You lay your talent on the altar. You lay all you have, everything you have, you lay it at his feet.

This is the call that he issues. And then even if you are sent back into the bakery shop where you've been working you go back as an entirely different person in an entirely different sphere of activity because you're not there simply to make a living any longer. You're not there simply to because of the accident of the trade into which you've come not by choice but as so often is with people who stumble into their trade or their profession.

Not so at all. When you go back into it you go back at the sovereign will of your risen Lord. And it now is an entirely new sphere of service though it may be the same procedures that you followed before you came to know him.

You're doing it for an entirely different reason on an entirely different level for his glory, for his praise, for his honor. Not just to make a living, not just to get food but to make a call to an entirely new sphere of activity under him. This means of course that it must be complete and final when you answer that call.

This is the call that Jesus issues and this is the answer that he demands. First it has to be complete. Notice in verse 20 of our text when he called Simon and Peter he said he found them casting a net into the sea for they were fishers.

And he said unto them follow me and I will make you fishers of men. And they straightway left their nets. This speaks of a livelihood and a means of security and a trade, a profession if you please.

They left that. They abandoned it. In verse 22 you find that having come to John and James he found them in a ship with Zebedee mending their nets and he called them and he said it was a wonderful investment.

It took a lot of work and a lot of money to get it and put it together and the Zebedee family owned this ship and undoubtedly Father Zebedee would have counted it a great joy to have had his sons continue in the family business. I'm sure this is a great delight to a father's heart. But the Lord Jesus called and he said remember he said if any man hate not his father it wasn't that they hated Zebedee it was that they loved Christ so supremely that they couldn't let a human affection stand in the way of the sovereign will of their Lord.

And they left the nets and they left the ship and they left their father. This is what he demands as an answer. Have you done that? Many of you have.

As I look into your faces you have left the ship and left your father but it was not only done but it was immediate. They did it completely but they did it instantaneously also. They straightway left all and followed him.

There was no hanging back there was no clinging there was no looking back with regret.

They did it with intent that this should be closed behind them immediately left the ship and left the father straightway immediately strong words the Holy Ghost uses in order that we can see the kind of response that he's asking from us completely instantaneously but there's something else they did they left it permanently this is a continued thing what a call to faith it was all they knew was fishing it's the only trade they had and they might ask well if I follow you Lord well how am I going to eat how am I going to take care of my family we know very little about Peter's family we do know that he had a mother-in-law and that implies he had a wife and there was possibility that he had children there were responsibilities that he had to care for and so he could say well now if I leave my

nets and I leave my trade how am I going to be cared for a call to faith there are those who've been in businesses where the narrow margin of honesty and dishonesty is such that they can't walk it without stepping across and so I meet them regularly who say I'm not going to hazard my relationship to the Lord by staying in a profession that exposes me to the kind of temptations that I've had I'm going to live honestly I'm going to follow Christ and it means I've got to find a way to hazard displeasing him by staying in that kind of a business which is going to expose me to bringing shame to him and so it's a call to faith every step of obedience is a step of faith it was Dietrich Bonhoeffer that said with such exquisite clarity and oh how I wish you would read it in that book that called

the discipleship especially that first chapter costly grace you never obey until you believe but obedience and faith are so closely linked that it's like the coin of the realm to separate the front from the back is to destroy the value of the coin and to separate faith from obedience is to turn both into valueless words and so it's a call to faith but they evidence that they believe by leaving their nets and leaving their father and leaving their ship and immediately they went on a trip and every time that you hear him and obey him you'll find that he's going to lead you out into ministry I would be so bold as to say that every step of progress you make in the Christian life is going to involve this this isn't something that you do and then it's finished but it's something that having

done the Lord has perfect right because you gave him a quitclaim deed to everything at the beginning he has a right to exact it as he wishes it's his and you will find that your life becomes settled and more or less cloistered and perhaps comfortable and then you feel that deep pressure of the spirit of God in your heart and he is saying to you again arise, leave the ship, leave the nets leave your father and it's a step of faith years ago I was greatly influenced by a dear man now of the Lord called the Moody of Russia and I did it with his counsel and dear friends came to me and said brother don't do this look what it's going to cost you look what we don't want you to go and I'll never forget that dear godly wise man saying to me brother every time you follow Jesus Christ it is from

something into something but you never can go into without going from and they never could have known the joy of following Christ if they hadn't been willing to leave the ship and the father it's a call to labor for the task to which he brings us is one of labor it's one of work he said take my yoke upon you and let us understand this that it is the work of faith the Christian life was never to be understood as kind of a perpetual Sunday school picnic where we simply rode around and he used to the music it was to be far

more than that when you come to Jesus Christ you are coming as a soldier you are putting yourself at his behest and saying Lord there's no task too lowly there's no work too shameful or menial I'm prepared have you ever read the story of Commissioner Brangle this brilliant

man from DePauw University in Indiana felt that God wanted him in the Salvation Army he was one of perhaps one of the outstanding debaters and orators of his generation it was a wasting of his talent when he asked to go into the army they brought him to England and they brought him to the headquarters and they brought him under the view of the founder General Booth and General Booth said oh yes we're happy to have you Brother Brangle we would be so pleased if you'd go down into the basement and polish the soldier's boots and so this brilliant man with his graduate degree and his skill and his talent was sent down there and forgotten about they promptly proceeded to forget about him and the only thing he had to do was to polish boots that were dirtied by the soldiers not the officers but

the soldiers tramping through the muddy streets of London at first he was terribly resentful and felt that they were right back in Indiana but he polished them with a vehemence and a dedication that made even the soldiers remark who was it down there that was doing this and then he found out that he wasn't doing it for General Booth of the Salvation Army but for Jesus Christ and when you come to him you're called that whatever you do whether war or indeed you do all for the glory of Jesus Christ this is the call sanctifying all labor it was a call to suffering it was a call to suffering for he said just a little later in Matthew the 10th chapter I didn't come to send peace I came to send a sword and a man's soul shall be they of his own household our Lord never made any mistake he said if

you follow me remember the birds have nests the foxes have holes but I have no place to lay my head what did he mean by that that never would there come a time when you deem anything as being his and when you come to Jesus Christ you hold everything lightly you hold everything as his and if it's given it's received if it's taken it's praised you hold nothing as yours this is what it is and when there is that suffering of the cross through the very deepest and quickest tenderest part of the heart it's been released from the bondage to things and this is what he is saying to these men that's your ship follow me it was a call to suffering it wasn't just to leave but it was that which was ahead what did they think about it John the 6th chapter tells you the reaction of Peter after some months

following the Lord you know this remarkable portion do you not how a great company have come on a superficial basis of enjoying the bread that he made and saying Lord do a miracle and prove that you're the Messiah but it's the same kind of bread we've been accustomed to eating now if you'll just make it come down from heaven then we'll really believe they wouldn't of course because no one's ever satisfied with that kind of proof that's why when people say well if I can just have an experience then I'll know no you won't you'll have to have a repetition of the experience to assure you that's why in the Christian life and especially in relation to the Lord when you make it never satisfies you must have it constantly repeated but when you make him he satisfies and when he is where he wants

to be you know you know and thus he is making it abundantly clear here to his disciples he said if you eat my flesh and you drink my blood you'll have life I am life in other words you've got to have me to have life he's worried many of his disciples left and followed him no more he turns and he sees these behind him Peter Andrew John, James and the others he said are you going to go away are you going to go away they look at one another they see the crowd going see how lonely it's gotten how all men have forsaken them they were twelve when they started and they're twelve now and he says one of them is the devil only eleven they don't know who it is are you going to go and finally Peter speaks up for the group he says Lord

you remember that day back there in Galilee when you saw me

casting my net and you said come follow me and straightway I followed you Lord I've cut all the bridges behind me I've cut all the ties no place else to go and no one else will want and Lord thou only that's the words of eternal life I'll stay with you Lord Jesus I'll stay with you permanent not just temporary but permanent is this answer to his call now what's the ministry that he brings us to my time is gone but see it hurriedly it is a ministry for all people men of Galilee and Samaria and Judea and Jerusalem and beyond Jordan how far beyond Jordan later he was to say go ye therefore into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature every creature every nation every tribe every tongue and when you give your life to Jesus Christ it's not for a local circumscribed ministry but

every Christian in the plan of God was to have a worldwide ministry as an heir of Abraham it is that in thee and in thy seed not only in Christ but those who are indeed the seed of Abraham through faith in Christ the promise was to come and every believer to have a worldwide ministry for after that the Holy Ghost has come upon you ye upon whom he comes shall be witnesses unto me both Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and the uttermost part of the earth and every spirit filled believer is to have a worldwide ministry for Christ and that for all needs notice that he went with them and with him with his disciples our Lord carried his seminary on the highway and he walked and they talked and he taught and he taught the multitude he was teaching teaching, instructing, explaining he was preaching he

was heralding and exhorting and he was healing he was demonstrating and confirming and this is what we are all called to do we're called to instruct and to explain and to clarify we're called to herald and to exhort and entreat and then he has promised that he will confirm and demonstrate but there's only one purpose for it all see it here if you will in the 24th verse and his fame went throughout all Syria there's only one reason for ministry and there's only one reason for coming to Christ and only one reason for faith and one reason for labor and one reason for suffering and that is that he be glorified Father glorify thou me with the glory I had with thee before the world was his fame is to go not throughout Samaria but to the outreaches of the world and this you are called to do you

are to live with an eye single to his glory for we read in Ephesians chapter 21 that marvelous benediction and now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think according to the power that worketh in us here it is unto him be glory unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages world without end and the purpose for his call was to get to himself a people who would know him and live and move and through whom he could express his will and purpose in order that he might be glorified and the full ministry of Christ was for this purpose what is our message today we have a full gospel the church in which you are gathered this hall and the ministry for which it has stood for these 79 years has been to one end of proclaiming the full gospel

to the whole world and I suppose one of the first that set forth systematically a testimony of the fullness of the gospel was the man whose loving memory is associated with this work in this society and who spoke of the fourfold gospel Christ our savior and all that that word can mean Christ our sanctifier and all that the fullness of Christ can mean Christ our healer for the needs of body, mind soul and spirit and Christ our coming king whom we honor as sovereign today and receive as sovereign tomorrow this is the testimony of which we are part this I believe is exactly the reason why we have been raised up if there is any reason at all in the 20th century for a society and a church such as this it is to herald again the fact that the call that Jesus brings to the world demands complete

abandonment to his sovereignty instantaneous surrender to his lordship and total obedience to his every purpose and will and that in the response to this he will manifest himself in all that he is Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever the same and beloved I would not stand before you as a prophet or I would not take that at all but I stand before you as one whose heart breaks to see brought back again into the church the message of repentance with all the biblical meaning with the necessity of meeting Jesus Christ on this initial level with all the solemnity and significance that it brings so that Christ can get a people that have been broken at the gate of the law he hasn't seen it yet in the manner that he deserves and the peril of our times demand but I believe he will

see it he will see it I will not join that pessimistic company that say that things are going to get worse and worse until the Lord comes because I believe that with every action there is an equivalent reaction and as things get worse in one direction God is going to find a people that will react to those things and a vehicle to reveal who he is and I challenge you today to hear him as he says follow me follow me into 1961 follow me into the days that lie ahead follow me into my purpose for a world that's on fire the third world war isn't about to begin the third world war has been on for ten years we're in it oh we haven't heard bombs we haven't heard the conquest of territory and people that is the fruit of war and we see that happening on every side the only answer today such as these

is to let Jesus Christ set his terms and respond to it and then to gather those who will respond to become the vehicle for the revelation of the glory of this risen son I challenge you yea I invite you I entreat you and I promise that he has in days such as these let us pray father of our lord Jesus we've gathered in thy presence we hear the call that our wonderful lord issues the answer that he demands and the ministry that he affords and we believe that this Jesus is the same today as he was then we hear Paul as he says I have fully preached the gospel of Christ from Jerusalem to your Lyricum by mighty signs and wonders through the power of the Holy Ghost we believe thine arm is not shortened thine ear is not heavy but that thou art looking for a people in whom and to whom and through

whom thou canst be all things and that thou again will get the fame of Jesus Christ and the glory of thy son not only in Syria but to the ends of the earth we pray for thy church thine own people hidden as they may be scattered as they are father for the sake of thy son get to thyself a church small, insignificant hidden as it may be but get to thyself thy people through whom thou canst reveal all that Jesus Christ is and we would be such a people here we would ask thee to join to us those of such a heart and mind and purpose that thy son's grace may much more abound and the splendor of Jesus Christ may be seen where the ravages of sin are so conspicuous and so to that end meet us and bless us as a people amen let us stand for the benediction now unto him who is able to do exceeding

abundantly of all we can ask or think according to the power that worketh in us unto him be glory in the church throughout all ages world without end amen

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