

[following the leader part 2]

:: mark 1.29-38 ::

So there I was. Getting psyched up to try something new. I was about 12 years old, driving around with my very patient and very loving parents, going 'collecting' for the first time.

See, I had gotten a job as a paperboy for the Hanford Sentinel, and once a month I had to go around to all of my subscribers and collect the fee for delivery. Each time was scary, but no time was more nerve-wracking than the first.

It was always a harrowing experience going from house to house, hoping they'd have the cash or the check ready, but, more often, having to stand for minute after minute on the porch, waiting for my customer's return. Even worse was the invitation to, 'come on in here for a minute.'

I'll tell you this, I got to know a lot about these neighborhoods by going to each of those houses.

In Mark chapter 1 we see the story of Jesus calling 4 of His disciples and then beginning His ministry around Galilee.

On Sunday morning we saw that there is a choice that we have to make as believers; whether we're going to simply affiliate with Jesus, or if we are going to **activate** as disciples; people who are willing to follow in trust and submission and adventure with our Lord.

We saw that the first step on the journey was to follow Jesus out of the boat. To give ourselves over **wholly** to His provision and His plan for our lives.

The second stop for these guys was to follow Jesus into the synagogue. There we learned that it is our goal to come into the Church that we might first: worship God, second: learn from God, and third: serve others.

Tonight we're continuing on in this chapter, in verses 29 through 38, to see 2 other steps that the disciples took in this walk with the Lord.

Our third stop on this trail is verses 29-31: *Follow Jesus Into Your Home.*

Mark 1.29 - Immediately He left the synagogue and entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John.

First, a quick reminder that Jesus Christ is all about movement. A walk with Him is a workout! He's at the seaside, then He's in the synagogue, He immediately leaves and heads to a house, after that He's on to the wilderness, and then the next town and then the next region, the next situation, the next portion of the journey.

Your life is not to be stagnant. Your life is not a dead end. Your walk with the Lord is meant to be filled with all sorts of new things, consistently, as you journey with Him through life. New ministry. New relationships. New opportunities. New stretching. New challenges. Newness and growth and fruitfulness.

We are to be like a tree, planted by rivers of water. Trees bear fruit each season, and if they don't, there's something wrong. No one wants a fruit tree that bears fruit once and then quits forever. So our first challenge to ourselves tonight is to evaluate our lives, to evaluate our present standing with God, and see if there be anything new. Any new ministry or service. Any new witness or testimony. Any new fruit. Because if there isn't, then it means we've lost pace with God, who is always on the move.

But back to our text, we see that Jesus entered into Simon and Andrew's house.

I like this because it doesn't say if Jesus was invited. Remember that instance in Luke chapter 19, where Jesus looked up into the sycamore tree and said to Zacchaeus, "hey I'm coming to dinner at **your** house tonight."

Jesus entered their home and it reminds us that His presence is pervasive. There is no area that He will leave to ourselves. There is no spot that is just for us. He met them at their job, then He went into their synagogue, and now He's in their home. Why? Because discipleship was all-encompassing. Because God wanted to provide for all of those areas. He wanted to guide in all of those areas. He wanted to **fill** all of those areas!

The question for us here is this: Is Jesus at home in *my* home? Or have I shut the door to His presence or His exhortation, His teaching, His conviction? Important question to ask, because life begins in the home. Your home is your number 1 area of life. It is the number 1 ministry, it is the number 1 responsibility. Your home is where God wants you to do the most important work.

Mark 1.30 - Now Simon's mother-in-law lay ill with a fever, and immediately they told Him about her.

Ok, the 12 disciples take a lot of knocks from Bible teachers and commentators. But this was a good move. Jesus comes into the house and they immediately think to bring this problem to Him.

What is a fever to a Messiah who casts out demons? See, Jesus does *big* problems AND little problems. These 4 disciples understood that in this situation. He's walking through the countryside, these guys have left all to follow Him, and when He gets to the house, they're thinking, "yeah, what *else* can you do Jesus? Where else will you demonstrate Your power and Your love?"

A disciple follows Jesus into the home because they recognize that Jesus cares about our marriages. He cares about our kids. He cares about our families. He cares about what happens inside those 4 walls that is hidden to the rest of the world. And we need to bring those situations to Him.

Having a problem at home? Get it in front of Jesus. God wants to heal your marriage. God wants to help you raise your kids. God wants to give you guidance for those decisions that you make around the dinner table. It will require sacrifice on your part. It will require discipline and selflessness and trust in God, but He is faithful to fill what we are faithful to give Him.

The disciples brought this problem before the Lord and here's what He did:

Mark 1.31 - He came and took her by the hand and lifted her up and the fever left her and she began to serve them.

Lots here in this verse, but here's what we can focus on this evening.

First, Jesus is hands on. Are you having problems at home? You are not alone. Jesus Christ has the power to help you. He has the power to transform your life. But this is where that discipleship has to kick in. That willingness to abandon our own plans, our own desires, our own methods and completely trust in Him. Submit to Him. Follow Him. His plan. His methods. His timing.

That's what these disciples did. They had a problem, they had a family situation, and they gave in to the power of Jesus. They said, "we've got nothing Lord, what can *You* do here?" And of course we know that Jesus never turns us away. He never ignores us. He never neglects us.

But, as always, He will not force us to choose to come to Him. He will not force Himself on us. We have to choose to follow, we have to choose discipleship.

God wants to be in your home.

Second thing we can see in verse 31: Jesus made her well - she wanted to serve. That's how it works.

As God does things in our lives, as we continue in our walk with Him, if we don't have a desire to serve others, if we don't have a desire to decrease so that He can increase, then there's something wrong. We have a spiritual health problem. God transforms us so that we can **serve**.

A disciple follows Christ into their home and makes Jesus King of the castle.

Our fourth and final stop on this disciple trip is in verses 35-38: *Follow Jesus Into The Wilderness*.

Mark 1.35 - And rising very early in the morning, while it was still dark, He departed and went out to a desolate place and there He prayed.

Jesus took a *lot* of time to wait on the Lord and pray. A *lot* of time. And here is where I have to fault the disciples a little bit. They didn't follow Jesus into the wilderness to pray.

There is never a time when personal prayer and devotions aren't important in our lives. We are never at a place where we've got enough stored up to last us a while. We are absolutely dependent on Spiritual food, and when we don't get it, things start dying in our lives. Our holiness, our desire to serve, our desire to give, our compassion, our longsuffering. If we don't cultivate those things by personal devotion with the Lord, they wither and die. We've got to get out to the wilderness to hear from God.

Now, when I say wilderness, I don't mean we have to actually drive out to the desert to do our personal Bible study and prayer.

So what do I mean?

Well, Jesus gave us some good principles as He modeled devotional time for us in this chapter.

First, rising early.

This is a rough one. I am not a morning person. There was a time when I would try to wake up extra early to do prayer and study and every time I tried I'd wake up all crumpled over on the couch.

But we can't deny that throughout the Bible we see people rising early to spend time with God. So what are we to do?

Find time. It's as simple as that. It doesn't have to be 5am. It doesn't matter when it is, but we must find time to wait on the Lord. If we don't find the time, if we don't make the time, then we're not going to do it. We just need to make it a priority and invest ourselves in that discipline.

Jesus was a man of discipline. We are disciples. Disciples need to be disciplined.

Second, Christ went out to a desolate place. How can we apply this?

Whenever possible, our prayer times need to be at a time and place where distractions are limited. Get somewhere quiet. Get somewhere alone. Get with God. That is how a disciple follows Jesus out into the wilderness. And it is in that wilderness where some of the most important growth and development gets done in your life.

If we want guidance, if we want comfort, if we want direction, if we want help and strength and peace, then the wilderness is the place to get it. Simple, one-on-one communion with God. That's what we were talking about. That's where Jesus went to prepare His life and ministry and that's where we need to get it.

Mark 1.36-37 - Simon and those who were with him searched for Him, and they found Him and said to Him, "everyone is looking for you."

It's an interesting couple of verses. Because on the one hand we see that the disciples had a great desire to be with Jesus. They went looking for Him. They wanted to be around Him. That's the kind of attitude that a disciple has.

But on the other hand we are reminded of their habitual prayerlessness in Gospels. Before the resurrection the disciples did not have a good prayer track record.

Our application is simple: meet desire with discipline. We need both and we can work on both.

We all want to be with Jesus. We want to learn from Him. We want to hear from Him. We want the direction and the encouragement and the strength and the grace that He offers us day in and day out, but so often we fail to receive it.

Why? Because so often we fail to meet our desire with discipline. This is a relationship. If we want to know God, then we have to spend time **with** God. We have to make the time to do it. We have to set other things aside so that we can be with Jesus.

Finally, verse 38:

Mark 1.38 - Jesus said to them, "Let us go on to the next towns, that I may preach there also, for that is why I came out."

Love it. The disciples find Him and say, "hey, everyone in town is looking for You!" And Jesus says, "Great! Let's go to the NEXT town!"

This verse illustrates the fact that Jesus came to change lives and to do the Father's will. His work and His message was for the whole world. While He was out there in the wilderness He received the direction of where to go next.

In one sense, discipleship can be scary. It is a complete abandon of your control over your life. In your home, at your job, in your church and everything in between now belongs to the Lord. And all those things we talked about on Sunday; your plans, your personal goals, your provision for your life, all that stuff is gone. It's out of your hands, because Jesus Christ comes in and supplies all of those things in abundance. But that can be scary.

This is where knowing God comes in. If you know God, then you know you have nothing to fear. We should never be afraid of Him or His plan for our lives. We should never fear that He is going to forget us or fail to provide for us. He won't.

When we understand who God is and who He's made us to be, then discipleship becomes an incredible adventure. Now, suddenly, everywhere you go, everything you do, everyone you meet might be a stop on your walk with God. A place or a person that He has brought into your path so that you can shine the light of God's love there. So that you can do what Jesus did. So that you can transform little pieces of this world wherever you go.

Following the leader. It's a simple game, but one that's all about trust and submission and adventure.

Be a disciple. Don't just affiliate, but activate. Lock in. Follow Jesus everywhere you see Him going and see what your Savior will make of you.