

BEING CALLED A DISCIPLE

THE NETS:

We have seen that being a disciple means being a "fisher of men". In Matthew 4:18, we learn from another analogy (a picture Jesus gives to teach us a spiritual application). The two brothers were throwing their nets into the sea. In different parts of the world and depending on the types of fishing being done, there are all kinds of nets which may be used as we see in the pictures below.



As we "fish for men," each of our nets may be different. According to the "fish" Jesus will have you catch, your "net" may be different than some other individuals or groups "net." He will supply to you what will be most effective for the type of "fish" He desires for you to "catch" into that net.

WHAT QUALIFIES ME TO BE CALLED A DISCIPLE?

Once again Jesus shows us in the calling of His own disciples, what qualifies us for Him to classify us as His disciples now. We have seen that He first calls us, and that depending on our response there begins a forward process if we respond to the affirmative.

As Jesus called His disciples, we see their response. Mark 1:18 says **AT ONCE, IMMEDIATELY** they left what they were doing (on their own) to follow Him. Once He "catches" us for His kingdom, as we follow and learn, He will begin to equip us for the task. Our following must include a willingness to lay everything we have and are down to follow and become a disciple. He is looking for an immediate response. Jesus told us (in Matthew 16:24) that we must deny ourselves, take up our cross (which indicates dying to self, dying to the flesh) and follow Him. Just as our "nets" may all be different, so will our "cross" be different from others. There may be more that some have to "die to"/deny than someone else, but we **ALL** must die to our "former/old self."

As we walk forward in this process, the commitment becomes more. Jesus tells us ("up front") that to be His disciple requires the surrendering of our claim to all we have. We cannot hang on to things and people in our lives so tightly that they are more important than Him and the commitment to follow Him. Remember Moses? God asked him what he had in his hand. That staff/rod was part of what he most likely used every day. It was an important "tool" to him. He depended on it. However, when God told him to throw it down, Moses needed to be obedient and willing to do that so God could in turn make it useful for His purposes. In Matthew 19:21,22 when a man who had great possessions (money) came to Jesus inquiring about following Him, he was told that he should sell (give up all) to follow Him. The man could not do that. His money and possessions were far more important to him and therefore were a great hindrance in his life. He probably had his own idea of how he might be a follower of Jesus. When he realized that there was only one way, he went away grieved and in much distress. He was not willing to pay the price.



THE QUESTION:

As we "walk" toward the goal of fulfilling God's desire and His command (of being and making disciples), how many are willing to "get out of their boat" IMMEDIATELY and follow Him? Have you made that choice? Is there anything standing in your way or something you may be "holding on to" which makes you unwilling to "throw it down?" To be a disciple and wear that label requires more than superficial enthusiasm. It requires a deeper commitment.

A condemned criminal who was required to carry his own cross upon which he would be crucified could not choose his own fate. It was already chosen for him. Jesus calls true disciples to choose it and in the choosing to "hate" (to love less, having a relative preference for one thing over another) their own lives by comparison with their devotion to Him (Luke 14:26). In making the choice, it is not a life of drudgery and regret for it does have its rewards! **CHOOSE THE LIFE!**