


Jesus Calls His Disciples

SESSION IN A SENTENCE: When Jesus called His disciples, He called them to follow His example of intentionally seeking the lost.

BACKGROUND PASSAGES: Luke 5:1-11,27-32; 6:12-16

In our culture today, people tend to recognize that things are broken, whether that be at the individual, family, or societal level. Perhaps more than previous generations, people today feel comfortable and willing to speak transparently about their own brokenness as well as the brokenness evident in society. They acknowledge that things aren't how they are supposed to be, so why bother trying to hide that fact?

 What areas of life come to mind when you hear the word *brokenness*?



Voices from Church History

“The creation became corruptible. Why and for what reason? Because of you, O man! For because you have a body which has become mortal and subject to suffering, the earth too has received a curse and has brought forth thorns and thistles ... The creation suffered badly because of you, and it became corruptible, but it has not been irreparably damaged.”¹


—John Chrysostom
(c. 347-407)

Group Time


Point 1: Jesus calls His disciples to trust His leading (Luke 5:3-7).

³ Getting into one of the boats, which was Simon's, he asked him to put out a little from the land. And he sat down and taught the people from the boat. ⁴ And when he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch." ⁵ And Simon answered, "Master, we toiled all night and took nothing! But at your word I will let down the nets." ⁶ And when they had done this, they enclosed a large number of fish, and their nets were breaking. ⁷ They signaled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink.

Simon Peter and his partners weren't bad fishermen. They knew what they were doing. They knew where to put their nets and when to put them down in order to get the best catch of fish. Since Jesus likely was a carpenter by trade, they had significantly more experience catching fish than He did. So Jesus' instructions here not only were contrary to traditional fishing strategy but also didn't make sense in light of the fishermen's experience. Yet Simon Peter trusted Jesus and obeyed in an act of faith.

 In what ways have you experienced God's call to trust Him when the conventional wisdom of the world would say otherwise?

Because God's wisdom can look so different from the worldly wisdom we are used to, sometimes trusting Him can seem illogical and impossible. But we must remember that we aren't putting blind trust in a religious system and hoping for the best. We aren't even putting blind trust in someone who has never been proven. We are trusting in a Savior who has done the miraculous. We trust a God with a perfect résumé, a God who keeps His promises, whose character can be trusted and who has proven Himself time and time again.

 What are some reasons we have to take God at His Word and by faith take the next step He calls us to?

Point 2: Jesus calls His disciples to fish for people (Luke 5:8-11).

⁸ But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." ⁹ For he and all who were with him were astonished at the catch of fish that they had taken, ¹⁰ and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching men." ¹¹ And when they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed him.

Consider the raw emotion of Simon Peter's response here. The miracle he had just witnessed and been a part of caused him to respond by recognizing Jesus as Lord and confessing his own sinfulness. He essentially told Jesus: "Go away from me. You are holy, like the Lord God of Israel. I'm sinful and insufficient. I don't have what it takes to keep up with You. I'm not worthy to be in Your presence, much less follow You." But follow he would, and with a mission.

ISAIAH BEFORE THE LORD	SIMON PETER BEFORE JESUS
Recognized his _____ (Isa. 6:5)	Recognized his _____ (Luke 5:8)
Atoned with a _____ (Isa. 6:6-7)	Atonement on Jesus' _____
Mission of _____ (Isa. 6:9-13)	Mission of _____ (Luke 5:10)

? Why should Jesus' holiness and power cause us to reckon with our own sense of sinfulness and insufficiency?

Aren't you glad this passage doesn't end with a focus on Simon Peter's insufficiency but instead focuses on the complete sufficiency of Christ? In following Jesus, Simon Peter and the other disciples would be made sufficient for the task of fishing for people (see Matt. 4:19). The transformation of the disciples from *fishermen* to *fishers of men* would happen not because of what they could do but because of the work that Jesus could do in them. His sufficiency is more than enough to cover our insufficiency.

Point 3: Jesus calls His disciples to invite sinners to repent (Luke 5:27-32).

²⁷ After this he went out and saw a tax collector named Levi, sitting at the tax booth. And he said to him, “Follow me.” ²⁸ And leaving everything, he rose and followed him.

²⁹ And Levi made him a great feast in his house, and there was a large company of tax collectors and others reclining at table with them. ³⁰ And the Pharisees and their scribes grumbled at his disciples, saying, “Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?” ³¹ And Jesus answered them, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. ³² I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.”

Levi (also known as Matthew) immediately leveraged his circle of influence in order to introduce his friends and coworkers to Christ. Called to follow Jesus, Levi, a former tax collector, threw a big party and invited other tax collectors to come so they could also meet Jesus. Levi utilized the relationships he already had so the non-disciples he knew could be **invited into a relationship** with Jesus and **challenged to change**.

What is your tendency when presenting the gospel to other sinners?



Invitational

Invitational and Challenging

Challenging



How should Christians approach their relationships with non-Christian friends, family members, and acquaintances?

Jesus was clear about the purpose of His ministry—to call sinners to repentance. Never once did Jesus lose sight of this aim. Unfortunately, we can lose sight of this purpose in our lives, churches, and ministries. We may turn our focus inward and lose sight of engaging the lost and calling sinners to repentance. But **evangelism must not be sacrificed for the sake of discipleship, and vice versa**.

Evangelism: It is the duty and _____ of every Christian and of every church of the Lord Jesus Christ to make _____ of all nations, to seek constantly to win the lost to Christ by verbal _____ undegirded by a Christian _____.

Daily Study

Day 1: Read Luke 5:1-11

Isn't it ironic that after getting the biggest catch of fish in his career, Peter left it all behind to follow Jesus? Peter recognized that what Jesus was doing wasn't about the fish at all. Jesus was revealing who He is to Peter, James, and John. And so in response, they left all of it behind to be with Jesus.

Sometimes in our lives, Jesus gives us gifts that are meant to draw us closer to Him, but instead, we get so distracted by the gift that we end up neglecting Him more. The point is never the gift. The point is always the Giver of gifts. Peter, James, and John recognized that the gift they were given wasn't actually the amazing catch of fish. The real gift was getting to see Jesus more clearly and getting the opportunity to be with Him forever.



What gifts has God given you today? How can you use those gifts to go deeper in your relationship with God? How can you use those gifts to help others find a relationship with God through faith in Jesus?

Day 2: Read 1 Corinthians 1:18-25

In this passage we see how the Jews struggled because they wanted their works to be enough and they wanted to see signs and miracles in order to believe. They were tied up in the external. The Gentiles' struggle was a desire for logic and reason to be their North Star.

It's not uncommon for us to struggle with both of these issues today. Some of us may lean more one way than the other. Others may wrestle equally with both. The struggle may manifest in legalistic tendencies where we get trapped into thinking that God's love for us is determined by the number of days we spend time in God's Word. Or it could play out in wrestling with obeying what God says when it doesn't make sense from an earthly standpoint, whether that be financially, relationally, or just level of risk.

In the midst of wherever you might struggle, the call to trust Christ is the same. He is "wiser than men" and "stronger than men." Trusting Him will not let you down. But we must first be willing to take the leap of faith and trust Him with our hearts and in our actions that follow.



In what ways have you experienced God helping you struggle through either legalism (thinking that works earn God's favor or salvation) or through trusting human rationale more than God's wisdom?

Day 3: Read Luke 5:27-32

Notice that Levi didn't invite a bunch of strangers to his dinner banquet to meet Jesus. These were friends, neighbors, and colleagues. He maximized his regular relationships in order to introduce people to Christ. Depending on where you live and what kind of church you are a part of, your life might have lots of natural intersections with those who don't know Christ. But maybe you struggle to find ways to introduce your friends to Jesus. Maybe you're afraid of rejection, losing friendships, or just the awkwardness of the situation. Or you might live completely surrounded in a Christian bubble and have no idea where to start building relationships with those who don't know Jesus. If that's you, then you need to think about intersection rather than addition. Identify things you already do where you can add intentionality to your interactions in order to better build friendships with those who don't know Jesus.



How can you take a step toward growth in the area of evangelism today?

Day 4: Read Luke 6:12-16

Jesus knew that Judas Iscariot would become a traitor even when He chose him to be a disciple. And yet, He still chose him, befriended him, traveled with him, and taught him—all with the knowledge that he would one day betray Him.

There are certainly many reasons Jesus did this, but one is the fact that God doesn't love us based on our performance. He knows we will sin. He knows we will betray Him. (Let's not forget, Peter betrayed Jesus too!) Yet He loves us because it's who He is. In the same way, when we are in Christ, we love those around us because of *who we are*, not because of what people do for us.



Who are the people in your life who are the hardest to love, and what would it look like to love them out of your identity in Christ, not out of an expectation for something in return?

Day 5: Read Ephesians 6:18-20

When we read through Paul's missionary journeys at a glance, it can seem like he was so confident and bold, like he always knew what to say and when to say it. But that's just not the case. We see this clearly in these verses. Paul was making a vulnerable prayer request. He was scared. He asked for prayer that the message would be given to him, and he asked for boldness to speak as he should. He not only expressed fear about knowing what to say but fear about actually saying it.

These verses can be such a great encouragement to us too. We aren't alone! We aren't alone in our fears of sharing the gospel, in our struggle to know what to say, or in our need for courage. Sharing the gospel can be scary—and it has been scary for Christians ever since Jesus walked the earth. What a relief it is to know that we don't have to get rid of our fear in order to be faithful. We don't have to muster up some false sense of bravery or courage. We can ask God for help. We can ask Him to give us courage and boldness. It doesn't have to come from us.



What fears do you have when it comes to sharing the gospel and calling others to repentance?

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General Editor—*The Gospel Project*
AUTHOR OF MULTIPLE BOOKS, INCLUDING
*This Is Our Time: Everyday Myths in
Light of the Gospel*

With this volume of *The Gospel Project*, the storyline of the Bible shifts from the Old Testament to the New, and we enter the era in which God begins to fulfill His promise of salvation through the person and work of Jesus Christ. In the sessions that follow, you'll take a closer look at the context surrounding the birth of Jesus, the theological parallels between Adam and Jesus (the last Adam), as well as the early ministry of Jesus.

Some of these stories will be familiar to you and the rest of your group—the Christmas story, for example, or the story of Jesus' temptation. In the familiar stories, we want to help you see aspects of the Gospel accounts that you may have overlooked. In the less familiar stories, we want to help you see the beauty of Jesus' interaction with all kinds of people with all kinds of needs and all kinds of backgrounds.

Our hope as you study the Scriptures is that you will be drawn to worship Jesus as the Savior and Lord who fulfills God's original intention for us as His people. Here we see a Jesus withstanding temptation, calling disciples, loving the unlovable, and battling the evil one. May your worship of this Savior lead you to faithful obedience to His call in extending grace and mercy and the message of salvation to those around you.

UNIT 19

SESSION 1

1. "Sin," in *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*, gen. eds. Leland Ryken, James C. Wilhoit, and Tremper Longman III (IVP, 1998) [Wordsearch].
2. Warren W. Wiersbe, *Wiersbe's Expository Outlines on the New Testament* (Colorado Springs, CO: Victor Books, 1992), 376.
3. Chrysostom, Homilies on Romans 10, quoted in *Romans*, ed. Gerald Bray, vol. VI in *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: New Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2001) [Wordsearch].

SESSION 2

1. Thabiti Anyabwile, *Christ-Centered Exposition: Exalting Jesus in Luke* (Nashville, TN: B&H, 2018), 40-41.
2. Jen Wilkin, *In His Image* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2018), 107.

SESSION 3

1. John Piper, "God Is Always Doing 10,000 Things in Your Life," *Desiring God*, January 1, 2013, www.desiringgod.org/articles/god-is-always-doing-10000-things-in-your-life.
2. Martin Luther, *The Magnificat*, quoted in *Luke*, ed. Beth Kreitzer, vol. 3 in *Reformation Commentary on Scripture: New Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2015) [Wordsearch].
3. Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2013), 690.

SESSION 4

1. C. S. Lewis, *God in the Dock*, ed. Walter Hooper (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1970), 168.
2. Thomas Becon, *The Sermon of Simeon in the Temple*, quoted in *Luke*, ed. Beth Kreitzer, vol. 3 in *Reformation Commentary on Scripture: New Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2015) [Wordsearch].

SESSION 5

1. Bernard Gilpin, *A Sermon Preached in the Court at Greenewich*, quoted in *Luke*, ed. Beth Kreitzer, vol. 3 in *Reformation Commentary on Scripture: New Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2015) [Wordsearch].
2. Gloria Furman, *Missional Motherhood* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016), 200.

UNIT 20

SESSION 1

1. Eric Mason, *Manhood Restored* (Nashville, TN: B&H, 2013), 1.
2. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*, trans. John W. Doberstein (SCM Press, 2015), 91.

EASTER SESSION

1. Basil, *On Humility* 20, quoted in 1-2 *Corinthians*, ed. Gerald Bray, vol. VII in *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: New Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2001) [Wordsearch].
2. Russell D. Moore, *Tempted and Tried: Temptation and the Triumph of Christ* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011), 75.

SESSION 2

1. Jackie Hill Perry, *Gay Girl, Good God* (Nashville, TN: B&H, 2018), 171.
2. Martin Luther, *The Large Catechism*, trans. Robert H. Fischer (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1959), 9.

SESSION 3

1. Trip Lee, *Rise: Get Up and Live in God's Great Story* (Nashville, TN: Nelson Books, 2015), 47.
2. Ambrose, *Concerning Repentance* 1.12.53, quoted in *John 1-10*, ed. Joel C. Elowsky, vol. IVa in *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: New Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2001) [Wordsearch].

SESSION 4

1. Chrysostom, *Homilies on Romans* 14.44, quoted in *Romans*, ed. Gerald Bray, vol. VI in *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: New Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2001) [Wordsearch].
2. Jerry Bridges, *31 Days Toward Trusting God* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2013) [eBook].

UNIT 21

SESSION 1

1. Fred L. Horton Jr., "Exorcism," in *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (Nashville, TN: B&H, 2003), 533.
2. Dexter Maben, "Mark," in *South Asia Bible Commentary*, gen. ed. Brian Wintle (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015), 1290.
3. Charles H. Spurgeon, *Morning by Morning* (Alachua, FL: Bridge-Logos, 2000), January 14.
4. Dacher Keltner, "Hands On Research: The Science of Touch," *Greater Good Magazine*, September 29, 2010, http://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/hands_on_research.

SESSION 2

1. See *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, by C. S. Lewis (New York: HarperCollins, 1978), 89.
2. St. Athanasius, *On the Incarnation*, trans. and ed. A Religious of C.S.M.V. (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1996), 35.
3. Kim Cash Tate, "Rejected by Friends, Loved by Jesus," *Desiring God*, December 29, 2015, www.desiringgod.org/articles/rejected-by-friends-loved-by-jesus.

SESSION 3

1. "Kawasaki Disease and Heart Transplant: Kendall's Story," Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, April 2012, www.chop.edu/stories/kawasaki-disease-and-heart-transplant-kendalls-story.
2. Andrew Murray, *Humility, in Humility and Absolute Surrender* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2005), 42.
3. "John," in *Africa Study Bible* (Oasis International LTD, 2016), 1534.

SESSION 4

1. Theodore of Mopsuestia, *Commentary on John* 24.23-24, quoted in *John 1-10*, ed. Joel C. Elowsky, vol. IVa in *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: New Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2001) [Wordsearch].
2. Samuel Ngewa, "John," in *Africa Bible Commentary*, gen. ed. Tokunboh Adeyemo (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006), 1286.