

# Jesus Creates Preachers

**Mark 1:14-20** <sup>14</sup> Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, <sup>15</sup> and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel." <sup>16</sup> And as He walked by the Sea of Galilee, He saw Simon and Andrew his brother casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. <sup>17</sup> Then Jesus said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men." <sup>18</sup> They immediately left their nets and followed Him. <sup>19</sup> When He had gone a little farther from there, He saw James the *son* of Zebedee, and John his brother, who also *were* in the boat mending their nets. <sup>20</sup> And immediately He called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants, and went after Him.

How would you summarize the story of Jonah? You could get pretty different answers to this question depending on whom you asked.

If you asked a little kid you would probably get an answer like "a really big fish swallows Jonah and then spits him up on the shore and Jonah is standing there covered in whale saliva."

If you asked some teachers or pastors you might get a response something like "God's word was preached to an evil and terrible people, the people of Ninevah, and his word was able to change their hearts and they repented."

Now these are both certainly important parts of the story. But they are still only parts of the story. The big fish is one part, the preaching and repentance of Ninevah is another. But if you want to summarize the whole account, you have to talk about Jonah himself and God. The vast majority of the book of Jonah is concerned not with God's mercy towards Ninevah, but rather God's mercy towards Jonah.

A better summary of the book of Jonah, I believe would go something like this:

God took a spiteful, arrogant, prideful, stubborn sinner, Jonah, and taught him how to love and forgive even his worst enemy.

This is what Christ does. Through the Gospel he calls sinners to repentance. But also and once again through the gospel he takes sinful men like Jonah and creates out of them preachers of the gospel.

Jonah is a prophet of God. But why?

Is it because he has a heart to reach out to the lost and bring the gospel to sinners? Not really. He tries to run away from that. Is it because he loves to preach God's word? Not really, he does that only when he is really forced to.

There is not a single reason you can point to in the personality of Jonah that would ever recommend him for the ministry. Jonah's attitude and actions are wrong from beginning till just at the end of the book of Jonah. But he is a prophet, why? Because God called him and told him to go preach.

The only that distinguishes Jonah from the hundreds of thousands of other sinners living on the earth is that God called him. The only thing that qualified Jonah to be a prophet is that God called him and sent him.

The point of the book of Jonah is that God taught Jonah how to forgive and have mercy and made of him a preacher of the gospel.

John the Baptist's time was over. God called him like he called Jonah and sent him to preach the Gospel. But that call was finished. Herod sinned because he threw John into prison and beheaded him. But it was God's choice that John's ministry was ended and that a new ministry was to begin, the ministry of Jesus.

When Jesus heard that John was put in prison he immediately went out and did two things:

First he preached the gospel. John's ministry was ended but the preaching of the gospel was not stopped.

Second he called four more men into the ministry. Where there was one preacher of the gospel before now there were four.

But where was he going to find these men? Where could Jesus find new preachers of the Gospel. Where could he find men to take the place of John the Baptist? Why are these four in our text, or we could broaden the scope a little and talk about the 12 instead of just the four mentioned in our text. Why were these 12 chosen?

This is an important question for us because we desperately need more preachers of the gospel. So where did Jesus find men qualified for the ministry?

Never once in the entirety of the gospels are the qualifications of these men ever discussed. From all appearances Jesus merely picks them at random. Here he called a couple fishermen, there a tax collector, and another was a zealot, what we might call a monk. Some of them were rich, some poor, some highly educated, some poorly educated.

Not only do the Gospels not speak about their qualifications for the ministry but almost every time we hear something about their character it is a negative thing. Peter is the one who is always too quick to speak. He says things without thinking and often finds his foot in his mouth. James and John are quick to anger and try to leverage themselves into positions of power over the other twelve. Thomas is the doubter. And Judas of course is the betrayer. In fact I offer you a challenge, see if you can think of any account or action of the apostles in the gospels that shows them in a positive light.

The point is they are not qualified. If Jesus was to wait till he found qualified men he would never have found any disciples at all. They are all just like Jonah, sinners whom God must mold into preachers of the Gospel. Jesus doesn't seek qualified men whom he can send. He calls unqualified men and molds them into what he needs.

The only thing that these men have in common is that they were called by Christ to be fishers of men. And because Christ called them he would make of them what he wanted them to be.

Notice that in our text. Jesus doesn't say come you will be good at fishing for men. No he says come and I will make you fishers of men.

This is what Jesus does he calls sinners into the ministry and then molds them into what they ought to be.

For those youths among us wondering about who might be wandering about their future, one of the things you should consider is the ministry. Is God calling you into the ministry? This question boils down to one and only one question, "are you calling me God." It is true that Paul by inspiration of the Holy Spirit gives some qualifications in 1 Timothy 3 and in Titus 1. These qualifications can help us to think about whether the Lord is calling us. But remember that the Lord is able to make of you what he desires. So the question boils down to one thing only, "Lord are you calling me?" If the Lord says yes, will you remain with your father and with the fishing boats? Or will you immediately leave all and follow Christ?

The rest of us have another question we have to consider. When was the last time you remembered in your prayers to pray that the Lord would move the hearts of our young men and women to follow Christ into the ministry?

When the ministry of John the Baptist ended Jesus replaced him with four. Where is that fourfold growth today? Instead of one pastor being followed by four more it seems like at the end of each pastors ministry there are four less.

I assure you the work is not growing less. There is more work to do today than there was in the time of our grandparents. But the workers are growing fewer.

Jesus has a very simple solution to this problem, “pray the Lord of the harvest to send forth laborers into the harvest.”

We spend so much of our time praying for so many things that we think we need or want. When was the last time we prayed that the Lord would call men and women and mold them into faithful pastors and teachers? This is something that we really desperately need and which the Lord has instructed us to pray for. Pray that the Lord might send out workers into his harvest.

Jesus came to give us the greatest gift of all: the forgiveness of sins. This gift is distributed through the preaching of the gospel, and the preaching of the gospel is accomplished by men whom Christ calls into the ministry. Sinners whom Christ grabs and molds into what he needs for the work that he needs done. The work is not less today than it was 2,000 years ago, but faithful workers are becoming fewer. There is only one solution pray, pray the Lord of the harvest to call and mold more men into his service, so that where there was one there might be four more.

**Psalm 68:11** The Lord gave the word; Great *was* the company of those who proclaimed *it*:

**Ephesians 4:8,11,12** <sup>8</sup> Therefore He says: "When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, And gave gifts to men." . . . <sup>11</sup> And He Himself gave apostles, prophets, evangelists, and pastors and teachers, <sup>12</sup> for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ,

Jesus does not find preachers but rather creates them. Since we are in desperate need of faithful preachers and since it is Christ alone who can give us what we need, we must pray to the Lord of the harvest to send out workers.

**Amen**