

# A Challenging Call

WITHIN AND WITHOUT (Mark 4:14-20)

'Discipleship is the process of you becoming who Jesus would be if He were you' - Dallas Willard

Mark accentuates Jesus' nature and example of perfect –humanness, contrasting Him with the very human and very-flawed disciples. Notice how Jesus challenges but never condemns their ignorance, weaknesses, and selfishness.

Despite their flaws, these are the men He chose to change the world. So, how did these men trust Jesus, and heed His challenge to share the gospel - even in the face of opposition? They did this by applying all He taught and shared with them.

## READ TOGETHER:

**Mark 4:14-20 (MSG):** The farmer plants seed by taking God's word to others. The seed that fell on the footpath represents those who hear the message, only to have Satan come at once and take it away. The seed on the rocky soil represents those who hear the message and immediately receive it with joy. But since they don't have deep roots, they don't last long. They fall away as soon as they have problems or are persecuted for believing God's word. The seed that fell among the thorns represents others who hear God's word, but all too quickly the message is crowded out by the worries of this life, the lure of wealth, and the desire for other things, so no fruit is produced. And the seed that fell on good soil represents those who hear and accept God's word and produce a harvest of thirty, sixty, or even a hundred times as much as had been planted!"

While we believe and accept Jesus' invitation to follow Him as disciples, we are imperfect, yet in process. We are 'changed, and changing still'. Like the first disciples, how do we continue the challenge of His call to make disciples, while we ourselves are still growing in our own discipleship journey?

## EXPLORE TOGETHER:

Have three group members read out each of the following points and Bible verse - then discuss and share:

**1. Sealed by the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 1:13-14)** - The Holy Spirit dwells in us. This is a promise and a reassurance; "God's guarantee that he will give us the inheritance he promised and that he has purchased us to be his own people" (NLT).

**Discuss:** What distracts us from prioritising quality time with the Holy Spirit? What can we do to invite the Holy Spirit into our day?

**2. Filled by the Holy Spirit inside and out (John 16:7; Galatians 5:22-23)** - Disciples cannot fulfill the Great Commission under their own power - we need the fruit of the Holy Spirit actively working in us.

**Discuss:** What are the fruits of the Spirit and how do you practically live them out to your daily life? Give some personal examples of you demonstrating the fruit of the Spirit.

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**3. Imitating Jesus' lifestyle (Ephesians 5:1 - 2)** – We are transformed from the inside-out as we imitate Jesus - the way He shared life with others, the way He prayed, served others with humility, the way He walked alongside others, always pointing people to the Father.

**Discuss:** What does it mean to follow Christ's example whilst dealing with our human weaknesses? What does this look like for you on your discipleship journey?

## PRAY TOGETHER:

Pray this beautiful prayer of St Francis of Assisi (1181-1226) and then share with your connect group so they can use this prayer this coming week:

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.  
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;  
where there is injury, pardon;  
where there is doubt, faith;  
where there is despair, hope;  
where there is darkness, light;  
and where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek  
to be consoled as to console;  
to be understood as to understand;  
to be loved as to love.  
For it is in giving that we receive;  
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned;  
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.  
Amen.

## SUGGESTED RESOURCES:

This week, share these resources with your connect group so they can explore and take inspiration from:

- **Book:** N.T. Wright - ['Following Jesus: Biblical Reflections On Discipleship'](#)
- **Book:** Richard Foster - ['Celebration of Discipline'](#)
- **Book:** Dallas Willard - ['Renovation of the Heart: Putting On The Character Of Christ'](#)