

- b) An obstacle to learning skills of faith

Peterson suggests: “A person has to be thoroughly disgusted with the way things are to find the motivation to set out on the Christian way. As long as we think the next election might eliminate crime and establish justice or another scientific breakthrough might save the environment or another pay raise might push us over the edge of anxiety into a life of tranquility, we are not likely to risk *the arduous uncertainties of the life of faith.*”

- c) Through Jesus’ proclamation and teaching, the rule of God comes near, and when God’s empire comes near, it repairs the damage caused by the kingdoms and powers of this world!

- B. Being a disciple is not about having an *inward disposition* (I really *want* to be like Jesus), nor is it about *how we see ourselves* (I identify with Jesus)!

### LIVE THE STORY

*The Gospel is intended to be learned and lived in community. The following questions are designed for use in our Community Groups as an aid to growth in the Gospel and Community.*

- How does the illustration of “the train is arriving” relate to what Jesus means by “the kingdom of heaven is near”? Explain.
- What does it mean to get behind Jesus and follow him? What promise does Jesus give to these two fishermen if they do?
- Why might the NIV’s translation “and I will send you out to fish for people” miss the essential middle? How does Matt. 5:13-16 or 7:22-23 help explain Jesus’ intent?
- Borrowing from the quote by Eugene Peterson, what are the “skills of faith” that Jesus teaches us?
- Discuss the Peterson quote at the top of this page.
- What does the rest of Matthew’s Gospel reveal as the “content” of what will we learn from Jesus if we respond to His call?

### DISCIPLE 1.0

#### *What Does it Mean to Follow Jesus*

Jerry Cisar — February 10, 2019

Text: Matthew 4:17-25 READ

#### Introduction: What does “repent” mean?

Frederick Bruner’s translation of 4:17: “*Turn your lives around, for here comes the kingdom of heaven.*”

#### I. The Dynamic Kingdom of Heaven (17)

- A. Jesus refuses to change course!

*Announce the coming Kingdom and call people to a changed life as the proper response.*

- B. What is the coming Kingdom?
- i. No difference between the kingdom of God and of heaven.
  - ii. “Kingdom of the supernatural sphere that is all around us in the atmosphere which God rules.”
  - iii. *Rule or reign of God*
    - a) Not a location; it comes.
    - b) It is not *entirely* here, but neither is it *in the distant future*. It’s *coming now*.

- C. The rule of God is dynamic, we must act when we hear it arriving or we will miss the opportunity.

### III. The First Disciples (18-22)

#### A. The Calling of the Four

- i. To follow Jesus is to get behind Him and follow after Him.

- a) Matt. 16:21-23

- b) “Peter, you have ceased to follow me and are now in league with the enemy, so once again you must forsake that and get behind me!”

- c) *Following Jesus is all about getting in line with the way He and His kingdom function, to include our willingness to suffer as a consequence of our obedience!*

- ii. The calling of the next two disciples is an abbreviated version of the same, as was the result: They followed Him.

- iii. Why four?

#### B. The Promise (19b)

- i. *Follow and I will make you fishers of humanity!*

- a) *“make someone into something.”*

- b) *“Come after me and my ways of doing things, and in the process, you will be transformed into fishers of people.”*

*“You come get behind me and follow in how I am teaching you to live, such that the Kingdom of heaven reigns, and I will in the process turn you into fisherman again, alright, the kind that will gather great catches of humanity in its nets!”*

- ii. If we think that the essence of *following Jesus* is “being sent out,” we can get involved in all sorts of activity and feel great about it, but not be doing the activity which equals *following Jesus!*

- a) *“Lord didn’t we do all this missional activity in your name?” and then Jesus will tell them plainly, “I never knew you.” (7:22-23)*

- b) Why? Because they didn’t change their practices!

- iii. The Great Commission (Matt. 28:18-20)

- iv. The Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5:13-16)

### IV. The Nature of Being a Disciple

#### A. The difference between disciples of Jesus and those of rabbis

- i. Matthew 11:28-30

- ii. Learning Skills in Faith

Eugene Peterson: “A disciple is a learner, but not in the academic setting of a schoolroom, rather at the work site of a craftsman. We do not acquire information about God but *skills in faith.*” (emph mine)

- a) *Skills in faith are operational in acts of love.* (Gal 5:6)