

St. Paul's Dorking Small Groups July 26th 2009  
The Apprentice! Week 1 The Task Luke 5:1-11



Word: Key points from Sunday's sermon

12 Disciples, 1 Task to become the Apprentice of Jesus Christ!

2,000 years ago Jesus called to himself a 'curious cross section' of his contemporary culture. Some were down to earth fishermen, some were radical Zealots, some were despised and some respected, all were different! Judean as well as Galileean, amongst them were those with both Greek and Semitic names. For three years this disparate group submitted themselves entirely to Jesus and became his disciples. The Greek word for disciple 'mathetes' appears 264 times in the Gospels and Acts but translates best as apprentice.

The BBC 2 programme 'The Apprentice' has its strap line 'there's only one winner and no second prizes.' Over three months, potential apprentices are put through a gruelling series of tasks and the prize for one of them is the job of being Sir Alan Sugar's apprentice, with a six figure salary. At the end of each task, the candidates are called to the boardroom to face Sir Alan and his advisers and eventually one gets fired with the infamous words "You're fired!"

Over the next six weeks we will be looking at some of the challenges of being an Apprentice of Jesus Christ today we will consider - The Invitation, the Task, The Lost, The Greatest, The Failure and the Test! Unlike the BBC's Apprentice the goal is not one apprentice and the rest losers but a church full of life long Christian apprentices. not "you're fired"... but rather "you're required!"

When we read of the calling of the first disciples in Luke we can see that this must have at first been perceived as downright inconvenient! Read verse 5. For a moment let's try and step into the shoes of Peter. There you are trying to bring a frustrating day's work to a close when a crowd overruns the place! Stepping into the nets you are trying to wash, getting in the way.... Then a preacher jumps into your boat and asks you to push out all over again! To fish??? You've already tried that! To Preach??? Surely not! Then to cap it all this carpenter turned preacher has the cheek to tell you how to do your job - to push out further and catch some fish! To overflow from the Sabbath and the synagogue into their daily working lives.....it was downright inconvenient for the call of Jesus to Peter and on the lives of these three young fishermen.

You know the call of Jesus to follow him, to be his apprentice, can be an 'Inconvenient Truth.' We have our lives sorted, ordered, and categorised - our work bit, home bit, church, bit etc but Christ's calling cuts across all 'bits,' all categories, everything! An Apprenticeship with Jesus colours all things. Becoming an apprentice of Jesus means signing up for a life long commitment, an apprenticeship of faith that transforms everything, an apprenticeship that changes the world, an apprenticeship that begins with changes to our world, our work, our family, our friends.

To Simon's credit no matter how inconvenient he takes a risk, he obeys Jesus, he pushes the boat out further, he lets down his nets. If the call of Jesus to follow is likely to be an inconvenient truth to encounter, it's effect is guaranteed to be shocking as Simon discovered - read v5 -8. It is difficult to tell whether Simon found the change pleasant or painful - it was too awe inspiring to be either! One glimpse of Jesus' power and holiness made him aware of his own inadequacies. It is rather ironic that all he could say was 'Go away Lord' for from this time on for the next three years he would barely leave Jesus' side.

Hearing the call of Jesus and following him will inevitably be a shocking experience as we allow him to impact our lives. We will be disturbed and challenged. For Peter it changed the way he fished - which was the most important aspect of his whole life. An ordinary morning at work became a moment of extraordinary significance as Jesus impacted everything for Peter and the other three young fishermen. For the first time in their lives here was someone worth giving everything up for.... From this time on every inch of the old familiar landscape was going to have a new power and richness... From this time on the empty nets of everyday life would overflow time and time again. The same is true for us today. Jesus changes everything. He brings a new richness, depth, meaning, power and holiness into our lives...if we would but hear his call to follow him....? Inconvenient? Yes! Shocking? Yes! The call of Christ, the invitation to be his apprentice is the beginning of a lifetime's adventure, a venture of faith that is born again each day, let us pull the boats up on the beach, leave behind what ever might hold us back and follow him.

Witness: choose from these questions to discuss

1. Tell other members of your group about the first time you discerned Christ's call on your life.
2. In what way/s do you find being a Christian inconvenient!?
3. Read v 4 and 5 - How do you think you would have reacted to Jesus command?
4. Do you ever find your experience of following Jesus shocking/ Awe inspiring?
5. What do you think Jesus would say to you today about being his Apprentice?