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Matthew 4:17-5:2

Introduction

This week's message explores what it truly means to be a disciple of Jesus as we begin studying the Sermon on the Mount. Kevin Sneed challenges us to move beyond seeing Christianity as merely difficult teachings that have been "left untried" (as G.K. Chesterton observed) and instead embrace Jesus' invitation to apprenticeship. The message emphasizes that Jesus doesn't call us to become converts but apprentices—people who are learners, practitioners, and followers. Through examining Jesus' call to the first disciples and His posture as an authoritative teacher, we discover that discipleship is about learning from Jesus how to live our specific lives as He would live them if He were us.

Key Texts: Matt. 4:17-5:2; Matt. 5:19; Matt. 7:26-29

Icebreaker

What's something you've learned that required not just understanding but lots of practice—like riding a bike, playing an instrument, or mastering a skill at work? How was that different from learning facts for a test?

Discussion Questions

1. G.K. Chesterton said: "The Christian ideal has not been tried and found wanting. It has been found difficult; and left untried." Where do you see Christianity being "left untried" in our culture or your own life?

2. **Read Matthew 4:18-22 together.** The disciples left everything "at once" to follow Jesus. What motivated such an instant response? How does this challenge our tendency to "test drive" faith commitments?
3. **Read Matthew 5:1-2 together.** Jesus saw the crowds with compassion in their struggles. Most of us long to be truly seen. What does it mean that Jesus sees you fully—struggles and all? How might this change how you approach Him?
4. Jesus taught "with authority" (Matt. 7:28-29), unlike other teachers. Where do you see Jesus' teachings challenging how you approach money, relationships, social media, or success? How do you wrestle with His countercultural authority?
5. Being a disciple involves being a learner + practitioner + follower. Which feels most natural and which most challenging? Why?
6. **Read Matthew 5:19 and 7:26 together.** Jesus emphasizes hearing AND practicing. John Mark Comer said discipleship is "less like learning chemistry and more like learning jujitsu." What's the difference, and how does this apply to your faith?
7. Dallas Willard: "I am learning from Jesus how to live my life as he would live my life if he were I." What would it look like for Jesus to live your specific life—your job, relationships, challenges? Pick one area to discuss.

Key Takeaways

- Jesus calls us to be apprentices, not just converts
- Discipleship involves being a learner, practitioner, and follower combined
- Jesus sees us with compassion before He teaches us
- We're not learning to live Jesus' life, but learning how Jesus would live our specific lives
- Christianity isn't difficult and left untried—it requires practice and commitment
- Following Jesus means walking alongside Him in listening, learning, and imitation

Notes