* **Series Slide**
* In the late 1960s, a psychologist by the name of Martin Seligman began a series of experiments at the University of Pennsylvania to investigate the causes of depression.
* And he accidentally discovered something.
* Let me tell you about the experiment…
* Dr. Seligman took 2 dogs and put them in 2 cages. Both cages had a floor that would administer ongoing electric shocks to the dogs…(this was in the 60’s where you could get away with that kind of thing).
* In one cage, the dog could push a lever with his paw and get the shock to stop. But in the other cage, no matter how much that dog pushed the lever…the shocks would not stop.
* Then he took those same 2 dogs and he put them in another cage. This cage also shocked the dogs…but in this cage…BOTH dogs had the ability to make the shocks stop by jumping over a little fence to the other side of the cage that wasn’t electrified.
* Well, the dog that had learned that he had power to overcome the shocks…you know…the one that pushed the lever in his old cage…he jumped right over the fence to safety.
* But…the dog that was previously in the cage where he had no control over the electric shocks no matter what he did… he just laid down, curled up in a ball and continued to be shocked.
* Even though he easily could have jumped the fence…he decided not to…because he had learned…
* ...he had learned that no matter what he did… he would continue to be hurt.
* Seligman called this “Learned Helplessness”. And he eventually found the same phenomena to be present in humans.
* **Learned Helplessness- Believing you are helpless to change a negative situation because of your past.**
* Here’s how it works out in humans.
  + If you do poorly on a test, and you are told when you are young, you’re so stupid.
  + You wind up believing “I fail tests because I’m stupid”
  + So…every time you find yourself in a classroom…you don’t even try to study and do well…because what good would it do.
  + Because there’s nothing you can do about being stupid…so why even try?
  + BUT, if you failed that test in 1st grade and your parents told you, “You can improve your grade if you study….”
  + “That was a really difficult test, you can do better on the next one”
  + Well, you don’t LEARN HELPLESSNESS.
  + You learn…there is something I can do about my grades.
* One more example of LEARNED HELPLESSNESS to help you grasp the concept.
  + Elephant crushing
  + Interesting phrase isn’t it?
  + Elephants seem the type that would crush…not BE CRUSHED.
  + But there is a practice in India and Thailand of training elephants where you tie a rope to a baby elephants leg…and put a peg in the ground.
  + When they are young, the elephant tries to escape, but can’t.
  + The rope on the peg is too strong
  + But, as the elephant grows, of course, he becomes powerful enough to easily pull the peg right out of the ground…but he doesn’t even try.
  + Because in his past, in his younger days he learned helplessness…if I’m tied to a peg…there’s nothing I can do about it.
  + So elephant trainers…who are absolutely no match for that elephant’s power…now have the power over them to keep them from running away. Because a peg and rope taught an elephant that it has no power.
  + **The peg crushed the elephant …when at any moment, if the full grown Elephant only realized its power, it could easily turn around and crush the peg.**
  + **But its past experience LITERALLY held it back.**
* **Title Slide**
  + Today, the passage we are going to read in Mark is about some shocked dogs…some tied up elephants….
  + …its about some guys who were told they weren’t smart enough to stay in school…
  + ...so they’re out fishing.
* **Mark 1:16-20**
* **Passing alongside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew the brother of Simon casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen. And Jesus said to them, “Follow me, and I will make you become fishers of men.” And immediately they left their nets and followed him. And going on a little farther, he saw James the son of Zebedee and John his brother, who were in their boat mending the nets. And immediately he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants and followed him.**
* **Transition:** This sermon needs to come with a warning label. Some of the language I use in this sermon is going to be dangerously…positive.
* You will, in moments today, wonder whether I’ve been possessed by Joel Osteen or Tony Robbins.
* …and so many of us as adults…can be pretty cynical. SO kids, if you’re parents at any point today can’t handle the positive language… don’t look …just calmly dismiss them into the Foyer.
* Alright, lets figure out what’s happening in this passage. First…
* **1) Jesus believes in you before you believe in him.**
  + See, I told you this was going to be shocking.
  + Why in the world would I tell you this?
  + Well, because its in this text we read today…let me show you.
  + First, let me give you a little context for what is happening here.
  + **v 17**
  + When Jesus walks out to the Sea of Galilee and says to Simon, Andrew, James & John, ‘Follow Me, and I’ll make you become fishers of men”
  + There is A WHOLE lot going on here that an original audience would have been familiar with…that we just aren’t.
  + So let me detour into a little bit of Jewish history here.

**Back to 1)**

* + All Hebrew boys went to school starting at age 5
    - **Ray Vander Laan, *In the Dust of the Rabbi, Discovery Guide***
  + At school, that would focus on learning the Torah (or teachings)…the first 5 books of the Bible.
  + By age 10, these boys had the Torah memorized
  + But only the best of the best could go on to the next level of schooling.
  + If you weren’t one of the better students, you were sent home to work with your father in the family business.
  + But if you made the cut, you’d go back to school to memorize the rest of the Prophets and Writings of the Old Testament.
  + Around age 17, if you wanted to keep studying the Scriptures, then you had to find a Rabbi who would take you on. Kind of like doing a PhD. You have to find the guy who’s gonna sponsor you.
  + This would be a guy you really admired. Someone who’s teaching you really respected…So, when you found this guy, you would sort of apply to be his “Talmid”…the Hebrew word for disciple.
  + And then that Rabbi would sort of give you an assessment. He would grill you with questions to and put you through a series of tests to figure out if you had what it took to become his disciple.
  + And then if the Rabbi accepted you, you would sit at your rabbi’s feet when he was teaching, you would follow him around everywhere he went… and your goal was to become exactly like your Rabbi.
  + Not to mention, becoming a rabbi is every Hebrew boys dream...everybody WANTED to be one, but not many were chosen.
  + So a Rabbi is going to be very selective with all the young men that turn in applications. They would only choose the one’s in which they saw the most potential to carry on their teaching.
  + So, for a Rabbi, there is a lot riding on who he chooses for his disciples. He had to be sure that anybody he chose was a person who could carry on his work in the world.
* Now, with all of that information, lets go back to the Sea of Galilee.
  + **V 16 & 19**
  + Jesus comes to these 2 sets of brothers who are fishing.
  + So, you have Jewish men, in a family business…what does that mean?
  + It means they didn’t make the cut.
  + They weren’t the best of the best religiously.
  + Somewhere along the way they were told…”You aren’t Talmid material.”
  + They were UNFIT to be ANY RABBI’s DISCIPLE.
  + Then along comes this guy, Jesus.
  + Now, If you read Luke’s account of this, he gives us a little detail that Mark doesn’t.
  + He tells you that Jesus gets on Simon’s boat because there was this huge crowd that was chasing him, wanting to hear his teaching.
  + And after he teaches, Jesus tells Simon to put his nets in the water…and Simon says, “We’ve been fishing all net and didn’t catch anything, but ok.”
  + So they put their nets out, and they caught so many fish their nets started to break.
  + **Ok, lets take a time out right there again. For another little Hebrew culture lesson**.
  + There are 3 things that would determine the REALLY SPECIAL RABBIS. The Jordan’s, Kobe’s and Lebron’s of the Rabbinic world.
  + The first thing was a sort of “it” factor. It's the Hebrew word “Schmeekah” (semikhah)
  + It literally means “authority”. There was just something about the way they taught that people were like “WOW”.
  + **Jesus had that**. That’s why these crowds pressed in on him to hear his teaching. It was whole reason he ended up on Simon’s boat in the first place.
  + The other 2 qualifiers for the superstar Rabbis are miracles…which Jesus clearly does right in front of Simon when he fills up his net with fish
  + …and you had to have 2 other rabbis with schmee-kah say that you had schmee-kah.
  + Well, remember what happened when Jesus was baptized?
  + You had John the Baptist attest to Jesus’ authority…and then, a the voice of God from heaven attested to his authority.
  + So, Jesus has the big 3. He has the Schmee- hah. He has the miracle. And he has John the Baptist and the voice of God saying, “This guy is the real deal”
  + **Luke 5:8**
  + And look what Simon does right before Jesus says “Follow me.”
  + He drops to his knees and says, “Depart from me I’m a sinful man.”
  + Do you know what that is?
  + Its not that Simon is recognizing that Jesus is God.
  + Its that he’s recognizing that Jesus is one of these powerhouse Rabbis.
  + He recognizes that somehow God is working through Jesus, but he doesn’t really understand that in any context outside of this is one of those special Rabbi’s with Schmee-hah.
  + So when he asks Jesus to depart from him because he’s sinful, he’s saying that “I don’t have what it takes to follow you. You would be wasting your time with me. This whole thing was decided years ago in Torah school. I’m a fisherman, Jesus. I’m not a Talmid.
  + “I could never carry on your teaching. I could never keep up with you. Depart from me…I’m not worth your time.”
  + In other words, in Torah school, Simon, Andrew, James & John were crushed. They had been tied to a peg. They were shocked dogs.
  + When it came to being a disciple, They had Learned Helplessness.
  + **And Jesus was about to show them how to turn around and crush the peg that had crushed them. He was about to help them jump the fence.**
  + See, Jesus wasn't taking applications for followers like all the other Rabbis.
  + He was GOING to his disciples to call them out.
  + And he wasn’t asking them to pass a test first. He was saying, FOLLOW ME, right now.
  + And he wasn’t going after the best of the best…he wasn’t chasing down the blue chip prospects
  + …he was going after the kids who had they were stupid all their lives.
  + He was going after the elephants who had been crushed by a peg and rope.
  + Listen, when Jesus calls disciples, he’s not looking for people who can pass a religious test first.
  + He’s waiting for you to chase him down and tug on his robe and say, “Can I be a disciple?”
  + Jesus doesn’t do things like the other Rabbis. He comes to you when you think there is no way out. When you think that your destiny has already been decided. When you think that the final word has already been spoken about your future, Jesus comes to you and says…well, exactly what he said to James & John, Andrew and Simon.
  + **Luke 5:10**
  + **“Do not be afraid; from now on, you will be fishers of men.”**
  + “Don’t be afraid. Everything you have learned about yourself…all that you have learned from your past about being helpless to change anything…being helpless to be anything more than you are right now…”
  + **“I’m not going to depart from you because you’re sinful, like every other Rabbi.**
  + **If you will get up out of your fear and helplessness…I will change who you are. Just Follow Me.”**
* **Back to 1)**
  + This is NOT unique to the first disciples.
  + This continues to be true about anyone who follows Jesus.
  + Before you believe in Jesus…he’s believing in you.
  + And listen, I’m not using that phrase in the positive self-help kind of way we typically hear it.
  + Its not that Jesus saw some hidden potential in these guys that everyone else missed. Its not that he really saw ANYTHING special in these guys.
  + The fact is that when you are at the end of your rope, when you are at the bottom of the barrel, when it feels like you have no hope…when you are on your knees telling God, “Please, depart from me, I’m a sinner.”
  + ...Then when God changes you…restores you…when he powerfully works in you and through you…when you crush the peg or jump the fence… Then there is no taking credit for that change in your life. You are left only to tell people, “Jesus did this, not me.”
  + So, Yes. Jesus believes in you before you believe in him…but only because he is confident about what HE can do with you…not because of what you bring to the table.
* **Transition-** Now, if you decide to answer Jesus’ call to be a disciple, its very important that you understand that….
* **2) Jesus changes his disciples into disciple-makers with a drip, not a zap.**
  + When Dr. Seligman discovered Learned Helplessness in those dogs…he also discovered a cure for it.
  + The only way to get the dogs who just laid down when they were shocked to jump the fence to the side of the cage that wasn’t electrically charged…was to have a person go in and physically pick up each of the dogs legs and place them one at a time over the little fence.
  + Dr. Seligman discovered that after doing this 3 or 4 times…the dog began to learn to do it himself.
  + **Mark 1:17**
  + When Jesus says to his disciples, ‘Follow me, and I will make you become fishers of men.”
  + That greek verb “will make you become” is very important.
  + It indicates something happening gradually.
  + In other words…whatever it is to be a “fisher of men”…you are not going to be one tomorrow…or the next day.
  + I’m going to have to gradually make you become one.
  + Jesus is going to have to day by day come into their cage, grab their legs and put them over the fence one leg at a time.
  + So, first…what does it mean to be “Fishers of Men”.
  + Well, there are 2 ideas here.
  + One is what I hope is pretty obvious.
  + Jesus means that are going to become multipliers. Disciple-makers.
  + He means that whatever it means to be a disciple…being a disciple has to culminate in making MORE disciples. Introducing more people to this Rabbi. That’s what being a FISHER of PEOPLE is.
  + That you are not content on Jesus JUST inviting you to follow him….but you go to other people and invite them to follow.
  + But, there is a second sort of nuance about this “fisher” of men idea.
  + It, like most of the things Jesus says, is a biblical reference. It's a throwback to the Hebrew text that, of course, all these guys would have been VERY familiar with, considering it's a part of their schooling.
  + The prophets Jeremiah and Amos use this idea of fishing for men, but its not very positive. In fact, its not about leading people to freedom at all…its about judgment and condemnation.
  + Take a look.
  + **Amos 4:1-2 & Jeremiah 16:16**
  + “**Hear this word, you …**
  + **who oppress the poor, who crush the needy,**
  + **…**
  + **The Lord GOD has sworn by his holiness**
  + **that, behold, the days are coming upon you,**
  + **when they shall take you away with hooks,**
  + **even the last of you with fishhooks.**
  + **“Behold, I am sending for many fishers, declares the LORD, and they shall catch them**.
  + This is not positive at all. God is saying that a fisher of men is a instrument of his judgment.
  + It is the way that he is going to take his people into captivity and exile because they have oppressed and crushed the poor and needy.
  + **Mark 1:17**
  + But, Jesus comes now to Simon, Andrew, James and John and he flips the script.
  + Now he says…you are going to become fishers of men…but not to come condemning people for their sin…but you are going to do like I’ve done with you…when they say, “Depart from me I’m sinful”…you won’t crush them…instead, you’ll call them. Or rather…I’ll call them THROUGH you! Just like I called you when you weren’t deserving…I’ll call them when they aren’t worthy.”
  + Now, lets stop right there for just a second.
  + I don’t know what you think it means to be a disciple…but if your idea of following Jesus doesn’t make one of its main purposes to take the salvation you have received and offer it to others…then you probably aren’t following Jesus.
  + In fact, there are a lot of folks that claim to follow Jesus but are using Amos and Jeremiah’s definition of Fisher of Men.
  + They use their identity as a disciple to remind people they look down on that they are condemned…
  + Instead of humbly delivering a message of salvation.
  + But your job is to be a disciple maker. You don’t fish people for condemnation…you go fishing for salvation.
  + And listen…don’t forget…it doesn’t happen overnight.
  + Jesus says, “I will make you BECOME fishers of men.”
* **Back to 2)**
  + Here’s what that means.
  + Just like it takes shocked dogs and pegged elephants time to learn how to ACT like they are free…so it takes time for a disciple of Jesus to learn to ACT like they are free.
  + Let me ask you a question.
  + When did Simon become a disciple?
  + Was it when he said later that Jesus was the Son of God?
  + Was it when Jesus changed his name to Peter and said that he would build his church on that confession?
  + Was it when he followed Jesus out onto the water in the storm?
  + Was it when he defended Jesus when they came to arrest him?
  + Was it when Jesus restored Peter after he resurrected?
  + Was it at Pentecost?
  + Was it when Peter preached his first sermon?
  + When did Peter become a disciple?
  + **Mark 1:18**
  + **Peter became a disciple IMMEDIATELY.**
  + He became a disciple as soon as he left his fishing business and followed Jesus.
  + Remember, to be Jesus’ disciple…there is no test. There is only a decision to respond to the invitation.
  + **BUT, when did Peter become a fisher of men?**
  + Well, Not until he began to testify to others of Jesus’ power and identity and faithfulness.
  + It was something he had to grow into. Something he stumbled through and learned.
  + See, being a disciple of Jesus is an identity.
  + Did you know disciple is not a verb.
  + Like, we say, “Who are you dispcling?”
  + But that’s like saying “Who are Xianing? Or Who are followering?”
  + It is as impossible to “disciple” someone as it is to “Policeman them”. Or Soldier them. Or Chef them.
  + Being a disciple is an identity…and you become a disciple of Jesus as soon as you decide to leave behind whatever it is that you are doing INSTEAD of following him.
  + That’s what it means to repent. It means that if your career is getting in the way of following Jesus…you drop it to follow.
  + It means that if your parents or friends are holding you back, you, sometimes painfully, have to leave them to follow.
  + That’s what Simon and Andrew and James and John do.
  + And when you turn to follow Jesus, you are, RIGHT THEN…a disciple.
  + But, there is still something that you are becoming.
  + …and this takes time.
* **Back to 2)**
  + See, we often think our spiritual growth happens with a zap.
  + Like, when God wants to change you…he just zaps you.
  + And then you don’t want to have premarital sex anymore.
  + Or ZAP. You only want to read your Bible instead of watching Netflix.
  + Or ZAP. You only want to say encouraging things instead of gossiping.
  + But, TYPICALLY, God doesn't work through zaps. He works through drips.
  + Here’s what I mean.
  + **DRIP instead of DELUGE ILLUS-** 
    - **Hole in the rock.**
  + Jesus was always teaching how slow the Kingdom of God was.
  + It was like a mustard seed, that started small and grew into a huge tree.
  + It was like a little bit of yeast that is slowly worked into the bread…until it permeates the whole thing and rises.
  + See, God changes his discples with a drip…not a zap.
  + **What’s the drip?**
  + Well, The way that any disciple follows his Rabbi is by staying close behind him every where he goes…learning his teaching…and practicing it as you go.
  + **SAYING- Being covered in the dust of your Rabbi.**
  + Spiritual disciplines are one way to be covered in his Jesus’ dust.
    - Reading Bible.
    - Praying.
    - Worship Gathering.
    - Practicing sharing your faith.
    - Helping the poor.. Being Generous.
    - Loving others.
  + **And do you know how the drip happens?**
  + It happens in community.
  + Did you notice that Jesus calls brothers? People already practicing family.
  + And did you know, that all through the NT, its really difficult to find Jesus talking to his 12 disciples alone. I mean…one on one.
  + He is always teaching them in front of the other disciples
  + … even when he rebukes Simon Peter later…and says “Get behind me Satan”…its in front of the other disciples.
  + See, we have this idea that we have a private relationship with Jesus, but that's not how being a disciple works.
  + The Drip happens in community. It happens in front of people. It happens with members of your spiritual family.
  + That’s what the church is. Disciples of Jesus. Being changed moment by moment in front of one another.
  + We are community of shocked dogs, and Jesus, by his Holy Spirit is lifting our legs one by one over the fence.
  + And for some of us, you are very nervous…because all you’ve ever know is the shock. All you’ve ever learned is that everyone who ever tried to help you ends up shocking you too.
  + Everytime you’ve tried to crush the peg holding you back…you still end up tied down.
  + But, that’s where community comes in. Because those of us who have become fishers of men…and in many ways ARE STILL becoming fishers of men…we become the hands and feet of Jesus…stepping in and helping you step over the fence…helping you to see that you are free…Jesus has MADE you a disciple…and now you can live free as a disciple-maker.
* **Transition-** See, that’s the difference in being a part of the crowd…and being a disciple.
* **3) Crowds want to see a miracle…the disciples get to BE the miracle.** 
  + All through the book of Mark, there is this sort of contrast between 2 groups of people that follow Jesus around.
  + There are the disciples…and then there are the crowds.
  + The disciples follow Jesus around 24/7. They are with Jesus, taking intimately with him, eating meals with him.
  + They are in his everyday life.
  + They are covered in his dust.
  + There are 12 of them primarily, but the scripture tells us that there eventually are over hundred of these folks.
  + But then there are the crowds.
  + And the crowds show up and hear Jesus because he’s got the Schmee-Khah.
  + He’s got the it factor.
  + He looks like Jordan in the NBA finals when he teaches.
  + …and….they love the miracles. You know, its cool to be really hungry and have a guy feed you and 4,999 of your closest friends with a Hebrew Happy Meal.
  + But the crowds aren’t around for the rebuke. The crowds aren’t around for the encouragement. The crowds aren’t there when they are on a boat in a storm with Jesus. The crowds aren’t there when Jesus says “eat my flesh, and drink my blood”
  + The crowds aren’t there when Jesus says, “Follow me…and carry your cross”
  + Because if you are intimately connected to this Rabbi…those kinds of things scare you.
  + …and eventually, the crowds chanted for Jesus to be crucified.
  + You know, the disciples eventually deserted Jesus. When Jesus went to the cross…all his disciples fled in fear.
  + They forgot that Jesus said, “Don’t be afraid before he said “I’ll make you fishers of men”.
  + And alone…without the support of the crowd and without the companionship of his discples…
  + Jesus died.
  + He was crushed…by 3 pegs…3 nails into his hands and feet.
  + He appeared helpless.
  + Unable to save himself.
  + But when he did it, he was dying to change his disciples.
  + He was making his disciples a miracle.
  + See, when a touch a dog that’s being shocked by electricity…they become a conductor and you become the receipient of that shock.
  + In Jesus Christ, when God condescended to pick up our legs and put them across the fence… he absorbed the shock we deserved for our sin.
  + He took our punishment, so we could have his freedom.
  + The Rabbi died to make his disciples a miracle.
  + But then, he resurrected. And he met his disciples in an upper room. And he gave them his Spirit. And he sent them out…finally…to fish for people.
  + To tell the world the gospel. That God himself had turned condemnation on a cross into salvation for everyone who would drop their nets and follow him.
  + And the disciples eventually, in the book of Acts finally became what Jesus called them to be. Fishers of men. They went from being fearful men who departed from Jesus, to being men who boldly went to their deaths preaching his faithfulness and love.
  + **So…that’s the question.**
  + Which group will you be a part of.
  + The Crowds…
    - Showing up to hear powerful teaching.
    - To get an experience.
    - To have some friends.
    - To see the cool stuff.
  + Or disciples.
    - In a relationship with this Rabbi and his family…covered in his dust… and covered by his blood…ready to take make disciples in your neighborhood…and to the ends of the earth
  + **Jesus was crushed by pegs, so you could crush your peg and be free to know God.**
  + **Jesus absorbed the shock for you, so you could go and absorb it for others**
  + **Like a good Rabbi, Jesus came to you when you didn’t deserve it and said, “Follow me”…so you could carry on his work in the world…proclaiming the gospel to the ends of the earth.**
  + Jesus believed in you before you believed in him.
  + Knowing that…now its your turn to trust him.
* **LORDS SUPPER**
  + Disciples eat together.
  + Intimacy.