

Sa listen, happy Father's Day. You're glad you showed up because some lucky dad is walking away with this three pound bar of Hershey chocolate. Oh, buddy, there's lots of people who will arm wrestle you for it. That may be how we decide who gets it. Little arm wrestling.

That'd be fun. Okay, I'm gonna put this someplace where it's out of the way. Hey, welcome to Sherwood Oaks. We are glad you're here. We are so in our second week on our summer series, taking us through, really, the life of Jesus.

So we're starting. We're focusing on the book of Matthew for the most part, with some forays into different parts of the Gospels. We're starting in the book of Matthew, Matthew. Those of you who are familiar with your Bibles know that Matthew is the first book in what's called the New Testament. So there's two testaments in the Bible, the Old Testament or the Old story.

And the new story would be one way to describe it. But Matthew is one of the disciples of Jesus. He writes out his encounters, his experiences with Jesus, and he leaves this record behind for us to read it, to glean from it, to learn more about this Jesus that has changed our lives. And so we're using Matthew's Gospel to sort of walk us through the summer, through the life of Christ. And we're calling it, as you can see, mountains and lakes.

And we're focusing on the parts of Jesus life that were really centered at these key points in. In the geography of the land he lived in the land of Israel. So mountains and lakes. Last week we were on a mountaintop. This week, well, we're going to be near the shore.

Last week, I made it abundantly clear which side of the vacation sort of spectrum I wanted to land on. Anyone remember my preferences? Mountains. I'm a mountain guy. Which made it incredibly ironic because I got a call Monday that the sort of our foster system had chosen our family as the recipient of a summer gift pack.

And so it arrived and I was really excited. Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah. I mean, you don't have to applaud that unless you voted for me. And that's great. Thank you very much.

It arrived and I was like, what is going to be in the summer gift pack? It's a big igloo cooler. Inside it was pool noodles, inner tubes, beach towels, sunscreen, those sand tarps you can stake down on the beach. And it's as if Jesus was here, heard my sermon, and said, I'm gonna show him. I get the point.

Jesus, good things happen in the mountains and on the water. So today we're going to focus on, on some time near the water. Last week, the mountainside, if you weren't here, read it in Matthew. Jesus is led by the Holy Spirit up into the desert, into the wilderness. And then the

devil takes him up onto a high mountain and tempts him with taking what we called the shortcut route to get someplace quickly without actually going through the whole process of learning what you need to learn to get to where God wants you to get to.

And Jesus committed to what we call the long cut to say, you know what, yes, it's a little harder. There's a lot of things that sometimes we would rather not experience in the long cut. But at the end of the day, when we get to where God wants us to be, we will have what we need to have to live there. Well, and so we want to be a church that embraces the long cut, not the shortcut. But today we're looking at something a little bit different.

We're at the shoreline, we're on the Sea of Galilee, where Jesus will invite some fishermen right in the middle of their jobs, right in the middle of their family life, right in the middle of their, of their lives in general, to leave, to leave some of that comfort and some of that familiarity and jump into a new, slightly scary life with him. So that's where we're at today. If you want to turn in your Bibles to Matthew chapter 4 on your Bible apps in your, in your, in the, in your Bible Bible, I encourage you to do that, to follow along because I cannot use everything there. But your eyes may be skimming and you might notice something in the middle of a sermon and you want to land on that. And that's perfectly all right.

If you get distracted, distracted by God's word and tune me out, that's absolutely fine. But if you want to read on the screen, we'll have the words up there as well. I'm going to pray and then we will jump right in. Heavenly Father, as we delve a little bit deeper into your life, we pray that you instruct us, encourage us, and even challenge us from your word. We pray this in Jesus name, amen.

So I was doing some calculation. I mentioned this to the boys the other day. It's been about 20 months where we're coming up in a very short time to our two year mark since two amazing young men pulled into my driveway, moved into my house. They arrived at this very tumultuous season in Their life, adolescence. Anyone old, young enough to remember adolescence.

You remember that time? You remember that time? You're still going through it, buddy. The mustache does not fool me. You're still there.

This is the time where in our lives we're making sense of the experiences, both the positive and the negative experiences that we've lived through. We're trying to figure out what those mean. We're learning who we are and more importantly, who we want to be in life. We're developing some long range goals and some aspirations for what we want to do. We're learning how to manage the big emotions.

Remember when you were supposed to learn how to manage those big

emotions? Some of you learned it, some of you are still learning how to manage those big emotions and how to, how to communicate effectively in the middle of those big emotions. You know, I'm talking about. They're learning how to develop and maintain long term relationships in adolescence. We're forming worldviews and opinions and belief systems.

And I've noticed that there are moments where they show just incredible maturity and sensitivity to others. Like I look at them and go, they're going to be amazing people. And then there are moments, let's be honest, where that doesn't happen. In other words, they're just learning how to be adults. We all had to go through this phase and I think it has a connection with us today because of what Matthew will show us.

When Jesus invites us to follow him into this new way to live and walk with Him. We're going to change. That's if we're serious about following Jesus. We are not going to change his influence in our life. Will, will in some way affect who we are.

But there's this side that that requires that we say yes to it, that we embrace it, that we go along with what Jesus wants to do in our lives. And that's what we're looking at today. So the, the background of the chapter. We're here in chapter four of Matthew. We're here after Jesus has finished his time in the desert.

He's been tempted, he's walked through it successfully. He finishes that time of fasting and prayer and he moves from his family home in the town of Nazareth where he grew up. And that's up in the hill country. If you've traveled with us to Israel, that's up in the hill country between the Mediterranean and the Sea of Galilee. There's some hilly area and Nazareth is up there.

And he walks about a four day journey to the Sea of Galilee. Do we have that Map up there, it. Well, that's a picture. That's the Sea of Galilee. That's there.

That's there in the town that Jesus moved to. The town is called Capernaum. So it's about four days from Nazareth to Capernaum. In between that, there's a town called Cana. He'll do a miracle at a wedding of one of his mom's friends there.

But we'll get to that maybe at a later point that's not happened yet. But this little town of Capernaum or Kaphar Nahum, or the city of Nahum or Nahum's village, let's be honest, is on the north coast of the Sea of Galilee. And there we have a picture of. Of someone enjoying the water. It's a beautiful view.

You're looking over to Tiberius on the far shore. That may mean nothing to you, but. But hey, a little knowledge goes a long way. You

may never know when you need to know where Tiberius is in that picture. There it is.

This little town of Capernaum is mentioned in the Old Testament with these words, land of the way, of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles. And the Old Testament prophet says this. The people living in darkness have seen a great light on those living in the land of the shadow of death. A light has dawned. And I love this.

Matthew quotes the. This passage. And I like that part about the light dawning in the land of the shadow of death. Because Jesus, the light of the world, moves into this place and makes it his home. And this place doesn't have a great reputation.

And there in Capernaum, Matthew says Jesus sort of began his preaching ministry. And he's just walking around. He's just talking to different people. He's gathering a few crowds. He's.

He's sharing some stuff that, that he wants them to know. And one of the things he speaks is this. His message is this. Repent for the kingdom of heaven has come near. We'll get back to that at a later point.

But that's sort of the starting message. Repent for the kingdom of heaven has come near. And one day when Jesus is. Is doing his preaching, sort of, sort of walks. He's beside the Sea of Galilee and he sees two brothers, Simon Peter and his brother Andrew.

They were casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. Come, follow me, Jesus says, and I will send you out to fish for people. And at once they left their nets and followed him. Now, going on from there, he saw two other brothers, James, the son of Zebedee and his brother John. And they were in a boat with their father, Zebedee, preparing their nets.

And Jesus called them. And immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him. These are ordinary people. Fishing was not an extraordinary career move. They live on the water.

It makes a lot of sense that that's where they would find sort of their career paths. They're local boys. They work in a local industry. With that, they've got a business to run. They've got responsibilities, personal and otherwise.

They've got duties and expectations and commitments. Peter, you mentioned here, Simon, who's also known as Peter, has a wife at home, we discover later. And Jesus says to these guys, just living sort of ordinary lives in the middle of their ordinary lives, follow me. And they put down their nets and they follow Jesus. Jesus always sort of finds us in the very ordinary parts of our lives where we're sort of

just doing our stuff.

And I say, Jesus always does this. This is how he always does it to me. He always shows up and taps me on the shoulder or shakes me by the shoulder or slaps me upside the head and says, hey, pay attention. Something new is happening. If you don't pay attention, you're going to miss it.

Jesus finds us in our lives, but he always calls us to his. He always says, follow me into this new thing I am doing. Now think about your life. You got a job, hopefully you like it. You may not.

You got a family, hopefully you like them. You may not. You've got responsibilities. No one likes those. You've got your interests.

You got your pastimes. And altogether you probably have a life that you've grown pretty comfortable with. It's not perfect. You'd like to make a little more money. You might like to have a few more toys in the driveway.

You might be able to have a little more time to just do what you want with your free time. But. But you've got to this point in your life where, yeah, it's not perfect, but it's. It's good. I know it.

I know how to function in this ordinary life. And that's where Jesus will oftentimes show up. I don't know who said it. Maybe Alan said it. Life happens when you're busy making other plans.

Anyone know who gets credit for that quote? But it's true. Jesus shows up when we're really doing other stuff in our. In the middle of our ordinary life. Jesus will invite us into his life and say, hey, here's what I'm doing.

Come and Join me on this. So when Jesus invites us to follow him, it's an invitation to be part of something much, much bigger than our normal life. Remember in the temple when Jesus was a young child, his parents asked him, what were you thinking? And he says, I got to be about my father's business. I'm being trained to work in dad's, dad's company.

And I got to, I gotta, that's my purpose. So when Jesus invites us in, he's inviting us into the family business as well. And it's a, it's an invitation to an adventure. Now if you only read Matthew's account, you might think that this is the very first time these fishermen have ever met Jesus. And it's like this weird thing where Jesus walks up and says, follow me.

And they're like, we must follow him. And they put down their nets and follow Jesus. That's not, that's not the story at all. In John, chapter one, we, we read that Andrew met Jesus through John the

Baptist. Andrew was a follower of John the Baptist.

And Jesus has an encounter with John the Baptist. And John says, you got to go follow Jesus. And so John and Andrew begins to follow Jesus. And then he brings all his friends and business associates back and they meet Jesus as well. And so this sort of relational connection is formed between them and Jesus.

And you can imagine if you got some sort of imagination that this friendship was such that maybe they've got a rough day at sea and they're like, you know what? We're not going out on the water today. What are we going to do? Well, you know what? I hear Jesus is preaching over at so and so and such and such.

Let's go over there and see what Jesus is talking about today. They would skip out of work and go and hang out with Jesus. But then the next day when the sun's shining and the water is calm, they go, okay, there's bills to pay. Yes. There's mouths to feed.

Yes.

We got to get back to the boats. Okay, Jesus will see you. Have a great life. Until we meet again. They go back to their ordinary life.

So they know Jesus. And when he walks by and says, hey, I want you to drop all this and follow me, it's not a one off. Still, it's a big ask. How would you react? Now, Andrew, there's no indication he has a family.

So he's a single guy. I used to be that way.

His thing is probably just put ourselves in his. When you were single, you know. Yeah, you got bills to pay. But You've also got a lot of time to do kind of what you want, and you're living your life free and easy. And I picture Andrew going, okay, okay, I'll change my job, but how is that going to affect my lifestyle?

You got Peter. We've talked about him already. He's got a wife at home. And so every man in this room knows that before you make a big life decision, you've got to run it by someone else. Who is that person you got to run it by?

You're afraid to say it, but just say it. They know it's true as well. You have to run it by your wife. How am I going to explain this? You did what?

You left your boats and did what? And then James and John, they're. They've got a dad who has been focusing all his time and attention into training them to take over this business, this fishing business. And James and John say, wait, if we change our plans, we're going to

disappoint dad. What's he going to do if we say, dad, we don't want to be X, we want to do Y.

But there's something in this encounter with Jesus that moves them out of that tension and out of the sort of the comfortableness and stability of the known life. They've got to sort of throw caution to the wind, and they're going to embrace this, what they know will be a wild and crazy uncertainty and an adventure with Jesus. They're going to embrace the adventure. They're going to be asked to do some impossible things. They're going to be asked to walk on water.

They're going to be asked to feed thousands of people. They're going to be asked to go into all the world, and they're going to be asked to face down some global authorities, big asks for guys who all they really wanted to do was go out and fish. That's really what they wanted to do with their life. Now, they don't know any of that yet. All they know is that Jesus has a little bit of a wild card.

And so following him is going to require some crazy bravado to say, okay, okay, where you go, we will go. When Jesus calls us to go deeper with him, it will require us to be brave and embrace the adventure despite the uncertainty of the outcome. Is there any place in your life now where you feel Jesus is saying, I need you to move in this direction? And you're like, I would. But Jesus says, hey, man up, guys.

Do it. Step into it. It's all right. I'M going to be with you. Say yes to the adventure.

Because saying yes to the adventure means you're also saying yes to an invitation to discover your true purpose. Jesus says, follow me and I will make you fishers of men. If you want to stay here on the water and fish for fish, no one will blame you. It's a good life. But if you follow me, I'll make you fishers of men.

If you leave aside your own purpose and join me in mine, something will happen that will make you different. Listen, I love my dad. But growing up, Saturdays were days every other kid looked forward to dreaded it. Saturdays were dad's day off and dad got to do whatever he wanted to do. And my dad is the weirdest guy.

He wanted to bale hay, he wanted to fix fence. And on January, wintry, snowy, freezy, icy mornings, he wanted to go chop firewood. He. Oh, he loved it. I could tell he loved it.

He wasn't putting on. He really did love it. Chopping firewood was reserved for the coldest day of the year. Because you know what they say, chopping firewood warms you twice. Once when you're cutting it and the other when you're burning it.

All I wanted to do was just stay snuggled up in my bed. It was hard to leave the comfort of the quilt to go out into the cold world to chop wood. What I really wanted to be doing my purpose in life. Say amen if you know what I'm talking about. All I wanted my purpose as a 13 year old was to get my bowl of honeycomb cheerio and plop my little pajama rear end down on the carpet and watch Scooby Doo.

Anyone else like that was my purpose in life. What more do you want from me, dad? This is what I'm supposed to be doing. That was not Dad's purpose for my life. He wanted me to go up and chop wood now.

Why? Why? Because many hands make light work. I can guarantee you right now my hands did not make that work any lighter. I was useless out there.

Oh, I'm telling you, if you bring this up to my family, they'll say he went and did what I did. Now I did sneak back several times back, back to the honeycomb cheerio and the Scooby Doo left it out there in the in the winter weather. But I showed up enough to scar me emotionally for the rest of my life.

Dad's purpose in dragging my rear end out of bed and out there in that cold morning to chop wood was not just so that we could have wood for the winter. His purpose was to keep me with him so that he could I could observe how functioning adults manage the world around them. He knew that if I was going to be successful, I needed a mentor, I needed teachers. Because grown up adulthood doesn't happen by accident. You need people around you to make that happen.

It takes time, it takes presence. Spending time with me, whatever it was, gave him the opportunity to model the values and the purposes of that he knew were important for me to live a godly and functional life. I'm not the only one that needed it. I may have needed it more than a lot, but I'm not the only one who needs it. We need older men in our society, in our church to step up to this and own this responsibility, to mentor and lead and coach and train and encourage chasten our younger men.

We need that as our young guys follow Jesus, they need older men who have walked that path not, not, not perfectly. Because no one in this room has ever done it perfectly. But those who have done it consistently and faithfully, even despite all the big trips and falls and mess ups, it's through this kind of fathering relationship that young men, young Christian men discover their God given purpose. And so today, if you have survived up to this point where you are alive and you're sitting in a chair, you know something of what it means to survive and be successful. Now you go, oh my word, I've made so many mistakes.

Ha ha ha. That's great. That's great. Because these young men are

going to make the same mistakes and you at least were able to say, hey, I did that and here's what happened. So maybe don't do that.

Your imperfections, your mistakes become great teaching points. Jesus redeems them for that purpose. But man, if you've navigated this, if you've navigated up to this point in time, I don't care if you're 18 or 88, you have something to pour into another young man. Take that responsibility seriously. You can become a father of sorts to a young man who may not have one.

If you want to step into that role, the first thing you can do is sign up to host a Joe with a Bro. Nate talked about it last week, but this is just an opportunity that, man, if you want to talk to another guy about your life, you say, hey, I want to have Joe with a bro. And if you're willing to talk to another guy about your life, you say, hey, I want to sign up for Joe with a bro. These are, these are just, they're low impact, extremely high impact opportunities where you can talk with a guy about what Jesus is doing in your life and he can talk about what Jesus is doing in his life. Man.

The invitation to follow Jesus, when he says, put down your nets and follow me, it's an invitation to discover a bigger purpose for your life. And don't we want that? And finally, it's an invitation to know Jesus, to really know Jesus. I suppose if Peter and his friends just dropped in on Jesus once a week and listened to his sermons once a week or whenever, over time they probably would have learned enough to sort of get what he was talking about, maybe even be able to talk about it with other people. Maybe they could share it.

Oh, Jesus talked about, yeah, being peacemakers. It's important that we get along with each other. Oh, that's great. But that once a week, once every other week, connection with Jesus would not really have brought them any closer to Jesus himself, you know what I mean? They would have been church going fishermen.

Listen, churchgoing fishermen are great, but Jesus didn't call us to be churchgoers. This may be shocking to hear a preacher say this. Jesus did not call us to be churchgoers. He called us to be disciples. And disciples go wherever Jesus goes.

They walk with Jesus wherever Jesus walks. Because in the walking with Jesus, that's where we are trained and we're prepared for what comes next. He says, you follow me and what I will make you. For them it was special as a man. For you it may be something else.

You follow me and I will make you X. So this invitation to follow Jesus is sort of the same one that I extended to the boys. You come and live with me, bring all your stuff with you, bring all your life experiences, bring your aspirations. Let's work through your coping skills and your communication tools. Let's work through your history.

Let's redeem some of that and see if we can make something really good happen. Let's reshape distorted worldviews and belief systems and, and see if we can't, we can't get, get you ready for being an adult because in the process you're going to discover your purpose. You're going to be prepared for whatever crazy mission I call you to. That's what Jesus says to us. Yeah, we're not that different from, from adolescents.

We're all working through this stuff. And Jesus says, you come and live with me and we'll sort it out. Matthew 11. He says it this way, take my yoke and Learn from me. Now, what's that look like?

Because we want to get practical here. When we, When Jesus calls us to live with him, obviously none of us are going to die and go to heaven and live next door to Jesus. That's not what he's saying. What he is saying is, I've given you through Matthew and Mark, Luke and John and Paul and Peter and James and John, my life. Get familiar with it, learn from it.

Listen to what they wrote down, what they considered important enough for you to know. Absorb that, listen to that. And then. And that's the way you get close to me, through my word. But here's the way you allow me to get close to you.

And this is where we talk about the stuff that's going on inside our lives and the stuff that's going on around our lives, and we just talk to him about all that stuff. Now, a couple weeks ago, we talked about prayer. And one of the things I said that have sort of helped me understand what prayer is, that prayer is not anything super magical. Many of us talk to ourselves a lot. You don't have to raise your hand if you talk to yourself.

But for me, talking to myself and acknowledging that Jesus is in the space with me is prayer where we get to share our thoughts, we get to share our concerns, we get to share our excitement or our dreams or our hopes. With Jesus, the. That's prayer. That's talking to him about the stuff that matters in us. But then there's stuff around us, our family, our work, where again, these things, if we don't, if we don't, if we don't align them correctly, they just become anxious thoughts.

They just become the things that depress us and weigh on us and worry us. But if we recognize that Jesus is right there with us and we share those things with him out loud, if we have to just talk about it out loud in the car by yourself, then that becomes prayer as well. So talk with him about that stuff. And that's how he gets close to your life. And then listen, because when, when, when we're talking to Jesus, he's going to respond.

He's going to tell us stuff, he's going to. He's going to inform us of

things. He's going to point us, he's going to nudge us in certain directions. And when he does the nudge, sometimes it's a slap upside the head, sometimes it's gentle. But in whatever way, he does that in your life, if you want to be more than just a church going fisherman and you want to be a disciple, then it requires that when he nudges you, move, you go in the direction that he's nudging.

This is discipleship. You gotta look, you gotta listen, you gotta be tuned in because he will. He'll point you in the direction he wants you to go. And the final thing is this. And this is where I think we have a hard time.

He wants you to hang out with people who are doing the same thing. Because Jesus didn't call those disciples into just a relationship with him. He called them into relationship with the posse, with the team. He's called them into a family. And so it's important when we are considering ourselves disciples of Jesus, that we don't try to do this on our own.

Me and God, we got this. No, no, you don't. No, you're not going to do that. It's not going to work. Jesus calls us into a family, he calls us into a relationship.

He calls us into a commitment to each other. It's important that you connect with others, that you're not trying to do it all by yourself. Can I just passingly mention one more time, Joe with a bro. Guys, guys, don't try to do this by yourself. Call up, let's have coffee.

Listen, I'm not going to judge you. Whatever you want to bring to that Joe with a bro, I'll have Joe. But if you want to have something else show up, show up. I want to. I want to talk with you as well.

I want to get to know you. There's an old proverb that says, iron sharpens iron. It's true. It's true. It's how we prep ourselves for whatever God calls us to do next.

This morning, maybe you've been showing up periodically to check on what Jesus says or what Jesus is up to. That's great. Jesus and I, we all, we love to have you here. But at some point, Jesus calls you to say, okay, okay, it's now time to put down your nets and get serious about following me. And if that's you today, and you're ready to make a real commitment to Jesus, we'd love to baptize you.

It's cold, I'm pretty sure. But you know what? Jesus calls us to adventure. And I've been in that water and. And there's an adventure awaiting you in that cold water, we can do it.

But if you're ready to cast down your nets and follow Jesus, today is a great day to do that. But I think that the bulk of us in this Room have been following Jesus for a while now. And we said yes to the

adventure. We said yes to the purpose. We said yes to getting to know Jesus more.

And we were in it to win it, maybe, but it's easy to sort of drift back and go, oh, well, I'm. I mean, I really need to get some. We got Christmas coming up. I'm gonna. I'm gonna go pick up the nets again and go back out and go back to what I know.

And nothing that dramatic, even. But sometimes it's easy for us just to get into the. Into the system and the patterns of life where we're not as dependent on Jesus or we're sort of coasting through life and we're coasting through our faith. And Jesus says, that's not what I called you to. That's not the walk of discipleship that I intended for you to have.

That's not the life of adventure that I promised you. That's not going to help you discover your real purpose. That's not going to help. You know me better. So today, as we take communion, and I'm just going to.

Just going to encourage you as you. As you remember Jesus, commitment to radical obedience to his Father, that you. You go back to that moment, too, where Jesus asks you to put down your net and follow him and go, okay, I want to get back to that place. Maybe you're at it right now. Like, okay, Lord, I'm in it.

I am. I'm putting down the net one more time. And we're gonna. I'm gonna follow you where you lead me. I'm committing this week, spend time in the Word.

I'm gonna tune in and dial into you. I'm going to talk about my stuff with you. I'm going to commit to some other guy. We're going to. We're going to.

I'm not going to do this alone. I'm going to go back to that adventure and that purpose and that knowing you deeper.

But if you're not there yet, and you're going to, I want to be there, but that's not me right now. Then can this be a moment where you say, lord, I thank you for what you've done. I love you. Help me be brave. Help me gain the courage I need to say yes to the next step with you, Jesus, this morning.

We want to follow you.

We want to live the kind of life that you've called us to, where you've invited us to.

But all of us need courage. All of us need you to make us brave. And so today, as we take communion, the bread and the cup that reminds us of your deep, deep love for us, your sacrificial love for us, your

willingness to go the long cut to bring us into this family, this new place, this new. This new relationship, this new identity. We want to be the people that you've called us to be.

But it can be scary. And so we pray you give us courage. Make us brave. And we thank you for that promise to go with us into whatever the future holds for us. In Jesus name, Amen.

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