



International Bible Lessons Commentary

Uniform Sunday School Lessons Series

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Mark 1:16-20 and Luke 14:25-33 English Standard Version March 10, 2019

The [International Bible Lesson](#) (*Uniform Sunday School Lessons Series*) for **Sunday, March 10, 2019**, is from **Mark 1:16-20 and Luke 14:25-33**. **Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further** follow the verse-by-verse *International Bible Lesson Commentary*. **Study Hints for Discussion and Thinking Further** will help with class preparation and in conducting class discussion: these hints are available on the [International Bible Lessons Commentary](#) website along with the *International Bible Lesson* that you may want to read to your class as part of your Bible study. You can discuss each week's commentary and lesson at the [International Bible Lesson Forum](#).

(Mark 1:16) 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.

In John 1:35-51, we learn how Andrew and Simon Peter met Jesus through the preaching of John the Baptist and how they wanted to learn more about Jesus from Jesus. They were fishermen who had the responsibilities of their families, so they returned to fishing after seeing Jesus and probably discussed Jesus with their family, fishing partners, and friends. Later, as Jesus' disciples, the Bible indicates they returned to fishing for fish from time to time.

(Mark 1:17) And Jesus said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you become fishers of men."

When Jesus saw them fishing, He called to them saying, "Follow me," which means "Obey me" or "Come with me and obey me." Jesus promised

that if they would learn from Him and obey Him that He would make them into people who could catch men. Just as fishing for fish was a learned occupation that required hard work, patience, and long hours, it would take them a few years of hard work and patience to learn their new occupation from Jesus and then from the Holy Spirit Who they would receive after Jesus' death and resurrection. The personal qualities of a fisherman would make them well-suited to fish for people, but presumably they did not know what fishing for people meant until after they had spent time with Jesus.

(Mark 1:18) And immediately they left their nets and followed him.

Simon Peter and Andrew obeyed Jesus immediately when He called to them. They knew or may have come to seriously consider the fact that Jesus was the Messiah, which meant the promised King of Israel. Therefore, with the authority of their King and the persuasive power of the truths they had learned earlier from and about Jesus, Jesus called them into His service, and they obeyed Him immediately when He called them.

(Mark 1:19) 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.

Mark's history of Jesus is the shortest gospel; a brief history that he most probably learned from Simon Peter. In Luke 5:9-11, we learn that James and John were fishing partners of Simon and Andrew. If James and John had not previously met Jesus and learned personally about Jesus, as they fished with Simon and Andrew, they would have learned about Jesus. Simon and Andrew had talked to John the Baptist and had talked to Jesus personally, and they would have enthusiastically talked about Jesus as they fished. Initially, Jesus probably wanted all of them to keep fishing for fish to meet their needs while He instructed them at other times as He was conducting His early ministry in Capernaum. Then, from time to time, Jesus would probably go to them when they were fishing and call them to join Him in learning from Him during His ministry, until they became fulltime fishers of men. After Jesus resurrection they saw Him in

Jerusalem, and again when they were fishing in Galilee (see John 21).

(Mark 1:20) And immediately he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants and followed him.

Jesus did not impoverish the families of those He called to follow Him. When James and John left their nets immediately, they left their father with his hired servants to carry on their business, which would have continued to include meeting the needs of their families and those of their partners' families as well. Their families took on added responsibilities too, because they knew Jesus the King had called Simon, Andrew, James, and John to serve and obey Him, just as a soldier might need to leave his family for a time in the service to their nation.

Luke 14:25-33

(Luke 14:25) Now great crowds accompanied him, and he turned and said to them,

Because Jesus taught with the authority of a King and Teacher unlike any other, great crowds followed Him as He healed the sick, raised the dead, and fed the hungry. They became excited thinking Jesus might be the Messiah as He preached about repentance and preparing for the coming Kingdom of God, and as He acted like a King who even had the power to cast out demons and confound His religious critics in debate. They came as great crowds to Jesus because they thought He would meet all their physical and material needs and free them from Roman oppression.

(Luke 14:26) “If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple.

Using what appears to us as startling words and would probably have appeared to the people in the crowds as shocking, with His words Jesus thinned the crowds and reduced their numbers to those who would be

serious about learning what He taught about God and following and obeying Him as a faithful disciple (student). Jesus wanted His listeners to count the cost of following Him. The Semitic expression using “hate” and “love” together means “to love” and “to love less.” Remember, Jesus taught people to love everyone even their enemies, and Jesus demonstrated God’s love for all people, even His enemies, by His death on the cross. Jesus would never teach anyone to hate those who are nearest and dearest to them. But, as the Son of God, Jesus claimed to be more important and deserving of greater love than those dearest and nearest to us; even more important than we consider ourselves. Jesus’ teaching meant that to be His disciple a person needed to love Him more than their families or anyone else. They must love Jesus supremely. They must love Jesus more than themselves—Jesus is worthy to be loved more than we love our own lives. Later, Jesus would demonstrate what these truths meant when He obeyed His Heavenly Father suffered and died on a cross for our sake.

(Luke 14:27) Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple.

The Jews and Gentiles of Jesus’ day were very much aware of how a criminal was treated before and after the Romans nailed them to a cross. They knew the suffering a criminal experienced as they watched them die. Jesus said that if a person wanted to be His disciple and obey him as their King; then, they must be prepared and willing to suffer and die on a cross as a criminal (which would happen to many Christians when the Roman government began to persecute them—and to suffer an agonizing death for being a Christian is certainly possible in many places today). Later, Jesus demonstrated what bearing His own cross meant for Him when He obeyed His Father and suffered and died on the cross to save us from our sins.

(Luke 14:28) For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it?

Before anyone decided to be one of Jesus’ followers or disciples, Jesus wanted them to consider all the consequences, even the worst possible

consequences. Life in this world as a disciple of Jesus did not mean lots of free food and immediate healing from any sickness. As the King of the universe, Jesus will do wonderful things for people and will meet all the needs of His disciples in the future Kingdom of God when He returns. Yet, there would come a time and a time came and a time has come again when disciples who truly try to obey Jesus in every detail immediately would and will suffer and die for expressing their faith in Jesus. To help people count the cost of following Jesus, for there is a personal cost that is well worth the cost, Jesus gave them some illustrations they could understand.

(Luke 14:29) Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him,

A wise person will estimate as carefully as possible the cost of a project before beginning the project. If they cannot afford to complete the project, a wise person will not begin it. Jesus wanted everyone who thought about following Him to consider the fact that they might suffer and die as a criminal if they obeyed Him as King. Teaching this consideration led many who had followed Him along with the crowd to count the cost and forsake Him.

(Luke 14:30) saying, ‘This man began to build and was not able to finish.’

Jesus’ stories showed that a person who began something but was unable to finish it would be mocked. Their inability to successfully finish the project might indicate that they had foolishly embarked on the project. Jesus knew that many who followed Him would leave Him when the going became difficult and dangerous, and they would be mocked—especially by the unbelieving crowds and religious leaders who rejected Him. Becoming a disciple of Jesus and following Jesus to the end would require total commitment, sacrifice, and perseverance.

(Luke 14:31) Or what king, going out to encounter another king in war, will not sit down first and deliberate whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with

twenty thousand?

Jesus the King counted the cost before He came into our world, and Jesus successfully completed the task set before Him. Jesus knew that He would be mocked by unbelievers and those who did evil. His truthful claim to be the Messiah and the Son of God would lead to His suffering and death on the cross, but He also knew before He came that He was willing pay that price; and by doing so, He knew that He would defeat Satan and free all who would believe in Him from slavery to Satan and sin. “Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God” (Hebrews 12:1-2)

(Luke 14:32) And if not, while the other is yet a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks for terms of peace.

Prior to the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple by the Roman army in 70 A.D., the Jews believed they could crush the mighty Roman army and gain their freedom; therefore, they refused to accept or ask for terms of peace and suffered the consequences. Rejecting Jesus to follow someone else or some other god or religion or philosophy will not save someone from death and destruction. No matter what the personal cost, it is far better to pick up your cross and follow King Jesus into eternity.

(Luke 14:33) So therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple.”

Jesus did not mean that people had to give away all their possessions to be His disciple, but they had to be willing to give up all they possessed, *if necessary*, to follow Him. Later, when Christians refused to make an offering to Caesar and recognize Caesar as a god to save their physical lives, they did renounce all that they possessed, even their own lives, as they suffered crucifixion or faced the lions in the Roman Colosseum or suffered

far worse. They counted the cost and paid the price to keep following Jesus, the King. Even today, some have sacrificed to help the poor, to build a church, to support missionaries, and their very lives to go to foreign lands to tell others about salvation from sin and death and the blessedness that comes from serving King Jesus in the Kingdom of God now and forever.

Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further

1. Do you think Simon and Andrew, and James and John, knew anything about Jesus before Jesus called them to follow Him? Give a reason for your answer.
2. What are some of the qualities of a fisherman's occupation that would help Simon, Andrew, James, and John be good at fishing for people?
3. What are some of the reasons that you can think of for great crowds of people following Jesus? Why do you think some people, even some great crowds, follow Jesus today?
4. Why do you think Jesus' true disciples obey Him immediately? What might it indicate when someone who calls himself a disciple of Jesus consistently refuses to obey Jesus' commands in the Bible?
5. Have you counted the cost of becoming and being one of Jesus' true disciples? Give a reason for your answer.

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