

Lesson 1 | March 6, 2022

The Calling of Discipleship

Study Text: Matthew 4:18–22; 9:9–13; Mark 1:14–20; 3:7–19

Central Truth: Jesus calls all people to become His disciples.

Key Verse: Matthew 4:19

He [Jesus] saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men (KJV).

Jesus called out to them, “Come, follow me, and I will show you how to fish for people!” (NLT).

Learning Objectives

- Students will understand that the call to discipleship is universal; it includes all followers of Christ.
- Students will desire to be used of God to further the cause of the body of Christ in a lost world.
- Students will look for opportunities to serve Christ and witness to others within their current day-to-day responsibilities, and continue to pursue open doors to expand their personal ministries.

Introducing the Lesson

Say: It can be surprising, but also encouraging, to remind ourselves just how ordinary Jesus’ disciples were. The circumstances of their calling to become disciples are equally unadorned. No bolts of lightning or thunderous voice from heaven accompanied their call. But Jesus’ plans for them were truly world-changing. That combination of the everyday and the eternally significant holds true for our Savior’s plans for us today.

Opening Activity—Just an Ordinary Day

Ask: Has God ever spoken to you on an ordinary day outside of a “church environment,” either through a “nudge” of the Holy Spirit or through someone else’s words or actions? Describe that incident.

Say: While much of what we read about Jesus’ disciples took place within events of His ministry, or later, as they proclaimed the gospel in Acts or the Epistles, it is interesting to note where they were and what they were doing when Jesus first invited them to follow Him and be “fishers of men.” (Share your highlights from the following text.)

From the beginning, Jesus’ plan for establishing His Church was to integrate the Church within the daily lives of His followers—all of His followers. He referred to the Church as His body, powerfully illustrating how belonging to Him within the Church was a totally immersive experience that shapes all that the Christian thinks, says, and does (see 1

Corinthians 12:27). This translates to the process of discipleship, in which all believers help each other to grow as they move through life.

Adrian Rogers on belief in God.

Every now and then a scientist will say some good words about God. That doesn't give me any more faith in God. A little more faith in the scientist, maybe, but not in God. What is science? Science is the study of phenomena now existing. God asked Job this question in Job 38:4, "Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth?" How do we understand everything we see in creation? By faith.

You may say, "Well, that takes a lot of belief." Well, it takes more to believe nothing times nobody equals everything. That's what many believe. No wonder the Bible says, "The fool has said in his heart, 'There is no God'" (Psalm 14:1). God is the supreme fact and the man who denies it is the supreme fool. Faith is not contrary to reason, it's simply beyond reason. To go in the laboratory to try to prove God would be like tearing a piano apart trying to find a tune.

Bob Hoekstra on the Holy Spirit giving power to be witnesses.

"After the cross and the resurrection, the Lord Jesus taught His disciples for forty days before He ascended to the Father. One of His strategic messages of preparation concerned the Holy Spirit enablement they would need to fulfill their ministry. "You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you..."

"Their success is documented in the Scriptures. The religious opposition admitted that Jerusalem was promptly reached. "Did we not strictly command you not to teach in this name? And look, you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine" (Acts 5:28). Soon thereafter, Judea was being touched. "At that time a great persecution arose...and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea...Therefore those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word" (Acts 8:1, 4). Next, the message of Jesus entered Samaria. "Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria and preached Christ to them. And the multitudes with one accord heeded the things spoken by Philip" (Acts 8:5-6). Finally, the gospel of grace poured out around the world: "The word of the truth of the gospel, which has come to you, as it has also in all the world" (Colossians 1:5-6)."

"In order for any disciple (then or now) to be an effective demonstration of the reality of the risen Christ, they must live by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Part 1—Calling Fishermen To Follow

Personal Encounter

Matthew 4:18–20

[Mat 4:18-20 KJV] 18 And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers. 19 And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men. 20 And they straightway left [their] nets, and followed him.

Say: The tasks put before us by those in authority over us can seem inviting or overwhelming depending on the approach taken by a leader. The language of Matthew 4:18–20 reveals Jesus’ personal approach to His disciples. Had He issued some elaborate demand from a distance, using an unknown representative, Peter and Andrew might not have responded in immediate obedience. Jesus’ direct presence and personal invitation made all the difference. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

As fishermen, Peter and Andrew were in the midst of their profession’s main task—catching fish. Standing on shore and casting their nets into the Sea of Galilee, they would have seen Jesus approaching them. Matthew doesn’t tell us anything about their thoughts on seeing Jesus, but he clearly records their reaction. **When Jesus invited them to fish for people, they put down their nets and followed Him immediately (Matthew 4:18–20).**

Peter and Andrew may have had questions about Jesus’ true identity. The Gospels reveal times when the disciples were amazed about some new insight into the Lord’s character and divine mission (e.g., Matthew 8:27; 21:20; 22:22). **Their understanding of Jesus as Messiah and Son of God grew as they spent more and more time with Him. But even at this first meeting, Peter and Andrew acted upon the calling that they heard, and they obeyed the Lord.**

An important detail to remember is that Jesus used what Peter and Andrew were already doing to help them transition into His greater plan of service. The years they had spent as fishermen had been preparing them for this moment.

What a powerful model for today’s believer to follow! God often calls Christians into His service by degrees, implementing into their lives step-by-step tasks that give valuable training for the larger mission He has in store. As believers are faithful within life’s tasks, they prepare for ever-growing levels of Kingdom service. The core quality for every follower of Christ to nurture is obedience.

Discuss

? Can you identify early jobs or life situations that helped prepare you for greater tasks in service to the Lord?

? How has the Lord led you to fish for people, perhaps within a career that does not involve Christian evangelism?

Wider Outreach

Matthew 4:21–22

[Mat 4:21-22 KJV] 21 And going on from thence, he saw other two brethren, James [the son] of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and he called them. 22 And they immediately left the ship and their father, and followed him.

Say: None of us is called to serve the Lord in complete isolation. The Holy Spirit's leading in our lives will always affect our family and loved ones, and even people we don't know. **As we commit ourselves to Christ as Lord, we can trust Him to work out the details connected with whatever He is asking us to do for Him. (Share your highlights from the following text.)**

Jesus' next encounter was with James and John, and specifically mentions their father, Zebedee. Matthew noted that the sons were with their father in a boat repairing their nets. Likely, this was a family business, and this task had been shared many times over the years—and was expected to continue for many more to come.

Again, Matthew told us nothing about any thoughts or questions the sons or their father might have had. As with Peter and Andrew, **the narrative focused on the immediate obedience of James and John.** But it is important to consider Zebedee. **There is no indication that he resented the loss of his sons' assistance.**

Although Jesus' exact words are not recorded, the implication is that He again connected His planned mission for these two additional disciples with what they were already doing. He invited them to follow the same path on which Peter and Andrew had just embarked. It is very possible that all four men had known each other for many years. We could infer from the text that Peter and Andrew were setting an example for James and John by their obedience. A core group of disciples was forming that would continue to grow and be used of God to take the gospel to the world.

All believers have a part in the proclamation of the gospel. Obedience to the Holy Spirit's leading will reveal opportunities to introduce the lost to the Savior, regardless of job description, personal ability, or any other human factor.

Resource Packet Item 1: Released Into Mission

Distribute the work sheet and ask five students to each read aloud one example of parents/guardians who supported God's calling of their children. Then discuss the in-

class question and encourage students to reflect privately on the follow-up questions. If someone chooses to share a concern, pray together for that person.

Discuss

? How have your loved ones reacted to the Lord's leading in your life?

? What can you do to encourage someone beginning on their Christian journey?

Part 2—Calling Sinners To Repent

Personal Testimony

Matthew 9:9

[Mat 9:9 KJV] 9 And as Jesus passed forth from thence, he saw a man, named Matthew, sitting at the receipt of custom: and he saith unto him, Follow me. And he arose, and followed him.

Say: Sometimes we can forget that the author of Matthew, as a disciple, is an important participant in the action of the Gospel. Writing his Gospel, John referred to himself in the third person as “the disciple whom Jesus loved,” keeping all the attention on Jesus. Matthew referred to himself by name, but kept that slight distance of third-person narrative when he described his calling into service for Jesus. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

In recording his call, Matthew focused on Jesus' invitation, and showed his own response to be one of immediate obedience. Also, Matthew noted his current career— that of a tax collector—just as he had identified the others as fishermen (chapter 4).

But that one distinction makes an enormous difference in the implications of Matthew's encounter with Jesus. Where the four fishermen were accepted members of their Jewish community, Matthew was likely resented as a tax collector, as most tax collectors were. Furthermore, Matthew may have been wealthier than most people, and in many cases a tax collector's wealth came by exploiting the people.

However, any attitudes the society of that day might have applied to fishermen and tax collectors did not affect Jesus' view of His disciples. Jesus does not place people on a scale of intrinsic value. His desire to transform lives and use them for His service is equal for every person. Matthew was no more and no less valuable to Jesus than the first four disciples.

Matthew's abandonment of all that he had been in order to pursue what Jesus wanted him to become speaks a powerful message. Regardless of social

position, personal resources, or long-term ambition, nothing can compare with the fulfillment, joy, and significance of heeding Christ's call into His service.

Discuss

? How can Jesus' followers model His equal (and immeasurable) valuation of all people?

? If you were to use Matthew's spiritual autobiography as a framework for your own testimony, what details would you include about your salvation experience and discovery of God's calling upon your life?

Forgiving Healer

Matthew 9:10–13

[Mat 9:10-13 KJV] 10 And it came to pass, as Jesus sat at meat in the house, behold, many publicans and sinners came and sat down with him and his disciples. 11 And when the Pharisees saw [it], they said unto his disciples, Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners? 12 But when Jesus heard [that], he said unto them, They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. 13 But go ye and learn what [that] meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

Say: Fulfilling the Great Commission is not just about launching a missions campaign overseas or holding a citywide gospel rally. It may be as personal and uncomplicated as inviting people to a meal and demonstrating that you care about who they are and what they are going through. Matthew's first act as Jesus' disciple was to give a feast and open his home to the Savior. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

Soon after Matthew left his tax collecting table to follow Jesus, he undertook an act of ministry he and the other disciples would share. Matthew is the key person mentioned, as the host, but all the disciples were clearly involved in the events of the evening, since they were collectively approached by the Pharisees (Matthew 9:10–11).

Several details in this story shed light on how Jesus desired His followers to live out the ministry of the Church, both then and today. **First, such ministry is not limited to religious leaders. In this instance, the leaders were actually in opposition to Jesus. Second, ministry to hurting people is not about ceremony but about relationship. Here, a meal was being shared in Matthew's home. This was an everyday event, not some regulated observance of the Law. Third, everything being done for the gathered crowd was done with an understanding of their**

spiritual need. The festivities never overshadowed the redemptive purpose at work (verses 12–13).

Jesus' response to the Pharisees helps to clarify all three points. First, He let the disciples be active to the point that the Pharisees approached them rather than Him directly. Second, He was invested in the events of the evening, so that the crowd was attracted to Him rather than put off in any way. Third, He used the illustration of a physician treating those who were ill to make it clear that His ultimate purpose was to bring spiritual healing rather than mere material provision.

Like His first disciples, all of Jesus' followers today are to be catalysts of loving service to those around them. As physical and emotional needs are addressed tangibly and meaningfully, the potential for meeting deep spiritual needs will multiply.

Resource Packet Item 2: Both/And vs. Either/Or

Distribute the work sheet and use the questions to generate class discussion, as time allows. Ask the class to give thought during the week to any issues you were not able to cover. Encourage them to consider participating in one or more of the action points.

Discuss

? What opportunities can you identify to offer practical expressions of Christ's love?

? How can believers today avoid categorizing people, as the Pharisees did, and reach out to all with the gospel?

Part 3—Granting Authority to Disciples Deliverance Modeled

Mark 3:7–12

[Mar 3:7-12 KJV] 7 But Jesus withdrew himself with his disciples to the sea: and a great multitude from Galilee followed him, and from Judaea, 8 And from Jerusalem, and from Idumaea, and [from] beyond Jordan; and they about Tyre and Sidon, a great multitude, when they had heard what great things he did, came unto him. 9 And he spake to his disciples, that a small ship should wait on him because of the multitude, lest they should throng him. 10 For he had healed many; insomuch that they pressed upon him for to touch him, as many as had plagues. 11 And unclean spirits, when they saw him, fell down before him, and cried, saying, Thou art the Son of God. 12 And he straitly charged them that they should not make him known.

[Mar 3:7-12 NLT] 7 Jesus went out to the lake with his disciples, and a large crowd followed him. They came from all over Galilee, Judea, 8 Jerusalem, Idumea, from east of the Jordan River, and even from as far north as Tyre and Sidon. The news about his miracles had spread far and wide, and vast numbers of people came to see him. 9 Jesus instructed his disciples to have a boat ready so the crowd would not crush him. 10 He had healed many people that day, so all the sick people eagerly pushed forward to touch him. 11 And whenever those possessed by evil spirits caught sight of him, the spirits would throw them to the ground in front of him shrieking, "You are the Son of God!" 12 But Jesus sternly commanded the spirits not to reveal who he was.

Say: Sometimes we approach the idea of “finding God’s will” as if it were a massive task or life mission that is dramatically hidden, usually overwhelming, and something to be found only through much effort. But our Heavenly Father assures us that finding His will is not burdensome, but is a life-long opportunity to grow—both in our relationship with Him and in our ability to serve Him effectively. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

Mark’s Gospel focuses initially on Jesus’ personal interactions with the first disciples He calls, with specific people He heals, and with the community of Capernaum where He teaches in the synagogue. But in Mark 3, the picture changes. Mark described Jesus’ growing reputation, and he reported that an enormous crowd came from regions near and far to hear Him at the Sea of Galilee (Mark 3:7–8).

Imagine the disciples’ feelings at seeing the multitude. Vast numbers of men, women, and children were clamoring to hear Jesus, to be near Him, and to receive answers to their desperate needs (Mark 3:8, NLT). This was a radically different ministry environment than Matthew’s dinner we discussed earlier. In the midst of this immense crowd, Jesus did not press His disciples into service. He gave them a very simple task perfectly in line with what they had been doing for years—launch a small fishing boat from shore so that He would have a platform from which to speak (verse 9).

Mark also records that Jesus had already been active among the throng, healing many and delivering many from demonic possession (verses 10–12). Yet, at this large-scale gathering of Jesus’ public ministry, He allowed the disciples to observe. They watched Him perform many miracles, perhaps wondering when He would ask them to do something. But His only request was for them to acquire a boat.

People pushed towards him just to touch him because they were without hope. American is close to reaching, “without hope” in our nation. Millions are lost and without hope and do not realize their condition.

The believer today can trust Jesus to provide the same nurturing as we see in His call to discipleship and service among His original disciples. The universal key to success and continued growth is continuing to obey the words and teachings of our Savior.

Discuss

? Can you remember an early “boat fetching” kind of directive God gave you that helped prepare you for later service?

? How does Mark’s narrative reinforce the truth that the Christian’s identity and mission are closely connected to who Jesus is and what He does?

Disciples Empowered

Mark 3:13–19

[Mar 3:13-19 KJV] 13 And he goeth up into a mountain, and calleth [unto him] whom he would: and they came unto him. 14 And he ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach, 15 And to have power to heal sicknesses, and to cast out devils: 16 And Simon he surnamed Peter; 17 And James the [son] of Zebedee, and John the brother of James; and he surnamed them Boanerges, which is, The sons of thunder: 18 And Andrew, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James the [son] of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus, and Simon the Canaanite, 19 And Judas Iscariot, which also betrayed him: and they went into an house.

Say: Many historic monuments only have room for a list of names. A simple plaque in a famous building might identify a few people who helped bring about its construction. Others are massive, such as the Vietnam Veterans Memorial wall in Washington, DC, which bears the names of more than 58,000 men and women who gave their lives for their country. A list of names, even in the Bible, points the reader to much larger events. **Jesus selected twelve disciples to become His apostles—the first key witnesses to the world of His identity as the Savior. Their names carry deep significance for every member of the body of Christ today.** (Share your highlights from the following text.)

Jesus’ selection of the Twelve from among the growing band of devoted followers may appear to be an act of discrimination, as if Jesus was saying, “I’ve decided to stick with you dozen over here, and the rest of you can go home.” But the ministry of discipleship

is about close relationships, and the subsequent multiplication of those relationships. **Jesus would invest himself in the Twelve mentioned in Mark 3:13–19, so that they in turn could invest in others. Also, unnamed disciples beyond the Twelve remained with Jesus, though in the background.**

The Book of Acts shows us how this dynamic worked. After the suicide of a guilt-ridden Judas, the Holy Spirit led the remaining apostles to fill Judas’s position of leadership and service in the Early Church. Acts 1:21–26 notes that this prayerful selection was from among men who had been with Jesus throughout His earthly ministry—from His baptism by John the Baptist to His ascension.

The Twelve would become living illustrations of how Jesus can use obedient servants to grow His Church and transform fallen humanity. This selection conferred much more than the title of “apostle.” The Twelve were not only called to proclaim the good news, but they were called to minister with spiritual authority. The context of these verses conveys the idea that the Twelve would have the same anointing to perform the spectrum of miracles Jesus demonstrated. They had come far from merely launching a boat from shore!

Resource Packet Item 3: Promises of Empowerment

Distribute the work sheet. Ask students to read the examples of the disciples’ forays into ministry. Note how Jesus’ promises to them also apply to us today.

Discuss

? Why is it important to view the Twelve as examples rather than exceptions?

? What practical steps can believers take today to grow in their ability to minister with Jesus’ authority?

What Is God Saying to Us?

Say: A life-changing invitation to four fishermen and a tax collector gave them the opportunity to take part in Christ’s world-changing ministry. The Gospels powerfully combine people’s everyday experiences with their eternally significant encounters with Jesus. Jesus still invites people to be radically transformed in relationship with Him and then be used in service to Him. The common denominator in Peter, Andrew, James, John, and Matthew’s meetings with Jesus was their immediate obedience. Jesus called them to a personal relationship with Him, and to trust Him to direct their lives. Our obedience can open doors to Kingdom service we could never envision on our own.

Living It Out

Ministry in Action

- Take stock of your tasks and responsibilities and look for ways they might shape you for Kingdom service.
- Take time to listen during your times of prayer and Bible study for the Holy Spirit to lead you into new opportunities.

■ Ask God to give you the kind of love for all people that Jesus demonstrated, and to help you demonstrate His love.

[Mar 1:14-20 KJV] 14 Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, 15 And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel. 16 Now as he walked by the sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew his brother casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers. 17 And Jesus said unto them, Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men. 18 And straightway they forsook their nets, and followed him. 19 And when he had gone a little further thence, he saw James the [son] of Zebedee, and John his brother, who also were in the ship mending their nets. 20 And straightway he called them: and they left their father Zebedee in the ship with the hired servants, and went after him.

Daily Bible Readings

Monday:

Adam's Calling and Responsibilities.
Genesis 2:8–17

[Gen 2:8-17 KJV] 8 And the LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed. 9 And out of the ground made the LORD God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil. 10 And a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads. 11 The name of the first [is] Pison: that [is] it which compasseth the whole land of Havilah, where [there is] gold; 12 And the gold of that land [is] good: there [is] bdellium and the onyx stone. 13 And the name of the second river [is] Gihon: the same [is] it that compasseth the whole land of Ethiopia. 14 And the name of the third river [is] Hiddekel: that [is] it which goeth toward the east of Assyria. And the fourth river [is] Euphrates. 15 And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. 16 And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: 17 But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

Tuesday:

The Call of Abram (Abraham).
Genesis 12:1–5

[Gen 12:1-5 KJV] 1 Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: 2 And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: 3 And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed. 4 So Abram departed, as the LORD had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and Abram [was] seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran. 5 And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in Haran; and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came.

Wednesday:

The Call of Moses.
Exodus 3:1–10

[Exo 3:1-10 KJV] 1 Now Moses kept the flock of Jethro his father in law, the priest of Midian: and he led the flock to the backside of the desert, and came to the mountain of God, [even] to Horeb. 2 And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush [was] not consumed. 3 And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt. 4 And when the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here [am] I. 5 And he said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest [is] holy ground. 6 Moreover he said, I [am] the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God. 7 And the LORD said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people which [are] in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows; 8 And I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey; unto the place of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites. 9 Now therefore, behold, the cry of the children of Israel is come unto me: and I have also seen the oppression wherewith the Egyptians oppress them. 10 Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people the children of Israel out of Egypt.

Thursday:

The Call of Joshua.
Deuteronomy 31:14–15,23; 34:9

[Deu 31:14-15, 23 KJV] 14 And the LORD said unto Moses, Behold, thy days approach that thou must die: call Joshua, and present yourselves in the tabernacle of the congregation, that I may give him a charge. And Moses and

Joshua went, and presented themselves in the tabernacle of the congregation. 15 And the LORD appeared in the tabernacle in a pillar of a cloud: and the pillar of the cloud stood over the door of the tabernacle. ... 23 And he gave Joshua the son of Nun a charge, and said, Be strong and of a good courage: for thou shalt bring the children of Israel into the land which I sware unto them: and I will be with thee.

[Deu 34:9 KJV] 9 And Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom; for Moses had laid his hands upon him: and the children of Israel hearkened unto him, and did as the LORD commanded Moses.

Friday:

The Call of Saul (Paul).
Acts 9:1–6,10–18

[Act 9:1-6, 10-18 KJV] 1 And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, 2 And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem. 3 And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: 4 And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? 5 And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: [it is] hard for thee to kick against the pricks. 6 And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord [said] unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do. ... 10 And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I [am here], Lord. 11 And the Lord [said] unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for [one] called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth, 12 And hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting [his] hand on him, that he might receive his sight. 13 Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem: 14 And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name. 15 But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: 16 For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake. 17 And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, [even] Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost. 18 And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized.

Saturday:

Timothy's Confidence in His Calling.
2 Timothy 1:3–8

[2Ti 1:3-8 KJV] 3 I thank God, whom I serve from [my] forefathers with pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day; 4 Greatly desiring to see thee, being mindful of thy tears, that I may be filled with joy; 5 When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also. 6 Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands. 7 For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. 8 Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God;

Bob Hoekstra talks of the empowering of the Holy Spirit.

[Act 1:5, 8 KJV] 5 For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. ... 8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

[Act 2:4 KJV] 4 And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

When the book of Acts addresses Holy Spirit empowering for ministry, three different terms are used to describe the same reality. When Jesus promised this power, He used the term "**baptized with.**" "You shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." When He indicated that this power would result in a worldwide witness, the term "**come upon you**" was used. "You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you." Then, when these promises of the Spirit were fulfilled, the term employed was "**filled with.**" "And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit."

It is clear that these three sets of terms in Acts 1 and 2 are all referring to the same spiritual phenomenon: the Holy Spirit

empowering Jesus' followers for witness. Each terminology may carry its own descriptive implications. To be "baptized with" the Spirit is like being inundated by Him. To have the Spirit "come upon you" is like being impacted from above by Him. To be "filled with" the Spirit is like overflowing with Him. Nevertheless, although each expression brings its own picture, they all are describing the same reality. All three terms are biblically accurate (although "filled with the Holy Spirit" is used most frequently throughout Acts).

These promises of Holy Spirit empowering cannot be monopolized by any denominational group or theological heritage. Nor can they be ignored by any individual or segment within the body of Christ. These truths are for all of God's children. Every disciple of the Lord Jesus must continue to learn and to grow in this essential spiritual empowering.

Perhaps a word of clarification is in order. These promises are not about the Spirit indwelling the people of God. The Holy Spirit definitely lives within every born again believer in Jesus Christ. "Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?" (1 Corinthians 3:16). The Spirit already lived within the apostles when they were given these promises. "And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit'" (John 20:22). These promises are about the indwelling Spirit flooding and overflowing our lives with the empowering reality of His presence.