

RUN THE RACE | HOPE CHAPEL

THE CALL TO FOLLOW

'Come, follow me' - Matthew 4:19
Pastor Andrew Cole | Sunday 26 April 2026 | 9AM Gawler

Big Idea: *There is a moment in every believer's life when the call of Jesus stops being background noise and becomes the loudest voice in the room. The question is not whether Jesus is calling - it is whether we will answer, not just once, but every day.*

Introduction - The Loudest Voice in the Room

Matthew 4:19 *Come, follow me, Jesus said, and I will send you out to fish for people.*

The call of Jesus comes differently to each of us. For Peter and Andrew, it was a morning by the Sea of Galilee, nets heavy from a night's work. For Matthew, it was the clink of coins at a tax collector's booth. For Saul, it was a blinding light on the road to Damascus that knocked him to the ground.

Sometimes the call comes as a whisper in the quiet of a morning. Sometimes as a thunderclap in the middle of a storm. But it comes to all of us.

The question this morning is not whether Jesus is calling. The question is whether we will answer - not just once with a raised hand at an altar call years ago, but answer today, tomorrow, and every day until he calls us home.

These are three revelations - not three suggestions. Three invitations from Jesus to step out of the shallow end of Christianity and into the deep waters of real discipleship.

REVELATION 1
LEAVE

Following Jesus requires leaving something behind

REVELATION 2
WALK

Following Jesus means walking where you cannot see

REVELATION 3
FISH

Following Jesus turns you outward toward others

REVELATION 1 | Following Jesus Requires Leaving Something Behind

Mark 1:18 *At once they left their nets and followed him.*

Two words in that verse ought to take your breath away: at once. No three-month notice period. No careful succession plan. No weighing of the pros and cons. When Jesus called, the disciples dropped what defined them and walked into what would redefine them.

The nets that had been their symbol of identity became the symbol of their surrender.

You cannot follow Jesus and keep carrying everything that you've been holding. Some things must be laid down for your hands to be free enough to take hold of him.

The Christian life is not an addition - like adding a veranda or a sunroom to a house. Jesus doesn't want to become one more thing on an already overcrowded shelf. He wants to clear the shelf. The Christian life is a replacement. It's foundational, not supplemental.

The Rich Young Man - Mark 10

A young man who had everything the world tells us to chase - rich, moral, religious, honest - runs to Jesus and falls to his knees. He asks the most important question a person could ever ask: 'Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?'

Jesus looked at him and loved him. Because he loved him, he told him the truth: one thing you lack. Go, sell everything, give to the poor, and come follow me.

And the next verse is one of the saddest in all of scripture. He went away sad, because he had great wealth. He met the Messiah face to face. He received a personal invitation from the Son of God. And he still walked away - because his grip on what he had was tighter than his grip on who was calling.

He wanted what he was carrying more than the offer of eternal life. Don't let that happen in our lives.

Reflect: *Ask yourself honestly, in the quiet places of your heart: What are you holding that is holding you? Is it a grudge? A relationship God has clearly told you to release? A career that has quietly become an idol? A reputation you're too afraid to lose? Money? Comfort? Status? Pride? Past hurts? Self-reliance? Jesus is not asking for what you cannot give. He is asking for what was never truly yours to begin with - your life, your breath, your days. In exchange, he gives you his.*

Galatians 2:20 *I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me.*

REVELATION 2 | Following Jesus Means Walking Where You Cannot See

Hebrews 11:8 *By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going.*

Following Jesus is not a GPS experience. A GPS lets you zoom out and see everything ahead - every turn, every destination. But Jesus doesn't offer that. He offers a lantern.

Psalms 119:105 *Your word is a lamp for my feet and a light on my path.*

An oil lamp held at night doesn't light up the whole hill in front of you. It lights just enough to take the next step without falling. God has designed it that way on purpose. If he showed us the whole journey, most of us would negotiate, renegotiate, or simply refuse.

Abraham was 75 years old when God called him to leave. God didn't say, go 400 kilometres southwest to Canaan. He said: go to the land I will show you. And Abraham went.

Jesus does not call the qualified. He qualifies the called. And he does it as you walk, not before you start.

The Heroes of Faith Moved Before They Could See

- Peter did not learn to walk on water in the boat. He learned when his feet hit the waves. There were no lessons, no prep courses, no guarantee of success - only the word of Jesus and the waves beneath his feet.
- Moses did not become a deliverer in the palace or in the wilderness. He became one when he stretched out his staff over a sea he had no natural reason to believe would part.
- Joshua didn't become a conqueror before Jericho. He became one as the priests' feet touched the flooded Jordan and the waters rolled back.
- David didn't become a giant slayer in the pasture. He became one when he ran - ran toward a nine-foot Philistine with five small stones.

None of them felt ready. If you wait to feel ready, you will never move. The question is not whether you feel ready. The question is whether you will trust the one who is calling enough to take the step anyway.

Reflect: *The safest place in the world is not where you can see everything. It is where Jesus is leading — even when you can see nothing. What is the next step in front of you right now that you've been waiting to feel ready for?*

REVELATION 3 | Following Jesus Leads You to Become a Fisher of Others

Matthew 4:19 *Come, follow me, and I will send you out to fish for people.*

Notice the sequence: Jesus says 'come' before he says 'I will send.' Intimacy precedes mission. Not longevity - intimacy. You can be a Christian your whole life, but it is your intimacy with God, your relationship with him, being with him, that must come before being sent by him.

The disciples spent three years walking with Jesus before they were ever commissioned to go to the nations. You cannot give what you have not received. You cannot pour from an empty cup.

But here is what we cannot miss: following Jesus will always eventually turn you outward. The gospel was never meant to terminate on you. You are not the destination of grace. You are a conduit of it.

You are not saved to sit. You are saved to - and to be sent.

The Great Commission in Matthew 28 is not an optional add-on for the spiritually elite or the vocationally called. It is the marching order for every believer. A fire that does not spread dies. A river that does not flow stagnates. A follower of Jesus who never points anyone to Jesus has, in a very real sense, missed the entire point of the following.

Matthew 28:19–20 *Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.*

Who Is in Your Net?

God has sovereignly placed people in your life - not by accident but by divine appointment. Who will never hear the good news unless you open your mouth, your home, or your heart?

- Your co-worker who spends more time with you than your family does
- Your neighbour you wave to but have never actually spoken with
- The café owner who knows your coffee order but doesn't know the Saviour you serve
- The family member you've been quietly praying for over 20 years
- Your doctor, hairdresser, your child's teacher, the cashier at Coles you see every week

Don't wait until you feel qualified. Peter was still rough around the edges when Jesus commissioned him. Matthew still had questionable friends. Mary Magdalene had a past people whispered about. Paul had blood on his hands. Jesus trusted every one of them with the greatest message in history.

Reflect: *What faces have come to mind right now? Who has God placed in your world by divine appointment? Is there someone you've been meaning to invite, to speak to, to open your home to? Don't wait. You are qualified enough.*

Conclusion - The Same Call, 2,000 Years Later

Leave. Walk. Fish.

Leave what is holding you. Walk into what you cannot see. Fish for those who are still lost.

The same call echoes across 2,000 years - from the shores of Galilee into this very room, into this very seat, into this very heart. This is not a call to a religion. It is a call to a revolution. The quiet, daily, decades-long revolution of a life wholly surrendered to Jesus Christ.

Philippians 3:13–14 *Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.*

The nets are still there. But so is the Master. He is still standing on the shore of your life today, extending the same nail-scarred hands he extended to fishermen 2,000 years ago. And he is still saying the one word that changes everything.

“Come.”

Reflection & Discussion Questions

Use these on your own during the week, or with your LifeGroup.

1. Andrew said the disciples ‘dropped what defined them and walked into what redefined them.’ What has defined you up to this point? Is there something God is asking you to lay down so your hands are free to take hold of him?
2. The rich young man met Jesus face to face and still walked away - because his grip on what he had was tighter than his grip on who was calling. Is there anything you’re holding on to more tightly than Jesus right now?
3. Following Jesus is a lantern experience, not a GPS experience — just enough light for the next step. What is the next step in your life or faith that you’ve been hesitating on because you can’t see the full picture?
4. Peter, Moses, Joshua, David - all became who they were in the act of stepping out, not before it. Where have you been waiting to feel qualified or ready before you move? What would it look like to start and get healed (or equipped) on the way?
5. Intimacy precedes mission. How is your intimacy with Jesus right now - honestly? Are you pouring out from a full cup, or an empty one?

6. Who is God's divine appointment in your world right now - the person he has sovereignly placed in your life who needs to hear the good news? What is one practical step you could take toward them this week?

Key Scriptures This Week

- Matthew 4:19 — Come, follow me; I will send you out to fish for people
- Mark 1:18 — At once they left their nets and followed him
- Mark 10:21–22 — The rich young man; one thing you lack
- Galatians 2:20 — I no longer live, but Christ lives in me
- Hebrews 11:8 — Abraham obeyed and went, not knowing where he was going
- Psalm 119:105 — Your word is a lamp for my feet
- Matthew 28:19–20 — The Great Commission: go and make disciples
- Philippians 3:13–14 — Forgetting what is behind, pressing toward what is ahead