

Come Follow Me
Elo Viz Production
Week 6
Matt 4, Luke 4-5

We usually will take this short time we have and cover 1 important doctrine, today there are two that I would like to touch on as quickly as I can. In Luke 5 it starts out with Jesus instructing Simon to let down his net to which Simon responds:

“Master, we have **toiled** all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net.

6 And when they had this done, they inclosed a great multitude of fishes: and their net **brake**.

11 And when they had brought their ships to land, they **forsook** all, and **followed** him.”
(Luke 5:5-6,11)

This same situation happened with most of the disciples that were called. Jesus says to them “Come, follow me” and they leave whatever it is they were doing and follow Him. What is important to notice is what were these men doing when Jesus calls them? They were working. Jesus calls His disciples when they are hard and work. The devil calls his disciples when they are idle.

I have seen this in my life. My grandpa used to say “an Idle mind is the devil's workshop”. When we have nothing to do we are a lot more susceptible to the temptations of the adversary. However, on the flip side. When we are busy at work, when we are moving God can steer our ship in the direction He would want our lives to go. The big question then is: Will we recognize His voice when He calls to us?

In Margret Weber's book Hear Him, Emily Belle Freeman tell this story:
“I come from a long line of shepherds. My father wanted us to understand this part of our heritage, so as we were growing up our family kept a small flock of sheep. One of the sheep I will never forget had the name of “Big Mama”. She earned this title because she was the leader of the flock.

Each spring brought changes to the flock as new lambs were born and older lambs were sold, but Big Moma remained a constant. She loved my Dad. It didn't matter where she was on the one-acre patch of ground where we kept the sheep, when she heard him call she would come running. She had a very uncommon bleat, and my dad could mimic it exactly. And so he would call, and she would answer, and when she came, the rest of the flock would follow.

One morning my dad woke me up early and said that the sheep had gone missing. They had found a hold in the fence and had wandered off. My dad had already driven through the surrounding streets but had not seen them anywhere. He had concluded that they must have wandered through the fields and joined a flock of more than one hundred other sheep about a mile away from our home.

He wanted me to come with him to talk to the farmer and to see if we could retrieve our sheep.

The farmer was not pleased to see my father. Our sheep were not marked, and unfortunately, neither were his. My dad tried to explain that the sheep would come when he called, and the farmers just shook his head.

My dad climbed up on the tailgate of our old white truck and started to bleat. I wish you could have seen the look on that farmer's face. The first and second calls were followed by silence. I have to admit I was a little worried. I wondered how important my dad would be to Big Mama now. But my dad wasn't worried- he kept calling. And finally, from the back corner of the field there was the familiar reply. My dad repeated the call loudly and consistently as Big Mama made her way through the huge flock, followed by our other lambs. The farmer watched in amazement and then helped us load our sheep into the back of the truck so that we could take them home." (Hear Him, By Margret Weber, page 23)

Jesus said: "I am the good **shepherd**: the good **shepherd** giveth his life for the sheep. I **know** my **sheep**, and I lay down my **life** for the sheep. (John 10: 11-15)

I think the important part of this story is that in order to know the Shepherd, the shepherd and the sheep had to spend a lot of time together. If the shepherd was like the farmer and simply just fed and protected the sheep the relationship would not be the same. Time, attention and love are the most important ingredients for the sheep to really know the shepherd and the shepherd to really know the sheep.

You might be asking: Well, how do I start? How do I hear His voice when I don't know what it sounds like? In my experience the best way to come to recognize the voice of the good shepherd is to read His words in the Holy scriptures. Find any place you can when He spoke to His prophets and you will begin to recognize His voice when He speaks to you. It takes time, dedication and a burning desire to know Him in order to really build that relationship which you seek. And I'm not speaking of dedication as 10 minutes of reading right before you go to sleep. I'm talking about making Him a priority in your life. Even when you're at work you're constantly pondering His words, His life, His mission. There is a phenomenal talk given by Elder Bednar in the MTC several years ago called "Quit worrying about it. Is it the Holy Ghost or me?" I will leave a link to the video in the transcript on our website CFMpodcast.org and if you would like a MP3 copy of it send us a message through the contact page and I'd be happy to email it to you. It is a wonderful talk about how to recognize what the voice of the Lord sounds like and how we can come to know it in our lives.

Link to Bednar's Talk:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AGS45Fd9nmE>

Now quickly the second point I hope to make in these chapters: We are all familiar with the story in Luke 5 when the friends of the man with palsy carry him in his bed to Jesus and there was such a crowd that the house was full and there were people in the street trying to hear Him. They tried to get through so that Jesus could heal their friend but the crowd was too large. So, they climb on the roof and rip a hole in the ceiling to lower him down into the house where Jesus was teaching.

"20 And when he saw their faith, he said unto him, Man, thy sins are **forgiven** thee.

21 And the scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, Who is this which speaketh **blasphemies**? Who can **forgive** sins, but God alone?

22 But when Jesus **perceived** their thoughts, he answering said unto them, What reason ye in your hearts?

23 **Whether** is easier, to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Rise up and walk?

24 But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power upon earth to **forgive** sins, (he said unto the sick of the palsy,) I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy couch, and go into thine house.

25 And **immediately** he rose up before them, and took up that whereon he lay, and departed to his own house, **glorifying** God.” (Luke 5:20-25)

What is interesting this time is that Jesus forgave the man's sins before He healed him. Most scholars believe that this was because his palsy he was suffering from is a result of sin in his past. This was a very common belief in that day. When the disciples came across a blind man they asked Jesus:

“2 Master, who did sin, this **man**, or his parents, that he was born blind?

3 Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the **works** of God should be made **manifest** in him. (John 9:2-3)

What is interesting is that we still carry this same belief today. How many of us think that if something bad happens to us it is because God is punishing us for something that we have done? Some even get to the point of such a deep belief that they convince themselves that God doesn't love them or even that He doesn't exist. If I don't acknowledge Him or keep my distance from Him, then He will turn His rage somewhere else and my life will be easier without a punishing parent and I can then do anything I want and not feel bad about it. Or if there was really a God in Heaven that cared for us, why would He allow bad things to happen?

Some of you are probably nodding your heads because you have had these thoughts before. I know I used to. When I was young I believed that If I did everything perfectly and I was righteous that nothing bad would happen, and if it did it was because I screwed up and made a mistake.

Please, if you could, turn up your volume so you can hear me when I say this: These beliefs are lies from the adversary!!!”

God has not, does not and will not do evil. If He did He would cease to be God. He can not lie, or deceive, He can not fail nor forsake. He has one goal and one mission: that is to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of His children. God does not have just one plan of happiness, He has a perfectly unique plan for every single one of His children that has ever or will ever live on this earth. And because He is all knowing; He can use the temptations, trials and the sins of men to bring to pass His work in you, for your salvation. God will never take away the agency of His children no matter how painful it will be for ourselves or for others. But He does stand ready to heal you and to take all that pain away if we will just turn to Him and ask in faith.

I tell my kids all the time that sometimes bad things just happen, but sometimes God allows things to happen in order to get our attention. But what if He didn't have to. What if our focus

was solely on Him and His work. Do you suppose that those things that God would have used to get our attention before would be altered? I believe so.

This life was designed to teach us and shape us into the eternal beings God intended us to be. Do you believe that plan would work if we never had a trial or a difficult moment in our life? It is the hard things that make us grow and change. The quicker we can learn each lesson God has designed to teach us, the quicker we can progress towards Him.

Think about these trials and what they have taught you, how they have shaped you:

- Losing a loved one
- Being a victim of violence or abuse
- The loss of employment
- Betrayal of family or a friend
- Poverty

This one reminds me of Tevye in the movie “Fiddler on the roof” when his son in law tells him that Money is the world's curse and Tevye replies “ May the Lord smite me with it. And may I never recover!”

Each of these events and a million others are allowed to take place in order to teach you something. But with that thought consider what Alma taught:

“**14** I said unto you, that because ye were compelled to be **humble** ye were blessed, do ye not suppose that they are more blessed who truly humble themselves because of the word?

16 Therefore, blessed are they who **humble** themselves without being **compelled** to be humble.” (Alma 32:14-16)

In this light I hope that you will consider these things. That our journeys or path to exaltation is not one that is set in stone, but is altered by our willingness to submit to God's teachings and direction. That when we choose to walk in the light without being compelled to leave the darkness, any trial or trouble we face will show a much clearer picture of who God intends us to be and what He intends for us to learn. Thus the magnitude of that event will propel us further down the path than we could have ever believed. Of this I testify.

In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.