

JESUS: THE SERVANT AT WORK

VOLUME ONE

STUDY THREE

Saying *Yes!* to Christ's Call

Mark 1:14–20

Answering the call is the way to find and fulfill the central purpose of your life.

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

W*HAT is my life purpose?*

This question sometimes occupies our thoughts. Beyond our occupation and our personal achievements, we wonder if we are fulfilling the reason God created us. With every tick of the clock, we long to contribute to something larger than ourselves and discover true and everlasting significance.

Perhaps the same question nagged Peter, Andrew, James, and John as they fished on the Sea of Galilee. Before sunrise, they launched their boats, strained at the oars, tossed their nets into the watery depths, and hauled in wriggling fish to sell at the market . . . and the next morning, they did it again. Day after day. Same sea. Same boat. Same nets. Same job.

And then, one day, everything changed. They heard Christ's invitation, "Follow Me!"

Think about the enormous risk saying yes to His call represented—leaving the familiar mending and casting nets to do what, exactly? Jesus invited them to follow Him and find out! It was a profound moment, a pivotal decision point in which their answer would change their lives . . . and, ultimately, alter the course of history.

In this *Searching the Scriptures* Bible study, we'll visit the seashore of Galilee and learn from these four fishermen what it means to say yes to Christ's call and to experience the thrill of discovering our purpose in God's great plan for His world.



INSIGHT FOR LIVING



Scan to listen to
Chuck's message.

The Bible-Teaching Ministry of Chuck Swindoll
Study 3 • Page 1

SEARCHING
THE
SCRIPTURES
BIBLE STUDIES

Saying *Yes!* to Christ's Call

Mark 1:14–20



PREPARE YOUR HEART

Evangelist Billy Graham shares the essence of prayer:

At its deepest level, prayer is fellowship with God: enjoying His company, waiting upon His will, thanking Him for His mercies . . . listening in the silence for what He has to say to us.¹

Express your joy to the Lord for His companionship as you turn to the Scriptures. Then, ask Him to help your heart listen to what He has to say to you so that you can answer yes to His call.



TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

After briefly describing Jesus' temptation in the wilderness (Mark 1:12–13), Mark skipped ahead about a year to Jesus' ministry in Galilee. He omitted Jesus' early ministry in Judea that John recorded in John 1:19–4:54, and he went directly to explain Jesus' rising popularity in northern Israel.

Herod Antipas inherited the regions of Galilee and Perea when his father, Herod the Great, died in 4 BC. During Antipas' reign, many Jews eagerly anticipated “the consolation of Israel” (Luke 2:25 NASB)—the arrival of the Messiah who would rescue Israel from Roman occupation.² In this climate of subjugation and despair, Jesus came preaching “God's Good News” (Mark 1:14).

Locate the area of Galilee in the maps in your Bible or Bible atlas or the online map titled “*Ministry of Jesus*” at insight.org. Pinpoint the Jordan River—the serpentine body of water that flows from the Sea of Galilee to the Dead Sea. Locate the Sea of Galilee—the freshwater lake around which much of Jesus' ministry took place. This was where Simon Peter, Andrew, James, and John ran their commercial fishing enterprise when they heard Christ's call.

Saying Yes! to Christ's Call

Mark 1:14–20



Observation: Jesus' Ministry in Galilee

Begin with observation. Carefully read [Mark 1:14–20](#). Look for the commands, the action words, the geographical locations, and the descriptions. There's always more to see in Scripture when you read a passage closely.³

Jesus' Method and Message—Mark 1:14–15

Israel had been waiting for centuries, and now the Messiah had come! Note how Mark described His ministry in Galilee after John was taken into custody. What were Jesus' method and message in Mark 1:14–15? What are some of the characteristics of His message?

Notice that His message has three characteristics. One: It is urgent and relevant. Two: It is transforming and personal. Three: It is free, based on grace.
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll

Jesus' Calling of Four Disciples—Mark 1:16–20

The four fishermen had seen Jesus and heard of His ministry before this encounter on the Sea of Galilee. In Mark 1:16–18, what did He command Simon and Andrew? What promise did He make after the command? How did they respond?

He simply says, "Follow Me." Understand, He's not starting a school to train preachers. He is not announcing the beginning of a seminary. He's not opening a rabbinical course of instruction. All He says is, "Follow Me."
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll

Saying Yes! to Christ's Call

Mark 1:14–20

Going on a little farther, Jesus saw James and John, the sons of Zebedee. What were they doing when He called them? What was their response, according to Mark 1:19–20? Why do you think they responded so eagerly?

No reluctance. If there were questions, we don't read of them. If there was hesitation, Mark doesn't tell us about it. They simply followed Him.
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Interpretation: His Method! His Message! His Call!

Turn to your Bible-study resources to help you understand Jesus' ministry in Galilee. If you have a Bible [dictionary](#) or [commentary](#), feel free to consult it.

Jesus' method was *preaching* the gospel of God. The Greek word for “preach” is *kerysso*, which also means “to herald,” as a messenger might herald a proclamation from the king. How was Jesus' method different from that of the typical rabbi? What response was it meant to produce?

In those days, kings would send out their edicts verbally, and they would hire or they would have on what we would call their staff, their own courier. And he would go into the marketplace or the public square and kerysso the message. It was always bold, and it always captured the attention of the public.
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll

Jesus' message was a proclamation:

“The time promised by God has come at last!” he announced. “The Kingdom of God is near! Repent of your sins and believe the Good News!” (Mark 1:15)

As Pastor Chuck explains in his commentary, *Insights on Mark*, “the kingdom had come near in the sense that He—the King—was standing right in front of His people!”⁴

Saying Yes! to Christ's Call

Mark 1:14–20

Jesus declared Himself as the Messiah, the promised One who would save His people and establish God's rule on earth. How do you think the Jews hearing His message would have understood it?

It is good news of truth. It is good news of peace, as opposed to that which is chaotic and filled with unrest. It is good news of hope in the midst of hopelessness and emptiness. It is good news of life after this one in a world that's given to temporal happiness and momentary reliefs. Jesus' word regarding the gospel of God is a bold declaration making people aware of their need for the living God. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

In Mark 1:16–20, Jesus called the four fishermen to follow Him and promised to make them “fishers of people.” Explore the term “[discipleship](#)” in *Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology* at biblestudytools.com, particularly the section titled “Personal Commitment to Jesus.” How would you explain the meaning of this call to “follow Him” or “discipleship” in the lives of these disciples? How important is this term to believers today?

*They would become “fishers of men” over a process, and they would need to leave the familiar places of their lives and go to what was unfamiliar. Ultimately, they would stop catching fish and they would start catching people.
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll*



Correlation: Christ's Call

Compare [Mark 1:16–20](#) with [Matthew 28:19–20](#); [John 15:1–8](#); [Acts 1:8](#); [8:1–4](#). What do the lives of the disciples and these passages teach us about our life purpose, our calling?

Saying Yes! to Christ's Call

Mark 1:14–20

Jesus knew what lay ahead for these four fishermen when He called them. Many days of privation, pain, physical exhaustion, and disillusionment would follow their saying yes. How do passages such as [Luke 9:23–25](#); [14:25–28](#) prepare us as we say yes to Christ's call?

When your direction in life is turned from the mundane nets and boats and water of your life and it's turned toward people, you are in for one surprise after another. Your world will be turned upside down as you become fishers of people.
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll

Jesus saw great potential in these ordinary fishermen. What lessons can we glean from Simon Peter's future ministry in [Acts 2:38–42](#); [5:15–29](#) and the importance of saying yes to Christ's call now?

Never doubt it, when He calls you, He sees you not as what you are, but as what you are to become. When God first calls us into His calling and work, the people who see us today would never have believed it back then, because of the work the Lord is doing as He teaches us to become fishers of men and women.
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Application: Say Yes to Christ's Call

A couple of searching questions can help you apply this passage. First, Jesus found His first disciples at work fishing. *Where does the Lord find you today?*

Saying Yes! to Christ's Call

Mark 1:14–20

Are you truly fulfilled in what you do for a living? Where does Jesus find you in your work? Are you changing, or are you stuck? Are you open, or are you closed? Jesus started where these men were; He saw them just where they were and He took them to where He had in mind for them. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

Second, what is the Lord's calling in your life? What purpose has He given you that transcends your occupation, your age, and your familiar world? Take some time to write it down in the box below.

If you're wanting all the risks removed before you tolerate the thought of yes, you're doomed to a perpetual no. If you're willing to take Him at His Word and trust Him to lead you just as He trusts you to follow Him, then your answer is not only yes but, today, an immediate yes. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

The first disciples never regretted their decision to say yes to Christ's call. It was the opportunity of a lifetime that led to an unforgettable adventure of walking with Jesus. He's calling you to do the same. What adventure might He have in store for you? Say yes and find out!



A FINAL PRAYER

Heavenly Father, when You call me, You see me not as what I am but as what I am to become. I trust You to train me, strengthen me, and lead me. I say an immediate yes. In Jesus' name. Amen.

ENDNOTES

1. Billy Graham, "10 Quotes from Billy Graham on Prayer," May 7, 2020, billygrahamlibrary.org/blog-10-quotes-from-billy-graham-on-prayer-2020.
2. Thomas L. Constable, "Notes on Mark," 2026 ed., Constable's Notes, soniclight.com/tcon/notes/html/mark/mark.htm, note 1:14–3:6.
3. To learn more about Pastor Chuck Swindoll's *Searching the Scriptures* Bible-study method, go to the web page "[How Does Pastor Chuck Swindoll Study the Bible?](https://insight.org/how-does-pastor-chuck-swindoll-study-the-bible)" at insight.org.
4. Charles R. Swindoll, *Insights on Mark*, Swindoll's Living Insights New Testament Commentary, vol. 2 (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2016), 28.

For the 2026 broadcasts, this *Searching the Scriptures* Bible study was developed by Mirlenda Noëlliste in collaboration with Bryce Klabunde, vice president of *Searching the Scriptures* Ministries, based upon the original outlines, charts, and transcripts of Charles R. Swindoll's messages. Copyright © 2010, 2026 by Charles R. Swindoll, Inc. All rights are reserved worldwide. Duplication of copyrighted material for commercial use is strictly prohibited.

insight.org

Insight for Living
Study 3 • Page 7

[illegible]