

Title:           **PETER'S FOUR CALLS**

Text:            John 1:35-42

Subject:        *The Savior's First Disciples*

Date:            Sunday Morning — June 8, 2008

Tape #            John #12

Reading:        *Luke 22:31-62*

Introduction:

(John 1:35-42) “Again the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples; (36) And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God! (37) And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. (38) Then Jesus turned, and saw them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye? They said unto him, Rabbi, (which is to say, being interpreted, Master,) where dwellest thou? (39) He saith unto them, Come and see. They came and saw where he dwelt, and abode with him that day: for it was about the tenth hour. (40) One of the two which heard John *speak*, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. (41) He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ. (42) And he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone.”

In these few short verses we have the beginning of the New Testament church, the calling of the Savior's first disciples. These first three disciples are Andrew and his brother Simon. The third disciple, that unnamed man who, with Andrew, left John the Baptist and “*followed Jesus*,” was probably the Apostle John, who always preferred to conceal his identity, never referring to himself by name. The title of my message is **PETER'S FOUR CALLS**. The Scriptures show us four specific times that Peter was called. We will look at those four calls in the order they are given in the Gospel narratives. As we look at this passage of Scripture together, I will call your attention to five things set before us by the Spirit of God.

### **FAITHFUL PREACHING**

*First*, the Spirit of God here shows us an example of faithful preaching (vv. 35-37). The first time that John the Baptist cried, “*Behold the Lamb of*

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God,” it appears that no one heard his message. No one began following Christ. No one obeyed the preacher. None believed on the Son of God.

What did John do? Did he quit preaching? No. Did he decide that preaching was now out of date, that educated people required something more than preaching? No. John just kept on doing what he had been doing, what he was sent to do. The next day, he saw the Savior passing by. Again, he pointed to him and cried, “*Behold the lamb of God!*”

The Lord Jesus Christ is the Lamb of God, that Lamb portrayed in all the Scriptures, who has, by the sacrifice of himself, put away sin. He is the Lamb set forth in the paschal lamb and typified by that lamb of the morning and evening sacrifice offered every day in the temple at Jerusalem. He is that Lamb without blemish and without spot, who was foreordained as our sin-atonement Sacrifice and Substitute (1 Peter 1:19).

- In his humiliation, he is the Lamb of sacrifice.
- In his resurrection, he is the prevailing Lion of the tribe of Judah (Revelation 5:5).
- As the King of Zion, he is the Ruler of the earth to whom every man must send a lamb (Isaiah 16:1).

God’s servants never adjust or alter their message for any reason. Whether men hear or refuse to hear, we will not change our message to suit them. John cried, “*Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world.*” It appears that no one responded in any way to his message. So the next day, he went out and preached the very same message. That day, two men heard him and believed. Those two men left John and “*followed Jesus.*”

These things are recorded in Holy Scripture, I have no doubt, to show us by example how we serve the souls of men. **It is by the preaching of Christ that sinners are converted.** It is by Gospel preaching that God calls out his elect. It is by the preaching of the cross that eternity bound men and women are snatched from the clutches of Satan as brands from the burning (1 Corinthians 1:18-25; 2:1-5; 9:16; Galatians 6:14; 2 Corinthians 5:17-6:2).

(1 Corinthians 1:18-25) “For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. (19) For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. (20) Where *is* the wise? where *is* the scribe? where *is* the disputer of this

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world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? (21) For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. (22) For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: (23) But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; (24) But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. (25) Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men.”

(1 Corinthians 2:1-5) “And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. (2) For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. (3) And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. (4) And my speech and my preaching *was* not with enticing words of man’s wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: (5) That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.”

(1 Corinthians 9:16) “For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!”

(Galatians 6:14) “But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.”

(2 Corinthians 5:17-21) “Therefore if any man *be* in Christ, *he is* a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. (18) And all things *are* of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; (19) To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. (20) Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech *you* by us: we pray *you* in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God. (21) For he hath made him *to be* sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”

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(2 Corinthians 6:1-2) “We then, *as workers together with him*, beseech *you* also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain. (2) (For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now *is* the accepted time; behold, now *is* the day of salvation.)”

**The preaching of the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation.** —  
Nothing else!

- Exalting Christ, not the Church!
- Proclaiming the Savior, not the Sacraments!
- Preaching Christ, not Creeds!
- Preaching, not Sharing!
- Preaching, not Discussing!
- Preaching, not Giving a Lesson!

It is by this means, the foolishness of preaching, that God has ordained the salvation of chosen sinners. Let the world laugh and mock. We will not lay aside this mighty weapon of warfare against the gates of hell. It is like the ram's horns, by which the walls of Jericho fell down. The preaching of the Gospel, the blowing of the jubilee trumpet, is mighty to the pulling down of strongholds. The story of the crucified Lamb of God has proved to be the power of God unto salvation in every age. Those who have done most for Christ's cause in every part of the world, have been men like John the Baptist. They have not cried, Behold me, or Behold the church, or Behold the ordinances, but “Behold the Lamb of God.” If souls are to be saved, men must be pointed directly to Christ, the Lamb of God!

Let every preacher of the Gospel patiently continue in his labor, preaching Christ. Preach him again and again, as the “*Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world.*” The story of grace must be told repeatedly — line upon line and precept upon precept. God's word shall not return unto him void (Isaiah 55:11).

**TRUE CHRISTIANITY**

*Second*, we see in the conduct of these two disciples a picture of true Christianity. We are told that these two men “*followed Jesus.*” The Savior graciously received them and made himself known to them as they followed him. This was the most blessed day of their lives. From that day on, these two men were Christ's men. They took up the cross, and followed him.

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They continued with him in his temptations. They followed him wherever he went. They became chosen Apostles, master builders in the temple of grace. Christianity is following Christ, no more and no less than following Christ. Believers are people who “*follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth.*”

- The Doctrine of Christ.
- The Example of Christ (John 13:1-17; Ephesians 4:32-5:2)

(John 13:1-17) “Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end. (2) And supper being ended, the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon’s *son*, to betray him; (3) Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God; (4) He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself. (5) After that he poureth water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples’ feet, and to wipe *them* with the towel wherewith he was girded. (6) Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet? (7) Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter. (8) Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me. (9) Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also *my* hands and *my* head. (10) Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash *his* feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all. (11) For he knew who should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean. (12) So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you? (13) Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for *so* I am. (14) If I then, *your* Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another’s feet. (15) For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. (16) Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. (17) If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.”

(Ephesians 4:32) “And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you.”

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(Ephesians 5:1-2) “Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; (2) And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.”

- The Spirit of Christ

True Christians are people who follow Christ; and they follow him to the end.

**CHRIST'S ABODE**

*Third*, we see these two disciples as they are received and taught by the Master (vv. 38-39).

(John 1:38-39) “Then Jesus turned, and saw them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye? They said unto him, Rabbi, (which is to say, being interpreted, Master,) where dwellest thou? (39) He saith unto them, Come and see. They came and saw where he dwelt, and abode with him that day: for it was about the tenth hour.”

First the Master asked them what they were seeking, not because he needed to know but because they needed to know! Take the Savior's question personally. I dare you. — “*What seek ye?*” What is it that you are seeking? Watch their answer. It may seem a strange response to some of you. To others it is the very response of your own heart. — They said, this is the thing we must know, “*Master, where dwellest thou?*”

Is this the earnest quest of your soul? Do you cry like Job of old, “*Oh that I knew where I might find him! that I might come even to his seat*” (Job 23:3)? The Master says, “*Come and see.*” — Come, follow me, and you shall see! Let me show you where he dwells (Isaiah 57:15; Matthew 18:20; Revelation 3:20). **His dwelling place is his people.**

(Isaiah 57:15) “For thus saith the high and lofty One that **INHABITETH ETERNITY**, whose name *is* Holy; I dwell **IN THE HIGH AND HOLY PLACE**, with him also *that is* of **A CONTRITE AND HUMBLE SPIRIT**, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.”

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Has God, by his Spirit, caused you to hear the Savior's voice and open to him? Has he broken you and made you contrite before him? I beg you, my Lord, make me such a soul before you? Make me what you would have me to be, and come dwell in me, as you promised. You said, my Father will come, and I will come, and make our abode with such. Master, you promised, the Holy Ghost shall come and abide with you forever. Will God, the triune God, dwell with me and in me? Behold, Lord, the heaven, and the heaven of heavens, cannot contain thee! Oh for grace and a sanctity of heart and mind to possess such mercies and be the dwelling place of God! Children of God, our bodies are the temple of God who dwell in us!

Still, there is more. **The Lord's dwelling place is our meeting place!**

(Matthew 18:20) "For **WHERE TWO OR THREE ARE GATHERED TOGETHER IN MY NAME**, there am I in the midst of them."

(Revelation 3:20) "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if **ANY MAN HEAR MY VOICE, AND OPEN THE DOOR**, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me."

**CHRIST'S WITNESS**

*Fourth*, as soon as Andrew found Christ he became the faithful witness of Christ, went out and found his brother Simon and brought him to the Savior (vv. 40-42).

(John 1:40-42) "One of the two which heard John *speak*, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. (41) He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ. (42) And he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone."

First, I have to say something about Andrew's statement, "*We have found the Christ.*" Do not be afraid of such a statement. All who have found the Christ have been found of Christ, and know that they have been found of him.

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“I sought the Lord, and afterward I knew  
He moved my soul to seek him, seeking me;  
It was not I that found, O Saviour true,  
No, I was found of thee.”

**Yet, we have found him because we sought him** (Jeremiah 29:10-14).

(Jeremiah 29:10-14) “I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place. (11) For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end. (12) Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you. (13) And ye shall seek me, and find *me*, when ye shall search for me with all your heart. (14) And I will be found of you, saith the LORD: and I will turn away your captivity, and I will gather you from all the nations, and from all the places whither I have driven you, saith the LORD; and I will bring you again into the place whence I caused you to be carried away captive.”

Andrew found his brother Simon, and told him what he knew. — “*We have found the Messiah, the Christ!*” We have found him of whom Moses and the prophets wrote. We have found...

- The Lamb of God.
- The Woman’s Seed.
- Abraham’s Seed.
- The One Manoah Saw.
- The Nazarite!
- Jehovah’s Servant!
- The Firstborn!
- The One Isaiah Saw, the Substitute.
- David’s Son, his Lord!

Like one who has unexpectedly heard good news, he ran to tell it to his brother, the one nearest and dearest to him. His heart was full of excitement. He had to tell what he knew. And by his testimony Peter first received light. Peter was brought to the Savior by the testimony of his brother. He saw no mighty miracle wrought. He was not convinced by any powerful reasoning. He simply heard his brother tell him that he had found the Savior. The

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simple witness of a caring brother was the first link in the chain by which Peter was drawn out of the world and joined to Christ.

Spirit of God, make Andrews of us all! Well it would be for immortal souls if all who have been converted themselves, would speak to their friends and relatives and tell them they have found the Christ! How much good might be done! How many might be led to the Lord! The work of testifying the Gospel of the grace of God ought not to be left to ministers alone. All who have received mercy ought to find a tongue and declare what God has done for their souls. All who have been delivered from the power of the devil, ought to “*go home and tell their friends what great things God has done for them*” (Mark 5:19). Every believer ought to be a missionary to his family, children, neighbors and friends.

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*Fifth*, I want you to see that this man Peter experienced four gracious, distinct calls from the Lord. They were given and experienced in a certain order; and both the calls themselves and the order in which they were given are instructive.

1<sup>st</sup>, **Peter was called to become a follower of Christ, a disciple, by the testimony of his brother, Andrew.** That is what we have before us in John 1. — This is the beginning of grace in the soul. The Lord Jesus Christ begins by first teaching us our own need of him, and our own sin, and then revealing himself to us as the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world.

2<sup>nd</sup>, In the 4<sup>th</sup> chapter of Matthew **Peter was called by the Lord Jesus, along with his brother Andrew, to abandon all earthly pursuits and devote himself entirely to the cause of Christ as a preacher of the gospel with him** (Matthew 4:17-22).

(Matthew 4:17-22) “From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. (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. (21) And going on from thence, he saw other two

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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.”

- They were believers, true disciples before they were called to be preachers.
- They were industrious, laboring men, serving the Lord as fishermen, when he called them to be fishers of men.
- There is much in that term “*fishers of men.*” — Fishermen have to be **familiar** with the water where fish are found and with the fish in the water. — Fishermen have to do a lot of **waiting**. — Fishermen often put themselves in **hazardous** situations. — Fishermen have to be **persevering**.

Let us take heed that we are among those who really follow Christ, and abide with Him. It is not enough to hear Him preached from the pulpit, and to read of Him as described in books. We must actually follow Him, pour out our hearts before Him, and hold personal communion with Him. Then, and not until then, we shall feel constrained to speak of Him to others. The man who only knows Christ by the hearing of the ear, will never do much for the spread of Christ's cause in the earth.

3<sup>rd</sup>, **The Lord Jesus called Peter to be an Apostle** (Mark 3:13-16).

(Mark 3:13-16) “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.”

Some men God sets apart for very special purposes, for works for which he alone can equip them. Certainly, that was true regarding the Prophets and the Apostles of old. Such men, being called of God to very great work, stand in the forefront of the Master's army. That means that they are sure to bear the full force of Satan's assaults.

Peter was just such a man; and he once failed and fell miserably. The Lord Jesus, you will remember, warned him of what he must endure, assuring

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him that he had prayed for him. Then he said to Peter, “*And when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren*” (Luke 22:32; John 13:37-14:3).

(John 13:37-38) “Peter said unto him, Lord, why cannot I follow thee now? I will lay down my life for thy sake. (38) Jesus answered him, Wilt thou lay down thy life for my sake? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, The cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied me thrice.”

(John 14:1-3) “Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. (2) In my Father’s house are many mansions: if *it were* not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. (3) And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, *there* ye may be also.”

4<sup>th</sup>, If you will turn to John 21 (vv. 1-18), I will show you Peter’s fourth call. It is the faithful Savior’s sweet, gracious call of restoration, a call every heaven born soul is sure to need, sooner or later.

(John 21:1-18) “After these things Jesus showed himself again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias; and on this wise showed he *himself*. (2) There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the *sons* of Zebedee, and two other of his disciples. (3) Simon Peter saith unto them, I go a fishing. They say unto him, We also go with thee. They went forth, and entered into a ship immediately; and that night they caught nothing.

(4) But when the morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore: but the disciples knew not that it was Jesus. (5) Then Jesus saith unto them, Children, have ye any meat? They answered him, No. (6) And he said unto them, Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find. They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes.

(7) Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter, It is the Lord. Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt *his* fisher’s coat *unto him*, (for he was naked,) and did cast himself into the sea. (8) And the other disciples came in a little ship; (for they were not far from land, but as it were two hundred cubits,) dragging the net with fishes. (9) As soon then as they were come to

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land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread. (10) Jesus saith unto them, Bring of the fish which ye have now caught. (11) Simon Peter went up, and drew the net to land full of great fishes, an hundred and fifty and three: and for all there were so many, yet was not the net broken. (12) Jesus saith unto them, Come *and* dine. And none of the disciples durst ask him, Who art thou? knowing that it was the Lord. (13) Jesus then cometh, and taketh bread, and giveth them, and fish likewise. (14) This is now the third time that Jesus showed himself to his disciples, after that he was risen from the dead.

(15) So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, *son* of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs. (16) He saith to him again the second time, Simon, *son* of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep. (17) He saith unto him the third time, Simon, *son* of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep.

(18) Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry *thee* whither thou wouldest not.”

(Psalms 51:12-13) “Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me *with thy* free spirit. (13) *Then* will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee.”

Blessed Savior, what reason have we to lift our hearts with gratitude and praise to thee, because you will never leave us to ourselves!

(Psalms 34:18-19) “The LORD *is* nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit. (19) Many *are* the afflictions of the righteous: but the LORD delivereth him out of them all.”

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(Psalms 37:23-24) “The steps of a *good* man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way. (24) Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the LORD upholdeth *him with* his hand.”

Amen.