

I was watching the football game, lying on the couch and Jesus said to me, “Leave your game/nets and Come after Me.” I suspect not all headed that call. A key detail of this scene is found in the nets. The message of Jesus was that the kingdom of God is at hand and he calls us to reform our lives to enter that kingdom.

The trouble is that many want the kingdom but not the reforming. It’s like those who want the meal but not the cooking; who want the grades but not the study. We want heaven, but not yet, as that might mean making changes.

We want to know God in our life, forgiveness - the peace of being united to God’s will — but we don’t always want to give up the nets, the entanglements that trap us, that hold us back from the fullness of Life God offers.

These entanglements are often the people and relationships that distance us and separate us from Christ. It is hard to stop the latest gossip, the wrong relationships, immoral behavior, habits of arrogance and our addictions.

So, we try to find ways of having it both ways and we can’t. To know the kingdom of God in our life we have to be willing to leave behind the nets, the distorting entanglements of soul and heart and mind.

The Gospel shows us the ones who left their nets and followed as Jesus gave them a new mission, new seas to sail, deeper purpose for their lives.

For us, to follow Jesus is not a matter of leaving family, jobs, or residence. It’s a matter of leaving behind a way of living.

+Many years ago, when people had troubles in their life or wanted opportunity, they were told “Go West!” So often they took their problems with them because the real problem was not in the East but in the heart.

So for us, the problem is not where we live, but how we live; not how much we have, but what we do with it; not in finding the truth, but in embracing it. The reign of God is open to all of us, if we are willing to risk a new way of living and make the commitment to Jesus Christ.

We never completely “arrive” in our spiritual lives, so we should constantly challenge ourselves to go deeper in our relationships with God.

We will experience the kingdom to the extent that we are willing to let some of those nets go. It’s hard to follow the Lord if we are dragging all kinds of tangled webs woven from bad memories, angers and sins or indifference.

Most of us know how to be a better Christian. We just don’t always do it. We know, for

example, that daily prayer would deepen our spiritual life. Yet we often omit our daily prayers.

Yes, I have to admit I am sometimes lazy and don't always do this, knowing it can only bring me his happiness the world can never give.

It is not a matter of ability – he can take care of that – but a matter of availability.

What nets, entanglements do we still need to leave behind at the shore in order to push out to sea and follow the Lord? We can tell what is really important in our life not by what we get out of it but by what we are willing to give up for it.

We might ask what motivated these fishermen to follow him? One almost gets the feel of the Walking Dead as they somewhat robotically swoon just at his words to follow. In reality, they had witnessed what he had been doing before being called.

Those fishermen had seen what Jesus could actually do with a life entrusted to his care, with a life put in his hands. They'd seen what he did with people in pain.

They had seen how he could transform those who were distracted, fragmented by voices and forces pulling at them.

They had seen what Jesus could do with those who were seized up with stress and who could no longer really function.

They had seen what Jesus did with those who were paralyzed in place, who were stuck and were going nowhere under their own power and how Jesus transformed life for them.

That is why they followed him—they wanted it for themselves. They wanted to go into that kind of kingdom.

We are often told to "Invite Jesus into our life." How many of you have ever heard that expression? But here's the news flash: Jesus doesn't want to be in your life because your life may be a wreck. No, he wants to call us out of our life into his life.

+It is respect life weekend and there are nets of the world that say it is "our life" but in reality it is God's life given to us. Jesus calls us to follow and love the gift of life. Perhaps you are pregnant and worried. Take Jesus' hand and follow him and see where it leads. And if made the wrong choices, take his hand and experience his mercy.

Jesus wants to take us boldly where we've never gone before, into the life of the kingdom of God. He wants to take us on the great adventure of being his follower into this world and to find that kingdom.

That is exactly what he means when he says, "Come and follow me!" Let him show you the life for which you were truly made.