

The Summons John Bell

Will you come and follow Me if I but call your name?
Will you go where you don't know and never be the same?
Will you let My love be shown? Will you let My name be known?
Will you let My life be grown in you, and you in Me?

Will you leave yourself behind if I but call your name?
Will you care for cruel and kind and never be the same?
Will you risk the hostile stare, should your life attract or scare?
Will you let Me answer prayer in you, and you in Me?

Will you let the blinded see if I but call your name?
Will you set the prisoner free and never be the same?
Will you kiss the leper clean, and do such as this unseen?
And admit to what I mean in you, and you in Me?

Will you love the "you" you hide if I but call your name?
Will you quell the fear inside and never be the same?
Will you use the faith you've found to reshape the world around
through my sight and touch and sound in you, and you in Me?

Lord Your summons echoes true when You but call my name.
Let me turn and follow You and never be the same.
In Your company I'll go, where Your love and footsteps show.
Thus I'll move and live and grow in You, and You in me.

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Mark 1:16-20 *"As Jesus passed alongside the Galilee Sea, He saw two brothers, Simon and Andrew, throwing nets into the sea, for they were fishermen. 'Come follow Me,' He said, 'and I'll show you how to fish for people.' Right away, they left their nets and followed Him. After going a little farther, He saw James and John, Zebedee's sons, in their boat repairing fishing nets. At the very moment, He called them. They followed Him, leaving their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired workers."*

Common English Bible

There is no record of Jesus discussing His plans and itinerary with Simon, Andrew, James and John, but that didn't stop them. What do you think compelled them to immediately get up and follow Jesus?

Following Jesus doesn't mean that you *have* to leave your current life – though for some that may be their path. Think about some ways that you can let Jesus be known, let His love be shown, in your corner of the world. Make a list of some of those actions.

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Acts 9:1-23 *“But Paul, threatening with every breath and eager to destroy every Christian, went to the High Priest in Jerusalem. He requested a letter addressed to synagogues in Damascus, requiring their cooperation in the persecution of any believers he found there, both men and women, so that he could bring them in chains to Jerusalem. As he was nearing Damascus on this mission, suddenly a brilliant light from heaven spotted down upon him! He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, “Paul! Paul! Why are you persecuting me?” “Who is speaking, sir?” Paul asked. And the voice replied, “I am Jesus, the one you are persecuting! Now get up and go into the city and await my further instructions.” The men with Paul stood speechless with surprise, for they heard the sound of someone’s voice but saw no one! As Paul picked himself up off the ground, he found that he was blind. He had to be led into Damascus and was there three days, blind, going without food and water all that time. Now there was in Damascus a believer named Ananias. The Lord spoke to him in a vision, calling, “Ananias!” “Yes, Lord!” he replied. And the Lord said, “Go over to Straight Street and find the house of a man named Judas and ask there for Paul of Tarsus. He is praying to me right now, for I have shown him a vision of a man named Ananias coming in and laying his hands on him so that he can see again!” “But Lord,” exclaimed Ananias, “I have heard about the terrible things this man has done to the believers in Jerusalem! And we hear that he has arrest warrants with him from the chief priests, authorizing him to arrest every believer in Damascus!” But the Lord said, “Go and do what I say. For Paul is my chosen instrument to take my message to the nations and before kings, as well as to the people of Israel. And I will show him how much he must suffer for me.” So Ananias went over and found Paul and laid his hands on him and said, “Brother Paul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road, has sent me so that you may be filled with the Holy Spirit and get your sight back.” Instantly (it was as though scales fell from his eyes) Paul could see and was immediately baptized. Then he ate and was strengthened. He stayed with the believers in Damascus for a few days and went at once to the synagogue to tell everyone there the Good News about Jesus—that he is indeed the Son of God! All who heard him were amazed. “Isn’t this the same man who persecuted Jesus’ followers so bitterly in Jerusalem?” they asked. “And we understand that he came here to arrest them all and take them in chains to the chief priests.” Paul became more and more fervent in his preaching, and the Damascus Jews couldn’t withstand his proofs that Jesus was indeed the Christ. After a while the Jewish leaders determined to kill him.”* The Living Bible

Paul experienced one of the most dramatic, life-changing experiences of Jesus in the Bible. Have you ever had an experience that called you to a new way of seeing things? A new way of living? Describe it.

Ananias was called “care for cruel and kind”, to use his hands and voice to heal Paul, a man who had persecuted Jesus’ followers. If you were in Ananias’ place, would you have been able to do that? Why?

Paul was so enthusiastic in his new life that he angered the Jewish leaders. Have you ever stood so firmly in something you believed in that it caused others to get upset with you? Describe that time.

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Matthew 6:1-4 *“Be especially careful when you are trying to be good so that you don’t make a performance out of it. It might be good theater, but the God who made you won’t be applauding. When you do something for someone else, don’t call attention to yourself. You’ve seen them in action, I’m sure – the play actors I call them – treating prayer meeting and street corner like a stage, acting compassionate as long as someone is watching, playing to the crowds. They get applause true, but that’s all they get. When you help someone out, don’t think about how it looks. Just do it – quietly and unobtrusively. That is the way your God, who conceived you in love, working behind the scenes, helps you out.”* The Message

Why do you think Jesus makes such a point of cautioning against publicizing our good works? What is the advantage of doing things “quietly and unobtrusively”? Does that make it harder or easier to do good? Why do you feel that way?

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Will you quell the fear inside and never be the same?
Will you use the faith you’ve found to reshape the world around
through my sight and touch and sound in you, and you in Me?

John 4:16b-17a, 18a *“God is love. When we take up permanent residence in a life of love, we live in God and God lives in us. This way, love has the run of the house, becomes at home and mature in us. There is no room in love for fear. Well-formed love banishes fear.”*

What “you” do you hide? Why do you hide that “you”? Do you love that “you”? Why do you feel that way?

Why do you think loving your hidden “you” was important enough for John Bell to ask that specific question?

When “we live in God and God lives in us” that’s the “faith you’ve found” that allows you to “reshape the world around”. Do you see that in your own life? Describe it if you do. If not, why not?

John says *“There is no room in love for fear. Well-formed love banishes fear”*. What does that mean to you? Is this an easy concept to accept? Why?

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Mark 8:34-37 *“Calling the crowd to join His disciples, He said, ‘Anyone who intends to come with Me, has to let Me lead you’re not in the driver’s seat; I am. Don’t run from suffering; embrace it. Follow Me*

and I'll show you how. Self-help is no help at all. Self-sacrifice is the way, my way to saving yourself, your true self. What good would it do to get everything you want and lose you, the real you? What could you ever trade your soul for?" The Message

Did you notice the change in wording for this verse? How does the change from Jesus speaking to us to our response to Jesus make you feel?

Would this be your response? Why? If your answer is no, bring your reasons to God. Be honest, God can take it. And when you're done talking to God, spend some time listening. God is longing to connect with you, but be prepared, God's response may not come the way you expect. But it will come.

Each verse contains the same phrase "and never be the same". Why do you think John Bell stressed this concept?

Is it a scary concept for you? Why? If you answered yes, can you see positives to leaving your past behind when you enter into a life in Christ? Describe them, then offer your fears and hesitations to God.

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John 15:4, 7-8 "Live in Me. Make your home in Me just as I do in you. In the same way that a branch can't bear grapes by itself but only in being joined to the vine, you can't bear fruit unless you are joined with me. But if you make yourselves at home with me and my words are at home in you, you can be sure that whatever you ask will be listened to and acted upon. This is how My Father shows who He is – when you produce grapes, when you mature as my disciples." The Message

We often talk about Christ being in us, but this song repeatedly refers to our being In Christ. What does that mean to You? The connection between the branch and the vine that Jesus speaks about in John is intimate and nurturing – both for the branch and the vine. Spend some time this week thinking about what Jesus needs from you, ways can you nurture Christ. Consider if that is something you can do for Jesus. When you have decided, offer those things to Jesus.

“We who believe are carefully joined together with Christ
as parts of a beautiful, constantly growing temple for God.
And you are also joined with Him and with each other by the Spirit
and are part of this dwelling place of God.”

Ephesians 2:21-22 The Living Bible