Sermon-based Small Groups

_____ of _____

1stPresDowntown

Seasons of Our Call

Matthew 4:18-22

Week of November 1, 2026

This week's scripture:

18 As he walked by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon, who is called Peter, and
Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea—for they were fishers. 19 And he said to them,
"Follow me, and I will make you fishers of people." 20 Immediately they left their nets and
followed him. 21 As he went from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and
his brother John, in the boat with their father Zebedee, mending their nets, and he called
them. 22 Immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.

Scripture Reflection Questions: Read this week's scripture together and discuss the following:

- What do we learn about God (e.g., traits, personality, what matters, priorities) in this passage?
- What do we learn about people, and ourselves in particular, this week?

Sermon Reflection Questions: Reflecting on this week's sermon, discuss the following:

1. He Came Looking

The sermon opened by noting that Jesus is the one walking, seeking, initiating— the disciples didn't find him, he found them. The sermon also observed that God is always active, always moving toward us, even when we aren't aware of it. How does it change the way you think about your own faith story to frame it not as a search you conducted, but as a call you received? Where do you see God having been active in your life before you recognized it?

The sermon asked us to think about the different callings we've experienced — mentor, friend, caretaker, leader, sponsor — and noted that all calls share something in common: they lead to transformation. What is a calling you've experienced (inside or outside the church) that changed who you were becoming? What did it ask of you, and what did it form in you?

2. Called in the Season of Activity
Simon and Andrew are mid-cast — occupied, in motion, already deep in the demands of the day — when Jesus speaks. The sermon offered this as good news for people who feel too busy to hear from God: the seasons of activity are not seasons of spiritual absence. When has God met you in the middle of a full, demanding season rather than on the other side of it? What made you able — or unable — to hear?

3. Called in the Season of Rest
James and John are mending — patient, quiet, in-between. The sermon described this as "the work between the work," and suggested that mending seasons have their own holiness. How do you tend to experience seasons of quiet or routine? Do they feel formative or frustrating? Do you find it easier to hear from God when things are busy or when things are still?

The sermon said the in-between is not spiritual wasteland and the valleys are not disqualifying seasons — the call only requires willingness. Is there a mending season in your past that you can now see was more significant than it felt at the time? What were you being prepared for that you couldn't see then?

4. The Shape of the Call
Jesus' invitation — "Follow me" — is personal, not programmatic. The sermon made the point that the Christian life is the following of a person, not the adoption of a worldview or a set of ideas. What is the difference, practically, between following a person and following a belief system? How does keeping the call personal change how you relate to seasons of doubt, distance, or confusion in your faith?

5. Lessons from the Water
The sermon offered three lessons from fly fishing as pictures of a called life. The first was "see a fish, catch a fish" — act on the call in front of you, don't wait for a better one, don't hesitate because conditions aren't perfect. Where in your life right now is there a fish rising that you've been hesitating to cast to? What is the thing you can see that you've been waiting to respond to?

The second lesson was "fish the sneaky spots" — the kingdom of God moves through the ordinary, the overlooked, the unexpected corners of the community.

The third was "every river is beautiful" — there is something to be loved in every season, and the task is to fish the one you're in. Which of these two lessons speaks most directly to where you are right now? What would it mean to apply it this week?