

Today we look at our preparation for... nothing!

"Going on from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John. They were in a boat with their father Zebedee, preparing their nets. Jesus called them, and immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him." Matthew 4:21-22

NUGGET - Today's verses point us to the fact sometimes our preparations seem to be in vain. We work and sweat and what we have at the end of the day is *nothing* to show for it. When James and John were with their father, in the boat, they were preparing their nets for the next day's work. But the next day of work never came for them. Jesus came instead, and called them to something they didn't expect. As they were working on cleaning and mending and preparing their nets to go fishing, Jesus came and called them away from that work to other work. Jesus called them to follow *Him*.

What about your life? Have there ever been instances where you got to the end of a day, fully prepared for tomorrow and then something comes along and your plans are changed? Even little things can screw-up your preparations and with seemingly rotten outcomes:

- You see traffic is bunching up ahead in your lane so you go to change lanes and someone dashes up from behind and cuts you off.
- You head to catch a table by the widow at a restaurant and someone beats you to it.

These aren't big things in themselves but they can be frustrating and seem to ruin the preparation you've done. It sometimes seems as though even God is out to foil your preparations. I'm guessing Zebedee wasn't thrilled with his two sons running off after some itinerant preacher and leaving him to do the fishing the next day. What has this to do with preparation?

Just this, God knows what is best for us and He knows best how to prepare us to have fulfilling lives that ultimately bring Him honor and glory. What may seem an unexpected bump in the road to us may, in fact, be God leading us on a better path; a path of His design. It may be that God's preparations for our lives lead us to frustrations now, but then later in life we see that God was moving us in ways that were in fact preparing us for something better than we could have prepared for on our own.

APPLICATION - Next week consider these things.

1. When you're stuck in traffic, give thought to what God is protecting you from rather than keeping you from.
2. Are you making plans at work or preparing for something new in life? In your thinking consider how the outcome of your plans may open up an opportunity for your life to show others the love God has shown you.
3. Someone in your life is in preparation for something; let them know that you are praying for them before the throne of God's grace

PRAY - Take time to earnestly seek God's guidance to prepare you for your coming days and those of whom you've thought of in #3 above to pray for.

GOING DEEPER

This week's nugget has Jesus, in the gospel of Matthew, calling two of His disciples to follow Him and leave behind their work with their father. Look at [Luke 5:1-11](#) to get more insight into James and John and why perhaps they were prepared to leave the nets with their father and follow Jesus. There are two schools of thought regarding when James and John left Zebedee. One says that it happened at the same time as when Peter did and others say it was later. In either case this gives us more information about how God prepares us for His work.

It is rare that God doesn't do some 'spade work' in our lives before moving us on to other things. God knows how to prepare the groundwork needed so that whatever He plants in our lives can grow. If we read selected opening portions from [Matthew 3:1, 11-17, 4:12-13, 17](#), [Mark 1:4-20](#) and [Luke 4:14 – 5:29](#) we learn that Jesus had been preaching and teaching and doing miracles before He called people to follow Him as His disciples. What benefit is gained by this method rather than just come down and dazzle with a wild display of Godly power (rather than 'mere healings') and draw followers that way?

What's amazing about this is that Jesus took the time to do what was necessary in order to prepare those who would be His disciples to be ready to follow Him. A lesson for us from this is that we too need to look at what God wants to accomplish in our lives (and our congregation) and take the time to prepare for it. After all Jesus had finally come to earth after hundreds of years of promises and when He did, He still took the time to prepare people for His work. He didn't just show up one day, die and rise again at the end of the week and be done with it!

What about the types of preparation that God does in our life? Well God prepares us spiritually, physically and mentally. For examples of how God prepares people in these ways review the following. As you read consider, who is being prepared and how does that preparation match with how God uses them? Further, what does God seem to often use as preparation that may seem like nothing or may seem unrelated in the moment? Recall 1 Samuel 1-2:21 (the story of the Samuel's birth and beginning to live in the temple) and then read [1 Samuel 3:1-4:1a](#). Now read [1 Samuel 17:19-55](#), [Jeremiah 1:1-10](#), [2 Timothy 1-2](#).

God uses parents and grandparents, friends and family; pastors, preachers and prophets; enemies, persecutions and trials to get us ready for what He has for us. And while no two circumstances are identical, God is consistent in His care over the details needed to accomplish His purposes in our lives and in the world He loves.

One final passage to read regarding God's preparation that, from our view point, had an unexpected outcome is [John 19:26-27](#). The apostle whom Jesus loved is John, the same John that we read about in the nugget today. This is Zebedee's son. It is into John's home, the home of Zebedee, that Jesus sends His own mother, Mary, to live as He hangs dying on the cross. Zebedee had no idea that day when his son John left his nets to follow Jesus that John would one day bring the mother of his Lord home to care for her.

We don't know if Zebedee was still alive at this point. However if you search through the gospels you often see James and John referred to as the sons of Zebedee. This may be some indication that Zebedee was alive. This is different than Jesus' father, Joseph, who after the early part of Jesus life we hear of no more. The point is, the day of James and John departure to follow Jesus is the day that set in motion the events that lead to Mary's coming to live with the family of the sons of Zebedee on the day of Jesus crucifixion. God's preparation for the details of life is amazing. God's peace on the details of your week, Pastor Rhodes