

As Jesus was walking on he saw a man named Matthew sitting by the customs house and he said to him , 'Follow me.' And he got up and followed him.

There is a whole world in these few words; so much left unsaid. There is a purity about it which speaks volumes. It's a meeting of darkness and light. We can infer this from our own conversion stories and that of others. There is a need in Matthew suddenly met by Christ. Whatever mess Matthew is in internally – and we can surmise that he's not happy with the sort of life he has chosen, or been forced to lead – when Jesus walks towards him, he knows that this man is the answer to his prayer. He *must* follow. It's a sudden call to freedom – and there's no doubt about it. It's the obvious thing to do. So he does it.

We know very little of him subsequently, apart from his inclusion in the list of apostles and the tradition that he wrote this gospel in Hebrew and was eventually martyred somewhere in the East. In a way, this makes his few words about himself all the more dramatic. His focus is now Christ and he has no need to speak further of himself. He speaks only of Christ. And yet this says everything about himself, which makes me wonder about my own legacy and the task of sifting the many words around me for Christ. Time in prayer can do it. There's a distillation needed which will leave us, also, with few words speaking volumes:

Follow me.

What I want is mercy not sacrifice.

Few words are needed. Indeed, only one.

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