

## **Life and Ministry of Jesus Christ Fishers of Men**

Thus far in Jesus Christ's Galilean ministry:

- In Cana: Jesus healed the son of the nobleman (gov't official) from Capernaum after rebuking the Jews for their unbelief (seeking a sign before believe)
- Last time: Jesus Christ's revelation of His Identity and Mission in His teaching in the synagogue in Nazareth and His subsequent rejection by His hometown folks

This time...Jesus moves to Capernaum and re-gathers His disciples, issuing a "full-time" call upon their lives

We will be in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke...starting in Matt 4

### **Matt 4:13-22**

The Gospel of Matthew is written to the Jews and presents Jesus Christ as the Son of David, Israel's Messiah and King

v13-17 Capernaum...fulfilled...Isaiah:

About 750 years prior, the Holy Spirit inspired the prophet Isaiah to write [\[Is 9:1-2\]](#)  
Jesus Christ fulfilled this prophesy ([\[Matt 5:17-18\]](#)) here, when He moved from Nazareth to Capernaum and established

- His home (Matt 9:1)
- His itinerant preaching ministry HQ in Peter's house

Capernaum was located on the northern shore of the Sea of Galilee, several miles west of where the Jordan River entered the lake

[ Map Cana Capernaum Nazareth ]

[ Map Tribes of Israel ]

[ Map Cana Capernaum Nazareth ]

The "Galilee of the Gentiles" was distinctly Greek/Roman in cultural flavor

Capernaum was the seat of the Roman province ruled by Herod Antipas

- Roman garrison housed here
- Roman tax station here, on the Via Maris trade route connecting Egypt and Persia

Note: Tax agent working there: Levi/Matthew

The Galilee was also home for simple, honest, and earnest Jews...

quiet a distinction from the sophisticated, proud, and self-righteous Jews living in Jerusalem/Judea

Capernaum was the site of a sizable synagogue (ruins still standing)

- funded/built by the good centurion (Luke 7:5), whom we will meet
- overseen by the chief ruler Jairus (Mark 5:22), whom we will meet
- where the multitude of Jesus' disciples "gathered" during His Galilean ministry would leave Him because of His hard sayings (John 6:59-60, 66)

Capernaum was the home of Jesus' closest disciples, His "Inner Circle", whom He will call permanently unto Himself in this passage

- Peter and Andrew
- James and John

Into the Galilee of the Gentiles comes the fulfillment of God's promise  
Into the darkness

- ignorance
- lies
- sin
- death

comes the Light of the World

- truth
- life
- a Person, The Word of God made flesh, the Seed of the Woman

Jesus Christ, The Prophet foretold by Moses 1450 years earlier, preached

- Repentance:
  - awareness of "I am wrong"
  - agreement that "God is right"
  - action to change directions and trust God "All the time"
  - attitude of humility
- The Kingdom of heaven: God governing man (for man cannot govern himself)

v18-20 Simon called Peter and Andrew:

Andrew and Peter started to follow Jesus in John 1:35-42

They were with Jesus

- in Cana when He turned the water into wine
- in Jerusalem when He cleansed the Temple, performed many miracles
- in Salim baptizing
- in Samaria for His harvest of souls

But when Jesus went from Samaria to Cana to start His Galilean ministry,  
Jesus apparently sent His disciples home to their families and to  
resume their vocations

Jesus went home with Nathaniel in Cana, where He healed the nobleman's son  
Then He went to Nazareth alone  
Rejected by His hometown, Jesus moved to Capernaum

Now He begins to gather the men His Father has chosen for Him  
He starts by re-gathering His first disciples...professional fishermen all

[ Fisherman 1 ]

[ Fisherman 2 ]

Walking near Capernaum on the north shore of the Sea of Galilee,  
Jesus sees many fishermen  
The very best fishing on the Sea of Galilee was on that northern shore because the  
Jordan River brought a continual fresh supply of food for the fish  
This also gives us a timestamp – early in the morning when the fishing is the best

Jesus first sees Peter and Andrew, who are fishing...and He calls them to follow  
Him into a new “full-time” work

The call “Follow me” was clearly understood by Jews to mean to become  
a permanent disciple of the Rabbi who issued the call  
The call was neither misunderstood nor strange...but the work is new

“I will make you”  
They cannot make themselves  
This is a work of God , not of man  
“fishers of men”  
A spiritual work

Jesus is calling Peter and Andrew to walk away from their vocation, their life,  
to begin something new...Heb 11:8-ish

What was their response?  
They had been following Him...seeing His works and hearing His words  
Now, to the call of “full-time” following, immediate obedience

They

- trusted Jesus without hesitation or reservation
- dropped everything and followed Jesus  
(left Corporate America but without 401K or SS)
- by faith forsook all they had known to that point to  
“go where no man had gone before”

v21-22 James...John:

Next, Peter and Andrew with Him, Jesus sees James and John mending their nets

After the night/early morning fishing, the fishermen would

- wash their nets of sand and pebbles
- repair any tears caused by waves or rocks

Jesus re-calls James and John into full-time following as well

What was the response of the sons of Zebedee?

The same – immediate obedience and abandonment of everything they had known

By faith they left everything behind to go where they knew not...dropping

- their possessions
- their plans
- their wills

Notice that Jesus called them...

- they did not approach Jesus looking for a job
- they did not call Jesus to join their line of work or to do with them what they wanted to do

So...

- is Jesus calling us and are we dropping everything to follow Him, to be used by Him in the accomplishment of His plan?
- or are we calling Jesus to come with us to accomplish our plan, and being frustrated when our plans don't work out?

What is the difference?

Who is Lord?

We read the same account in Mark 1...with a few additional details

## **Mark 1:16-20**

The Gospel of Mark is written to the Gentiles and presents Jesus Christ as the Servant of God

v16-18 Come ye after Me...to become:

“Follow behind” Me...same as Matt 4

“I will make you”...same as Matt 4

“fishers of men”...same as Matt 4

But...”to become”

Jesus’ making them fishers of men is a process, not an event

Jesus Christ will spend the next 2½ years or so pouring His life into these men, truly making them disciples, making them fishers of men

Becoming a fisher of men, a genuine disciple of Jesus Christ is long, slow, painful work...by both Master and disciple

But we dictate the pace of the work...by the degree of our submission

They immediately obeyed

- forsook....left, gave up, abandoned...  
their fishing business, their life as they knew it
- following...wherever, unto the very end

v19-20 with the hired servants:

Again, the account is the same as in Matt 4, with one difference that shows the Lord’s caring for His people

Zebedee is not left “high and dry” by the Lord’s calling of his sons, who left their father and their father’s business

Zebedee has hired servants so he can continue to provide for his family

With the accounts of Matt 4 and Mark 1 in mind, did the two sets of brothers follow Jesus with blind faith...or reasonable and assured faith?

There is more to the story and we find it in Luke 5...later that same day

Note: Mark is

- briefer
  - more chronological
- than Matthew or Luke (more topical)

## **Luke 5:1-11**

The Gospel of Luke is also written to the Gentiles and presents Jesus Christ as the Son of Man, the Seed of the Woman promised by God in Gen 3

v1 the people pressed upon Him:

The fame of Jesus of Nazareth has spread all over Galilee

He speaks with power and authority unlike the scribes (Ch 4:31-32)

No man ever spoke like Jesus spoke...the people were astonished at His doctrine/teaching

The people are eager for the Messiah and hungry for the Word of God

A multitude of people are following Jesus

Here at the Sea of Galilee, there are so many that they are “pressing upon” Him... wanting to get as close as they can, they are almost pushing Him into the lake

Names for this fresh water lake:

- Sea of Galilee
- Lake of Gennesaret (“harp” because the shape of Sea of Galilee)
- Lake of Kinneret
- Sea of Tiberias

v2-3 two ships...one of them...Simon’s:

So Jesus makes use of what is available...the ships of His four full-time followers are handy so He chooses Simon Peter’s boat to become His pulpit

Jesus asks Peter to push a little ways offshore so He can teach the Word of God to the people

As in the synagogue in Nazareth and every other synagogue, Jesus sat to teach.

Jesus never passes up a teaching moment

To whom and of what did Jesus teach?

1. the people on shore
  - The Father Who sent Him
  - The Kingdom of heaven/God
  - how to enter this Kingdom
2. Peter, behind Him in the boat
  - the “net” of Peter’s new vocation
  - the fishing to which Peter was now called

When the teaching of the people concluded, the 1:1 teaching of Peter continued

v4-6 Launch out...let down your nets:

Jesus instructs His new full-time follower Peter to

- push out further into the Sea of Galilee, to the deep waters
- drop his fishing nets, for a catch

Peter respectfully tells his Master that he and his brother Andrew...

professional fishermen who knew the very best times and places to catch fish...

- in the shallows in the north end...NOT in the deep
- at night/EARLY morning...NOT in the day

had fished all night long and caught nothing

- no food
- no sales

But, simply because Jesus told him to do it, Peter would by faith in the Word of Jesus Christ do it...which he did immediately (again)

And to his utter amazement, a net-breaking catch...biggest catch ever!!

What is Peter beginning to learn?

1. The Creator is better than the best bait, better than sonar...  
the best fisherman ever!!
2. The Creator knows things and sees things no mere man can
3. a more clear understanding as to the
  - Identity and Mission of his Master
  - meaning of His Word (Matt 4:19)  
i.e. two great multitudes are "linked" people and fish
4. a door is closing (fishers of fish) and a door is opening (fisher of men)
5. he can trust Jesus of Nazareth to provide for him...faith in Jesus Christ is rewarded
6. the fruit of his labor (nothing) vs the fruit of the Lord's labor (!!!)
  - John 15:4
  - Ps 127:1
7. to expect miracles when Jesus speaks/works

But the lessons for Peter were not for Peter alone...

but for all 4 of Jesus' new full-time followers

v7-10 partners...filled both ships:

The Holy Spirit tells us

- they...was Andrew also in the boat or Jesus was helping?
- the brothers...Peter/Andrew and James/John...are business partners
- the catch that broke Peter's net was so big it filled to the brim both ships
- the fishers of fish partners are now fishers of men partners

Depart from me...Fear not:

Peter is overcome by being in the presence of God and with humility and a broken heart cries out: "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!"

Lord: "supreme Authority", "God"

Peter's heart on the ship with Jesus is like Isaiah's before the Throne of God in Is 6:5...proclaiming his unworthiness to be in the presence of God

Jesus hears Peter's profession...and hears the fear in his heart about this new venture in faith he has been called to

"Fear not"...for there was fear in Peter's heart

"from henceforth you shall catch men"...I have called you to a BETTER work, a more rewarding and fruitful work  
(with v1, 6-7 before his very eyes...both multitudes)  
(with Matt 4:19 and Mark 1:17 spoken to him earlier in the morning ringing in his ears)

The purpose of the miraculous catch was not to catch fish but to catch fishers of men.

And the response of all 4 of the business partners?

v11 forsook all and followed Him:

"Sold-out"!

The abandonment of a profitable worldly business for an even more profitable eternal business, the business of the Father: to seek and save the lost

The forsaking of a hard business for an even harder business

The resolute following of Jesus Christ based on

- Him (His Identity, Mission and Word) vs worldly stuff
- reasonable, assured faith vs blind faith

Note: Peter's first "fishing trip" yielded 3000 men! (Acts 2:41, Jer 16:14-16)

## Lessons for us this morning

### 1. Followers vs following

Jesus did not come for a following...He came to make followers  
Gal 1:10

#### The following

- wants an ear-ticking and a full belly...not an ear-tingling and suffering
- follow as long as there is something in it for them...and leave they are offended or when something “better” comes along

#### Followers

- are...have a new identity
- do...whatever, whenever, wherever
- abandon...the things of the world for the things of God
- live by faith vs sight

The demographic “Christians” is comprised of

1. Following...
  - Fake fish...until the hard sayings, cannot continue
  - Falling away/apostate...love not the truth, walk away (2 Thes 2:1-12, 1 John 2:18-19)
  - Religious...hunters vs fishers (Mark 7:1-13)
2. Followers...obey faithfully come what may, stand on the Word of God

Who will be snatched off the earth before the wrath of God falls?

Only the followers...

- the fruitful soil (Matt 13)
- those of Luke 9:57-62

### 2. Fishers of men

#### a. Fishing (Ref: Msg PD)

- Do you fish (for men)?
- Where do you go fishing?  
Gotta go where the fish are...they will not come to you
- What is the best lure to catch fish?  
Must lure them – cannot chase them with a hook or a net  
The Love of God is the best lure
- What is the best bait to catch fish?  
The bait is food, the Bread of Life (Matt 4:4)

b. Who

Jesus only uses sinful man...that is all He has to work with

- He makes them new creatures
- He calls them to Follow

Jesus uses the available vs the able

- Not all are available – fear makes people unavailable
- None are able – He makes them able

We must first fail in our own efforts/works before we will be willing to trust Jesus

- Jesus will not work if the Father does not get the glory
- We must know/accept our unworthiness to see His fruitfulness...Eph 3:20

c. What

Being made...becoming

- surrender (no peace without surrender)
- submission (laying down one's life)

Not ashamed of the Gospel

Willing to share the Gospel, with the boldness of the Holy Spirit

See the opportunities to share/speak...all around us

Willing to risk every human relationship

Willing to suffer in this world for Jesus Christ's name sake

Where would you be if someone was not ashamed, was willing to risk the relationship?

Are you ashamed, fearful?

Fear not!

Jesus is in the boat with you, He goes before you,  
He will never leave you nor forsake you

Prov 11:30    he that winneth souls *is* wise

d. Where (fishing holes)

Home

School

Work

Neighborhoods

Social Media

e.g. monsoons this week

SM reports the news

News stations report on SM reports of the news

Individuals

Police Depts

SRP/APS

3. Jesus Christ is calling – how will you respond?

If you are calling Jesus...repent!

Jesus is calling...follow!

Following Jesus is seeking/doing what He wants

Following Jesus is NOT seeking/doing what we want