

God Provides
May 10, 2015

The four different accounts of Jesus ministry do not always agree. They were written by four different men, only two of whom were apostles of Jesus. So we would expect some differences in what they write, even when they cover the same event. This morning we are going to look at three of them to put together all the facts about a particular event. We start in Mark 1.

Mark 1:16-18 (NIV) As Jesus walked beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. "Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will make you fishers of men." At once they left their nets and followed him.

It does not translate well into English, but Jesus was inviting them to become His apprentices. Jesus was inviting them to be His students, His disciples, His followers. He wasn't inviting them to listen to a sermon or to join Him for lunch. He wasn't inviting them to follow Him to a restaurant. He was inviting them to be His disciples. They understood this, and amazingly, they choose to do so. It appears that Jesus is just walking along and invites them to become His disciples, and without any other information or contact with Jesus, they do so. But there is more to the story than this.

Of the four gospels, Mark's is the most succinct. He gives us bare facts, with few of the surrounding details. It is as if He wants to hit us with a story and then quickly move on to the next one. So we will go to a couple of the other gospels to fill in some of the details that will answer the questions raised by Mark's account of these two men becoming followers of Jesus.

John the Baptist had appeared on the outskirts of Israel, down by the Jordan River, preaching to people who passed by. John was not a Baptist like we are Baptists. A better translation of his name is John the Baptizer, or John the immerser. The word baptizer means immerser.

Well word spread that there was this very unusual character down by the Jordan River, and people went out to see what was going on. As John preached, people became convinced that he was a prophet from God and many let John immerse them in the river. Two such men who came from Galilee were brothers Simon and Andrew.

John 1:35-42 (NIV) The next day John was there again with two of his disciples. When he saw Jesus passing by, he said, "Look, the Lamb of God!"

When the two disciples heard him say this, they followed Jesus. Turning around, Jesus saw them following and asked, "What do you want?"

They said, "Rabbi" (which means Teacher), "where are you staying?"

"Come," he replied, "and you will see."

So they went and saw where he was staying, and spent that day with him. It was about the tenth hour. Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was one of the two who heard what John had said and who had followed Jesus. The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, "We have found the Messiah" (that is, the Christ). And he brought him to Jesus.

Jesus looked at him and said, "You are Simon son of John. You will be called Cephas" (which, when translated, is Peter).

Jesus soon left the area to head home. If Simon and Andrew accompanied Him, we do not know. If Jesus had already invited them to be His disciples, they did not yet choose to do so. It is some time later that the event occurs by the Sea of Galilee. Let's look at it as recorded in Luke's account.

Luke 5:1-10a (NIV) One day as Jesus was standing by the Lake of Gennesaret (Sea of Galilee), with the people crowding around him and listening to the word of God, he saw at the water's edge two boats, left there by the fishermen, who were washing their nets. He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little from shore. Then he sat down and taught the people from the boat.

When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch."

Simon answered, "Master, we've worked hard all night and haven't caught anything. But because you say so, I will let down the nets." When they had done so, they caught such a large number of fish that their nets began to break. So they signaled their partners in the other boat to come and help them, and they came and filled both boats so full that they began to sink. When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus' knees and said, "Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!" For he and all his companions were astonished at the catch of fish they had taken, and so were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, Simon's partners.

Note that we have four men who are partners in a fishing business. The four men are two sets of brothers. Simon and Andrew are brothers. James and John are brothers. They have two boats. They were likely boats similar to the one found nearly 30 years ago. In 1986 the water level of the Sea of Galilee dropped due to a drought. Revealed in the mud was an ancient boat. It measured 27 feet long, 7.5 feet wide, and just over 4 feet high. Through dating of the wood making up the boat in addition to some clay pots and nails found in the boat, it was determined that the boat was from the first century. From repairs on the boat it had evidently been in use for many decades. The construction matched those found in Roman writings and mosaics of the first century. In short, it was type of boat used to fish and travel the Sea of Galilee in the days of Jesus.

http://www.generationword.com/images/israel_pictures/jesus-boat-galilee/IMG_3581.JPG

Let's go back, now, to Mark's account to get a few more details.

Mark 1:17-20 (NIV) "Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will make you fishers of men." At once they left their nets and followed him. When he had gone a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John in a boat, preparing their nets. Without delay he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men and followed him.

So we have, not four, but five men who are fishing partners. There are the brothers Simon and Andrew. Then there is Zebedee and his two sons, James and John. They have two boats. Business appears to be pretty good. They are making enough to support five families, assuming that all the brothers are married, which is likely. The business is also doing well enough to hire extra men. But Jesus invites four of the five partners to become His disciples, leaving the fishing business to the one last man. That is a significant hit to the business. They were likely wondering if the one man could handle the business. He would need to hire and train more men and oversee everything.

In addition, there are five families to think about. Peter has a wife and his mother-in-law lived in their home. He may have had children, though we aren't told so. Never-the-less I am sure these men are concerned about what will happen to their families if they take up with this traveling prophet. There is the concern about whether the business can hire on men to replace the four and still make enough to provide for all five families. This is no small thing Jesus is asking them to do.

There are two bits of information that help them to make the decision to follow Jesus. The first is what they had heard John the baptizer say. Everyone believed John to be a prophet of God and John said that Jesus was the Lamb of God. That is a hugely significant statement. John says that Jesus is much more than a prophet. John believed that Jesus was the Messiah. They understood the phrase "Lamb of God" to mean the messiah. Remember in John's gospel that when Andrew met Jesus he went and told his brother Simon, "We have found the messiah."

The second undeniable fact was the miraculous catch of fish they had just witnessed. They caught so many fish that the nets were breaking, that two boats were sinking. No one in the history of the Sea of Galilee had ever caught so many fish in one throw of the net. It was no coincidence. It was no fluke. It was a mighty miracle. It confirmed that there was something very, very special about Jesus. If Jesus could do that today, He could do it tomorrow. If Jesus could provide a huge payday for the fishing business today, He would be able to make sure the business survived, even if Simon and Andrew left. God would provide for the two families. God would make sure they did not go under while the brothers were traveling the countryside with Jesus. God would take care of their needs.

And so when Jesus gives the invitation to follow as His disciple...

Mark 1:18 (NIV) At once they left their nets and followed him.

Today Jesus is inviting you to be His disciple. He is inviting you to do more than just believe in Him. He is inviting you to trust Him for your forgiveness. He is inviting you to believe all He said and did. He is inviting you to serve the purposes of God with Him.

And you might be thinking about all the responsibilities you have.

"If I follow Jesus, what happens to my education?"

"What happens to my career plans?"

"What happens to marriage?"

"What happens to my hopes of having children?"

"What happens to my responsibilities for my parents?"

"How am I going to raise my kids to be responsible, caring, law-abiding adults?"

"How will following Jesus affect my health needs?"

"Can Jesus meet my needs?"

"Will Jesus meet my needs?"

The missionary Paul, who was challenged greater than most of us ever will be, said this...

Philippians 4:19 (NIV) ... my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus.

Now, there is a promise to rely on. There is a promise to trust. Just as Jesus put more fish in a net than it had ever held before, He can provide for your needs. Jesus can and will meet your every need. You can trust Him to do that. The question is, will you?

Will you follow Jesus and trust Him to meet your every need?

Will you follow Jesus and believe that He will enable you to meet your every responsibility?

Jesus cares about you. Jesus cares about your family. Jesus cares about your friends. Jesus cares about all the things you are responsible for doing. They will not suffer because you follow Jesus. Better, you will have more resources to fulfill them.

Jesus took care of the families of the disciples. He can take care of your family too.

As we celebrate Mother's Day and remember all that moms are responsible for doing, let this encourage you moms, God provides. God provides. Follow Jesus and God will provide. God is greatly concerned about righteousness. Fulfilling your responsibilities is righteousness. He will help you fulfill all righteousness to your families while you follow Jesus.

Dads, God will help you fulfill all righteousness to your families while you follow Jesus. You do not have to choose one over the other.

I've been in some tough spots in my life and when I turned to the Lord and confessed I was in over my head and needed help, God provided... every time. He did so not because of who I am, but because of who He is. And He will do the same for you. God can and will provide what you need to do what you need to do.

Today, won't you choose to follow Jesus? God provides. God will provide what you need. Your family will not suffer because you follow Jesus. Follow Jesus and trust God to provide.

Christian, have you fallen back into following less, believing less? Get back to where you need to be today. Give it all back to Jesus. Whatever you have let slide in your following, repent today.