

Subject: Matthew #8

Title: Follow Me, And I Will Make You Fishers of Men

Text: Matthew 4:18-25

Matthew 4:18 And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers.

19 And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.

20 And they straightway left their nets, and followed him.

21 And going on from thence, he saw other two brethren, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and he called them.

22 And they immediately left the ship and their father, and followed him.

23 And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people.

24 And his fame went throughout all Syria: and they brought unto him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatick, and those that had the palsy; and he healed them.

25 And there followed him great multitudes of people from Galilee, and from Decapolis, and from Jerusalem, and from Judaea, and from beyond Jordan.

Introduction

With the temptation of Christ behind us, we learn in v.12 that John the Baptist was “cast into prison” and that Jesus “departed into Galilee.”

Galilee was the northern section of Palestine. It was a mountainous region that extended from the Lake of Galilee north to the Lebanon Ranges. The O.T. barely mentions it, although it is seen in one of the prophecies of Jesus in Isaiah 9:1-2.

The population of Galilee was a mixture of Jews and Gentiles, and this is one reason why strict Jews of Judea despised the Galilean Jews.

John 7:41 Others said, This is the Christ. But some said, Shall Christ come out of Galilee?.....52 They answered and said unto him, Art thou also of Galilee? Search, and look: for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet.

Added to this, Galilee was cut off from Judea by the territory of the Samaritans, a people of mixed blood and mixed religion, hated by the Jews.

Jesus grew up in Galilee and spent most of his public ministry there. Nazareth, Nain, Capernaum, Cana, and Bethsaida were towns in this Galilean region. This was what we might call, the proverbial “other side of the tracks.”

John 1:43 The day following Jesus would go forth into Galilee, and findeth Philip, and saith unto him, Follow me.

44 Now Philip was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter.

45 Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.

46 And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?

Philip saith unto him, Come and see.

This prejudice was another reason to reject the ministry of Jesus of Nazareth. Mary was pregnant before marriage, Joseph a mere carpenter, Jesus a bastard child, from Nazareth of Galilee! “*Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?*”

Our text records the beginnings of Christ’s calling of His disciples. The message this morning is designed to ask four pertinent questions concerning these unusual men that we call the Twelve Apostles.

Four Important Questions

1. Why did Jesus call the disciples to work with Him?
2. Who were these Disciples?
3. What qualified them for their calling?
4. What was the result of Jesus’ personal investment in them?

1. Why Did Jesus Call the Disciples to Work with Him?

A. Jesus’ purpose was to make them “*fishers of men*” (v.19). Jesus’ ministry and mission concerned people, bringing people to the King and into the Kingdom. People working with people.

B. These men are called “disciples,” i.e., students or learners. These men first needed to learn some specific truths and skills:

- theology
- ministry skills
- spiritual formation

They needed to learn “to follow.”

C. Jesus wanted to teach these men what was of greatest importance, love God, love others. Jesus wanted to touch their lives personally.

D. Jesus wanted these men and others to share the responsibilities and blessings of a most fulfilled life. They could achieve purpose, fulfillment and happiness by doing that which was most fulfilling, teaching and influencing people for good, for God! They could become partakers of the Divine nature.

E. Jesus knew that God would be glorified through the **transformation** that would take place in these men’s lives through discipleship.

II. Who Were the Disciples?

Disciples (students) or Apostles (sent ones). This was a diverse group of individuals, fishermen, tax collector, revolutionary, two or three sets of brothers, but all very common men.

Peter

- * also called Simon and Cephas (John 1:42)
- * fisherman from Capernaum
- * married
- * one of the inner three (Peter, James, John, Matthew 17:1)
- * denied Christ
- * led the Apostles at Pentecost (Acts 2)
- * wrote the Epistles of I and II Peter

Andrew

- * the first Apostle (John 1:40)
- * Peter's brother
- * brought Peter to Jesus (John 1:41)

James, the son of Zebedee (Matthew 4:21)

- * fisherman
- * brother of John
- * "Sons of Thunder" (Mark 3:17)
- * asked Jesus to rain fire on a rebellious village
- * sought for him and his brother John to sit on the right and left hands of Jesus (Mark 10:35-37)
- * martyred (Acts 12:1-2)
- * inner three

John, the son of Zebedee

- * fisherman, brother of James
- * inner three, at the transfiguration
- * the "beloved one" (John 19:26)
- * John cared for Jesus' mother
- * terrible temper, "Sons of Thunder"
- * wrote five N.T. books (Gospel, I, II, III John, Revelation)
- * exiled to the island of Patmos (Revelation 1:9)

James, the son of Alphaeus (Matthew 10:3)

- * Galilean
- * brother of Matthew (Mark 2:14)

Philip

- * from Bethsaida of Galilee
- * fourth to follow Jesus (John 1:43)
- * told Nathaniel (Bartholomew) and invited him to "come and see" (John 1:46)

Bartholomew

- * also known as Nathanael (John 1:46-48)
- * born in Cana of Galilee (John 21:2)

Thomas

- * also known as Didymus (John 11:16)
- * the doubter (John 20:24-25)
- * “My lord and My God” (John 20:18)

Matthew

- * also known as Levi (Mark 2:14)
- * tax collector (Matthew 9:9)
- * author of the first Gospel

Judas Iscariot

- * from Kerieth (southern Palestine, Amos 2:2) - all others from Galilee
- * the treasurer (John 12:6; 13:29)
- * betrayed Christ with a “kiss” for 30 pieces of silver (John 26:14-15; Matthew 26:48; Luke 22:47-48)
- * hung himself (Matthew 27:5)

Simon the Canaanite (Matthew 10:4)

- * also known as Simon Zelotes (Luke 6:15; Acts 1:13), because he was a revolutionary, anti government

Thaddeus

- * also known as Lebbaeus (Matthew 10:3), Judas the brother of James (Luke 6:16), and Jude
- * spoke only one time in Gospels (John 14:22)

The Twelve Apostles

Peter - Simon Peter - Cephas

Andrew

James, son of Zebedee

John, the “beloved one”

James, son of Alphaeus

Philip

Bartholomew - Nathaniel

Thomas - Didymus

Matthew - Levi

Judas Iscariot

Simon the Zealot

Thaddeus - Jude - Lebbaeus - Judas brother of James

Matthias - Judas' replacement (Acts 1:23-26)

Paul - Apostle to the Gentiles (Acts 9)

III. What Qualified These Men for Their Calling?

A. The most obvious thing to me concerning their qualifications is that they had no apparent qualifications!

That is not accidental - **Disciples are very ordinary people!** - *“not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called”* (I Corinthians 1:26).

B. This was a **diverse group**, not voted the most likely to succeed in their high school yearbooks.

- Galileans - social low life
- Fishermen
- despised tax collector
- they were diverse and **common**

So was Jesus - Nazareth - carpenter - Mary and Joseph were poor - unschooled, one of seven children (Matthew 13:55-56)

C. The qualification that stands out to me is this - they answered the call, they were **available**.

Whatever you may think of Joel Olsteen, I can say that he is right about this - there is unrevealed greatness out there. Greatness in the sense that God wants to do great and wonderful things through all of us, **all who will make themselves AVAILABLE**.

D. God will use your history, your life, your experience, your background, your education, to do great things as a disciple of Jesus Christ.

These men were “nobodies” who we are talking about 2,000 years later! You are not insignificant!

Jesus did not call the Scribes, the Priests, the Pharisees, the Professors, the politicians, the military, etc. He called the common to assure us that **the call was for all!**

Anyone can follow - its a personal choice

“Follow me”

Are you missing your call?

Are you available?

IV. What Were the Results of Jesus' Investment in Them?

- * Not all followed - Judas. All will not follow. Don't be discouraged by those who won't.
- * Many disciples chose not to continue (John 6:66), but the program will go on without you.
- * Those who followed were **transformed**.
 - Thomas the doubter - became a believer
 - Peter the denier - denied Him no more
 - The Sons of Thunder (James/John) - put their zeal and passion to work for Jesus
 - Matthew, the tax collector, became Matthew the evangelist
 - Simon the Zealot went from patriotism to evangelism
- * They became "*fishers of men*" and "*turned the world upside down*" (Acts 17:6).
Acts 17:6 And when they found them not, they drew Jason and certain brethren unto the rulers of the city, crying, These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also;
- * They suffered and some were martyred, but they became men of courage, purpose and resolve.

We are now experiencing 2,000 years of success.

"Follow me and I will make you fishers of men."

He will use:

- the common
- the diverse
- the available
- your experience and talent
- and transform your life.

Matthew 4:25 And there followed him great multitudes of people from Galilee, and from Decapolis, and from Jerusalem, and from Judaea, and from beyond Jordan.

Matthew 28:19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

Acts 1:8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

Now, my final thought or question. How do I really know if I am following Him?

What do I look for? What are the signs or what is the evidence?

It is easy for me to give myself a free pass on this one - "Of course, I am following Him."
What is the evidence? The answer is in the text.

"Follow me and I will make you fishers of men." You do what you are supposed to do, "Follow," and He will do what He is supposed to do, "make you a fisher of men." Followers are "fishermen." This is exactly what He did. This is what we are to do. We are to reach out to new people!

Where's your pond?

Examples:

- * retired - NSBI - mission field (Dutton)
- * raised her children - back to school to counsel and help women
- * saved - NSBI - pastoring in Naples
- * retired - in the jails every week
- * retired - Little Red Book
- * etc., etc.

Where's your pond?

"God's church exists not for itself, but for the benefit of those who are not yet members...and the church which lives for itself will be sure to die by itself." - Michael Green