



## Matthew 4:18–22 (NLT)

*One day as Jesus was walking along the shore of the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers—Simon, also called Peter, and Andrew—throwing a net into the water, for they fished for a living. Jesus called out to them, “Come, follow me, and I will show you how to fish for people!” And they left their nets at once and followed him.*

*A little farther up the shore he saw two other brothers, James and John, sitting in a boat with their father, Zebedee, repairing their nets. And he called them to come, too. They immediately followed him, leaving the boat and their father behind.*

### Understanding the Biblical Story

#### Verse 18

*One day as Jesus was walking along the shore of the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers—Simon, also called Peter, and Andrew—throwing a net into the water, for they fished for a living.*

- Jesus had previously made Galilee his base of operations, living in Capernaum during this story (Matthew 4:12–13).
- The Sea of Galilee is the center of life in Galilee, roughly 13 miles long from north to south and 8 miles across from east to west. The sea was thick with fishing boats in Jesus’ day.
- Peter and Andrew used a casting net (also known as the *amphiblestron*), which was circular and as large as 9 feet across. Weighted with pellets of lead, it would sink into the water, catching fish as it descended and was drawn to shore.

#### Verse 19

*Jesus called out to them, “Come, follow me, and I will show you how to fish for people!”*

- It was Jewish custom for potential disciples to approach rabbis and apply to become their pupils. Jesus chooses them.
- Following rabbis typically meant becoming a scholar, specifically in the Law. However, Jesus calls his disciples to be heralds and multipliers of God’s Kingdom.
- Disciples of Jewish rabbis normally continued their trades, but Jesus wants his disciples to be with him full-time.

#### Verse 20

*And they left their nets at once and followed him.*

- Why would they do this? The Gospel of John seems to indicate they had prior contact with Jesus. But that might be missing the point this story is making.
- People become believers by the power of Jesus’ word. They follow him because he has spoken to them, and his word generates faith.
- The church comes into being in response to Christ’s own word. That is the miracle in this story and why the apparent lack of prior contact enhances the message.

## Verse 21

*A little farther up the shore he saw two other brothers, James and John, sitting in a boat with their father, Zebedee, repairing their nets. And he called them to come, too.*

- Mark's Gospel reports that there were hired men in the boat with Zebedee.
- Typically, there were three types of people who would fit under the category of fishermen in Jesus' day:
  - Tax collectors who sold fishing rights to businessmen.
  - People who owned/leased boats and employed day laborers.
  - A seasonal day laborer.
- The sons of Zebedee were likely in the second category.

## Verse 22

*They immediately followed him, leaving the boat and their father behind.*

- We often look at the disciples following Jesus as an abandonment of their former occupation. For some of us, that is true, but for others it means abandoning our former motivations.
- The image of fishing was often used in other faiths' traditions as an illustration of calling people to a new life, to participate in their god's own saving work.

### **What This Fishing Story Teaches Us About Discipleship**

We are never called into discipleship \_\_\_\_\_.

Fishing isn't just about inviting people into a relationship with Jesus Christ, but \_\_\_\_\_ disciples to \_\_\_\_\_ in one another.

Ministry can happen in \_\_\_\_\_.

#### **Our Purpose**

Christ Church exists to make the freeing and saving grace of Jesus Christ relevant to our community and the world.

### **Five Qualities of Good Fishermen**

#### 1. Patience

- We don't always get to see quick results. We trust in long-term results.

#### 2. Perseverance

- We can't be paralyzed by the thought of failure and must always be willing to try again.

#### 3. Courage

- We need to be willing to tell the truth, sharing the gospel and acting on it despite opposition.

#### 4. An eye for the right moment

- We must be discerning, understanding there is a time to speak and a time to stay silent.

#### 5. The ability to keep out of sight

- We must get out of the way, presenting Jesus Christ rather than ourselves by our words and deeds.

## **Come and Fish**

**Come:** No matter where you are in your faith. No matter what your occupation happens to be. You have a unique circle of influence and experiences that will speak into somebody's life.

**Fish:** Invest in those around you. Support them and help them see where God may be inviting them to grow in their faith. Help each other become better disciples. Be a kingdom multiplier.

Major sources for today's teaching: *The Gospel of Matthew Volume I* by William Barclay, and *The Communicator's Commentary: Matthew* by Myron S. Augsburger.