

Rev. Dustin Daniels | River Bible Church
Matthew 4:18-22 | The Call
May 29, 2022

WELCOME:

- Please turn your Bibles to Matthew 4.
- Bibles in back—our gift to you.

REVIEW:

Last Sunday, we discussed how Jesus fulfilled a prophecy from the OT book of Isaiah.

The cool thing is that this prophecy was predicted 500-700 years before Jesus was even born.

The prophecy was about people's hearts and their broken spiritual condition.

The people who lived in this land during Jesus' time were *sitting in spiritual darkness*.

They were *living in the shadow of death*.

And we discussed how the Verde Valley is no different today.

In our own backyard, we have devil worship in Jerome.

We have all sorts of New Age mysticism in Sedona.

In Clarkdale, Cottonwood and Cornville, we either have all sorts of false beliefs mixed into Christianity—

Or, nobody gives a rip about Christ at all.

Finally, we made the comparison that just as Jesus was the light to the Galileans—today Jesus' church is the light to the Verde Valley.

If, we're the light in the Verde Valley, then where are we supposed to shine it?

And that sets us up for today's Scripture passage.

INTRODUCTION:

Today, we will see what Jesus does when someone comes to the light.

Jesus doesn't allow His people to figure out this new spiritual life on their own.

So we're going to see Jesus in action today.

He's going to call and gather four disciples unto Himself.

What does this calling mean for you?

How does Jesus' call impact your life?

Let's find out!

Please stand for the reading and honoring of God's Word.

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 4:18-22 CSB

Matthew 4:18— As he was walking along the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon (who is called Peter), and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the sea—for they were fishermen.

Matthew 4:19— "Follow me," he told them, "and I will make you fish for people."

Matthew 4:20— Immediately they left their nets and followed him.

Matthew 4:21— Going on from there, he saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee, and his brother John. They were in a boat with Zebedee their father, preparing their nets, and he called them.

Matthew 4:22— Immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.

***This is the Word of the Lord for River Bible Church.*

EXEGESIS:

Matthew 4:18— As ^{Jesus} he was walking along the Sea of Galilee,

From the start, Matthew gives us the picture that Jesus is on mission.

He is walking with a purpose.

As beautiful as the sea of Galilee is, Jesus is not sightseeing.

What Jesus is doing is replacing the twelve tribes of Israel with the twelve disciples.

The twelve tribes failed to be obedient.

The twelve tribes failed to evangelize.

Israel was supposed to spread the message of the One True Living God—YWHW—to the other nations.

But they didn't do that.

In fact, they didn't even try.

Rather than going out into the world, they shut the world out.

So, with Jesus now walking along the Sea of Galilee, this is a do-over from the nation of Israel.

Jesus' whole life is a do-over.

That's why Jesus is called the Second/New Adam.

Jesus is going to do what Adam and Eve failed to do.

Jesus is going to accomplish what the nation of Israel did not.

Matthew 4:18— *As he was walking along the Sea of Galilee,*

We learned about the area of Galilee last Sunday, specifically with Nazareth and Capernaum, and today we learn about its sea.

The Sea of Galilee is eight miles wide and thirteen miles long and is nearly 700 feet below sea level.

It has several different names and even more different spellings.

It's also called the Sea of Chinnereth or the Sea of Tiberias.

Luke, in his Gospel, refers to it as a lake.

Dr. Luke was probably a bit more seasoned than the other Gospel writers when traveling, so he's familiar with how large an actual sea is—he's probably seen the Mediterranean Sea or traveled on it.

Regardless, the Sea/Lake of Galilee was known for its fishing.

Josephus, a Jewish historian and one-time governor of Galilee, states that the lake had 240 fishing boats.

So that's quite the fishing enterprise for a small lake.

Matthew 4:18— ^{Jesus}... he saw two brothers, Simon (who is called Peter), and his brother Andrew.

So let's talk about these two men.

Peter eventually becomes the leader of the Twelve.

We know Pete well.

His mouth is shaped like a foot.

Andrew is not as prominent as the other disciples.

But the interesting thing about Andrew, is that he's always bringing other people to Jesus.

Andrew brought Peter to meet Jesus in John 1:42.

Andrew brought the little boy with a sack lunch to Jesus in John 6:8.

Jesus then used that sack lunch to feed over 20,000 people.

Andrew brought a group of Greeks to meet Jesus in John 12:22.

So that gives a little insight into Andrew's personality.

Matthew 4:18— They (Pete and Andy) were casting a net into the sea—for they were fishermen.

So we know who these men are, and now we know their profession.

Peter and Andrew are commercial fishermen, not casual hobbyist anglers.

Can you picture what these men look like?

Don't think of the movies that you've watched.

These men are professional fishermen who have been working all night long.

Physically these men are strong—and emotionally, they are strong-willed.

They are rough around the edges.

They talk like fishermen, and they smell like fishermen.

Why? Because they are fishermen!

Are y'all getting the picture?

So Peter and Andrew are manly men—they are far from wimps.

Notice how Matt gives detail into their style of fishing—*casting a net into the sea*.


They are not using a fishing pole—hook and line—stick with a string.

They are throwing this big heavy net into the shallow water and dragging it along the shore.

The net was circular and weighted down with stones.

When they pulled it up, it tightened around the fish.

So as they are working...this is just another day in the life of Galilee.
And all of a sudden, Jesus walks up and says to them...

 **Matthew 4:19**— "Follow me," he told them, "and I will make you fish for people."

This statement seems abrupt at first.

Because it sounds like Jesus is taking a stroll on the beach and walks up to strangers and makes this bizarre statement.

And it is abrupt because this is the first mention of any dialogue between Jesus, Peter, and Andrew in Matthew's Gospel.

But if you remember from last week, there's a twelve-month time gap between Matthew 4:11-12.

And we looked at John's Gospel to fill in that year of Jesus' life with details.

So Peter and Andrew knew Jesus fairly well at this point.

They knew what kind of man Jesus was.

Jesus had invited the disciples to follow him a year prior—John 1:43.

And within the past year...

They saw Jesus:

- Turn water into wine.
- Cleanse the temple in Jerusalem.
- Among other things.

Secondly, John the Baptizer told his disciples that the Messiah was coming.

John encouraged his disciples to go and follow Jesus.

Andrew just happened to be one of John's disciples who did precisely that.

So Peter and Andrew had been followers of Jesus for about a year but eventually had to go back to work just like everyone else.

After a year of being bi-vocational disciples of Jesus, Jesus says...

“Follow me” in v. 19 is literally *come after me*,

We would say it this way, “Come here, come on!”

Don’t you find it interesting that Jesus didn’t tell them to “Believe.”

No, Jesus says, “let’s go—it’s time—follow Me!”

Why didn’t Jesus tell them to believe?

Because they already believed.

Verse 19 is not an invitation.

This is a command.

They already believe, and now it’s time to do something with their faith.

KEYPOINT #1

God always calls His people to do His work.

We see this all through Scripture— Noah, Abraham, and Moses.

God calls Noah and says he will destroy the Earth because it’s filled with wickedness.

God commands Noah to build an ark.

Noah responds, *“Sure, but what’s an ark?”*

Genesis 6:22— *And Noah did this. He did everything that God had commanded him.*

God also called Abraham.

Listen to the wording of how God relates to Abraham during this call.

+ **Genesis 12:1**—The Lord said to Abram:
Go from your land,
your relatives,
and your father's house
to the land that I will show you.

+ **Genesis 12:2**—I will make you into a great nation,
I will bless you,
I will make your name great,
and you will be a blessing.

+ **Genesis 12:3**—I will bless those who bless you,
I will curse anyone who treats you with contempt,
and all the peoples on Earth
will be blessed through you.,

+ **Genesis 12:4**— So Abram went, as the Lord had told him,

The most famous calling may be Moses.

+ **Exodus 3:4**— God called out to him from the bush, "Moses, Moses!" "Here I am," he answered.

Here's the amazing thing about being called by God.

Moses argues with God and gives God excuse after excuse for why God has the wrong guy.

And yet, God doesn't have the wrong guy.

Why? Because he's been chosen by God to do God's work.

Now, We fast forward several thousand years, and we see God in the flesh calling more men.

Notice here

This is the second call from Jesus to Peter and Andrew.

This call is different than the first.

They were already disciples, but they were now called into full-time discipleship.

They had made a previous commitment to Jesus, but they had not yet given their lives over to Jesus.

Jesus allowed a year to pass for the relationship to build before He required something new of them.

Some say that this is the call of Salvation.

Notice what Jesus says here...

Matthew 4:19— "Follow me," he told them,

Follow ME!

Jesus doesn't offer a particular doctrine, systematic theology, or set of beliefs.

Jesus offers His disciples something much better—a relationship with God.

Think about it...Jesus came from Heaven in perfect community with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit.

And now Jesus is offering the disciples the same type of community on Earth.

Jesus calls Peter and Andrew to give up everything they've ever known and join him in full-time ministry.

And they know this—and they're excited about this call.

Pause...at this point, isn't it interesting that Jesus calls others to join Him in His walk, journey, and for fellowship.

What's that tell us?

KEYPOINT 2:

Jesus never intended to save sinners alone.

Yes, salvation is through Christ alone, but that's not what I'm talking about.

There is no such thing as a lone ranger Christian in Scripture.

Yes, many times the main focus is on the Biblical leaders, but they are surrounded by people.

Except for one man, there may be another example, but I'm thinking about Samson.

There are many reasons that Samson failed in his life and calling.

One of the primary reasons was that he did go it alone.

He had no godly men around him—while he clung to a wicked woman.

And when you go it alone, you die alone.

We are to follow Jesus and be surrounded by community.

Because Jesus, Himself, was surrounded by community.

Thirteen times in Matthew's Gospel, we hear Jesus saying to people, 'Follow Me.'

Matthew 4:19— *...and I will make you fish for people.*"

Jesus said, "**I will make....**"

"I'm going to do this in you—I will train you."

The same is true for us today.

The call is the same but through a different means.

The call is not through Jesus today but rather the Holy Spirit.

And the way the Holy Spirit makes the call is through His Word and confirmed by His people called the church.

The question is whether or not we're teachable and obedient to the call.

So Jesus gives Peter and Andrew a command to follow Him, what do they do?

"Oh, okay Jesus...ummm, yeah, I'm going to have to get back to you on that."

My schedule is pretty full, I've got bingo later in the day, and I certainly don't want to miss "Wheel of Misfortune" tonight."

Is that what happened?

Matthew 4:20— *Immediately they left their nets and followed him.*

Immediately—at once, without delay.

They intentionally and willfully decided to depart from their work.

They dropped the nets and followed Jesus.

Now many of us may still find this part of the story abrupt and hard to believe.

And I get that.

What Matthew records with this narrative are the highlights of Jesus being King.

Matt focuses on the call of a King.

But Luke focuses on the humanity of Jesus.

So let's take a quick look at Luke's account to fill in some details. *-hope this helps*

Luke 5:1—As the crowd was pressing in on Jesus to hear God's word, he was standing by Lake Gennesaret.

Luke 5:2—He saw two boats at the edge of the lake; the fishermen had left them and were washing their nets.

Luke 5:3—He got into one of the boats, which belonged to Simon, and asked him to put out a little from the land. Then he sat down and was teaching the crowds from the boat.

Luke 5:4—When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into deep water and let down your nets for a catch."

Luke 5:5—"Master," Simon replied, "we've worked hard all night long and caught nothing. But if you say so, I'll let down the nets."

Luke 5:6—When they did this, they caught a great number of fish, and their nets began to tear.

Luke 5:7—So they signaled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them; they came and filled both boats so full that they began to sink.

Luke 5:8—When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus's knees and said, "Go away from me, because I'm a sinful man, Lord!"

Luke 5:9—For he and all those with him were amazed at the catch of fish they had taken,

Luke 5:10—and so were James and John, Zebedee's sons, who were Simon's partners. "Don't be afraid," Jesus told Simon. "From now on you will be catching people."

Luke 5:11—Then they brought the boats to land, left everything, and followed him.

KEYPOINT 3:

Christianity is not only a set of teachings to understand. ~~Christianity is~~ ^{IT'S} a Person to follow.

Matthew doesn't record any hesitation for Peter and Andrew to leave their nets.

Their nets equaled their livelihood.

This is how they made a living.

Fishing is all they've ever known.

If they don't fish, they don't eat.

That's like a general contractor leaving his tools.

That's like a lawyer leaving his books.

That's like a doctor burning his license to practice medicine.

Do you know what this scene reminds me of?

Do you remember Elijah and Elisha?

It's almost as if Jesus is imitating Elijah's call to Elisha (1 Kgs 19:19–21).

Jesus even hints at this OT narrative in Luke's Gospel— *"No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."* (Luke 9:62).

What's interesting here is how both Elijah and Jesus invert the standard procedure for disciple-making.

Generally, the disciple would ask the Rabbi.

Rabbis waited for students to apply to them.

We still do the same thing today.

If you want to go to college, you have to apply.

You may get a scholarship, but you still have to fill out the paperwork.

That's not how Elijah or Jesus did it.

Jesus chooses His disciples.

Pause. What's that tell us?

To be chosen by Jesus is supernaturally special.

God, Himself is making a distinction between the chosen and the world.

If God chooses these men, then He has a special assignment for them.

Matthew 4:20— *Immediately they left their nets and followed him.*

At this moment, everything changed for them.

In many ways, they walked away from their families, homes, and livelihood.

If that's not crazy enough, Matthew presses on in verse 21.

Matthew 4:21— *Going on from there, he saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee, and his brother John. They were in a boat with Zebedee their father, preparing their nets, and he called them.*

Matthew provides a second example that's nearly identical.

This time it appears that James and John are heading out to fish.

They are fixing their nets.

A net is no good if it has a hole in it.

So, once again, it's just another day at the office, and Jesus shows up and calls them.

And they said ???... Well, they didn't say anything.

Matthew 4:22— *Immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.*

In other words, they left their livelihood and family to follow Jesus.

Fast forward two years, and it cost them everything.

James was the first of the apostles to be martyred.

King Herod killed him.

The Jews rejoiced when Herod murdered James.

When Herod saw this, he also arrested Peter and intended to kill him. (Acts 12:1–2).

Peter was eventually murdered for following Jesus.

John, refers to himself as the apostle whom Jesus loved (John 13:23; 19:26).

John did a lot of writing.

The Holy Spirit worked through him to write the fourth Gospel.

He also wrote 1,2, and 3 John along with the book of Revelation.

Speaking of John's writing, in His Gospel, John chapter 21, he hints that there could have been up to seven fishermen within the Twelve.

Have you ever thought about why Jesus called so many fishermen?

I'm not a fisherman.

I'm not an outdoorsman.

My idea of a camping trip is a four-star hotel.

But I do have some observations when it comes the character of men who are fishermen.

First, fishermen are busy people.

Professional fishermen did not sit around and play video games.

I've seen an episode of the Deadliest Catch—these guys know how to work.

They either sort through their latest catch, prepare for a new catch or fix their gear.

Jesus chose fishermen because He needs people who are not afraid to work.

Fishermen are also courageous.

Fishermen are patient.

Fishermen work together. They are a team.

Jesus demands cooperation within the team.

Lastly, fishing demands faith because fishermen can't see the fish.

And all of these qualities make for great disciples who learn how to be evangelists.

Isn't that interesting?

These Disciples have to learn the 3 Circles just like us!

That's what Jesus means when He says, *"I will make you fisher's of men."*

Because that's what these men are now.

They are evangelists in training.

And next week, these men are with Jesus as He continues teaching, preaching and healing.

PREACH

As I wrap up today's sermon, I want to do something slightly different. I'd like to share a burden that I have with you.

And I think the burden is illustrated well within this story.

On a dangerous seacoast where shipwrecks were nonstop, some people decided to build a very simple yet crude life-saving station.

This station was just literally just a tent.

They only had one boat, and the people were few.

But even though they were few, they were dedicated.

They chose to keep a constant watch over the sea for people who needed help.

They sacrificed their time with little regard for themselves.

They were committed to go out day and night.

And because of their commitment, they saved many lives.

Some of those people who were saved were so thankful, they also wanted to give back.

They felt compelled to be a part of this life-saving work.

They gave their time and money.

So, new boats were bought.

More people were trained.

And this little station grew.

Over time, some members became unhappy because the tent was cold and crude.

They felt that they needed to build a larger, nicer place.

And they rationalized that it would be better for the people they saved from the sea.

So they replaced the sleeping bags/cots with hospital beds and put better furniture in the building.

Soon the station became a popular social place for its members.

They continued to remodel and re-decorate until the station looked more like a club than a life-saving rescue station.

Over time, fewer and fewer members were interested in going out on these life-saving missions.

So they decided to hire professionals/ professional life-saving crews to do the work—so they could stay in the clubhouse and socialize.

And then, one day, these professional life-saving crews brought boatloads of cold, wet, half-drowned people from a large ship that wrecked off the coast.

These people, who were thankful to be alive, were obviously dirty, bruised, sick, and scared.

The beautiful new club got incredibly dirty that day.

So the club members created a committee to prevent that from ever happening again.

The committee spent money and resources to build a shower on the outside of the building, so the people could be cleaned up before coming inside.

At the next meeting, there was a split in the club membership.

Most of the members wanted to stop the club's mission—the mission of saving lives.

skw They claimed it had become an unpleasant hindrance to their newly expanded social life.

Other members insisted on keeping the original mission of the club.

They passionately pointed out that saving people's lives from the sea was their primary purpose.

After all, they were still called a life-saving station.

But those members were voted down.

And they were told that if they wanted to save lives, they could build their own station down the coast somewhere else.

And that's what they did.
As the years went by, the new station gradually faced the same exact problems as before.

It, too, became a club, and its life-saving work became less and less of a priority.

The few members who remained dedicated to the original work of saving people's lives, began yet another station.

But, history continued to repeat itself.

If you visit that coast today, you will find a number of exclusive clubs along the shore.

Shipwrecks are still recurring in those waters, but most people drown.

This modern-day parable points to the heart of my burden for you—and the people of the Verde Valley.

It wasn't too long ago that we had a church split here at River.

When I was commissioned to be the senior pastor, River Church, as it was called several years ago— was a club.

There hadn't been a baptism in six or seven years.

The baptism, ^{AT that time} which looked like a kiddie pool, was stuck in the closet so the mice could eat holes in it.

And the most significant change that I made coming in was from the pulpit.

The decision to teach the Bible verse by verse.

And we've been doing that for nearly four years now.

And by God's grace, this little church on the hill offers six Bible studies.

By God's grace, we are a teaching church.

And that's wonderful, because we are fulfilling part of the Great Commission.

But here's my burden.

Moving forward, what are we going to do with it?

What are we going to do with all this knowledge about Jesus.

Maybe a better question is, what will we do with Jesus?

A pastor friend of mine says this, *"We have a choice. We can either be fishers of men or keepers of the aquarium."*

This idea of keeping and maintaining and managing the aquarium is called iChurch.

iChurch it's where we:

1. Complain about the music
2. Critique the sermon
3. Demand to be served
4. Refuse to allow God's Word to transform us into the likeness of Christ.

There is a reason our mission statement is nailed to the foyer wall for everyone to see.

"Experiencing God... Verse by Verse."

Here's the thing...learning God's Word is only the beginning of the journey.

We have to ask ourselves, *"what are we going to do next?"* — *Is this a goal? AS it sets*
- Goals

That's the place where Peter, Andrew, James and John found themselves in today.

We experience God verse-by-verse—SO THAT we can experience God day-by-day.

Experiencing God verse by verse is vertical—it's theological and that's very important.

But experiencing God day-by-day is horizontal—it's about people.

How do we do that?

By going fishing. We have to be intentional.

We just learned how Jesus called His first four disciples.

Nothing has changed over the past 2,000 years.

God is calling you too.

It's a constant call.

Everywhere we look in the Verde Valley, people are drowning spiritually.

And dear friend, you can't teach a drowning person how to swim at that moment.

Somebody somewhere needs to jump in the water to save that man's life.

Somebody needs to get dirty and wet.

The work of evangelism is a form of spiritual rescue.

I know this is so hard to believe, but you and me—are God's marketing plan for the gift of His Salvation that He's given to us.

There is no plan B—The Great Commission is what it is.

BTW, do you realize how much more influence you have than me?

When people find out I'm a pastor, they immediately shut down.

But not as much with you. Why?

Because you're an ambassador for Christ disguised as a retiree.

You're a business owner, undercover, as an evangelist.

You're artists, salesmen, nurses, mechanics, contractors and builders all working together within these professions for the building up of God's Kingdom right here in the Verde Valley.

I can stand up here every Sunday and blow the spiritual fog horn to equip you as the saints for ministry.

But the question remains.

What are you going to do with Jesus after that spiritual fog horn sounds each week?

That's why the 3 Circles is a priority.

It's why we show those videos nearly every Sunday.

It's why many of you have been trained, and more people are being trained right now.

Jesus taught Peter, Andrew, James and John how to turn everyday conversations into Gospel conversations.

Jesus taught them and sent them out two by two.

What about you?

What's Jesus calling you to do?

For some of you, it begins with answering the call to salvation.

Romans 10:9—*If you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.*

For some of you the call is to be baptized.

If you're new to RBC, maybe your call is to make the commitment to continue coming on Sunday mornings.

Maybe your call is to stay after Sunday service and spend time in fellowship—to truly learn about the culture and DNA of the church.

Maybe your call is to join a small group.

If you're doing all those things, maybe your call is to become a member—a formal commitment to Christ's church.

If you're a member, maybe God is calling you to....(fill in the blank).

I have a theory—

Do you want to know why so many Christians are unhappy with life and angry at God?

Because they said “no” to His call.

Dear friends, you haven't lived until you've said “yes.”

It is the most terrifying thing you will ever do.

I like to call it a beautiful disaster.

Here's the thing, if you've said “no” in the past—repent—and say “yes” today.

God's not done with you. You're still breathing! It's not too late.

We've all been commissioned, but to fulfill the call is a little different for each of us.

That's what makes the church so beautiful.

I'd like to encourage you to do some business with God today and listen to where He's calling you.

↳ And then drop your net & follow Him. Amen?

PRAY/Benediction:

Eph 3:20-21

Now to him who is able to do above and beyond all that we ask or think according to the power that works in us—to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

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