

Called to Follow Jesus

John 1:35-42; Mark 1:16-18; Luke 1:1-11

I. Simon Peter—the Basic Facts

- Son of John (or Jonah) Jn. 1: 42; Matt. 16:17
- Originally named Simon (or Simeon) Acts 15:12
- Introduced to Jesus by his brother, Andrew (Jn. 1:40-42)
- Jesus named him Peter (Greek translation of the Aramaic word “Cephas”= “stone or rock”) Mk. 3:16
- Peter & his brother, Andrew were fishermen (Mk. 1:16) partners with James & John (Luke 5:10)
- Peter was married, he had a wife & mother-in-law (Mk. 1:29-31; 1 Cor. 9:5)
- Peter & family lived in a house in Capernaum on the Lake Galilee/Gennesaret shore (Mk. 1:21, 29)
- One of the 1st disciples called by Jesus; an apostle, one of “the Twelve” & named 1st (Mk. 3:14-19)

II. God’s repeated appearing and calling

“The next day again John [the Baptist] was standing with 2 of his disciples; he looked at Jesus as he walked by & said, “Behold, the Lamb of God!” The 2 disciples heard him say this, & they followed Jesus. Jesus turned & saw them following & said, “What are you seeking?” They said to him, “Rabbi” (which means Teacher), “where are you staying?” He said, “Come & you will see.” So they came & saw where he was staying, & they stayed with him that day, for it was about the 10th hour. One of the 2 who heard John speak & followed Jesus was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother. He first found his own brother Simon & said to him, “We have found the Messiah” (which means Christ). He[Andrew] brought him [Simon] to Jesus. Jesus looked at him & said, “You are Simon the son of John. You shall be called Cephas” (which means Peter).” (John 1:35-42)

A First appearing – introduced by Andrew – John 1:35-42

B First calling – Matt. 4:18-20; Mark 1:16-18

Matt. 4:18–19 *2 brothers, Simon (who is called Peter) & Andrew.* These brothers had been followers of Jesus for about a year (cf. John 1:35–42) but apparently had returned for a time to their normal work. *casting a net into the sea.* A circular cast net, 20–25 feet (6.1–7.6 m) in diameter with lead sinkers attached to the outer edge, enveloped fish as it sank. *Follow me.* Jesus calls them to abandon their ordinary occupations (Matt. 4:20) and accompany him full-time. (ESV Study Bible)

C Possible second calling – Luke 5:1-11

“On one occasion, while the crowd was pressing in on Jesus to hear God’s word, he was standing by the lake of Gennesaret [Galilee]. He saw 2 boats by the lake, but the fishermen had gone out of them & were washing their nets. Getting into one of the boats (Simon’s), Jesus asked him to put out a little from the land. Jesus sat down & taught the people from the boat. When he’d finished speaking, Jesus said to Simon, “Put out into the deep & let down your nets for a catch.” Simon answered, “Master, we toiled all night & took nothing! But at your word I’ll let down the nets.” When they had done this, they enclosed a large number of fish, & their nets were breaking. They signaled to their partners in the other boat to come & help them. They came & filled both boats, so that they began to sink. But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus’ knees, saying, “Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.” For he & all who were with him were astonished at the catch of fish that they’d taken, & so also were James & John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. Jesus said to Simon, “Don’t be afraid; from now on you’ll be catching men.” When they had brought their boats to land, they left everything & followed him.” (Luke 5:1-11)

“Passing alongside the Sea of Galilee, Jesus saw Simon & Andrew the brother of Simon casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen. Jesus said to them, “Follow me, & I’ll make you become fishers of men.” Immediately they left their nets & followed him.” (Mark 1:16-18)

- “*Do not be afraid.*” (Lk. 5:10) Greek is present, imperative—a command to cease/stop being afraid
- “Catching men” (Greek: *anthropos*), people, both men & women. (Luke 5:10-11)

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- Jesus calls common fishermen to leave everything & become his disciples as fishers of men. Jesus precedes the call by demonstrating his authority through the miraculous catch of fish. [ESV]

III. Called with a view to change

- A. Simon's name shall be Cephas/Peter
- B. Called to follow Jesus
- C. Called to become fishers of men
- **Jesus** calls his disciples to be *fishers of men*, an assignment they will fulfill as they have continual fellowship with him & carry out the mission that Jesus gives them (3:14). Jesus' words recall Jer. 16:15-17, where "fishers" & "hunters" of men will call people back from idols to God after judgment has occurred. This call happens in a context of purification (Jer. 16:17) & will include Gentiles (Jer. 16:19).
- Mark 1:20 *they left their father...with the hired servants*. Several of Jesus' first disciples were not poor but self-employed fishermen or, as in this case (James & John), were part of a family business. ESV
- **Mark 1:17** *Become (genesthai)*. Mark has this word. It would be a slow and long process, but Jesus could & would do it. He...makes fishers of men out of fishermen. (Robertson's Word Pictures)
- **On Luke 5:10** "catching men" Robertson's Word Pictures says: "The old verb *Zōgreō* means to catch alive, not to kill. So then Peter is to be a catcher of men, not of fish, & to catch them alive & for life, not dead & for death. [Peter is changed from a "fish-killer"—catching fish unto death, into a "man-fisher"—catching men unto life!] The great Pentecost will one day prove that Christ's prophecy will come true. Much must happen before that great day. But Jesus foresees the possibilities in Simon and he joyfully undertakes the task of making a fisher of men out of this poor fisher of fish."

III. Expecting change

- A. Change is usually a long process
 - 1 Simon's name *shall be* "Peter"
We do not know whether Jesus had seen Simon before or not, but he at once gives him a nickname that will characterize him some day, though not yet, [it occurred later] when he makes the noble confession (Matt. 16:17), and Jesus will say, "You are Peter." Here the future passive indicative of *kaleō* is only [a] prophecy. (Robertson's Word Pictures)
 - 2 Not everyone has a "Damascus road" experience like Paul (Acts 9)
- B. The Lord calls us with a purpose and He does the changing
 - 1. Year by year
 - 2. Experience by experience
 - Simon's reaction is appropriate for times when God himself appears to someone (cf. Isa. 6:1-8; Ezek. 1:28): *he fell down at Jesus' knees* (in the midst of the fish!), asking the *Lord* to *depart from* him, lest he be judged as a *sinful man*. Peter was *astonished* by the miracle as a demonstration of the presence of God, which was the first step in understanding who Jesus is. At this point Peter simply understands that God works through Jesus, though he will come to a much deeper understanding, as this unfolds only over a period of time (see Mark 8:29). But it is only after the resurrection that Peter and the disciples fully understand who Jesus is (cf. Luke 24:31, 36-43, 52). (ESV Study Bible)
 - 3. How is the Lord changing your life, your world?
 - 4. The Lord never gives up on us – Phil. 1:6

IV. Following Christ

- 1. Letting Christ be the centre of our life
 - a. Whether you drop your job or change your job is up to the Lord
 - b. Let Jesus come into the normal relationships of life
 - c. Peter had normal family relations
 - d. Having a father, brother, wife, mother-in-law, etc... – Mk. 1:29-31

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- e. Allowing Christ to work in us in our relationships
2. Letting Christ direct our life instead of making Christ an add-on to our life
3. Letting Christ change us inwardly
4. Letting Christ change us outwardly to be fishers of men
 - a. Love God – God-centred
 - b. Love others – others centred
 - c. As a team – Peter, Andrew, James, and John
 - d. Is your home meeting open to more people?
 - e. *Catching men* builds on the analogy of catching fish. It means bringing people into the kingdom of God, & into relationship with Jesus. (ESV Study Bible)
 - f. Consider your small/home group or service team as a team for “catching men,” fulfilling your role as “fishers of men.”
 - How are you doing as “fishers of men”?
 - What can you do to fulfill this role in a more productive fashion?

THE BIBLE—The Importance of Narrative

Most of the Bible doesn't consist of rules & regulations—lists of commands to be obeyed. Nor does it consist of creeds—lists of things to be believed.... Much of the Bible is not a rule book; it is narrative... It is one thing to go to have your commanding officer bark a string of commands at you. What if, instead, he began '*Once upon a time . . .*'?

Timeless Truth? Some view the Bible as a repository of timeless truth. ...But it seems God hasn't given us an abstract set of truths unrelated to space & time. He gave us narratives. The 4 Gospels are one instance ...Evangelicals often lurch towards Romans to find a systematic theology in the light of which they read everything else...Evangelicals haven't been as good with the Gospels as with the epistles. What to do with the Gospels? We come to them looking for particular answers to particular questions. And *we have thereby made the Bible into something which it basically is not*...A Preacher said ...a lot of Christians use the Bible as a *Daily Light* or *Daily Bread*. It ought to be in little devotional chunks, but it's not. Other people treat the Bible like Calvin's *Institutes*, the Westminster Confessionor the 'Four Spiritual Laws'. ...Many Christians try to make the Bible into a set of abstract truths & rules, or abstract devotional doctrinal, or evangelistic snippets here & there...

But the Scriptures are mostly narrative. Somehow, God's authority in the Bible is wielded [exercised] *through* God's people telling & retelling *their* story,...telling the true story of creation...through singing psalms...through telling the story of Jesus...

The Authority of a Story

There are various ways stories possess authority. ... Let me offer a possible model, which ...corresponds to the biblical story... Suppose there's a Shakespeare play whose 5th act had been lost. The first 4 acts provide so much...that the play ought to be staged. But, it's inappropriate to write a 5th act...Better, to give key parts to sensitive & experienced Shakespearian actors, who immerse themselves in the first 4 acts, in Shakespeare's language & culture *and who would then work out a fifth act for themselves*...

In the Bible the 5 acts are: (1) Creation; (2) Fall; (3) Israel; (4) Jesus; (5a) early church. The New Testament is the first scene in the 5th act, giving hints (Rom 8; 1 Cor 15; Rev.) of how the play should end. Today's church lives under the 'authority' of the extant story, and offers an improvisation of the final, 5th act (5a, 5b, 5c,...).

N. T. Wright, *How Can the Bible Be Authoritative?* *Vox Evangelica*, (1991) 21, pp. 7–32 (edited extracts).