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Mark 1:16-20 Jesus Calls His First Disciples

Discussion: What do we understand by the words *disciple, follower, believer, and apostle*?

Mark 1	Matthew 4	Luke 5
<p>Jesus Calls His First Disciples 16 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.</p>	<p>Jesus calls his first disciples 18 As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen.</p>	<p>Jesus calls his first disciples 1 One day as Jesus was standing by the Lake of Gennesaret, the people were crowding round him and listening to the word of God.</p>

Additional material from Luke 5

2 He saw at the water's edge two boats, left there by the fishermen, who were washing their nets. **3** He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little from the shore. Then he sat down and taught the people from the boat. **4** When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, 'Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch.' **5** 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.' **6** When they had done so, they caught such a large number of fish that their nets began to break. **7** So they signalled to 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. **8** When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus' knees and said, 'Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!' **9** For he and all his companions were astonished at the catch of fish they had taken, **10** and so were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, Simon's partners.

Mark 1	Matthew 4	Luke 5
<p>17 "Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will send you out to fish for people."</p>	<p>19 'Come, follow me,' Jesus said, 'and I will send you out to fish for people.'</p>	<p>Then Jesus said to Simon, 'Don't be afraid; from now on you will fish for people.'</p>
<p>18 At once they left their nets and followed him.</p>	<p>20 At once they left their nets and followed him. him.</p>	<p>11 So they pulled their boats up on shore, left everything and followed him.</p>
<p>19 When he had gone a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John in a boat, preparing their nets. 20 Without delay he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men and followed him.</p>	<p>21 Going on from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John. They were in a boat with their father Zebedee, preparing their nets. Jesus called them, 22 and immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.</p>	

Comparison

- While Matthew follows Mark's narrative almost word for word, Luke has Jesus teaching the crowds and introduces a miracle that is *convincing* to Simon Peter.
- There is no mention of Simon and Andrew having a boat in Mark or Matthew's account; they could have been shore fishing with weighted nets.⁵⁸
- James and John, however, were in a boat owned by their father Zebedee.
- Luke's account suggests Simon did have a boat and that he and Andrew were business partners with John and James.
- The Sea of Galilee (from the Hebrew) is instead referred to as Lake Gennesaret in Luke's account (the Greek alternative), while the Romans called it Lake Tiberius.



Figure 6: Shore fishing ⁵⁹

Context

- Mark's account sounds as if Jesus was unknown to them, a chance encounter, but these four men were already disciples of John the Baptist (John 1:35-42).⁶⁰
- These were not poor men; they had their own businesses, owned boats and employed hired men. We should dismiss notions of them as poor, uneducated men.⁶¹

Key Points

- Rabbis would apprentice people to study the scriptures and follow the Rabbinic codes, but Jesus called his disciples to follow *him*. Jesus was showing them "the Way".⁶²
- The first pair dropped everything and left their possessions, the second pair left their father as well.⁶³ However, it seems they retained the use of the boat and fishing tackle (John 21:3), and the use of Simon and Andrew's house (Mark 1:29). The abandonment of nets does represent a decisive change of lifestyle.⁶⁴

Bible Study of Mark's Gospel

Discussion: Can you think of someone in whom you saw great authority? Perhaps in the way they spoke, or commanded respect, or with a skill so great it was astonishing.

Mark 1	Luke 4
<p>Jesus Drives Out an Impure Spirit 21 They went to Capernaum, and when the Sabbath came, Jesus went into the synagogue and began to teach.</p>	<p>Jesus drives out an impure spirit 31 Then he went down to Capernaum, a town in Galilee, and on the Sabbath he taught the people.</p>
<p>22 The people were amazed at his teaching, because he taught them as one who had authority, not as the teachers of the law.</p>	<p>32 They were amazed at his teaching, because his words had authority.</p>
<p>23 Just then a man in their synagogue who was possessed by an impure spirit cried out, 24 "What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God!"</p>	<p>33 In the synagogue there was a man possessed by a demon, an impure spirit. He cried out at the top of his voice, 34 'Go away! What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are – the Holy One of God!'</p>
<p>25 "Be quiet!" said Jesus sternly. "Come out of him!" 26 The impure spirit shook the man violently and came out of him with a shriek.</p>	<p>35 'Be quiet!' Jesus said sternly. 'Come out of him!' Then the demon threw the man down before them all and came out without injuring him.</p>
<p>27 The people were all so amazed that they asked each other, "What is this? A new teaching—and with authority! He even gives orders to impure spirits and they obey him."</p>	<p>36 All the people were amazed and said to each other, 'What words these are! With authority and power he gives orders to impure spirits and they come out!'</p>

Comparison

- While Luke continues to mirror Mark's Gospel over the coming chapters (by relating several *miracles* that Jesus performs), Matthew omits this incident from his Gospel and instead provides examples of Jesus' *teaching*, (for example, the Sermon on the Mount).
- Matthew returns later to instances where Jesus casts out demons.
- While Luke speaks of Jesus' words having authority, Mark adds that this was unlike the teachers of the law, also known as scribes.
- Luke also refers to the impure spirit by using the equivalent Greek term *demon*.

Context

- Note that Jesus would have been invited to speak by the synagogue leader.

Going Deeper: Synagogues and Jewish Law

Unlike the small village of Nazareth, the city of Capernaum had an estimated population of about 10,000.^{65,66} Sacrifice was only conducted at the Temple in Jerusalem, and synagogues were therefore only places of worship and teaching, which would have been overseen by

- the *Leader of the Synagogue* who was responsible for the financial and physical well-being of the synagogue, managing the finances, organising the reading of scripture, and inviting people to preach.
- *Scribes*, however, were lawyers, able to draft contracts (marriage, loans, land sales, etc) by *interpreting* within the confines of the Torah (first five books of the OT) and other traditions of Jewish Law.⁶⁷
- *Pharisees* were mostly based in Jerusalem and saw themselves as the Jewish leaders who oversaw the implementation of the Law upon the population.

Key Points

- There are two points at which amazement is expressed by those in the synagogue; the first of these is at Jesus' teaching. Scribes could preach on the OT reading, but not step outside the confines of what past tradition has determined. Mark does not tell us the content of *what* Jesus said, but that he spoke with an authority that comes from God; we see Jesus often use the phrase "You have heard it said, but I say to you..."
- The second astonishment regards the exorcism Jesus performs. Both Mark and Luke describe a person in the congregation as being *possessed*. It appears that the person is possessed by a single demon and that it has *taken control* to speak *through* him.⁶⁸ However, it appears to speak for *all* demons.⁶⁹
- The demon cried out in fear, its continued existence depending upon Jesus' next actions. Both Mark and Luke tell us the demon identifies Jesus as the "Holy One of God"; it recognises Jesus' divine identity before humanity does. The destruction of Satan's rule is a natural consequence of Jesus' bringing of the kingdom of God.⁷⁰

Bible Study of Mark's Gospel

- When demanding that the demon “be silent”, Jesus does not want the congregation to learn of his divine identity from a demon. They are supposed to see what Jesus does and make a decision for themselves about who he is. Not everyone will accept him.

Going Deeper: The Doctrine of Creation⁷¹

The term *doctrine* is used to describe aspects of our faith that have become commonly agreed upon over hundreds of years, through debates between theologians. There are many doctrinal topics, each expressing our understanding of the Trinity, Christ, or the Holy Spirit, or perhaps our understanding of the Resurrection, the Atonement, or the Sacraments.

On the Doctrine of Creation, our Christian belief is that God (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) is uncreated and eternal, and has given existence to everything outside himself, by the power of his word, and all of it was declared very good (Gen. 1:1, John 1:1-3). The “Heavens and the Earth” is all-encompassing, and we observe that not only did God create all the creatures of the Earth (including humans), but also all the spiritual world (including the angels).

Jesus, therefore, has authority over all Creation, both the earthly and spiritual.

- In summary, these passages (plus Matthew’s additional material about Jesus’ teaching) demonstrate Jesus’ authority in two specific areas; as a teacher about the kingdom of God and also over the spiritual world. His divine identity has also been stated publicly (albeit by a demon). Mark continues after this point with further examples demonstrating how Jesus has authority over other aspects of Creation.
- The accounts in Mark and Luke state how Jesus quickly has become known following this single occasion in the synagogue, while Matthew speaks of how far the news travels once Jesus has been teaching and healing people for a period of time.
- Conflict with the Jewish religious leaders would become inevitable once news of Jesus’ activities and teaching reached the Pharisees in Jerusalem.

Bible Study of Mark's Gospel

The accounts from Mark and Luke...

Mark 1	Luke 4
28 News about him spread quickly over the whole region of Galilee.	37 And the news about him spread throughout the surrounding area.

...and the account from Matthew

Matthew 4
23 Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people.
24 News about him spread all over Syria, and people brought to him all who were ill with various diseases, those suffering severe pain, the demon-possessed, those having seizures, and the paralyzed; and he healed them.
25 Large crowds from Galilee, the Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea and the region across the Jordan followed him.

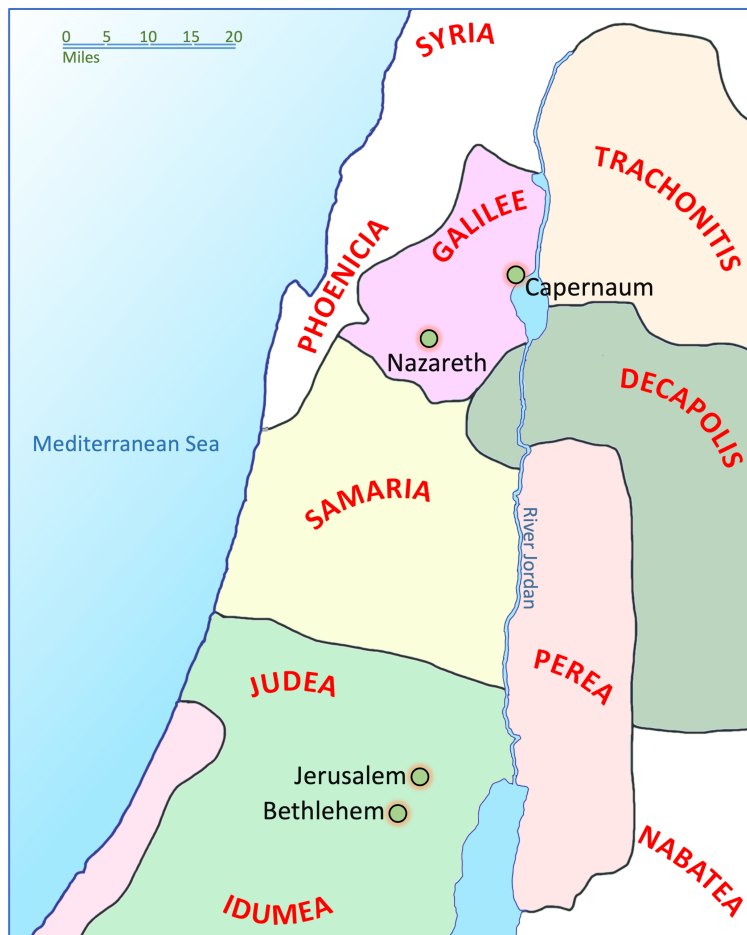


Figure 7: News spreads about the ministry of Jesus

Discussion: What issues or thoughts spoke to you most strongly from today's session?