



CALVARY
TUSCALOOSA

TEACHING PLAN
JANUARY 6, 2019



THREE PARTS OF OUR MISSION: INTRODUCTION
MATTHEW 4:18-20 JANUARY 6, 2019 TEACHING PLAN

PREPARATION

- > Spend the week reading through and studying Matthew 4:18-20. Consult the commentary provided and any additional study tools (such as a concordance or Bible dictionary) to enhance your preparation.
- > Determine which discussion points and questions will work best with your group.
- > Pray for your pastors, the upcoming group meeting, your teaching, your group members, and their receptivity to the study.

HIGHLIGHTS

TAKEAWAY: The Bible is a mission text, and in the verses for this study, we see Jesus calling people to join the mission.

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT: Without a clear understanding of the mission of Jesus, we will not be able to live out the story of God.

GOSPEL CONNECTION: The mission of God is about life (John 10:10)! Is the church doing life-giving things for people, or simply providing a place for people who already have life?

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to help get the conversation going.

- 1 What is the mission statement of your workplace?
- 2 What is your personal mission statement?
- 3 What are the benefits of a company or person having a clear mission?

Mission brings clarity to daily living. If a person has a clearly conceived mission and believes in that mission, then what he or she does on a daily basis will be in line with his or her mission. Mission gives purpose and direction for daily living.

This is also true in the life of the Christian. Christians ought to be the most mission-driven people on the face of the earth. The mission that we have is from the one true God, dealing with eternity and the souls of men.

From the beginning, God has been on mission. God's rescue mission culminated with the work and person of Jesus Christ. Those who have been redeemed have been commissioned to be on mission as well. Our mission isn't self-determined, but has been mandated by Jesus Christ.

Even before Jesus completed His mission on earth, He began to prepare His disciples to be missionaries to preach the good news. In Matthew 4, we see Jesus calling Simon and Andrew, saying that He would make them "fishers of men."

ALTERNATE INTRODUCTION

What is the mission of the Humane Society, Red Cross, or Salvation Army?

How does one's mission affect daily life?

Mission matters because it determines what you do, how you use your resources, and how you view the world. Whether stated or not, all people have a mission in life. It may be to attain financial security, family peace, or career advancement. Whatever the goal may be, it will dictate daily living. Christians ought to be the most mission-driven people on the face of the earth. The mission that we have been given is from the one true God, impacting eternity and the souls of men.

From the beginning, God has been on mission. God's rescue mission culminated with the work and person of Jesus Christ. Even before Jesus completed His mission on earth, He began to prepare His disciples to be missionaries to preach the good news.

UNDERSTANDING

Notes:

Unpack the biblical text to discover what Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

The verses in this study deal with Jesus' calling of Simon and Andrew, two brothers, who were fishermen. When we compare this account with John's, it seems that Simon and Andrew had already been followers of Christ for more than a year (John 1:35-42). Apparently, they had returned to their normal work of fishing in the Sea of Galilee.

Fishing in New Testament times largely consisted of casting nets. The net that Simon and Andrew used was probably a circular cast net about 20 feet across with sinkers attached to the outer edge. The net would sink more quickly around the edges enveloping any fish that happened to be under it when it hit the water.

Jesus' call to these men was obviously significant to be included in Matthew's account. After all, the nature of this calling included fully abandoning their work and becoming followers of Jesus full-time.

The context of this passage is the beginning of Jesus' ministry. Just before Matthew's account of Jesus' calling the disciples, Mathew wrote of Jesus' baptism and wilderness temptation. Most of Jesus' life and ministry took place in the region of Galilee. By the time Jesus began His ministry, a fishing industry had flourished around the sea, thus Simon and Andrew were just two of many fishermen in the area.

> Have a volunteer read Matthew 4:18.

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.*

Notes:

After Jesus returned from the wilderness and was triumphant over the temptations of the enemy, He immediately called men to follow Him. We should note that Simon and Andrew knew Jesus and had followed Him for some time. This moment, however, marked a shift in Jesus' ministry and the commitment of those who would follow Him.

- What was the profession of Simon and Andrew? Was this in contradiction to their faith in Jesus? Why or why not?

Simon and Andrew were fishermen. This was a common profession in that region during Jesus' time. Fishing on the Sea of Galilee was big business, and many a first century Jewish man provided for his family by casting nets. Simon and Andrew were just two of probably thousands of fishermen.

The fishing business was a perfectly respectable and honorable profession. They weren't breaking any laws of the Torah. They worked hard to provide for their family and contributed to the overall wellbeing of society by being productive participants in the economic infrastructure.

- If they already knew Jesus and had even spent some time following Him, what are some reasons they might not yet have begun to follow Him full time?

We should be careful not to read too much into this episode. Some may be tempted to say that they were being disobedient by fishing and not still following Jesus. Some might say that they were indecisive in their faith.

Notes:

There are two possibilities here. The first is that they indeed had doubted Jesus' claims and mission. But, it is more likely that Jesus had not called them to abandon their lives to follow Him until this point. If we read the account in John 1:35-42, it is clear that their initial encounter with Jesus was quite different from the call that Matthew recorded. In John 1, they approached Jesus upon hearing the words of John the Baptist. In Matthew 4, Jesus approached them.

- Based on their profession, where might Simon and Andrew have found their identity prior to this call of Jesus? Why is this significant?

Again, we ought to be careful about reading between the lines of the text. Matthew is simply relating to his readers the fact that Simon and Andrew made their living by catching fish. Yet, it is helpful to meditate on the tremendous transition that was about to take place. We may not immediately think of these men as fishermen. They were disciples of Jesus who had the privilege of walking with Jesus, hearing Him teach, and seeing Him perform miracles.

But, in our text today, we see them before the transition. They are simple, hardworking fishermen. They lived to make a living. They spent early mornings and late nights dragging in nets full or empty of fish to provide for their families. They paid their taxes, repaired leaky roofs, and planned for the future. The orientation of Andrew and Simon's life was daily needs, not the global mission of Jesus...yet.

> Have a volunteer read Matthew 4:19.

19 *“Come, follow me,” Jesus said, “and I will make you fishers of men.”*

Notes:

One of the most astounding facts about God throughout the Old Testament is that He pursues His people. God went to find Adam and Eve. He approached Cain. He instructed Noah. He led Abraham. He spoke to Moses. These are only a few examples of the overarching reality in the Old Testament of a Creator who condescends to reach His creation.

Nowhere is this more true than in the incarnation—Immanuel, God with us. The person of Christ is the ultimate example of condescension by the eternal God. Jesus began His ministry by reaching out to a select group to be His disciples.

- What is the first aspect of Jesus’ call to Simon and Andrew? What were the implications of this call?

Jesus said first, “Follow me.” He went straight to the heart of the matter: a new orientation of life. Jesus was calling Simon and Andrew to change their life purpose and orientation. Jesus called them from a life of fishing to a life of following Him.

In calling Simon and Andrew, Jesus turned the normal teacher/discipleship relationship on its head. Teachers who were honored usually waited until a disciple approached them. Only the most radical rabbis were known to choose disciples. But God doesn’t wait for people to choose Him. He has proven Himself to be a missionary God who seeks, chooses, and saves.

- Why is it significant that Jesus told the men what He would “make” them, not what they would “become”?

Jesus didn't say that they would become fishers of men. Rather, He said that He would make them fishers of men. Interestingly, Jesus said that He Himself would change their identity. Not only did Jesus initiate the relationship with the men who would be His disciples, but He also indicated that He would transform them. He would change their orientation of life.

Notes:

Along with the commission to fulfill the mission of God comes the promise of God's presence and power (Matthew 28:20; Acts 1:8). Jesus didn't only tell Simon and Andrew to follow Him, but also that He would accomplish an identity-changing work in their lives. What they did and who they were would be changed.

- What did it mean that they would be made fishers of men?

At this point, the disciples did not have the full picture of the person and work of Jesus. They may have had an idea, but their understanding would soon expand. At this point, they couldn't know completely what it meant that they would be "fishers of men." It is clear to us because we know the whole story. We know that God would turn the world upside down through the testimony of these disciples (Acts 17:6).

It's significant that Jesus' pitch to Simon and Andrew for becoming disciples was that they would turn into something as strange sounding as "fishers of men." Of course, this was a metaphor, but let's think about how Jesus framed His call. He didn't say, "Follow me and I will make you behave better." He didn't say, "Follow me and I will make you the happiest you've ever been." No, He said that He would make the disciples exactly what the one true God has been since Genesis 3: "fishers of men." Not only is God a missionary God, but He also would now have a missionary people.

>Have a volunteer read Matthew 4:20.

20 At once they left their nets and followed him.

Notes:

The response of Simon and Andrew is stunning, but not necessarily as odd as we might perceive. We should remember that Simon and Andrew knew Jesus. They weren't under some spell that caused them to follow the random petition of a complete stranger. They had spent time with Jesus and had apparently decided that He was worth following.

- When does the text say they left their nets and followed Jesus? Why does this stand out?

Immediately. Again, their response was stunning. It would have been understandable if they desired to at least finish the day's work. Yet, Simon and Andrew made a definite decision to leave behind their livelihood, families, and future.

- We know Simon and Andrew were leaving something behind, but what were they going toward?

God doesn't leave vacancies. He clears the old to make way for the new. In Simon and Andrew's case, they were stripped of their old identity, only to be immediately given a new one. In other words, they gave up everything they knew so that they could gain something more. Granted, heading off to follow Jesus may not have seemed like much gain to most people, but those who responded to Jesus' call had been given the gift of faith that Jesus was a treasure beyond all treasures. They somehow understood that they had found the pearl of great price. Once Jesus was raised from the dead, their faith became sight. They would be shown clearly that Christ was the mystery of God, the hope of glory, the salvation of mankind.

The disciples left behind their personal missions to join the mission of God. The mission of God culminates in Jesus Christ and continues today as the church takes up the charge to make disciples of all nations, baptizing and teaching those that respond to the gospel with faith and repentance.

Notes:

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

- 1 What would you say is your primary identity? In what ways has your identity changed after you came to be a follower of Christ?
- 2 How have you experienced God's pursuit of you?
- 3 How do you need to act to join God on His mission to save others?

PRAY

Thank God that He is a missionary God, who sent His Son Jesus that we might be saved by Him and point others to His saving work.

FOLLOW UP

Midway through this week, send a follow-up email to your group with some or all of the following information:

Notes:

- > Questions to consider as they continue to reflect on what they learned this week:
 - Where have you recognized that you need to take action to join God on His mission?

 - What steps do you need to take toward this?

- > A note of encouragement, following up on any specific prayer requests mentioned during your group gathering.

- > The challenge to memorize Matthew 4:19.

MATTHEW 4:18-20

4:18-22. Peter, Andrew, James, and John were fishermen (all involved in a family business) living in Capernaum or nearby Bethsaida (see John 1:44). This was apparently also the home of Matthew at the time of his calling (9:1,9), and of Philip and possibly Nathanael (John 1:43-45). The fishing profession in that day probably carried with it the same kind of social stigma that “common laborer” does today. Three of the four (Peter, James, and John) would become Jesus’ closest earthly friends. And Andrew played a significant role in his ministry more than once (Mark 13:3; John 1:40; 6:8; 12:22).

Notes:

Matthew left his readers with the impression that this was Jesus’ first encounter with these four men. However, John recorded that some of the Twelve (at least Andrew, Peter, Philip, and Nathanael) had been with Jesus during his earlier ministry (John 1:35-51; 2:2,12,17; 3:22; 4:1-2,27-33). Jesus had known his disciples for some time and had even seen them in ministry situations. Thus, their decision to follow him was not hastily made.

However, this does not decrease the significance of their commitment. In fact, quite the opposite. These men, in well-reasoned decisions, left both career and family to follow Jesus. And their confidence in him was such that, when he called, they all came at once (4:20) or immediately (4:22). They literally dropped their nets and left the boats in which they were standing. James and John left their father standing with his boats.

When Jesus said, Come, follow me (4:19), he was calling these men to a new career. In keeping with his skill as a teacher, he used terminology that would inspire them because of its relationship to their life experience. These men knew how to fish—for fish. So they had some concept of the task to which he was calling them. However, even

though they had some familiarity with the concept of fishing, Jesus would still need to transform them into fishers of men. And that is the point of most of the teaching that follows, including the Sermon on the Mount— Jesus taught his disciples! He trained the Twelve whose names would one day mark the foundation “stones” (Matt. 16:18; Eph. 2:20; Rev. 21:14) of the New Jerusalem!

Notes:

You will notice as Matthew’s Gospel unfolds that, while Jesus did not ignore the crowds, he was primarily engaged in teaching the Twelve. Even when he ministered to the thousands, it was in the context of teaching the Twelve. For example, the feeding of the five thousand, while compassionately providing food for thousands, was about his attempt to impact the Twelve (Mark 6:30-44). (See discussion at Matthew 5:1-2.)

The one condition necessary to their becoming fishers of men was to follow me. Packed into this two-word command are many implications. Jesus was saying, “Live with me and learn by watching me. Own my values and priorities. Learn to become passionate for the things I live for. And follow my example by doing the ministry I have come to do.”