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Come, Follow Me,
And I Will Show You How to Fish for People
Matthew 4:18-22; Mark 1:16-20; Luke 5:1-11

Come, follow Me, and I will show you how to fish for people DIG: What invitations did Jesus give to those fishermen? What seems unusual about their response? What prior knowledge of Christ to you think they had (see Matthew 4:13 and 17)? Picture yourself as Simon. What are you thinking, doing, feeling in Luke 5:1-3? When the Lord speaks directly to you in Luke 5:4? Why do you go along with His odd request? How did this have a more profound effect on him than the healing of his mother-in-law? What is he beginning to grasp about the Rabbi from Galilee?

REFLECT: Spiritually, are you still preparing the nets? Leaving the boat? Or following hard after Messiah? Are you totally committed? The apostles left their profession and their source of income. They believed that He would provide for their needs. Do we do the same? The Lord told Peter: Don't be afraid. Why did He say that? When you think of totally committing yourself to follow Yeshua, what are you afraid of? Why? When and how did you fall in love with Jesus?

Rescuing **the lost** from sin is **ADONAI's** greatest concern. So much so that it caused to **Yeshua** weep bitterly over the unbelieving **City of David,** sobbing: **Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you. How often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but [they] refused (Matthew 23:37)!** **God** sent **His Son** to earth – to preach, die, and be raised – for the purpose of saving mankind from sin **(John 3:16)**. **Christ** said of **Himself: For the Son of Man came to seek and save the lost (Luke 19:10).** Evangelism was the great concern of the congregations of **God** after Shavu'ot. **They** studied at **the apostle's** feet, shared with each other, and **praising God they** enjoyed **the favor or all people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved (Acts 2:42-47).** Evangelism has been the heartbeat of faithful

believers ever since.

Forms of the Greek word translated *evangelize* are found over fifty times in the B'rit Chadashah. Evangelization is the primary thrust of the Great Commission: **Go therefore and make disciples of all nations (Mattityahu 28:19a).** While some people have the spiritual gift of evangelism **(Ephesians 4:11)**, we are all to be evangelists. To **make disciples** is to *evangelize*, to bring people under the lordship of **Yeshua Messiah**. But, when **Jesus** called **His disciples** to **Himself**, **He** also called **them** to call others.[390]

Yeshua could have accomplished **His** mission alone, but, **He** never intended to do it alone. In conjunction with the declaration that the Kingdom was near, **He** continued to call **His apostles**. In this commentary on **the Life of Christ**, I make a distinction between **apostles** and **disciples**. **The twelve** will be called **apostles** or **talmidim** (Hebrew), and the others would come to believe in **Him** would be called **disciples**. While it is true that the **apostles** were also **disciples**, it is not true that all **disciples** were **apostles**.

The concept of discipleship was nothing new to first century Judaism. Any significant rabbi would have faithful followers who would be called to a commitment of both following and learning – thus the word **talmid** (singular), meaning *learner.* The **talmid** would "yoke" to a rabbi, and submit himself to the rabbi for instruction. **The rabbis taught that the talmid would "be covered with the dust of his feet" because he would follow so closely.** To be selected as a **talmid** of a leading rabbi was a great honor. This meant more than merely passing on information, but also involved a close personal relationship with one's rabbi. The word *halakhah* is usually translated *the path that one walks.* The word is derived from the Hebrew root *hei-lamed-kaf*, meaning *to go, to walk or to travel*. Thus, the goal of a **talmid** would be to duplicate and perpetuate *halakhah*. The wisdom of the Torah and *halakhah* were transferred to the **talmid** after years of teaching and on the job training, so that one day he would have his own **talmidim** (plural).

Here **Jesus** calls **Peter** and **Andrew** to *halakhah*, or full-time ministry (**Philip** and **Nathanael** are not mentioned, but it is implied that they were likewise called). Then **Yeshua** adds two more **talmidim**, **James**, **and his brother John** who also left **their** prosperous fishing business to follow **the Lord** into full time ministry. At that time there were seven **talmidim**.

One day as Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee. It is a beautiful body of water, nearly 700 feet below sea level, thirteen miles long and eight miles wide, is actually an inland **lake** (**Luke** calls it **the Lake of Gennesaret** and **John** calls it **the Sea of Tiberias** at one point). The Jewish historian Josephus reported that there were some 240 boats that regularly fished on its waters. When I visited **Isra'el** in October 2023 just before the war broke out, my Messianic congregation took a boat ride on **the Sea of Galilee**. Nothing like worshipping on **the Sea of Galilee**. To take the ride with us click **here**. **The people were crowding around Him and listening to the word of God (Mt 4:18a; Mark 1:16a; Luke 5:1a)**

He saw two brothers, Simon called Peter (Hebrew: **Kefa**) **and his brother Andrew.** As **Simon** was one of the most common names in first-century Palestine (we shall see four other **Simons** in **Matthew 10:4, 13:55, 26:6, 27:32**), the nickname by which our **Lord** used to identify **him** (and especially to distinguish **him** from the other **Simon** among **the Twelve**). **They were casting a net into the sea for they were fishermen (Mattityahu 4:18b; Mark 1:16b; Luke 5:1b).**

Simon was a simple, uneducated man who knew **Yeshua** from **their** previous meeting during the summer, as **he** and some others were fishing for the tropical musht **fish** in the warm mineral springs down the coast near Tabgha. At that time, **Jesus** had called **Shim'on** and **his brother Andrew** to join **Him** as **He** preached throughout greater **Galilee**. While **Peter** had initially accepted **Christ's** call as a **talmid**, **he** also had a wife and mother-in-law to care for. But now **the Nazarene** was back, standing in front of **his boat**.[391]

The **crowding** was so great that there was not enough room for **Messiah** to address **the people**. **He saw at the water's edge two boats, left there by the fishermen, who were washing their nets** of the sand and pebble, with which

such a **night's** work would clog them**. He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Shim'on, and asked him to put out a little from shore. Then He sat down and taught the people from the boat (Luke 5:2-3). He** is always teaching from a sitting position that is the posture of **a rabbi**. Crowds began to find **Him** on those days when **He** preached. The early morning sun reflected the mirrored surface of **the lake** and lighted up the whole scene.

When He had finished speaking, He said to Simon: Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch (Luke 5:4). Peter was an experienced **fisherman** who knew the habits of **fish**. Fishing was normally done at night; for it was then that **the fish** rose from the depths to feed at the surface of **the water**. **The fish** remained at the surface as long as it was dark. But, when the night passed and the sun rose, **the fish** descended back into the depths of **the lake** again. Those in the fishing trade knew that it was useless to attempt to **fish** in the daytime.[392]

But **Kefa** was exhausted and discouraged. **He** had been up for twenty-four hours straight, sailing **his** small boat out onto **the lake** and dropping **his nets** again and again. **His** back was probably aching from leaning over the side to pull **his nets** in. **He** had been in and out of the inland **sea** time and again without any success. **He** needed a drink and a meal. **He** needed some sleep. But, most of all, **he** needed to pay **his** taxes, and that fruitless night of fishing didn't help.[393]

So **Simon** answered: **Rabbi, we've worked hard all night and haven't caught anything.** Do you have any worn, wet, empty **nets**? Do you know the feeling of a sleepless, night of failure? Of course you do. For what have you been casting?
Solvency? "My debt is an anvil around my neck . . ."
Faith? "I want to believe, but . . ."
A happy marriage? "No matter what I do . . ."
You say, **"**I've **worked hard all night and haven't caught anything."**
You've felt what **Peter** felt. You've sat where **Peter** sat. And now **Jesus** is asking you to go fishing. **He** knows your **nets** are empty. **He** knows your heart is weary. **He** knows you'd like nothing more than to turn your back on the mess and call it a life.
But **He** urges, "It's not too late to try again."
See if **Peter's** reply won't help you formulate your own.[394]

Simon thought **he** knew more about fishing than **Yeshua**. **Kefa's** experience told **him** that to put down the **nets** during the daytime would be useless. **But because**

You say so, I will let down the nets (Luke 5:5). Being an obedient **talmid he let down his nets**.

When they had done so, they caught such a large number of fish that their nets began to break. So they signaled 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. Seeing the miracle of **both boats filled** with **fish** was enough to convince **Shim'on Kefa** that **he** was in the presence of **the Holy One of God**. The effect on the impulsive **Peter** was instantaneous. **When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus' knees** and said: **Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man (Luke 5:6-8)!** Like **Isaiah**, **Simon** expressed **his** unworthiness, which one *should* feel in the presence of the divine.

If we compare ourselves to someone else we can always find someone who is worse that we are. So don't do it. The only thing that will result is bad fruit. The only comparison we should be making is with the absolute standard of **Jesus Christ**. **He** is our audience of **One**. When we do this, our only conclusion can be the same as **Peter's**. We are **sinful** indeed.

For he and all his companions were astonished at the catch of fish they had taken, and so were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, Simon's partners. Then Yeshua offered by bringing a word of comfort **to Shim'on: "Don't be afraid. Come, follow me, and from now on I will show you how to fish for people" (Mattityahu 4:19; Mark 1:17; Luke 5:9-10b). Come,** this seems to be one of **His** favorite words:

Come now, and let us reason together, though your sins are as scarlet, they will be as white as snow (Isaiah 1:18 NASB).

Let anyone who is thirsty, come to Me and drink (Yochanan 7:37 NCBV).

Come to Me all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest (Matthew 11:28). It all begins with a tug on the heart. This is not to say that our faith is mindless, but, for most of us, following **Jesus** is like falling in love. It has been said that "we admire people for reasons; we love them without reasons." It happens merely because they are who they are. **And I, Yeshua** said: **when I AM lifted from the earth, will draw all people to Myself (John 12:32).** Yes, we **follow Messiah** for what **He** said – **His** words are important; but, we also **follow Him** because of everything that **He** is.[395]

The obedience of **His talmidim** was instantaneous. **At once Simon Peter and his brother Andrew left their nets and followed Him (Matthew 4:20; Mark 1:18).** Obedience is the spark that lights the fire of passion. **Kefa** did eventually **catch** men and women. Remember how well **he** did on Shavu'ot? **The Lord's** answer to **Peter** was certainly significant. **About three thousand** souls were saved and **baptized** after **his** first sermon (see my commentary on **Acts, to see link click An – Peter Speaks to the Shavu'ot Crowd**)! **Shim'on** was fishing according to **Messiah's** instructions.

A number of qualities that make a good **fisherman** can also help make a good evangelist. First, a **fisherwoman** needs to be **patient**, because she knows that it often takes time to find a school of **fish**. Second, a **fisherman** must have **perseverance**. It is not simply a matter of waiting patiently in one place, hoping some **fish** will eventually show up. It's a matter of going from place to place, and sometimes back again, over and over – until **the fish** are found. Third, the **fisherwomen** must have **good instinct** for going to the right place and dropping **the net** at just the right time. Poor timing has lost many a catch, both of **fish** and of **people**. A fourth quality is **courage**. Commercial **fishermen**, certainly ones such as those on **the Sea of Galilee**, frequently face considerable danger from storms and various calamities.[396]

But, do you know there is another **fisherman**? **The devil** is also a **fisherman**? Rabbi Sha'ul tells us that in **Second Timothy 2:26 CJB**, when he says: **God may grant sinners the opportunity . . . to come to their senses and escape the trap of the Adversary, after having been captured alive by him to do his will**. **Satan** also has **his** hook out in the water. While it is true **ADONAI** is fishing for your soul, that **old Serpent** is also fishing for your soul with a hook baited with the things of this world **(First John 2:15-17)**. You might say **the Lord's** hook is the cross. The Son of **God** died on that cross for you. This is **the Father's** message for you today. By the way . . . whose hook are you on today? You are either on **God's**

hook or **the Adversary's** hook.[397]

And there's no wiggling off the line.

So, they pulled their boats up on shore, left everything and followed Him (Luke 5:11). It is important to understand that this wasn't **the Lord's** first interaction with **Peter**, **Andrew**, **James** or **John** (see **Bp – John's Disciples Follow Jesus**). **They** had already been called to faith, and **the Rabbi** from **Galilee** already had a relationship with **them**.

When He had gone a little further, He saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John. When **the Galilean Rabbi** called **the two brothers they** were tough, crusty outdoorsmen, like uncut jewels. They had little education, little spiritual insight, and perhaps little religious training. **They were in a boat with their father Zebedee, preparing their nets,** a routine but vital task in the fishing business **(Mt 4:21; Mk 1:19).**

Although **their** family name was **Zebedee** or *Zavdai*, Hebrew for *gift of God*, **Yeshua** would later give these two zealous **brothers** the nickname **Boanerges, which means "sons of thunder" (Mark 3:17). Jesus called them** as **He** had called **Simon and Andrew**, **and immediately they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men and followed Him (Mattityahu 4:22; Mark 1:20).** In **their** case something of a price of discipleship is indicated by the breaking of family ties – the leaving of **their father's** business. The mention of **hired men** may imply that **Zebedee** was wealthy. But **John**, the inspired human author, may also be included to indicate that by leaving **their father** to **follow Jesus**, **James and John** were not leaving **him** entirely alone to run his fishing business. Nonetheless, the emphasis is on **their immediate** response to **Christ's** call.[398]

Like **Shim'on Kefa**, the prophet **Isaiah** also had a revelation of **the Lord** that humbled and terrified **him**, **"Woe is me! For I am lost . . . for my eyes have seen . . . the LORD" (Isaiah 6:5).** However, the touch of a burning coal from the bronze altar cleansed **him** of **his** sins and freed **him** from all guilt. Once purified, **Isaiah** was able to hear the cry of **ADONAI's** heart: **Whom shall I send? And who will go for Us?** Without hesitation, **Isaiah** called out: **Here am I! Send me (Isaiah 6:8)**.

God longs to call each of us, just as **He** called **Peter** and **Isaiah**. As we

allow **ADONAI** to overwhelm us with **His** love, we too will hear the call to discipleship. We will know that we are unworthy of such an honor, but we will also know that, through repentance **(First John 1:8-10)**, we can be empowered by **the Holy Spirit** to be **fishers of men and women** ourselves.

As our relationship with **Jesus** deepens, so too will our love for **Him** and, like **Simon** and **Isaiah**, we will want to **followed Him**. Let us not **be afraid** to humble ourselves before **the Lord** and receive the calling **He** has for us. There is no greater honor than to be a **disciple** of **the Meshiach**, equipped to **catch** souls for **His** Kingdom.

***Lord Jesus**, cleanse our sin and empower us with **Your** presence. Here we are, **Lord**! Send us! Empower us to advance Your Kingdom! Teach us to speak **Your** words and minister **Your** love to everyone we meet. Amen.*[399]