

Matthew 4:18-22

We have been looking at Matthew chapters 1-4 since early December.

1. We have considered the events surrounding the birth of Jesus.
2. We have witnessed his baptism
3. We have considered His temptation in the wilderness
4. We have spent the last few weeks looking at how he launched his earthly ministry
5. Now, this morning we see him officially calling his first disciples to follow him.

READ/PRAY

There are three major points for us to consider from this text this morning. After we have considered each one, we will take some time to consider one modern day example of what we learn.

I. Fools for Christ v18-22

Now as Jesus was walking by the Sea of Galilee, He saw two brothers, Simon who was called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. 19 And He said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men." 20 Immediately they left their nets and followed Him. 21 Going on from there He saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and He called them. 22 Immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed Him.

1. He found men from Galilee...not Jerusalem.
2. He found men on the seashore...not in the Temple courts
3. He found fishermen...not Pharisees

These men were not considered influential, wise, or great.

1. They were fishermen...foolish in the eyes of the religious elites.
2. But they gladly became fools for Christ's sake
3. Look at them a few years later!
4. Acts 4:13 *Now as they observed the confidence of Peter and John and understood that they were uneducated and untrained men, they were amazed, and began to recognize them as having been with Jesus.*

This is the pattern.

1 Corinthians 1:26-29 *For consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble; 27 but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong, 28 and the base things of the world and the despised God has chosen, the things that are not, so that He may nullify the things that are, 29 so that no man may boast before God.*

II. Followers of Christ v19-22

And He said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men." 20 Immediately they left their nets and followed Him. 21 Going on from there He saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and He called them. 22 Immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed Him.

It has been a troubling matter for many to imagine how quickly Peter, Andrew, James, and John drop everything to immediately follow Jesus.

1. Did Jesus throw some kind of magical spell on them or something?
2. Recognize that Jesus had known these men for roughly a year.
3. John 1:35-42 *Again the next day John was standing with two of his disciples, 36 and he looked at Jesus as He walked, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God!" 37 The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. 38 And Jesus turned and saw them following, and said to them, "What do you seek?" They said to Him, "Rabbi (which translated means Teacher), where are You staying?" 39 He said to them, "Come, and you will see." So they came and saw where He was staying; and they stayed with Him that day, for it was about the tenth hour. 40 One of the two who heard John speak and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. 41 He found first his own brother Simon and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which translated means Christ). 42 He brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, "You are Simon the son of John; you shall be called Cephas" (which is translated Peter).*

Between John 1 and Matthew 4

1. John the Baptist gets put into prison
2. Jesus begins ministering in the region of Galilee...no doubt these men had heard him preach
3. Now Jesus specifically calls them to follow Him.

Notice what it costs them to follow Christ

1. They had to leave their security nets and leave their family: Deny themselves
2. They had to leave behind their boats and their family business, thus giving up their futures: Die to Self.
3. Follow Jesus
4. This was nothing but a foreshadowing of what Jesus would demand from all of His followers.

Luke 9:23-26 *And He was saying to them all, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me. 24 For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it. 25 For what is a man profited if he gains the whole world, and loses or forfeits himself? 26 For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when He comes in His glory, and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels.*

III. Fishers of Men v19

v19 *And He said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men*

They became fishers of men!

- a. Matt 28:19-20 *Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations...*
- b. Mark 16:15 *And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature*
- c. Luke 24:46-47 *...repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.*
- d. John 20:21 *Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you*
- e. Acts 1:8 *You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses...*

We have heard all of these verses too...but they obeyed taking the gospel as far as modern day Bulgaria, India, Syria, Iraq, Iran, Turkey, Afghanistan and more. They had one ambition: to know Christ and to make Him known.

Conclusion:

The Marines are looking for a few good men, but Jesus is looking for a few fools.

1. Fools who will follow him 100%
2. Fools who will lay down their pride, their plans, and their lives to fish for men.
 - a. To know Christ
 - b. To make Him known

He is searching for some people foolish enough to follow Him 100% and fish for men.

Gladys Aylward

When you read of the heroes of the Christian faith, it often seems like they are “over here” and most of us are “over here.” They were destined by their background, their lineage, their DNA to accomplish great things for God. We often look at ourselves and think I am not that smart, I am not that gifted, I am not that “spiritually elite” and I am not destined to be greatly used for God.

On February 24, 1902, a little girl would be born in London England who would prove otherwise. This little girl would grow up with one desire: to be a missionary to China.

1. She would grow to be less than impressive physically. She was only 4’10” tall.
2. She wasn’t viewed as the most intelligent hat London had to offer.
 - a. She was kicked out of Bible school because her grades were poor.
 - b. She was rejected by her mission agency because they said she was not intelligent enough to be able to learn the language.
 - c. They told her she should be a parlor maid.

That is exactly what she did.

1. She worked as a parlor maid
2. But she saved every penny she made and put it towards a train ticket from London to China.

Finally, she had enough money to get a one way ticket to China (talk about commitment), and she boards the train.

1. But this is not an easy trip.
2. There was a war going on, so the train was stopped along the tracks
 - a. in Russia,
 - b. in the winter,
 - c. in the dark and in the cold.
3. So, what was she to do?
 - a. She got off the train and walked toward China.
 - b. She walked in the Siberian snow.
 - c. Curls up and sleeps on the tracks.
4. Finally makes it to another train station where the Russians mis-read her passport.
 - a. It said Missionary
 - b. They thought it said machinist

The Russians, thinking she was a machinist, took her passport and kidnapped her to do machinist work for them during this war time.

1. Through a miraculous series of circumstances, this little woman was able to escape the Russian prison and get on a boat bound (not for London, but for China).
2. She arrives and makes her way to the only person she had heard of in China: Jenny Lawson in Yangcheng.
3. She stayed with her and used her inn as an avenue of preaching the gospel to those who passed through.
4. Jenny died in an accident leaving this young woman alone.
 - a. With her only contact, teacher, and translator dead, what was she to do?
 - b. She stayed and ran the inn, and despite her lack of “ability” she was able to learn the Chinese language and speak it fluently.
 - c. She began to gain a reputation in China for God and His power.

One day she is challenged. A riot had broken out at a men’s prison. The guards had been forced to flee. The Mandarin demanded that, if her God is really so powerful, she was to go in and stop the riot.

1. This little woman walks into a rioting Chinese prison of men hacking each other with machetes. Many are dead.
2. One of them runs towards her as the machete wielding man chased him.
3. The victim hid behind the 4’10” woman. What did she do?
 - a. She scolded the man, ordered him to drop the machete, stopped the riot, and calmed the prison.
 - b. She then instituted better policies in the prison that brought a measure of peace
 - c. She began to teach the Scriptures and baptisms that lasted for 3 whole days were the result.

She was eventually appointed as an official for the Mandarin. You see foot binding had been outlawed, but many in the rural areas did not get the memo...or heed it. So Gladys went as a representative of the Mandarin to enforce the law of the land...no more foot binding. But you know what else she did with this open door, and authority?

1. She spread the gospel from rural village to rural village and saw many come to faith in Christ.
2. The Mandarin had given her an open door, and his authority, and she used it...not just to put an end to a gruesome inhumane practice....but to spread the Word.

At one point, she heard of an area of China that had no witness.

1. She took out with a friend and got stuck in the woods on a mountain with no food or water for 10 days.
2. They begin to pray for God to send someone to save them.
3. They begin singing hymns and songs to God when suddenly a Buddhist monk appears and demands that they come with him.
 - a. He said, his community wanted to know about the God who loves.
 - b. Somehow they received a tract with John 3:16 on it 8 years earlier.
 - c. They had been looking for someone who could tell them more and knew that these ladies could do so because they heard them singing about this God.

The Japanese were at war with China during this time and they were beginning to invade and advance.

1. What she might be most well known for was taking a number of orphaned children out of the danger zone to safer areas of china.
2. As the danger zone spread, so did the number of children she had responsibility for.

3. Before it was over, she had 100 children between the ages of 3 and 16 all by herself that she led across China in an attempt to get them away from the advancing Japanese.
 - a. They had to walk over mountains and across china for 27 days and nights.
 - b. But she made it to safety with all 100 children.
4. By the time she arrived, she had contracted Typhus, pneumonia, and obviously a recurring fever.
 - a. She collapsed and was in a dillierius state for 2 months.
 - b. It took 2 years for her to recover. The doctor was amazed she lived at all.

She returned to London and eventually resettled in Taiwan where she opened an orphanage that she led until her death in January of 1970.

This little woman's name was Gladys Aylward. In her words, this has all happened because

"Years ago in London, God took a girl and asked her to give Him her hands, her feet, her whole body for His use." Gladys Aylward

We need some people foolish enough to follow Christ 100% and fish for men and we can only wonder at what God might do.