

# **BIB203 NT1 Life of Christ**

## **Unit 4a Synoptic Example 1**

Presented by the



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Hello. We are in Unit 4 of Life of Christ, NT1. We are going to continue what we did last week, which is to explore the use of Mark by Matthew and Luke. So this is a part two, if you will. And all we're going to do in this particular unit is we're going to explore some other passages. It's going to be sort of a sequential treatment of Mark, so we're going to be primarily in the Gospel of Mark and we're going to explore Matthew and then Luke. That's how the process is going to go. So this is part two. Last week was part one. Last week was Unit 3. And so let's go ahead and begin with Mark 1:14-15. So please open your Bibles to that section. And in Mark 1:14, we read, "Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the Gospel of God, and saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the Gospel.'" And so, what we see is, in the context of the Gospel of Mark, John's arrest occurs early. It's placed early in the Marcan narrative.

So now we want to look at Matthew and all of the material that precedes the pertinent section in Matthew. Now, the pertinent section in Matthew is Matthew 4:12-17. You'll notice immediately that Matthew has expanded it into six verses as opposed to the two that we see here in Mark, but he certainly uses Mark. So let's go over to Matthew and look at what he did in relation to the Marcan material. So again, it is Matthew 4:12-17. Now, what we see in verse 12 of Matthew 4, "Now when he heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew into Galilee." So you can see that when you take a look at Mark, it says now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee. Matthew furnishes additional information. "When he heard that John had been arrested, he (Jesus) withdrew into Galilee."

And we get some more information. He left Nazareth. And I'm summarizing the passage now. He went and he lived in Capernaum, and we're told that that was in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali, so that Isaiah's prophecy might be fulfilled. And you see an Isaianic prophecy covering verses 15 and 16, and it reads, "The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles—the people dwelling in darkness have seen a great light, and for those dwelling in the region and shadow of death, on them a light has dawned." Now, what Matthew just did is he took Isaiah 9:1-2 and he put it together with Isaiah 42:7. He placed those two texts side by side. He juxtaposed them together in order to highlight the fact that Isaiah had prophesied about this aspect of Jesus' ministry.

And then we read in verse 17, "From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.'" So that's Matthew's use of Mark. So what Matthew does is he includes material of his own. So the material that we see in Mark is intertwined, woven together with M material, Matthew's material, and we get a bit more information, hence the use of six verses. And of course, Matthew has a genealogy, an origin story for Jesus, the coming of the wise men to Jerusalem, Jesus' temptation in the wilderness. All of that is expanded in Matthew, leading to this juncture and the use of the Marcan material in Mark 1:14-15.

So that leaves Luke. What does Luke do? Well, it looks as though Luke simply collapses back to two verses. We have to go to Luke 4:14-15. So let's go there. And what we see there is Luke omits it completely. He uses similar material with respect to what Matthew does, but John's arrest is missing. If you take a look at verse 14, "Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee." That links with the Matthean material. "A report about him went out through all the surrounding country. And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified by all." And so that's all you have. So Luke barely includes anything about it. All he has in there is Jesus went to Galilee. So taking all the synoptics together, what you have is John gets arrested. Jesus hears about it. He withdraws to Galilee. That withdrawal would be in a

northerly direction because John the Baptist ministered by the Jordan and in the Jordan in the south. And so he's arrested by Herod and Jesus goes north to Galilee where he begins his ministry.

So that's one example. There is another example that we can look at. So going back to Mark now, again following this in sequence, we can look at Mark 1:16-20. So let's turn there. And so what we see here in verse 16, "Passing alongside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew the brother of Simon casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen. And Jesus said to them, 'Follow me, and I will make you become fishers of men.' And immediately they left their nets and followed him. And going on a little farther, he saw James the son of Zebedee and John his brother, who were in their boat mending the nets. And immediately he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants and followed him."

So the picture we have in Mark 1:16-20 is Jesus is walking alongside the lake, the Sea of Galilee, the Galilean Lake. He sees Simon and Andrew and they're casting a net into the sea, and Jesus says to them, "Follow me and I'll transform your lives. I'll make you become fishers of men." And we're told in Mark 1:18, "Immediately," as though it happened on the spot, "they left their nets and followed him." He went a little further on the coastline and he saw James the son of Zebedee and John his brother. They were mending their nets. "And immediately he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants and they followed him." Again, the sense of immediacy because of the use of the adverb "immediately" in verse 18 and verse 20. So that's Mark.

So how does Matthew use this? What does Matthew do with it? Well, we have to go to Matthew 4:18-22. And what we find when we get there is pretty much the same material. If you look at verse 18 and just let your eyes run over it, it's pretty much the same material. He's walking by the Sea of Galilee. He sees two brothers, Simon Peter and Andrew. They're fishermen. They're casting the net into the sea. He invites them to follow him. And immediately... Matthew actually uses that adverb, "immediately," in verse 20. They leave their nets. They follow him. He goes on from there. He sees two other brothers, James and John in the boat with Zebedee, their father. And they are mending their nets. He calls them. Immediately they leave the boat and their father, and they follow him. It's the same material. So Matthew changes virtually nothing.

What about Luke? What does he do? Well, we go to the Gospel of Luke. We have to go to Luke 5 and we're looking at the first 11 verses. So what does Luke do with Mark? So Luke 5:1-11. And what we see here is a broader description of what happened. Now, to be fair, the tendency is to read these as separate events. Matthew and Mark, there is no trouble equating those two because they are virtually identical. But when it comes to Luke, it certainly reads as though it were a different situation, a separate context. But let's read it and see what we find. It says, verse 1, "On one occasion, while the crowd was pressing in on him to hear the word of God, he was standing by the lake of Gennesaret, and he saw two boats by the lake, but the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. Getting into one of the boats, which was Simon's, he asked him to put out a little from the land. And he sat down and taught the people from the boat. And when he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, 'Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch.' And Simon answered, 'Master, we toiled all night and took nothing! But at your word I will let down the nets.' And when they had done this, they enclosed a large number of fish, and their nets were breaking. They signaled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the 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

and all who were with him were astonished at the catch of fish that they had taken, and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, 'Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching men.' And when they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed him."

Again, it looks like a different setting. It looks like a different event. But what if it isn't a different event? What if it is actually the same event? If it is a different event, well, then Jesus invites these two sets of brothers twice, which is certainly possible. We can certainly argue for the possibility. But what if, in fact, this is actually one and the same event, but Luke gives us more detail? So I remind you again, in Mark 1:16-20, Jesus is walking by the Sea of Galilee, he calls Simon and Andrew, and then he calls James and John. They leave everything immediately and they follow him. Matthew uses Mark without shifting, without changing anything. He basically co-opts the Marcan tradition.

Luke expands that tradition, it seems. It all takes place in Galilee in all three Gospels. The crowd is pressing in. He's standing by the lake of Gennesaret. That's a point of comparison, a point of similarity. He saw two boats by the lake. The fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. That is a point of dissimilarity because in Mark and in Matthew, you have Simon and Andrew, and they are casting their nets into the sea. So that doesn't quite fit. Jesus gets into one of the boats, which was Simon's, and he asks them to put out a little from the land. You don't see that in the Marcan tradition and you don't see it in Matthew either. He sat down. He talked to people from the boat. That's missing from Mark and Matthew. He finished speaking. He told Simon, "Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch." And Simon, after a brief protestation, agrees to do so, even though he's toiled all night with his brother.

So at that point, there's a point of similarity with the Marcan and Matthean traditions. They are casting their nets into the sea. It's a little different from what we normally expect or assume. They catch a lot of fish. The boats begin to sink. They signal to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. Simon Peter saw this and he fell down at Jesus' knees and he said, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord," because they were astonished at the fish. That's also missing from Mark and Matthew. Jesus said to Simon, "Don't be afraid; from now on you will be catching men." So they had brought their boats to land, and they left everything and followed him.

It's hard to harmonize all of them. The only reason that I would suggest a possible harmonization of these stories with Luke giving us the fullest description is because of what Luke says about his Gospel in chapter 1. He says to Theophilus that he desires to set everything in order so that he, Theophilus, would know the certainty of the things that he had been taught. So Luke deliberately tries to craft a sequence of the Gospel narratives more so than Mark and more so than Matthew, although it's relatively speaking in relation to Matthew. Matthew is more theological than chronological, but he certainly has some chronology in terms of his narrative structure and shape. Luke is theological. He is not merely historical or chronological, but in terms of seeking to set things in order for accuracy, Luke outstrips Mark and Matthew. So what does that leave us? Where does that leave us? It seems that Mark and Matthew, Mark in particular, highlights the fact that Jesus called these two sets of brothers: Simon and Andrew, James and John. And they left everything and they followed Jesus. But the how, how they left everything and followed Jesus, that is not given to us, it seems. It's given to us in Luke in more detail, in fuller detail. So all of the narratives work together. I guess that's why they call it the synoptics.