

BIB203 NT1 Life of Christ

Unit 5d Johannine Synoptic Example 4

Presented by the



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So in this segment, as I said, we're going to be looking at the requisite passage in Luke. At this point, we have looked at John 1:19-42, correlate it with Mark 1:1-12 and with the passages that were a further concern, from verses 13 through 15 thereabouts. And we looked at Matthew 3:1-4:11. We sort of completed that circuit. With Luke, we looked at 3:1-22 and 4:1-14 because that involved John's ministry, Jesus' eventual arrival at baptism, and Jesus' temptation. But then we went back to look at John 1:19-42 and further, arguably 1:19-51 but initially 1:19-42. And what we found was that there are three days that are recorded by John. After three days, the first day being when Jesus returns from the Judean wilderness and moves towards John, and John immediately announces him to be the Lamb of God. That is the earliest stage of the beginning of Jesus' ministry. And what we find, what we have found, particularly in the last segment, is that there are a number of men there, about four or five men, who were there at the baptism of John. They were subjected to that baptism for the remission of their sins. And when Jesus is pointed out as the Lamb of God, they are, over the course of three days, gathered to Jesus. So from John's tradition, John's recollection of events, John's Gospel, we see a gathering of at least four or five disciples, five disciples arguably, with Jesus prior to his attendance of a wedding in Cana at Galilee. That would be John 2.

Seeing that throws additional light on the call of the disciples. So we have to look at the Synoptics again. So John 1:19-51, in particular verses 43 to 51, actually precede what we see in Mark and Matthew and Luke regarding the call of the first disciples, which is normally the heading that you see, give or take, in our English Bibles. So let's go to Mark first very quickly. So in Mark 1:16, we're looking at verses 16 to 20, we see that Jesus is passing alongside the Sea of Galilee. He sees Simon and Andrew the brother of Simon casting a net into the sea. They are fishermen. Jesus said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you become fishers of men." Immediately they left their nets and followed him. "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." That's what we see in Mark.

When we read Mark, if we weren't aware of the other Gospels, if we hadn't correlated or closely read the other Gospels in tandem with this passage we just read, it would be natural for anyone and understandable for anyone to assume that Jesus called these disciples and they immediately left their family businesses and followed Jesus without a word, without a question, as though the call was instantaneous and they immediately responded and they just followed Jesus. They dropped everything. He called him and they dropped everything on a dime, to use the expression. And they followed him. We look at Matthew and we see pretty much the same thing. But for formality's sake, let's look at it. So Matthew 4:18-22 where the Marcan tradition is basically reproduced. So he's walking by the Sea of Galilee. He sees two brothers, Simon and Andrew. He calls them. Immediately they leave. They follow him. Verse 21, he sees two other brothers. He calls them. Immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him. So it's a reproduction of Mark effectively.

But then when you come to Luke, and that would be Luke 5:1-11, he tells us, "On one occasion." One out of many occasions is what is implied. "While the crowd was pressing in on him to hear the word of God, he was standing by the lake of Gennesaret." So Luke uses a different name. Gennesaret and Galilee are the same thing. "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, 'We toiled all night, Master, and took nothing!'"

Note that he calls Jesus Master. "But at your word I will let down the nets." Because if John 1 is to be believed, particularly verses 43 to 51, then Peter knows of Jesus. He has been following him since he returned, a day or two since he returned from the Judean wilderness. Jesus has embarked upon his ministry in Galilee. And so we should look at Luke 5 as being in the flow of that Galilean ministry. And so what you see, as a point of comparison with Matthew 4, is that John and James are mending their nets, but Simon and Andrew are casting the net into the sea, within the Matthean tradition, Matthew 4:18-22. But in Luke, we have "two boats by the lake... the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets." So men in both boats are washing their nets. They're done fishing. He gets on one of the boats, which was Simon's, and he teaches. When he finishes speaking, he says to Simon, "Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch." And Simon says, "Master, we worked all night! We took nothing." "We'll let down the nets." So they do it, and verse 6, "They enclosed a large number of fish, and their nets were breaking. And they signaled to their partners in the other boat to come." We read in verse 10 that James and John, sons of Zebedee, were partners with Simon. They were business partners. So Luke brings all of this information out that we don't see in Mark.

And in Matthew, they got a large number of fish and they called for help because their nets are breaking. (Verse 6) They signaled to those partners to come and help them. They filled both of the boats, but both of the boats began to sink. They caught so much fish. Simon Peter saw it and fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." Where is that coming from? Andrew, his brother, said to him sometime before when they were in Judea, "We have found the Messiah." That's significant. So all of that is in the back of Peter's mind at the very least when he falls down at Jesus' knees and says, "Depart from me. I am a sinful man, O Lord." They were all astonished at the catch of fish, and Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching men." And when they brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed him.

It would seem that this Lucan tradition is the fullest explanation for the Marcan and the Matthean. If that's true, then that means that the Marcan and the Matthean traditions, arguably the Marcan because Matthew borrows from Mark. He basically reproduces Mark. What that means then is Mark and Matthew are summaries and Luke is proper narrative. They are all true, but Luke gives us more detail. And furthermore, when you correlate it with John, well, they met in Judea by the Jordan, wherever Jesus was staying. You've got Peter and Andrew and John. James is not in the picture. We don't know where James is in the Gospel of John. But you have three of these individuals that are featured here in Luke 5. And so that's how we should understand.

What that means, though, is that the call is not immediate. Call is a useful term, make no mistake, but it's probably not the right term when you see the events from the perspective of four Gospels, with respect to timelines and what probably happened before what, and so on and so forth. Again, Mark and Matthew are summaries. Luke gives us a full description. So the use of "immediately" in Mark should be taken under advisement. It should be understood tentatively. And in any event, the quality of Mark's Gospel is such that there are Semitisms throughout that particular Gospel. There is the use of the present tense, what is called the historic present by Greek grammarians. And some would say that Mark is the least grammatical, a point that we made earlier on in this course. It is the least grammatical of the Gospels. And Matthew simply uses that and places it within the context of fuller material that he as an

apostle had access to. But Luke, being a careful historian or following careful historical method 2000 years ago, according to the standards of two millennia ago, he compiles things in order as best as he knows how, on the human scale and under the impress of the Holy Spirit transcendently. And John sheds light on all of this.

To summarize, the ministry of John the Baptist commences. He castigates the people and the religious leadership. He rebukes them. Some of them respond positively and they come to him and they are baptized in preparation for Messiah, for the remission of their sins. At some point, the religious leaders seek to ameliorate this preacher, this strange preacher who dresses funny and eats weird food, and they ask him questions and he responds. "I'm not Messiah. I'm not Elijah. One is coming after me." The very next day, Jesus comes out of the Judean wilderness, which means that they are asking John these questions at the end pretty much of Jesus' temptation in the wilderness, give or take a few days.

And so John records for us three days (the next day, the next day, the next day) in which Jesus will have transitioned to Galilee. He begins his ministry, apparently then, via a wedding. John records that for us. That's not recorded in the Synoptics. We don't see that. All we read is Jesus came in the power of the Holy Spirit to Galilee. After John was arrested, Jesus withdrew into Galilee. We read that kind of language in the Synoptics. And so we necessarily correlate it with the Gospel of John in that respect. Just to give us a picture, not to give us a strict chronology. It's just to allow us to put portraiture, put one portrait to another in sort of a probable sequence so that we can see what probably (emphasis on that adverb "probably") happened.

And in the course of Jesus' ministry in Galilee, he goes and sits on Simon's boat. He teaches the people. That's what he's doing. He's teaching. He's ministering in Galilee. And he brings Peter and his business partners in addition to his brother (and that's mentioned, his brother) to a point of crisis by simply requesting that they let down their nets. So presumably, they pull out into deeper water, they let down their nets, and they catch fish. It's an astonishing catch. They probably had never done anything like that in their lives. They probably were not fully out in deep water. That would explain why they were able to call to their business partners at the shore to come and help them because they caught all this fish so close to shore. They'd never seen anything like that before. So the event is remarkable enough. It is startling enough for Peter to experience an existential crisis. "Depart from me. I am a sinful man, O Lord." And the others are equally astonished because the nets are breaking, the boats are about to sink, and Jesus says to him, "Don't be afraid; from now on you will catch men." And presumably, he may have said, "Follow me. I'll make you fishers of men."

And all of this, it's not a dramatic proclamatory call, as we like to imagine it. It is probably more in the way of a conversation in light of this remarkable event, catching all this fish. So they are brought to a point where they look at him again. They do a double take, figuratively speaking, and they look at him and they realize afresh everything that John the Baptist had been saying. And when so he calls them to come with him, well, they're already hanging out with him, so it's a natural step for them to leave all that they know to become itinerant like their master.