

**A HARMONY OF THE GOSPELS**  
**XXXI. Christ's Sovereign Divine Call Of The Fishermen**  
**(Matthew 4:18-22; Mark 1:16-20; Luke 5:1-11)**

**I. Introduction**

- A. Salvation occurs when one believes in Jesus Christ as his personal Savior from sin and eternal damnation. However, a believer needs to be discipled in the Lord and come to serve Him, and those actions require increasing levels of maturity in one's experiential walk with God.
- B. Matthew 4:18-22, Mark 1:16-20 and Luke 5:1-11 record Christ's sovereign, divine call of Peter, Andrew, James, and John into discipleship and service after their initial expression of faith in Jesus as the Messiah: John and Andrew trusted in Christ in John 1:35-40 and Peter did so in John 1:41-42. James may have already been a believer, or he may have trusted in Christ and heeded the call to serve Him at the same time as Christ's call of Peter, Andrew and John to serve Him – we are not sure. We view the event for insight and application:

**II. Christ's Sovereign Divine Call Of The Fishermen, Matthew 4:18-22; Mark 1:16-20; Luke 5:1-11.**

- A. While Jesus was teaching the people by the Sea of Galilee in the area of Capernaum, the people were so impressed with His words that they were crowding around Him, Luke 5:1 NIV.
- B. Nearby were two fishing boats that had been brought to shore, and the fishermen had left them to wash their nets, so Jesus entered into the boat that belonged to Peter and asked him to thrust it out a little way from the shore that He might teach the people from there, putting room between Himself and the crowd, Luke 5:2-3a.
- C. Peter complied with Jesus' request since he had already believed in Him, and Jesus sat down on a bench in the boat and proceeded to teach the people, Luke 5:3b.
- D. Christ wanted to get Peter and the other disciples there who had already trusted in Him to follow Him into a higher level of discipleship that involved service. To do so, He revealed His divine authority and provision to equip them to succeed in ministry by performing a fishing miracle along with their own efforts, Luke 5:4-10:
  - 1. After He had finished speaking to the crowd, Jesus told Peter to launch his boat out into the deep and let down his nets for a catch, Luke 5:4.
  - 2. Such an effort seemed futile to an experienced fisherman like Peter: "Fishing was normally done at night" when "the fish rose from the depths to feed at the surface . . . When the . . . sun rose, the fish descended into the depths of the lake again. Those in the fishing trade knew it was useless to attempt to fish in the daylight hours." (J. Dwight Pentecost, The Words and Works of Jesus Christ, 1991, p. 143)
  - 3. Besides, Peter and his brother Andrew (Mark 1:16) had labored throughout the previous night and caught nothing, so fishing that next morning out in deep water seemed to be a very useless act to them, Luke 5:5a.
  - 4. Nevertheless, due to his faith in Christ, and though explaining that the effort seemed futile in view of the lack of a catch the previous night, Peter said he would obey Christ's word and let down the net, Luke 5:5b.
  - 5. When Peter and Andrew had let down their nets, 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," Luke 5:6-7 ESV.
  - 6. Peter then fell at Jesus' knees where Jesus sat saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." (Luke 5:8) Peter's action revealed his astonishment at the huge catch, and James and John, Peter's partners in the fishing business, were also astonished along with Peter and his brother Andrew, v. 9-10a.
  - 7. Having made the point that He could equip Peter and his partners to achieve far more than they could on their own if Jesus was involved, Jesus told Peter, "Stop being afraid (for your own benefit)" (*phobou*, **present middle** imperative indicative of *phobeo*, "be afraid," with a *me* negative particle; U. B. S. Grk. N. T., 1966, p. 220; The Analyt. Grk. Lex. (Zon.), 1972, p. 428); from now on you will be catching men," Luke 5:10b ESV with the Greek translation of *phobou*)
- E. After this display of Christ's power to equip them to succeed in fishing for men like they had succeeded in catching fish, these men immediately left their fishing trade and followed Jesus, Luke 5:11:
  - 1. When the men had brought their boats to land, they left the fishing trade and followed Jesus, Luke 5:11.
  - 2. These men were Peter, James, John, and Andrew, all of whom Jesus personally called (Matthew 4:18-22).

***Lesson:*** Upon revealing by means of a great miracle how very effective Peter, James, John and Andrew could be if they obeyed the Lord's call to disciple others, Jesus called these men to the service of discipling, and they obeyed.

***Application:*** If God reveals that He can and will make us effective coupled with a call to service, may we obey Him.