

Opportunity Cost

How to Say Yes Without Knowing What's Next

The Greatest Opportunity Series – Part 3

Mk 1:14-20

April 6-7, 2024

Introduction

- **The Year of Opportunity** – refresh for all those who are new from Easter that we are in the year of opportunity where **we keep our eyes open to watch for the movement of God and keep our ears open to listen for the Holy Spirit's guidance**. We are walking by incredible opportunities that God provides, every day. But this year we are going to do something about it. Amen?
 - **The honor of being invited to church** – If you were invited by a friend or family member this Easter or today, consider it an honor. **They brought you into their safe space**. I know it seems like they get extra credit for bringing you, but they don't. They are risking a lot by bringing you here. This is where they are vulnerable. So, they must really care about you to bring you.
 - **Jesus came with an opportunity** – **Jesus came 2,000 years ago with an opportunity. He proclaimed that His arrival was good news for all mankind. Why?** Because for a variety of reasons He was making it **possible to connect God and mankind**, a relationship which had been broken since the dawn of creation. He explained that He was the rightful King who had come to earth to rescue us. But, **He wasn't forcing, He was offering. The good news would only be true if we received the gift of rescue. To refuse a rescue is no rescue at all.**
 - **It's twisted to be a selfish demand** – Unfortunately in the last 2,000 years **the enemy has twisted the story, marred the message, and blinded the minds of people to think that somehow Jesus was a narcissistic bad guy** who was demanding that everyone do what He said or they would be burned alive. As a result **the opportunity sounded more like a threat and human hearts immediately started resisting**.
 - **So let's reset the story...**

You Have the Opportunity to BELIEVE

- **Recap of the Series** – we are in part 3 of a series about the life and ministry of Jesus walking through the Gospel of Mark.
 - **Part 1: More** - In part 1 we learned that **God has MORE for us**. Whatever you think you know about God it's better than that. We talked about what the good news is and why it's so amazing.
 - **Part 2: Blah** - Pastor Brian taught us about the baptism and temptation of Jesus Christ. He reminded us that **Jesus was prepared to walk into the opportunity that the Holy Spirit walked Him into, in the desert, because He firmly knew WHO He was and what He was here to do**.
 - **Today Jesus assembles His team** – turn with me to Mark 1:14, page _____

Lesson

- **Most Wanted**

- **John the Baptist is Arrested**

- **Mk 1:14a** - *“Now after John was arrested,...”*¹

- **John Who?**² – **John the Baptist**. He was the son of Zechariah and Elizabeth. He was a cousin of Jesus. He was the son of a priest and the priestly line ran through his mom and dad. He baptized people by immersion in the Jordan River rather than in the temple like one would assume. He dressed and did his ministry in a similar fashion to Elijah the ancient prophet (who also ministered in that area and was taken up to heaven in that area). His ministry was one of repentance and preparation for the Messiah (get ready, He’s coming...actually He’s here). He was put in prison for calling out Herod Antipas for marrying his brother’s sister

¹ “According to W. Marxsen, *Der Evangelist Markus* (Göttingen, 1956), pp. 22–24, an impression of successiveness has been deliberately created by Mark where none existed before; historically John’s arrest belongs later. Ch. 6:14 shows conclusively, however, that the activities of Jesus and John were both chronologically and spatially separated. Those who judged that Jesus is John raised from the dead could not have seen the two men working together, or known of Jesus’ baptism by John. The public activity which brought Jesus to the attention of the people could only have begun after John had been removed from the scene through his arrest. “The people have an impression of successiveness, not contemporaneousness.” See W. Wink, *op. cit.*, pp. 8–10.” William Lane, NICNT

² “JOHN THE BAPTIST Son of Zechariah and Elizabeth. Relative of Jesus Christ. Baptized people for repentance of their sins. Beheaded by Herod Antipas at the request of his stepdaughter/niece.²...Descriptions of John the Baptist clearly set him in the tradition of Elijah. John appeared as an ascetic in the Judaean wilderness near the Jordan River wearing camel-hair clothing and a leather belt. He ate locusts and wild honey (Mark 1:6; compare 2 Kgs 1:8). Similar to both John and Jesus, Elijah also had a disciple “calling” (1 Kgs 19:19–21). Before Elijah ascended into heaven, in response to Elisha’s plea to remain with him, we read “Then Elijah said to him, “Stay here; for the Lord has sent me to the Jordan.” (2 Kgs 2:6). John baptized on the east side of the Jordan, opposite Jerusalem (John 1:28). Much of Elijah’s prophetic activity occurred on the east side of the Jordan, and he ascended to heaven from there as well (1 Kgs 17:5). The Babylonian exiles may have come to the eastern shore of the Jordan upon their return to Jerusalem (Webb). John’s baptism could symbolically represent a “return from exile” or a “new exodus,” as entering the water (symbolized through baptism), and consequently the land, was set within the paradigmatic theme of Israel’s prior water crossings, not only of Israel’s exodus from Egypt through the “Sea of Reeds,” but also through crossing the Jordan in the book of Joshua (Stegemann, Webb). The most viable understanding of John the Baptist as portrayed in the Gospels is the direct prophetic continuity with the expectations of a coming Elijah. “John’s emergence was at the same time the promised return of Elijah” (Stegemann, 217)... The term “baptism” is a new term in the New Testament writings. However, archaeology and literature provide significant evidence of widespread water cleansing practices. Before John the Baptist, cleansing with water was largely associated with ritual purification, distinct from ethical or moral concerns. While there were numerous ritual purifications, including immersion of the entire body, “... until John’s appearance, neither in Judaism nor in the world around had anyone baptized other persons” (Stegemann, 218). Further, the status of “clean” and “unclean” people or things (Lev 10–15) related to ritual, not spiritual or moral status (Klawans, *Impurity and Sin in Ancient Judaism*). However, it is evident in the New Testament that the terms “clean” and “unclean” are used to refer to individuals with spiritual or moral “defects” in addition to ritual ones. This shift in terminology portrays movement from concrete ritual to abstract spiritual condition. Ritual cleansing with water became a practice that symbolically generated moral or spiritual cleanliness, leading to repentance and forgiveness of sins. The enmeshment of ritual terminology with ethical realities is evident in much of the Qumran literature as well (compare CD col. 6, 10, 11, 12; 1QH^a 8:30, 12:38; 4Q257 3; 4Q370; 11Q5 19, 11Q19 51:14; 11Q20:15 1QS 3:4–9 “he cannot be sanctified in all waters or rivers ...”). In reference to the ritual of baptism itself, we find from later Jewish sources that immersion is required for “God fearers” who convert to Judaism. In m. Pesahim 8.8 the rabbinic schools of Hillel and Shammai debate the issue of proselyte water purification and the Passover meal. Immersion represents a change in ritual status, ensuring that the cleansed person does not impose uncleanness on others (compare b. Yevamot 46a). Beasley-Murray notes, “A Gentile convert to Judaism at the beginning of the Christian era was required to receive circumcision, to undergo a ritual bath, and to offer sacrifice ... In assessing the significance of proselyte baptism, it is essential to note the importance attached by the Jews to circumcision. The frequently quoted saying in Yeb. 2:29, “One who has become a proselyte is like a child newly born” (Soncino Talmud ed. 22a), should be compared with that in Pesahim 91b, “One who separates himself from his uncircumcision is like one who separates himself from the grave” (Beasley-Murray, *Baptism in the New Testament*). John the Baptist and his disciples provide a bridge between early Jewish cleansing rituals and the church sacrament of Baptism. The book of Acts shows John’s disciples merging with the followers of Jesus (Acts 18:24–19:7). Paul asks disciples of John about the baptism they received, saying, “John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the one who was to come after him, that is, in Jesus” (Acts 19:2–4). If the baptism practiced by Jesus and his disciples was “Spirit-filled,” and John’s disciples did not know that there was a Holy Spirit, it is likely John’s baptism was a gradation closer to a more ritualistic or cultic baptism. It later becomes suffused with greater “spiritual” significance as it was adopted as an entrance rite by the early Christ followers... John the Baptist is already arrested by Mark 1:14, suggesting the movement had a political dimension as well. In Mark 6:14, Herod, concerned with Jesus’ identity, states, “John, whom I beheaded, has been raised.” The narrative of John’s beheading comes after this statement. John’s critique of Herod and his unlawful relation with Herodias parallels Elijah’s critic of Ahab and Jezebel. The women in both narratives respond by conspiring to kill the prophet. Lastly, we find in Mark 11:32 that all regarded John as a prophet... Luke also demonstrates John’s priestly lineage through his mother Elizabeth (of the daughters of Aaron) and his father Zechariah (in the course of Abijah). Qumran anticipated two Messiahs: one priestly and one Davidic (CD 12.23; 14.19; 19.10–11; 20.1; 1QS 9.11; see also T. Levi 18; T. Reu. 6:8). In Luke 11:1–2, the Lord’s Prayer is a response to a request by Jesus’ disciples to teach them how to pray, as John taught his disciples...” Lexham Bible Dictionary

(incest). Later, while in prison Herod's step-daughter danced for him to get his favor and due to her mom's influence asked for JTB's head on a platter. It was granted. While in prison JTB had his followers make sure that Jesus was the actual Messiah and Jesus said, 'take a look at what's happening, examine the evidence that I am who I say I am.'

- **Why was he arrested?** – As mentioned above he was arrested for **calling out Herod Antipas for incestual marriage to his brother's sister**. Herod saw him as a threat in many ways but also knew that there was something supernatural about him. In the end Herod has him beheaded.
- **ESV Combo Account** – John the Baptist getting thrown in jail.
 - *As the people were in expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Christ, this is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" He confessed, and did not deny, but confessed, "I am not the Christ." And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the Prophet?" And he answered, "No." So they said to him, "Who are you? We need to give an answer to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" He said, "I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,' as the prophet Isaiah said." (Now they had been sent from the Pharisees.) (Then) they asked him, "Then why are you baptizing, if you are neither the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?" John answered them all, and preached, saying, "I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is mightier than I is coming. Among you stands one you do not know, even he who comes after me, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. I have baptized you with water, but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire." So with many other exhortations he preached good news to the people. But Herod the tetrarch, who had been reprovved by him for Herodias, his brother's wife, and for all the evil things that Herod had done, added this to them all, that he locked up John in prison."*
- **Is this timing correct?**³ – It seems strange that Mark mentions that **Jesus' launch of his public ministry in Galilee was in alignment with John the Baptist's arrest**. It's as if he was stating that while John was doing prep, Jesus was being prepped (desert temptation, etc.), but when we get to Luke's gospel, the only one that has a chance of being chronological, it mentions John's imprisonment in chapter 7. However, it states that John was ALREADY in prison. We don't know how long. Luke himself described Jesus going public immediately after the 40 days in the wilderness following his baptism (which JTB was obviously not in prison for). So, what's the timeline of Jesus' early ministry when He was calling the disciples and interacting with John the Baptist?
 - **North regular life** - Jesus is in the North behind the scenes and working as a tradesman locally while John the Baptist (JTB) is running his public ministry in the South
 - **Growing up together** – it's important to note that Israel is not a very big nation (about the size of New Jersey). Up north was more rural and everyone was mostly in the same are (no one really lived in the high north, just around the Sea of Galilee). We know that Jesus was related to both John the Baptist and James and John. My point is that a bunch of these guys would have grown up knowing each other or knowing ABOUT each other. There's no way that they are all strangers.

³ "It is significant that Jesus does not enter upon his own distinctive ministry until after John has been arrested. Mark's formulation suggests that Jesus is restrained by God from his ministry of proclamation until the Baptist is removed from the scene. His arrest indicates that the time has come for Jesus to act. Jesus enters into Galilee proclaiming the gospel of God." William Lane, NICNT

- **South** - Jesus travels down South (multiple times in his life, at least once a year), where he is baptized by JTB in the Jordan River.
 - Jesus goes out into the southern wilderness 40 days to be tempted.
 - Jesus stayed down there a bit – JTB calls him out as they pass by each other on the street and calls him ‘The Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world!’ and tells everyone that he saw the Spirit descend on Jesus when he baptized Him. (John 1:29-34)
 - **Jesus met Andrew and Simon in the South early on** – Andrew was a disciple of JTB. The next day Andrew and another disciple of JTB’s were standing with him when Jesus came by and JTB called him out again. (John 1:35-42). Andrew gets his brother Simon and brings him to Jesus. Jesus calls Simon, Peter.
- **North** - Jesus arrives back in the North and starts preaching & ministering publicly. JTB is arrested and put in prison by Herod Antipas.
 - **Jesus called Philip** to follow him as an official disciple. **Philip finds Nathanael** and brings him to Jesus and is convinced to follow him too. (John 1:43-51)
 - *Jn 1:43-51 - “The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, “Follow me.”⁴⁴ Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. ⁴⁵ Philip found Nathanael and said to him, “We have found him of whom Moses in the Law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.” ⁴⁶ Nathanael said to him, “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?” Philip said to him, “Come and see.” ⁴⁷ Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him and said of him, “Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no deceit!” ⁴⁸ Nathanael said to him, “How do you know me?” ⁴⁹ Nathanael answered him, “Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!” ⁵⁰ Jesus answered him, “Because I said to you, ‘I saw you under the fig tree,’ do you believe? You will see greater things than these.” ⁵¹ And he said to him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.”*
 - Jesus attends the wedding in **Cana** (Northeast) with the disciples/followers He has (unk who was all there), where his mom ignites his miracle ministry (water to wine).
 - It was his **first ‘sign miracle’** and it says his disciples believed in him even more. (Jn 2:1-12)
- **South** - Jesus goes South for Passover and clears the temple the first time.
- **Mid/South** (Aenon near Salim) - Jesus and John the Baptist are separately baptizing in the central valley in the Jordan River (Jn 3:22-36) likely just inside the technical Judaeon limits.
 - **On the way home North** - Woman at the well (Samaria)
- **North** - Jesus returns to Galilee to minister
- **South** - Jesus goes to Jerusalem for a festival and heals the man by the pool – locks up with Religious leaders
- **North** - Jesus returns to the North, this time to Nazareth and is rejected.
 - **Jesus sets up homebase in Capernaum** (Galilee region) and calls the next 4 disciples: Andrew, Peter, James & John, all fishermen.
 - Luke’s chronology indicates that **BEFORE Andrew and Peter were called, Jesus had interacted with them AT LEAST in three if not four significant ways.** 1.) Jesus healed Simon Peter’s mother-in-law from a fever in her home. 2.) Jesus was being crushed by a huge crowd wanting to hear Him preach by the Sea of Galilee and he uses one of Simon/Andrew’s boats to stand on out in the water. 3.) right after the sermon and everyone went home, he encouraged Simon to do more fishing and there was a HUGE catch. All the partners were involved (Andrew, James, John, etc.). Simon is cut to the heart by the miracle and the interactions they’ve had. Jesus talks about Simon following him as a rabbi (Lk 5:9-11). 4.) Don’t forget northern Israel is rural and people are tight. Jesus was related to James and John who were in a family fishing business connected to Peter and Andrew’s family fishing business. They all knew each other or knew OF each other growing up.
 - It makes more sense that **Andrew is back at the family business in the North as a fisherman since his rabbi, John the Baptist, was in prison already.** It also indicates why it was such an easy switch over to Jesus’ team, although other JTB disciples didn’t switch.

- Matthew explains that Jesus was walking by the Sea of Galilee when He saw Andrew and Peter working. This would suggest that perhaps it was **either the next day, or later that week. Jesus officially calls them as disciples and they leave their jobs as fishermen and follow Him. Just down the way Jesus does the same to James and John.**
 - **Jesus goes publicly through Galilee with a popular ministry.** He heals the leper.
 - **Back in Capernaum Jesus calls Matthew/Levi** as a disciple. Heals the paralyzed man who came through the roof.
 - **Jesus calls the 12 Apostles** – fully formed team.
 - Jesus goes to minister at Nain, raises young man from the dead. **JTB's disciples ask if He's the Messiah.** John's already in prison.
 - **More preaching in Galilee and Nazareth.** Likely 3 major tours through the North along with ad-hoc ministry. **John the Baptist is beheaded in prison during the 3rd sweep through.**
- **Life-Changing News**
 - **Jesus Proclaims the Gospel in Galilee**
 - **Mk 1:14b-15** - *"Jesus came into Galilee,⁴ proclaiming the gospel of God,¹⁵ and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel."*

⁴ "Galilee in the Bible- The region of Galilee is referred to 69 times in the Bible. Joshua brought the region of Galilee under Israelite domination when he defeated the Canaanite league led by Jabin (Josh 11:1–11). Four of the Israelite tribes were assigned to this area (Asher, Issachar, Zebulun and Naphtali; Josh 19). The Assyrian king Tiglath-Pileser III invaded Galilee in 733 BC and captured a number of the major cities (2 Kgs 15:29). Israelite dominion over Galilee ended in 722 BC when Sargon II captured the capital city (2 Kings 17) and exiled the inhabitants of the region to Assyria. Galilee is prominent in the Gospels as the scene of Jesus' childhood and much of His public ministry (Matt 2:22–23; 4:12, 23). Most of the 12 apostles were from the region of Galilee (John 1:44; Matt 4:18–21). Name and Location - The name "Galilee" literally means "circle" or "district," the fuller expression of which is "district of the Gentiles" (Isa 9:1; Matt 4:15). Galilee is located in the northern part of the land of Israel between the Jezreel Valley and the Litani (Leontes) River. The region is bordered on the west by the Mediterranean Sea and on the east by the Sea of Galilee and Upper Jordan Valley. The political boundaries of the region of Galilee were vague and variable until defined by Roman administration after the death of Herod (4 BC), when Galilee became a part of the tetrarchy of Antipas (Hoehner, Herod Antipas, 43). Topography - Galilee is the highest region of Israel, with elevations ranging from 3,962 feet at Mount Meron to 680 feet below sea level at the Sea of Galilee. Because of its altitude and proximity to the sea, it is also the coolest and most well-watered part of Israel. Josephus praised the fertility of Galilee, stating that no part of the land was left uncultivated (Josephus, Jewish War 3.42–43). The region was fertile in part because of its springs, heavy dew, and rainfall. The terrain is quite diverse and includes volcanic cones, limestone hills, and fertile alluvial plains. Divisions - Josephus indicated that Galilee was divided into two regions: Upper and Lower Galilee (Jewish War 3.35–40). The border between the two regions is marked by a slope which rises almost 1,500–2,000 feet vertically, the fault of Esh Shaghur, which cuts across the region between Acco and Ptolemais, and the north end of the Sea of Galilee. Upper Galilee is a mountainous plateau which reaches elevations of more than 3,000 feet. Mount Meron, Upper Galilee's highest peak, reaches an altitude of 3,962 feet. From the Litani River in the north, the mountains of Galilee rise to their highest point and then drop into the fault of Esh Shaghur, the border between the two Galilees. Upper Galilee is composed primarily of hard ridges of Cenomanian limestone and plateaus of softer Senonian (chalk) limestone. This windswept mountainous region is believed to have been densely forested in antiquity (Aharoni, The Land of the Bible, 25). Because of its isolated and mountainous terrain, Upper Galilee was not a focal point of biblical history, although small villages and fortresses were located there in Roman times. Baly suggests that rugged Upper Galilee offered the northern Israelites a "region of escape" when resisting political domination by a foreign power (Baly, The Geography of the Bible, 152). The key characteristics of Upper Galilee are its mountainous terrain and isolation from surrounding regions. Lower Galilee is less uniformly mountainous than Upper Galilee and is characterized by low mountain ranges (under 2,000 feet) with a series of small valleys and basins between them. The shallow valleys and basins bisect the mountains longitudinally from east to west and give the region a staircase-like topography descending from Upper to Lower Galilee. The valleys and basins of Lower Galilee provided a number of easy travel routes from Israel's northern coast and the Jezreel Valley across the region to the Sea of Galilee, where the routes converge. Climate - Because of its elevation and proximity to the sea, Galilee has the wettest (and coldest) winter weather in the land of Israel. During the rainy season (November–April), Lower Galilee receives between 15–20 inches of precipitation while Upper Galilee receives between 30–40 inches (May, Oxford Bible Atlas, 51). Temperatures in Galilee vary considerably depending on elevation and distance from the Mediterranean Sea. The higher elevations of Upper Galilee make it cooler and more pleasant during the summer months, but it is also colder during the winter months when occasional freezing temperatures bring ice and snow. Lower Galilee is affected by the westerly Mediterranean Sea breeze which sweeps through the east-west valleys and basins during the afternoon. The valleys tend to funnel the winds down onto the Sea of Galilee causing violent storms (see Matt 8:24; Mark 4:37; Luke 8:23). Winter storm winds reaching velocities of 75 mph have been measured in the hills of Galilee. While all of Israel is known for its copious dew, it is most plentiful in the region of Galilee (see Psa 133:3). Western Galilee is extremely rich in dew, with 200 to 250 dew nights annually (Orni and Efrat, Geography of Israel, 153). The dew precipitates from the moisture-laden Mediterranean air, which settles on the

- **Jesus** – Jesus Christ of Nazareth. The Son of God. The son of Mary and stepson of Joseph. The Messiah (Anointed One) that Israel had been waiting thousands of years for. He came from heaven as a member of the Godhead (Trinity) and would return to heaven after His resurrection. He would eventually die on a cross for the sins of the world.
- **Came into Galilee** – where's Galilee? **Galilee is a major region in northern Israel. It composes 4 of the 12 tribes of Israel territory.** Think of it like **Northern California**. It is rolling hills (and small mountains) and has most of the precipitation of the nation, which must be shipped down to the dry south. It's largely centered around the Sea of Galilee (see below). Jesus lived here and ran His ministry here. **The more north you go (Upper Galilee) it's more remote and less people live there.** Most folks lived in Lower Galilee. It was a very fertile area with lots of crops and fishing.
 - **Why Galilee?** – **fulfillment of prophecy (Isaiah).** **730 years before** this event, Isaiah the prophet (740-701BC) prophesied that God would do a mighty work in the land of Naphtali & Zebulun that was attached to the Messiah and hope for the world. This is that fulfillment.
 - Mt 4:12–16 – *“Now when he heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew into Galilee. ¹³ And leaving Nazareth he went and lived in Capernaum by the sea, in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali, ¹⁴ so that what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled: ¹⁵ “The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles— ¹⁶ 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.”*
- **Proclaiming the gospel of God** – what does proclaiming mean?
 - **What's the gospel of God?** – we talked about this extensively in week 1 (go back and listen) but the gist is that ‘gospel’ in those times means, **‘great news because of the presence of a great ruler.’** It was a Roman term that usually was tied to the emperor. John the Baptist and Jesus’ team used it to describe something even more accurate and more powerful: The presence of the Son of God (God Himself) on earth and changing things for the better.
 - **What would He be saying or explaining?** – **He would be talking about how His arrival ushered in a new reality of heaven on earth.** Since He was there things were going to change. It was **a foretaste of the heavenly life** to come

cool Galilean hills and valleys after sunset. Dew was important for Galilean agriculture during the long dry season between May and September. Condensation on rocks would seep into the soil and lightly irrigate thirsty plants. Culture - The region of Galilee received its abundant water supply from the Jordan River and contained wide and fertile valleys covered with deep, rich soil. Additional agricultural characteristics included forests, rich soil, plentiful water, and an abundance of fish in the Sea of Galilee. Galilee was known in ancient times as an excellent region for producing wheat. It was also known for its production of olive oil (Josephus, Jewish War 3.592); olive groves were planted on the lower slopes of the hills while grain grew on the fertile valley floors. According to Jewish tradition, it was easier to bring up a legion of olives in Galilee than one infant in Judaea (Avi-Yona, The Holy Land, 203). Galilee was also Israel's largest and best producer of wine. The abundance of fish in the Jordan River and Sea of Galilee resulted in the fishing industry being a primary source of income for Galileans. Salted and pickled fish from Galilee were sold throughout the land. Fishermen from Capernaum were among the first to become followers of Jesus (Matt 4:18–22; Mark 1:16–20). While the fertile fields of Galilee could have been used as grazing land for sheep and goats, Galilee's ancient farmers realized that the land could be used more profitably for agriculture. Galilee was also located on the international trade and travel route which passed through the land of Israel, joining Mesopotamia with Egypt. The route descended south from Damascus, crossing the Jordan River just east of the Habor, and cutting through Lower Galilee and the Jezreel Valley to reach the coastal plain. The Galileans profited from the trade and the customs they levied on caravans and travelers who passed through their region. Levi was a customs collector in Capernaum, a toll station on the Via Maris (“way of the sea,” Isa 9:1), when Jesus called him to become His follower (Mark 2:14).” Lexham Bible Dictionary

after death and renewal of all things. As a taste, Jesus was healing, casting out demons, setting people free, encouraging them, giving them hope, and shifting their worldview and paradigms.

- **And saying, 'the time is fulfilled...'** – what time? What's fulfilled? – for thousands of years there were prophecies about **a Messiah coming** and making things right for the Jewish people. He would not only handle their sin problem (that the sacrificial system wasn't capable of doing fully), but their earthly reality as well (military conquering hero). Jesus is saying, 'I'm the guy you've been waiting for.' However, He did not do all the things they expected of Him. He explained that He had two different visits to do and on the first one it was about suffering to handle the sin problem and the second was the military one.
- **The kingdom of God is at hand**⁵ – what does this mean? The kingdom of God, in the person of Jesus Christ (God Himself) is fulfilled, **present**, and imminent. God's rule (kingdom) is now active on earth in a new way that it wasn't before.
- **Repent**⁶ – what does that mean? It means **reorientation**. It means **changing our minds to align with God's way of seeing things**. It means to shift from our self-direction and turn to His direction.
 - **Confession & Remorse** – Although it's not explicitly stated, confession and remorse tend to be a key part of repentance. The reason we would change our mind and direction is that we realize we've been going the wrong way. **Confessing that we've been going the wrong way** is part of it. For someone who never knew, it would be less than an active rebellion confession and more of an ignorance repentance (I didn't know, forgive me, I should have). **The remorse comes when the realization comes**. We have done things and lived in such a way that violated God, that should create remorse for our actions. But, it's **very common for us to feel bad about the consequences of sin rather than the violation to God.**⁷ **Those are two different things.**
 - **The way INTO God-opportunities** - Repentance is the response for God's people to enter into the opportunities He has for them. **As long as we are doing our own thing, we are not doing His thing.** To go through the door that

⁵ "Jesus then proclaims that the kingdom has drawn near, and while his proclamation is veiled, Mark clearly understands that it is Jesus' own appearance which is the decisive event in the redemptive plan of God. The coming of the kingdom remains future, but it is certain precisely because God has begun to bring it to pass in the coming of his Son. The announcement that the consummation is at hand affirms that the decisive events in its approach are under way. The Anointed One is already present among the covenant people, and through him the royal act of God in redeeming his people has begun. The kingdom has drawn near, spatially in the person of Jesus who embodied the kingdom in a veiled way..." NICNT

⁶ "Jesus' action in confronting Satan, sin, disease and death, and subduing nature is the sign that the end stands as the next act of God in man's future. Provision has been made for men to repent, but there is no time for delay. Only through repentance can a man participate with joy in the kingdom when it does break forth. Jesus accordingly calls men to radical decision. In Jesus men are confronted by the word and act of God; he himself is the crucial term by which belief and unbelief come to fruition. Jesus proclaims the kingdom not to give content but to convey a summons. He stands as God's final word of address to man in man's last hour. Either a man submits to the summons of God or he chooses this world and its riches and honor. The either/or character of this decision is of immense importance and permits of no postponement. That is what repentance is all about." NICNT

⁷ "The Greek word metanoia literally means a change of mind. We are very apt to confuse two things—sorrow for the consequences of sin and sorrow for sin. Many people become desperately sorry because of the mess that sin has got them into, but they know very well that, if they could be reasonably sure that they could escape the consequences, they would do the same thing again. It is not the sin that they hate; it is its consequences." William Barclay commentary

He opens, we would need to stop going where we are currently going and turn to enter into the direction He is suggesting. It's a **course correction**.

- **Believe in the gospel**⁸ - the one command for salvation seems to be belief. But what does that mean? (the command for discipleship is love – John 13:34; 15:12, 17; etc.).
 - 1 Jn 3:23–24 – *“And this is his commandment, that we believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he has commanded us. ²⁴ Whoever keeps his commandments abides in God, and God in him. And by this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit whom he has given us.”*
 - **What constitutes belief?**⁹ - Belief is **more about trust than intellectual assent. Belief means that you trust the information and act accordingly.** So, what information are we told to believe in? The good news. Which is? That God has come close to man and that changes reality. Jesus Christ is the Son of God who came into the world to bring heaven near. The rightful king of creation is present and thereby all His words are right and true. Do you believe that?
 - **Was that command clearer to His initial hearers?** – probably not. They probably got the gist, but there's a lot of background information they needed so they could fully believe. But we are held accountable to believing the portion of the Gospel that God reveals to us. We cannot know it outside of Him. All of us are deficient in knowledge about God and the ramifications of His present. We are all woefully deficient in theology and doctrine. That is why we must be saved by grace and just follow along as God reveals Himself to us. People could get the gist of believing and trusting Jesus. That was enough.

- **Apostles in Training**

- **Jesus Calls His First Disciples: Simon & Andrew**

- **Mk 1:16-18** - *“Passing alongside the Sea of Galilee/Gennesaret, he saw Simon and Andrew the brother of Simon casting a net¹⁰ into the sea, for they were fishermen. ¹⁷ And Jesus said to them, “Follow me, and I will make you become fishers of men.” ¹⁸ And immediately they left their nets and followed him.”*

⁸ “The summons to “repent and believe in the gospel” is not new, but a fresh reiteration of the word addressed to men through the prophets. But the note of urgency in the summons to repent is sharpened, for now the nature of the gospel is clearer than ever before.” NICNT

⁹ 4100. πιστεύω pisteúō; fut. pisteúsō, from pístis (4102), faith. To believe, have faith in, trust. NT meanings: (I) Particularly, to be firmly persuaded as to something, to believe, followed by the inf. (Rom. 14:2); by hóti (3754), that (Mark 11:23; Rom. 6:8; 10:9). With the idea of hope and certain expectation (Acts 18:8). (A) More commonly used of words spoken and things, followed by the dat. of the person whose words one believes and trusts in (Mark 16:13; John 5:46; Acts 8:12; 1 John 4:1); by hóti (John 4:21). (B) With an adjunct of the words or thing spoken, followed by the dat. (Luke 1:20; John 4:50; Acts 24:14; 2 Thess. 2:11; Acts 13:41); by epí (1909), upon, and the dat. (Luke 24:25); by en (1722), in, and the dat. (Mark 1:15, “in the glad tidings” [a.t.], meaning to believe and embrace the glad tidings announced; Sept.: Ps. 78:22; Jer. 12:6).” Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament

¹⁰ “Cf. F. Dunkel, op. cit., p. 387: Mark employs the technical term for the throwing out of the circular casting net, which had a diameter varying from ten to fifteen feet. The outer edge was weighted to allow the net to sink rapidly, imprisoning fish under it; in the middle of the net was a rope by means of which it could be pulled up. With such a net, usually only a few fish were taken with each cast. Dunkel distinguishes between five types of nets used in fishing these waters (pp. 376–380).” NICNT

- **Passing alongside the Sea of Galilee¹¹** – where’s the sea of Galilee? What is it? – the Sea of Galilee is a freshwater body that’s 64 square miles. It’s the lowest freshwater lake on earth and second-lowest lake in the world at 705ft below sea level. 33 miles in circumference, 12-13 miles long, 6-8 miles wide.¹² Average depth is 84 ft (Max depth is 141 ft).
 - **Compared to Folsom Lake** - By comparison,¹³ Folsom Lake is 75 miles of shoreline (circumference), 9 miles long, 29 square miles. It’s deepest part (when full) is 276 feet. That means, technically, although far more spread out (Galilee is much rounder), **Folsom Lake has 2x’s the shoreline, is 2x’s deeper, 4 miles shorter than the Sea of Galilee. About the same width in the body across maybe a bit narrower.**
 - **Why was Jesus walking alongside it?** – **the Sea of Galilee is the center of the whole Galilee region.** It’s why everything built up around it. It’s the center of commerce. It was, in a sense, center of life. For a country area it was well traveled. Jesus would go there like everyone else.
 - **The importance of the fishing business¹⁴** - **Fish was the staple protein of Israel.** They didn’t eat much meat (lamb, beef, etc.). Therefore, fishing was a massive industry. Up North it came from the Sea of Galilee, if not from the Sea itself (remember, Israel is on the Mediterranean Sea coast). Since **fresh fish could only happen BY the water (no refrigeration), being near the lake was key. For the rest of the nation, it would have to be salt-cured fish** (heavily salted to preserve it).
 - **He saw Simon** – who’s Simon? **Simon is who we think of when we think of Peter.** Jesus changed his name into a nickname (Peter means rock). Simon is Andrew’s brother. He seems to be the only disciple who was married (reference to his wife and mother-in-law). It’s likely that Jesus lived at Peter’s house in Capernaum. Simon was a louder leader, likely one of the older disciples. Jesus seemingly put him as the leader of the group (confirmed both by how Jesus talked about him, how he operated in the book of Acts, and how tradition explains it).
 - **And Andrew the brother of Simon** – who’s Andrew? We know less about Andrew than about Simon Peter. We know that Andrew was **once one of John the Baptist’s disciples** and when he learned about Jesus Christ being the Messiah

¹¹ “Jesus found these brothers working as fishermen on the shores of the Sea of Galilee, elsewhere designated the Lake of Gennesaret or the Sea of Tiberias. The inland sea, which was twelve miles in length and six miles across at its widest point, provided a point of access between Galilee and Perea. There were many towns and fishing villages especially on the western and northern shores. The waters teemed with life, and when Jesus summoned the brothers they were casting their nets into the sea.” NICNT

¹² “The Sea of Galilee is approximately 12 miles north to south, and about seven and a half miles wide.”

Lexham Bible Dictionary

¹³ <https://www.goldkeymarine.com/post/folsom-lake-water-level-watch>; <https://earthobservatory.nasa.gov/images/40147/lake-tiberias-sea-of-galilee-northern-israel>; <https://norcalwater.org/efficient-water-management/efficient-water-management-regional-sustainability/water-maps/folsom-reservoir/>; <https://www.worldatlas.com/lakes/folsom-lake-california.html>;

¹⁴ “There were many fishermen in Galilee. Josephus, who, for a time, was governor of Galilee, and who is the great historian of the Jews, tells us that in his day 330 fishing boats sailed the waters of the lake. Ordinary people in Palestine seldom ate meat, probably not more than once a week. Fish was their staple diet (Luke 11:11; Matthew 7:10; Mark 6:30–44; Luke 24:42). Usually the fish was salt because there was no means of transporting fresh fish. Fresh fish was one of the greatest of all delicacies in the great cities like Rome. The very names of the towns on the lakeside show how important the fishing business was. Bethsaida means House of Fish; Tarichaea means The Place of Salt-fish, and it was there that the fish were preserved for export to Jerusalem and even to Rome itself. The salt-fish industry was big business in Galilee.” William Barclay Commentary

he told his brother and introduced him to Jesus initially. Andrew seemed to have switched over to Jesus' team either because of JTB's imprisonment or just before it. JTB was clear that Jesus was the real Messiah. The father of Andrew and Peter was named John (Mt 16:17; Jn 1:42; 21:15–17). **Their birthplace seems to be Bethsaida (Jn 1:44), which means house of fish** (fishing house), a village on the north shore of the Sea of Galilee. **Philip also grew up in Bethsaida.** Jewish historian Josephus says that Philip was buried there after he died. Andrew is commonly referred to as 'Simon Peter's brother' but never the other way around. Clearly Simon Peter was the more well-known of the two and the greater leader.

- **Why brothers?** – Why did Jesus call brothers to be disciples/apostles? Why not just individual guys? Is there a meaning or did it just happen? It can't be an accident, right? 1/3 of the group are brothers (2 brother combos = 4 out of 12). The answer is, we don't know. However, it makes me wonder if that filled the team with sibling rivalry and problems, or a more tightknit group? Did it mean that the other 10 felt like outsiders? Was Matthew the twin brother of Thomas (they are named together a lot and we know that Thomas was a twin)? Was there some numerology reason for it (some speculate it was both a 12 tribes reference and a split nation: 10 tribes and 2 tribes, but this seems like a stretch). I don't know. I do know that taking two boys from each family-fishing team was a huge cost to the family unless they had a ton more kids. We know that the Zebedee family was all in (mom was involved), but we don't know about Andrew and Peter's family.
- **Casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen** – They were at work doing their thing.
 - **what type of fishing?** – although there were **5 types of fishing**¹⁵ in the Sea of Galilee the most common and the type mentioned **here is the casting of a circular, weighted net** which would float down and trap fish below it. When it was pulled up it would cinch together, holding the fish. A few fish would (hopefully) be caught at a time. It was done **from the shore**, and it was shallow work.
 - **Why fisherman?**¹⁶ – **Why did Jesus call so many fishermen?** At least 4 of the 12 were this type. That's **1/3 of the entire crew!** We might be tempted to think that maybe it's because everyone was a fisherman in the North, but we must remember Jesus wasn't. Levi wasn't. We don't know what the rest of the team did for a living. Although they didn't HAVE TO BE fishermen, Jesus selected at least 1/3 that were. What does that tell us? It at least tells us that

¹⁵ "The fishermen used two kinds of nets, both of which are mentioned or implied in the gospels. They used the net called the sagēnē. This was a kind of seine- or trawl-net. It was let out from the end of the boat and was so weighted that it stood, as it were, upright in the water. The boat then moved forward, and, as it moved, the four corners of the net were drawn together, so that the net became like a great bag moving through the water and enclosing the fish. The other kind of net, which Peter and Andrew were using here, was called the amphiblēstron. It was a much smaller net. It was skilfully cast into the water by hand and was shaped rather like an umbrella." William Barclay commentary

¹⁶ "We must notice what they were. They were simple folk. They did not come from the schools and colleges; they were not drawn from the religious elite or the aristocracy; they were neither learned nor wealthy. They were fishermen. That is to say, they were ordinary people." William Barclay Commentary

Jesus wasn't interested in the richest and most educated. **Fishermen were common folks**. They were the average man. There was no formal education involved. It was like being a shepherd.

- **Common people = possibility** – if Jesus called the average person, then **all of us can be called**. There's not a bar of intelligence, education, wealth, to be a part of the active kingdom of God. God provides the ability.
- **Common people = glory to God** – When God calls someone that's highly gifted and talented, it tends to draw glory away from Him. People think that it's the person that's doing the amazing work. **When God calls the 'unable' it becomes clear that it HAS TO BE God**.
- **Did they work for someone?** – Both sets of disciples were part of their **family business**. It was a HUGE cost to lose two employees out of both families.
- **Jesus said to them, 'Follow me'** – what did that mean? In the ancient world, spoken **by a rabbi, it meant, come and learn from me. Follow me and my way of living**. Listen to the words that I say. Become more like me. I'll role model and you'll be my **apprentice**. It was an invitation to become a formal disciple.
- **Don't be afraid** – **Luke's gospel** adds that Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid; from now on you will be fishing men." So, clearly there was **an expected hesitancy and fear about making such a big move to quit everything and follow Him. Jesus understood that it was difficult. He wasn't callous to that and He's not callous to us either**.
- **Is Jesus allowed to do that?** – Absolutely. Even if He weren't God (and He is) rabbis would call up disciples to follow them all the time. But since Jesus was God, it meant that He had the prerogative to take them away from anything they were doing even if it was good and meaningful (work for the family business).
- **Invitation** – Notice that it is an **invitation to an opportunity**. They don't know fully what it's going to entail or how it will turn out. **They were risking and going out on faith**. They knew plenty about Him and His character, but it still took some denial of self and shifting of lifestyle. But Jesus wasn't demanding. He was inviting. That's what He does for us. **He invites us into opportunities to be WITH Him and live FOR Him**.
- **Not follow THIS but follow ME** – **it's always relational**. It's always about activity. It's never merely a set of tenets or concepts. It's never just ethereal. A true faith is always real, it's personal, it's connective.
- **Follow means activity**¹⁷ - A call to Christianity is not a call to continue as you are, but **a call to DO SOMETHING** different. It's an activity. It's a lifestyle. It's more than thinking different, it's living different, it's DOING different.

¹⁷ "Lastly, we must notice what Jesus offered them. He offered them a task. He called them not to ease but to service. It has been said that what we all need is something in which to invest our lives. So Jesus called his disciples, not to a comfortable ease and not to a lethargic inactivity; he called them to a task in which they would have to spend themselves and burn themselves up, and, in the end, die for his sake and for the sake of others." Barclay

- **...and I will make you become¹⁸ fishers of men¹⁹ (process)** – Jesus doesn't say (at least according to Mark) 'come and you will be fishers of men' right off the bat. He says, come and learn from me and **I will make you INTO fishers of men**. So yes, I believe that the word 'become' is significant? The same is true of us. We are not perfect evangelists nor disciples the very first day we are called by God and saved. God always designs via process (babies to grown ups). **This is a process they are being invited into and so are we.**
 - **Did they know what all this meant?** – As I mentioned above, they knew enough. They knew that it was a rabbinic call to become official disciples.
 - **Fishers of Men** – Was it an accident that Jesus used fishing language for fishermen? Of course not. Was it simply a dorky play on words? Not really, although the play on words was obvious. It was a cryptic way of telling them they were being invited into something that both familiar and yet very new. **God would take WHO they were already and transform them into who He DESIGNED them to be.**
 - **Relatability** – Using the fishing language was also a relational decision. **He was inviting them into relationship and relatability matters.** He was using their language and their tools. He called them on their turf where they felt safe.
 - **Only NOW able to fish men** – prior to Jesus' arrival, there was no point in gathering men for God. There was no real way to access God, even though the sacrificial system. It was going to be God's mercy or not. When Jesus came, He was ushering in a new reality where it was POSSIBLE that men could be gathered together for their salvation and connection to God. He made a way. For Jesus to say this to the disciples is to say, 'I'm on my way to fix the God-Man chasm problem...go get everyone ready for it.'
 - **Good or Bad fishing?²⁰** – there is an element in the concept that may mean that they are fishing/gathering men for judgment by God. All men will be judged, and they are being brought together to come face to face with God. We think of fishers of men as evangelistic, but it may be a more elastic word that means gathering in general.
 - **Heavenly fishing** – It was the mindset of the ancient Jews that God was the great fisherman because He would be the one to gather people and decide between good and bad. Jesus used that same concept in Matthew

¹⁸ "Jesus affirms his relationship to those called in terms of a program for the future: he will make them become fishers of men. What they will become depends upon their following him." NICNT

¹⁹ "Yet far more than this was involved in the call to become "fishers of men." To interpret this phrase only as a play on words appropriate to the situation is to fail to appreciate its biblical background and its relevance to the context, which has focused attention on God's eschatological act in sending Jesus. In the OT prophetic tradition it is God who is the fisher of men. The passages in which the image is developed are distinctly ominous in tone, stressing the divine judgment. The fishing metaphor was kept alive at Qumran, and it is striking that it is the judgment aspect of the metaphor which is stressed, as when the Legitimate Teacher expresses his awareness of being commissioned to execute God's fishing among his contemporaries. The Teacher continues what God has done, in the company of others who are fishers. It is this understanding which provides the key both to the urgency in Jesus' summons of Simon and Andrew and to the radical obedience they displayed in responding to his call. The summons to be fishers of men is a call to the eschatological task of gathering men in view of the forthcoming judgment of God." NICNT

²⁰ "The use of the fisher image in proximity to Jesus' proclamation summarized in Ch. 1:15 provides the answer; it is the eschatological Lord who calls. He summons men by an act of grace to serve as agents of the kingdom drawn near, who shall gather a people for judgment." NICNT

13. So to have Him ask men to join Him in being a part of God's plan to gather and sort was a high call.

- Mt 13:47–50 - *“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and gathered fish of every kind. ⁴⁸ When it was full, men drew it ashore and sat down and sorted the good into containers but threw away the bad. ⁴⁹ So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous ⁵⁰ and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”*
- **Immediately they left their nets and followed him – Did they quit their job? Yes.** What did the business owners think? You mean their parents? Clearly Zebedee's family (James and John) were cool with it, they got involved in the ministry too. But as far as Peter and Andrew's? They already knew that Andrew was a disciple of John the Baptist so they were used to it.
- **Why did Jesus call them during work?**²¹ – Jesus knew what He was doing at all times. **Why did He interrupt them during work?** Surely, there were plenty of opportunities to talk later in the evening when everyone stopped working (or perhaps they worked day and night due to night fishing as well). It's tempting to think that it just happened that way. But what if it's purposeful? What if the whole point was to contact them DURING their livelihood and call them to sacrifice for Him. **They were in essence being called to leave their jobs and reorient their lives. What better time** to consider the cost than at work?
 - **Leaving everything: It cost them something** – We already know that John the Baptist was imprisoned and will soon learn that he will be beheaded for his faith. Discipleship with God costs in a dangerous and rebellious world. Now we have Jesus asking these fishermen to leave their family and life they were familiar with and the future they expected behind without assurances of what's next. **Discipleship is always risky because you never fully know what the Master has in store. The premise of being a 'follower' is that you aren't in control.**
- **This isn't the first time they've met** – right? Right. If you look back up at the timeline you will see they were very familiar with each other in so many ways. This was simply the last in a series of connections to become full disciples.
 - Luke's chronology indicates that **BEFORE Andrew and Peter were called, Jesus had interacted with them AT LEAST in three if not four significant ways.** 1.) Jesus healed Simon Peter's mother-in-law from a fever in her home. 2.) Jesus was being crushed by a huge crowd wanting to hear Him preach by the Sea of Galilee and he uses one of Simon/Andrew's boats to stand on out in the water. 3.) right after the sermon and everyone went home, he encouraged Simon to do more fishing and there was a HUGE catch. All the partners were involved (Andrew, James, John, etc.). Simon is cut to the heart by the miracle and the interactions they've had. Jesus talks about Simon

²¹ “The call of God can come to any one of us, not only in the house of God, not only in the secret place, but in the middle of the day's work.”
William Barclay commentary

following him as a rabbi (Lk 5:9-11). 4.) Don't forget northern Israel is rural and people are tight. **Jesus was related to James and John who were in a family fishing business connected to Peter and Andrew's family fishing business. They all knew each other** or knew OF each other growing up.

- It makes more sense that **Andrew is back at the family business in the North as a fisherman since his rabbi, John the Baptist, was in prison already.** It also indicates why it was such an easy switch over to Jesus' team, although other JTB disciples didn't switch.
- **Not the first disciples** – it's most likely that Jesus had already called Philip and Nathanael BEFORE this. That means it's possible that Jesus isn't walking alone this day. He may have had His first two disciples and other followers walking with him (maybe not). It could have been another reason why Peter and Andrew knew what was up and knew it was an official call. They were joining a team.
- **God Squad**
 - **Jesus Calls James and John as His Disciples**
 - **Mk 1:19-20** - *"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. ²⁰ And immediately he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants and followed him."*
 - **Going a little farther** – how far down the way? It probably wasn't very far. It's not that big of an area that they were in, and they would work in sections.
 - **Did these guys know the other guys?** – absolutely. They were both in family fishing businesses in the same area. Luke's gospel tells us that the families were **partners in the business** (Luke 5:10). Whether they got along before this or not, I have no idea (not sure if 'sons of Thunder' are fun or annoying).
 - **Did Jesus know them before too?** – yes, look up above at the timeline and see that **Jesus was related to this family.** They knew exactly who He was and what He was about. They likely already saw Jesus minister and do miracles hanging out with Simon-Peter.
 - **He saw James, son of Zebedee** – Who's James? James, the brother of John was one half of the 'sons of Thunder' (which either meant they were bold and blatant, or they were loud, not sure). James is the older one. He will be the first to be martyred of the apostles.
 - **Who's Zebedee?** – Zebedee is the dad. **Salome is likely the mom.** They own the fishing business that the boys work for. The family seems to have become fully immersed in the ministry after a while.
 - **Why do some characters get descriptors and others don't?** – Why tell us the dad's name? Usually, people who are called out by name are **influential, leaders, or familiar to the main reading audience.** The author is trying to tie in people who you know. It would be a distinguishing factor instead of all the other James' and John's around.

- **And John his brother** – who’s John? John is the younger brother of the ‘sons of Thunder’ (see above). **He is going to become Jesus’ closest friend.** He was **likely the youngest disciple** of the whole team. Some estimate him to be about **14 years old.** He was the one that leaned his head back against Jesus’ chest at the last Supper. Jesus kept him close. He was the last apostle to die and the only one that wasn’t martyred. He wrote the gospel of John and 1, 2nd, 3rd John as well. His gospel was written last and far later than the others.
- **Who were in their boat mending the nets**²² – Unlike the Simon/Andrew reference about nets earlier (casting nets), this description hints at preparing **drag nets** for that next evening. Drag nets were pulled behind a boat to catch the fish that were swimming in deeper water.
 - **Were the boats on dry land or in the water?** – most likely they were pulled up on land. It’s easier to stretch them out to get things done and fixed rather than working in tight quarters out on the water. Luke’s gospel seems to suggest that Peter and Andrew were called right after the miraculous catch which made them call James and John to get their boats into the water and help out, which means they were on the land prior. But it seems more likely that it was the next day from the miraculous catch, especially since Mark’s gospel talks about Peter and Andrew doing shore fishing with casting nets on this day, but I could be wrong.
 - **Why do you need to mend nets?** – it means prepare them for the next time they go out. When you are dragging nets, they catch on things and tear. You need to make sure any big holes are closed or else it ruins the whole point of trying to scoop fish up (they will slip right through the holes).
- **Immediately he called them** – what does this mean? Is it similar to how He called Simon and Andrew? Exactly the same. Mark uses the term ‘immediately’ a lot and it doesn’t really mean immediately as in sudden. It means, next.
- **And they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants** – was Zebedee good with this? He seems to be. **He was right there the whole time.**
 - **If they had servants does that mean they were wealthy? Likely.** We find out later that the mom **Salome joined the ministry** and it’s said that the **women financed the ministry.** I’m assuming Salome was a big part of that.
 - **They clearly didn’t leave dad high and dry if he had servants, right? – right.** It’s possible that they whole family had talked about this prior and knew it was only a matter of time until they were called and if they did they needed to jump on that opportunity.
- **And followed him** – followed him where? They became His official disciples. They both literally followed Him to go talk about their new life, AND followed Him metaphorically as disciples.
 - **Where was he going?** – He was likely on His way to either do more ministry or heading back to where He was staying to have a bite to eat.

²² “Mark’s term means properly to put in order, or to make ready, and so includes cleansing, mending and folding the nets in preparation for the next evening’s fishing in the deeper waters. Presumably the heavier drag nets are in view, on which see F. Dunkel, op. cit., pp. 377–380.” NICNT

Conclusion

- **Jesus gives us the opportunity to Believe** – there’s a kindness to that. He doesn’t force it. It’s relational more than informational.
 - **Jesus presents opportunities in many different ways.** He approaches individuals, brothers, crowds, those who oppose Him and those who weren’t supposed to even come near him. He uses also uses different methods of teaching, miracles, stories, he is constantly inviting into more.
- **Why pick a team instead of doing it all himself?** – **It’s always been about relationship and connection with God and us.** God crated us to be connected with us. He saved us to be connected with us. He gives us eternal life to be connected with us. **He doesn’t need us, He wants us.** He wants to invite us into His bigger plans because He knows that it’s fun and bonding for us to be there. He doesn’t need us for results, we actually just get in the way. But it’s a chance to do things together.
- **There’s a Cost** – We will talk more about cost in future messages but it’s important to note that there’s always a cost. Any change is difficult for us, but when God calls us to deny ourselves and follow Him it’s a big deal.
- **The ESV Combo Account of the Calling of Andrew, Peter, James & John**
 - *“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.” (Soon thereafter) **While walking alongside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon (who is called Peter) and Andrew his brother, 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 from there he saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee and John his brother, who were in their boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets, and immediately he called them. And when they had brought their boats to land, they immediately left everything: the boat and their father in the boat with the hired servants and followed him.**”*
 - Luke is black
 - Matthew is orange
 - Mark is green