

‘A CALL TO SERVE: EXPLORING RESPONSES TO JESUS’ CALL IN MATTHEW 4:18-20’

BY

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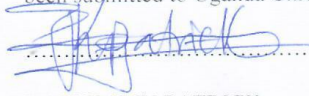
A RESEARCH PAPER SUBMITTED TO BISHOP TUCKER SCHOOL OF DIVINITY AND
THEOLOGY IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE AWARD
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...

DECLARATION

I, Katuramu Patrick a student of Bishop Tucker School of Divinity and Theology at Uganda Christian University do declare that this research work is my original work and has never been submitted to Uganda Christian University or any institution of learning for any award.



KATURAMU PATRICK

27/08/2024

DATE

APPROVAL

This is to certify that this research project entitled "A CALL TO SERVE: EXPLORING RESPONSES TO JESUS' CALL IN MATTHEW 4:18-20" has been done under my supervision.

.....*Kalengyo*.....

27/08/2024

PROF. EDISON MUHINDO KALENGYO

DATE

SUPERVISOR

DEDICATION

I dedicate this research project to my lovely wife Mary Katuramu Ekyansiimiire who supported me and took care of our children: Martha Ajuna Patricia, Matthew Patrick Musinguzi, Mariella Patricia Atuhaire and my nephew Mark Aliganyira, and provided them with basic needs while I was away for studies. I also dedicate it to my dear late mother; Mulari Margret, my 7 siblings, friends, My Archdeacon Rev. Canon Cranmer Ssempeebwa and my classmates who prayed tirelessly, supported me and my family at the time I was at school.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I would like to extend my gratitude to the following for their amazing participation and contribution to my life and time of study:

First of all, I appreciate God who has given me daily strength, protection and healing me every moment I go down. Thank you, God, for giving me your grace and mercy, I will always praise you.

Secondly, I appreciate Bishop Tucker School of Divinity and Theology and West Buganda Diocese for accepting my interest in studying for ministerial formation and allowing me to Study here at Bishop Tucker School of Divinity and Theology which was a blessing to me.

Thirdly, I appreciate my dear research supervisor- Prof. Edison Kalengyo Muhindo. For the Parental guidance, he has rendered me during this research process.

I lastly appreciate my dear wife for the support she has rendered me for the time I have spent on campus. I love you till death do us apart.

ABSTRACT

In contemporary Christian society ministry, individuals from diverse professional backgrounds often feel a call to serve God. Many professionals, such as teachers, medics, engineers, and lawyers, have embraced ministry without proper guidance, leading to gaps in service delivery as they hastily leave their professions in response to their call. This speed to leave everything without proper guidance can result in challenges and gaps in service delivery within various sectors.

Matthew 4:18-20 narrates the calling of Peter and Andrew, fishermen who left their nets to follow Jesus. This passage serves as a foundational text for understanding the concept of responding to Jesus' call. However, the circumstances of their call, their immediate response, and the factors that may hinder someone from leaving everything to follow Jesus remain subjects of inquiry. The study intends to provide a deeper understanding of the challenges and significance of individuals responding to Jesus' call from various professional backgrounds. Through this exploration, the study hopes to contribute to a better understanding of how individuals can effectively respond to Jesus' call in their professional and personal lives, ultimately enriching Christian ministry and service delivery.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1.1 Introduction

This chapter covers the background to the study, statement of the problem, purpose and objectives, research questions/hypotheses, scope of the study, justification and significance. It also shows the literature review of the study and the research methodology used.

1.1.2 Background to the Study

In contemporary Christian ministry, individuals from diverse professional backgrounds often feel a call to serve God. Many professionals, such as teachers, medics, engineers, and lawyers, have embraced ministry without proper guidance, leading to gaps in service delivery as they hastily leave their professions in response to their call. This speed to leave everything without proper guidance can result in challenges and gaps in service delivery within various sectors.

Matthew 4:18-20 narrates the calling of Peter and Andrew, fishermen who left their nets to follow Jesus. This passage serves as a foundational text for understanding the concept of responding to Jesus' call. However, the circumstances of their call, their immediate response, and the factors that may hinder someone from leaving everything to follow Jesus remain subjects of inquiry.

This research aims to delve into the concept of responding to Jesus' call as depicted in Matthew 4:18-20, specifically focusing on individuals from different professions who are called to serve God. It is primarily biblical in nature, utilizing resources from the Uganda Christian University (UCU) library and online resources. The study intends to provide a deeper understanding of the challenges and significance of individuals responding to Jesus' call from various professional backgrounds. Through this exploration, the study hopes to contribute to a better understanding of how individuals can effectively respond to Jesus' call in their professional and personal lives, ultimately enriching Christian ministry and service delivery.

1.1.3 Literature Review

This section reviews existing literature on the concept of responding to Jesus' call as depicted in Matthew 4:18-20, with a focus on individuals from different professions who are called to serve God. Additionally, it considers the Apostle Paul's perspective on tent-making as a means to support ministry. The review aims to examine various authors' perspectives on these topics, including the Biblical basis and theological viewpoints.

Holy Bible King James version, *Bible & Literature Missionary Foundation 713 cannon boulevard Shelbyville, Tennessee U.S.A. 37160*. Matthew 4:18-20. In this primary resource, the writer uses the word straight away to assert the action of Peter and Andrew which I am researching about and it will be of help to my research as the word 'straight away' can mean there and then. ¹

Richmond Lattimore, *The Four Gospels and Revelation: Newly Translated from Greek* pg. 65. Jesus called peter and Andrew they at once followed him without haste not even thinking about their occupation. Richmond wrote a book about the four Gospels and in it, is a statement am researching about. In that book he says, "that with authority, Jesus said follow me and they at once followed him." This I believe will be helpful to people who will encounter my research. However, he missed a point on what they were doing at that particular time. ²

CarstenP.Thiede, *Simon Peter (from galilee to Rome)* pgs.17-22 in this book, Peter and Andrew are talked about as swift respondents to Jesus' call which is what am researching about. According to Carsten, peter and Andrew urgently followed Jesus without question though to me they did so because he (Jesus), had proved to them that he is unusual being at the Sea of Galilee rather Matthew's call should be considered swift.³

Richard A. Burridge, *Four Gospels One Jesus* pg. 83 In this book, Burridge writes that the first disciples are called by the lake side; the calling that involves leaving everything at Jesus'

¹Holy Bible King James version, *Bible & Literature Missionary Foundation 713 cannon boulevard Shelbyville, Tennessee U.S.A. 37160*. Pg. 5

²Richmond Lattimore, *The Four Gospels and Revelation*: London. Hutchison \$ Co. (Publishers) Ltd, .1980 pg. 65.

³Carsten P. Thiede, *Simon Peter (from galilee to Rome)* Peterborough. Paternoster press, 1986. pgs.17-22

command. This make sense to my understanding and helpful to my research, though he did not identify exactly what “everything meant.”⁴

Robert. H. Gundry, Commentary on the New Testament verse by verse explanations with a literal translation pg. 14. In his commentary Robert brings to our attention the surety of how Peter and Andrew majestically followed Jesus without questioning to where he was calling them to or how shall we recover our belongings? This will help me answer the question of survival by called individuals.⁵

Donald senior (20) in his book “New Testament message”, mentions that peter and Andrew were called to holiness and that they at once reacted and followed Jesus, and I agree with him because Luke 5:8, peter himself calls himself a sinful man. “Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man.”⁶

The expositors study bible; in this the author says clearly that when Jesus told them to follow him, “they immediately left their business and followed Jesus” This statement will help me with my research because I need to clearly ascertain the mood and response to the call so as to convince people who aspire to become ministers.⁷

Life application study Bible NIV. Pg. 1535. The applicant points out that Peter and Andrew had had an encounter with Jesus and new of the things he was capable of doing therefore they left their business and fish for people. I complement him because Jesus had an encounter with peter in Luke 5:1-8.⁸

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⁴Richard A. Burrige, *Four Gospels One Jesus: Michigan*. William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. Grand Rapids, 1994. pg. 83

⁵Robert. H. Gundry, Commentary on the New Testament verse by verse explanations with a literal translation: Massachusetts, Hendrickson publishers, 2010. pg. 14.

⁶ Donald Senior, C.P, *New Testament message*. New York, The Paulist Press. 1989 Pg. 20.

⁷ Jimmy Swaggart. *The expositors study Bible (Matthew 4:18-20)*; Baton Rouge, Louisiana Jimmy Swaggart ministries 1st edition, 2006).

⁸ Dr. Bruce B. Barton. *The Life application study Bible NIV*: Tyndale House Publishers (1st edition) 1988. Pg. 1535.

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F.F. Bruce, *New Testament History* pgs. 155-156. This book helps me to know what it means to leave everything and follow Jesus. According to Bruce, he ascertains that leaving everything in response to Jesus' call is a great achievement one can get in life since one would never regret the decision made. Though he forgot that through grace we respond to God's call by the help of the Holy Spirit.¹³

John MacQuarrie, *The Faith of the People of God* pg. 93 in this book I have extracted the statement, "(He Christ) is the founder of that new people of God whose sudden and massive rise transformed the ancient world when he called to himself men who eagerly responded to his call and followed

⁹Carsten P. Thiede, *Simon Peter (from Galilee to Rome)* Peterborough. Paternoster Press, 1986. pgs.17-22

¹⁰Richmond Lattimore, *The Four Gospels and Revelation*: London. Hutchinson & Co. (Publishers) Ltd.1980. pg. 65.

¹¹ Donald Senior, C.P., *New Testament message*. New York, The Paulist Press. 1989 pg. 20.

¹² Jimmy Swaggart. *The Expositors Study Bible (Matthew 4:18-20)*; Baton Rouge, Louisiana Jimmy Swaggart Ministries 1st edition, 2006).

¹³Frederick Fyvie Bruce, *New Testament History*: Bristol, Western Printing Services Ltd. 1969. Pgs. 155-156.

him.” According to MacQuarrie, wants people to leave everything for his sake. Though he forgets that there some other factors that may not let one leave whatever they are doing for God’ sake.¹⁴

Runyankole Book of common prayer with hymns, song 168 verse 2. The song title is Yesu nakweta at’ ij’, onkuratire meaning “Jesus calls us; o’er the tumult”. Verse two is in line with my research as it stresses that the fishermen heard his voice and at once left all their belongings and followed Jesus.¹⁵

The expositors study bible; in this the author says clearly that when Jesus told them to follow him, “they immediately left their business and followed Jesus” This statement will help me with my research because I need to clearly ascertain the mood and response to the call so as to convince people who aspire to become ministers.¹⁶

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¹⁴John MacQuarrie, *the faith of the people of God*: New York, Harper & Row Publishers. 1972 pg. 93.

¹⁵Runyankole, *Book of Common Prayer with hymns, song 168 verse 2*. Uganda, Centenary Publishing House Ltd. Revised Edition 1966.

¹⁶Jimmy Swaggart. *The expositors study Bible (Matthew 4:18-20)*; Baton Rouge, Louisiana Jimmy Swaggart ministries 1st edition, 2006).

¹⁷Carsten P. Thiede, *Simon Peter (from galilee to Rome)* Peterborough. Paternoster press, 1986. pgs.17-22

¹⁸Frederick Fyvie Bruce, *New Testament History*: Bristol, Western Printing Services Ltd. 1969. Pgs. 155-156.

that there are some other factors that may not let one leave whatever they are doing for God's sake.¹⁹

1.1.4 Statement of the Problem

In recent times, professionals such as teachers, medics, engineers, and lawyers have embraced ministry hastily, leading to gaps in service delivery. This phenomenon raises the need for a deeper biblical analysis of the text in the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew 4:18-20. This study seeks to identify the lessons within this text to provide insights into how individuals can respond to God's call without compromising their professional responsibilities.

1.1.5 Expected Outcomes/Objectives

- i. To examine the circumstances under which Peter and Andrew were called in Matthew 4:18-20.
- ii. To explore, the meaning of Matthew 4:18-20, analyzing the theological significance, the implications of the calling of Peter and Andrew.
- iii. To establish insights into the lessons that can be applied to contemporary Christian ministry considering the various professions of those called by Jesus.

1.1.6 Research Questions

- i. What are the circumstances under which Peter and Andrew were called in Matthew 4:18-20?
- ii. What is the meaning of Matthew 4:18-20?
- iii. What insights can we learn from Matthew 4:18-20, and how can these lessons be applied in the contemporary society.

1.1.7 Significance of the Study

By examining the biblical narrative of Peter and Andrew in Matthew 4:18-20, this study can provide practical guidance for individuals from diverse professional backgrounds who feel called

¹⁹John MacQuarrie, *the faith of the people of God*: New York, Harper & Row Publishers. 1972 pg. 93

to serve God. This can help them navigate the challenges of balancing their professional responsibilities with their call to ministry, potentially improving their effectiveness in both areas.

Understanding the factors that lead professionals to hastily leave their professions for ministry can shed light on how to better support individuals in responding to their call without negatively impacting service delivery in their respective fields. This can ultimately lead to improved service delivery within various sectors.

This study can contribute to theological discussions on vocation and responding to God's call. By exploring the biblical narrative and drawing parallels to contemporary Christian ministry, this study can provide new insights into how individuals can discern and respond to God's call in their lives.

By enriching the understanding of how individuals can effectively respond to Jesus' call in their professional and personal lives, this study has the potential to enrich Christian ministry. This can lead to more fulfilled and effective ministry leaders who are better equipped to serve their communities and fulfill their callings.

1.1.8 Theoretical Framework

The researcher conducted a Biblical theological research focusing on the text in the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew 4:18-20. This study aims to assert the lessons inherent in this narrative, drawing parallels to the Apostle Paul's perspective on tent making as a means to support his ministry. By examining these aspects, the research seeks to provide insights into how individuals can effectively respond to God's call in their professional and personal lives, ultimately enriching Christian ministry and service delivery.

This study addressed the following research questions in a contextual manner:

How does Jesus' call to Peter, Andrew, James, and John in Matthew 4:18-20 illustrate the concept of vocation and answering the call to serve God?

What lessons can be learned from the different professions or backgrounds of the individuals called by Jesus in Matthew 4:18-20, and how can these lessons be applied to modern-day Christian ministry?

1.2 Research Methodology

1.2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the methodology used in the study, which is a desk research approach. The methodology includes the research design, data sources, data collection methods, data analysis techniques, and ethical considerations.

1.2.2 Research Design

The study utilized a desk research design, which involves collecting and analyzing existing literature, documents, and other sources related to the topic. This design was suitable for examining the concept of responding to Jesus' call as depicted in Matthew 4:18-20, focusing on individuals from different professions who are called to serve God.

1.2.3 Data Sources

The primary data sources for this study included biblical texts, theological literature, scholarly articles, and other relevant documents. These sources provided a foundation for understanding the biblical narrative of Peter and Andrew's call and its implications for contemporary Christian ministry.

1.2.4 Data Collection Methods

Data collection for this study involved reviewing and analyzing existing literature and documents. This included accessing online databases, library, and other resources to gather relevant information related to the research questions and objectives.

1.2.5 Data Analysis

The data analysis for this study involved a thematic analysis of the literature and documents reviewed. Themes related to the circumstances of the call, responses to the call, factors hindering individuals from responding, and lessons for contemporary Christian ministry were identified and analyzed to draw meaningful conclusions.

1.2.6 Limitations

Difficulty in accessing the online library or delays in obtaining necessary data hindered the completion of the study within the planned timeframe.

Relevant literature and documents were limited, particularly they were not easily accessible or were in languages other than English, which impacted the comprehensiveness of the study.

The available source materials were biased or presented a particular theological or ideological perspective, potentially influencing the objectivity of the study.

Existing literature focused more on theoretical interpretations of the biblical narrative rather than practical implications for contemporary Christian ministry, which limited the applicability of the study findings.

The findings of the study were not easily generalizable to all individuals from diverse professional backgrounds who feel they are called to serve God, as the study is based on existing literature and not primary data from a specific sample.

Conducting a thorough desk research study was time-consuming, especially difficulties were encountered in finding and analyzing relevant sources, potentially leading to delays in the research process.

Depending on the availability of literature, there was lack of recent studies or publications on the topic, which limited the currency of the study findings.

1.2.7 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations for this study included ensuring the proper citation of sources and respecting the intellectual property rights of authors. All sources used in the study were properly credited, and any direct quotations or ideas taken from these sources were appropriately referenced.

1.3.9 Outline of the Chapters

Chapter One: This chapter introduces the topic of the study, provides the problem statement, discusses the central issue, outlines the objectives of the study, presents the guiding questions, provides an overview of the literature review, and methodology used.

Chapter Two: This chapter examines the circumstances under which Peter and Andrew were called in Matthew 4:18-20.

Chapter Three: This chapter explores the meaning of Matthew 4:18-20, analyzing the theological significance, the implications of the calling of Peter and Andrew.

Chapter Four: This chapter explores the relevance and application of Matthew 4:18-20 in contemporary society, with a specific focus on examples from Uganda.

Chapter Five: This chapter draws together the insights gained from the analysis of Matthew 4:18-20 and its application to contemporary society, particularly in Uganda.

CHAPTER TWO

THE CIRCUMSTANCES UNDER WHICH PETER AND ANDREW WERE CALLED IN MATTHEW 4:18-20

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the context of Matthew 4:18-20, focusing on the general background, historical context, and literal context. Understanding these elements provides a comprehensive framework for interpreting the passage, revealing its significance within the Gospel of Matthew and its broader biblical and historical setting.

2.2 General Background

The Gospel of Matthew is an anonymous biography of Jesus.²⁰ It is traditionally attributed to the apostle Matthew, a former tax collector also known as Levi, is believed to have been written between 70-90 AD. This period follows the destruction of the Second Temple in Jerusalem in C.E. 70²¹; but precedes the finalization of the New Testament canon.²² Matthew's Gospel aims to present Jesus as the Messiah prophesied in the Hebrew Scriptures, emphasizing His role as a teacher and king. The intended audience is primarily Jewish Christians, evident from the frequent references to Jewish customs, laws, and prophecies that Matthew assumes his readers understand.

Matthew 4:18-20 narrates the calling of the first disciples by Jesus,²³ Simon Peter and his brother Andrew, who were fishermen by trade. Jesus calls them to follow Him and promises to make them "fishers of men." This passage highlights key themes of calling and discipleship, the transformative power of Jesus' call, and His authority to redefine the lives of His followers. The immediate and unquestioning response of Peter and Andrew to Jesus' call underscores the compelling nature of His invitation and sets the stage for their significant roles in His ministry.

2.3 Historical Context

The Jewish context in the first century was marked by a diverse religious landscape. The Pharisees, known for their strict adherence to the Law and traditions, were influential in synagogues and often clashed with Jesus over interpretations of the Law. The Sadducees, comprising mainly the priestly and aristocratic classes, held significant power in the Sanhedrin and the Temple but differed from the Pharisees in theology, particularly concerning the resurrection. The Essenes were a separatist group living in communal settings, possibly linked to the Dead Sea Scrolls, who practiced strict purity laws and awaited the coming of the Messiah. The Zealots were a revolutionary group

²⁰ Brown, J. K. "Matthew, Gospel of", in *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*: Downer's Grove, InterVarsity Press 2013, p.574.

²¹ William, Graham Scroggie, D.D. (Edin), *a Guide to the Gospels*. London, Kregel publications, 1948. Pg.139.

²² Brown, J. K. "Matthew, Gospel of", in *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*: Downer's Grove, InterVarsity Press 2013, p.576.

²³ Gill, J. Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible. (1746). Retrieved from <https://www.studydrive.org/commentaries/geb.html>

advocating for Jewish independence from Roman rule and were known for their radical opposition to the Roman occupation.

The socio-political climate of Judea under Roman rule created tension among the Jewish populace, with the expectation of a Messiah to deliver them from Roman oppression running high. This context adds urgency and depth to Jesus' call to His disciples, who were living under the constant pressure of Roman occupation and the hopes of messianic deliverance.

Geographically, Galilee was a fertile region in northern Israel known for its agriculture and fishing industry; during the time of Jesus, the region of Galilee where this event takes place was a fishing hub²⁴, with many people making a living as fishermen. The Sea of Galilee, also known as Lake Gennesaret, was central to the livelihood of many Galileans, including Peter and Andrew, who were fishermen. Fishing was a significant industry in Galilee, providing food and employment. Fishermen like Peter and Andrew were generally not wealthy but were essential to the local economy, reflecting the communal nature of their society.

Commercial fishing was an active industry on the Sea of Galilee²⁵. Fishermen organized themselves into businesses with some forming partnerships. Some fishermen owned their boats and hired out hands. Capernaum was ideally situated for fishing on the Sea of Galilee. The Sea was a large lake shaped like an irregular oval. Galilee means "circle." Many hamlets and towns of different backgrounds circled its shores. The historical context of this passage helps us understand the significance of Jesus' call to his disciples, as well as the radical nature of his teachings that would go on to challenge not only the religious and political authorities of his time but also whoever would like to join ministry presently.

2.4 Literal Context

In the immediate context of Matthew's narrative, Jesus' baptism by John the Baptist (Matthew 3:13-17) marks the beginning of His public ministry, receiving divine affirmation as God's Son. This moment is pivotal as it signifies the endorsement of Jesus' mission by God Himself. The

²⁴Richmond Lattimore, *The Four Gospels and Revelation*: London. Hutchison & Co. (Publishers) Ltd 1980, p. 54.

²⁵ Craig S. Keener. *The IVP Bible Background Commentary, (NT)*, USA, InterVarsity Press, Second edition 2014, p.54

baptism scene is rich with symbolism, including the descent of the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove and the voice from heaven proclaiming Jesus as the beloved Son. This divine affirmation sets the stage for Jesus' ministry, confirming His identity and authority.

Following His baptism, Jesus faces temptation in the wilderness (Matthew 4:1-11), where He confronts and overcomes three temptations from Satan. These temptations test Jesus' obedience and readiness for ministry. Each temptation corresponds to a different aspect of human weakness: physical hunger, trust in God's protection, and the lure of earthly power. Jesus' victory over these temptations demonstrates His steadfastness and commitment to His divine mission, further solidifying His role as the Messiah. This period of testing also parallels Israel's 40 years in the wilderness, positioning Jesus as the fulfillment of Israel's story and the true obedient Son.

After this period of preparation, Jesus moves to Capernaum in Galilee, (Galilee means "circle.")²⁶ Fulfilling the prophecy of Isaiah about a great light dawning in the land of Zebulun and Naphtali (Matthew 4:12-17). This move signifies the beginning of Jesus' public proclamation of the Kingdom of Heaven. Capernaum becomes the center of His ministry, a strategic location for spreading His message due to its position along major trade routes and its diverse population. Jesus' message emphasizes repentance and the nearness of God's kingdom, calling people to a radical transformation of life and priorities.

In this context, Jesus calls Peter and Andrew, two fishermen, to follow Him (Matthew 4:18-20). The call of these first disciples is significant in several ways. Firstly, it shows Jesus taking the initiative in gathering His followers, reflecting His proactive approach to building His ministry. Unlike the typical rabbinic practice where disciples sought out a teacher, Jesus reverses this by seeking out His disciples; Disciples normally chose to become students of a particular rabbi; only the most radical teachers called their own disciples²⁷. Secondly, the choice of fishermen highlights the inclusive nature of Jesus' ministry. Fishermen were ordinary working-class individuals, not religious elites or scholars. By calling them, Jesus underscores the accessibility of His message and the potential for anyone to participate in His mission.

²⁶Robert. H. Gundry, *Commentary on the New Testament verse by verse explanations with a literal translation*: Massachusetts, Hendrickson publishers, 2010. pg. 14.

²⁷Craig S. Keener. *The IVP Bible Background Commentary, (NT)*, USA, InterVarsity Press, Second edition 2014, p.55

Following this passage, Jesus continues His early ministry in Galilee (Matthew 4:21-25). He calls more disciples, teaches in synagogues, preaches the gospel of the kingdom, and heals various diseases, attracting large crowds. This period is marked by an intense and dynamic outreach, where Jesus' actions and teachings draw significant attention and establish His reputation as a powerful teacher and healer. His ministry in Galilee sets the foundation for the spread of His message, showcasing His authority over both physical ailments and spiritual matters.

Textual criticism of Matthew 4:18-20 shows consistency in early Greek manuscripts, supporting its authenticity. Notable manuscripts include Codex Sinaiticus and Codex Vaticanus, both of which are crucial witnesses to the New Testament text. These manuscripts provide strong evidence for the reliability of the passage, reinforcing its importance in the gospel narrative.

Lexical analysis of key Greek terms, such as ἀκολουθέω (akoloutheo) for "follow me,"²⁸ implies not just physical following but also a deep commitment to the teachings and lifestyle of the teacher. This term conveys a sense of ongoing discipleship, where following Jesus involves a continuous process of learning and transformation.

The metaphor ἀλιεῖς ἀνθρώπων (halieis anthropon) for "fishers of men" symbolizes evangelism, indicating a mission to bring people into the Kingdom of God. This metaphor is particularly poignant for Peter and Andrew, whose previous occupation as fishermen involved skill, patience, and persistence. Jesus repurposes these qualities for a spiritual mission, suggesting that their experience and abilities will be invaluable in their new roles. The use of familiar occupational language to describe a new spiritual mission makes the call relatable and understandable, bridging their past and future roles.

Literary devices in the passage include direct speech, emphasizing Jesus' authority, and the metaphor of becoming "fishers of men." The direct speech, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men," is a powerful command that leaves no room for hesitation. It highlights Jesus' authority and the transformative nature of His call. The metaphor of fishing for people instead of fish uses everyday language to convey a profound spiritual truth, making the call accessible and memorable.

²⁸Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., Bauer, W., & Gingrich, F. W. (2000, p. 36).

The significance of Jesus' call to Peter and Andrew lies in His authority and initiative, as He takes the lead in calling His disciples. Their immediate response, leaving their nets to follow Him, signifies a total commitment and readiness to embrace a new mission. This response serves as a model for discipleship, demonstrating that following Jesus requires a willingness to abandon previous priorities and embrace a new purpose. The transformation from fishermen to "fishers of men" highlights the profound impact of Jesus' call and the new direction it brings to their lives. This moment marks the beginning of their journey with Jesus, one that will lead them to play pivotal roles in the early Christian movement and the spread of the gospel.

CHAPTER THREE

MEANING OF MATTHEW 4:18-20

3.1 Introduction

This chapter looks into the meaning of Matthew 4:18-20, analyzing the theological significance, the implications of the calling of Peter and Andrew, and the broader lessons on discipleship that can be drawn from this passage. Understanding the profound implications of this text helps illuminate the core themes of the Gospel of Matthew and Jesus' mission.

3.2 Theological Significance

Matthew 4:18-20 is rich with theological implications, particularly concerning the nature of Jesus' ministry and His call to discipleship. The passage begins with Jesus walking by the Sea of Galilee. Jesus has left His home town of Nazareth for the whole of his ministry in Galilee basing on the side town of Capernaum²⁹, a setting that underscores His accessibility and engagement with ordinary people. By choosing to call fishermen, Jesus demonstrates that His message and mission are not limited to the religious elite but are open to all. This inclusivity is a key theme in Matthew's Gospel, which often emphasizes Jesus' outreach to marginalized and everyday individuals.

The phrase "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men" (Matthew 4:19) carries deep theological meaning. The command to follow implies more than physical movement; it signifies a call to a radical reorientation of life. In the context of first-century Jewish culture, where disciples typically chose their rabbis³⁰, Jesus' initiative in calling His disciples highlights His authority and the divine nature of His mission. This call to follow is an invitation to participate in the Kingdom of Heaven, a central theme in Jesus' teaching throughout Matthew's Gospel³¹.

The metaphor of becoming "fishers of men" is significant. Fishing, an occupation familiar to Peter and Andrew, symbolizes their future role in evangelism and spreading the gospel³². Just as fishing requires patience, skill, and perseverance, so too does the work of bringing people into the Kingdom of God. This metaphor also connects to the prophetic imagery found in the Hebrew Scriptures, where fishing for people is sometimes used to depict God's judgment and gathering of His people (e.g., Jeremiah 16:16, Ezekiel 29:4-5). In this context, Jesus repurposes the imagery to highlight the positive mission of drawing people to God.

Furthermore, the use of the term "fishers of men" ties into the broader biblical narrative. The Old Testament prophets often spoke of a time when God would call and gather His people. By using this term, Jesus places His mission within the continuity of God's redemptive plan. This continuity reassures the Jewish audience of the time that Jesus' mission is a fulfillment, not a break from,

²⁹Alexander & Alexander, *Zondervan hand book to the Bible*. InterVarsity press. 5th Edition 2017. P.555.

³⁰Craig S. Keener. *The IVP Bible Background Commentary, (NT)*, USA, InterVarsity Press, Second edition 2014, p.55

³¹Kendell H. Easley. *Ultimate Bible Guide, THE BIBLE; A Book-By-Book Overview*. 2018. P.251

³²Henry, M. (1706). *Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary*. Retrieved from

<https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/mhn.html>

their rich spiritual heritage. The metaphor underscores the active and communal aspect of discipleship, emphasizing that followers of Jesus are to be engaged in the work of bringing others into the fold.

3.3 Implications of the Calling

The immediate and unquestioning response of Peter and Andrew to Jesus' call is noteworthy. They leave their nets and follow Him, symbolizing a complete break from their former lives and a total commitment to Jesus' mission. This act of leaving everything behind illustrates the cost of discipleship and the kind of dedication that Jesus demands. It serves as a powerful example for all believers, emphasizing that following Jesus often requires significant personal sacrifice and a willingness to prioritize His call above all else.

The transformation from fishermen to "fishers of men" underscores the transformative power of Jesus' call. Peter and Andrew are invited into a new identity and mission that goes beyond their everyday occupation. This transformation reflects a broader theme in the Gospel of Matthew, where Jesus' followers are continually called to new levels of understanding, commitment, and service. The disciples' willingness to embrace this new mission demonstrates their trust in Jesus and their readiness to embark on a journey of faith.

Furthermore, the calling of Peter and Andrew sets the stage for the formation of the early Christian community. As the first disciples, they play crucial roles in Jesus' ministry and the establishment of the church. Their initial response to Jesus' call models the ideal response for all who would come after them. It highlights the importance of obedience, faith, and readiness to engage in the mission of spreading the gospel.

The calling also indicates a shift (call to a task)³³ in the understanding of religious vocation. Traditionally, religious leaders were expected to emerge from established religious schools or priestly families. By calling fishermen, Jesus disrupts this expectation, showing that divine calling transcends human qualifications and societal norms. This democratization of ministry roles suggests that anyone, regardless of their background, can be called to serve in God's kingdom.

³³ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996, Vol 1. p. 423).

3.4 Lessons on Discipleship

Matthew 4:18-20 offers several key lessons on discipleship. Firstly, it emphasizes the authority of Jesus in calling His followers. Unlike other rabbis³⁴ of the time, Jesus chooses His disciples, underscoring His unique authority and divine mission. This call is not merely an invitation but a command that requires a response.

Secondly, the passage highlights the radical nature of discipleship. Peter and Andrew's immediate decision to leave their nets and follow Jesus demonstrates the total commitment and sacrifice required of true disciples. This radical call challenges believers to evaluate their own priorities and willingness to follow Jesus wholeheartedly.

Thirdly, the transformation from fishermen to "fishers of men" illustrates the new purpose and identity that come with discipleship. Jesus calls His followers not only to personal transformation but also to active participation in His mission. This involves evangelism, service, and the building of the Kingdom of God. The metaphor of fishing for people captures the essence of this mission, emphasizing the need for persistence, skill, and dedication.

Additionally, the passage illustrates that discipleship is a process. Peter and Andrew's journey with Jesus begins with a call but involves continuous growth, learning, and commitment. Throughout the Gospel of Matthew, we see their development as they witness Jesus' teachings and miracles, grapple with their own understanding, and eventually take on leadership roles within the early church. This process underscores that discipleship is not a one-time event but a lifelong journey of faith and transformation.

The call to become "fishers of men" also highlights the communal aspect of discipleship.³⁵ Following Jesus is not just about personal salvation but about participating in a community with a shared mission. This communal dimension reflects the nature of the early Christian movement, which was characterized by a strong sense of fellowship, mutual support, and collective mission.

³⁴ Craig S. Keener. *The IVP Bible Background Commentary, (NT)*, USA, InterVarsity Press, Second edition 2014, p.55

³⁵ Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., Bauer, W., & Gingrich, F. W. (2000, p. 503).

The metaphor of fishing, which often involves teamwork and cooperation, reinforces the idea that discipleship is inherently relational and communal.

Finally, Matthew 4:18-20 serves as a reminder of the impact of discipleship. The immediate and decisive response of Peter and Andrew leads to their pivotal roles in the early church and the spread of the gospel. Their example demonstrates that a willingness to follow Jesus wholeheartedly can have far-reaching and transformative effects, both for the individual and for the broader community.

3.5 Conclusion

Matthew 4:18-20 encapsulates the essence of Jesus' call to discipleship. Through the calling of Peter and Andrew, we see the profound implications of following Jesus, the radical commitment required, and the transformative mission that He imparts to His followers. This passage not only provides insight into the nature of Jesus' ministry but also offers timeless lessons for all who seek to follow Him. By understanding and embracing the meaning of this passage, believers are challenged to live out their discipleship with the same faith, dedication, and willingness to be transformed and to transform others.

CHAPTER FOUR

MATTHEW 4:18-20 AND THE CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY

4.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the relevance and application of Matthew 4:18-20 in contemporary society, with a specific focus on examples from Uganda. By examining how the themes of discipleship, commitment, and transformation manifest in modern contexts, we can better understand how this Biblical passage continues to inspire and guide believers today when called to serve.

4.2 Discipleship in Contemporary Society

In contemporary society, the concept of discipleship as depicted in Matthew 4:18-20 remains highly relevant. The call to follow Jesus and become "fishers of men" is echoed in various forms of Christian ministry and community engagement. For instance, church planting and evangelism efforts in Uganda reflect the call to be "fishers of men." Many local and international missions focus on spreading the gospel to unreached areas, similar to how Jesus called His disciples to spread His message. The Church of Uganda, for example, has been actively involved in planting new congregations in both urban and rural areas. This mission-driven expansion is a direct response to the Biblical mandate of discipleship and evangelism. This calls for ministers who will pastor the flock of God irrespective of diverse professions they may be.

Findings indicate that Jesus' relationship with His disciples serves as a model for discipleship and mentorship in contemporary Christian ministry. Leaders in the Church are called to nurture and disciple believers, guiding them in their faith journey.³⁶

Findings revealed that Jesus called individuals from diverse professions, such as fishermen, tax collectors, and zealots. This diversity teaches us that God can use anyone, regardless of their background or occupation, for His purposes in ministry.³⁷

Findings indicate that the call of Peter and Andrew demonstrates that following Jesus transforms one's perspective on work. Their occupation as fishermen was not seen as a hindrance to ministry but as a platform for God's work. Similarly, contemporary Christians can view their professions as opportunities for ministry and service.³⁸

Youth discipleship programs, by the Anglican church of Uganda, also exemplify the principles found in Matthew 4:18-20. These programs aim to mentor and guide young people in their spiritual journey, encouraging them to follow Jesus wholeheartedly and to share their faith with others. By investing in the spiritual growth of the youth, these programs ensure the continuation of the discipleship legacy. They create a supportive environment where young believers can develop

³⁶Willard, D. *The divine conspiracy: Rediscovering our hidden life in God*. Harper Collins. (2009).

³⁷Craig S. Keener: *The Gospel of Matthew: A socio-rhetorical commentary*. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing. (2009). Pg. 56.

³⁸Peterson, E. H. *The Message: The New Testament in contemporary language*. NavPress Publishing Group. (2002). Pg. 48

their faith, learn to lead, and engage in evangelism, thus embodying the call to be "fishers of men." Though the youth may have acquired other primary occupations, they can join ministry without haste buying a leaf from the 'fisher men' who were made 'fishers of Men'

4.3 Commitment and Sacrifice

The immediate and total commitment of Peter and Andrew to follow Jesus, as described in Matthew 4:18-20, serves as a powerful example for believers today. In Uganda, many individuals demonstrate similar commitment and sacrifice in their pursuit of faith. Many Ugandans who feel called to religious vocations, such as priesthood or pastoral ministry, often leave behind lucrative careers and family expectations to follow their calling. This mirrors the disciples' willingness to leave their nets and livelihood to follow Jesus. The Uganda Martyrs Seminary in Namugongo, for instance, has seen numerous students forsake other **professional** opportunities to dedicate their lives to ministry.

Findings revealed that Peter and Andrew's immediate response to Jesus' call without hesitation or questioning serves as a model for believers today. Their willingness to leave their livelihoods and follow Jesus demonstrates the importance of immediate obedience to God's call in our lives. In today's fast-paced world, where distractions and competing priorities abound, their example challenges believers to prioritize their relationship with Christ above worldly pursuits.³⁹

Study findings disclosed that by leaving their nets and following Jesus, Peter and Andrew showed a sacrificial commitment to Christ. This challenges contemporary believers to consider what they are willing to sacrifice in order to follow Jesus wholeheartedly. Following Jesus may require believers to make sacrifices in terms of time, resources, and personal desires. Peter and Andrew's willingness to leave their nets serves as a reminder that following Jesus often involves leaving behind comfort and security.⁴⁰ Therefore in the contemporary society, a great deal of ministers have committed themselves to follow Jesus by leaving their primary jobs.

Ugandan Christians involved in social activism and advocacy for justice also reflect the commitment and sacrifice exemplified in Matthew 4:18-20. Organizations like the Uganda

³⁹ Richard A. Burridge, *Four Gospels One Jesus: Michigan*. William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. Grand Rapids, 1994. Pg. 84

⁴⁰Richmond Lattimore, *The Four Gospels and Revelation*: London. Hutchison \$ Co. (Publishers) Ltd (1996). Pg.65

Christian Lawyers' Fraternity where some are clergy, work tirelessly to provide legal aid to the underprivileged, often facing personal and financial sacrifices. Their work in advocating for human rights and social justice embodies the discipleship call to transform society through the gospel. By standing up for the marginalized and oppressed, these modern-day disciples live out the radical commitment and selflessness that Jesus' call to follow demands.

4.4 Transformation and New Identity

The transformation from fishermen to "fishers of men" signifies a profound change in identity and purpose. This theme of transformation is evident in the lives of many professionals in Ugandan who embrace their faith and allow it to reshape their lives.

Study findings also indicate that Peter and Andrew's response highlights the transformative power of a personal encounter with Jesus. Their lives were forever changed by their encounter with Christ, illustrating the transformative impact Jesus can have on individuals today. Just as Peter and Andrew's lives were transformed by their encounter with Jesus, contemporary Christians are called to seek a personal relationship with Christ that leads to transformation⁴¹ ; overcoming their fear of leaving their primary professions.

The church of Uganda theological institutions like UCU and other affiliated colleges in the act of ministerial formation; provide holistic support that includes spiritual guidance, helping individuals to rediscover their identity in Christ and pursue a new purpose in life. These transformations reflect the shift from an old way of life to a new mission, similar to the disciples' experience.

Findings further revealed that the call of the disciples emphasizes the mission and service aspect of Christian ministry. Just as Jesus sent out His disciples to preach the Gospel, contemporary Christians are called to be ambassadors for Christ, spreading His message of love and salvation.⁴²

Findings also revealed that the disciples' dependency on Jesus for guidance, provision, and empowerment teaches us to rely on God in all aspects of ministry. This includes seeking His wisdom, strength, and resources for effective service.⁴³

⁴¹ John MacQuarrie. *The Faith of the People of God: A Lay Theology*. SCM Press. (1976). Pg. 93

⁴²Bosch, D. J. *Transforming mission: Paradigm shifts in theology of mission*. Orbis Books (2011). Pg. 205.

⁴³Tozer, A. W. *The pursuit of God*. Bottom of the Hill Publishing. (2009).

Christian community development initiatives also demonstrate this transformation. Projects that focus on education, healthcare, and economic empowerment often integrate spiritual teachings, encouraging beneficiaries to embrace new identities as empowered, self-sufficient individuals. The work of Compassion International in Uganda, which supports children through sponsorship programs that include spiritual mentorship, exemplifies this holistic approach to transformation. By providing educational opportunities, healthcare, and spiritual guidance, these initiatives help individuals and communities experience a comprehensive transformation that mirrors the disciples' shift from their old lives to their new mission.

4.5 Challenges and Opportunities

Applying the principles of Matthew 4:18-20 in contemporary Uganda comes with both challenges and opportunities. Understanding these dynamics can help modern disciples navigate their faith journey more effectively. Socio-economic pressures can make it difficult for individuals to fully commit to the call. The economic demands on families often require individuals to prioritize immediate financial stability over spiritual pursuits. Balancing these pressures with the call to follow Jesus can be challenging, requiring creative solutions and support from faith communities. Churches and Christian organizations can play a crucial role in providing such support, helping believers to balance their material needs with their spiritual commitments. In today's fast-paced world, where distractions and competing priorities abound, their example challenges believers to prioritize their relationship with Christ above worldly pursuits.⁴⁴

Findings revealed that many individuals may hesitate to leave their current life behind due to fear of the unknown. The uncertainty of what lies ahead can be daunting and prevent them from taking the leap of faith. Overcoming this fear often requires a strong faith and trust in God's guidance and provision.⁴⁵

The growing influence of the church in Uganda presents an opportunity for deeper discipleship and societal transformation. Churches are well-positioned to address social issues and promote

⁴⁴ Richard A. Burridge, *Four Gospels One Jesus: Michigan*. William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. Grand Rapids, 1994. Pg. 84.

⁴⁵Smith, J. The Fear Factor: *Overcoming Fear of the Unknown*. *Journal of Faith and Courage*, Russell press. 10(2), (2015). Pg. 45-56.

ethical values, leveraging their influence to foster a culture of commitment and service. By aligning their mission with the principles of Matthew 4:18-20, Ugandan churches can inspire a new generation of committed disciples especially those with initial professions. This involves not only preaching and teaching but also engaging in practical initiatives that demonstrate the gospel's transformative power in addressing societal needs.

Interfaith collaboration on social issues, such as peace building and community development, provides opportunities for Christians to demonstrate the transformative power of discipleship. Initiatives like the Acholi Religious Leaders Peace Initiative in Northern Uganda, where Christian and Muslim leaders work together to promote reconciliation and development, show how discipleship can extend beyond traditional boundaries to foster broader societal change. By working together on common goals, these interfaith efforts reflect the inclusive and transformative nature of Jesus' call to follow Him.

4.6 Conclusion

Matthew 4:18-20 continues to hold insightful relevance for contemporary society, particularly in Uganda. The call to follow Jesus, commit wholeheartedly, and transform lives resonates with the experiences and aspirations of many professionals in Ugandan. By examining how these themes are lived out in various contexts, we can gain a deeper appreciation for the timeless nature of discipleship and the ongoing impact of Jesus' call to be "fishers of men." This passage not only provides a blueprint for individual faith journeys of many professionals joining ministry, but also offers a vision for collective transformation and engagement in the mission of spreading the gospel. Through commitment, sacrifice, and the willingness to embrace a new identity and mission, Ugandan believers today continue to embody the principles of discipleship as outlined in Matthew 4:18-20, demonstrating the enduring power and relevance of Jesus' call to follow Him.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS

This chapter draws together the insights gained from the analysis of Matthew 4:18-20 and its application to contemporary society, particularly in Uganda. By summarizing the key findings, this chapter will highlight the significance of Jesus' call to Peter and Andrew, emphasizing its theological and practical implications. Following the conclusion, a series of recommendations were presented to enhance discipleship practices and foster a deeper understanding of Jesus' call.

Matthew 4:18-20 is a vital passage that captures the essence of Jesus' call to discipleship. Through the calling of Peter and Andrew, we see a profound model of what it means to follow Jesus. This passage emphasizes several key themes: the authority of Jesus, the radical commitment required of His followers, the transformation from ordinary occupations to a divine mission, and the importance of evangelism. By understanding the theological significance, implications, and lessons on discipleship within this text, believers are challenged to reflect on their own response to Jesus' call.

In the context of contemporary society, Matthew 4:18-20 remains highly relevant. The themes of discipleship, commitment, and transformation are evident in the lives of many Ugandan Christians who embody these principles in various ways. From church planting and youth discipleship

programs to social activism and community development initiatives, the call to be "fishers of men" is being lived out in meaningful and impactful ways. Despite challenges such as socio-economic pressures and the need for balance between material and spiritual pursuits, the opportunities for deeper discipleship and societal transformation are significant.

Based on the exploration of Matthew 4:18-20 and its application in contemporary society, the following recommendations are made to enhance discipleship and foster a deeper understanding of Jesus' call.

First, Strengthening Discipleship Programs; Churches and Christian organizations should invest in comprehensive discipleship programs that not only teach biblical principles but also provide practical guidance on how to live out these principles in everyday life of all people of vast professions. These programs should include mentorship, community engagement, and opportunities for personal growth.

Secondly, Promoting Commitment and Sacrifice; Believers should be encouraged to reflect on the level of commitment and sacrifice they are willing to make in following Jesus. This can be facilitated through sermons, Bible studies, and personal testimonies that highlight the importance of prioritizing Jesus' call above all else.

Lastly, Fostering Transformative Initiatives; Christian communities should support initiatives that aim to transform lives and communities. This includes supporting rehabilitation programs, community development projects, and social justice efforts that embody the principles of discipleship and reflect the transformative power of the gospel.

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