

The call of disciples is something severally described in the Gospel, and it is several so that we can see how it differs, and in what way it is the same.

In Mark's Gospel the first four disciples are summoned with unique power from their fishing boats, and they drop everything and come at once. Luke didn't like this, because the kind of power that can achieve this does not attract him; we would say that it resembles the power of a cult over a young and impressionable person. Luke is a Greek, that is, a Westerner; he wants the power that holds Peter to Jesus to be rational and humane, not almost magical.

Accordingly, Luke sends Peter to listen to Jesus in the synagogue at Capernaum and to witness a miraculous cure; and he comes to Peter's house for his Sabbath lunch; there he heals Peter's mother-in-law, who makes herself useful with her new-found health; as soon as the Sabbath closes with sunset, Peter finds his front-doorstep turned into a hospital, as hundreds gather to be cured and exorcised. Early next morning Peter sets out to find Jesus to bring him back to the town and keep the kettle boiling, but Jesus informs him that he has to move on to his mission.

That all precedes today's story of the preaching in the boat. You can see that Jesus has taken possession of Peter's religious life, in the synagogue, he has taken a place in Peter's home and family, and he has transformed the door of Peter's house to a gate of heaven. Now he appears in Peter's place of work. It is a bad place, and Peter is nursing that burden of failure which is so hard for a labourer to bear; *we worked all night and caught nothing* is the voice of the dismissed, the useless, we have all felt it in moments of emptiness and disappointment. Still, if you say so...the miracles have taken their place in his mind, and he puts his feelings behind him, and does the unthinkable thing.

The result is dramatic; it is fishing as he has never known it before: but see the secret message: the nets are tearing, both boats are sinking. This is a form of prosperity that Peter is not equipped to receive. Something that's been building in Peter over the whole sequence of events comes suddenly to the fore, and he is on his knees; he knows what Mark's Peter knew instantly, that this man is taking possession of him. But he also knows he is unworthy: *leave me, Lord*.

The scene is so deep in its meaning that it transcends all settings and illuminates the whole Gospel. In fact, it takes us to the scene beside the sea in John, at the very other end of the Gospel, where Jesus tactfully demands Peter's loyalty after his three denials. It is there that Peter receives his calling in John, the one place where Jesus says, *Follow me*.