

1049 Fishers of men, healings of the leper and the paralyzed man, and one way of Bible writing style - The image of Jesus (4)

(Verses refer to those in NASB unless otherwise specified, and by Whirlwind.)

First, let us see the process of the call of Peter to be fishers of men. We observe that due to Andrew's introduction, Peter knew Jesus. We can thus see the importance of preaching the Gospel as one way of introducing the Gospels to people. Secondly, He showed His mercy by healing the leper and the price He paid for it. We also observe that His reaction to this event is very different from ordinary people. We also discussed if He knew ahead of time the price He had to pay, or if he healed him just because of His mercy. Thirdly, we take a look at His healing of a paralyzed man, who was let down by four friends through the roof. Jesus healed the paralyzed man because of their faith. Who are they? These verses don't say it clearly. We use a practical method to explain this. We also mention one way the Bible uses writing styles to make a point by referring to certain examples, which includes the general principles and special cases.

1. The call of disciples as fishers of men in the lake of Gennesaret

The time Jesus first met Peter is described in John 1:35-42, "Again the next day John was standing with two of his disciples, and he looked at Jesus as He walked, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God!" The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. And Jesus turned and saw them following, and said to them, "What do you seek?" They said to Him, "Rabbi (which translated means Teacher), where are You staying?" He said to them, "Come, and you will see." So they came and saw where He was staying; and they stayed with Him that day, for it was about the tenth hour. One of the two who heard John speak and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He found first his own brother Simon and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which translated means Christ). He brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, "You are Simon the son of John; you shall be called Cephas" (which is translated Peter)."

First, we see what John the Baptist said in John 3:30, "He must increase, but I must decrease," is real. From this event, we can see that he had a heart without any jealousy to Jesus at all. He is very humble. He introduced his own disciples to follow Jesus. Secondly, we can see that Peter knew Jesus through the introduction of Andrew. Without Andrew, Peter would not know Jesus. "So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ," (Romans 10:17) we should "preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction." (2 Timothy 4:2) If people don't know what Gospels are, how can they believe? We also see that Jesus wanted these two disciples to make their own judgement by inviting them. Just one day, they knew, "We have found the Messiah." Thus, Jesus is indeed a doer. This is what James said in James 1:22, "But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves."

This was the first call of Peter, described in Matthew 4:18-22, "Now as Jesus was walking by the Sea of Galilee, He saw two brothers, Simon who was called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. And He said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men." Immediately they left their nets and followed Him. Going on from there He saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and He called them. Immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed Him." Here, we can see that He also called Andrew, James, and John.

It is clearly stated in Luke 5:1-11 that Peter in the second call genuinely accepted his call after his seeing a miracle. In the first time, "Immediately they left their nets and followed Him." Probably, he went back again since there was the second time. And this time, "they left everything and followed Him." These verses described the overall situation as follows. "Now it happened that while the crowd was pressing around Him and listening to the word of God, He was standing by the lake of Gennesaret; and He saw two boats lying at the edge of the lake; but the fishermen had gotten out of them and were washing their nets. And He got into one of the boats, which was Simon's, and asked him to put out a little way from the land. And He sat down and began teaching the people from the boat. When He had finished speaking, He said to Simon, "Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch." Simon answered and said, "Master, we worked hard all night and caught nothing, but I will do as You say and let down the nets." When they had done this, they enclosed a great quantity of fish, and their nets began to break; so they signaled to their partners in the other boat for them to come and help them. And they came and filled both of the boats, so that they began to sink. But when Simon Peter saw that, he fell down at Jesus' feet, saying, "Go away from me Lord, for I am a sinful man!" For amazement had seized him and all his companions because of the catch of fish which 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 fear, from now on you will be catching men." When they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed Him."

Notice that only Simon said, "I am a sinful man." The others just felt amazed. We can see that not all people can perceive things for the same event. To them, it is surely a miracle. They were professionals and worked hard all night and caught nothing. And they caught so many fishes just acting according to what Jesus said. No wonder why anyone who perceives the event accepted the call to be fishers of men, and left everything and followed Him. We can also see the importance of encountering miracles for those with little faith like me. The miracles make us realize that the words in the Bible are not merely words, but can be experienced. And how much we can experience, God has the absolute authority. What we can only do is to pray.

In the Gospel of Mark, the same event is recorded. The time of the event is after John had been taken into custody as stated in Mark 1:14-20, "Now after John had been taken into custody, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel." As He was going along by the Sea of Galilee, He saw Simon and Andrew, the brother of Simon, casting a net in the sea; for they were fishermen. And Jesus said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men." Immediately they left their nets and followed Him. Going on a little farther, He saw James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, who were also in the boat mending the nets. Immediately He called them; and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants, and went away to follow Him."

"Fishers of men" is not just a saying. It was actually done by the Holy Spirit to make people be pierced to the heart as stated in Acts 2:37-41, "Now when they heard this, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brethren, what shall we do?" ...So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls."

2. Healing the leper

The event happened in Luke 5:12-16, "While He was in one of the cities, behold, there was a man covered with leprosy; and when he saw Jesus, he fell on his face and implored Him, saying, "Lord,

if You are willing, You can make me clean." And He stretched out His hand and touched him, saying, "I am willing; be cleansed." And immediately the leprosy left him. And He ordered him to tell no one, "But go and show yourself to the priest and make an offering for your cleansing, just as Moses commanded, as a testimony to them." But the news about Him was spreading even farther, and large crowds were gathering to hear Him and to be healed of their sicknesses. But Jesus Himself would often slip away to the wilderness and pray."

The reaction of Jesus was very different from ordinary people. This should be a good opportunity to become famous, but He slipped away to the wilderness to pray to hear the leading of the Holy Spirit. He said clearly that He kept the commandments of the Father in John 15:10 "... just as I have kept My Father's commandments ..." He is the same as us except that He has no sin, since He took "the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men."(Philippians 2:7) He was a complete man with the likeness of men, and needed prayer just like us, but He was back to the original state when Adam was created. He was also completely God without using His God's status during the period of Word becoming flesh. For example, in the mountain of transfiguration, Moses and Elijah, "...appearing in glory, were speaking of His departure which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem."(Luke 9:30-31) Although He knew this quite a while ago, He had to confirm it. To understand that He can be both a complete man and a complete God at the same time, let us use an analogy. A prince was down to a beggar for a situation like a mutation, he is still a prince even he became a beggar temporarily. There is no change for his status. He is always a prince no matter how he lives. But to us, it is still a mystery because we don't know how He "...emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men."(Philippians 2:7) We have to be in faith, and know that He had already done it. Here, we also see that He was the man with constant praying, and is a model for us in prayer.

In Matthew 8:1-4, the same event is recorded as follows. "When Jesus came down from the mountain, large crowds followed Him. And a leper came to Him and bowed down before Him, and said, "Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean." Jesus stretched out His hand and touched him, saying, "I am willing; be cleansed." And immediately his leprosy was cleansed. And Jesus said to him, "See that you tell no one; but go, show yourself to the priest and present the offering that Moses commanded, as a testimony to them."" Here, we know when it happened. It was after the time Jesus preached the words in chapters five to seven of the Book of Matthew, the well known the Sermon on the Mount.

In the Book of Mark, a little more is described. In Mark 1:40-45, it is said, "And a leper came to Jesus, beseeching Him and falling on his knees before Him, and saying, "If You are willing, You can make me clean." Moved with compassion, Jesus stretched out His hand and touched him, and said to him, "I am willing; be cleansed." Immediately the leprosy left him and he was cleansed. And He sternly warned him and immediately sent him away, and He said to him, "See that you say nothing to anyone; but go, show yourself to the priest and offer for your cleansing what Moses commanded, as a testimony to them." But he went out and began to proclaim it freely and to spread the news around, to such an extent that Jesus could no longer publicly enter a city, but stayed out in unpopulated areas; and they were coming to Him from everywhere."

He is merciful since it is said clearly that He was moved with compassion. It is believed that the Holy Spirit didn't say that He was not allowed to heal the leper; otherwise, He cannot say that He follows the leading of the Holy Spirit in His whole life. Talking about foreknowledge, in the event of the woman of Shunem, "When she came to the man of God (Elisha) to the hill, she caught hold of his feet. And Gehazi came near to push her away; but the man of God said, "Let her alone, for her soul is troubled within her; and the Lord has hidden it from me and has not told me.""(2 Kings 4:27) Apparently, God didn't tell Elisha in advance.

In the event of the conversation of Jesus and the woman of Samaria, "...He had to pass through Samaria."(John 4:4) And Jews normally didn't pass the road through Samaria. We see the leading of the Holy Spirit because "He had to." Therefore, someone may ask if the Holy Spirit let Jesus know ahead. He knew the trouble but He still did it anyway. In this question, the Bible doesn't say clearly. But according to the consistency of the Bible, it is believed that the Holy Spirit will give him some freedom like when Adam and Eve were created, not like a robot, one command leading to one action only. Therefore, my opinion is that He didn't know ahead of time; otherwise, He didn't follow the leading of the Holy Spirit as discussed. In this case, there is no reason to record that He paid the price for His compassion, which is the fact that He could no longer publicly enter a city. This is very different from what happened in the Garden of Gethsemane. Although He confirmed ahead in the mountain of transfiguration that He would die for us, it wasn't easy to do so as a human being. But He still prayed, "...yet not as I will, but as You will." This is an example of obeying the leading of the Holy Spirit, and "Do not quench the Spirit."(1 Thessalonians 5:19)

3. Healing the paralyzed man, and one way of Bible writing style

Reading the Bible must read out the principles of how God works like what said in Psalms 103:7, "He made known His ways to Moses, His acts to the sons of Israel." Despite this, when Moses became angry, he still couldn't obey what God told him regarding telling the water to flow out of the rock, and struck the rock twice with his rod instead. (Ref. Numbers 20:7-12) As a result, he couldn't enter the land of Canaan in this life. We cannot know all the principles of how God works since He is infinite and we are finite. But we have to do our best. Here, we'll share one way of the Bible writing style from verses. Before that, let us take a look at the event of His healing of a man who was paralyzed.

In Luke 5:17-26, it says, "One day He was teaching; and there were some Pharisees and teachers of the law sitting there, who had come from every village of Galilee and Judea and from Jerusalem; and the power of the Lord was present for Him to perform healing. And some men were carrying on a bed a man who was paralyzed; and they were trying to bring him in and to set him down in front of Him. But not finding any way to bring him in because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and let him down through the tiles with his stretcher, into the middle of the crowd, in front of Jesus. Seeing their faith, He said, "Friend, your sins are forgiven you." The scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, "Who is this man who speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins, but God alone?" But Jesus, aware of their reasonings, answered and said to them, "Why are you reasoning in your hearts? Which is easier, to say, 'Your sins have been forgiven you,' or to say, 'Get up and walk'? But, so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins,"-He said to the paralytic-"I say to you, get up, and pick up your stretcher and go home." Immediately he got up before them, and picked up what he had been lying on, and went home glorifying God. They were all struck with astonishment and began glorifying God; and they were filled with fear, saying, "We have seen remarkable things today.""

Here, we can see that the teaching of Jesus was in public. The scribes and the Pharisees said correctly, "Who can forgive sins, but God alone?" But they didn't know, "I and the Father are one."(John 10:30) The same event is recorded in Matthew 9:1-8 and Mark 2:1-12. In Matthew 9:1, it is said, "... Jesus ...came to His own city, which is as Mark 2:1 said in Capernaum. In the Book of Luke, it was also asked, "Which is easier?" Both of them were not easy. The goal of this time is very clear, "so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins." It is also said in Mark 2:5, "And Jesus seeing their faith said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are

forgiven.'" So, who are they as said here and the verses in the Book of Luke? They were only the four friends or including the paralyzed?

Before we discuss this question, let us mention one practical method with detail in [1], which can be done by everyone who is willing to do it. That is: (1) Don't discount the words in the Bible; (2) Use logic; (3) Use the consistency of the Bible. Here, we have no consistency of the Bible since there are examples where some patients need to have at least a weak amount of faith in order to be healed, and some don't. As an example, it is said in Acts 14:8-10, "At Lystra a man was sitting who had no strength in his feet, lame from his mother's womb, who had never walked. This man was listening to Paul as he spoke, who, when he had fixed his gaze on him and had seen that he had faith to be made well, said with a loud voice, "Stand upright on your feet." And he leaped up and began to walk." The man certainly had faith. But the verses in Acts 3:1-10 don't mention that the lame at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful has faith.

In Acts 3:1-10, it says, "Now Peter and John were going up to the temple at the ninth hour, the hour of prayer. And a man who had been lame from his mother's womb was being carried along, whom they used to set down every day at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, in order to beg alms of those who were entering the temple. When he saw Peter and John about to go into the temple, he began asking to receive alms. But Peter, along with John, fixed his gaze on him and said, "Look at us!" And he began to give them his attention, expecting to receive something from them. But Peter said, "I do not possess silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you: In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene-walk!" And seizing him by the right hand, he raised him up; and immediately his feet and his ankles were strengthened. With a leap he stood upright and began to walk; and he entered the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God. And all the people saw him walking and praising God; and they were taking note of him as being the one who used to sit at the Beautiful Gate of the temple to beg alms, and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him." There are other examples like these two. Thus, we cannot determine uniquely whether the verses in the Book of Luke indicate that the word 'they' includes the patient or not. As discussed in [1], logic is only a tool. If we enter various assumptions as inputs, we will get different results. Under the assumption that we don't discount the words in the Bible, we cannot get a unique conclusion. Like what we discussed before, this is just another example which doesn't get a unique conclusion.

The consistency of the Bible is very useful in other places. For example, in 1 Thessalonians 4:17, it is said, "Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord." Such an event is also mentioned in Matthew 24:39-41 "...so will the coming of the Son of Man be. Then there will be two men in the field; one will be taken and one will be left. Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken and one will be left." Someone thinks the person is taken away for judgement [2]. From the consistency of the Bible, it is apparently incorrect.

There is one way of Bible writing style. Normally, it refers to ordinary cases, but there are special cases. As an example, the Lord made Himself as an example in baptism as a general principle in Matthew 3:15-16, "But Jesus answering said to him, "Permit it at this time; for in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he permitted Him. After being baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; ..." There is a special case in Luke 23:39-43, "...He said to him (one of the criminals), "Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise.'" We cannot use the special case as the excuse that one doesn't need baptism.

The Bible states clearly in many places this general principle that we need to be baptized. In the following, there are some examples. In Matthew 28:18-20, it says, "And Jesus came up and spoke to

them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." In Acts 8:36-38, it says, "As they went along the road they came to some water; and the eunuch said, "Look! Water! What prevents me from being baptized?" [And Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart, you may." And he answered and said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."] And he ordered the chariot to stop; and they both went down into the water, Philip as well as the eunuch, and he baptized him." The meaning of baptism is given in Romans 6:4, "Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life." If we want to use special cases, we need to ask if we are in similar situations.

Let use another example from the Bible as an illustration. David in the event of Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah the Hittite, he committed adultery and killed Uriah with the sword of the sons of Ammon. (Ref. 2 Samuel 11-13:14) Are we saying there is no problem by committing adultery and killing by this way? Absolutely not. I think that God used His absolute authority this time to forgive the death penalty of David because "...David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the Lord."(2 Samuel 12:13) He immediately repent when he realized that he was faulty. His repent was very deep as stated in Psalm 51, and not only to God, but also to many as this Psalm was for the choir director which would be sang by many. He didn't hide his faults in front of them. I think that it might be one of the reasons why God said, "...David the son of Jesse, a man after My heart..."(Acts 13:22) God has mercy and grace, but He is also fair. Although God has the absolute authority, it is believed that He would make the same decision under the same circumstance.

References

[1] The detail is in the web, "<https://a-christian-voice.com/>," by pressing "On spiritual understanding about life." And then press, "1039 Looking at what we should do through Revelation 15."

[2] For example, in Matthew 24:39-41, Amplified Bible (AMP), it says, "and they did not know *or* understand until the flood came and swept them all away; so will the coming of the Son of Man be [unexpected judgment]. At that time two men will be in the field; one will be taken [for judgment] and one will be left. Two women *will be* grinding at the mill; one will be taken [for judgment] and one will be left."