

Matthew 4:21

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And going on from thence, he saw other two brethren, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and he called them.

Analysis

The call of James and John follows the same pattern—Jesus calls, they immediately follow. The detail that they left 'their father Zebedee in the ship with the hired servants' shows they left family responsibilities and business interests. Yet this abandonment was not irresponsible but responsive to a higher calling. Christ's call takes precedence even over family obligations, though not in a way that dishonors God's design for family.

Historical Context

Zebedee's possession of a boat and hired servants suggests the family was relatively prosperous. James and John's willingness to leave this family business for an uncertain future with an itinerant rabbi demonstrates radical faith. They would later be among Jesus' inner circle.

Related Passages

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How does leaving family business and father illustrate Jesus' teaching that He must be loved above even family (Matthew 10:37)?
2. What does this passage teach about the relationship between legitimate responsibilities and ultimate allegiance to Christ?

Interlinear Text

καὶ προβὰς ἐκεῖθεν εἶδεν ἄλλους δύο ἀδελφὸν

And going on from thence he saw other two brethren

G2532 G4260 G1564 G1492 G243 G1417 G80

Ἰάκωβον τὰ τὰ Ζεβεδαίου καὶ Ἰωάννην τὰ

James the son of the son of Zebedee And John the son of

G2385 G3588 G3588 G2199 G2532 G2491 G3588

ἀδελφὸν αὐτούς ἐν τὰ πλοίῳ μετὰ Ζεβεδαίου

brethren his in the son of a ship with Zebedee

G80 G846 G1722 G3588 G4143 G3326 G2199

τὰ πατρὸς αὐτούς καταρτίζοντας τὰ δίκτυα

the son of father his mending the son of nets

G3588 G3962 G486 G2675 G3588 G1350

αὐτούς καὶ ἐκάλεσεν αὐτούς

his And he called his

G846 G2532 G2564 G846

Additional Cross-References

Mark 3:17 (References John): And James the son of Zebedee, and John the brother of James; and he surnamed them Boanerges, which is, The sons of thunder:

Matthew 10:2 (References John): Now the names of the twelve apostles are these; The first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother;

Acts 12:2 (References John): And he killed James the brother of John with the sword.

John 21:2 (Parallel theme): There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee, and two other of his disciples.

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