

“Fishers of Men”

Matthew 4v12-25

Scripture Ref: Is 9:1-2; 2 Peter 1:19;

- 1. Matthew goes from Jesus’ temptation right into His ministry in Galilee**
- 2. ...he skips over some things:**
 - a. Luke tells how Jesus was rejected in His own hometown – Luke 4:16-30**
 - i. Literally they drug Him out of town to a cliff and were going to toss Him off!**
 - b. John covers more of the disciples being called, going into Jerusalem, cleansing the temple, turning water to wine...**
- 3. Into Galilee - was a progressive and productive area – maybe like California to us**
 - a. The population was racially diverse; it was a fertile area, about 200 towns with a population of approx three million people in an area the size of Connecticut.**

Jesus Brings the Light to Galilee

12 Now when Jesus heard that John had been put in prison, He departed to Galilee. 13 And leaving Nazareth, He came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is by the sea, in the regions of Zebulun and Naphtali, 14 that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying:

15 "The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, By the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles: 16 The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, And upon those who sat in the region and shadow of death Light has dawned." (Isaiah 9:1-2)

- 4. A good friend of mine is going to be moving to the :Golden Coast” area of California, near San Loius Obispo, which I personally think is one of the most beautiful areas of our country - I am like – jealous!**
 - a. But you know, we can be in the most beautiful place on earth – pick wherever you want**
 - b. Sunny – tropical paradise – Hawaii; Mountain ranges by the sea; Alaska in the summer;**
 - c. But without the Lord in our lives – we are sitting in darkness. We are sitting in the shadow of death.**
 - d. No matter how great our existence is on this planet – death looms on the horizon – drawing closer with every breath, every heartbeat.**
- 5. But the good news is – The Light has dawned!**

2 Peter 1:19 ... *the light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts;*

17 **From that time** Jesus began to preach and to say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

6. **"From that time"** – a critical turning point – also chapter 16, as He turns towards the cross

7. **Repent...** remember we talked about repentance...

- a. **Brokenness** – an awareness that we have hurt ourselves, others, and the Lord
- b. **Decision** – I make a choice that I will turn away – go the other direction
- c. **Action** – I follow through with what I choose.
- d. and Jesus is preaching – "repent" – because "Kingdom of Heaven is at hand!"

8. **But what is this "kingdom of heaven"?** What was Jesus telling us?

- a. He was telling us that this world in its present form is passing away. And that a new world-- a new realm-- a new creation, far superior to the present one-- will over take it.
- b. This present world as we know it will be completely destroyed—and a new one will replace it-- one in which Almighty God Himself lives and dwells with Man.

9. **In this new "kingdom", or world, or realm—whatever you wish to call it:**

- a. This eternal kingdom will never perish, spoil, or fade
- b. There will be no more sin.
- c. There will be no more tears or pain.
- d. There will be no more anguish or shame.
- e. There will be no more anger or hate or war.
- f. The evil of this world will be no more.
- g. It will be a kingdom not bound by time—it will be eternal and man shall live forever and ever in peace and tranquility.
- h. No more death - We will have brand new bodies—ones that will not suffer from the effects of aging or disease or sickness. They will not be able to be injured or wounded.
 - i. Our bodies will be indestructible, eternal, and immortal—never to die-- but only filled with life and vitality and energy and health.
- i. There will be peace, rest and joy—and it will never, ever end.
- j. God Himself will make us new and will live with us and walk amongst us.

10. Jesus plainly taught us about this kingdom. He died for this kingdom—and He rose from the dead for the sake of this kingdom.

- a. **Jesus taught us that there is nothing else in all of life that is so important as entering into and remaining within His eternal kingdom for which He shed His blood.**
- b. **He said that the price for obtaining and possessing this kingdom is worth even giving up your own life here on earth.**
- c. **There is no price too great to pay in order to possess this eternal life.**

11. And He has invited man to work with Him to prepare for this kingdom!

Four Fishermen Called as Disciples

18 And Jesus, walking by the Sea of Galilee, saw two brothers, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. 19 Then He said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men." 20 They immediately left their nets and followed Him.

21 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. He called them, 22 and immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed Him.

12. I have good news for you fishermen out there – Jesus really loved fishermen!

- a. **At least four, possible seven of His disciples were professional fishermen**
- b. **Did Jesus like to fish? Did He like seafood and wanted to secure a supply?**

13. Maybe Jesus liked what He saw in fishermen...(attributes)

- a. **Fishermen were workers: People might think they just sit around with a pole in the water... but professional fishermen was constant work.**
 - i. **Preparing for the trip – mending nets, loading equipment**
 - ii. **Spending long hours on the water, no motors, casting nets, hauling them in, sorting through the catch, storing the catch.**
 - iii. **Unloading the catch, then preparing for the next trip.**
- b. **Fishermen were courageous: No coast guard, no sea-tow.**
- c. **Fishermen were patient: if there are no fish in one spot, you have to go to another, you had to keep trying and not give up.**
 - i. **No depth-finders or sonar -**
- d. **Fishermen were skilled: You had to learn how to take care of your equipment, where the fish are, how to sail**

- e. Fishermen worked together: Working on a boat requires teamwork
 - f. Fishing demanded faith: You could not see the fish
 - g. Perhaps Jesus knew that with these skills and work ethic, these guys could stay the course!
14. And guess what – these qualities are useful in the kingdom of heaven:
15. Work: Preparing for the kingdom is work – My wife tells me to be ask her before I invite people to stay at our home – because it is a lot of work for her! She has to PREPARE...
- a. I think in our country we have become a bit selective in our work ethic in the kingdom
 - i. We're willing to work, as long as there is something in it for me, I'll do it, otherwise let someone else do it!
 - ii. Or we want our "ministry" to be fun and cool... "I'll just minister to the guys next to me in the lineup, or on my softball team, etc."
 - b. Guess what – when we are all about fun, and the only things I am willing to do have to be "enjoyable to me" then I start to become very self-absorbed.
 - c. There is something about expending energy, or working hard to accomplish something, that makes it all the more satisfying when it is all done!
16. Courage: The people around us will never understand why we might do something in the church or for someone else and not get paid for it...
- a. And if you say "I am storing up treasures in heaven!" they really look at you weird!
 - b. It takes courage to step out – to witness – to overcome our fear of rejection!
 - c. Not only that - when you begin to step out – you will be targeted by our adversary the devil – and we have to be willing to stand against him in the Lords power!
17. Patience: I have said this before – there are things that we might do in the kingdom that will not bear fruit until much later – months – years – maybe even after we have passed from the scene.
18. Skill: God gives us gifts, and we have to sharpen them for his use
19. Teamwork: None of us are on an island, we have to set aside our differences and work together.
20. Faith: Sometimes God sends us out over the horizon – we don't see land anymore
- a. We're in uncharted territory – off the map
 - b. And it requires faith to set sail.

21. Jesus called these men to be “fishers of men” – which was a common term in that era meaning “to catch someone with teaching or persuasion”

a. Perhaps another way of putting it would be like this:

Guys, follow me, step out in faith with me, and I'll show you how to change the world. I'll help you make an eternal difference in the lives of others.

“World-Changers”

22. Think about that for a moment – we get a little edgy when we think about walking up to someone and presenting the gospel...

- a. But wouldn't you want to be able to make an eternal difference in someone's life?**
- b. Wouldn't it be cool to be able to help someone whose life is in turmoil, difficult marriage, problems with kids, sin is eating away at their lives...**
- c. And you can help them come to the Lord, and watch God begin to restore their marriage, restore their children, learn to live God's way and be blessed...**
- d. And get this – those are just the fringe benefits – the real treasure is heaven – the Kingdom of Heaven!**

23. You too can be “Fishers of men”. You don't have to be Billy Graham, or stand on a street corner and yell.

- a. When Jesus says “follow me” - you go!**
- b. When your talking to your neighbor and he starts sharing about his marriage, you just go – you say “Let me tell you what God did in my marriage”**
- c. When your cousin starts heading in the wrong direction, you just go – you say “can I share with you what God did in my life?”**

24. Because – Jesus HEALS...

Jesus- The Healing King

23 And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people. 24 Then His fame went throughout all Syria; and they brought to Him all sick people who were afflicted with various diseases and torments, and those who were demon-possessed, epileptics, and paralytics; and He healed them. 25 Great multitudes followed Him -- from Galilee, and from Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and beyond the Jordan.

25. Jesus healed sickness, and disease, torments, demon-possessed, epileptics, and paralytics

a. Yes – God still heals today –

- b. **And yes – Jesus also heals marriages, and hearts, and minds, and relationships...**
- c. **If you will only give Him a chance!**

26. Some here today – you need a healing! Well you need to take the next step...

“Some of you are here today and your kind of new to this “God” thing, it’s a HUGE deal that you are even sitting in church today.....your next step is making the decision to come back again next week.”

“For others of you, you have been coming a while, and you are learning more and more about Christ.....you’re pretty well convinced that following Him is the best way to live your life.....and so for you, your next step is to reach out to him to solidify that desire....” You need to Make Jesus Lord of your life!

“Perhaps you’ve been following Jesus for a while now - maybe even for years.... Maybe your next step is a matter of taking that step of faith in your life that God has been leading you towards.....” Jesus is telling you “Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men!”

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