

Matthew 4:12-22

We pick up our study this morning having witnessed the baptism and temptation of Jesus. In His baptism we see Him identify Himself with sinners but through His temptation we see Him prove Himself to the sinless Son of God as He reveals His power over flesh and Satan.

I have framed this morning's message around these four points:

1. When: Jesus started
2. Where: Jesus served
3. What: Jesus said
4. Who: Jesus selected

1. When: Jesus started Vs. 12

12 Now when Jesus heard that John had been put in prison, He departed to Galilee.

- How much time passes from when Jesus is baptized to when John is arrested isn't clear, but from the gospel of John we learn that their ministries did overlap for some time prior to John's arrest.

NOTE: During this interim period of time Jesus became familiar with his first disciples, attended a wedding in Cana, met with Nicodemus at night and a Samaritan woman at a well. John 3:22-36 indicates that one component of the ministry of Jesus during this period was that He (*or at least His disciples 4:2*) began baptizing people in Judea not far from where John was operating. It was during this time that some of John's disciples reported the success of Jesus' ministry to him, and where we have recorded this response.

John 3:29-32

He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. Therefore this joy of mine is fulfilled. 30 He must increase, but I must decrease. 31 He who comes from above is above all; he who is of the earth is earthly and speaks of the earth. He who comes from heaven is above all.

- John's disciples were confused and maybe even upset by the decline of John's prominence. They viewed ministry as a popularity contest or competition. John on the other hand did not allow his prominence to sidetrack his purpose in ministry

which was not to draw people to himself but to direct people to Jesus.

NOTE: Not only do John's disciples exemplify a common view of ministry as competition, but also a common response when prominence and popularity begin to decline to that of Jesus. They may have seen this decline as negative, but John saw it as necessary.

APPLICATION: This helps to highlight one of the great dangers of numerical success in ministry. Once success is attained there is a real pressure to maintain the same growth rate or numbers. Often this pressure means that a ministry will begin to alter their God given mission in bringing attention and honor to Jesus to something more appealing to the masses. John did not allow a decrease in popularity discourage his mission or his motivation which was to point to Jesus.

NOTE: I never want to get to the point where those who attend Shoreline hear more about what we are doing for God than they do about what God has done for us! If you intend on serving here, please know that while we deeply appreciate your service we will glorify and thank God for your service and heavenly rewards.

APPLICATION: Not all ministries are meant to last a lifetime. There may be some that run their course and fulfil their purpose in a matter of only a few years.

2. Where: Jesus Served Vs. 13-16.

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."

- After His time in Judea and following John's arrest Jesus returned to Nazareth. Luke 4 offers more detail on this time, and we learn that Jesus had begun teaching in the synagogues throughout Galilee, but after confirming His identity as messiah in His hometown by reading from Isaiah 61 they rejected and attempted to kill Him!

NOTE: This rejection led Him to make the move to Capernaum, a town about 30 kms away that sat on the northern shores of the Sea of Galilee. It was in this town where Jesus would establish his base of operations for His ministry, and in this region where He would conduct 85% of His ministry.

QUESTION: Why Capernaum? Why Galilee?

➤ **PRAGMATIC:**

- **Location:** Capernaum was a town established on agriculture and fishing, but it also served as an important trade hub that sat on a major international trade route called the Via Maris (Way of the Sea).

NOTE: This unique positioning meant that news of Jesus' ministry could spread quickly beyond Capernaum by those who frequently travelled through the town.

- **Population:** Within Capernaum there lived a large population of Jews, to whom Jesus would aim His ministry. It's location also acted as a gateway to the Gentile world, and while there were a large contingent of Jews within Galilee the majority of the population were Gentiles.

NOTE: The region of Galilee was an area of approximately 100km x 50km. The Jewish historian Josephus describes it as containing some 204 villages with none fewer than 15,000 people. This means there were approximately 3 million people living in Galilee during the time of Christ!

- Aside from these things, Capernaum itself was also the hometown of many of Jesus' disciples, including Matthew. This meant that on a practical level the material needs of the ministry team could be more easily met.

➤ **PROPHETIC:**

- Of even greater importance is that Galilee was itself the place where Isaiah predicted the Messiah would live and minister more than 700 years earlier, and Matthew continues to utilize prophecy to confirm the identity of Jesus.

NOTE: Included in this prophecy is the recognition of Galilee as a place of the Gentiles. Though it was initially given to the Hebrew tribes of Zebulun and Naphtali, these were the first two tribes of Israel taken into Assyria and repopulated with other nationalities. The prophecy describes it as a place of serious moral and spiritual darkness.

- It certainly appears that this region was chosen by God due to its influence among the Gentiles, and it's need of spiritual illumination. God's intent through Messiah was reach the world!

NOTE: Jerusalem had the temple, Rome had the political power, but it was Galilee where the light of God dawned. It may not have been the center of religious activity, or the throne of political power but it was a place of deep spiritual need. It was the place where Jesus would be able to best fulfill His ministry as Messiah.

Luke 4:18-19

*18 "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me,
Because He has anointed Me
To preach the gospel to the poor;
He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted,
To proclaim liberty to the captives
And recovery of sight to the blind,
To set at liberty those who are oppressed;
19 To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord."*

APPLICATION: There are some people who believe themselves too insignificant, too sinful too far gone that they wonder why God would ever choose to save them. The good news this morning is that there is nobody that is too insignificant, too sinful, or too far gone that the grace, love, and power of God can't save!

NOTE: This is one aspect of our vision that may be misunderstood. When we speak about enlightenment we are not speaking of some strange new age form of enlightenment, but rather the light that comes when the gospel of Christ shines upon the darkness of our own human hearts.

- Jesus **exalted**
- His people **established**
- His church **engaged**

- The world enlightened

3. What: Jesus Said Vs. 17

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

- The message of Jesus was a continuation of the same message proclaimed by John the Baptist 3:2 – a message of repentance and readiness for the kingdom of heaven.

NOTE: To preach is the heralding of a message, and this the heralding of turning away from their current lifestyles in preparation for the kingdom which was now at hand, or draws near.

- Though this was a message proclaimed by Jesus in the first century, but it remains a message just a relevant for the time that we are living in today.

James 5:8

Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand.

1 Peter 4:7-8

7 But the end of all things is at hand; therefore be serious and watchful in your prayers.

Rom 13:12-14

The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. 13 Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy. 14 But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.

APPLICATION: The Biblical message of preparation for the Kingdom of Heaven is not – purchase land, gather supplies, hunker down. As we see the day of the Lord approaching, the message of preparation is turn away from the world, the flesh, and the devil toward Christ! This is the message that must continually be declared!

4. Who: Jesus Selected Vs. 18-22.

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.

a) Brothers

- At times we forget that these men are not merely characters in a story, and a consideration of their natural relationships may help us to realize that they were indeed real men.

NOTE: I have three brothers, which is a special relationship. I remember working with my older brother in a tyre shop for approximately 4 years and these were treasured times.

- These men were more than friends, they were family. Some of them were married, perhaps they had children.

APPLICATION: How beautiful it is when the Lord calls you on this journey to serve Him alongside your family and your friends. But this doesn't happen for all of us, and this is a good reminder to be praying for our family members who have not yet begun this journey of faith.

b) Busy

- Throughout the Bible we see God calling men to service who are already busy. King Saul was searching for his father's donkeys, Moses and David were tending to sheep, Gideon was threshing wheat, Matthew was collecting taxes etc... These men were fishing because they were fishermen.

NOTE: These men knew how to fish, but Jesus would teach them how to fish for men. This saying was thought of by many in a negative sense, like the reference of Jeremiah 16:16. Jesus however means it as a reference to capturing the hearts of men through the power of His message!

APPLICATION: God does not often call lazy or idle men to the work of His ministry. So often those who aspire to ministry imagine it to be a less laborious life, and while a servant of the Lord through a lack of faithfulness may become lazy faithful service to the Lord and to His people means laboring often to the point of exhaustion!

- God does not often call the best and brightest (*1 Corinthians 1:26-29*) but chooses to do His mightiest works through common people that He would be glorified!

APPLICATION: How well positioned are you for the work of the Lord? Do you know Him? Are you busy and faithful? Are you in a place where you can hear His voice? Are you ready and willing to leave things behind should He ask?

NOTE: Repentance means a turning away from something. We often think of this in terms of sin, but it may also mean the turning away from anything which might hinder our ability to follow Christ.

Luke 14:25-28

25 Now great multitudes went with Him. And He turned and said to them, 26 "If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. 27 And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple.

Heb 12:1-2

Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2 looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

APPLICATION: Are there things in your life that hinder your pursuit of Christ?

c) **Bold**

- The calling of Jesus meant leaving their livelihoods behind, which wasn't an uncommon thing to do at this time but certainly still a bold decision to make for these men.

NOTE: Not only to these men act in obedience to the Lords calling, but they do also so without hesitation.

APPLICATION: Immediately is not the response of many people today. Too often we question the calling, or the wisdom of Christ in calling us and we off excuses rather than obedience. We may also promise a later time or ignore His calling altogether. I wonder how much blessing we have missed simply because of a failure to leave our nets or fathers behind to follow the leading of Christ?

Luke 9:57-62

57 Now it happened as they journeyed on the road, that someone said to Him, "Lord, I will follow You wherever You go."

58 And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head."

59 Then He said to another, "Follow Me."

But he said, "Lord, let me first go and bury my father."

60 Jesus said to him, "Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and preach the kingdom of God."

61 And another also said, "Lord, I will follow You, but let me first go and bid them farewell who are at my house."

62 But Jesus said to him, "No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."

