



DESERT VIEW BIBLE CHURCH

THE PROMISED KING • MATTHEW 4:12-17 • 12/4/2022

MAIN POINT

From the very beginning of His ministry, Jesus announced the kingdom of heaven and called people to repent and believe in Him.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

When you were a child, what did you think it would be like to have a career, family, and children?

As you grew up, started a career, got married, and had children of your own, how did that clarify your dreams?

When we are children, we dream of what we will be when we grow up. However, over time those childhood dreams are clarified, shaped, and embraced as we discern what God has called us to. Knowing and understanding this calling is crucial for us to live up to our God given purpose. Though the purpose of Jesus' earthly ministry was

decided before the foundation of the world, each gospel has an account of Jesus announcing and clarifying this calling. Here will we look at one such account in the introduction to Jesus' Galilean ministry from the gospel of Matthew.

UNDERSTANDING

READ MATTHEW 4:12-16.

The section begins with the announcement of John the Baptist's arrest. How are the ministry of Jesus and John the Baptist related? How are they different?

This section of verses serves as an introduction to Jesus' Galilean ministry. John was the prophet who was to come before Jesus (Mal. 3:1). With His cousin John in jail, Jesus embarked upon His ministry in Galilee which comprises much of the content in Matthew's gospel. As we will see, their messages both focused on repentance, but Jesus was the fulfillment of all that John announced.

What did Jesus leave behind to embrace His calling? What is an example of something we must leave behind to follow the calling God has for our lives?

When Jesus left Nazareth, He spent the majority of His ministry around the sea of Galilee. In other words, the most impactful ministry the world has ever known happened in one geographic region. What does this teach us about our ministry in the places that God has called us to serve?

When we look into how Jesus' ministry started, there are several takeaways for us doing ministry thousands of years later. First, Jesus left His hometown to embrace the calling God had for His life. Ministry requires sacrifice, and Jesus was willing to make it in order to obey God. Secondly, many of us see having ministry in a limited area as being insignificant, yet Jesus did most of His ministry in a fixed location. When we follow where God leads, no matter how small, the results are left up to God and His power. It may be that God takes our faithful ministry where He has put it and uses it to reach people far beyond us.

Re-read the prophecy of Isaiah in verse Matthew 4:15-16. What was Isaiah saying, and how did Jesus fulfill this ministry?

Why did Matthew take time and care to point out that Jesus' ministry fulfilled a prophecy from Isaiah? Why did this matter for His audience (and us) to understand?

How do we make sure that our individual ministry and calling is in line with the revealed truth of God in His Word?

Matthew quoted from Isaiah 9:1-2 and asserted that in His ministry, Jesus had fulfilled these verses. Matthew wants us to see that Jesus is the one true, promised Messiah. He is the fulfillment of prophetic witness and is uniquely able to bring about the promises of God. As Jesus began His ministry, He embraced His calling, supported by the Word of God. Our callings may look a little different than Jesus' in the particulars, but each of us are called to announce the salvation that Jesus brings and call others to follow Him, just as Jesus did.

READ MATTHEW 4:17.

What message did Jesus preach as He began His preaching ministry?

How closely should our message mirror His? What hesitation do you have proclaiming this message yourself?

What did Jesus mean when he said, “The kingdom of heaven has come near”? How is Jesus’ message both one of judgment and hope?

Jesus’ preaching ministry was focused on repentance, similarly to John’s. Jesus came to redeem the world from its sins, which happened through His saving work on the cross. When we repent and receive His sacrificial death as the substitute for our sins, we believe the gospel that Jesus proclaimed. In Jesus, the kingdom of heaven came to earth to bring hope and healing along with the awareness of sin. All ministry done in Jesus’ name must center on the central message of Jesus’ ministry: the gospel.

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

What has Jesus called you to do? How are you following Him in ministry?

What are some ways we can encourage one another as we seek to go on ministry just as Jesus did?

How is God calling you to engage people with Jesus’ message of repentance and salvation?

PRAYER

Praise God for the blessings that He brings in the free offer of grace. Ask that we would joyfully embrace the ministry that Jesus has called each of us to.

COMMENTARY

MATTHEW 4:12-17

4:12. John had publicly challenged Herod the tetrarch's adultery and was jailed for it. The atmosphere in Jerusalem became increasingly hostile to the prophetic message of repentance, and Jesus moved north to the countryside of Galilee.

There is both a continuity and a discontinuity between the ministries of John and Jesus. Matthew portrayed Jesus as picking up the baton from John when John was imprisoned (see 14:1-12 for more on John's imprisonment and death), preaching exactly the same message of repentance (4:17; cf. 3:2). But there is also a clear distinction between the ministries of John and Jesus. John himself described this distinction (3:11-12). And Matthew brings to bear the testimony of Isaiah in 4:15-16 to describe the beginning of a new era. Jesus moved into Galilee in fulfillment of a centuries-old prophecy (Isa. 9), which prophesied that the northern country so trampled by pagan armies and living in gloomy, depressed darkness, will now enjoy the messianic light!

4:12-13. Galilee was the region of Jesus' early ministry, contrasting significantly with the locations of his later ministry. The geographical flow of Jesus' ministry as portrayed in Matthew is very distinctly north-to-south, from Galilee to Jerusalem. Beginning with 4:12, and extending through chapter 18, Jesus' ministry takes place in the region around the Sea of Galilee, with two late ventures even farther north into the Gentile territory of Tyre and Sidon (15:21-28) and Caesarea Philippi (16:13-20.).

Beginning with chapter 19, Jesus moved resolutely south toward Jerusalem and his appointment with the cross. In the north, far from the center of religious power (John 4:1), the "little people" would hear and respond more readily to the Messiah.

Zebulun and Naphtali were the two tribes whose territory was bordered by the Sea of Galilee—Zebulun to the south (including Nazareth), and Naphtali to the north (including Capernaum). Capernaum was the home of several of Jesus' disciples.

4:14-16. The quote is from Isaiah 9:1-2. Jesus' ministry in the north was anticipated by the prophet Isaiah, whom Matthew quoted here to stifle any criticism that Jesus was an uncivilized Galilean. Isaiah 9 is part of a larger prophetic statement concerning the coming of the Messiah. Matthew has already quoted from this portion. In the latter portion of Isaiah 8, Isaiah emphasized the Lord's judgment on errant Israel: "Then they will look toward the earth and see only distress and darkness and fearful gloom, and they will be thrust into utter darkness" (8:22). Israel was in trouble.

The first word of Isaiah 9 is "nevertheless," introducing the contrasting light and hope brought to Israel by the Messiah. The portion quoted by Matthew is a carefully selected segment of the larger message of hope for Israel. Any Jew familiar with his Bible would have recognized Matthew's quote and would have made the connection to the remaining, unquoted portions (Isa. 9:3-7). Among the promises made here are the renewed covenant blessing on Israel; the removal of the oppressor's yoke; the birth of the promised child, whose name will be called "Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace"; and his reign on David's throne in justice and righteousness. There was no doubt who this Jesus is. Matthew clearly identified Jesus' move to Capernaum as the "official" beginning of his public ministry and as the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy.

"Galilee of the Gentiles" was a common designation for this region. It was Galilee, bordering on the Gentile nations, where the "light" shone. Although it is clear that Jesus' earthly ministry would be mainly to the Jews, Matthew went to great lengths to show the long-term implications of Jesus' coming for all nations. In Matthew 4:1-11, Jesus was portrayed as the faithful Son, paralleling Israel as the unfaithful son. It is clear from the Old Testament (e.g., Gen. 12:3) that Israel's purpose was to minister to all nations. They had failed, but the faithful Son would succeed.

4:17. Some scholars believe that the phrase From that time and an identical phrase in 16:21 provide the fundamental structure of Matthew, dividing the book into three portions. While this seems overstated, these key verses do indicate critical turning points in the ministry of Jesus, particularly regarding the themes of his preaching and teaching. The theme Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near (4:17) underlies

virtually everything Jesus taught in 4:17-16:20. The king made a legitimate offer of the long-promised kingdom to the long-promised people—Israel. By contrast, from 16:21 on, Jesus' teaching dealt predominantly with the preparation of his disciples for his coming death, resurrection, and ascension.

Jesus' preaching ministry here is one message: Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near (4:17; cf. 3:2). This quotation, reflecting the essence of Jesus' message—"turn from your sins; the long-promised king is in your midst"—is identical to that of John the Baptizer in 3:2. The kingdom is at hand because its king is, and the potential for its full realization is near.