

There was a farmer who needed to repair a section of his fence.

- He kept noticing the broken boards and would think, "I'll get to it tomorrow." Day after day passed, but he always found an excuse to put it off: he was too tired, the weather wasn't quite right, or he had other things to do.
- One night, a violent storm hit. The gap in the fence grew larger, and the next morning he found that his livestock had escaped through the broken section. It cost him dearly, all because he kept saying, "I'll do it later."

In life, how often do we respond to Jesus' call to follow or serve with, "I'll do it tomorrow"?

- If the disciples had waited—if Peter and Andrew had told Jesus they'd follow after one more day of fishing—would they have witnessed the miracles, or become the foundation of His church?
- ***When Jesus calls, the time to act is now—not later.***

Our Reading Plan, our groups studies, and our preaching series is through the Gospel of Matthew. Today's Sermon is titled: "Invitation: Jesus calls people to follow Him"

- Big Idea: Jesus calls us to follow Him wholeheartedly, participate in His kingdom work, and share His light with a dark world.
- Jesus is still inviting people to follow Him! Matter of Fact, He is still calling ordinary people to do extraordinary work for His Glory

**Matthew 4:12-17** - Now when Jesus heard that John had been put in prison, He departed to Galilee. <sup>13</sup> And leaving Nazareth, He came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is by the sea, in the regions of Zebulun and Naphtali,

- Jesus relocates to Galilee—fulfills prophecy and begins ministry in a spiritually needy region.
- The context: John the Baptist's arrest signals a shifting moment.
- Last week Pastor Justin introduced this series as we began our journey through the ministry of Jesus as he is baptized by John and Tempted in the wilderness by Satan.
- Some months have passed...although we are not certain of the amount of time, several months perhaps as much as a year has passed since Jesus' baptism and temptation.

### **Light: Jesus' Presence (vv. 12-17)**

**Matthew 4:14-17 – When John was put in prison, Jesus came to Capernaum, in the region of Zebulun and Naphtali...** Now when Jesus heard that John had been put in prison, He departed to Galilee. <sup>13</sup> And leaving Nazareth, He came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is by the sea, in the regions of Zebulun and Naphtali,-

**Mt. 4:14 - that it might be fulfilled** which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying: <sup>15</sup> "The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, By the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles: <sup>16</sup> 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.” <sup>17</sup> From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

**Notice again the phrase in Matthew 4:14 – “...that it might be fulfilled...”** This is the 5<sup>th</sup> time...

- Matthew is pointing out that Jesus fulfills the prophesy that Isaiah wrote some 700 years previous – He does this by quoting Isaiah 9:1-2
  - **Isaiah 9:1-2** - Nevertheless the gloom *will not be* upon her who *is* distressed, As when at first He lightly esteemed The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, And afterward more heavily oppressed *her*, By the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, In Galilee of the Gentiles. <sup>2</sup> The people who walked in darkness Have seen a great light; Those who dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, Upon them a light has shined.
    - **To His Jewish audience, they would know what is coming next...**
    - **They would have had significant portions of Isaiah memorized...**
    - **This one is of great significance, because it is a Messianic Prophecy**
    - **It holds great significance for us today ... particularly this time of year.**
  - **Isaiah 9:6-7** - For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. <sup>7</sup> Of the increase of *His* government and peace *There will be* no end, Upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, To order it and establish it with judgment and justice From that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.

Matthew is Presenting Jesus is Messiah the Christ, the Anointed One of God

- Chapter 1 – Jesus is the Savior, Messiah, Son of Abraham, Son of David – Fully Human / Divine
- Chapter 2 – Sovereign over the Wise & Shepherd over the Weak
- Chapter 3 – He is the Savior King and Righteous Judge – filled with the Spirit, Loved by the Father
- Chapter 4 – New Adam, Light of the World and Hope for all people – where the First Adam failed when tempted by the devil in the garden, Jesus the New Adam, Second Adam succeeded by using the power of the Spirit and the Word of God to withstand temptation

Matthew presents Jesus as Light of the Word and the Hope for all People.

- Context of “Galilee of the Gentiles”:\_ spiritually dark, marginalized region.
- **John 1:5** - And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.
- **John 8:12** - Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, “I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life
- **John 9:5** - As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.”

One commentator said, "... All those who dwell among the despised, in the midst of darkness, enveloped in the 'shadowlands of death' are not introduced to the One who is the light for the world and the hope for all people." (Platt, *Exalting Jesus in Matthew*, KL 1506)

We see this played out later in Matthew 4...

**Matthew 4:23-25** - 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. <sup>24</sup> 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. <sup>25</sup> Great multitudes followed Him—from Galilee, and *from* Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and beyond the Jordan.

### ***Jesus Ministers to Every Need (vv. 23–25)***

- Jesus' Ministry: Teaching, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every disease.
- Broad Reach: People from all over bring their brokenness to Jesus.
- Our mission is holistic—word and deed. We show Christ's compassion and truth.
- Truth! Jesus cares about spiritual and physical needs; we are called to do the same.

**Matthew 4:17** <sup>17</sup> From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

### ***This is the Same Message, We preach today – Repent and Believe***

Here is a Key Truth: Christ's presence dispels spiritual darkness.

- Jesus still brings hope and clarity into our darkness.
  - If you never repented of sin, believed in Jesus, and called upon His name for salvation, he will bring hope of salvation, forgiveness – ¿Would you turn from Darkness to Light?
  - If you have walked away from Jesus (God, Church) He will bring hope of renewal.
- For those of you who call TFBC Home – Our Vision is to bring Hope and renewal to Every person and Every Place – We do that by living out our mission – relentlessly pursuing God's design

### **Light: Jesus' Presence (vv. 12–17)**

### **Leadership: Jesus' Call (vv. 18–22)**

### ***Jesus Calls Ordinary People to an Extraordinary Mission***

**Matthew 4:18-22** - 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. <sup>19</sup> Then He said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men." <sup>20</sup> They immediately left *their* nets and followed Him.

**Matthew 4:21 – 22** - <sup>21</sup> 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, <sup>22</sup> and immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed Him.

### **This would not have been the first time these guys met Jesus**

- John the Disciples, records an earlier encounter, when John the Baptist points to Jesus proclaiming Him as the **Lamb of God** who takes away the sin of the World.
- Andrew and John the Disciple ask Jesus, "Where are you staying? Jesus says, **"Come and See"**
- John 1 records that they spent that day with Jesus, WE then learn from John 2-4 that Jesus takes them on a mission trip, if you will – They are with him at the wedding of Cana of Galilee, presumably in the vicinity when he talks to Nic, and in town going after lunch, when Jesus was talking about to the Samaritan woman.
  - Here, Jesus is Calling them into a deeper level of commitment – more on that in a minute

### **Jesus initiates the Call – It is a Divine Initiative**

- God said, Let us Make Man in our own image – God did, and breathed in his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul
- When Adam rebelled in the garden, God called to Adam, "Where are you?"
  - On Adam's worst day, God initiated the pursuit!"
- Jesus said in **John 15:16**, "You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and *that* your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you.
- **Luke 19:10** - for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost."
- This underscores that discipleship begins with God's sovereign initiative, not merely human aspiration.
- Grace, Not Earning: This demonstrates that being a disciple is ultimately a matter of God's grace, not a reward for seeking spiritual promotion or self-effort.

### **It is a Purposeful Calling**

- Intentional Selection: Jesus called specific people for His purposes.
  - Each disciple had unique backgrounds and gifts, which Jesus used intentionally to advance His kingdom.
- This points to Empowerment and Authority:
  - The call of Jesus conferred His authority and power upon the disciples (Mark 3:13-15). They didn't just volunteer; they were entrusted with a mission from Jesus Himself.

### **The Calling Carries a Relational Priority – Relationship before Mission**

- By calling them, Jesus established that relationship with Himself was the foundation of their mission. Their primary identity was as those whom Jesus called to be "with Him" (Mark 3:14).

- Commitment Rooted in Jesus:\*\* Their allegiance and identity now rested not in their own initiative, but in their response to His gracious invitation.

#### Theological Significance for us Today\*\*

- Security in Being Chosen:\*\* Believers can rest in the security that our salvation and calling are initiated by Christ, not dependent on our own worth or pursuit (Eph 1:4-5).
- Humility in Service:\*\* It humbles us—we serve not from self-promotion, but because we are sent and empowered by Christ.
- Our Identity and Mission ALWAYS start with Christ's invitation, but never stops there
- We gather in worship, We serve, we give, we share our faith out of the OVERFLOW of our relationship with Jesus – It always starts with Abide – How's Your God Time?

#### **Jesus, not only initiates the Call,**

#### **Jesus always calls us to deeper level of commitment.**

**Matthew 4:18-22** - 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. <sup>19</sup> Then He said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men." <sup>20</sup> They immediately left *their* nets and followed Him.

**Up to this point, they knew Jesus** – They had spent time with Jesus, but they are back doing the family business

- Jesus calls them to a greater devotion...a whole hearted commitment... He called them to live to advance his Kingdom

This is a Transformative Calling

- Jesus calls us as we are, but transforms us as we follow.
- Follow me, and I will make you something you are not

#### **A disciple by Definition is a Learner, An Apprentice**

- An apprentice is someone who learns a skilled trade or profession by working under a qualified expert for a set period, gaining practical experience while earning
- We understand this ... **Skilled laborers:** electricians, plumbers, Apprentices in the **tech industry** (IT, cybersecurity), **healthcare** (medical assistants, lab techs, hospitality... techs),
- An apprentice learns a craft hands-on, working under a master or experienced professional to become a qualified journeyman or expert.

**To Walk with Christ is to be His disciple to be transformed into His image to take on his life's mission as our own.**

**I Peter 1:21** - For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps:

- **To Value what He Values – Abide, Connect, Share**
- **To Live the 5G Life**

- Our Vision is to bring Hope and Renewal to Every Person and Every Place
- Our Mission is to Equip you to relentlessly pursue God's Design
  - If we are going to bring light of Jesus and the hope of the Gospel to every person and every place, we must live out our faith beyond these walls, beyond this day

**Matthew 4:18-22** - 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. <sup>19</sup> Then He said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men." <sup>20</sup> They **immediately** left *their* nets and followed Him.

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To bring hope to every person and every place, we must respond with rapid obedience

- We must listen carefully to God's voice and stepping forward in faith without delay.
- When we obey quickly, we demonstrate trust in the Lord, align our hearts with His mission, and position ourselves to be used by Him to impact lives for His glory.
- **Hope moves at the speed of obedience.**

Next Steps: For Some...Today is the Day of...

- ...Salvation, Baptism – **Would you take that step?**
- You are a Regular Attender, but you are Committed to this Church, **Would you Join us?**
- Group – Sunday School, D-Group, Ladies D-Groups, Men's D-Groups – Deep Discipleship
- Give and Serve – Consistently, Proportionately, Cheerfully
- Go – Invite to Christmas...

### ***I'll do it someday***

Illustration: Imagine you have a special box at home labeled "Someday."

- In it, you keep slips of paper with all the things you intend to do...someday. "Someday, I'll call my old friend and apologize. Someday, I'll finally take that trip with the family.
- Someday, I'll read through the Bible. Someday, I'll share Christ with my neighbor. Someday, I'll get serious about following God with all my heart."
- The trouble is, the box never gets emptied. "Someday" becomes "no day," because life keeps us busy, and the right time never seems to come. One day, we wake up and realize there's no more "someday" left.

Application: God calls us to act today, not to wait for some distant, perfect moment that may never come.

In light of everything we know about Jesus from the first four chapters of Matthew, we should feel the wonder and weight of the One who gives this invitation, this command, to four fishermen to "Follow Me" in verse 19. This is Jesus, the Savior, the Messiah, the One promised to come in the kingly line of David and from Abraham, the father of Israel. He was fully human and fully divine, the One to whom wise men from the nations bow down, the One whose birth and life are the culmination of generations of prophecy and anticipation. He is the Savior King and Righteous Judge of the world, perfectly filled with God's Spirit and loved by God the Father. He is the only man who has conquered sin, and the true Son that Israel could never be.

There is only one conclusion to draw when we hear the invitation "Follow Me": Jesus is worthy of far more than church attendance and casual association. We have such a dangerous tendency to reduce Jesus to a poor, puny Savior who is just begging for you and me to accept Him into our lives. As if Jesus needs to be accepted by us! Jesus doesn't need our acceptance; He is infinitely worthy of all glory in the whole universe, and He doesn't need us at all. We need Him.

We dare not patronize Jesus, **for He is worthy of total abandonment and supreme adoration.** We're talking about the Savior King of the universe and Righteous Judge of all nations—God in the flesh—saying, "Follow Me." That thought alone is mind-boggling. There is no potential casual response to Jesus. It's either "turn and run" or "bow and worship." Luke's Gospel records that as soon as Peter caught a glimpse of Jesus' power and authority, He fell on His face, and then rose and followed (Luke 5:1-11). Everything is different once you meet this King. That's why we know that people who profess to be Christians but whose lives look just like the rest of the world are lying.

Many people claim to have made a decision, prayed a prayer, signed a card, walked an aisle, accepted Jesus into their hearts, but their lives don't look any different. These people say they're Christians, but the reality is that they've never met Jesus. Because when you do, everything changes. (Platt, *Exalting Jesus in Matthew*, KL 1511)

Platt, David. *Exalting Jesus in Matthew* (Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary) (Function). Kindle Edition.