

Matthew 4.12-17

How do the people around you know that you are a Christian?

There is a time gap between v. 11 and 12

***We learn from the apostle John (1:19—4:42) that about a year elapsed between Jesus' wilderness temptations and the events recorded in Matthew 4:12–17. Probably because it does not relate directly to Jesus' kingship, that period is not mentioned by Matthew.<sup>1</sup>***

What happened during this time?

Among the highlights of that year were from the book of John:

Jesus' first miracle at the wedding at Cana (John 2:1–11),

His cleansing of the Temple (2:12–25),

His testimony to Nicodemus (3:1–21),

the final public testimony of John the Baptist (3:22–36), and

**John 3:30 -He must increase, but I must decrease.**

Jesus' ministry in Samaria with the woman at the well(4:1–42).<sup>1</sup>

Jesus ministry centered on people and their relationship to God.

He had a concern for both their eternity and how they lived in this life.

Jesus did not do miracle and preach just to show how great He was (for he is God), but to change people and how they lived.

He had real impact upon people.

Proposition: Let the King truly impact your life.

## **I. JESUS MOVES TO GALILEE**

### **A. The time**

**12. Now after hearing that John was imprisoned He withdrew to Galilee.**

**1) Jesus' official ministry began when the herald of the King went to jail.<sup>2</sup>**

**2) He was imprisoned. Why?**

Mt 14:1-5 At that time Herod the tetrarch heard of the fame of Jesus, And said unto his servants, This is John the Baptist; he is risen from the dead; and therefore mighty works do shew forth themselves in him. For Herod had laid hold on John, and bound him, and put *him* in prison for Herodias' sake, his brother Philip's wife. For John said unto him, It is not lawful for thee to have her. And when he would have put him to death, he feared the multitude, because they counted him as a prophet.

***Herodias was the daughter of Aristobulus, another son of Herod the Great; so when she married Philip, she was marrying her own father's brother. What precipitated the arrest of John the Baptist was that Herod Antipas (another of Herodias' uncles) talked Herodias into leaving her husband (his brother) in order to marry him (Mark 6:17)—thus compounding the incest, as well as violating Lev. 18:16. John was outraged that a ruler in Israel would commit such a sin openly, so he rebuked Herod severely (v. 4). For this, he was imprisoned and later killed<sup>3</sup>***

Le 18:16 Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of thy brother's wife: it is thy brother's nakedness.

**3) So Jesus withdraws to Galilee**

a) Why? Was He afraid? Certainly not.

b) We learn from John

**John 4:1–3 -When therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and**

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<sup>1</sup> MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1985). *Matthew* (p. 103). Chicago: Moody Press.

baptized more disciples than John, (Though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples,) He left Judaea, and departed again into Galilee.

***Though Jesus had not yet begun preaching, His close association with John the Baptist made Him suspect to the Pharisees and Sadducees, whom John had so scathingly rebuked.. Jesus had no fear of their hatred, but it was not yet time for that hatred to be unleashed against Him. Jesus was no more afraid of the Pharisees than was John, but He wanted to avoid a premature confrontation.***<sup>4</sup>

## **B. The reason**

13. And leaving Nazareth He came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is by the sea, in the region of Zebulun and Naphtali.

### **1) Apparently in v. 12 Jesus goes to the town of Nazareth**

(1) Does anybody remember what happened to Jesus in Nazareth?

Luke 4:16–30 -And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read. And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, To preach the acceptable year of the Lord. And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him. And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears. And all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth. And they said, Is not this Joseph's son? And he said unto them, Ye will surely say unto me this proverb, Physician, heal thyself: whatsoever we have heard done in Capernaum, do also here in thy country. And he said, Verily I say unto you, No prophet is accepted in his own country. But I tell you of a truth, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when great famine was throughout all the land; But unto none of them was Elias sent, save unto Sarepta, a city of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow. And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Eliseus the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, saving Naaman the Syrian. And all they in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath, And rose up, and thrust him out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong. But he passing through the midst of them went his way,

### **2) After Jesus leaves, Nazareth he goes to the city of Capernaum**

a) Could mean "village of Nahum"

(1) Maybe named after the prophet Nahum

(2) Nahum means "compassion," and it may be that the town simply had been named for its compassionate people.<sup>5</sup>

b) The village enjoyed a fishing industry that probably demanded the presence of a tax collector's booth<sup>6</sup>

c) This is the hometown of Peter, Andrew, James, John and Matthew.

d) In Jesus' day it was flourishing, but today, mainly uninhabited.

e) Capernaum becomes Jesus' HQ of ministry until the hour that He went to Jerusalem for the final time to be crucified.

14. In order that the word through Isaiah the prophet would be fulfilled, saying,

15. "Of the land of Zebulun and of the land of Naphtali

A way of the sea, on the other side of the Jordan,

Galilee of the Gentiles

16. The people who sat in darkness,

Have seen a great light,

And to the ones sitting in the land and the shadow of death

A light rose upon them."

### 3) This relocation was in fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies

Is 9:1-2 Nevertheless the dimness shall not be such as was in her vexation, when at the first he lightly afflicted the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, and afterward did more grievously afflict her by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, in Galilee of the nations. The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.

Is 42:6-7 I the LORD have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles; To open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house.

### 4) "A way of the sea"

- a) the name of a famous trade route that went through Galilee
- b) From Damascus, to the Mediterranean, down to Egypt.

### 5) Notice "Galilee of the Gentiles"

- a) Galilee had much Gentile influence
- b) Many of the Jews in the region were Jewish in name only, having been greatly influenced by the non-Jews around them, even to the point of intermarrying with them.
- c) So the name, Galilee of the Gentiles, was very appropriate.

### 6) Jesus came to those who dwell in darkness.

***In despised Galilee, the place where people live in darkness (i.e., without the religious and cultic advantages of Jerusalem and Judea), the land of the shadow of death (i.e., where the darkness is most dense; cf. Job 10:21; Ps 107:10; Jer 13:16; Amos 5:8), here the light has dawned<sup>7</sup>***

- a) What does live in darkness mean?

(1) walking in darkness as a figure of wickedness and disobedience<sup>8</sup>

Pr 2:13 Who leave the paths of uprightness, to walk in the ways of darkness;

(2) Natural man loves darkness

Jn 3:19-20 And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved (be exposed, convicted)

- b) Notice light?

(1) What is the meaning of light?

Jn 8:12 Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.

(2) Light in the OT

(i) Walking in the light spoke of a life of righteousness and obedience

Pr 4:18 But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

(3) Jesus as the light

***...conveys the idea of the illuminating, truth-revealing, and sin-exposing ministry of the Son of God.<sup>9</sup>***

Jn 9:5 As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.

Jn 12:35 Then Jesus said unto them, Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth.

- c) Jesus came as the shining beacon of God to draw people out of the darkness of sin, into the light of God.
- d) As a believer, you are called to light

1 Pe 2:9 But ye *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:

- e) As a believer, you are called to walk in the light

Eph 5:8 For ye were sometimes darkness, but now *are ye* light in the Lord: walk as children of

light:

## II. JESUS PREACHES

17. From then Jesus began proclaiming and saying, "Repent; for the kingdom of heaven has drawn near."

### A. Jesus preached

- 1) Jesus did many things during His earthly ministry, one the most important was His preaching
- 2) Preach = to proclaim
- 3) Preaching is the proclamation of certainties, not the suggestion of possibilities.<sup>10</sup>
- 4) Preaching is not argumentation but simple proclamation of the truth

*H. Lenski comments, "The point to be noted is that to preach is not to argue, reason, dispute, or convince by intellectual proof, against all of which a keen intellect may bring counterargument. We simply state in public or testify to all men the truth which God bids us state. No argument can assail the truth presented in this announcement or testimony. Men either believe the truth, as all sane men should, or refuse to believe it, as only fools venture to do"*<sup>11</sup>

### B. Jesus preached, "Repent"

- 1) A change of mind
- 2) to change one's orientation, to turn around and seek a new way<sup>12</sup>  
*...to repent, therefore, is to change the way a person looks at sin and the way he looks at righteousness. It involves a change of opinion, of direction, of life itself. To repent is to have a radical change of heart and will-and, consequently, of behavior*<sup>13</sup>

3) Repent has always been a part of the gospel, it is the first demand of the gospel.

Lk 5:32 I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

Lk 24:47 And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

Acts 2:38 -Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

### C. Jesus preached, "Repent for the kingdom of heaven is near."

- 1) How could the king of heaven be near?
- 2) It was near in the person of Jesus, its king

*The work of God was rapidly moving toward the establishing of the glorious kingdom of God on earth. If one wanted to be a part of the kingdom, he must repent. Repentance was mandatory if fellowship with God was to be enjoyed.*<sup>14</sup>

- 3) The opening word of this first sermon sets the tone for Jesus' entire earthly ministry (cf. Luke 5:32).
- 4) Repentance was a constant motif in all His public preaching.<sup>15</sup>

## III. LESSONS

### A. Let Jesus impact your life in confronting evil

- 1) It could sometimes cost...

*It is always dangerous to confront evil, and John's fearless condemnation of moral wickedness in high places led to his being beheaded. With similar bravery John Knox of Scotland stood ground against a corrupt monarchy. Standing before the repressive and corrupt Queen Mary, who had just rebuked him for resisting her authority, he said, "If princes exceed their bounds, madam, they may be resisted and even deposed."*<sup>16</sup>

- 2) How do you react when you hear that Christians in other countries are being persecuted for their faith?
  - a) Some deny it,
  - b) Some refuse to think about it
  - c) Some hurt for them
  - d) Some pray for them

- e) Some find some way to help them
- 3) **How do God's people become bold (instead of fearful) during times of persecution?**
  - a) They lose the shackles of the world
  - b) They focus upon God
  - c) They trust God for his power
  - d) The Holy Spirit does a mighty work in them.

***John the Baptist's imprisonment and death, just as his heralding the King of kings, were in God's divine plan and timetable. The end of the herald's work signaled the beginning of the King's. Herod and Herodias believed they freely controlled their province, and certainly the destiny of the insignificant Jewish preacher who dared condemn them. It is amazing how the proud and arrogant think they act in perfect freedom to accomplish their selfish ends, when in truth their decisions and actions only trigger events that God scheduled before the foundation of the world.<sup>17</sup>***

## **B. Let Jesus impact your life in reaching those without God...**

- 1) **In what ways are your neighbors like the people of Zebulun and Naphtali?**
  - a) Live for self
  - b) Have no interest for spiritual things
  - c) Enjoy their sin
  - d) Tolerate my Christian life.
- 2) **You have been saved to sit and soak.**
- 3) **You have been called to serve God and reach the un-gospeled with the gospel of Jesus Christ.**
- 4) **Jesus went to where the people were.**
- 5) **The same for you**
  - a) In your home
  - b) In your school
  - c) In your workplace
  - d) In your shopping
  - e) In your play

***Not mighty and beautiful Jerusalem, the queen city of the Jews, but Galilee of the Gentiles would first hear Messiah's message. Not the learned, proud, and pure Jews of Jerusalem, but the mongrel, downcast, nontraditional mixed multitude of Samaria and Galilee had that great honor. To those who were neediest, and who were most likely to recognize their need, Jesus went first.<sup>18</sup>***

- 6) **If that was what Jesus did, what should you be doing?**

## **C. Let Jesus impact your life in your relationship to the world**

- 1) **You are in the world, but are not to be of it.**
- 2) **There is much pagan influence around you**
  - a) At work
  - b) On TV
  - c) In the movies
  - d) In literature
  - e) Where you shop
  - f) On the internet

- 3) **Remember what James wrote:**

***James 1:26–27 -If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain. Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.***

- 4) **The power of the message of the gospel is gutted by those who have been stained by the world.**
- 5) **Yet is it the way that you live, day in day, in the good times and in the bad time, that form the basis of your witness to a pagan world.**

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- <sup>1</sup> MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1985). *Matthew* (p. 103). Chicago: Moody Press.
- <sup>2</sup> MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1985). *Matthew* (pp. 103–104). Chicago: Moody Press.
- <sup>3</sup> MacArthur, John Jr. *The MacArthur Study Bible*. electronic ed., Mt 14:3. Nashville: Word Pub., 1997, c1997.
- <sup>4</sup> MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1985). *Matthew* (p. 105). Chicago: Moody Press.
- <sup>5</sup> MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1985). *Matthew* (p. 106). Chicago: Moody Press.
- <sup>6</sup> *Expositor's Bible Commentary*
- <sup>7</sup> *Expositor's Bible Commentary*
- <sup>8</sup> MacArthur, John. *Matthew*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1989.
- <sup>9</sup> MacArthur, John. *Matthew*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1989.
- <sup>10</sup> MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1985). *Matthew* (p. 108). Chicago: Moody Press.
- <sup>11</sup> MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1985). *Matthew* (p. 108). Chicago: Moody Press.
- <sup>12</sup> MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1985). *Matthew* (p. 109). Chicago: Moody Press.
- <sup>13</sup> MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1985). *Matthew* (p. 109). Chicago: Moody Press.
- <sup>14</sup> Walvoord, John F., Roy B. Zuck, and Dallas Theological Seminary. *The Bible Knowledge Commentary : An Exposition of the Scriptures*. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1983-c1985.
- <sup>15</sup> MacArthur, John Jr. *The MacArthur Study Bible*. electronic ed., Mt 4:17. Nashville: Word Pub., 1997, c1997.
- <sup>16</sup> MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1985). *Matthew* (p. 104). Chicago: Moody Press.
- <sup>17</sup> MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1985). *Matthew* (p. 104). Chicago: Moody Press.
- <sup>18</sup> MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1985). *Matthew* (p. 107). Chicago: Moody Press.