

## Matthew Lesson 04

### Matthew Chapter 4

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Memory verses for this week: *Prov 17:24 Wisdom is before him that hath understanding; but the eyes of a fool are in the ends of the earth.*

**Introduction:** In last week's lesson, we saw John the Baptist come upon the scene and begin preparing a people for Christ. We saw that he came not to the large cities or the synagogues, but came preaching in the wilderness of Judea. At the end of the chapter, we saw Christ being baptized by John in the Jordan River to set an example for us to follow, and to fulfill all righteousness. In chapter 4 the devil immediately challenged Him. Later in the chapter is the record of Jesus initial message and the calling of His first disciples.

### I. The Temptation of Jesus

*Mat 4:1 Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.*

The chapter begins with Matthew noting, "*then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil*". It is apparent that God through the Holy Spirit not only allowed such temptation, but also led Jesus thereto.

It was God's will for Him to be tempted in all points as we, yet demonstrate He was without sin.

*Heb 4:15 For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.*

It was, however, the devil who tempted Him and not God. The word translated as tempted (peirazw peirazo) in this context has the sense to 'entice to do wrong.' Satan was at the source of such.

As Jesus began His ministry, it is noteworthy that Satan immediately attacked Him. A lesson remains for us. As we step forth to serve the Lord, we may well expect opposition from Satan.

Which wilderness Jesus retreated to is not noted. The land east or south of Jerusalem is traditionally thought to be the area. It indeed is wilderness and desolate in its ruggedness.

Much is recorded in the Word of God about the wilderness. We studied last week about John the Baptist coming and preaching in the wilderness of Judea. The nation of Israel wandered in the wilderness for 40 years because of their unbelief. And we see Christ being led by the Spirit to the wilderness to be tempted by Satan. Temptation is something Satan uses on everyone. It was temptation in the garden of Eden that led Eve to sin. The three things that cause us to sin are the lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life. Satan used all three on Eve there when he tempted her.

*Gen 3:1 Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?*

*Gen 3:2 And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden:*

*Gen 3:3 But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.*

*Gen 3:4 And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die:*

*Gen 3:5 For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.*

*Gen 3:6 And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.*

*Gen 3:7 And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons.*

Verse 6 of Gen. 3 say that the fruit was good for food. (Lust of the flesh). It was pleasant to the eye which was the lust of the eye. And it was a fruit to make one wise, being the sin of the pride of life.

All of these things are of the world, and God is not of this world.

*1 John 2:15 Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.*

*1 John 2:16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.*

*1 John 2:17 And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.*

*Mat 4:2 And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungered.*

*Mat 4:3 And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.*

Jesus, when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterwards hungry. The bible doesn't say a lot about the purpose of fasting. When the dual nature of man is viewed correctly, the purpose of the fast is clear. There are degrees of fasting in the Bible. In the case of fasting for one day, it usually meant abstinence of food and perhaps drink.

When fasts went for more than one day, they may rather have been abstinence from customary nourishment or preferred foods. These fasts usually preceded or occurred during a feast. All fasts were not absolute.

The fast Jesus underwent here is definitely an absolute fast. He denied Himself nourishment to humble Himself before God and more carefully focus on things spiritual. Obviously, He thereafter was hungry.

In verse 3, here, Satan is referred to as 'the tempter. Notice how the devil approached Jesus with a question of doubt, "If thou be the Son of God."

He likewise approached Eve in the garden of Eden and asked, "Yea, hath God said?" Satan is the author of doubt. It has been part of his standard stock and trade from day one.

Forty days prior, God had blessed Jesus at His baptism and called Him His beloved Son. Satan now questioned that. In effect he said, 'If you really are God's Son, why don't you turn these stones into bread and make some food for yourself?'

Christ was tempted by Satan himself. Years ago when I was a child, there used to be a TV show on called the Flip Wilson Show. You may remember how he used to have a routine where he would say "The Devil made me do it." It got a lot of laughs, and was cute in the show, but the reality is that Satan can't MAKE US sin, but he can sure give us many temptations to lead us astray. Christ didn't face one of Satan's workers, but Satan himself. The Devil is real, and not just some imaginary influence in life. He was created an angel, the most beautiful of all angels. But he sinned and decided to exalt his throne above God and was cast down and became the Devil. Always remember that Satan is your enemy, even after you are saved and have accepted Christ as Savior.

*Isa 14:12 How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!*

*Isa 14:13 For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north:*

*Isa 14:14 I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.*

*Isa 14:15 Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit.*

The first temptation was when Satan used Christ's hunger to work against him. Christ was a human man with normal flesh, and after 40 days, the hunger must have been devastating. He starts out questioning God as he did in the garden of Eden as he says "IF thou be the Son of God." He uses this and says if he is, then make these stones be bread. Could Christ have done this? In a second he could have. He created the whole earth and all the stones in the earth, so making the stones into bread would have been easy.

Matthew Henry points out that when we are alone, Satan really works on us.

Note, Though solitude is a friend to a good heart, yet Satan knows how to improve it against us. Woe to him that is alone. Those who, under pretence of sanctity and devotion, retire into dens and deserts, find that they are not out of reach of their spiritual enemies, and that there they want the benefit of the

communion with saints. Christ retired, (1.) To make his victory the more illustrious, he gave the enemy sun and wind on his side, and yet baffled him. He might give the Devil advantage, for the prince of this world had nothing in him; but he has in us, and therefore we must pray not to be led into temptation, and must keep out of harm's way. (2.) That he might have an opportunity to do his best himself, that he might be exalted in his own strength; for so it was written, I have trod the wine-press alone, and of the people there was none with me.

*Mat 4:4 But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.*

Notice how Jesus deflected Satan's attack. In each case of Satan's temptation, Jesus quoted from the book of Deuteronomy. Here, the quote it is from Deuteronomy 8:3—*“Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.”*

Our lives are more than physical. The issues of life are fundamentally spiritual. What we need even more than physical food is the Word of God in our lives. It is noteworthy that Jesus did not say, 'but by the Word of God.' What He did say was 'by every word of God.' Jesus referred to the very *words* of Scripture.

The word translated as it is written (*gegraptai gegraptai*) as noted in Matthew 2:5 is conjugated in the perfect tense and passive voice. The thought therefore is that 'it has been written and continues to be written.'

Clearly implied is that every word of God has not only been inspired (verbal inspiration) but also that every word of God has been preserved (verbal preservation.) Some have questioned whether there is the doctrine of preservation. Others flatly deny that preservation extends to the very words of God.

Jesus here clearly implied that the very words of God have been preserved. The phrase "it is written" as described above appears sixty three times in the New Testament.

Christ knew how to respond to Satan. He responded back with the Word of God. Jesus tells Satan

that man is not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God. God's Word is spiritual food to the soul of the child of God. We are commanded in I Peter to desire the sincere milk of the Word that we may grow thereby.

*1 Pet 2:1 Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings,*

*1 Pet 2:2 As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:*

*Mat 4:5 Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple,*

*Mat 4:6 And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.*

Satan again tempted Jesus by taking Him to the highest point of the Temple.

The pinnacle of the Temple is thought to have been the top of the Temple wall probably at its southeastern corner.

There, the Temple platform and rampart wall, rising above it, towered as much as 300 feet above its base in the valley below. To the lowest depths of the Kidron Valley below, the total drop may have been as much as 450 feet.

Again, the devil attempted to sow the seeds of doubt by further questioning if Jesus was the Son of God. One of Satan's standard tactics down through the ages has been to attack the person of Jesus Christ. Here, he urged Jesus to throw Himself down.

Then, he misquoted Psalm 91:11-12. The cults will often use the Scriptures, but invariably it is out of context or in an abridged form.

*Psa 91:11 For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways.*

*Psa 91:12 They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.*

The second temptation was to put God to the test. Note that Satan starts quoting scripture now. We need to realize that not everyone who uses the Word of God is a true man of the Lord.

*2 Cor 11:14 And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.*

*2 Cor 11:15 Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.*

*Mat 4:7 Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.*

Jesus again quoted Scripture (Deuteronomy 6:16) to thwart the temptation of Satan. Jesus did not argue with the devil. He merely quoted Scripture to him and noted that what the devil had suggested was not allowed.

Note that Jesus knows more about the Word than Satan. He responds back with the exact and pure Word of God. He doesn't take verses out of context, but uses all of the Word as God intended.

*Mat 4:8 Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and showeth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them;*

*Mat 4:9 And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.*

The devil again tempted Christ by showing Him all the kingdoms of the world (*kosmos kosmos*) in a moment of time. There certainly is no identification of the mount of temptation in the text. Local tradition claims that it is a mountain peak just west of Jericho overlooking, the Jordan River valley. However, there is no indication of this in the Scripture.

It is further noteworthy that Satan did not show Jesus all the kingdoms of this *earth*. However, the kingdom of this *world* is his for he is the god and prince thereof. Satan used another standard tactic to tempt and that is deception. The devil is the god of this world only by God's dispensation.

The kingdoms of this *earth* were not his to give. However, the kingdom of this *world* was. Yet, he deceitfully so implied all of the kingdoms of the earth.

Seven different times in the book of Revelation, he is called a deceiver. In John 8:44, Jesus called him a liar

*Joh 8:44 Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.*

The third temptation Satan uses on Christ is to take him to a high mountain and offer Christ all the kingdoms of the world. If Christ received the kingdoms, the one thing he desired the most, would come to pass. He wanted the Jews to follow Him, and if he had the kingdoms they would. The Jews were looking for a man to come and overthrow the Roman government and to take the Throne of David. All Christ had to do to receive these kingdoms was to fall down and worship Satan. I'm afraid many a man has fallen for power like this and lost their souls to Satan. But not Christ... see what he says in verse 10.

*Mat 4:10 Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.*

Jesus says "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." Only God deserves our worship.

Again, Jesus parried the thrust of the devil by quoting to him from Deuteronomy 6:13. Not only did Jesus quote Scripture to defeat the devil, He also quite simply resisted him.

James 4:7 instructs, "*Resist the devil and he will flee from you.*" Jesus did exactly that. Notice again how that Jesus noted quoted Scripture—"it is written."

*Mat 4:11 Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him.*

Jesus steadfastly resisted Satan. Moreover, He blunted every attempt of Satan to tempt Him by using God's Word. We again find another reason to be conversant with the Bible. It is a defensive sword to parry and blunt every thrust of the wicked one. As a man, Jesus no doubt was altogether drained



after forty days of fasting and His confrontation with the devil. God therefore mercifully sent angels to minister to Him.

The word used is (diakonew) *dia- konoew* which in its most literal sense refers to serving tables. Implied is that they brought Him food for His physical nourishment. Truly, God takes care of His own!

Finally Satan leaves Christ alone and the angels come and ministered unto Christ. If we will turn from Satan, he will flee from us. Be sure he will be back, but when we turn him away he doesn't keep sitting right on our door step.

## **II. Jesus Begins His Public Ministry**

*Mat 4:12 Now when Jesus had heard that John was cast into prison, he departed into Galilee;*

*Mat 4:13 And leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the sea coast, in the borders of Zabulon and Nephthali:*

Hearing of the persecution against John, Jesus departed to go back to Galilee. He apparently first returned to Nazareth where He had been brought up. He thereupon "dwelt in Capernaum." Implied is that He settled there for the time being. Capernaum is located on the northern shore of Galilee.

In Jesus day, it was perhaps the most prominent and prosperous city in Galilee, located on a major trade route bringing many merchants to and through town. To this day, Capernaum boasts of being the 'town of Jesus.'

Matthew clearly makes the point that Capernaum was situated at the ancient border, separating the tribes of Zebulon and Naphtali. Capernaum may have been the town of the prophet of the same name. The name *Capernaum* in Hebrew (Mwxn- rpk) literally means 'village of comfort.'

Situated on the north shore of Galilee, cool winds from the south blew into the town during the summer, making it a desirable place to dwell.

John the Baptist was cast into prison because he preached against Herod marrying his brother's wife. (Phillip was the brother's name.) When we speak out against those in power, sometimes there is a price to be paid. Jesus departed into Galilee and it says he dwelt in Capernaum. Jesus began his public ministry in Zabulon and Nephthalim. By beginning His ministry here, once again prophecy was fulfilled.

*Isa 9:1 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.*

*Isa 9:2 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.*

*Isa 9:3 Thou hast multiplied the nation, and not increased the joy: they joy before thee according to the joy in harvest, and as men rejoice when they divide the spoil.*

*Isa 9:4 For thou hast broken the yoke of his burden, and the staff of his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, as in the day of Midian.*

*Isa 9:5 For every battle of the warrior is with confused noise, and garments rolled in blood; but this shall be with burning and fuel of fire.*

*Isa 9:6 For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.*

*Mat 4:14 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying,*

*Mat 4:15 The land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephthalim, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles;*

*Mat 4:16 The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up.*

Again, Old Testament Scripture is noted as being fulfilled in the life of Christ. Matthew here quotes from Isaiah 9:1-2.

*Isa 9:1 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.*

*Isa 9:2 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.*

As Jesus lived in Capernaum, He fulfilled the prophecy that the light of the Messiah would shine in the northern-most tribes of Zebulun and Naphtali.

Because the region of Galilee was removed geographically from the center of Judaism in Jerusalem, it had been a region of greater spiritual darkness through the centuries. It also had often been the first area to come under military attack from foreign invaders from Assyria to Rome.

That likely is the reference of them dwelling “in the region and shadow of death.” Yet in this outpost of Israel, the light of the Messiah first shined as prophesied in Isaiah.

*Mat 4:17 From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.*

We see that the people who sat in darkness saw great light. The greatest need of man today is to find that true spiritual light that only Christ can provide. Those that sat in darkness saw the light and were made alive. Jesus is the true light that lighteth every man. Jesus’ message was the same as John the Baptist’s message... repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

*John 1:6 There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.*

*John 1:7 The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe.*

*John 1:8 He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light.*

*John 1:9 That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.*

*John 1:10 He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.*

The initial message of Jesus Christ to Israel was the same as John's: "Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Jesus' initial ministry was in offering Himself to Israel as their long-awaited Messiah-King. Yet, because of their spiritual condition, they needed to repent.

Repentance remains an integral part of saving faith and actually is the first part thereof. Before Israel could believe in their Messiah, they had need to turn to Him in the first place. Jesus' initial ministry was in the context of the kingdom. Sadly, they as well as the world today have turned every man to his own way rather than turning to God and Christ.

Israel remained an occupied nation under the military heel of the pagan Roman government. They longed for political freedom and a restoration of the ancient, royal kingdom founded in David and truncated at the Babylonian captivity.

Most Jews were well aware of the prophecies that the Messiah would bring great glory, international prominence, and prosperity to Israel. They therefore were looking for a political, victorious, military leader who would throw off the yoke of the Romans, bringing prosperity and prominence to Israel.

Jesus' message to Israel was totally different. He came preaching *repentance*. That is not what they wanted to hear. In fact, for many a Jew, that message was altogether irrelevant. Prosperity, civil rights, and politics were on their minds. 'Getting right with God? Who cares!' But the kingdom of heaven was at hand because the King had arrived. Few realized it.

### **III. The Call of Peter and Andrew to Follow Christ**

*Mat 4:18 And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers.*

*Mat 4:19 And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.*

*Mat 4:20 And they straightway left their nets, and followed him.*

Matthew now records the call of Jesus' first disciples.

*"And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers."*

The Sea of Galilee is a beautiful small sea in northern Israel about thirteen miles long and six miles wide. To the east, the Golan Heights (a.k.a. Gadara) rise steeply with similar high hills on the western shores.

The Jordan river flows into the sea from the north where the terrain is not as rugged. It flows out similarly to the south into more gentle topography.

The basic call of Jesus to his disciples was, *"Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men"*. If we would be a follower of Jesus Christ, we too, need to be fishers of men.

Matthew records, *"And they straightway left their nets, and followed him"*.

The word translated as straightway (euyewv *eutheos*) has the sense of 'immediately.'

It is interesting that Jesus first and last statement to Peter was "Follow me"

*Joh 21:22 Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me.*

Our basic call likewise is to follow Him. That is the essence of being a disciple.

In verse 18, Jesus looks and sees two brothers there by the sea of Galilee who were fishermen casting their net into the sea. They were experienced fishermen by trade, and Jesus tells them to follow him and he would make them fishers of men. All mankind has this call going out that we need to turn to Christ for salvation. It says that straightway they left their nets and followed him. We will never go wrong following Jesus.

*J. Vernon McGee made this comment about the call of Simon and Peter.*

In the Gospels the Lord makes at least three calls to these men, or perhaps it would be more accurate to say that three meetings took place between Christ and these men. The first meeting took place in Jerusalem, as recorded in John 1:35–42. Their second meeting took place by the Sea of Galilee, and apparently this is the record of it. They had seen Him before this, but at that time He had not called them to be with Him. Now here at the Sea of Galilee when He meets them again, He calls them to follow Him. And then we will find that they went back to fishing—Mark and Luke give us that detail. And finally He called them again, and that was to apostleship.

The wonder of it all is that Jesus called men like this. I have always felt that since He called imperfect men like the disciples were, He may be able to use me, and He may be able to use you. It is encouraging to know that we don't have to be super-duper saints to be used by Him. He may not make you a fisher of men, if you are not in the fishing business. But whatever business you are engaged in, He can use you. Whatever your talent may be, if you will turn it over to Him, He can use it. Years ago a lady in my church was absolutely tongue-tied when it came to witnessing for Christ, but she could bake the most marvelous cakes! She used to deplore the fact of her inability to witness, and I said to her one day, "Did it ever occur to you that the Lord may want you in the church family to bake cakes?" That may seem ridiculous, but it is not. The important thing for us is to give ourselves to Him. Under His direction He won't have us all doing the same thing because He gives us separate gifts. The body of Christ has many members in it, and they all have different functions to perform.

I was uncertain about whether Christ had ever met Simon and Peter before this time. However, it is clear that J. Vernon McGee's teaching is accurate when you read the account in John.

*John 1:35 Again the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples;*

*John 1:36 And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God!*

*John 1:37 And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.*

*John 1:38 Then Jesus turned, and saw them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye? They said unto him, Rabbi, (which is to say, being interpreted, Master,) where dwellest thou?*

*John 1:39 He saith unto them, Come and see. They came and saw where he dwelt, and abode with him that day: for it was about the tenth hour.*

*John 1:40 One of the two which heard John speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother.*

*John 1:41 He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messias, which is, being interpreted, the Christ.*

*John 1:42 And he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone.*

#### **IV. The Call of James and John**

*Mat 4:21 And going on from thence, he saw other two brethren, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and he called them.*

*Mat 4:22 And they immediately left the ship and their father, and followed him.*

Jesus likewise *called* two other disciples: James and John. These were the sons of Zebedee. They too *immediately* (the same word as *straightway* in verse 20) followed Him. John 1:35-51 provides parallel, though differing, details of the call of Jesus' initial disciples.

In His call of these, His grace is evident in choosing them. What a privilege it must have been to have been chosen by the Savior. Yet, in the greater scope of election, we have been chosen in Him as the body of Christ even today.

Little did these humble, Galilean young men likely realize the blessing as well as the future persecution which had been granted to them. Notwithstanding, "*they immediately left the ship and their father, and followed him*".

Not only did they turn to, trust in, and follow Jesus Christ; they left their livelihood and even their families. Inherent is the degree of dedication in them at even this early stage. It is evident they already were aware of Jesus and were believers prior to His call to service. All had received the baptism of John the Baptist.

We see that when Jesus called these men, that they immediately left the mending of their nets and followed Him. I think if we have a direct call into the ministry, every man should immediately arise and follow after Christ. There should be no delay. These men left their father and followed Jesus then and there.

*Mat 4:23 And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people.*

*Mat 4:24 And his fame went throughout all Syria: and they brought unto him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatic, and those that had the palsy; and he healed them.*

The gospel of the kingdom essentially was that the King had arrived and would restore the kingdom of Israel under God if they would repent of their sinful ways. Sadly, they *would* not. Of interest is that His public speaking ministry was a combination of both *teaching* and *preaching*, even as the pastoral ministry is to this day.

Moreover, Jesus healed those sick and diseased. His healing was, in part, a means of authenticating Himself to skeptical audiences and unbelieving people (Jews). It was also from a heart of compassion to meet the needs of those about Him.

Jesus' reputation reached into the neighboring region. Of interest is how that word of Him spread into Syria to the north and east. These were gentiles and they heard him gladly.

He healed their sick and those possessed of demons. The word translated as lunatick (selhniazomai *seleniazomai*) refers to those with seizures, and "the palsy" to those who were paralyzed.

The word translated as possessed with devils (daimonizomai *daimonizomai*) literally means 'demonized' or under the power of a demon.

We see Jesus beginning his ministry and going out and preaching the gospel and healing the people of their sicknesses and diseases. It says that his fame spread abroad. Just think what it would be like if someone could heal the sick today. Everyone would come running to be healed. It was that way in Christ's day. People who had physical infirmities sought out Christ hoping to be healed. The need to have our health is important, but the greatest need is to have our spiritual need met. Men, women, boys, and girls need to be saved.



*Mat 4:25 And there followed him great multitudes of people from Galilee, and from Decapolis, and from Jerusalem, and from Judaea, and from beyond Jordan.*

Large crowds followed Him from Israel and other surrounding gentile areas. Galilee in that day essentially consisted of Jewish people. However, Decapolis was comprised of ten cities which in modern geography would be northern Jordan and southern Syria.

Though, no doubt, Jews lived there; it was predominantly gentile country. Crowds journeyed north from Jerusalem and greater Judea to the south and the Jordan region to the southeast. Truly, Jesus became famous, especially in a day of limited communications.

It says that great multitudes followed Christ from the first. Many came for the right reasons, but many came to only be healed or to be fed by the bread and fishes. In the end of Chapter 6 of John, when Christ brought some hard messages that the people could not understand, his numbers dwindled down to 12.

*John 6:53 Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.*

*John 6:54 Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.*

*John 6:55 For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.*

*John 6:56 He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.*

*John 6:57 As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me.*

*John 6:58 This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever.*

*John 6:59 These things said he in the synagogue, as he taught in Capernaum.*

*John 6:60 Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is an hard saying;*

*who can hear it?*

*John 6:61 When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, Doth this offend you?*

*John 6:62 What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?*

*John 6:63 It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.*

*John 6:64 But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him.*

*John 6:65 And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father.*

*John 6:66 From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.*

*John 6:67 Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away?*

*John 6:68 Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life.*

*John 6:69 And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.*

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

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**Practice Random Acts of Kindness. Each act spreads, and many will be blessed.**