

JESUS' MINISTRY: GOING FORTH WITH PURPOSE MATHEW 04: 12–17

Introduction

The time had now come — the time when Jesus was to go forth to His great purpose. There is much to grasp in this passage for every believer — layman and minister alike. Every believer is called by God, actually sent into the world for a specific purpose. The sad fact is that too many believers are not aware of their purpose. They do not know why God sent them into the world. They have not sought God to discover His purpose for their lives; therefore, they are just walking through life doing the same tasks and activities which occupied their time before they were saved. But for the believer who knows God's purpose for his life, the day comes when he is to go forth to His purpose. He is to go forth as Christ went forth, to carry on the great task which God has given him to do.

- I. There was the sign to begin His ministry: John's imprisonment (v. 12).
- II. There was the chosen headquarters: Galilee (vv. 12-13).
- III. There was the deliberate decision to fulfil Scripture (v. 14).
- IV. There was the mission (vv. 15-16).
- V. There was the message (v. 17).

I. *Mathew 04:12 Guidance in Jesus Christ's Ministry*

There was the sign to begin — John's imprisonment. God showed Christ when to begin His ministry. The imprisonment of John was His sign to launch out in full force. He had been ministering in Judea (Jn. 4:1) but not as publicly or as extensively as He was now to do. He could now go forth and tackle His task to the fullest. Why now? Why not earlier? Jesus could not give the appearance of competing with John. If He had begun His ministry in full force before John's ministry had been completed, the loyalty of the people would have been divided. John was sent to prepare the way, and the way was not fully prepared until John was removed from the scene.

Thought 1. The believer who lives and walks in Christ will be directed by God.

- 1) He will know God's purpose for his life.
- 2) He will know when to go forth to his task, when to carry out God's purpose for his life just as Christ knew. God will guide and direct His servant.

John 16:13 "But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come."

Psa 25:09 He guides the humble in what is right and teaches them his way.

Psa 73:24 You guide me with your counsel, and afterward you will take me into glory.

Isa 30:21 *Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you saying, "This is the way; walk in it."*

Isa 42:16 *I will lead the blind by ways they have not known, along unfamiliar paths I will guide them; I will turn the darkness into light before them and make the rough places smooth. These are the things I will do; I will not forsake them.*

Isa 48:17 *This is what the Lord says — your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel: "I am the Lord your God, who teaches you what is best for you, who directs you in the way you should go."*

Thought 2. The eclipse of John by Jesus holds a significant lesson for believers of every generation. The believer is to be serving the Lord from day one of his conversion, and when the day comes for him to launch out in full force to carry out God's purpose for his life, he must go forth. Within every generation, God raises up witnesses to follow other witnesses in order to carry on the work of the ministry (Eph 4:11-12). Believers are not rivals. They are joint servants of the Lord who work together in their respective ministries. They are not to compete against each other. And when the time comes, when a servant's ministry is completed, he is to willingly step aside. In fact, a believer should prepare to have his ministry eclipsed, to move aside while God raises up others to carry on after he is gone. God cannot wait until a generation is gone to raise up others. There would not be time for the new generation to take over and affect a smooth transition. God has to raise up new servants and thrust them into the forefront as the older generation fades into the background. Such eclipsing should be accepted willingly and graciously.

Rom 12:3-6 *For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you. Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith.*

1 Cor 12:4-7 *There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men. Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.*

Eph 4:11-12 *It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up.*

Phil 2:3-4 *Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.*

II. *Mathew 04:12–13 Galilee – Jesus' Headquarters*

There was the chosen headquarters — Galilee. Christ left Nazareth. Why? Nazareth was His hometown. Why did He not make his hometown His headquarters? The reason is clear: the city had rejected Christ: “No prophet is accepted in His home town” (Lk. 4:24). They had thrown Him out and had attempted to kill Him (Lk. 4:29). Therefore, Christ set up headquarters in the city of Capernaum. Capernaum lay in the northernmost point of Palestine. It was deliberately chosen by Christ as “His own town” (Mt. 9:1; Isa. 9:1-7).

God had prepared Galilee down through history for the coming of His Son's ministry. Several facts show this (see Gal. 4:4).

1. Throughout history Galilee had been invaded and repopulated again and again with different people and cultures from all over the world. Over the years such an influx of differing people had created an atmosphere susceptible to new personalities and ideas.
2. Galilee was strategically located. The world's leading roads passed right through its borders. Merchants from all over the world passed through, boarding in its cities.
3. Galilee was heavily populated. It was also surrounded by the Samaritans, Phoenicians and Syrians making it an open door for world evangelization. It was one of the most fertile lands in that part of the world. This fact, plus the travelling trade, led people to settle within its borders. There were within the district over two hundred cities with a population of fifteen thousand or more. There were multitudes for Jesus to reach.
4. Galilee was open to new and fresh ideas. Its people, having come from all over the world, were liberal minded, always looking for new and fresh ideas to stimulate and challenge their thinking.

It was for these reasons that Christ chose Galilee to begin His ministry. The area was an open door for people to spread the news that the Messiah had come and the Kingdom of Heaven was being ushered in.

Thought 1. A person's place of ministry should be deliberately chosen. He should consider strategic locations for ministry.

Mat 28:19-20 “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

Mark 16:15 He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation.”

Acts 1:8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

Thought 2. People can reject the gospel and the Saviour. Just imagine! The Lord's own hometown rejected Him. (See *Rejection of Jesus Christ*, Jn. 1:10-11).

JOHN 01:10–11 REJECTION OF JESUS CHRIST

Christ was tragically rejected by the world.

1. Christ (the Word and the Light) was in the world. He had made the world, and He loved and cared deeply for the world; therefore, He was actively working to help the world and its people from the very beginning of creation.
 - a. Christ gave the *light of order and purpose and beauty* to the universe as a whole. The universe is lovingly supplied to take care of man's needs, and the world shows the glorious power and deity of God (Rom. 1:19-20).
 - b. Christ gave the *glorious light [privilege] of living* in such a beautiful world to man. He gave man a soul, the very *light* of life by which he could learn and reason, love and care, work and serve — all for the purpose of building a better world, both for God and for himself.
 - c. Christ gave a spirit to man, the *light of knowing and worshipping* God and living forever in the life of God.
 - d. Christ gave messengers to men, *prophetic lights* to proclaim the truth and to encourage men to follow God and to be diligent in their work and service to the world. But note what happened and is still happening. “The world did not recognize Him” (auton ouk egno). Men rejected Christ; they closed their eyes and failed to see Him.
2. Christ (the Word and the Light) came to His own people, but they too rejected Him. The words “that which was His own” (eis ta idia) mean literally to His own home, to His own people. Two significant points are:
 - a. The world is His home, and all the people are His by creation. He came to all the people of the world, but they did not receive Him. They rejected Him.
 - b. The nation of Israel was His peculiar home, the people whom He had chosen to be the messengers of God to the world. They, of all people, should have known better because of the special privileges, but they too rejected Him.

Mat 8:34 *Then the whole town went out to meet Jesus. And when they saw him, they pleaded with him to leave their region.*

Mark 6:3 *Isn't this the carpenter? Isn't this Mary's son and the brother of James, Joseph, Judas and Simon? Aren't his sisters here with us?" And they took offense at him.*

Luke 4:28 *All the people in the synagogue were furious when they heard this.*

Luke 4:29 *They got up, drove him out of the town, and took him to the brow of the hill on which the town was built, in order to throw him down the cliff.*

Luke 23:18 *With one voice they cried out, "Away with this man! Release Barabbas to us!"*

John 5:43 *I have come in my Father's name, and you do not accept me; but if someone else comes in his own name, you will accept him.*

John 1:11 *He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him.*

John 12:48 *There is a judge for the one who rejects me and does not accept my words; that very word which I spoke will condemn him at the last day. □*

III. Mathew 04:14 Fulfilment of the Scripture

There was Jesus' deliberate decision to fulfil Scripture (Isa. 9:1-2; 42:6-7). This stresses the critical importance of the Scripture. A believer should heed the Scripture — all of it. It is useful for training in righteousness. God wants man to know the right things to do, to think and to say. The Bible reveals how to live "self-controlled upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope — the glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ" (Tit. 2:12-13).

Scripture is not of one's own interpretation. What does this mean? Men cannot interpret Scripture as they want. Scripture is to be interpreted by Scripture itself and by the Holy Spirit who dwells within the believer to teach him the truth (2 Pet. 1:21). (See *The Bible*, 2 Pet. 1:19-21).

- a. First, Scripture did not come from the will of man. No prophecy of Scripture arose out of the prophet's own interpretation. God moved upon the prophet's heart and gave him a vision and then the prophet wrote down exactly what the Spirit of God spoke to him. Scripture is not of the will or mind of man. It is of God.
- b. Second, Scripture was given by the Holy Spirit. Men were carried along (borne along, moved, impelled) by the Holy Spirit to speak the Word *from God*.

John 15:3 *"You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you."*

John 17:17 *"Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth."*

Eph 5:26 *To make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word.*

2 Tim 3:16 *All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness.*

Heb 4:12 *For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.*

1 Pet 1:22 *Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, from the heart.*

Psa 119:9 *How can a young man keep his way pure? By living according to your word.*

2 PETER 01:19–21 THE BIBLE, SCRIPTURE

“Word of prophecy” is better translated *prophetic word*, referring to the whole prophetic message centred in Jesus Christ. The *prophetic word* did not begin or originate in the mind of man, but in the mind of God. However, God used men as instruments and authors to communicate His message to the world.

Over a period of some 1500 years He chose kings, soldiers, peasants, farmers, scholars, priests, statesmen — approximately thirty-five authors from different nations, professions and social strata. The original manuscripts were written in three different languages — Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek. □

IV. *Mathew 04:15–16 The Mission of Jesus Christ*

There was the mission. Christ's mission was people; He focused on people.

1. Listen to what is said about the mission of Christ.
 - a. Christ went to people in needy lands.

Mat 20:28 “Just as the Son of man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

Luke 5:31-32 Jesus answered them, “It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.”

Luke 19:10 “For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost.”

- b. Christ took people in darkness and showed them light. Jesus made a great claim and promise. (Jn. 8:12-13)

The great claim was, “I am the Light of the world”. Note that He made the great claim of deity: “I Am.” The Lord's claim to deity was emphatic.

The great promise was twofold: “Whoever follows me...

- will never walk in darkness.”
- will have the light of life.”

Note two critical points.

- a. A man does not possess light, not within himself, not by nature. Men are in darkness by nature.
 - b. A man is delivered “out of darkness” by following Jesus Christ. Note the word “follows” is continuous action. A man must continue to follow in order to receive light.

John 1:4 In him was life, and that life was the light of men.

Rom 13:12 The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armour of light.

c. Christ took people in death and gave them light.

John 5:24 *"I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life."*

Heb 2:14-15 *Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death — that is, the devil — and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.*

Thought 1. The mission of every believer is people - to meet people and to do what Christ did.

Thought 2. Since Christ came, two wonderful things are now present.

1) Light is now present. Man no longer has to seek light because God sent the light into the world.

2) Choice is now present. Man can now choose light; he does not have to remain in darkness.

2. Note what is said about the people of the world.

a. People are in darkness.

Mat 6:23 *"But if your eyes are bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness!"*

John 1:5 *The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.*

Rom 13:12 *The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armour of light.*

1 Th 5:4 *But you, brothers, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief.*

b. People sit in darkness. They accept and are comfortable in darkness, pleased with their lives. Scripture says men love darkness rather than light.

John 3:19-21 *"This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what he has done has been done through God."*

Eph 5:14 *For it is light that makes everything visible. This is why it is said: "Wake up, O sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you."*

c. People sit in the region and shadow of death. They are in the region (territory, country, area) of death; but right now, while living on the earth, death is only a shadow. There is hope for man: man has the opportunity to be saved from death, from doom, and from condemnation. (See *Death*, Heb. 9:27).

John 3:16-18 *“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God’s one and only Son.”*

Heb 2:14-15 *Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death — that is, the devil — and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.*

- d. People now see a great light, the greatest of lights: Christ, Himself. (See *Jesus the Light*, Jn.8:12).

John 8:12 *When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”*

John 12:35 *Then Jesus told them, “You are going to have the light just a little while longer. Walk while you have the light, before darkness overtakes you. The man who walks in the dark does not know where he is going.” (see Jn 12:46)*

- e. People now have a light that is “sprung up.” They have a light that grows and continues on. There is growing opportunity to walk out of the darkness into the light and to live forever, conquering death (Heb. 2:14-15).

John 5:24 *“I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life.”*

John 11:25-26 *Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?”*

HEBREWS 09:27 DEATH (THANATOS)

The basic meaning of death is *separation*. Death never means extinction, annihilation, non-existence, or inactivity. “Death is the separation of a person from the purpose or use for which he was intended.” (H.S. Miller. Quoted by Lehman Strauss. *Devotional Studies in Galatians and Ephesians*. Neptune, NJ: Loizeaux Bros. Copyright 1957 by Lehman Strauss, p. 137.)

The Bible speaks of three deaths.

1. Physical death: the *separation* of a man’s spirit or life from the body. This is what men commonly call death. It is when a person ceases to exist on this earth and is buried (1 Cor. 15:21-22; Heb. 9:27).

1 Cor 15:21-22 *For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive.*

Heb 9:27 *Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment.*

2. Spiritual death: the *separation* of man's spirit from God while he is still living and walking upon earth. This death is the *natural state* of a man on earth without Christ. Man is seen as still in his sins and *dead* to God (Eph. 2:1; 4:18; 1 Jn. 5:12).

Spiritual death speaks of a person who is dead while he still lives (1 Tim. 5:6). He is a natural man living in this present world, but he is said to be dead to the Lord Jesus Christ and to God and to spiritual matters.

- a. A person who wastes his life in wild living is spiritually dead.

Luke 15:32 *"But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found."*

- b. A person who has not partaken of Christ is spiritually dead.

John 6:53 *Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you."*

- c. A person who does not have the spirit of Christ is said to be spiritually dead.

Rom 8:9 *You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ.*

- d. A person who lives in sin is said to be spiritually dead.

Eph 2:1 *As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins.*

Col 2:13 *When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins.*

- e. A person who is separated from God is said to be spiritually dead.

Eph 4:18-19 *They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, with a continual lust for more.*

- f. A person who sleeps in sin is spiritually dead.

Eph 5:14 *For it is light that makes everything visible. This is why it is said: "Wake up, O sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you."*

- g. A person who lives in sinful pleasure is dead while he lives.

1 Tim 5:6 *But the widow who lives for pleasure is dead even while she lives.*

- h. A person who does not have the Son of God is dead.

1 Tim 5:6 *He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.*

- i. A person who does great religious works but does the wrong works is dead.

Rev 3:1 *“To the angel of the church in Sardis write: These are the words of him who holds the seven spirits of God and the seven stars. I know your deeds; you have a reputation of being alive, but you are dead.”*

3. Eternal death: the *separation* of man from God's presence forever. This is the second death, an eternal state of being *dead to God*. (1 Cor. 6:9-10; 2 Th. 1:9). It is spiritual death, separation from God, that is prolonged beyond the death of the body. It is called the “second death” or eternal death.

Rom 6:23 *For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

Rom 8:6 *The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace.*

2 Th 1:9 *They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power. □*

JOHN 08:12 JESUS THE LIGHT

When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, “I am the Light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.” **John 08:12**

Jesus is said to be the *Light of men* (Jn. 1:4) and the *Light of the world* (Jn. 8:12; 9:5; 12:46). It is possible for the Light, Jesus Himself, to be in men (Jn. 11:10; see Col. 1:27) and for men to become children of Light (See Light - Believers, Jn. 12:34-36).

Apparently, Jesus used the word *light* often. John uses the word twenty-four times. What is meant by calling Jesus the Light?

1. Jesus, the Light, is light by nature. Light is what He is within Himself, within His being. His nature, His essence, His character. Scripture says...
 - that “God is Light” (1 Jn. 1:5);
 - that Jesus is “the image of the invisible God” (Col. 1:15);
 - therefore, “Jesus is Light.” He is “the Light of the world.”
2. Jesus, the Light, tells us that He is holy, righteous and pure. Light is the symbol of purity and holiness. Light means the absence of darkness and blindness; it has no spots of darkness or blackness, nor of sin and shame.
3. Jesus, the Light, reveals. His light shows clearly the nature, the meaning, and the destiny of all things. His light shines in, spots, opens up, identifies, illuminates, and shows things as they really are. The light of Jesus Christ shows the truth

about the world and man and God. The light of Jesus Christ reveals that He loves and cares for man and wants man to love and care for Him.

4. Jesus, the Light, guides. His light allows a man to walk out of darkness. Man no longer has to grope, grasp, and stumble about trying to find his way through life. The path of life can now be clearly seen.
5. Jesus, the Light, does away with darkness and with chaos. His light routs, wipes out, strips away, and erases the darkness. The empty chaos of creation was routed by the light given by God (Gen. 1:3). Jesus Christ is the Light that can save man from chaos (Jn. 14:1, 17; 12:46; 16:33).

Jesus proclaimed Himself to be the Light of the world at the great Feast of Tabernacles (Jn. 7:2). The very first ceremony of the Feast holds great significance for Jesus' claim. It was called "The Illumination of the Temple" and was held in the Court of the Women. The centre of the Court was surrounded by large sections of stadium-like seats. In the open space of the Court sat four huge candelabra. When darkness fell the candelabra were lit, and the elders danced and led the people in singing psalms before the Lord all night. The brilliance and glow from the burning flames of the huge candelabra were said to be so bright that the light could be seen throughout the whole city. It was against this background that Jesus cried out, "I am the Light of the world." □

V. Mathew 04:17 Repentance

There was the message. The words "from that time" are extremely significant. They indicate urgency, persistence, perseverance: three excellent words describing the obsession of Christ with His mission and message. It had two major points.

1. Christ preached repentance. Repentance means to change; to turn; to change one's mind; to turn one's life. It is a turning away from sin and turning toward God. It is a change of mind, a forsaking of sin. It is putting sin out of one's thoughts and behaviour. It is resolving never to think or do a thing again. (See Mt. 3:2; Lk. 13:2-3; Acts 2:38; 3:19; 8:22; 26:20.) The change is turning away from lying, stealing, cheating, immorality, cursing, drunkenness, and the other so-called glaring sins of the flesh (sinful nature). But the change is also turning away from the silent sins of the spirit such as self-centredness, selfishness, envy, bitterness, pride, covetousness, anger, evil thoughts, hopelessness, laziness, jealousy, lust.
 - a. Repentance involves two turns. There is a negative turn away from sin and a positive turn toward God. It is a turning to God away from sin, whether sins of thought or action (See Lk. 3:3; 1 Th. 1:9; Acts 14:15.)
 - b. Repentance is more than sorrow. Sorrow may or may not be involved in repentance. A person may repent simply because he wills and acts to change; or a person may repent

because he senses an agonizing sorrow within. But the sense or feeling of sorrow is not repentance. Repentance is both the change of mind and the actual turning of one's life away from sin and toward God. (See *Godly Sorrow*, 2 Cor 7:10).

Luke 13:3 *"I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish."*

Acts 3:19 *Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord.*

Acts 8:22 *Repent of this wickedness and pray to the Lord. Perhaps he will forgive you for having such a thought in your heart.*

2. Christ preached the Kingdom of Heaven is near, at hand.

Mat 5:3 *"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."*

Mark 1:14-15 *After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. "The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!"*

John 3:3 *In reply Jesus declared, "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again."*

Acts 14:22 *Strengthening the disciples and encouraging them to remain true to the faith. "We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God," they said.*

1 Cor 4:20 *For the kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but of power.*

Thought 1. Four challenging conditions are mentioned here.

- 1) Believers should become obsessed with the mission of the Lord! They should be gripped and enslaved by the obsession of Christ! The reason: man no longer has to seek light. The Light of the world has come, but so many are still in darkness. They have not seen it. Believers, in their lethargy and lack of urgency, have hoarded the message, failing to go forth as God's messengers of light (2 Cor. 5:19-20; see Jn. 20:21; Lk. 19:10).
- 2) The ministry of believers is the same as Christ's: to preach. All other works and ministries are important, but the primary ministry of all believers is to preach, to proclaim the gospel to a world crying for help.
- 3) The message of believers is the same as Christ's: (1) repent; (2) the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand. All other subjects are important, but the primary message must be these two. They demand more attention.
- 4) Believers are given the highest honour in the world: they are sent into the world on the same mission as God's very own Son. Imagine having the same mission and the same message as God's own Son! ■

2 CORINTHIANS 07:10

REPENTANCE: GODLY SORROW AND WORLDLY SORROW

Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death. 2 Corinthians 7:10

Sin and irresponsibility cause regret and disappointment, guilt, and remorse. In short, sin causes sorrow. But sorrow has no healing power by itself. Only repentance, a change of mind or a turn of life, can heal the heart of man.

There are two kinds of sorrow.

1. Worldly sorrow. This sorrow can be a sorrow over doing wrong or of coming up short from what one expects. It is a violation of one's values. It can also be a sorrow caused by being found out, or suffering consequences, or being punished. In either case "the sorrow of the world works death" (2 Cor. 7:10). It works death in two ways:
 - => It eats a man up with guilt and remorse, depression and despair, defeat and inactivity (cp. *Judas*, Mt. 27:3-5).
 - => It embitters a man in rebellion and resentment against the consequences and punishment of sin (cp. *Esau*, Heb. 12:16-17).
2. Godly sorrow. This is the sorrow that is wrought in the heart of the believer by the conviction of the Holy Spirit. When the believer does wrong or falls short, the Holy Spirit is grieved (Eph. 4:30). His work is quenched (1 Th. 5:19). His ministry of making the believer like Jesus is hindered and hampered. So He begins His convicting work. Under the weight of conviction the believer's heart is thereby led to repent. The believer changes his mind and turns his behaviour around to what it should be (cp. *Peter*, Mt. 26:75). Godly sorrow always leads to repentance. A believer who refuses to repent wallows around and eventually dwells in the realm of worldly sorrow. He always bears the mark of indwelling and unconfessed sin and failure.

Mat 5:4 "Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted."

Acts 3:19 Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord.

2 Cor 7:10 Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death.

Joel 2:12 'Even now,' declares the Lord, 'return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning.'

2 Chr 7:14 *If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land.*

Psa 34:18 *The Lord is close to the broken-hearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.*

Psa 51:17 *The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.*

Isa 55:7 *Let the wicked forsake his way and the evil man his thoughts. Let him turn to the Lord, and he will have mercy on him, and to our God, for he will freely pardon.*

Isa 66:2 *“Has not my hand made all these things, and so they came into being?” declares the Lord. “This is the one I esteem: he who is humble and contrite in spirit, and trembles at my word.” □*

JESUS' DISCIPLES: THE KIND OF PERSON CALLED MATHEW 04:18–22

Introduction

What kind of persons does Christ call? This passage shows that Christ calls ordinary people who will simply make themselves available to Him.

Note from where Jesus called His first two disciples. They were not in a religious centre, nor a learning centre. Neither were they in a position of authority and power, nor did they possess wealth or financial security. They were out in the work-a-day world. This is not to de-emphasize the importance of religion or of learning, but it does teach at least two things.

First, position and power, wealth and security, religion and learning can block and keep a person away from God. Such things can make a person so self-confident and assured that he becomes useless to God. God is unable to work His power through him. The man's own abilities and energy block God's gifts and power from flowing through him.

Second, God can use and call anyone who is really available, whether religious or non-religious, learned or unlearned, ordinary or extraordinary. The main ingredient is to be available and willing to respond.

- I. The first men called (vv. 18-20).
 - a. Were brothers who worked together.
 - b. Were industrious workers.
 - c. Were called to follow Jesus - at once.
 - d. Were called to another work.
 - e. Were responsive.
- II. The second men called (vv. 21-22).
 - a. Were obedient sons working with their father — closely knit.
 - b. Were industrious, frugal.
 - c. Were simply called.
 - d. Were responsive: left their livelihood and family.

I. *Mathew 04:18–20 The Uniqueness of His Disciples*

The first men called: Five traits are seen in these men, traits that show what kind of person is called by Christ.

1. The men called by Christ were brothers who worked together. The fact that they were working together says at least three things.
 - a. They had good parents who had taught them to love and care for one another.
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- b. They came from a closely knit family, a family that worked together.
- c. They followed and obeyed the teaching of their parents and maintained a brotherly spirit throughout life.

Thought 1. The disciples' brotherly and cooperative spirit shows us three things.

- 1) The need for a brotherly spirit — the kind of spirit Christ desires of His followers. The kind of kingdom Christ is building is a kingdom of followers with a brotherly spirit.

Mat 22:39 *“And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’”*

John 13:35 *“By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”*

John 15:12 *“My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you.”*

Rom 12:10 *Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honour one another above yourselves.*

1 Pet 1:22 *Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, from the heart.*

- 2) The need for reaching families for Christ: brothers and sisters reaching out to each other.

John 1:41-42 *The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, “We have found the Messiah” (that is, the Christ). And he brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, “You are Simon son of John. You will be called Cephas” (which, when translated, is Peter).*

John 4:53 *Then the father realized that this was the exact time at which Jesus had said to him, “Your son will live.” So he and all his household believed.*

Acts 16:15 *When she and the members of her household were baptised, she invited us to her home. “If you consider me a believer in the Lord,” she said, “come and stay at my house.” And she persuaded us.*

Acts 16:30-31 *He then brought them out and asked, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” They replied, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved - you and your household.”*

- 3) The need for parents to train up their children in the way they should go (Eph. 6:1-4; Col. 3:20-21).

Deu 6:7 *Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.*

Prov 22:6 *Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it.*

Eph 6:4 *Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.*

Thought 2. There is one thing essential for serving Christ that must be stressed among God's people: cooperation — a nature and willingness to serve together (See *Church — The Body of Christ*. 1 Cor. 12:12-31).

Acts 11:25-26 *Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, and when he found him, he brought him to Antioch. So for a whole year Barnabas and Saul met with the church and taught great numbers of people. The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch.*

Phil 2:19-20 *I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, that I also may be cheered when I receive news about you. I have no one else like him, who takes a genuine interest in your welfare.*

2. The men called by Christ were industrious workers. Remember that Peter and Andrew were busy at work when Christ called them. This is a second essential component for serving Christ that must be stressed: energy, industry, a willingness to work and to work hard. Jesus calls a person who is on the move — working continuously and not sitting idle. God does not choose the lazy and inactive, but the energetic and industrious. Too many believers are inactive. Therefore, they miss out the higher calling of God.

Amos 7:14-15 *Amos answered Amaziah, "I was neither a prophet nor a prophet's son, but I was a shepherd, and I also took care of sycamore — fig trees. But the Lord took me from tending the flock and said to me, 'Go, prophesy to my people Israel.'"*

1 Kng 19:19 *So Elijah went from there and found Elisha son of Shaphat. He was ploughing with twelve yoke of oxen, and he himself was driving the twelfth pair. Elijah went up to him and threw his cloak around him.*

1 Cor 15:58 *Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labour in the Lord is not in vain.*

Mark 13:34 *"It's like a man going away: He leaves his house and puts his servants in charge, each with his assigned task, and tells the one at the door to keep watch."*

Luke 19:12-13 *He said: "A man of noble birth went to a distant country to have himself appointed king and then to return. So he called ten of His servants and gave them ten minas. 'Put this money to work,' he said, 'until I come back.'"*

3. The men called by Christ were asked to follow Him, and they were to *immediately* follow Him. The significant point is: the disciple is called to follow Christ personally, to attach himself to Christ before he does anything else. Personal discipleship, that is, personal attachment, is essential. A person must first learn Christ before he can serve Christ.

Thought 1. The Lord's call is to have a personal relationship, to become attached to Him.

Isa 43:10 “You are my witnesses,” declares the Lord, “and my servant whom I have chosen, so that you may know and believe me and understand that I am he. Before me no god was formed, nor will there be one after me.”

Phil 3:8-11 What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ — the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith. I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead.

Thought 2. The disciples, although illiterate, were given nearly three years of the best and most extensive training in the world. They were taught by Christ Himself, God’s own Son. Every believer needs to have intimacy with Christ and to do it often, to study and meditate upon Him and His Word.

2 Tim 2:15 Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.

Josh 1:8 Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.

4. The men called by Christ were asked to perform another task. This was a call to a different kind of employment, to another work and profession. It was a drastic, traumatic change. This throws light on several facts.
 - a. The call to a personal relationship had already been issued. John tells us this (Jn. 1:35-42). A personal relationship must always be stressed before service.
 - b. This call, the call to “fish for men,” was a call to service. It was a call to care for men, to help and minister to them. No greater call can come to a man, for helping another human being is the greatest act in all of our life. Imagine a person who gives himself to nothing but ministering and helping people. Is there a greater call than this? (See Mt. 20:26; Mk. 10:43; Lk. 9:48.)
 - c. The call was to *immediate and total detachment* from everything else and to *immediate attachment* to Jesus and His mission. (See *Call to Discipleship*, Mt. 4:19).

Mat 4:19 “Come, follow me,” Jesus said, “and I will make you fishers of men.”

Jude 1:22-23 Be merciful to those who doubt; snatch others from the fire and save them: to others show mercy, mixed with fear — hating even the clothing stained by corrupted flesh.

John 15:16 *“You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit — fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name.”*

Acts 9:15 *But the Lord said to Ananias, “Go! This man is my chosen instrument to carry my name before the Gentiles and their kings and before the people of Israel.”*

Isa 6:8 *Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?” And I said, “Here am I. Send me!”*

Thought 1. The Lord's call is twofold.

- 1) To follow Him, the Messiah. Before doing anything else, a disciple must first learn Christ.
- 2) To become a fisher of men.

Thought 2. Christ relates a person's call to the knowledge and experience of the person. These fishermen were called “to fish for men.”

- 1) This fact stirs some confidence and prevents some apprehension and fear in accepting the call of Christ. It means that Christ always considers a person's knowledge and experience when He calls him.
 - 2) This fact also enables a person to serve more efficiently and effectively — to accomplish much more for God.
5. The men called by Christ were responsive. They responded immediately.

Thought 1. The call of God is critical and demands a decision.

- 1) It is immediate — right now! A person is to get up now, not tomorrow. Some people desire to follow Christ; therefore, they attach themselves to Him and join the church. Yet they come ever so short and miss eternal life. Why? Because they never knew the price of discipleship. They were to pay a great price, but they knew nothing about it or else were unwilling to pay the price. True discipleship costs everything a person is and has. This is an excellent picture of how some put off the call.
- 2) It is unequivocal. It demands a positive response — immediately. How tragic that many are called, but few are chosen.

Mat 20:16 *“So the last will be first, and the first will be last.”*

Luke 9:59-62 *He said to another man, “Follow me.” But the man replied, “Lord, first let me go and bury my father.” Jesus said to him, “Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and proclaim the kingdom of God.” Still another said, “I will follow you, Lord; but first let me go back and say good-bye to my family.” Jesus replied, “No one who puts his hand to the plough and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God.”*

MATHEW 04:19 CALL TO DISCIPLESHIP

This was a call to service. Peter and Andrew had already been called as disciples (Jn. 1:35-42). The thought is *immediate and total detachment* from everything. Mathew emphasizes the call to the Lord's *official mission or work*. Mark stresses the call to a *changed life*: "To become fishers of men" (Mk. 1:17). Luke stresses the call to a *different profession* (Lk. 5:10). John stresses the call to a personal relationship (Jn. 1:40-42). □

II. Mathew 04:021–22 Features of Discipleship

The second men called: Four traits are seen in these men, traits that also show what kind of person is called by Christ.

1. They were obedient sons working with their father. They were from a closely knit family, and a closely knit family has an important influence upon the lives of its children. The point is that obedience is essential, both as a child and as a servant.

Eph 6:1-2 *Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. "Honour your father and mother" — which is the first commandment with a promise.*

1 Tim 5:4 *But if a widow has children or grandchildren, they should learn first of all to put their religion into practice by caring for their own family and so repaying their parents and grandparents, for this is pleasing to God.*

Lev 19:3 *"Each of you must respect his mother and father, and you must observe my Sabbaths. I am the Lord your God."*

Mat 7:24 *"Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock."*

Mat 12:50 *"For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother."*

John 14:23 *Jesus replied, "If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him."*

2. They were industrious and frugal. Note how they were mending their nets, making use of what they had instead of running out to secure new nets. The point is that God does not care for wastefulness. The person God calls is frugal and thrifty, not wasteful.

John 6:12 *When they all had enough to eat, he said to his disciples, "Gather the pieces that are left over. Let nothing be wasted."*

Prov 12:27 *The lazy man does not roast his game, but the diligent man prizes his possessions.*

Prov 21:20 *In the house of the wise are stores of precious treasure, but a foolish man devours all he has.*

3. They were simply called. There was nothing dramatic or spectacular about their call. A dramatic experience was not necessary to reach them.

Thought 1. Some receive very simple calls, but they are as much called as those who receive more dramatic and spectacular calls. God's call matches the nature and needs of a person. God's call considers a person's emotional, mental, physical, and spiritual needs. Some need more emotional calls than others. Some need more rational calls.

Isa 1:18 *"Come now, let us reason together," says the Lord. "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool."*

Isa 55:1 *"Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost."*

Mat 11:28 *"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest."*

Rev 22:17 *The Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life.*

4. They were responsive; they left their livelihood and family.

Thought 1. Some are called to leave more. Some leave not only businesses, but fathers and mothers. In some cases, this involves persecution and even the threat of death.

Mat 10:21 *"Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child; children will rebel against their parents and have them put to death."*

Luke 14:26-27 *"If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters — yes, even his own life — he cannot be my disciple. And anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple."*

Thought 2. God's call involves a drastic change. It involves both a change of life and a change of one's primary profession.

Mark 10:28 *Peter said to him, "We have left everything to follow you!"*

Luke 5:27-28 *After this, Jesus went out and saw a tax collector by the name of Levi sitting at his tax booth. "Follow me," Jesus said to him, and Levi got up, left everything and followed him.*

Luke 14:33 *In the same way, any of you who does not give up everything he has cannot be my disciple.*

Luke 18:29-30 *"I tell you the truth," Jesus said to them, "no one who has left home or wife or brothers or parents or children for the sake of the kingdom of God will fail to receive many times as much in this age and, in the age to come, eternal life."*

Phil 3:8 *What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ. ■*