

The Gospel of Matthew

Title: Fishers Of Men

Text: Matthew 4:18-22

INTRODUCTION: Fishers of men, God throughout all of history has used men to accomplish His will. God calls, God saves, God rescues, and God uses men to do what He wills. In Genesis 12:3 God promised Abraham a great nation and all would be blessed. Exodus 32:31,32a "Then Moses returned to the Lord, and said, Alas, this people has committed a great sin, and they have made a god of gold for themselves. ³² But now, if You will, forgive their sin." Proverbs 11:30 "The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, And he who is wise wins souls." Keep in mind, you're not winning them, God is using you to accomplish what He desires. Daniel 12:3 "Those who have insight will shine brightly like the brightness of the expanse of heaven, and those who lead the many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever."

Evangelism has always been at the heart of the Bible and especially in the NT. In Acts 2:42-47 we see the adding of the church "And the Lord was adding to their number day by day who were being saved." The church began real persecution under Saul, but according to Acts 8:4 "Therefore those who had been scattered went about preaching the word." After Saul's conversion we see his greatest concern was evangelizing, cf. Romans 1:14-17. Paul wanted to become all things to all people, and not in a sinful way either, 1 Corinthians 9:22 "To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak; I have become all things to all men, so that I may by all means save some."

God's work in redemption in you saves you, and then He puts in you a desire to share the gospel of salvation.

POINT 1 - THE CALLING OF MEN. Luke 6:13 "And when day came, He called His disciples to Him and chose twelve of them, whom He also named as apostles." Most of the disciples had little education, spiritual perception or very little religious training. Sometimes they were even short sighted and inhospitable. When the multitude became hungry the disciples thought of sending them away to find their own food. When some little children were brought to Jesus for blessing, the disciples rebuked those who brought them. Peter thought he would be generous to forgive someone up to "seven times." Peter, James and John couldn't stay awake with Jesus for one hour in the garden. They showed signs of cowardice, weakness, selfishness, and little potential for dependability, yet the Lord chose them.

The Gospel of Matthew

POINT 2 - THE MINISTRY OF JESUS IN GALILEE. The synagogue was a place of study, teaching, community fellowship and even legal services. Worship was held from sundown Friday to sundown Saturday. Sections of the Torah and prophets were read. Followed by various prayers, singing and response. Then a text of Scripture would be expounded, following a pattern began by Ezra (Nehemiah 8:1-8). Often dignitaries and visiting rabbis would be given the honor of expounding Scriptures.

Jesus was **teaching**, the Greek word is *didasko* which refers to the passing on of information. It focused on content, with the purpose of discovering truth. Scripture was read and explained section by section and verse by verse.

Jesus was **preaching** the gospel of the kingdom. In definition, this differs from teaching, because preaching or proclaiming is announcing a message. Jesus was announcing God's long promised Messiah and King had come to establish His kingdom. We can say the message proclaimed needs to be explained (taught) and vice versa.

Jesus was **proclaiming the gospel of the Kingdom**. This is good news, and Jesus' preaching often called men to repent and prepare themselves for the Kingdom. As men began to reject His message, His preaching became more and more harsh. The gospel is the good news of salvation through Jesus Christ, Colossians 1:13-14 "For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, ¹⁴ in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins." Today, we both proclaim and teach the things of God, the kingdom to come, the gospel of salvation.

There was another aspect of His ministry that proved He was the King and the Savior to redeem men.

Jesus was **healing** people of various form of sickness, diseases and ailments. Some people are sick because of their own foolish habits, whereas others may suffer a direct consequence of their sin. Many of the Corinthians Christians were sick, weak and some had even died because they profaned the Lord's suppers. Yet not all sickness or suffering is because of sin, cf. John 9:1-3.

Until modern times and advances in medical science, disease and sickness was rampant. So hearing the news of healings and miracles no wonder people came to Jesus. Here Matthew lists the types of healings that were occurring:

The Gospel of Matthew

- Demon-possessed people, Scripture is clear that many were suffering from afflictions initiated by the devil. Matthew 9, 12, 17 and Mark 9, 13 give ample evidence of demon related afflictions.
- Epileptics (KJV translates lunatics) in ancient times they were thought to be under the influence of the moon i.e. moonstruck
- Paralytics which represent a wide range of crippling afflictions.

POINT 3 - A SYNOPSIS OF THE MIRACLES AND HEALINGS. Jesus' healings accomplished a few things above the immediate effect of these miracles.

- Proved that He was divine, because no human could do such things. Jesus told Phillip in John 14:11 **"Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me; otherwise believe because of the works themselves."**
- These wondrous healings showed God's compassion towards those who suffer. No all who were healed believed.
- These miracles showed that Jesus was the promised Messiah. Word was sent to John the Baptist while in prison affirming this, maybe he was doubting? Cf. Matthew 11:1-5

These miracles and signs were time specific for the apostles and the earthly ministry of Jesus to point people to the Messiah. Yes, God still heals today. But not in the form which we read about. Later in the apostolic age, Paul told Timothy to take a little wine for his stomach aches. Knowing God uses natural elements to heal the body. And many who came to Jesus, who saw and benefited from these healing, never believed.