

NOON BIBLE STUDY: MATTHEW 4 (PART 2)

MATTHEW 4:12-16

V. 12 - JOHN THE BAPTIST IS ARRESTED BY HEROD. THIS FULL STORY IS RECOUNTED LATER IN MATTHEW'S GOSPEL. HERE IS THE REASON WHY HE WAS ARRESTED:

MATTHEW 14:3-5 - FOR WHEN HEROD HAD JOHN ARRESTED, HE BOUND HIM AND PUT HIM IN PRISON BECAUSE OF HERODIAS, THE WIFE OF HIS BROTHER PHILIP. 4 FOR JOHN HAD BEEN SAYING TO HIM, "IT IS NOT LAWFUL FOR YOU TO HAVE HER." 5 ALTHOUGH HEROD WANTED TO PUT HIM TO DEATH, HE FEARED THE CROWD, BECAUSE THEY REGARDED JOHN AS A PROPHET.

V. 13 - SEE MAP

V. 15-16 - QUOTE FROM ISAIAH 9:1-2; 60:1-3

MATTHEW 4:17 - JESUS BEGAN TO PREACH - *"REPENT, FOR THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS AT HAND"*

WE EXPLAINED THE PHRASE KINGDOM OF GOD WHEN WE LOOKED AT CHAPTER 3. THIS ONE SENTENCE PHRASE IS A SHORTHAND SUMMARY OF JESUS' PROCLAMATION. THE PEOPLE IN THE GALILEE REGION HEARD THE CALL TO TURN AWAY FROM THEIR SIN AND TOWARDS GOD BECAUSE THE KINGDOM OF GOD WAS COMING SOON. IN THIS CONTEXT, IT IS IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER THAT THE KINGDOM OF GOD ISN'T JUST THE DAWNING OF A RESTORED EDEN - IT ALSO INCLUDES A TIME OF JUDGMENT AND JUSTICE - SIMILAR TO WHAT THE OLD TESTAMENT PROPHETS CALLED "THE DAY OF THE LORD". THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN/GOD IS THE TIME WHEN EVERYTHING WRONG WITH THE WORLD IS MADE RIGHT - BUT PART OF WHAT IS WRONG WITH THE WORLD IS HUMAN SIN AND REBELLION AND THAT MUST BE ADDRESSED TOO.

JESUS' PREACHING WAS A CALL FOR PEOPLE TO RETURN TO THEIR CREATOR NOW FOR FORGIVENESS RATHER THAN FACE JUDGMENT WHEN THE KINGDOM ARRIVES.

MATTHEW 4:18-22 - JESUS CALLS HIS FIRST DISCIPLES

ACCORDING TO MATTHEW'S ACCOUNT, JESUS' FIRST DISCIPLES WERE GALILEAN FISHERMAN: BROTHERS SIMON (AKA PETER) AND ANDREW AND JAMES AND JOHN, SONS OF ZEBEDEE.

WHAT IS A DISCIPLE?

WHAT IS A DISCIPLE IN THE CONTEXT OF FIRST CENTURY JUDAISM?

WHAT DO YOU THINK OF ANDREW, PETER, JAMES AND JOHN'S REACTION?

EXCERPT FROM "COME AND FOLLOW ME": THE PRIMARY WORD USED TO DESCRIBE SOMEONE WHO FOLLOWS JESUS IS "DISCIPLE", AND IT APPEARS HUNDREDS OF TIMES IN THE NEW TESTAMENT (AND IS NOT JUST USED OF JESUS' CLOSEST 12). "DISCIPLE" COMES FROM THE WORD MEANING STUDENT AND THE GOAL OF DISCIPLES IS TO HEAR AND OBSERVE THEIR TEACHER SO THAT THEY CAN IN TURN PRACTICE THE INFORMATION FOR THEMSELVES. THE GOAL OF JESUS' FOLLOWERS ISN'T JUST TO HEAR AND OBSERVE THOUGH, FOR HIS GOAL IS TO SHAPE AND TRANSFORM THE LIVES OF THOSE WHO FOLLOW HIM.

A MODERN EQUIVALENT WOULD BE THE IDEA OF AN "APPRENTICE" WHICH IS DEFINED BY MERRIAM WEBSTER AS "*A PERSON WHO LEARNS A JOB OR SKILL BY WORKING FOR A FIXED PERIOD OF TIME FOR SOMEONE WHO IS VERY GOOD AT THAT JOB OR SKILL.*" AN APPRENTICE WILL SPEND TIME WITH AN EXPERIENCED PERSON WHO TEACHES THEM A TRADE BY WORD AND EXAMPLE. OVER TIME APPRENTICES ARE MOVED OUT OF THE CLASSROOM AND GIVEN THE OPPORTUNITY TO DO WORK IN THEIR FIELD ALONGSIDE THEIR TEACHER, EVENTUALLY GROWING TO BE ABLE TO DO WHAT THEIR TEACHER DID, NOW ON THEIR OWN.

DISCIPLESHIP TO JESUS IS NOT JUST A SET OF BELIEFS TO AFFIRM OR A FEW FACTS TO ACCEPT. IT IS A WAY OF LIFE THAT SUPERNATURALLY SHAPES THE FOLLOWERS OF JESUS TO BECOME MORE AND MORE LIKE THE ONE THEY ARE FOLLOWING, LISTENING TO AND LEARNING FROM.

THE MAIN TEACHERS OF SCRIPTURE DURING JESUS' TIME WERE CALLED RABBIS. TO BE A RABBI TOOK A LOT OF TIME AND EFFORT AND ONLY THE BEST STUDENTS WERE ABLE TO ADVANCE. YOUNG BOYS WHO WANTED TO LEARN FROM A RABBI WOULD DEVOTE THEMSELVES TO STUDYING AND LEARNING ABOUT THEIR RABBI'S INTERPRETATION AND APPLICATION OF THE WRITINGS OF MOSES. THEY WOULD WORK HARD TO MEMORIZE AND EDUCATE THEMSELVES WITH THE GOAL OF BEING APPROVED BY AND EVENTUALLY BECOMING LIKE THEIR RABBI. AS YOU CAN IMAGINE, IT WAS A SMALL AND ELITE NUMBER THAT COULD ACTUALLY ATTAIN THESE MARKS (CP: ACCEPTANCE AT AN IVY LEAGUE OR BECOMING A PROFESSIONAL ATHLETE). AS A RESULT, RABBIS WERE REVERED BY THE JEWISH PEOPLE.

IT MIGHT SEEM ODD THAT THESE FISHERMEN SIMPLY DROP THEIR NETS AND FOLLOW JESUS - BUT IMAGINE BEING OFFERED A FULL SCHOLARSHIP TO HARVARD OR A FULLY GUARANTEED NFL CONTRACT! THESE POOR FISHERMEN RECOGNIZED THAT THEY WERE BEING INVITED INTO AN APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM WITH A TEACHER AND PROPHET THAT MADE IT EASY TO WALK AWAY FROM THEIR FISHING TRADE. THESE FISHERMEN WEREN'T THE BEST OR THE BRIGHTEST, BUT THEY WERE WILLING TO RESPOND WHEN JESUS CALLED THEIR NAME. THEIR DECISION ON THE SHORE OF THE SEA OF GALILEE WOULD CHANGE THEIR LIVES AND CHANGE THE WORLD. THESE DISCIPLES DIDN'T EARN JESUS' LOOKING THEIR WAY, AND YET HE GAVE THEM HIS FULL ATTENTION. THIS IS HOW DISCIPLESHIP TO JESUS IS DIFFERENT FROM BEING A STUDENT OF SOME FAMOUS TEACHER OR PART OF A CHAMPIONSHIP SPORTS TEAM. WE DON'T EARN OUR WAY INTO APPRENTICESHIP TO JESUS, WE'RE INVITED BY HIM.

MATTHEW 4:23-25 - JESUS' MINISTRY AND FOLLOWING GROWS

JESUS IS NOT ONLY TEACHING ABOUT THE COMING KINGDOM, HE IS DEMONSTRATING THE POWER OF THE KINGDOM THROUGH MIRACULOUS HEALING. AS YOU CAN IMAGINE, THIS LEADS TO NEWS SPREADING AND AN INCREASED INTEREST IN HIS MINISTRY. CROWDS ARE GROWING, AND THIS WILL LEAD TO JESUS TO BEGIN TO CLEARLY DEFINE WHAT IT MEANS TO FOLLOW HIM AND HIS WAY.