"BE A FISHERMAN!"

Matthew 4:12-25
1/29/2017

INTRODUCTION:

***Follow Jesus and be a fisher of men!**

Why should we be fishers of men?

I. THOSE IN DARKNESS NEED LIGHT (v. 12-17)

II. SOULS ARE MORE IMPORTANT THAN FISH (v. 18-22)

III. JESUS IS A GREAT SAVIOR (v. 23-25)

His greatness is revealed by:

A. His Message (v. 23a)

B. His Miracles (v. 23b)

C. His Fame (v. 24)

D. His Following (v. 25)

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ILLUS: "The Lifesaving Station" (MacArthur, p. 112)

ILLUS: Painting - "The Rock of Ages" (MacArthur, p. 116)

***Follow Jesus and be a fisher of men!**

Why should we be fishers of men?

I. THOSE IN DARKNESS NEED LIGHT (v. 12-17)

V. 12

John the Baptist's imprisonment was perhaps a signal to Jesus that His forerunner's ministry was now complete and that He (Jesus) was to call His disciples and continue that ministry of calling men to "repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand? (Mt. 4:17; cp. John's identical message - Mt. 3:2).

V. 13

Capernaum - the home of Peter, Andrew, James & John; a place where Jesus did many of His miracles

V. 14

Matthew again continually cites O.T. statements of prophecy which Jesus fulfilled -- in keeping with his theme that Jesus is the King of the Jews.

V. 15

Zabulon & Nephthalim" - two northern tribes of Israel that settled side by side on the northwest side of the sea of Galilee. (Nazareth was in Zabulon and Capernaum was in Nephthalim).

V. 15-16

Galilee is called the region of the "Gentiles" because Assyria conquered and scattered the northern tribes of Israel in 722 B.C. The land was then populated by Gentiles.

V. 16

Verses 15-16 are quotations from Isaiah 9:1-2.

V. 1 - Zebulon and Naphtali came under the yoke of Assyria (II Ki. 15:29).

"Galilee of the nations" - Galilee of the Gentiles

V. 2 - "Because Christ would minister and live in Galilee, it would be glorious" (Ryrie footnote)

NOTE: Isaiah 9:1-2 clearly refers to Jesus as evident by verses 6-7.

"Darkness" = referring to spiritual darkness (Judea had God's Law; Jerusalem was the place of worship, and the Galileans were viewed as pagans since they did not have God's revelation, the Bible).

"After the fall, mankind had two "candles" as it were, that continued to give light about God and His will - the candle of creation and the candle of conscience. But man paid little attention to either, preferring to walk in the darkness of his own corrupted will (See: Rom. 1:18-21)" (MacArthur, p. 102)

"Sat. . .sat" - Why the word "sat" rather than walked, etc.? ANSWER: When you are in darkness, you can't see where you are going; so rather than walking and stumbling (Jn. 12:35), they complacently sat.

The metaphor of "light" "conveys the idea of the illuminating, truth-revealing and sin-exposing ministry of the Son of God." (MacArthur, p. 101).

"Great light" - Jesus is not merely light, He is great light.

Cp. Is. 42:6-7. The Father prophesied this of the Son (His "Servant") - "I the LORD have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles; to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house."

"Shadow of death" - a common Hebrew expression (EX: Job 3:5, 10:21-22, 12:22, 16:16, 24:17, 28:3, 34:22, 38:17; Psalm 23:4, 44:19, 107:10, 14; Is. 9:2; Jer. 2:6, 13:16).

This phrase means to be on the verge of death; to be i an absolute pitch black region, surrounded by a host of demons, all whose aim is to kill, steal, and destroy.

"Sprung up" - NOTE: the light did not gradually come; but rather, wherever Jesus is there is total light, instant light, because in Him there is "No darkness at all" (I Jn. 1:5).

Instant light - EX: the light switch brings immediate light.

The life of Christ is called "the light of men" (Jn. 1:4).

"Light is come into the world and men loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil" (Jn. 3:19).

"I am the light of the world: he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness but shall have the light of life" (Jn. 8:12; cp. Jn. 9:5).

"I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on Me should not abide in darkness" (Jn. 12:46).

While we, like John the Baptist, reflect the light of Christ (Mt. 5:14), we are "not that Light" but are sent to "bear witness of the Light" (Jn. 1:7).

Like Paul, it is our privilege to "open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to lig and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins,a nd inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me" (Acts 26:18).

If such a privilege is ours, what will Satan's chief aim be? -- II Cor. 4:4 - "In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ who is the image of God, should shine unto them."

God "hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light" (I Pet. 2:9).

V. 17

The exact same message that John preached (Mt. 3:2) - only this time the kingdom is being announced by the King Himself.

Since the King was on earth, His kingdom was "at hand" (I.e. ready to be established on earth, if the prerequisite of repentance was met).

II. SOULS ARE MORE IMPORTANT THAN FISH (v. 18-22)

V. 18

This is not the first time Jesus met these disciples.

The chronology is:

1. Jesus met Andrew first in the region of the Jordan River where John was baptizing (Jn. 1:35-40)

2. Then his brother Peter met Jesus (Jn. 1:41)

3. Then in Galilee Jesus met Philip and Nathaniel (Jn. 1:43-46)

4. Jesus then went back to Judea with His disciples and they baptized people (Jn. 3:22-36) (John the Baptist was still not imprisoned)

5. He then went north again into Galilee (Jn. 4:33)

6. It was while He was in Galilee that He confronted His disciples (the fishermen) with a demonstration of His power and deity. It is at this point that four of the prominent disciples left all to become fishers of men (Lk. 5:10-11; SEE: Mk 1:14-20)

"Jesus walking by the sea" - this evidently occurred the day immediately after the "big catch" described in Luke 5:1-11.

SEE: Lk. 5:1-11

Every fisherman knows the excitement of catching fish, and the anticipation of going back to the same lake where a "big catch: was formerly made. This is what motivated Peter and Andrew to be up and fishing the day after the supernatural catch was made.

"Casting a net into the sea" - a throw net or "cast net" was used during daytime fishing from the shore.

V. 19

"Follow Me" = lit. "come after Me!" come along behind Me, keep up in step with Me and let Me lead you.

Before anyone can be a Godly fisher of men, they must be a follower of Jesus.

If fishing for men is the result of following Jesus, what does this say about Christians who are not fishing for men? ANSWER: They are not following Jesus.

"I will make you" - how did Jesus "make" them such fishers of men?

1. By His example (Jn. 4; Mt. 9:9-13)
2. By His command (2 by 2; Mk. 16:15; Mt. 28:19-20; Acts 1:8)
3. By His enablement (Jn. 15:7-8, 16)

"Fishers of men" -

1. Our "lake" is the world (Jn. 3:16; Mk. 16:15)
   (NYC is our part of the lake)

2. Our "net" is the Gospel (I Cor. 1:17-18, 2:1-5)
   (the simple gospel, not eloquent rhetoric)

3. Our "fish" are lost sinners (Rom. 3:23)

Note: Fishing for men is the only type of fishing where you catch them dead and bring them home alive! (Eph. 2:1ff) (whereas, fishing for fish you catch them alive and bring them home dead).

Why did Jesus refer to evangelism as "fishing"?

1) Because evangelism like "fishing" requires patience

2) Because evangelism like "fishing" demands work and discipline

(NOTE: their type of fishing was not like sitting out on a lawn chair on a lake with a rod and a can of soda on a Saturday afternoon. It was rigorous work to pull in the nets, sort the fish, mend their nets, row their boat, battle the elements and stay up late at night [most fishing was done at night, since their nets were visible cotton, not synthetic line]).

3) Because evangelism like "fishing" requires perseverance

(Going from place to place, many times covering the same area over and over again)

4) Because evangelism like "fishing" requires dependence upon God

(only those which God directs into your net, do you catch!)

The greatest long-term, remaining, enduring benefit that we can be to humanity is to fish for them and bring them to Jesus.

Note everyone that we get in the net will be saved. Some false professors will slip in (SEE: the parable of the drag net - Mt. 13:47-50).

V. 20
"Straightway" - immediately; without any delay.

"Left their nets" - for these men, this was leaving their livelihood, their trade, their career, their "first love," their "bread and butter," the work they knew best. They were to leave their fishing business to become disciples of Jesus and fishers of men.

V. 21
"Mending their nets" - James and John were repairing the net that broke the day prior because of the over-abundant catch that Jesus gave them (Lk. 5:6).

V. 22
"Left the ship and their father" - James and John not only left their economic security (fishing) but also their social security (father).

Sometimes it is easy to leave a business to go to a foreign field and be a missionary, but it is not so easy to leave family!

Many "would be" missionaries have forfeited a life of serving Jesus Christ so they could forever enjoy the security of mama and papa!

The former has greater rewards (Lk. 18:29-30 - "And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake, Who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting.")

III. JESUS IS A GREAT SAVIOR (v. 23-25)

Christ's public ministry was three-fold:
"Teaching. . . preaching . . . healing"

His greatness is revealed by:

A. His Message (v. 23a)

"In their synagogues" - Why? Because Jesus went to the "Jew first." (Mt. 10:5-7) -- their promised kingdom was being offered.

Also, the Jew would have the necessary knowledge of God's moral Law, which prepared the way for the reception of the Gospel.

NOTE: Paul followed this custom of Jesus (Lk. 4:16; Acts 9:20, 13:5).

"Gospel" = good news

B. His Miracles (v. 23b)

"Healing all ... sickness and all ... disease" - the evidence of a true miracle worker is his ability to heal all ailments (not just psychosomatic ones, like contemporary "faith healers").

C. His Fame (v. 24)

The typical doctor specializes in one area of medical practice. Jesus being God can do it all! He is the Great Physician.

--"Diseases" - various sicknesses, infirmities, or injuries
--"Torments" - severe pain and torture
--"Possessed with devils"
--"Lunatick" - not crazy, insane people but epileptics (cp. Mt. 17:15)
--"Palsy" - lame, paralyzed
There was no case too difficult for Jesus!

D. His Following (v. 25)

Even today, people among every race and nation follow Jesus because He is the only true Savior and Lord (Phil. 2:10-11).

CONCLUSION:

Prov. 11:30 - "The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise."

Dan. 12:3 - "And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever."

ILLUS: Allegory - "The Fishless Fisherman"

Hymns -"Rescue the Perishing"

"Send the Light"

"Let the Lower Lights Be Burning" (SEE: story, MacArthur, p. 120)