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St. Paul's Lutheran Church
2100 16th Street SW
Austin, MN 55912-1749
Pastor Ted Barthels
Sermon preached on
February 2, 2020

Scripture Lessons: Isaiah 9:1-4; 1 Cor. 1:10-17

Hymns: 27; 364; 770; 644

Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Sermon Text: Matthew 4:12-23

Now when Jesus heard that John had been put in prison, He departed to Galilee. ¹³And leaving Nazareth, He came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is by the sea, in the regions of Zebulun and Naphtali, ¹⁴that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying:

¹⁵ "The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali,

By the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan,

Galilee of the Gentiles:

¹⁶ The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, And upon those who sat in the region and shadow of death Light has dawned."

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

¹⁸ And Jesus, walking by the Sea of Galilee, saw two brothers, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. ¹⁹ Then He said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men." ²⁰ They immediately left *their* nets and followed Him.

²¹ Going on from there, He saw two other brothers, James *the son* of Zebedee, and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets. He called them, ²² and immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed Him.

²³ And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people. (NKJV)

This is the Word of God.

Sanctify us, oh Lord, through Your truth. Your Word is truth. Amen.

In Christ Jesus, God our Savior, dear fellow Redeemed:

INTRO: How is Jesus' glory manifested today?

We see Jesus' glory in ... the world around us? The powers and wonders of nature? Without doubt there is a natural knowledge of God. The presence of the Creator is manifested with all His glory in the world around us. We are right to praise the Lord because we do see that we are "fearfully and wonderfully made!" (Psalm 139:14) However, that doesn't show us our Savior and His glory. When we talk about Jesus we may talk about the wonders of His miracles: the multitudes that were blessed by Jesus' healing them, the feeding of the five thousand with but a few fish and loaves of bread, the stilling of the storm. We haven't seen these wonders, and yet we know them, and in them we find the glory of our Savior revealed. We read of these wonders in the Word of God and then we talk about them amongst ourselves and with others, and the glory of the Lord is manifested. The fact that **we** talk about them, that **we** know about the glory of the Lord Jesus is in itself a manifestation of His glory as the Savior of the world!

It was foretold by the prophets of old that salvation would not be limited to one nation, indeed that it was too small a thing to save only the people of the Jews, considering the magnitude of the sacrifice Jesus offered on the cross with innocent sufferings and death. But then the message of this salvation needed to be broadcast among the gentiles also. That was also foretold by the prophets as we read

from Isaiah this morning, and as Matthew declared in our text that very prophecy fulfilled by Jesus. Jesus in His love for lost souls began the outreach to the gentiles and then made sure that proclamation of the gospel would continue. This morning we consider the revelation of Jesus' glory in --

THEME: The Ever Growing Expanse of Jesus' Ministry.

The expanding nature of Jesus' ministry was

I. Demonstrated in Jesus' Galilean Ministry.

The events of our text take place a year or so after Jesus' baptism. It was the day after Jesus was baptized by John in the Jordan River that Peter and Andrew and Philip and Nathanael had been directed to Jesus by John the Baptist who declared Jesus to be "the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world." (John 1:29) They spent some time with Jesus, but then they returned home to Galilee. Peter and Andrew went back to their fishing business, together with their close friends James and John the sons of Zebedee. Jesus was busy teaching in the region of Judea and Jerusalem. Our text tells us that it was after Herod imprisoned John the Baptist for the audacity of declaring that Herod living with his brother's wife was sinful adultery. That all coincided with Jesus' return to Galilee. While in Judea Jesus' audience was predominantly Jews, and many of the Jews who should have been familiar with the Scriptures and watching for the coming of the Christ.

After spending a year or so among the Jews in Judea Jesus returned to Galilee where He had grown up, first to Nazareth where He was well known as the son of Joseph the builder. Jesus taught in the synagogue and while they were deeply impressed by His powerful presentation of the God's Word, they were also offended by Jesus for He was only one of them, and they were not willing to sit at Jesus' feet and humbly learn from the son of a carpenter. Jesus moved His family (that is His mother and any

siblings) to Capernaum, a small city on the shores of the Sea of Galilee. There He regularly taught in the synagogue that had been graciously built by a devout Roman Centurion, *a gentile*. And so our text reports that the words of Isaiah were fulfilled regarding the Christ coming and preaching in the region that in days of old was the land of the tribes of Zebulon and Naphtali. Here Jesus' audience was a mixture of Jews and gentiles.

While people who knew the Scriptures should have understood that this was a sign that Jesus was the Christ, it was always assumed that the Christ would dwell in Jerusalem. This false assumption stood in the way of the truth for some in accepting the truth, but it didn't stop Jesus. He was foretold to be the One who would be a bright light for those who sat in the darkness of sin and the shadow of death. And indeed He was all of that and is all that! The Light of the glory of God in Jesus Christ was revealed in the message that Jesus boldly and continuously presented to the people. *"From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.' "* (v.17)

Yes, the message was a one of repentance. In fact it was a message calling for a **continuing** repentance, a **life** of repentance. Isn't that the way it has to be? Don't we all know from our own experience with sin and the false ideas and philosophy of this world that we must daily repent of our sins, and plead for the mercies of God, because the kingdom of God is at hand! Sin creeps into our lives with a persistence that cannot be ignored, that dare not be ignored. If we let up at all with daily contrition and repentance we find ourselves falling again into the failings of our own sinful flesh and the false ideas of work-righteousness that this world engenders. Repentance necessitates a turning away from any thoughts of our goodness winning God's favor, and our turning wholly to the righteousness of Christ for acceptance into God's presence.

That is the faith that the Holy Spirit works in hearts of sinners through the gospel. That is the message which Jesus preached, and which presents Jesus and only Jesus as the way to life everlasting. And that is what characterized Jesus' ministry.

If we turn to the last verse of our text we see that truth confirmed.

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

Jesus' glory was observed. People were amazed by His teaching because He taught as one having authority, and not as the scribes. (Mark 1:22) Jesus declared sins forgiven! No rabbi dared do that! But Jesus revealed His glory, "the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." (John 1:14) He revealed it first and foremost in His TEACHING!

And then Jesus revealed His glory also in his many, many miracles of healing. Jesus always looked upon the people with great love and compassion. He was moved with compassion and so He gave them what they needed in the message of the gospel, and then He also relieved them of the burden of corruption that sin brought into this world. He lifted the burden of sickness and infirmity.

Jesus walked all about Galilee, and beyond into the regions of the Phoenicia to the west, around Tyre and Sidon -solid Gentile country, **and** to the east, the region of Decapolis, or the ten cities east of the Sea of Galilee. These were predominantly gentile regions. Yes, He preached and He healed those who lived in darkness, and upon them a great Light shone. And so Jesus' glory was revealed.

However Jesus knew that His own public ministry of preaching and teaching and healing would only last a

couple more years, but the expanse of His ministry was not to come to an end with His death in Jerusalem. It --

II. Continued through Jesus' Call to Discipleship.

We read of this in our text:

Matthew 4:18-22 "And Jesus, walking by the Sea of Galilee, saw two brothers, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. ¹⁹Then He said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men." ²⁰They immediately left *their* nets and followed Him.

²¹Going on from there, He saw two other brothers, James *the son* of Zebedee, and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets. He called them, ²²and immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed Him."

This is a special event that should be rather stirring for us. These men had families to support, businesses to run, fishing boats and nets to tend to. They were busy working when Jesus came on the scene. Peter and Andrew were actually still fishing. Jesus called to them and said "*Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.*" And they did it! Immediately, they left their nets and boats and occupation and followed Jesus. And we observe the similar response from James and John. They were busy repairing their nets, preparing for the next night of fishing when Jesus called to them, and they left their father Zebedee and the nets and they **followed Jesus.**

This is simply amazing! Were they totally irresponsible? Were they under Jesus' spell? Not His spell, but rather His **calling!** This is the power in Jesus' call. Actually they were already disciples. They knew who Jesus was and they believed that Jesus was the Christ promised of old. Now Jesus was calling them to a new vocation. There was power in Jesus' call. The power was not in Peter and Andrew and James and John. The life changing power of

Jesus Christ is evident in the response to Jesus' call. They left what they had been doing and from that time onward for the next two years they spent almost all their time on the road with Jesus. As His full time disciples they had much to learn both by hearing all Jesus taught, as well as much for them to learn by observation. It ultimately led to what John asserted so well in his first epistle.

1 John 1:1-4 "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life— ²the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us— ³that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. ⁴And these things we write to you that your joy may be full."

That was Jesus' purpose in calling these men on that day, so that they could boldly proclaim with absolute certainty the gospel of Jesus Christ that **our** joy would be full!

Now it is through the testimony of those apostles and evangelists that the Lord has called us to faith. Yes, we are called to be Jesus' disciples and that begins as it began with those four fishermen; that we listen and learn with devotion to our Lord that we might grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. However just as Jesus had a greater purpose for the lives of Peter and Andrew and James and John besides being fisherman, so He has a greater purpose for us also.

None of us are called to be apostles as they were, but we have been called by the Lord to be His witnesses, that we testify and testify boldly to the truth of Jesus in our lives. **In** our lives means more than **during** our lives, it means **with** our lives. Not every disciple, then or now, has been called to leave behind one's occupation to a full time

gospel ministry, but everyone has been called, chosen by the Lord to be His own special people who are to show forth the praises of Him who called us out of darkness to His marvelous light. (1 Peter 2:9)

Some may also know the Lord's call to fulltime ministry. That may seem intimidating, but the Lord calls, and the Lord enables, and it is the Lord's power and glory from beginning to end that abides with His people.

We are so blessed to be among those whom He has called. Without Jesus and His gospel we would still be wandering in the darkness of unbelief. But He has called us by the gospel and His light has shone in our hearts, and the response is immediate. It is, for we now rejoice in the salvation we have in our glorious Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

AMEN.

And the peace of God which passes all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.