

- 1 **On the Move with Jesus**
Matthew 4:12-25 NLT
- 2 **12 When Jesus heard that John had been arrested, he left Judea and returned to Galilee. 13 He went first to Nazareth, then left there and moved to Capernaum, beside the Sea of Galilee, in the region of Zebulun and Naphtali.**
- 3 **14 This fulfilled what God said through the prophet Isaiah:**
**15 "In the land of Zebulun and of Naphtali,
beside the sea, beyond the Jordan River,
in Galilee where so many Gentiles live,**
- 4 **16 the people who sat in darkness
have seen a great light.
And for those who lived in the land where death casts its shadow, a light has
shined."**^[f]**17 From then on Jesus began to preach, "Repent of your sins and turn
to God, for the Kingdom of Heaven is near."**^[g]
- 5 **The traditional church year is a little different from the calendar year.**
 - It begins with Advent, the four Sundays leading up to Christmas.
 - As you know, in Advent we prepare for the coming of the Christ child.
 - In a personal, spiritual sense, Advent is a time to renew in our hearts the meaning of Emmanuel, God with us – the wonder that in Jesus, God has become one of us.
 - He understands us.
 - Indeed, he is as close to us as possible.
 - He has come to make his home in our hearts.
- 6 **After Advent and Christmas, the traditional church year moves into what is called "ordinary time".**
 - This is the time when we focus on the life and ministry of Jesus.
 - In particular, his three year ministry – all that he did and taught.
 - This is where we find ourselves today in Matthew 4 – at the beginning of Jesus's earthly ministry.
 - The next part of the church year will be Lent, the forty days leading up to Easter, and then the Easter itself – remembering Christ's death on the cross for us, and his glorious resurrection.
- 7 **Today we focus on Jesus as launches his public ministry. And we immediately notice some things.**
 - Jesus is on the move.
 - There's a favorite part in the Chronicles of Narnia, C.S. Lewis's classic series.
 - It's happens whenever Aslan, the great Lion, and the Christ figure reappears, and begins to assert his presence.
 - The characters whisper – "Aslan is on the move".
- 8 **And it's the same with Jesus.**
 - He is not a tame Messiah
 - The Lion of Judah is not tame; he is active, engaged, busy.
 - In fact the Gospel of Mark – from which Matthew and Luke borrowed many verses – almost breathlessly conveys this.
 - It uses the word "and" again and again, connecting the activity of Jesus in staccato fashion.
- 9 **Jesus was not simply a man among men, but one who caused great wonder, amazement, and awe upon those who encountered him.**

- "They were *astonished* at his teaching" (Mk 1:22); "they were all amazed" (Mk 1:27); "they were utterly astounded" (Mk 6:51);
- "the disciples were amazed at his words" (Mk 10:24).

10 **The word "again" is used no less than 26 times which serves to remind the hears of the previous occasion when something occurred.**

- Mark's gospel is more direct in language, even blunt at times.
- For example, Mark tells us that Jesus' relatives "went to seize him, for people were saying, 'He is beside himself'" (Mk 3:21).
- Mark portrays Jesus in action and urgent action at that. In the first chapter alone we can sense the urgency and immediacy of Jesus' work and mission. And our passage today in Matthew has that same sense – that same spirit.
- Mark uses the word "immediately" no less than eight times.
 - For example, he says the "Spirit *immediately* drove him out into the wilderness" (Mark 1:12).
 - "And *immediately* he called them" (Mk 1:20); "and *immediately* on the sabbath he entered the synagogue and taught" (Mk 1:21);
 - "and *immediately* the leprosy left him" (Mk 1:42).

11 **So what's the point?**

- The point is that we follow a Savior who does something.
- He is busy – he's engaged; and his followers are to do the same.
- This will inevitably mean doing new things; and doing new things means change. And we're sort of conflicted about that.
- Someone has said, "Everyone wants something new and fresh, but nobody wants to change."

12 **In 1870, the Methodists were having their annual conference in Indiana.**

- The presiding Bishop was asking a group for an interpretation of current events, when the president of the college where the conference was held volunteered his input:
- "I think we are living in a very exciting age. I believe we are coming into a time when we will see wonderful inventions. I believe we will fly through the air like birds!"
- Bishop Wright, visibly disturbed by this scientifically based comment proclaimed, "This is heresy, this is blasphemy; I read in my Bible that flight is reserved for the angels.
- We will not have such talk here in my area" proclaimed Bishop Wright.
- Bishop Wright then returned home to his two young sons, Orville and Wilbur.

13 **You see - Jesus does not shy away from change.**

- He engages the world.
- He impacts it; And we must try to keep up!

14 **¹² When Jesus heard that John had been arrested, he left Judea and returned to Galilee. ¹³ He went first to Nazareth, then left there and moved to Capernaum, beside the Sea of Galilee, in the region of Zebulun and Naphtali.**

15 **This happens just after Jesus's baptism – the inaugural events of his public ministry.**

- Then Jesus is driven into the wilderness by the Spirit where he fasts, and is tempted and tested for 40 days.
- Having faced the test and overcome Satan's temptation, he moves from Judea to Galilee.
- Notice that the occasion for this is his cousin, John's arrest.
 - John the Baptist is the forerunner – the one whose purpose was to announce the coming of the Messiah.
 - With his arrest, his ministry is complete.
 - Jesus knows that his time has come and he takes steps to launch his ministry. Notice he does several things.

- 16 **First he moves his base from Nazareth to Capernaum.**
- Nazareth is a sleepy little village.
 - Capernaum, on the Sea of Galilee, is a bustling hub of commerce of at least 1500 people – a significant population in that region.
 - Jesus is relocating to a place where He can have maximum impact.
 - Where his teaching and mighty works will have the broader influence.
- 17 **So what's the take away for us as his followers?**
- Are we seeking to have maximum influence and impact.
 - Are we seizing our opportunities.
 - Our church has been blessed with much!
 - You as members have been blessed with much!
 - No need to compare ourselves to others. The simple fact is that we have been blessed with resources and opportunities.
 - This is a year of opportunity. Amen?!
- 18 **Now, it would be easier to stay the same – to do little or nothing.**
- Opportunity Always means effort and impact.
 - It means cracking the ice of the old to make way for the new.
- 19 **Our rivers have frozen over in winter, haven't they?**
- In the spring, when they start to thaw, the sound of ice cracking can be an incredibly violent sound.
 - The more extensive and severe the freeze, the more thunderous the thaw.
 - Yet, at the end of the cracking, breaking, violent period, the river is open. It flows.
 - The river is life-giving.
 - And notice, I don't hear anyone saying, "Let's not suffer the thaw; let's keep the freeze; I prefer things frozen."
- 20 **To wrench anything out of its accustomed course often is a painful process.**
- It does great violence to the existing pattern.
 - Many people want change, both in the external world and in their own internal world, but they are unwilling to undergo the cracking and popping pain that often must precede it.
- 21 **Cathy McWade described the experience at the chiropractor after her recent fall in the school parking lot.**
- She said when the chiropractor first adjusted her, it sounded like a hand grenade. Not quite – but you get the picture.
- 22 **Jesus' message, though, is uncompromising.
The need to change is a certainty.
There's no compromise.**
- 23 **14 This fulfilled what God said through the prophet Isaiah:**
- 15 **"In the land of Zebulun and of Naphtali,
beside the sea, beyond the Jordan River,
in Galilee where so many Gentiles live,**
- 24 **16 the people who sat in darkness
have seen a great light.
And for those who lived in the land where death casts its shadow,
a light has shined."**^[f]
- 25 **Second, notice WHERE Jesus sets up base camp for his ministry.**
- He fulfills prophecy by being in Galilee where so many Gentiles live.

- Gentiles = mission. Being in Galilee of the Gentiles meant busting out of a comfort zone.
- Being in Galilee of the Gentiles means getting out beyond just folks like us.
- This verse foreshadows the verses with which Matthew will end.

26 **19 Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. 20 Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Matthew 28:19, 20 NLT**

27 **Following the way of Jesus will mean breaking out of our comfort zone.**

- Not just being with folks like us, our people, our clan.
- Jesus says, come on, join me. Love people who are different. Ones who don't know about me; ones who've never heard.

28 **But the world is so bad, we think; the winter is so long and cold. Is there any real hope?**

29 **Malcolm Muggeridge, the noted British journalist, was a guest at a breakfast in Washington, D.C.**

- When he had finished his testimony, he made a number of comments about world affairs, all of which were very pessimistic.
- Someone asked him, "Dr. Muggeridge, you have been very pessimistic. Don't you have any reason for optimism?"
- Muggeridge replied, "My friend, I could not be more optimistic than I am, because my hope is in Jesus Christ alone."
- He allowed that remark to settle for a few seconds, and then he added, "Just think if the apostolic church had pinned its hope on the Roman Empire."

30 **You see - change is possible.**

- You can change.
- I can change.
- Our world can change.
And His invitation to follow Him still stands.
Say "yes."
Bow before Him as your King.

31 **BENEDICTION:**

Live the kingdom...demonstrate that we can live under God's gracious rule now, for it is the way to mercy, peace and fulfillment; it is for people that are willing to live life as it is meant to be lived;

Share the kingdom...live its principles now and allow people to experience grace, in both how you live and in what God offers.

Now...May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.