

Encounters with Jesus

Week 4 — Jesus and the Four Fisherman (Matthew 4:8-25)

Context:

After Matthew reports of the circumstances surrounding Jesus' miraculous birth and escape from King Herod to Egypt, our passage today picks up at the beginning of Jesus' public ministry. Following Jesus' baptism in the Jordan, the Holy Spirit compelled Jesus into the desert where he would first be tested before his ministry could begin. Our passage begins with Jesus' final temptation by Satan.

Introduction

- a. We tend to read scripture piece by piece (maybe catching the verse of the day) without considering the larger context or narrative
 - (1) Without understanding the larger context, we will never achieve any depth of understanding
 - (2) We need a deeper understanding in order to face the difficult realities of life
- b. Matthew's Gospel intends to show one particular thing: Jesus is Israel's God in the flesh, who came to establish his eternal kingdom
 - (1) From beginning to end:
 - Gospel begins announcing Jesus as "son of David" (the promised eternal king)
 - Gospel ends with the triumphant Jesus telling his disciples, "All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations" (28:18-19)

Jesus takes Israel's history as his own personal history, personally reliving everything his people had experienced, but doing so without sin. All of the sin, brokenness, disobedience, faith, hope, and love contained in God's Story is summed up by Jesus, who is the glorious God revealed, and who, by his death and resurrection, would make all things new.

1. It's All About the Kingdom

- a. Adam and Eve begin in the Garden and are expelled into the wilderness beyond; Jesus—the second Adam—begins in the wilderness in order that the world would be made a Garden City one day
- b. Satan's temptation
 - (1) In sin, all of us have functionally bowed down to Satan, doing the will of our flesh, rather than obeying God
 - (2) This is a legitimate offer: Jesus calls Satan the "ruler of this world" who will be "cast out" (John 12:31)
- c. Jesus knows who he is and who he is destined to become and withstands the devil's temptation — he came in order that he would have an eternal kingdom
 - (1) We were intended to have dominion as kings on the earth, but our Story begins with rebellion against God, the rightful king, instead submitting to the serpent
- d. Jesus was fulfilling Isaiah's prophecy - "The people dwelling in darkness have seen a great light..." (Matt. 4:16)
 - (1) That same prophecy also says:

"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be

upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. ⁷ **Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end**, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this” (Isaiah 9:6-7)

- (2) The Message of the Gospel is greater than individual forgiveness and includes the proclamation that Jesus Christ is the King of kings and Lord of lords.
 - Satan’s temptations were about the kingdom,
 - Isaiah’s prophecies were about the coming of a kingdom that will never stop increasing,
 - Jesus’ first words of his public ministry was, “Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matt. 4:17)

Only by remembering that our loyalty is to Christ first and foremost will we be able to live in the world and not look like the world. Then and only then will we become the peacemakers God intends us to be and the ambassadors we are called to be.

Jesus is political — he simply has a greater vision than we do. He is concerned with building one nation of priests and kings, made up of every tribe and tongue, every culture and beautiful color, and every imaginable image bearer represented! And as transformed citizens of heaven, we raise no banner but Christ and him crucified.

2. Seek First the Kingdom

- a. They respond immediately
 - (1) Jesus simply speaks saying, “Follow me,” and the disciples immediately put down their nets, left their boats, and even left their family
 - (2) Hearing even a glimpse of the kingdom and the possibility of being part of it, they do not hesitate
 - **There is no hesitation when you hear of the kingdom:**
“The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field” (13:44)
- b. Don’t cling to what won’t satisfy
 - (1) We often cling to things we believe will give us purpose, meaning, and value, but they never ultimately satisfy
 - (2) Every temptation to place our hope in something other than Jesus and his kingdom is a lie from the tongue of a serpent
 - (3) If you hear Jesus, **come to him immediately**

3. Only This King Can heal Your Demons

- a. Behold our King: “And he went throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction among the people” (Matt. 4:23)
 - (1) Where Jesus is present, everything is transformed because he came so that all things will be made new!
 - **If you find yourself trembling, worrying over sin:** Come to this King, who gives his life for you and in your place so that your sins can be forgiven!

- If you find yourself fearful or anxious: Come to this King, who has the power over life and death, who is the Alpha and the Omega, who commands your destiny, and who will never let you go.

- b. Jesus comes to make us new so that we may become “fishers of men,” crying out to the world, “Come be reconciled to God.”
 - (1) As those who have become citizens of the Kingdom, we seek to live so that our lives and the world around us will look more like the Kingdom, and where more people hear the good news of the gospel of the kingdom so that they might become citizens of the Kingdom with us.

Only this King can deal with your demons. Only this King is able to bear the burden of your pain and trauma. Only this King is able to give your life a foundation that will not be shaken. Only this King is able to secure your future. Only this King will be able to provide you lasting hope.

Whatever that thing is — that thing that keeps you up at night — Jesus can deal with that too. Jesus is the one who will bring life to every area of our lives that feel dead.

If we lived according to the standards of Christ’s Kingdom, keeping our eyes on the King who has come, with “on earth as it is in heaven” as our goal, everything in our life will be transformed.

(Discussion questions on next page)

Discussion Questions

1. David began by discussing the importance of understanding Scripture in its larger context. Why do you think we often only take Scripture in by snippets?

How might we misread individual passages if we don't understand the larger context?

How does knowing the larger context of Matthew's Gospel provide key details or themes that help us understand the passage today?

2. How does the story of the creation and fall relate to Jesus' temptation? How does the theme of the kingdom or "dominion" relate to the first temptation of Adam and Eve, and why is that significant to Jesus' temptation?

3. How does the idea that "Jesus is not political" fail to see the importance of the Kingdom? How does loyalty to Jesus and his kingdom help us to live in the world, but not look like the world (not using the devil's methods)?

If we are ambassadors of Jesus and of his Kingdom (2 Cor. 5:16-21), how should that change how we treat our neighbors or those we think of as "our enemies"?

4. The disciples, we see, immediately drop everything to follow Jesus. What are some of the common ways we can easily be caught up in worldly issues or concerns that can discourage us from acting "immediately"?

What are some things that you are clinging to that Jesus is asking you to drop and follow him?

5. Take some time to discuss some difficulties of this last year. What "demons" have you been dealing with?

What hope does the message or this passage give you for the future? How does focusing on Jesus help you to have hope in the midst of challenges?