

Message #8**Matthew 4:18-25**

Jesus Christ was divine royalty and the manner in which He began His royal, messianic ministry goes totally against the grain of what we would most likely think, say or do. Keep in mind that Jesus Christ was God. He had all power and all authority to do whatever God's will was and apparently when He begins His public ministry, this is God's will.

JESUS CHRIST BEGINS HIS MESSIANIC, KINGLY MINISTRY BY TAKING SPECIFIC KINGLY STEPS.**STEP #1** – Jesus Christ began His kingly ministry by preaching a specific message. **4:17, 23**

I want you to notice the heavy emphasis placed on preaching and teaching. This was a most significant part of His ministry and it is still a significant part of a Christ-like ministry. Whenever a true biblical ministry is taking place there will be a heavy emphasis on preaching and teaching God's Word.

In **verse 23** we see that Christ went about all of Galilee and He taught and preached in every Jewish synagogue. This was the best place for him to address Jews because it was the place they came to receive religious instruction.

Now the specific message He was preaching was the “gospel of the kingdom” (**4:23**). This is not the Gospel of grace. This is the message that challenges Jews to repent. The message went something like this: “I am your King and I will set up your Kingdom on earth here and now if you will repent and realize you Jewish people are sinners, who cannot, in and of yourselves, be good enough to inherit this righteous Kingdom.”

STEP #2 – Jesus Christ began His kingly ministry by calling specific men. **4:18-22**

Jesus Christ began His kingly ministry by calling four fishermen. These men were not from a class of wise, elite, educated scholars who studied books. These men were rugged working men who fished the Sea of Galilee.

The Sea of Galilee is an inland lake which is about eight miles wide and 13 miles long. As Christ was walking by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers—Simon, who was called Peter, and Andrew, his brother. These two were apparently standing on shore casting their nets into the lake. We could call this shoreline net casting. The other two were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, who were mending the nets in their boat with their father. There were three ways to fish in Jesus' day: 1) Hook and line (much like we do); 2) Shoreline net casting (like Peter and Andrew here); 3) Deep water net casting (Luke 5:4).

Now as far as Andrew and Peter are concerned, **Matthew 4:18** is not the first exposure that they had to Jesus Christ. In the Scriptures, Jesus made at least three different calls to these men. This is the second of three such meetings between Jesus and these two brothers:

Meeting #1 - The brothers believe Jesus is the Messiah near Jerusalem. John 1:29, 40-42

Meeting #2 - The brothers are called to discipleship by the Sea of Galilee. **Matt. 4:18-22**

Meeting #3 - The brothers are called to apostleship out in the Sea of Galilee. Luke 5:1-11
The call here is to discipleship, or meeting number two.

Now the specific thing Christ said in this calling was “follow me and I will make you fishers of men.” This is not a presentation of the Gospel of grace. **True Grace Age Gospel preaching does not ask people to follow Christ; it asks people to believe in Christ.** Following Christ is not a matter of salvation; it is a matter of discipleship.

Now Christ uses a fishing analogy because these men are fishermen. He does not say this to Matthew, who was a tax collector. All He says to Matthew is “follow me” (Matt. 9:9). When Christ talked to another disciple, He challenged him to “follow” Him and let the “dead bury the dead” (Matt. 8:22). **The reason I point this out is because the main point of discipleship is following Christ.** Your purpose to follow Christ and you will influence people in your specific world.

Now the response of all four is that they “immediately” (**4:20, 22**) left and followed Him. They left their fishing boats and equipment. They left their clients, their friends and family. You do not have to follow the Lord Jesus to go to heaven. You must **believe** in the Lord Jesus to go to heaven. If you want to influence others so they will go to heaven, you do have to follow Christ.

STEP #3 – Jesus began His kingly ministry by performing specific miracles. **4:23-24**

- 1) He healed every kind of disease. **4:23a**
- 2) He healed every kind of sickness. **4:23b**
- 3) He healed every kind of pain. **4:24a**
- 4) He healed every kind of demonic affliction. **4:24b**
- 5) He healed every kind of epileptic seizure. **4:24c**
- 6) He healed every kind of paralysis. **4:24d**

STEP #4 – Jesus began His kingly ministry by influencing many people. **4:25**

Word spread about Jesus Christ. Tremendous crowds followed Him and many of the people weren't Jewish. Decapolis was a district of ten cities east of the Jordan River. What Matthew is showing is that tremendous numbers of people, both Jews and Gentiles, were following Christ and hearing the Gospel of the Kingdom. They knew He claimed to be King and the things He was doing proved He was that King.

If we want Jesus Christ to greatly influence our life, first believe on Him and second, follow Him through the pages of Scripture. Not only will He influence us, but we will influence others.