

Matthew 4:12–23 — Jesus Calls Us to Follow

Setting the Scene

- John the Baptist has been arrested, a faithful voice has been silenced
- Jesus does not pause His mission, He moves forward
- Jesus leaves Nazareth and settles in Capernaum, a working-class town on the Sea of Galilee
- Galilee was culturally mixed, religiously overlooked, and socially dismissed by Jerusalem
- God chooses the margins as the place where His light begins to shine

Fulfillment of Isaiah

- Matthew quotes Isaiah 9:1–2 to explain what is happening
- Galilee is described as a land of darkness and shadow
- Darkness in Scripture represents hopelessness, oppression, and spiritual confusion
- Jesus is the promised light that dawns in those dark places
- God’s salvation arrives where people feel forgotten

Jesus’ First Message

- Jesus begins preaching: “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near”
- Repent means to turn, not to be shamed
- The kingdom is not far away, it is close because Jesus is present
- God’s reign is breaking into everyday life

What the Kingdom Looks Like

- Jesus does not stay in one place
- He walks into towns, synagogues, and along the shoreline
- His message is not abstract theology but lived grace

The Call of the Fishermen

- Jesus sees Simon Peter and Andrew while they are working
- They are casting nets, doing ordinary, daily labor
- Jesus calls them exactly where they are
- He does not wait for them to clean themselves up
- “Come, follow me” is an invitation, not a threat

Fishers of People

- Jesus promises to reshape their purpose
- Fishing becomes a picture of gathering people into God’s grace
- They are not leaving work, they are stepping into new work

Immediate Response

- Peter and Andrew leave their nets at once
- James and John leave their boat and their father
- Following Jesus involves trust and release
- Discipleship always costs something

God Uses Ordinary People

- These men are not scholars or priests
- They are working-class fishermen
- God builds His kingdom through everyday lives

Jesus Calls More

- James and John are working alongside their father
- Jesus calls them just as He called Peter and Andrew

- God's call is personal and direct
- No one is overlooked

What They Leave Behind

- Nets, boats, and family represent security
- Following Jesus means trusting Him more than stability
- God does not always remove responsibility, but He reorders priority

Jesus' Ministry Pattern

- Jesus travels throughout Galilee
- He teaches in synagogues
- He proclaims the good news of the kingdom
- He heals disease and sickness

Teaching

- Jesus explains who God is
- He teaches people how to live in God's kingdom
- Truth shapes faith

Proclaiming

- Jesus announces that God's reign has arrived
- Good news means hope has broken into suffering
- The kingdom is not political power, it is healing presence

Healing

- Jesus heals every kind of sickness and disease
- God cares about bodies as well as souls
- The kingdom restores what is broken

What This Means for Us

- Jesus still calls people in the middle of ordinary life
- We do not have to be perfect to be chosen
- We are invited to follow before we fully understand

Living the Call

- Following Jesus means turning toward Him daily
- Discipleship means letting go of what holds us back
- God's light still shines in dark places
- Jesus still says, "Come, follow me"