

SITTING AT THE FEET OF JESUS

The Beginning of Jesus' Public Ministry

Matthew 4:18–5:20

*" 'Come, follow me,' Jesus said, 'and I will make you fishers of men.'
At once they left their nets and followed him." Matthew 4:19-20*

Day 1: Read Matthew 4:12-25.

1. After his baptism and time of testing in the desert, Jesus begins his public ministry. What does he do? (vv. 12; 17-19; 23, 24)
2. What kinds of people respond to Jesus? How do they respond? (vv. 24, 25)
3. Jesus' preaching, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near," (v. 17) is followed by awesome miracles. How are the healings and exorcisms a sign that the king has come and "the kingdom of heaven" has started to arrive? (v. 24)
4. The puppet kings who have ruled over Israel for the last 200 hundred years have been blood-thirsty, oppressive, and cruel. In contrast, what is the rightful king, Jesus, like? (Mt. 2:6; Mt. 9:36)

Day 2: Read Matthew 4: 18-25.

5. How do the first four disciples respond to Jesus' call? (vv. 20, 22)
6. Do you remember when you first heard Jesus calling you? How did you respond?
7. What have you given up and left behind to follow Jesus? Was it worth it? Why?
8. Jesus says that his disciples will become "fishers of men." This is a picture of fishing with large nets and hauling in huge catches, not fishing with a rod. How did this come true in Peter's and John's lives? (Acts 2:14, 36-41; 4:1-4)

Day 3: Read Matthew 5:1-12.

9. In what is called "The Beatitudes" (i.e., declarations of blessedness), Jesus is giving his disciples a radical new way of living. These are the ethics of the kingdom that go way beyond mere outward obedience to a set of rules. Those who have responded to his preaching and embraced Jesus as king are now called to a radical commitment to him and to an obedience that comes from the heart. What happens to us when we enter the kingdom which enables us to live this new way? (Ez. 36:25-27; Jn. 3:1-8; 2 Cor. 5:17, 18)

10. What kind of people will be a part of the new kingdom? Write beside each one your own definition. List each attribute on the left; "flesh out" what that means on the right.

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|------|----------------|--|
| v.3 | poor in spirit | To admit my spiritual poverty; I need God. |
| v.4 | | |
| v.5 | | |
| v.6 | | |
| v.7 | | |
| v.8 | | |
| v.9 | | |
| v.10 | | |

11. The second half of each beatitude contains a promise. What will Jesus' disciples receive? When? How do these promised blessings compare to the "blessings" we normally want?

Day 4: Read Matthew 5:11-16.

12. What images does Jesus use? (vv. 13, 14) What do you think they mean?
13. Jesus is calling his disciples to a radical new lifestyle. The goal, though, is not just our own personal holiness. We are called to be "fishers of men." Look back at The Beatitudes. As we are changed to live them, how do we become "saltier salt" and "brighter light" in the world?
14. (a) What was Israel supposed to be? (Is. 42:6-7; 49:6)
- (b) How does Jesus do what Israel failed to do? (Lk. 4:18-21; Jn. 3:16-19; 8:12)
- (c) What is our calling now? (v. 14; Eph. 5:8-11; Phil. 2:14-16)
- (d) What will be the result? (v. 16)

Day 5: Read Matthew 5:13-20.

15. In verse 17 Jesus says that he has not come to abolish the Old Testament Law and Prophets but to fulfill them. How is Jesus this promised fulfillment? (Rom. 3:21-26; Heb. 1:1-4)
16. Look back at The Beatitudes. Which beatitude(s) have we seen embodied in Jesus so far in Matthew?