

Matthew041217-031311
Bridge of Hope
March 27, 2011

“Beyond Ordinary”

Introduction: Good morning! I’m Jason and I serve as one of the pastors here at Bridge of Hope. We are glad that you are here with us for worship today.

We are plowing through Matthew’s Gospel account. Matthew has given us a clear picture from the perspective of others as well as showing us a divine revelation that Jesus is indeed the Son of God....the Messiah!

We then see how Jesus responds to this revelation as He is lead by the Spirit and is tested for 40 days and nights. Jesus refrains from eating during this time where we get to see 3 of those tests at the end of the 40 days brought on by the adversary, the Devil. Jesus is obedient to the Father and uses the Word of God as His weapon against these temptations and prevails, undoing the failure of Adam.

Jesus then starts his public ministry in Galilee....this was not the place where the religious leaders believed the Messiah would come onto the scene. This is because they were ignoring the Scripture and Matthew points this out by quoting the prophet Isaiah to remind them that God had foretold the place....Galilee not Judea would be the place of the launching of the Messiah. John the Baptizer’s arrest also thrusts Jesus to the forefront and Matthew uses this scenario to quell the thoughts that John was the Messiah....although Jesus ministered with John, John was quick to point out that Jesus was the one coming after him...and that would be proven in the ministry of Christ.

As we continue today looking at the launching of the Messianic Mission, we are going to look at the prominence placed upon Jesus calling men to follow Him. We are going to see that there was a plan and purpose for how and who Jesus called to follow Him. We are also going to see that where these men were from was significant and this will give us insight into how He calls us.

Let’s go ahead and get to work by taking a look at our text:

Matthew 4:18-22 (ESV) ¹⁸While walking by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon (who is called Peter) and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen. ¹⁹And he said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men."
²⁰Immediately they left their nets and followed him. ²¹And going on from there he saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets, and he called them. ²²Immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him."

We are continuing on the path to life Beyond Ordinary as we examine the messianic call to come and follow. This is no ordinary call. This truly is a calling to live life Beyond Ordinary. As we talk today, try to see yourself in these men that were called out by Jesus to follow Him.

- **Who Was Called?**

1. The who in this section of the story is important. Make no mistake....Jesus is concerned with who you are. So who are these men?Peasant fisherman from the wrong part of the country....they are not Judeans but Galileans....they are not from the right pedigree to be called to 'walk behind' the greatest rabbi to ever live....

In Rabbinic tradition, a student would pursue the rabbi as the instructor. Not so with this story....Jesus pursues these men....catches them at work and calls to them, "Follow me". This was out of the ordinary. Why these men? Why not a religious scholar or a great leader of people or a Zealot who was leading uprising against the Romans?

Because God is not concerned with our view of who is worthy. Man looks on the outward appearance but God looks at the heart. God's ways are so much higher than ours....He chooses with sovereignty because He has the big picture and understands what is best for the future.

Whether we would admit it or not, we do not like the fact that Jesus chose to call simple, uneducated fishermen to be His first disciples because we want to believe that there has to be more to it than that.....because...wait....that means he can call us to "Follow" Him....

These guys totally do not fit the mold by the religious world's standards. Trust me....as a former sailor, I can tell you that they are rough around the edges....They are dirty and uneducated....they are from a community, although traditionally Jewish in Capernaum, that is quite mixed with Gentiles and they are versed in the ways of the Gentiles, maybe even doing business with them.

Although Simon is a very common Jewish name, Andrew is a Greek name....very untraditional indeed....

Are you the right pedigree? Do you have things in your life that you assume disqualifies you from Jesus ever calling you by name and commanding you to follow Him? Do you make excuses because you want to continue being who you are instead of being who you will become...?

- **When Were They Called?**

1. There is a saying that God is never late and never early....He is always on time. All of us recognize that time is an important issue. Most of us have very little of it and it is a precious commodity. The timing of the calling of these first disciples is significant and is worth a look.

Jesus is about to launch His public ministry and is making all the preparations to do so at this point. He has been ordained by God the Father....in publicas the Beloved Son. Jesus has emerged from the desert wilderness victorious over His adversary and has now begun preaching Repentance.

His first act as Messiah is not to purchase property to establish a “new” and “exciting” synagogue....His first act is to build a community....He calls PEOPLE to follow Him. Why is this significant? Because it shows the priority of the Messianic Mission. Jesus’ priority was to develop disciples that would follow Him and be like Him so that later when we read the book of Acts, they could be empowered to be His witnesses.

Please do not miss the significance of the ‘When’ because it is significant. So often our priorities are out of whack. We want to build other things rather than a community of disciples and this is just not the priority of Jesus nor is this consistent with His mission that He commands us to participate in as His disciples.

The Religious Leaders, based out of Judea in Jerusalem were looking for a Messiah who would build a nation....but Jesus was too busy building a community which would eventually be the Kingdom. A community is people. So many of us would prefer to hide in an institution called the church instead of being a part of a community....which is the true essence of the Greek word for church *ekklesia*.....

So often we want to define the kingdom by territory or buildings but Jesus flips the script on us and actually makes the bold statement that a Kingdom....*the Kingdom is a people*....

I hope no one is offended by this next statement, but I am going to say it anyway....what good is enlarging our territory if the people of God are not occupying it? God has always been chasing after a people....this is the true essence of the Christian story...God’s redeeming quality, always pursuing and reaching out to a people....this is where we see what the Messianic Mission was and is about....its about calling men and women to Himself...

So in light of this, we need to ask ourselves: Do I see people the way God sees them? Do I make the sought of God a priority in my life? Do I structure my life so that I can take the time to be the mouthpiece of God when He wants to say to someone....Follow me?

- **Why Were They Called?**

1. The all important question here really is WHY? Jesus gives a very simple answer....to be fishers of men. This is mission! Jesus is revealing the Great Commission right here....The building of the great Messianic Community has a purpose...

The purpose of the Messianic Call is not to congregate and be social....the purpose is not to have a holy huddle. The purpose is not us 4 and no more....the purpose is not to create the Jesus Country Club....the purpose is not goose bumps, slain in the spirit and drunk in the spirit...the purpose is not so you can simply get your praise on....the purpose is not multi-million dollar facilities where the church is in debt up to its eyeballs.....

The purpose is to be fishers of men, to go into all the world and preach the Gospel, to make disciples of ALL nations teaching them to obey Jesus....the purpose is to GO...the purpose is to create a community of followers who are so in love with the One they follow that they are in love with each other....

Conclusion: This message about the call is not just an Expository look at Scripture. This is about real life because if you would be honest, you have heard the same call...maybe today....to Come and Follow me.....

Jesus cares about who you are but more importantly wants you to realize that He can make you into a new creation...you can have a new identity in Christ if you will simply respond to His invitation to follow Him.

The Mission of Jesus is the priority of the call to Discipleship....to follow Jesus. We are called simply to Go....

Make no mistake, you will follow something....the question is, who or what will you follow?

Jesus tells the story of a king who prepares a feast for his son and invites many guests but ALL refuse to come. Who in their right mind refuses a king? But not only did they refuse him once, but yet again....also murdering his messengers and going about their business....So the king then invites and even compels anyone and everyone who would come to the feast to come....one particular guest is seen by the king not in the proper attire for a wedding feast and the king, asks "How did you get in here without the proper attire". The man has no response because he knew he should have taken the clothes that were offered to the guests to wear....and he is escorted out harshly....

Then Jesus makes a really interesting statement.... "For many are called, but few are chosen". It can be read a different way....For many are invited but few accept the invitation. How many times have you spat in the face of the King by turning down His invitation?

He invites you to come....He HAS invited you to come....will you continue to NOT acknowledge Him as King? Will you respond like Simon Peter, Andrew, James and John or will you respond like the invited guests of the King? Will you drop everything you know...everything that is comfortable and everything you rely on in this life to follow Jesus?

So many of us think that 'calling' is about vocational ministry. We say things like: "that's not my calling".

Since when is the Great Commission a calling? Since when is making disciples about a calling to vocational ministry....the Great Commission is for all of us....the Messianic Call is for every disciple....not just pastors....or deacons....or whatever title you want to give to those you have deemed 'worthy' but you are not. Honestly that logic is just an excuse to not live a life worthy of the calling....the call to be a disciple.

Response:

Will you respond today like the first disciples? Will you drop everything? We do not normally do this, but I want you to take a step out....You are hearing the voice of Jesus calling out to you right now and He is saying: Follow me...with reckless abandon...follow me.....if that is you, respond....stand to your feet, kneel at your pew, or come to the front....but in some way, I would ask you to 'at once' or 'immediately' respond.....

We want to remind our guests that we have a gift we would love to share with you. After you finish your time of worship take a moment to stop by the Guest Table in the Connection Center and you can pick up your gift there.