

Matthew042325-040311
Bridge of Hope
April 3, 2011

“Beyond Ordinary”

Introduction: Good morning! I’m David 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 have been looking at what is the introduction to the rest of Matthew’s letter. It is found in Matthew 4:12-25 and contains 3 key thoughts for his readers concerning the launching of the Messianic Mission. As Matthew walks us through a series of transition steps he takes us from what others say to confirm Jesus is Messiah to what Jesus said and did to confirm that He is Messiah. We have discovered that John the Baptist has moved off the scene eliminating confusion concerning the roles each of them played. We found that Jesus fulfills even more Messianic prophecy by landing in Galilee where he will do the majority of His ministry. And we got to see Jesus step forward to take the lead now as He calls people to repentance.

Matthew then gives us a picture of how Jesus founded His Messianic community through the radical call to follow Him. He shares with us about how some of the first to follow Jesus dropped what they were doing as they abandoned all to His call. It is a powerful and challenging picture that Matthew gives us as these ordinary men leave the lives they have known to learn how to live Beyond Ordinary. The Messianic community begins to take shape as ordinary people respond to His call and follow Jesus. It is a whole new way of living that He now wants to lead His disciples into experiencing. This community would have love for one another as it’s banner and it would speak of their love for God and more importantly God’s love for them.

And now, now we get to see an overview of the beginnings. Matthew is about to launch into the actual teachings and work of the Messiah. But before he does, he gives this overview so that his readers can know what to expect. He is telling them just enough to create excitement in them about what is going to be shared. So this part of the introduction is meant to get you excited about the story of Jesus, who is called Messiah, who is Messiah.

This isn’t about a little obscure thing that only a few knew or experienced. And it isn’t about someone with empty words that make no real difference in life. This is the story of the Messiah who can change everything when people are willing to follow Him. It is about the radical things that can happen when people make radical life changes to follow Jesus Christ. Matthew is going to teach what Jesus said about how the Messianic community would live. He is going to remind everyone what Jesus taught so that they in turn could live it and share it with others. Matthew wants his Jewish readers to be excited about their choice to follow Jesus. He wants to be filled with anticipation for what they are about to read. And he wants them to pay close attention so they too can share the Good News with others about Jesus Christ.

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

Matthew 4:23-25 (NLT) *Jesus traveled throughout the region of Galilee, teaching in the synagogues and announcing the Good News about the Kingdom. And he healed every kind of disease and illness. News about him spread as far as Syria, and people soon began bringing*

to him all who were sick. And whatever their sickness or disease, or if they were demon-possessed or epileptic or paralyzed—he healed them all. Large crowds followed him wherever he went—people from Galilee, the Ten Towns, Jerusalem, from all over Judea, and from east of the Jordan River.

We get to look at what life Beyond Ordinary is going to be like as Matthew introduces us to the Messiah. Very soon Matthew will talk about the exchange the Messiah wants to make with all who will follow. But today as we complete the 4th chapter in Matthew's Gospel account we have 3 important thoughts from this introduction that launches the Messianic Mission:

- **Jesus Ministry Begins**

1. **Matthew now begins the summary of the start of Jesus' ministry as he describes a sketch of what it actually looked like.**
2. **Matthew shows the breadth of the ministry as he talks about Jesus and His disciples traveling throughout Galilee.**
 - We know that most of His ministry as stated in other texts of scripture was predominately in the more Jewish areas of Galilee, but the impact of the ministry hit the entire region.
 - Matthew wants his readers to know that Jesus was well known and impacted every area of Galilee.
 - It isn't that Jesus and His disciples visited every city, but most likely Jesus impacted just about every city.
3. **The description tells us that Jesus taught in the synagogues.**
 - This is interesting because we generally just read right through this, but to the Jewish reader it carried greater significance.
 - To teach in the synagogues came only through invitation and was a very formal or recognized form of teaching.
 - So Jesus was invited to teach in the formal setting of the synagogues.
 - This meant that in the early part of His ministry the Jewish religious structure gave Him a platform to speak from.
 - There must have been some reason for doing this, not everyone was given such an opportunity.
4. **The text also describes Jesus as simply proclaiming the Good News and again we don't always understand exactly what is being said here.**
 - This is about a much broader picture of Jesus' ministry.
 - He was teaching the people in informal settings as well.
 - Like on the hillside or by the edge of the lake.
 - Great crowds would find where He was and gather to listen and learn.
 - It was a ministry that went beyond the synagogue and flowed into the market place.
 - What better place to share the Good News than in the market place!
5. **We follow the example of Jesus as we are called to present the Gospel in both formal and informal settings.**
 - In worship we tell the Good News of Jesus' love.
 - In Fellowship we share the truth of His love.
 - In the Bible we learn about the Gospel.
 - In the Market Place we tell the story of Jesus and His love.
 - He is the story and we tell it wherever we find ourselves to be.
6. **Then Matthew tells us that Jesus was healing all sorts of illness and disabilities.**

- Matthew is setting the stage for more specific information that will be shared later in the letter, but for now it suffices to make a general statement.
- He wants the readers to know that right from the start Jesus healed people of sorts of sickness.

- **Reports Spread**

1. **For Matthew the most important thing is that the reports that were spread were about the who more than the what.**
 - Matthew emphasizes that the reports spread about Jesus.
 - He is keeping the focus on Jesus, which is something he will do throughout the letter.
 - The story isn't about the healings or the invitations to speak, it is about Jesus who did these things.
2. **The next important piece in this part is that they spread throughout the whole region.**
 - The word went out far beyond the places Jesus visited as people told of what they had heard and seen and who was doing them.
3. **Now Matthew gives us some detail about what the reports were.**
 - He gives some of the content of these reports by letting us see how people were responding to them.
 - People brought those who were suffering to Jesus, they brought people with all kinds of illness, afflicted by pain, possessed by demons, those who were subject to fits, and those who were paralyzed.
 - They brought them all to Jesus because they had heard about Him and what He said and did.
4. **Last of all Matthew tells us that Jesus healed them.**
 - We don't know if He literally healed every person or not.
 - It could be that Matthew was focused more on the types of things to represent Jesus power over every form of illness.
 - Either way it is an awesome report that went out as word spread throughout the entire area to both Jews and Gentiles about Jesus.
5. **Today, it still works the same way, when people talk about Jesus and what He has done, others listen and want to know more.**
 - Especially when they know it is real because they know the person who has been impacted by Jesus' love.
 - When they hear your testimony and know what you went through it gets their attention.
 - The story stills works!

- **Great Crowds Come**

1. **Matthew has already talked about the disciples who have made a radical commitment to follow Jesus.**
2. **Now Matthew lets us see that Jesus was reaching further than this radical group, Jesus was attracting some large crowds of people to hear what He has to say and to see if He will do a miracle in their lives.**
3. **It is interesting that Matthew uses the same term here in reference to the crowds as he did for the disciples.**
 - The word "follow" in this part is a term that denotes a radical change in life.
 - It isn't that Matthew is trying to say that everyone in the crowd made the same radical commitment that the disciples made.

- He is saying that some in the crowd began to make a radical change to follow Jesus.
 - We know that the crowds were for the most part fickle. Today they were there and tomorrow they weren't.
 - It was for some simply entertainment. For others they were drawn only for the miracles they could see. Still they all came to see Jesus.
 - They didn't all follow Jesus with such a radical commitment level, but some did and the crowd of those who followed (who made a radical life change) grew.
4. And then Matthew lets us know that the crowd that grew, who both followed Jesus and those who simply came to see what was going on, were from all over Israel.
- He lists in the text several areas to show the vastness with which the reports had actually spread and that people came from all these places to see Jesus.
 - Jesus was reaching much more than Galilee even though He was doing much of the ministry in Galilee.
5. We need to remember that the crowd will never gather unless we who have been transformed by the Good News are willing to talk about what Jesus has done.
- And when we do, those who listen might decide to check it out for themselves.
 - And when people check it out for themselves some become followers of Jesus too.
 - And when people believe the crowd of those who become radical true believers, they too grow and the cycle begins again.
 - Why? Because when Jesus's love changes your life you want to share it with anyone who will listen so that they too can experience His love.

Conclusion: The Messianic Mission has been launched. The ministry has begun, the reports have gone out, and the crowds have gathered. What you are about to read in the pages to follow is an actual account of what took place. This is what the Messiah came to say and do among us. The message of the Messianic Mission is simple, the Messiah has come to seek and save those who are lost. He has come to heal and restore lives. It is a message of great love as God has sent His one and only Son into the world so that whosoever will believe and follow Jesus will have eternal life. It is the Good News concerning Jesus Christ.

As we gather once again to remember and reflect on Jesus love through the elements of communion, we do so with greater understanding. We come with excitement because we know that Jesus has provided for us, He has provided for the sins of the whole world. And anyone who chooses to follow Him, who will respond to His call of love, they too can be grafted into the family of God.

Today as we share in this time of communion we call you to be the radical follower of Jesus Christ that you first set out to be. Remember your first love, when you first discovered that God so loved you that He gave His one and only Son for you. And then choose to live in way that reflects this first love. It is a call to radical crazy love!

Will our servers please come and share with all the communion prepared for this day.
 (prayer for the bread)
 (prayer for the cup)

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.