

Matthew 4:12-17

We pick up this morning in verses 12-17 where we left off. I want to remind you that you can find the sermon notes on the church app as well as a Bible if you forgot yours at home. You can also listen to past sermons, get major announcements and reminders, register for certain big events, and even give online through the app. Don't miss out on it. You can see the directions for how to download the app in your ministry guide...there are also instructions posted at the welcome desk etc.

I trust that you have found Matthew 4...and if you have, let's begin by looking again at verse 12 as we continue to look at the official beginning of Jesus' early ministry.

*Now when Jesus heard that John had been taken into custody, He withdrew into Galilee;*

1. John the Baptist's ministry was over...Jesus' was officially beginning.
2. So he goes to Galilee. **13** *and leaving Nazareth, He came and settled in Capernaum, which is by the sea, in the region of Zebulun and Naphtali.*
  - a. Why Galilee?
  - b. Read on. v14-16 **14** *This was to fulfill what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet: 15 "THE LAND OF ZEBULUN AND THE LAND OF NAPHTALI, BY THE WAY OF THE SEA, BEYOND THE JORDAN, GALILEE OF THE GENTILES— 16 "THE PEOPLE WHO WERE SITTING IN DARKNESS SAW A GREAT LIGHT, AND THOSE WHO WERE SITTING IN THE LAND AND SHADOW OF DEATH, UPON THEM A LIGHT DAWNED."*
  - c. The Gentiles, who have walked in darkness are about to see a great light: Jesus Christ
3. How did Jesus approach these people...these lands?

**17** *From that time Jesus began to preach and say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."*

## **I. He Preached**

Darkness is passing and Light has come in the person of Jesus Christ, who came preaching.

1. The early church was characterized by proclaiming the word of God!
2. Acts 4:31 *And when they had prayed, the place where they had gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak the word of God with boldness.*

- **We need a baptism of the Holy Spirit that will bring a boldness that will produce a preaching of the gospel that will shine the blinding Light of Christ on those who are in deep darkness.**

Jesus Preached!

## **II. What did He Preach?**

**17** *From that time Jesus began to preach and say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."*

Jesus preached "Repent." What does it mean to repent?

1. Ultimately repentance is a change of mind which results in a change of direction
2. It is a 180 degree u turn.
3. We are heading one way, but we change our mind, and do a 180 degree u-turn and go a different direction.

Repentance has 3 major elements.

**1. We must recognize and confess that we are guilty of personal sin**

- a. The Law of God...summarized in the 10 commandments...summarized by Jesus in the greatest commandments: love God and love our neighbor.
- b. Rom 3:23 *for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God*
- c. Rom 7:18 *For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh.*

**2. There must be a godly sorrow for and hatred of sin**

- a. 2 Cor 7:9-10 *As it is, I rejoice, not because you were grieved, but because you were grieved into repenting. For you felt a godly grief, so that you suffered no loss through us. For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly grief produces death.*
- b. Worldly sorrow is sorrow for circumstances or consequences and leads to death.
- c. Godly sorrow is sorrow for sin against God and leads to repentance and salvation.
  1. Drunk is a drunk for years and a happy drunk...until he hits a tree and is paralyzed from the waist down. Oh God, I am sorry! Is he sorry for his sin or his circumstance?
  2. Thief is excited he is getting away with a great loot from the bank he just robbed...until he hits the road block and is put in prison for 20 years. Oh God, I am sorry! Is he sorry for his sin or his circumstance?
  3. Now, our circumstances can drive us to repent sometimes...
    - a. but let us be sure that it is godly sorrow that breaks our hearts
    - b. And not just worldly sorrow that breaks our pride.

**3. There must be a purpose to forsake sin**

- a. Isa 1:16 *Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean; remove the evil of your deeds from before my eyes; cease to do evil*
- b. Isa 55:6-7 *Seek the Lord while he may be found; call upon him while he is near; let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the Lord, that he may have compassion on him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.*

Unfortunately, the message of repentance is not received well by those who operate in the flesh.

Exodus 7:20-24

1. The Egyptians would rather dig wells by hand than just repent!
2. **We would rather work ourselves to death trying to dig new wells than to just repent.**

The reason that the Gospel seems to have little affect in our 20th and 21st century world is because we have reduced the gospel to Admit, believe, confess...where is repentance?

1. We would rather do almost anything other than repent.
  - a. Pray a prayer? Sure
  - b. Get baptized? Ok
  - c. Join the church?
  - d. Give offerings...serve? Ok
  - e. Repent? What do I have to repent of?
2. In the words of Jesus Himself.... *"except we repent, we will all perish."*

The reason that the church is so weak and ineffective in our culture is that we have neglected the importance of repenting ourselves.

1. Judgment begins at the house of God.
2. But again, we would rather dig new wells than do things God's way.
  - a. We fail to pull the log out of our eyes because we are busy pointing out the splinter in everyone else's.
  - b. And because we fail to be repenting repenters that have the power of God, we become well diggers working ourselves to death in an effort to experience God our own way
  - c. We dig wells with this big production, this big program, this big effort, in an effort to make it appear that we have some sort of power and presence of God that we don't have...which we could have if our hearts would just break.
3. Bethel and a church in FL were busted for putting glitter and fog machines in the AC vents and selling it off as God's manifesting His presence...the glory cloud.
  - a. What does this say about the church today, that we have resulted to glitter in the vents?
  - b. What does it say about professing believers that we believe the glitter and fog??
4. *The Church must first repent; then the world will break!* Ravenhill

Jesus Preached "repent" and his message has not changed.

### III. Why did He preach it?

*17 From that time Jesus began to preach and say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."*

1. Because, the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand and you will not get into the Kingdom of Heaven without repenting.
2. That is shocking news isn't it...you will not get into the Kingdom of Heaven without repenting.
3. But it is true.

Luke 13:1-5 *Now on the same occasion there were some present who reported to Him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mixed with their sacrifices. 2 And Jesus said to them, "Do you suppose that these Galileans were greater sinners than all other Galileans because they suffered this fate? 3 I tell you, no, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish. 4 Or do you suppose that those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them were worse culprits than all the men who live in Jerusalem? 5 I tell you, no, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish."*

Why did Jesus preach...repent? Because the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand and you will not get into the Kingdom of Heaven without repenting.

1. You can pray a sinner's prayer without repenting.
2. You can get baptized without repenting.
3. You can join the church without repenting.
4. You can attend church, work in the church, give to the church, and be a good neighbor without repenting.
5. But you will not get into the Kingdom of Heaven without repenting!
  - a. Recognizing personal sin
  - b. Sorrow for and hatred of personal sin
  - c. Turning away from personal sin
6. But repentance has another side.
  - a. Turning away....turning to!
  - b. Judas Iscariot turned away, but he did not turn to, and therefore his repentance was incomplete and he went to hell.

Don't miss this.

1. Jesus preached repentance because repentance is the only way into the kingdom.
2. But a repentance that results in salvation...transformation...fruit...is 2 sided
  - a. Repentance...turning away
  - b. Faith...turning to
  - c. And then a continual transformation in Christ
3. Acts 26:18-20
  - a. If you want to get into the Kingdom of Heaven
    1. Out of darkness into light
    2. Out from under the power of Satan and into the power of God
    3. If you want to get into the Kingdom of Heaven
  - b. Repent...turn away...and turn to God experiencing transformation!

**Invitation:** Does this make sense to you?

1. Some of you have gone through the motions...but you have never repented and you see that now.
  - a. Maybe for the first time you have seen your personal sin and you have seen how grievous it is
  - b. Maybe for the first time you have felt true godly sorrow that breaks your heart
  - c. Maybe for the first time you have a clear desire to turn away from your sin and forsake your sin.
  - d. Tell it to Jesus right now. Repent!
2. Some of you have partially repented....you have turned away and you hate your sin and yourself...but you have failed to turn to!
  - a. You are trying to pay for your own sin by being good or by punishing yourself.
  - b. Turn away. Yes. But don't be a Judas and spiritually hang yourself!
  - c. Turn to Christ and be forgiven right now this morning.
3. If that is you, and you need to repent for the first time....or if you need to stop trying to pay for your own sin and embrace the forgiveness that can only be found in Christ, we want to pray for you. Just step out from where you are and come.

Pray