

## **The Call of the King**

### **Matthew 4:12-25**

Satan failed to take Jesus out. Instead he has John the Baptist imprisoned. Now Jesus must take centre stage. He does that by moving to Galilee.

#### **The State We're In**

The religious leaders looked down on Galilee. This was the scene of the Assyrian invasion. Its Jewish population had been decimated. Non-Jews had been resettled there. That is why it was called 'Galilee of the Gentiles'. It was to this multi-ethnic region that Jesus came.

The people are described as living in darkness: the darkness of ignorance of God, sin, and fear. We might think we are very different from them, but the Bible tells us we too live in the dark before we know Jesus: we don't know God, sin blights our lives, we can be controlled by fears and anxieties.

Isaiah tells us that darkness will be dispelled when a Son comes. Matthew says he has come – and he has come with a message.

#### **Called to Turn**

Jesus calls people to repent. That means he assumes we are heading the wrong way, that what we need in life is not a minor readjustment, but a radical change – to turn away from sin and towards God. But whilst the Christian life begins with repentance, it doesn't end there.

#### **Called to Follow**

Jesus calls these men to follow him. It is a call to a radical commitment. From now on, Jesus and your relationship with him will be what defines you. Being an admirer of Jesus costs you nothing, but it costs you everything to be a disciple. Life is forever changed when Jesus says, 'follow me.' When these fishermen said goodbye to their nets and boats, they were saying goodbye to everything those things symbolised: a life of relative comfort, security and prosperity.

Following Jesus will radically alter your relationship with money, comfort and success. It will alter how you see the approval, or the criticism, of the world. But rather than recoil from the cost – you will embrace it: because no one has ever given up anything for Christ that compares with what Christ has given up for us.

#### **Called to a Task**

Jesus called them to become fishers of men. He calls us to join him on his mission. That mission was threefold: teaching, proclaiming, healing.

He taught the good news of the kingdom – and as he gives us opportunity, so must we.

He proclaimed the good news of the kingdom. As we know and experience the power of the gospel in our own hearts we will be able to speak of it to others' hearts.

Thirdly, he healed. No sickness can stand in the way of Jesus. One day, when the kingdom comes fully, everything will be made whole. Until then we are to pray for the kingdom to come. We are to pray for the sick. We are to care for the suffering, and show mercy to the struggling. We are to be ambassadors of the king and outposts of the kingdom.