KINGDOM *of* HEAVEN

A SERIES IN THE BOOK OF MATTHEW

Matthew 4:12-22

(Sermon from Sunday 16 April 2023, Richard van Lieshout)

1. Information

a) **Read the passage, perhaps twice using two different versions**

b) **Fill in any info that didn't make it into the sermon.**

- There is additional information in the CG guide from **page 35-36**. You may want to add additional information on the theme of gentile mission from v12-16, which was not covered in the sermon.

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- It may be helpful for you to get a sense of how I divided up the passage, and the resulting sermon outline.

- I broke up the passage preached into three sections, basically outlining Jesus's 'strategy' as he begins his ministry:
  a) **Strategic relocation (v12-16)**
     - Wherein I explain the significance of Jesus's ministry starting in Galilee
  b) **Preaching (v17)**
     - Wherein I speak (again) about 'Repent'. You may recall I gave a more visual explanation when we covered John the Baptist's preaching in 3:1-12 ('the crossing of the rubicon'), here I give a more technical definition.
  c) **Recruiting (v18-22)**
     - Wherein I comment on the calling of the 4 disciples

- I ended the sermon by making two **preliminary** observations on what it means to follow Jesus **today:**
  a) **Following Jesus is personal**
  b) **Following Jesus is comprehensive.**

- They are **preliminary**, since there will be a lot more said on the theme of discipleship and following in Jesus in chapters 8&9, as well as 16.
- ***I'm trying to be careful to stick to the flow of Matthew and not jump ahead, dealing with the text as it unfolds!***

- I would strongly encourage you to do the same! Our tendency is to jump to a thematic discussion/sermon on discipleship, as we've been well trained on the subject and have been subjected to thousands of books and sermons on it.

- Matthew is certainly developing this important theme, and it seems he means for us to engage with the material as he has organised it (for example, placing the calls to discipleship of chapters 8&9 within stories of Jesus's works is a very thoughtful arrangement, and clearly meant to follow the Sermon on the Mount as well).

2. **Activation**

- I do think that it would be beneficial to unpack the two **preliminary** points on discipleship. There is a LOT of practical ground to cover in them!

a) Following Jesus is Personal

i. An aspect of the call of the disciples I didn't mention in the sermon is how Jesus chooses his disciples, whereas rabbinic transition at the time had disciples applying to be disciples of a particular rabbi. This distinction has big implications for us. **Reflect on this along with John 15:16**, keeping in mind the fact that Jesus chooses lowly Galilean fishermen, not the spiritual elite in Jerusalem!
ii. I make a point about about Jesus's call to follow 'me', and talk about 'churchianity' as a tendency to mistake the ritual of church going with following Jesus (I hope to nuance it correctly in the sermon, as I am obviously a huge fan of the Church!). **Reflect with your group on how, perhaps (especially for those who have been Christians longer), we sometimes default to church engagement as the primary means of following Jesus**. This 'call' text is a strong antidote/wake-up-call to rote religion!

b) Following Jesus is Comprehensive

i. There is a lot more to come in this category, in the Sermon on the Mount over the next few months. However, in the sermon I do make the one obvious connection in this story where the disciples leave behind their source of financial stability to follow Jesus (in the case of James & John it's a family business!). I make the comment how we make big decisions, like moving house, job & country to increase financial stability, but the disciples do the opposite! Clearly the subject of material possessions will be dealt with extensively by Jesus in the Sermon on the mount, **but I think it's right to reflect on the example of the first disciples especially in this instance**.

2. **Implementation**

- The 'transformation equation' can similarly be described as:
  i. What? (Information)
  ii. So what? (Activation)
  iii. **Now what? (Implementation)**

- What resolutions can your group make together for the coming week?