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A Gospel-Driven Ministry; Matthew 4:12-17

GPBC

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Introduction – Today’s text represents a turning point in the Gospel of Matthew, a major shift, if you will, in demonstrating that Jesus is the Christ, the Savior. Up to this point the fulfilling of the OT prophecies of the Messiah have been oriented toward place and events surrounding Jesus. How He was born, where He was born, the flight to Egypt, the settling in Nazareth, John the Baptist singling out Jesus as the One who was to come after him, the Spirit anointing and the Father announcing Him to be the One, and the devil’s failed attempt to cause His fall. Places and times and events that were setting the stage, putting the spotlight on Jesus.

Today’s text begins a new realm of presenting Jesus as the Messiah. We move from places and times and events to also actions. It’s not just what others are saying about Him and it’s not just the case that He happens to be in the right place at the right time, but He begins His public gospel ministry. It’s one thing for others to say Jesus is the light; it’s quite another for Jesus to be the light!

I. Why Now? V12

- a. From the other gospel accounts we know that about one year has passed between v11 and v12. There was a period of overlap in John’s ministry and Jesus’ ministry. Matthew brushes passed those events because he is more concerned in conveying the transition.
- b. Jesus began preaching when John’s ministry concluded. This movement from John to Jesus represents the full and complete transition from the one who was preparing the way of the Lord in ch3 to the Lord’s full public ministry which begins in ch4.
- c. This is a remarkable moment in time and in redemptive history. This completed transition from John to Jesus indicates that the wait is officially over. No longer are we waiting for God to make good His promises on sending a Redeemer. No longer are we waiting for the Lord’s way to be prepared. All things have been done that need to be done. The timing is right. The day has arrived. The Messiah is here and He is openly, fully, actively engaging in His mission as our Savior.

- d. The Old Covenant era of God's people awaiting and looking forward by faith is now concluding. The New Covenant era of God's people embracing Jesus as our substitute and Savior has dawned!
- e. What does this mean for us today in 2018? The gospel era is now. As Paul writes in 2 Cor 6:2 – Behold, now is the favorable time; behold, now is the day of salvation. The King has come. The work has been done. As Jesus cried from the cross, "It is finished!" Now, believe, believe in Jesus and you shall be saved.

## II. Why Galilee? Vv13-16

- a. In one sense the answer speaks to the Person of Christ
  - i. V14 – so that what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled. This fulfilling of Jesus making his home in Capernaum again places Jesus in the exact spot that fulfills OT prophecy. In this sense, it's about location just like Bethlehem, and Egypt, and Nazareth was about location. The OT prophetic locations and the life of Jesus fit with undeniable precision.
  - ii. In that sense we see that Jesus is the Messiah. And that's very important to recognize the remarkable, unique placing of Jesus in prophetic geographical location. That speaks to His person.
  - iii. However, the fulfillment of this prophecy includes much more than a matching of geographical location. It's not just that God promised the Messiah would be in Galilee of the Gentiles and here is Jesus in Galilee of the Gentiles. This fulfillment is about what the Messiah would be doing in Galilee of the Gentiles.
- b. In another sense the answer speaks to the Work of Christ
  - i. Jesus is not in Galilee merely because that's where God said He would be. It's also what God said He would be doing that only the Messiah can do!
  - ii. Read vv15-16 – The land of Zebulun and Naphtali, known in Jesus' day as Capernaum by the sea, had over the years become a population of Jew and Gentile. The invasions, the exiles, the transportation routes, the fishing industry had all collectively seen a growing population of Gentiles settle in this region.
  - iii. Years and years ago Isaiah had prophesied that the Messiah would have a great ministry extend to the Gentiles. V16.

- iv. God's work and plan of salvation up to this point had not totally excluded Gentiles, but it had been primarily with the Jewish people. God created a new people from Abraham, God delivered the Israelites from Egypt, God revealed His will and His law and commands to Israel, God put a temporary sacrificial system in place so that Israel could have their sins atoned and worship Him by means of a substitute. Now along the way Gentiles had come into this community, but the primary work had been with Israel.
  - v. This means for the vast nations of the world who were not Jew but Gentile, they did not have the grace of God's primary work and revelation. If they did, they were often bystanders not participants. They were in the dark. God was not directly speaking and working and saving and drawing them into worship. They dwelt in darkness and death.
  - vi. However, praise be to God, it was always the plan of God to send His Son, the Light into the darkness of the Gentile world. The gospel was always meant for the ends of the earth.
  - vii. God's focus on Israel in the OT was to create a new people through whom He would make Himself known to all peoples! He promised Abraham that through him all the families of the earth would be blessed. Remember we made that observation when we studied the genealogy of Jesus back in Matthew 1.
  - viii. This fulfillment passage is telling us God's plan to save people from every family on the earth is now beginning.
  - ix. Jesus is not just the light to the Jews; He's the Light of the World!
  - x. Imagine not knowing anything about the One true God or about the reality of the world or life or sin or truth. Imagine not having any access or historical reference or means of knowing about God's plan of salvation. Imagine knowing something is horribly wrong with you and with the world and sensing something greater and something beyond death but not having any answers!
  - xi. And then a great light dawns in the darkness!!!
- c. How the Work of Christ informs missions today

- i. This is a side note. But I just want to make sure we are aware today, we who gather at Grassy Pond Baptist Church that has existed since 1879, who associate with the largest Protestant denomination in the world, who have Bibles everywhere in our homes, who grow up hearing the gospel each and every week, let's remember that today there are Gentiles all over this planet who still dwell in darkness and regions of death. There are multitudes of people who remain BC!
- ii. They've never heard the gospel. The Light has yet to reach their village. Wycliff Bible translators estimates that 1,600 people groups have yet to have the Bible in their language. The Joshua Project has identified 17,017 distinct people groups in the world, 7,087 of which are classified as unreached. Entire countries have closed their doors to the gospel.
- iii. Missions is following the footsteps of Jesus into the dark regions of the Gentiles and by the proclamation of the gospel shining the light!
- iv. I'm all for any kind of missions. But what will we do Grassy Pond about those who have never heard?

### III. The Gospel is Driving the Ministry of Jesus

- a. From that time – when He was in Galilee of the Gentiles, when John's ministry concluded and His ministry went public – from that time Jesus began to preach.
- b. It's true we can support the gospel by giving. It's true we can support the gospel by praying. It's true we can demonstrate the gospel by how we live. But in the end, we must proclaim it.
- c. Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. Same message as John. When John preached it, kingdom of heaven is at hand meant that the Messiah was on the way. When Jesus preached it, it meant the kingdom of heaven is standing in front of you.
- d. The gospel always begins with repentance. The first step of salvation is always repentance. Repentance is knowing there is a God and that I'm not right with Him. Knowing my life of sin and living for self and going my own way has only brought death and destruction and disappointment. Knowing I don't want to live this way anymore!

Conclusion – when you reach repentance, Jesus is right in front of you! Look at next week's text. As Jesus preaches repentance, He calls disciples. Is He calling you today?