

News About Jesus Spreads

Matthew 4:12-25

BIBLE BACKGROUND FOR LEADERS

Prophecy Fulfilled

After John the Baptist had been put in prison, Jesus moved into a three-pronged ministry: teaching, preaching, and healing. He left his hometown of Nazareth and moved to Capernaum, in the area of Zebulun and Naphtali, thus fulfilling a 700-year-old prophecy from Isaiah (Isaiah 9:1). It was also during this time that Jesus called his first disciples—Peter, Andrew, James, and John.

Jesus Teaches and Preaches

During the week, Jesus preached to large crowds that gathered around him in the open air, and on the Sabbath he taught smaller gatherings in the synagogues. Though not the same as the Temple, synagogues had become the common meeting place for Jews during and after their captivity in Babylon. They met regularly on the Sabbath and perhaps on other days of the week as well. They held regular services, and guests were allowed to speak, which gave Jesus frequent opportunities to address synagogue gatherings.

Jesus Heals

As Jesus traveled about Galilee, he didn't just preach and teach. Matthew is careful to point out that no illness or disease was beyond Jesus' power to heal. The descriptions of the diseases Jesus healed indicate that some were quite severe. Jesus also healed those possessed by demons, those paralyzed by injury or disease, and those having seizures. These miracles of healing grew out of Jesus' compassion and grace and also served to give authority to the message he proclaimed. Someone who demonstrated God's power could be trusted to speak for God as well. And with the healings came notoriety. Jesus' actions became known not only in Galilee but also throughout Syria (the area north of Galilee), drawing even more people to follow Jesus.

Jesus' Ministry Continues

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Jesus' compassion, as well as his power to heal, drew people to him then and continues to do so today. However, sometimes Jesus depends on his followers to be the ones to demonstrate compassion and grace to others. We have been empowered by the Holy Spirit to preach and teach the good news about Jesus and the kingdom of God and to offer compassion and grace to those who are hurting.

The Jesus Connection

As an imitator of Jesus, you've been called to participate in some part of Jesus' three-pronged ministry strategy. You find meaning and purpose in your life by obeying your calling.

How do you use your "teacher" role to advance Jesus' strategy of ministry? What skills do you want to develop to be more effective? Talk to God about what you can learn from Jesus' teaching. You can write your prayer here.

Adult

 Lesson 8

Winter Quarter

The Many Names of Jesus

The Bible includes many names and descriptions for Jesus. Look up the verses below, and write in the space provided what each name or description tells you about Jesus.

1. Isaiah 7:14
2. Isaiah 9:6
3. Matthew 11:28-30
4. John 1:29
5. John 4:10-14
6. John 4:25-26
7. John 6:35
8. John 8:12
9. John 10:14
10. John 11:25-26
11. John 11:27
12. John 14:6
13. John 15:5
14. Hebrews 4:14
15. Revelation 1:17-18



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DIGGING

Matthew 4:12-25 ► Bible Point—Jesus wants everyone to follow him. Key Verse—"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28).

Daily Challenges

Choose one or more of these activities to do this week.

- Write down the things that are getting in the way of following Jesus. Then lift up each of those things to God in prayer, thanking him for his willingness to clear those obstacles in our path and asking God for perseverance in following Jesus.
- Think of a friend who appears interested in following Jesus. Set a time with your friend to listen to him or her and, if appropriate, invite your friend to worship with you at church.
- Go to a Christian bookstore or go online to find a resource on discipleship, and make a commitment to read it.

Through the Week

Use the following passages to explore additional biblical perspectives on the reasons people follow Jesus.

Monday–Mark 2:1-12

These men needed to talk to Jesus because their friend was paralyzed. Why do you need to talk to Jesus?

Tuesday–John 4:46-54

What problems do you need Jesus to help you with?

Wednesday–Mark 1:40-42

How do you think Jesus will respond when you ask him for help?

Thursday—Matthew 18:19-20

Who could you ask to pray with you about your problems?

Friday–Luke 18:1-8

What should we do when our prayers are not answered right away?

Saturday—Hebrews 4:16

What will God give us in our time of need?

Talk Topics

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- Talk about a time you really needed God's help, like the people in today's Bible passage.
- What are the top five reasons you have for following Jesus?
- Talk about a time you chose not to follow Jesus, and what happened.
- Talk about what Jesus means when he promises to give us rest in Matthew 11:28.



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