

Following Jesus

Luke 4:12-25

Follow God's Purpose in 2021 and be Prepared for the Unexpected

Questions to Ponder:

1. What were some challenges from 2020 that you were not ready for?
2. What were the hardest challenges from 2020?
3. What are the things that you would change from 2020?
4. What are the things that you would not change from 2020?
5. What from the experiences from 2020 help prepare you for the challenges of 2021?
6. What are your plans for 2021? Are you hesitant to make plans?
7. Are you prepared to respond to the unknown of 2021?

When Jesus heard that John had been put in prison, he withdrew to Galilee. Leaving Nazareth, he went and lived in Capernaum, which was by the lake in the area of Zebulun and Naphtali— to fulfill what was said through the prophet Isaiah:

“Land of Zebulun and land of Naphtali, the Way of the Sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles—the people living in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned.”

From that time on Jesus began to preach, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.”

Jesus began his ministry after John was put into prison. Keeping in mind that Jesus was fully man and fully God it is not clear if he knew about the timing of what would happen with John. But when it did happen he followed the plan of God because He knew the Word of God. On a societal level we know that because Jesus was baptizing there were Jewish leaders in the south that were concerned about Him. His move north was a natural step because of the issues in the south and because Galilee was more densely populated with a more diverse group of people. After he was rejected in Nazareth he moved to Capernaum the center of trade.

Key Points:

1. Jesus was prepared to respond to the imprisonment of John because He knew the prophecies and He understood His purpose.
2. The move to Capernaum was strategic because of a large Gentile presence, the Jews were more open and flexible, and it was a center of trade for the surrounding countries.
3. Jesus did not take on the message of John until John was no longer able to speak that message. (Repent for the Kingdom of Heaven has come near)

Questions to Consider:

1. Do you believe that Jesus while on earth the day and the hour that John the Baptist would be imprisoned or was he prepared to take on the message because he knew the prophetic scripture?
2. Do you believe that Jesus went north because he was thinking strategically or was he following the prophetic Word? Is it spiritual to think strategically?
3. What do you think it means that the people living in darkness have seen a great light? What is that light? How did they see that light? Who were the actual people living in Darkness?
4. How does the message “*Repent for the Kingdom of Heaven has come near*” potential bring light to darkness?
5. How can we bring light to the darkness?
6. How can our worship service bring light to the darkness? How can we improve the effectiveness of our worship service to bring light to the darkness of this world?
7. What can you do with your life to bring light to the darkness?

Following Jesus

Luke 4:12-25

Follow God's Purpose in 2021 and be Prepared for the Unexpected

As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. "Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will send you out to fish for people." At once they left their nets and followed him. Going on from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John. They were in a boat with their father Zebedee, preparing their nets. Jesus called them, and immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.

Keep in mind that this was not the first encounter that these four men had with Jesus. We see in John 1 that Andrew was a disciple of John the Baptist along with John the brother of James. It is likely that Peter and James had already been introduced to him. It is also interesting that Peter, John, and James were the inner circle of the disciples of Christ. So when these four men were approached by Jesus they already had context. But they had not fully left everything to follow Jesus.

Key Points:

1. Jesus was calling men who were already partially engaged in the message. They just had not fully committed.
2. These four men were all from the North and the communities in and around Capernaum. They were already open for change and could even have been politically active.
3. The call of Jesus was for a full commitment to leave what was comfortable and trust Him. The expectation was that Jesus would devote himself to them and they would devote themselves to Jesus. It was a mutual commitment.

Questions to Consider:

1. Why do you believe that Andrew and John left John the Baptist (John 1:35-37)?
2. Why do you believe that they did not immediately follow Jesus? What was missing?
3. Why did Jesus start with these four men?
4. What was involved with this commitment? What do you think that they believed was involved with this commitment?
5. Is it possible to be a Christian and not a disciple? Is it important?
6. How can we help each other to grow as disciples?
7. Do you want to be a disciple? What is holding you back? What does leaving the nets and father look like in our cultural context today?

Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people. News about him spread all over Syria, and people brought to him all who were ill with various diseases, those suffering severe pain, the demon-possessed, those having seizures, and the paralyzed; and he healed them. Large crowds from Galilee, the Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea and the region across the Jordan followed him.

The center of ministry operation was Capernaum and from there Jesus went throughout Galilee. His message was the good news of the kingdom, that the kingdom was near. We will see the details of that message on the Sermon on the Mount. He was well known even in Jerusalem which was a four days journey. His focus at this point was sharing the message. This would not be considered personal evangelism like what Paul did in his travels years later. This was a general message of the good news.

1 Corinthians 3:9

*For we are co-workers in God's service; you are
God's field, God's building.*

**Oversea Chinese Mission
Beyond Walls Church**

Following Jesus

Luke 4:12-25

Follow God's Purpose in 2021 and be Prepared for the Unexpected

Key Points

1. Jesus went to the synagogues so his focus was still the Jewish people. But in healing and overall impact his ministry affected both Gentile and Jewish.
2. Jesus was caring for the physical needs of the people not as an end but as a natural part of a loving person. His healing also demonstrated that His message had authority. It will become more clear later that many people were following Him not for His message but for His miracles.

Questions to Consider

1. What is the message of the Good News that Christ preached? How does that Good News fit with the "Repent for the Kingdom has come near?"
2. What would the message sound like today in our cultural context?
3. Is it valid today to go to the people and speak the Good News?
4. None of us is able to perform miracles such as healing. What can we do that will show our love for the physical needs of others. Do those acts draw people closer to God or make them more open to hear the message of the Good News?
5. Should the church today be more focused on the physical needs of the community or the spiritual needs? What does that balance look like? How does this help us decide on what we should do?
6. What are some possible ways that your small group can work together to share the Good News?