

Bible Study Class
Clayton Presbyterian Church
Lesson 5 Jesus
From Judea to Galilee

Opening prayer: God, give us this day such blessings through our worship and study of you, that we may better serve You in the coming days. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Read John 4:1-7

Matthew 4: 12 When Jesus heard that John had been put in prison, he withdrew to Galilee.

Q 1. When Jesus heard that John the Baptist had been put in prison, where did He go? The verses in John indicate that the first ministry Jesus did with His disciples was a baptizing ministry at the Jordan. Sometime after that and after the arrest of John the Baptist, Jesus went to Galilee to begin His itinerant ministry in that region. Jesus knew that because of His rising prominence and popularity, there would soon be a confrontation with the religious establishment. Jesus knew that the time was not yet right for a confrontation in Jerusalem, so He returned to Galilee.

Read Luke 3:18-20

Q 2. Why was John the Baptist put in prison? The relationship between Herod and Herodias was both complicated and sinful. He was her uncle, and he seduced her from his half-brother. In marrying Herodias, Herod at once married a woman both his niece and his sister-in-law. Because John made such a bold stand for the truth, Herod, who was steeped in immorality, punished him. One source quotes Josephus as saying that Herod feared John's popularity and was afraid that he might start a revolt.

Q 3. What had the Pharisees heard concerning the results of Jesus' preaching? If His disciples were baptizing more than John had baptized then their popularity was greater than John the Baptist. Why would that be important to them? They were afraid that they may lose some of their power over the people. To Jesus?

Jesus was concerned that He could carry on His mission and not be stopped by the religious authorities until His time was come.

Q 4. Why did Jesus go through Samaria on His way to Galilee?

Although the road through Samaria was the shortest route from Jerusalem to Galilee, pious Jews often avoided it. They did so because there was a deep distrust and dislike between many of the Jewish people and the Samaritans. When the

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Babylonians conquered the southern kingdom of Judah, they took almost all the population captive, exiling them to the Babylonian Empire. All they left behind were the lowest classes of society, because they didn't want these lowly regarded people in Babylonia. These ones left behind intermarried with other non-Jewish peoples who slowly came into the region, and the Samaritans emerged as an ethnic and religious group. Because the Samaritans had a historical connection to the people of Israel, their faith was a combination of commands and rituals from the Law of Moses, put together with various superstitions. Most of the Jews in Jesus' time despised the Samaritans, disliking them even more than Gentiles - because they were, religiously speaking, "half-breeds" who had an eclectic, mongrel faith. The Samaritans built their own temple to Yahweh on Mount Gerizim, but the Jews burned it around 128 b.c. This obviously made relations between the Jews and the Samaritans even worse. The city of Sychar was the capital city of the Samaritans.

Q 5. Where did Jesus have a conversation with a Samaritan woman? This was the well where Abraham first came, and Joseph's bones are buried. Everyone knew about Jacob's well. Notice the humanity of Jesus, he is tired and thirsty because it is about noon. Usually, the women would go to the well during the morning or evening or both. The fact that this woman was coming at noon probably says that she was trying to avoid the other women. Briefly describe this conversation and any conclusions we should draw from it and the events surrounding it. All in all, this woman is a fascinating character. "She is of mature age, and has had a not altogether reputable past. She is frivolous, ready to talk with strangers, with a tongue quick to turn grave things into jests; and yet she possesses, hidden beneath masses of unclean vanities, a conscience and a yearning for something better than she has." (Maclaren) Another commentator contrasts this woman with Nicodemus who came at night, she came at day. Nicodemus was supposed to be an educated religious leader and she was of loose morals. Yet we see that she accepted Jesus' message more readily.

Read John 4:31-34

Q 6. What did Jesus tell His disciples His food or meat was when they tried to get Him to eat? The disciples went into the Samaritan village to get food, and wanted Jesus to eat what they brought to Him. How do you feel when you fix a meal and no one wants to eat it? Spurgeon says "It is right for the spiritual man to forget his

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hunger, but it is equally right for his true friends to remind him that he ought to eat for his health's sake: it is commendable for the worker to forget his weakness and press forward in holy service; but it is proper for the humane and thoughtful to interpose with a word of caution, and to remind the ardent spirit that his frame is but dust. I think the disciples did well to say, 'Master, eat.' Jesus wasn't saying that food and drink and rest are not important. Instead, He wanted His disciples to know that life was more than those things; that man does not live by bread alone.

Read John 4:35-38

Q 7. Although the time for harvesting the grain fields was several months away, what did Jesus to His disciples about the "harvest" ? Explain. There are still four months and then comes the harvest: This was a proverb with the idea that there is no particular hurry for a task because things simply take time and you can't avoid the waiting. Jesus did not want His disciples to have this mentality; He wanted them to think and act as if the harvest was ready now. Jesus used the idea of food and harvest to communicate spiritual ideas. The idea of harvest meant that there were many people ready to be received into the Kingdom of God, and that the disciples should see themselves as workers - reapers - in that harvest. Jesus encouraged His disciples in their work with Him in at least three ways.

- Their work in the harvest would be rewarded
- The good of their work would last forever
- Every worker in the harvest would rejoice together in the work.

John the Baptist had prepared the way by sowing the seeds, now they were to harvest.

Read John 4:39-45

Q 8. Why did many of the Samaritans believe? Many of the Samaritans of that city believed in Him: At that moment they did not know enough to trust Jesus and His work on the cross; but they could most certainly believe in Him as the Messiah of God. Whose testimony was instrumental in their belief? They did believe, and because of the word of the woman who testified. This was remarkable in light of the opinions of most of the Jewish people of Jesus' day regarding the Samaritans. They regarded Samaria and the Samaritans as a place and people to

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avoid if possible, and if it were necessary to go through Samaria it should be done as quickly as possible. Yet Jesus stayed there two days.

Q 9. What did Jesus say in reference to prophet having honor? He has no honor in his own country. Why? Galilee was Jesus' country - where He grew up. Because these people felt so familiar with Jesus, they did not honor Him the way they should have. In this we recognize that they really were not familiar with Jesus; if they were, they would have honored Him all the more. There is such a thing as a false familiarity with Jesus; a dangerous feeling that we know all about Him. Such a dangerous feeling leads to a lack of honor towards Jesus. Where was He when He made this statement? Back in Galilee. Jesus spent most of His time in the region of Galilee, usually only going up to Jerusalem for the appointed feasts. Galilee was a large, populated area north of Judea and Jerusalem, where Jews and Gentiles lived together, though usually in their own distinct cities. Galilee was not a small backwater region. According to the ancient Jewish historian Josephus, Galilee was an area of about 60 by 30 miles and had 204 villages, with none less than 15,000 people. This means there were more than 3 million people in the extended region.

Mark 1: 14-15 After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. "The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news."

Q 10. What did Jesus begin to preach upon His arrival in Galilee? Jesus was a preacher and He brought the message of God's rule on earth, though not in the manner that was popularly expected or desired. Most people wanted a political kingdom that would replace the oppressive occupation of the Romans. Contrary to the expectations of most people in His day, Jesus brought a kingdom of love, not subjugation; of grace, not law; of humility, not pride; for all men, not only the Jews; to be received voluntarily by man, not imposed by force. The Gospel of Mark- will stress the *work* of Jesus and His wonderful miracles. But with this opening statement, Mark reminds us that the focus of Jesus' ministry was preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God. Jesus was a preacher who did wonderful miracles, not a miracle worker who sometimes preached. He wanted people to know that it was near - as close as your hand. It wasn't as distant or as dreamy as they had imagined. Now was the time for them to encounter the kingdom of God. There are

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two ancient Greek words that can be translated time. One is *chronos*, meaning simple chronological time. The other is *kairos*, meaning "the strategic opportunity, the decisive time." Jesus used this second word when He said, "the time is fulfilled." His idea was, "The strategic time for the kingdom of God is now. Now is your time of opportunity. Don't let it pass you by." When Jesus preached the gospel of the kingdom of God, He wanted people to know what entering that kingdom was like. They could not enter the kingdom going the same way they had been going. They had to change their direction to experience the kingdom of God. It is wonderful to feel sorry about your sin, but repent isn't a "feelings" word. It is an action word. Jesus told us to make a change of the mind, not merely to feel sorry for what we have done. Repentance speaks of a change of direction, not a sorrow in the heart. We can't come to the kingdom of God unless we leave our sin and the self-life.

Read John 4: 46-54

Q 11. Briefly describe the second miracle Jesus performed at Cana of Galilee. By this time Jesus had made His home in Capernaum. Though Jesus was at Cana, the nobleman travelled the 20 or so miles from Capernaum to Cana. This man was probably an officer of Herod Antipas." This man was one of many parents who came to Jesus on behalf of an afflicted child. He obviously came with passion and urgency of a father of a sick child - and at the point of death. Jesus rebuked those who depended on signs and wonders before they would believe. It might seem that Jesus was harsh towards this man who wanted his son healed, but He encountered many in Galilee who were interested only in His miracles - He therefore questioned this man accordingly. Signs and wonders from God are obviously good things, but they should not form the foundation of our faith. We should not depend on them to prove God to us. In themselves, signs and wonders cannot change the heart; Israel saw incredible signs at Mount Sinai and even heard the very voice of God, yet a short time later they worshipped a gold calf. Alford says, "These words imply the contrast between the Samaritans, who believed because of His word, and the Jews who would not believe but through signs and prodigies." What was the first? Changing water into wine.

Read Matthew 4:18-22

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Q 12. While walking by the Sea of Galilee in Capernaum, who did Jesus call to follow Him? Briefly describe this incident. This story is told in Mark and Luke as well. Luke adds the conversation with Peter about an unclean man as well as the miracle of pulling up so many fish that the nets were breaking. This was not the first time Jesus met these men, and other gospels describe previous encounters, but this is when Jesus called them to leave their professions and follow Him with a full-time commitment. "Its fishing industry was prosperous, and its fishermen not necessarily poor. Zebedee's family employed workers." God usually calls people as they are busy doing something. Jesus called the apostles as they were casting a net into the sea or mending their nets. "They were busy in a lawful occupation when he called them to be ministers: our Lord does not call idlers but fishers." (Spurgeon) In that day, it was customary for a rabbi to have disciples; there was nothing cult-like about Jesus asking these men to be with Him constantly and to learn from Him. In some aspects, Jesus offered them a traditional education at the feet of a rabbi; in other aspects, this was very different from a normal rabbinical education.

Read Matthew 4:13-16

Q 13. What prophecy was fulfilled when Jesus left Nazareth and went to live in Capernaum? This comes from Isaiah 9:1-2

Read Luke 4:31-44

Q 14. What characteristic of Jesus' teaching astonished those who heard Him teach in the synagogue at Capernaum? Jesus pursued His primary calling as a teacher, taking advantage of the courtesy of the synagogue. We are not told what Jesus taught, but we are told of the effect the teaching had on His audience. They were astonished. They had never heard anyone teach quite like this before.

Q 15. After an unclean spirit in a man at Capernaum recognized Him, what confession did he make concerning Jesus? The terms unclean spirit, evil spirit, and demon all seem to be the same, referring to evil powers of darkness who are the enemies of God and man. These powers are organized and led by Satan himself. What have we to do with You, Jesus of Nazareth? It is ironic that the demons knew who Jesus was, but the chosen people - those from His own city - did not appreciate who Jesus was. Did You come to destroy us? This question "reflects

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the belief that the advent of the kingdom of God would spell the demise of demonic control over the world." (Pate) I know who You are; the Holy One of God! The demon himself testified that Jesus was holy and pure. The demons admitted that their wilderness temptations failed to corrupt Jesus. What did Jesus say to this unclean spirit? But Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Be quiet, and come out of him!" What was the reaction of the people as a result of the unclean spirit obeying Jesus? The manner of Jesus' dealings with the demon in this passage is a clear demonstration of His power and authority over the spirit realm. People were amazed at the authority of His word in both teaching and in spiritual living. "This may have distinguished Jesus from the 'ordinary' exorcist's fanfare of incantations, charms, and superstitions." (Pate)

Q 16. After leaving the synagogue in Capernaum, into whose house did Jesus go? Simon will later be identified as Peter, the leader among the disciples of Jesus. This shows that Simon Peter was married. Clement of Alexandria, an early Christian writer, said that Peter's wife helped him in ministry by meeting the needs of other women. Who did He find sick there? His mother-in-law. What did He do? He stood over her and rebuked the fever: In this situation, Jesus saw the fever itself as something to be rebuked. Perhaps He perceived that there was some spiritual dynamic behind this seemingly natural illness. This was not only the healing of a disease, but also the immediate granting of strength. One doesn't normally go from a high fever to serving others.

Q 17. When Simon and others came to Jesus and told Him the people were seeking Him, what reason did He give for separating Himself from the multitudes who were seeking Him? I must preach the kingdom of God to the other cities also: He taught about the kingdom of God, in the sense that He announced the presence of the King and corrected people's misconceptions about the kingdom. Jesus saw His main ministry, at this point, to be preaching the kingdom. Miracles were a part of that work, but not His main focus.

Read Matthew 4:23-25

Q 18. As Jesus traveled all over Galilee, what did He preach? The good news of the kingdom. What else did He do? People brought to him all who were ill with various

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diseases, those suffering severe pain, the demon-possessed, those having seizures, and the paralyzed; and he healed them.

Q 19. Where were the multitudes from who followed Jesus as a result of the miracles and teaching He had done during His travels in Galilee? Crowds from Galilee, the Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea and the region across the Jordan followed him.

Closing prayer: Lord, Help us to apply these lessons of Jesus to our lives. Amen.

Matthew 4:18-22	Luke 3:18-20	John 4:1-7
Matthew 4:13-16	Luke 4:31-44	John 4:31-34
Matthew 4:23-25		John 4:35-38
		John 4:39-45
		John 4: 46-54

Texts for lesson six: Matthew 4:23-25, 8:2-4, 9:2-9 10:2-4, 12:1-21
 Mark 1:40-3:19; Luke 4:42-44. 5:12-28, 6:1-16; John 5:1-47

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