

Youth Teaching Resources

January 26, 2020



Season after Christmas (January 5)

Now Appearing

John 1:1-9, 10-18 – “The Word that Reveals”

Epiphany (January 12-February 23)

Matthew 3:13-17 – “A Son Who Pleases”

John 1:29-42 – “A Lamb Who Leads”

Matthew 4:12-23 – “A Preacher Who Calls”

www.nurturingfaith.net

Subscribe to *Nurturing Faith* to access the core Bible content for this lesson.
Find links and videos related to this lesson.

A Preacher Who Calls

Matthew 4:12-23

YOUTH Teaching Guide

by Jeremy Colliver

This youth teaching outline is designed to support THE BIBLE LESSON by Tony Cartledge, printed in *Baptists Today*. You can subscribe to either the digital or print edition of *Baptists Today* to access the lessons. Please also ensure that each person in your class has a copy of *Baptists Today* so they can prepare before the lesson.

PARENT PREP

How many times do you have to call for your students before they answer? Do you have to come up with creative ways to get their attention? Do they roll their eyes when they finally arrive? As they are trying to create their independent personas, they will be less and less likely wanting to be around you. It isn't you, they are trying to distance themselves from the people that they have defined themselves by so far in life. This is why one of your friends can say the same thing you have over and over and they will listen to the friend.

TEACHING THE LESSON

Fellowship

Begin the session by showing the clip "Popular" from *Wicked*. If you are unable to show the clip, summarize it to the best of your ability, and then facilitate a discussion by using questions like the following:

- 1) Why was Glinda trying to make Elphaba popular? Did she have good intentions?
- 2) Does Elphaba believe her?
- 3) Does Elphaba want to be popular like Glinda?
- 4) Who do you take advice from?
- 5) Who do you want to be like?
- 6) Who do you follow on Instagram? Why do you follow the people that you do? How much influence do you think they have on you?
- 7) Who do you follow in your faith?

Information

Transition to the next section of the session by reading Matthew 4:12-25. Allow the students to ask any initial questions they have about the text. As you answer their questions, you may want to provide some of the information found in Tony's commentary to answer their questions. When the students have had an opportunity to share their initial thoughts, continue the discussion by facilitating a discussion using questions like the following:

- 1) Why was John arrested? What does this have to do with Jesus?
- 2) What does it mean to repent?
- 3) What does Matthew mean by the "Kingdom of Heaven"?
- 4) How did Jesus begin his ministry?
- 5) What was Jesus' challenge to his first disciples?
- 6) Had Jesus' first disciples met Jesus before being called? Does it matter? Explain.

If your group would like to dig deeper in their discussion, share some of the insights that Tony provides in the "Digging Deeper" portion of his commentary. You may want to use some questions like the following to facilitate your discussion:

- 1) Where is Capernaum? Why does Jesus go here?
- 2) What does "beyond the Jordan" mean to the people of Israel?
- 3) Who was the first disciple?
- 4) What was the Sea of Galilee like? How does this shape this story?

You may also want your group to discuss "The Hardest Question" if they would like to continue their discussion on this passage. Tony poses the following question to consider as "The Hardest Question": Why did Jesus begin his ministry in Galilee?

Transformation

Conclude your time together by leading the group through the ancient practice of Ignition Contemplation. If you have not led your group through this process, familiarize yourself with the practice before leading the group. Once you have led the group through the practice, allow students to share their experiences with the practice and what God has revealed to them through the practice.

Close with a prayer thanking God for continuing to call us all these years later and even when we don't listen.

Digging Deeper

by Tony Cartledge

Digging Deeper is designed to support THE BIBLE LESSON by Tony Cartledge, printed in *Nurturing Faith Journal*. Watch for the “shovel” icon in the THE BIBLE LESSON, and then reference that item in this Digging Deeper resource. You can subscribe to either the digital or print edition of *Nurturing Faith Journal* to access the lessons. Please also ensure that each person in your class has a copy of *Nurturing Faith Journal* so they can prepare before the lesson.

The text—The Revised Common Lectionary reading stops at v. 23, but the pericope continues through v. 25, so we will consider all of Matt. 4:12-25.

Why was John arrested?—Nothing is said about why John had been arrested. Later, we read that John was in prison (11:2). Not until 14:3-4 do we learn that John had been imprisoned for criticizing Herod Antipas for having married his brother Herod Phillip’s wife, Herodias. This may or may not have been the same arrest: the Jewish authorities could have arrested him earlier for claiming publicly that Jesus was the son of God. We have too little to go on, other than that John continued to have some disciples who remained with him. The interesting thing to note is that Matthew portrays Jesus and John “hearing” about the other and responding, but not personally interacting.

Arrested, in a word—The word translated as “arrested” in v. 12 normally means something like “delivered up,” “handed over,” or “turned in.” Later Matthew would use it in connection with Jesus being delivered to the authorities and to the cross (17:22; 20:18; 26:2). The participle form was used of Judas as the one who betrayed, or turned him in (26:25, 46, 48; 27:3).

Capernaum—All four gospels locate Jesus in Capernaum at some point, but only Matthew says that he intentionally moved there, leaving his home in Nazareth, at the very beginning of his ministry. In Luke, Jesus is rejected in the synagogue at Nazareth before “he went down to Capernaum, a city in Galilee,” in order to teach (Luke 4:31), apparently adopting it as a home base because Simon and Andrew had a home there.

Beyond the Jordan?—Strangely, both Isaiah 9:1 and Matthew’s quotation in v. 15 describe the land of Zebulun and Naphtali as being “beyond” or “across” the Jordan, but they were both on the near side of the Jordan River. Elsewhere, “beyond the Jordan” (modern “Transjordan”) routinely refers to the eastern side of the Jordan. Capernaum is located about three miles west of the Jordan, but it was close to the Transjordan area, where Jesus also ministered.

Editor Matthew—Matthew’s gospel draws heavily from the earlier gospel of Mark, which describes the beginning of Jesus’ preaching ministry this way: “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near, repent and believe the good news.”

Matthew’s version is much shorter: “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near” (v. 17). Perhaps it is because he has included a specific prophecy that Matthew deletes “the time is fulfilled,” though it is less clear why he did not include Jesus’ call to “believe the good news.” Perhaps he thought the good news was self-evident in the nearness of the kingdom.

Digging Deeper *continued*

Who's on first?—Matthew 4:1-22 and Mark 1:16-20 tell essentially the same story: Jesus first saw Peter and Andrew casting their nets on the Sea of Galilee, called them, and they followed. He then repeated the process with James and John.

Luke's account (5:1-11) differs in that Jesus, pursued by a crowd, hops into Simon's boat and asks him to shove it out into the water. After preaching from the floating pulpit, he tells them where to cast their net and the catch a great haul of fish, leading Peter to kneel in adoration. James and John, described as Simon's partners, are also amazed, and they join Simon Peter in following Jesus. Though we may presume Andrew was present, he is not mentioned until 6:14.

John's version (1:35-42) says that Andrew and another unnamed person had become disciples of John the Baptist, who was preaching in Judea. Jesus met them there and invited them to stay with him. Andrew sought out his brother Simon and brought him to Jesus, who renamed him Cephas (Aramaic for Peter). The next day, Jesus found Philip, who introduced him to Nathanael (1:43-51). James and John do not enter the story until later.

The Sea of Galilee—As you visualize the Sea of Galilee, recall that it is relatively oval shaped, about 14 miles long and 3-7 miles wide. As Mark tells it, Jesus would probably have met Simon and Andrew on the north shore, near their home village of Capernaum, which was located right on the shore.

If you're thinking of sandy beaches, think again: the shore is consistently rocky, with very little sand.

The Hardest Question

by Tony Cartledge

The Hardest Question is designed to support THE BIBLE LESSON by Tony Cartledge, printed in *Nurturing Faith Journal*. You can subscribe to either the digital or print edition of *Nurturing Faith Journal* to access the lessons. Please also ensure that each person in your class has a copy of *Nurturing Faith Journal* so they can prepare before the lesson.

Why did Jesus begin his ministry in Galilee?

If Jesus wanted to make an immediate impact, one would think he'd choose to begin preaching in Jerusalem, or that he would take advantage of the crowds John had attracted to a wilderness area near the Jordan River, much closer to Jerusalem than Galilee. Why start in an out-of-the-way place like Galilee?

In the time of Jesus, Galilee was a governmental district located north and west of the Sea of Galilee, stretching south to the Jezreel Valley, north to Lake Huleh, and west to the border with Phoenicia. Historically, its population was mainly non-Jewish, so much so that it was called "Galilee of the nations" (Isa. 9:1 [NRSV], or "Galilee of the Gentiles" [NIV]).

Today, the term is used more to describe a geographic region. "Upper Galilee" refers generally to the area north of the Sea of Galilee, while "Lower Galilee" refers to the area west of the Sea of Galilee and south to the Jezreel Valley.

When the Jewish Hasmonean king Aristobulus conquered the area around 104 BCE, he forced its Gentile occupants to convert to Judaism or leave the area. By the first century CE, however, Galilee included healthy groups of both Jews and Gentiles, with individual towns being predominantly Jewish or Roman. Jesus' home village of Nazareth was in Galilee, as was Capernaum, which Mark identifies as the home of Peter and Andrew.

Jews from Galilee apparently spoke with distinctive accents (Matt. 26:23), and a number of them belonged to a movement of anti-Roman activists known as the Zealots (one of Jesus' disciples was known as "Simon the Zealot").

So, why would Jesus begin his work in Galilee? While no one can claim to know the mind of Christ, several factors may have entered his thinking. First of all, Galilee was familiar to Jesus; it was where he grew up, where his family and friends lived.

Second, the anti-Roman activism in Galilee may suggest a general unrest with the status quo that could have made the population in Galilee ripe for a message that was radically new. And, although Jesus made a point of saying he had come first to the Jews, he knew that many Gentiles would hear his message, too.

The Hardest Question *continued*

Third, Galilee was located at a distance from Jerusalem, where the Jewish authorities would certainly be opposed to Jesus' message. By beginning his work in the backwater towns of Galilee, Jesus had a better chance of building a strong following before the authorities sought to silence or discredit him. Though John's gospel says he made brief visits to Jerusalem, the other gospels have him remain outside of Jerusalem until Palm Sunday. Jesus knew that spending any length of time there would lead to his death. Thus, the gospels pay special attention to the time when Jesus "set his face to go to Jerusalem" (Luke 9:51), because it would mean the end of his earthly ministry.