

## *"Kingdom Eyes: Your Call"*

Matthew 4:12-23

January 20, 2008

Matthew's 4<sup>th</sup> chapter makes it clear, if not easy. Now, as then, there is a great struggle, there is a great announcement, and there is a great calling.

### **A Great Struggle**

Look what has just happened to Jesus.

He got tested and tempted

-so if you think that is the sin, you are wrong

Tempted doesn't mean fallen

Tempted and tested people are stronger people

Tempted, tested, and honest about it

may qualify you for leadership!

### **A Great Announcement**

Jesus comes straight out of a time of soul-searching and starts His work.

- The Kingdom of God is near
- Clear values focus the way
- Clear principles are the foundation
- Understanding real life gives the passion for ministry
- Focused on who you serve keeps the ministry clear.

### **A Great Calling**

- God uses the abilities you have,  
not the ones you don't have  
or that someone else has.
- God calls you where you are
- (Sales managers just want to know who you know)
- Is there a difference in you that people can see?
- God calls to supremely important things
- Does God only call if you are doing "godly" things?  
Be careful the next time you go fishing.

**God calls you! It's your call how you will respond.**

## **A Great Struggle**

Jesus' story is just like our own. Some days you get the bear, and some days the bear gets you. Life is full of ups and downs. Jesus has just been baptized and hear the voice of God proclaim - "This is my son! I am so pleased with you." Immediately he is eyeball to eyeball with the devil. Up and down. Coming out of that experience a winner, strong in his faith, firm in his principles. Jesus should be up! And here comes the news that his cousin, John, is in prison. This is no overnight stay for food and shelter. This is a death sentence. But Jesus is so strong in His convictions that He is still able to announce that "the Kingdom of God is near."

When the times were bleakest Jesus did not buckle – he instead went to work. And with things looking their absolute worst – he is still able to say that the Kingdom of God had come. We would be confounded by that kind of optimism.

These too are difficult times. But God calls you to roll up your sleeves and go to work. Are you listening? Are you ready? Can you see the glimmering hope out in front where maybe no one else can see it? **It's your call.**

Here is the time in our own lives when the pressures are so great. The pressure to: give in, give up, surrender, fall for, ignore, sell out to, surrender to, ..... But here comes

## **A Great Announcement**

Out of this time of testing comes the opportunity to be a stronger person, clearly focused, able to stand strong, able to stand for the things you want your life built upon.

(follow the outline)

Here's an interesting conversation. A young woman comes to the church and asks if a new group she wants to start in town can meet here. She went to several other churches, including ones with which she had affiliation in some way. She was always put off ... well we will have to let you know. Well, we'll have to have it approved by the Board. She says, "I should have come here first." She had gone to one church in town – on Easter – and the sermon was about money and abortion. Back to the other issue. A great number of people would say – "well, it isn't the church's business to be involved with AA and DivorceCare and weight loss, and financial peace." It should be the purpose of the church to be user-friendly and welcoming to people in the community – and it should know that clearly without having to hold a board meeting to decide.

## **A Great Calling**

God calls everyone. He calls you where you are to use the gifts He has given you and the skills you have developed. I saw the writings of another person recently that said you have to be about "religious" things in order for God to be able to call you, or for you to hear God's call. These guys were fishing! There is nothing particularly religious about that – no matter what

some of you might say. But God was reaching for the gifts He had given and the skills they had developed, to channel all of that in a new direction.

God calls everyone. Everyone in this church this morning. More than that God calls even to every person in this town who is not in church today!

Now this was not a man who would bet you over the head. But who caringly, lovingly called people to come and be part of the new age God was creating. There was no threat, no screaming and yelling, no bribing, no bullying, no offer of financial wealth (can't you tell how much I enjoy tv preachers?) This is an amazing encounter. Jesus walks up to these men and extends to them an invitation to a new life. "*Come follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.*" He called them to use the skills they had already developed to make a difference in their world. Instead of fishing for fish, they would fish for God's lost children.

**2 facts are very clear:**

**You can't do anything to make God love you more.**

**You can't do anything to make God love you less.**