

# Matthew *A New Perspective*

## 3. A New Ministry

*Matthew 4.12-25*

**Aim of the Study:** To consider the reason for Jesus' mission, to compare the way Jesus went about his mission with how we do, and consider how our personal and corporate mission can be more effective.

### To start with:

Ask everyone to write a mission statement for themselves:

- My life is for....
- This coming year is for...

Ask people to share their thoughts with another person and then ask them to discuss:

- My relationship with God is for...

**Background Information:** (Make sure everyone can see a copy of the enclosed map and the description below)

Jesus knew very clearly what his life was about and what he needed to achieve. After 30 years of obscurity he made a decisive break with Nazareth and came to live in the area of the Sea of Galilee. This was a freshwater lake, fed by the Jordan and measuring 14 miles long by 7 miles at the widest point. In those days there were nine or ten thriving towns clustered round its edge, and the city of Capernaum lay at the northern tip. The province of Galilee was not large, only 50 miles by 25, but it was such a fertile area that it supported a dense population. Josephus, who was later its governor, tells us that there were 204 villages in the province, none of them with less than 15,000 inhabitants. So Jesus began his work in the most densely populated area he could have found anywhere in the Middle East. It was also a population that was volatile and open to change. Josephus says that the Galileans were tough and courageous, fond of innovation, by nature disposed to change, and always ready for sedition.

1. It seems that Jesus was very intentional about his mission - why do you think he moved from Nazareth to this area to begin his ministry?

*Now read Matthew 4.12-25*

2. As a group, list the activities and events involved in Jesus' mission in verses 18-25. What do they tell us about Jesus' priorities? To what extent would you say our church and personal mission reflect the same priorities as Jesus?
3. Why do you think we rarely see the sort of frenzied response to the gospel as described in verses 24-25?
4. a) Why do you think Jesus choose to have a group of disciples rather than just completing his mission alone?  
b) To what extent is this a useful model for modern church mission?  
c) What corporate church mission activities have you been involved in? What was your experience of that?
5. What does it mean for us all, as disciples, to be 'preaching the good news of the kingdom'? (v23)

Give everyone a copy of the chart enclosed and ask them to think about what that might involve practically for them in each of the following areas.

*(NB. This is not designed to induce guilt, but to encourage people to think about carrying the gospel with them, regardless of the context they are in)*



You might like to play one of the following in the background as people are thinking about their 'mission':

Mission's Flame - Matt Redman, Facedown album, Track 11

God of Justice - Tim Hughes, Holding Nothing Back album, Track 7

God of this City - Bluetree, Greater Things album, Track 5

(or Chris Tomlin, Hello Love album, track 4)

Beauty for Brokenness—Graham Kendrick, Spark to a Flame album, Track 7 (or

The Very Best of Graham Kendrick album, Disc 1 Track 12)

## **Finally**

Spend some time in small groups discussing what has struck you from this exercise and praying for each other for vision, passion and imagination for how they might be salt and light, carriers of the kingdom wherever they go, as Jesus was.