CHAPTER 23
Jesus' Ministry Begins
MATT 3-4, JOHN 1-4

THE STORY

Introduction
In just three short years, Jesus would launch a movement that would change the world. Today there are millions of people who would say they are followers of Jesus. A disciple is a follower.

Three questions to think about.
• Why should we follow Jesus?
• How is following Jesus different than following anyone else?
• Where are we leading the people who are following us?

I. Why should we follow Jesus?
MATTHEW 3:1-17

John the Baptist came preaching in the Desert of Judea saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near.”
Jesus came to be baptized by John. Verse 13
Jesus was baptized to identify with us in our sin.

As Jesus came up out of the water, a voice from heaven said, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.” Verse 17
The first person to reveal the identity of Jesus is God.
If Jesus chose to be baptized to identify with us, how much more important is it for us to be baptized to identify with him?
Immediately after his baptism, Jesus is led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. Jesus is re-enacting the temptation in the Garden of Eden.

Three times the devil tempts him. Three times Jesus answers with the Word of God. All three quotes come from Deuteronomy – 8:3; 6:16; and 6:13.

- Where Adam sinned, Jesus, the second Adam, triumphed over sin and Satan.
- Where Israel, as God’s son, grumbled and complained, Jesus, the Son of God, obeyed.

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II. How is following Jesus different from following anyone else?

Jesus calls us into a personal relationship with himself.
Jesus calls us to a loyalty that is higher than any other loyalty.
Jesus called the disciples to leave everything to follow him. Matthew 4:18-22

“Come, follow me and I will make you fishers of men.”

Jesus calls people from all walks of life. Jesus calls us to put him first above everything and everyone else in our life.
We all need Jesus.

Nicodemus was a religious leader. John 3

- Yet Jesus said, “You must be born again.”
- To Nicodemus Jesus gave the clearest statement of why he came. “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.” John 3:16
The Woman at the Well – John 4
• She was a Samaritan.
• She was an immoral woman.
• Yet she believed and brought others to see Jesus.

Jesus wants all of us.
23 "Then he said to them all: ‘Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me. 24 For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will save it. 25 What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit their very self? 26 Whoever is ashamed of me and my words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of them when he comes in his glory and in the glory of the Father and of the holy angels.’ Luke 9:23-26

Have we surrendered everything to him?

III. Where are we leading the people who are following us?

We all have a circle of influence.
By our life and by our words we want to point people to Jesus.
John the Baptist said of Jesus:
• “Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.” John 1:29
• “He must become greater. I must become less.” John 3:30

The Woman at the Well said to her town:
• “Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Christ?” John 4:29

The Apostle Paul would say to his followers:
• “Follow my example as I follow Christ.” 1 Corinthians 11:1
Conclusion

There is no one better to follow than Jesus Christ. Following Jesus is not casual or passive. Our great joy and privilege is to help others to know him too.