

1. Most of us know the phrase “thy (your) will be done”. It is part of the Lord’s Prayer.
  - a) It is a sentence we pray regularly, but rarely think about:
  - b) It is a prayer for us to do God’s will, and not our own will.
  - c) How does one practically do God’s will through the day?
    - i) Unfortunately, we don’t receive faxes in the morning with today’s instructions.
    - ii) We don’t get e-mails, nor phone messages, nor mail from God saying, “Good morning John, here is what I want you to do today.” ☺
  - d) So back to the question, if we are sincerely praying “thy (your) will be done”, how do we know what is God’s will and how do we obey it?
    - i) Fortunately, you have come to the right place. ☺
    - ii) The answer is to study and learn God’s word, so you know how to apply it. I’m not saying my bible studies are the answer, (but they can’t hurt ☺) as much as I desire the reader to study the text itself, contemplate what it means and contemplate how it applies to your life.
    - iii) Solomon figured this out at the end of his life: “Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man.” (Ecclesiastes 12:13, NIV).
      - a) I underlined the word whole. It is all-inclusive. It means the whole duty of man (and women) is to fear God and obey his commandments.
      - b) But you say, we are our New Testament believers. We are not “under law”, but “under grace”. Agreed. Our salvation does not depend upon how well we keep the “10 commandments” or any other commandments anywhere in the Bible.
        - (1) But those commandments are there *for our happiness*. God wants us to live a full, rich abundant life. God-the-Father, who loves us beyond what we can comprehend, wants to bless you more than you can imagine. For God to bless us, we have to do what He wants us to. As I mention over and over again in these studies, Christianity is not just saying you believe in Jesus, it is taking action based on that belief. If you are grateful for what Jesus did for you, you live in obedience out of gratitude.
  - e) OK, so if we don’t get faxes, e-mails and voice messages on God’s instructions for the day, how do we practically know what to do for the next, say 24 hours?
    - i) Well, prayer for “God’s will to be done” won’t hurt. ☺
    - ii) Next, remember the age-old idiom, “you are what you eat?” That happens to be true. We physically grow based on what we eat.
      - a) It is also true that we become what we worship. If you spend all your free time going after pleasure, or seeking riches, you become what you worship. The same applies to Jesus. If we spend our lives worshipping Jesus, studying the Bible, studying the life patterns, the word-pictures, we become what we worship. There is no exception to this fact.
      - b) If our brains and bodies are “bible-based”, we will know if what we do throughout the day is God’s will or not. We will set goals, work, play, raise our families in ways that are pleasing to God.
        - (1) Your daily marching orders come from your obedience to what God teaches us from the bible. Those patterns, principals and word-pictures describe on a moment-to-moment basis on how we should live our lives.

- (2) You may read a passage in the bible one day, or hear a sermon, or read something here and say, “you know, that one aspect of my life is not pleasing to God, it’s time to change that”.
      - (a) That is doing God’s will.
    - (3) You can open your prayers by saying, “Lord, what do you want me to pray for today?” Sometimes, (not guaranteed!) something may pop in your head that you didn’t think about earlier, that God may be calling you to pray about earlier.
- 2. Now that I’ve gotten your brain focused on doing God’s will, I can break down and talk about The Gospel of Matthew, Chapter 4.
  - a) The chapter is about Jesus being tempted by Satan.
  - b) The second half is about Jesus choosing his disciples and Jesus setting up his ministry.
  - c) The big-picture idea to see is God the Father’s will being carried out through Jesus despite the temptations to do otherwise.
  - d) In the second half, we see the disciples willing to change their lives based on what Jesus called them to do.
  - e) The overriding theme is God’s will getting done.
    - i) Living moment by moment, we may not see God’s will getting accomplished.
    - ii) We may be busy “just living”. We are going through our routines.
    - iii) But when we look back and see the big picture, we can often see how God was working through our lives all for His glory.
  - f) Before I start Verse 1, I should also talk about “mistakes” and God’s will.
    - i) The bible is full of stories of horrible things done by one of main bible characters. Yet, you will later read of how God used that event, eventually for His glory.
      - a) Back in Chapter 1 of Matthew, we talked about Jesus’ pedigree. You may remember that his ancestor Judah had sexual relations with his daughter-in-law, who he thought was a (veiled) prostitute. God used that sinful act to keep the messianic line going.
      - b) Some may think, “Well then, its ok to mess up, because God will eventually use that mistake for his glory”. Yes He can and He does. It does not excuse what we do. (Romans Chapter 3 tackles this subject). Often we still have to pay the consequence of that sin despite how God used it.
      - c) The point is God has such a better plan for us *if* we obedient instead.
        - (1) Yet God uses are mistakes. He can use us in a better way if we were obedient to what God calls us to do.
      - d) God desires to work through people.
        - (1) Oh how much more could God accomplish if we only pray more “thy will be done”! It is through God’s strength that we have the ability to do God’s will in the first place.
    - g) With all that said, let’s go to Verse 1, and we’ll take on this subject more as we go.
- 3. Chapter 4, Verse 1: Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil.
  - a) The last verse of Chapter 3 was Jesus being baptized, and the voice of God the Father saying, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased”.
  - b) It appears, right afterward, Jesus was called into the desert to be tempted.
  - c) When Jesus received the Holy Spirit, from this point forward, Jesus lived to do the Father’s will. The Father’s will, was in effect, “OK son, go to the wilderness now. Don’t eat and watch out for Satan”. ☺
    - i) Just exactly what Jesus did during those 40 days is unknown.
    - ii) I believe in the quote, “Where the Bible is silent, we should be silent”.

- d) Why this was the Father's will (go live in the desert/be tempted) is discussed elsewhere in the Bible. The reason for this 40 day period is commented upon elsewhere:
- i) "Because he (Jesus) himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted." (Hebrews 2:18, NIV)
  - ii) Let me paraphrase what a person can think. "There is no way I can overcome my problem with fill-in-the-blank. I am just too weak. I don't have the power to overcome this problem. How can God help? If there is a God, he cannot relate to my problem. He doesn't know how tough it is for me to overcome this."
    - a) Read Hebrews 2:18 again. If we want Jesus to help us with our problems, then we need to understand that Jesus can relate to our problems.
    - b) God the Father's first order of business after Jesus was baptized, was not to do miracles, not to heal sick people, not to preach the Gospel or even go immediately to the cross. It was to be tempted, so that we can relate to Him. Think about that in perspective of how much God the Father loves you and cares about your particular problems.
    - c) If Jesus, in his humanity, overcame these temptations, think about how much God the Father loves you and wants to help you in your desire to drop your bad habits and live the life more like God desires for you!
  - iii) Some commentators compare Jesus being tempted in the desert to Adam and Eve being tempted in the Garden of Eden.
    - a) Adam and Eve, in the best of places sinned.
    - b) Jesus, in the worst of places, resisted sin.
    - c) Adam & Eve fell because they trusted in their own desires and not what God commanded them to.
    - d) Jesus, under the worst of circumstances, not only can relate to our problems, but gives us a model of how, if we obey God's commandments, shows us how we can mature to live the full, abundant life that God the Father desires for us.
- e) Before I move on to Verse 2, let's talk a little about the devil himself.
- i) One commentator counted over 50 names for him in the Bible. The two most common are "the devil" and "Satan". We tend to use those two the most.
  - ii) The two great mistakes to make about Satan are that 1) he doesn't exist and 2) he is everywhere. It is a mistake to think of him as a fictional character. The other problem is we can blame Satan when often it is our own free will that causes us to mess up our lives.
  - iii) I believe Satan is the most powerful creature made by God. We are unable to resist him in our own power. The only way to resist Satan is to call upon God and rely upon his Word. That is how Jesus overcame him as we'll see in this passage.
4. Verse 2: After fasting forty days and forty nights, he (Jesus) was hungry.
- a) Well, who wouldn't be after 40 days! ☺
    - i) People who have studied fasting will say that after a few days your body will "shut down" and no longer desire food. At about a 40-day period, you are now near the point where you can starve to death. The body now needs food again simply to survive. That is what is meant by the text.
    - ii) The number "40" in the bible is usually associated with "trials".
      - a) After leaving Egypt, the Israelites were in the desert for 40 days when the spies came back from the Promised Land. When they came back, the reports of "giants in the land" gave them fear of doing what God commanded them to do and conquer the land. God then punished them for 40 years (a year for each day). (See Numbers 14:34)
      - b) Also with Noah, it rained for "40 days and 40 nights" (Genesis 7:12)

- c) Remember that Matthew's primary concern is to show Jews that Jesus is the Messiah. Jesus' success at His 40-day trial in the wilderness is meant to be compared to the Israelites failure on their 40-day trial.
  - b) The next 10 verses will discuss Jesus being tempted by the devil. Notice that the fasting didn't prevent Satan from tempting Jesus. If anything, Satan used that moment of weakness to tempt Jesus. Think how we feel when we are hungry.
    - i) There is an English acronym associated with human weakness called "H.A.L.T.". It means one should never get too (H)ungry, (A)ngry, (L)onely or (T)ired. When one is suffering from one or more of those things, that is when we are weak and are more susceptible to Satan's Attacks.
5. Verse 3: The tempter (Satan) came to him (Jesus) and said, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread."
- a) Notice Satan acknowledges that Jesus is the "Son of God".
  - b) He is not saying it as a form of denial or question, but saying in effect, "*Since* you are who you claim you are, then use your power to turn the stones into bread.
  - c) Could Jesus do that? If Jesus is God, he can do anything. The Bible teaches that it was through Jesus that all things were created (See John 1:2, or Colossians 1:16). That means that Jesus is a creator and not a created "thing" and has the power to make stones into bread or anything else he desires.
    - i) If you know your bible, you should be familiar with the story of how Jesus "multiplied" the loaves of bread on two occasions; one to feed 5,000 men and the other to feed 4,000 people. Both stories are covered later in Matthew and we'll get to them later in the chapter. If Jesus could multiply the loaves then, he certainly could have used some miraculous power to feed himself here.
  - d) OK, so what is wrong with Satan asking this question?
    - i) Here was Jesus, literally starving to death.
    - ii) Satan was not telling Jesus to "go starve to death", but to save his own life.
    - iii) If I encountered Jesus in the desert, and I didn't have any food or any way to transport Jesus to food in time to save his life, I would probably have said something similar.
    - iv) Jesus' answer tells us why it was wrong.
6. Verse 4: Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.' "
- a) The problem was not Jesus eating bread. The problem was this was not the desire of God the Father for Jesus to do at this moment in His life.
  - b) Let's face it; it is logical for Jesus to eat bread here to live.
  - c) This verse has scary implications for us as Christians. Does that mean the "logical" thing for us to do is not always "God's will"? It is something to stop every now and then to pray about. Sometimes God may ask us to do illogical things (by the world's idea of what is right) as God has a greater purpose in mind.
    - i) If you try a prayer like that, and don't get an answer, consider the logical thing *is* the right thing to do, assuming it is not something contradictory to the bible.
    - ii) This situation applies to the time where you are feeling supernaturally "led" to do something that defies logic. Again, you will know it is God's will if 1) it is not something that violates any biblical principal and 2) the results ultimately work out for God's glory.
    - iii) This principal about God's will is summed up with the quote Jesus gave. It is the last phrase of Deuteronomy 8:3.
      - a) Notice it says we are to live on every word that comes from God's mouth.
      - b) To live on every word, would mean to learn every word.
      - c) This is why Christians encourage regularly readings of the entire bible.

- d) Further, it says that man is not to live by bread alone.
    - (1) Jesus does not condemn eating food and sustaining our life.
    - (2) It is about putting things in perspective.
    - (3) It is about seeking God's will first, and then our food or whatever else you desire.
- 7. Here comes temptation #2; Verse 5: Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. <sup>6</sup> "If you are the Son of God," he said, "throw yourself down. For it is written: "He will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone. "
  - a) Somehow, Satan took Jesus from the desert to Jerusalem. Specifically, he took Jesus to the high point on top of the temple.
  - b) How Satan "transported" Jesus is an unanswerable question.
    - i) It may have been a vision or it may have been like "Star Trek" where Jesus was "beamed" to this location.
    - ii) Either way, it gives us a glimpse into how much power Satan has!
  - c) Historians tell us that the Temple Mount stood over a large valley. From the top of the temple to the ground (via the back side) was a 450 foot drop!" (Source Josephus).
  - d) Let me paraphrase what Satan was saying, "Hey Jesus, the Bible says in Psalms 91:11-12 that angels will protect you. So why don't you just prove to everyone that you are the Messiah. Jump off the temple. People will see angels catch you, realize you are the Messiah and save a whole lot of trouble."
    - i) This verse indicates that Satan can quote Scripture! Further he can twist it to tempt you with all kinds of things.
    - ii) This is why false-teachers are emphasized so much in the New Testament. Every book in the New Testament has at least some reference to false teachings and false teachers. If Satan can cause temptation by misapplying Scripture, imagine what man can do!
    - iii) Further, Satan knew that this prophecy in Psalms 91:11-12 was about Jesus!
      - a) When Satan quoted these two verses, he skipped one sentence. Satan skipped the last sentence of Verse 11 that says, "to guard you in all your ways" (NIV)
      - b) That sentence is the key to the temptation.
      - c) "Your ways", refers to the ways of God-The-Father. The prophecy is that the Messiah would come to do 100% do the will of God the Father.
      - d) God the Father desired that Jesus pay the price for all of mankind's sins.
  - e) Remember that Satan's goal is to stop, prevent, or at least slow down God's redemptive plan for mankind.
    - i) God the Father, by definition is perfect. In order for us to spend eternity with God, a perfect sacrifice would be needed for sin.
    - ii) If Satan could cause Jesus, even for a moment, to not do God the Father's will, Jesus no longer becomes the perfect sacrifice for our sins.
    - iii) These temptations never deny Jesus as God. In fact, they attempt to make Jesus show off his power. They focus on attempting to make Jesus anything less than perfect so the sacrifice on the cross no longer becomes a perfect sacrifice.
  - f) Let us personalize this second temptation.
    - i) The first one has to do with sustenance. There is nothing wrong with eating food or enjoying life, it should simply be done in accordance with God's will.

- ii) This second temptation is about power. There is a need in man to have power and to obtain power.
    - a) There is nothing wrong with power per se. Somebody has to lead and be in charge. God raises up people to be our leaders. (See Rom. 13:1).
    - b) The point has to do with committing sin in order to achieve or use that power. If we are not following biblical principals in order to get that power, then we are living in sin.
    - c) Satan was offering Jesus a “short-cut” for his power. The application is to resist Satan’s temptations of “short-cuts” in order to live our lives.
    - d) Again, it comes back to God’s will. God does desire the best for us and wants us to accomplish great things. (God’s desire of “great things” is often contradictory to man’s definition). But God desires that we do it his way, and at His timing, and not ours.
- 8. Verse 7: Jesus answered him, "It is also written: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.' "
  - a) This is Jesus’ response to Satan’s second temptation.
    - i) This is a quote of Deuteronomy 6:16.
  - b) Notice Jesus did not say, “you didn’t property quote the bible”.
  - c) Jesus used his authority as God to resist Satan. He said that one does put God to the test. He was referring to himself, not God the Father in this situation.
    - i) Jesus responded in a way that we could use when we face the same temptations.
    - ii) The text does not say, “You (Satan) shall not put me or you (people) to the test”. It says, “You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.”
    - iii) Satan has been given the power and authority to tempt and test us.
    - iv) God allows this for our growth and maturity. The same way we test our children to see if they learn. God allows temptations to keep us dependant upon Him.
    - v) Our only hope of resistance is to turn to God for help. (Reference: See Jude 1:9)
- 9. Here comes “Temptation #3”; Verse 8: Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. <sup>9</sup> "All this I will give you," he said, "if you will bow down and worship me."
  - a) Satan showed Jesus all the kingdoms of the world. Again, we don’t know if was “like a movie” or just how Satan did this. We simply take the text at face value.
  - b) An important concept to understand is Satan owns this world.
    - i) Not just the ugly aspects, but also the beautiful aspects of nature, the beautiful things man has built. You name it, if it is part of the earth, man-made, or God-made, and it does not swear allegiance to Jesus, it belongs to Satan.
    - ii) Remember that if Satan didn’t own the kingdoms of this world, Jesus can’t be tempted by it. If I tell you, “You can buy this house from me for \$5”; you can’t be tempted by the offer unless you believe I own the house in the first place.
    - iii) You will notice in this section of Scripture (Verses 8-11) that Jesus never denies Satan owns this world! He simply rebukes Satan by again quoting Scripture.
- 10. Verse 10: Jesus said to him, "Away from me, Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.' " <sup>11</sup> Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him.
  - a) Again, the temptation focuses on Jesus taking a “short cut” to the cross.
  - b) You almost get the impression that the 3<sup>rd</sup> temptation was a desperate attempt to get Jesus to fail. If he wasn’t going to eat bread despite his extreme hunger, if he wasn’t going to take a “short cut” to the cross (via throwing himself off the temple to prove his Messiahship), then he wasn’t going to bow down to Satan even if Satan offered everything he had to Jesus.
    - i) I believe Jesus is aware that one day the world would be redeemed to Him anyway. The ceremony for that event is described in Revelation Chapter 5.
    - ii) The third temptation was “just” Satan offering another shortcut.

- c) There is a bible trivia point I should mention here.
    - i) The same story of the “three temptations” is told in Luke Chapter 4.
    - ii) In Luke 4, the order is mixed up. In Luke’s account, the 3<sup>rd</sup> temptation is told second and the 2<sup>nd</sup> temptation here in Matthew is told as the third in Luke.
    - iii) The logical explanation is that Matthew tells the story *chronologically* and Luke tells them in *climatically*. The 2<sup>nd</sup> temptation (throw yourself from the temple) appears to be the greatest temptation. The 3<sup>rd</sup> temptation (worship me) appears to be a desperate attempt by Satan to get Jesus to take a short cut.
      - a) In Matthew’s Gospel, you will notice the word “then” as a connection. After the 1<sup>st</sup> temptation, *then* comes the second one, etc.
      - b) In Luke’s Gospel, you will notice the word “and” as a connection.
        - (1) If the 3 temptations are connected by “and”, they don’t necessarily have to be in chronological order.
      - c) There, don’t you feel better know that you know that? ☺
  - d) Notice Satan left right after this third temptation? Why? Because Jesus commanded him to leave after this temptation.
    - i) Satan must obey Jesus, as Jesus is Lord and God.
      - a) You can read all three temptations and Jesus response was to say in effect that, “I, Jesus, am Lord and God of all, you must obey me.”
        - (1) This is written as a model for us to turn to God to overcome evil and not try in our own power.
      - b) I believe the greatest Satanic attacks come 1) when we are weak and/or 2) when we are in service for God.
        - (1) He comes when we are weak because we are vulnerable.
        - (2) He comes when we are in service to God as he is doing everything in his power to stop us from being a good witness. This goes back to one of my favorite expressions: “If you don’t believe the devil is real, try opposing him for awhile”.
      - c) Notice that Jesus’ fasting and praying for 40 days didn’t stop the attacks from happening. Jesus knowledge of the Word of God gave him the strength to know what was God’s will for his life. He could resist the temptation by knowing “God’s Will” by knowing the Bible.
    - e) Notice the last phrase of Verse 11 “angels came and attended him”.
      - i) The logical assumption is that angels came and fed him and strengthened Jesus.
      - ii) Details are not given, so that is the assumption.
11. Verse 12: When Jesus heard that John had been put in prison, he returned to Galilee.
- a) Verse 12 is a bridge verse. In fact, there may be a time gap here of up to a year.
  - b) The purpose of Matthew’s Gospel is not to give a detail-by-detail account of Jesus’ life.
    - i) It is to focus on specific events that show that he is the promised Messiah.
  - c) Some of the early chapters of John’s Gospel appear to have taken place in the time-gap between Verses 11-12 and Matthew.
    - i) Chapter 3 of John’s Gospel tells how Jesus was baptizing others elsewhere along the Jordan River. John the Baptist’s disciples were commenting on the fact that people were coming to Jesus to be baptized and that John’s audience was decreasing. (See John 3:26).
  - d) Jesus returned to the Galilee region because it was part of God’s redemptive plan to go to that region at that time. Jesus was simply working on God the Father’s timing.

12. Verse 13: Leaving Nazareth, he went and lived in Capernaum, which was by the lake in the area of Zebulun and Naphtali-- <sup>14</sup> to fulfill what was said through the prophet Isaiah: <sup>4:15</sup> "Land of Zebulun and land of Naphtali, the way to the sea, along the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles-- <sup>16</sup> the people living in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned."
- a) Nazareth is where Jesus grew up. I assumed he stopped there, lived with relatives for awhile and then moved to Capernaum.
  - b) One can get a few more details about this part in Luke, Chapter 4, Verses 23-27.
    - i) This is where Jesus preached in his hometown, and in effect, was rejected.
  - c) Capernaum was a town off of the Sea of Galilee was Jesus based his "operations".
    - i) We will read in Matthew 9:9 that this was where Matthew himself met Jesus.
    - ii) It was a good spot geologically to base Jesus operations. It was along the main highway that runs from Egypt up into Asia Minor. In Verse 14, the expression "the way of the sea" is used. This is that same main travel route.
  - d) Again, we see Matthew quoting Old Testament Scripture to support the fact that Jesus was the Messiah. He is quoting Isaiah 9:1-2;
    - i) If you read the quote in Isaiah the word order is a little different. Most commentators suspect Matthew was quoting the Greek version of the Old Testament (i.e., "The Septuagint" which was more readily available.)
      - a) The point is Matthew quoted the concept correctly, even if he didn't quote the exact Hebrew word-for-word.
  - e) You have to remember that Matthew main's audience was Jewish. While religious leaders knew the bible backwards and forwards, the "common Jew" went to Synagogue every Sabbath, but couldn't quote it verbatim.
    - i) The average Jew might have thought "shouldn't the Messiah be based in Jerusalem or somewhere like that?" That is why Matthew takes the time and effort to point out that God stated many years earlier just exactly where the Messiah would base his ministry.
  - f) When we get to Matthew Chapter 11, we will discover that Jesus predicts the destruction of Capernaum because they did not repent and believe the Gospel after seeing Jesus' miracles. Today, Capernaum, is basically an archeological tourist spot. There is no population, per se. Jesus prediction about this town came true.
  - g) OK John, this is all interesting, what does any of this have to do with you and me?
    - i) I love when you ask that question. ☺ Notice Verse 16 again "the people living in darkness have seen a great light".
      - a) That is from Isaiah. It sounds like it is from The Gospel of John:
        - (1) "In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it."  
(John 1:4-5, NKJV)
      - b) Sometimes as Christians we take for grant it how non-believers "live in darkness". Anyone who has lived for a while following Jesus can see how people are "blind" to the truth. Sometimes they are good morally, and sometimes they are corrupt. But one can see that non-believers simply don't "get it". They may understand the gospel message but they either refuse to believe it or simply refuse to think about it. They don't want to change their lifestyle.
        - (1) The simplicity of "living in the light" is that we understand our eternal destiny and we live in gratitude of that fact.



13. Verse 17: From that time on Jesus began to preach, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near."
  - a) These are the first recorded words to Jesus to anyone other than Satan.
  - b) The first word out of Jesus mouth to people is "repent". That was the same first words John the Baptist had for people as well.
    - i) As I stated a few lessons ago, to repent is to change your behavior for the better. It is to realize some aspect of the way you live is wrong and you are now committed to change that behavior for the better.
  - c) I should also mention again that the phrase "kingdom of heaven is *near*" refers to the fact that being saved is simply a matter of believing in Jesus. Being "near" is the opposite of "far" as if to say the kingdom of heaven is thousands of miles away, or as if to say, being saved is a difficult process of self-discipline and rituals.
14. Verse 18: As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen.
 

<sup>19</sup> "Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will make you fishers of men." <sup>20</sup> At once they left their nets and followed him.

  - a) In John's Gospel we learn that Andrew was a follower of John the Baptist. He may even have been a witness to Jesus' baptism. (See John 1:40)
    - i) Further, we learn in John's Gospel that Jesus first spoke to Andrew and Peter at the time of Jesus' baptism. So here in Matthew, some time later is Jesus calling Peter and Andrew to be his disciples. It is not their first encounter with Jesus. Peter and Andrew probably already believed Jesus is the Messiah. Here was their chance to do something about it and follow Jesus.
  - b) Verse 19 is one of the most famous verses in all the bible. It is the command given by Jesus to Peter and Andrew to 1) "follow me" and 2) I will make you "fishers of men".
    - i) The fish symbol has been associated since the 1<sup>st</sup> Century with Christianity. It comes from this reference to "fishers of men".
    - ii) One of the greatest testimonies in all the bible is that they left their profession to follow Jesus. They gave up their way of life, their occupation, probably outcast from their synagogue all because they were convinced Jesus is the Messiah.
      - a) God often asks the same thing from us. We have to be willing to give up everything to follow him. Once you accept that, it may be fine to keep your present occupation or position, or God may call you to something else. The point is one has to be *willing* to give up all to be a follower of Jesus.
    - iii) I believe all Christians are called to be "fishers of men". We are at the least to pray for the salvation of those people on our hearts.
      - a) Our lives should be a witness for Jesus. Further, when the opportunity is there, we should even explain the gospel message to people. It is not just a matter of "living like a Christian", there are times to verbalize it as well.
      - b) God gives some people the specific gift of evangelism. Let's say two people give the exact same gospel presentation. One is Billy Graham and you or I are the other. We say, "come on down and accept Jesus", and basically, nobody comes. Billy Graham does this and thousands rush forward. This is because he was given the specific gift of evangelism.
        - (1) That doesn't excuse us for not being "fishers of men". Our prayers and efforts can lead individuals to Jesus. My "road to salvation" began when someone gave me a few cassette tapes on Christianity.
      - c) Getting back to Jesus statement, I believe the order is important.
        - (1) One has to follow Jesus *in order* to be "fisher's of men".
        - (2) That doesn't mean being a perfect Christian. It simply means one has to be a disciple in order to bring in more disciples.

- d) It is amazing to consider that there are billions of Christians and it all came via word of mouth. People get saved one at a time. Jesus started with 12 guys and ended with 11. By word of mouth, by these 11 men becoming “fishers of men”, billions swear allegiance to Christ.
15. Verse 21: Going on from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John. They were in a boat with their father Zebedee, preparing their nets. Jesus called them,<sup>22</sup> and immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.
- a) I find it interesting that James and John were called, but their father was not.
- i) Their father Zebedee stayed in the fishing business and was probably not saved.
- ii) One can see both the “pre-destiny” aspect of Christianity (Jesus called the two brothers) and the “free-will” aspect as those two choose to follow Jesus.
- iii) One of the hardest things a person can do in their life is to leave their family in order to follow Jesus. There are millions of families split over this. It is difficult to leave ones surroundings, ones family, one’s religion, basically one’s “comfort zone” in order to follow Jesus.
- a) Here is a verse we’ll get to in a few weeks “Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to turn ‘a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law” (Matthew 10:34-35), NIV
- b) This is a prediction by Jesus how he will cause family splits over Him.
- b) Some commentators pick up on the fact that Andrew and Peter were *casting* their nets while James and John were *mending* their nets. If you read the text carefully, it says that Andrew and Peter left their nets and James and John left their father’s boat.
- i) There are wonderful sermons given on how some Christians are called to “cast” their nets and be involved in evangelism. Others are called to “mend”. Those people work on maturing the Christian believers. They are “mending” the church.
- a) If you like that word-picture, enjoy it. If you think I’m reading too much into the text, feel free to ignore it. ☺
- c) I should also remind the readers not to get your “James” mixed up.
- i) This James, the brother of John, did not write the Book of James.
- ii) This James gets killed by Herod. (See Acts 12:2)
- iii) That James, who wrote the Book of James, is Jesus half-brother.
- a) That James, Jesus half-brother is not “saved” until post-resurrection.
16. Verse 23: Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people.
- a) From here until the crucifixion, Jesus main mission is to spread the word that the Messiah *is here and He is it*. Jesus wanted to give every ample opportunity and evidence to support the fact that he is the promised Messiah (king) they have been waiting for.
- b) The purpose of the miracles, of which we will read many of, is to validate Jesus as the Messiah. Remember that all of these people Jesus healed are now long and dead. The healing is only a temporary fix. Accepting Jesus as payment for your sins is the permanent fix.
- i) By performing these miracles Jesus is also showing his compassion for the people.
17. Verse 24: News about him spread all over Syria, and people brought to him all who were ill with various diseases, those suffering severe pain, the demon-possessed, those having seizures, and the paralyzed, and he healed them.<sup>25</sup> Large crowds from Galilee, the Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea and the region across the Jordan followed him.
- a) My favorite word in this whole section is “all”. All the people were healed were brought to Jesus.

- b) Matthew lists different categories of diseases just so you wouldn't think Jesus was limited in his power or that the healing was some sort of "mind-over-matter" thing.
  - c) It also shows that God is bigger than any of your diseases!
    - i) Yes God cares about your salvation, and that is His primary purpose.
    - ii) He also cares about your physical well-being.
    - iii) Scriptures like this validate praying for the sick, and God, in his infinite love, wants to see all people well.
    - iv) Why then today does God miraculously cure a few, some naturally get better, and some get better through the marvels of modern medicine?
      - a) That can't be answered. One has to remember that God is in charge, and we are not. I have seen many a miraculous miracle of healing in my day, but I don't know why God chooses to do some, and not all.
      - b) I do know God has a reason for all things to happen, even when he allows sickness and pain. The fact that we will all live forever is the main comforting thought through all sorts of difficulty.
  - d) Getting back to the text, you will notice, Jesus was drawing a large crowd.
    - i) This section is very logical. Even before our present time of modern communication, in the days of word-of-mouth, if there was a miracle worker within 100 miles, I can see people bringing their sick family members and friends over for healing. The text gives the impression no one was turned away.
    - ii) The text mentions territory associated with non-Jews as well as Jews.
      - a) Syria is the territory north of Israel. "Decapolis" is a collection of 10 towns around the Sea of Galilee that were Gentile country. The remaining territories were primarily Jewish.
      - b) The text hints that Jesus was healing people whether or not they were Jewish. He came for everyone, although his primary mission at this point is for the Jews. We'll discuss this more as we go along.
18. OK, its time for a wrap up. I opened this discussion with the topic of "God's Will being done".
- a) Jesus passed the temptations of the devil.
    - i) It was "spiritually" meant to be shown in contrast Adam and Eve's failure.
    - ii) Jesus performed God's will and passed the test.
  - b) Next we read of Jesus opening his ministry.
    - i) He was given the specific powers to heal people. The healing was only for a time, and these people eventually died. We don't even know who among them were saved and unsaved. I'm sure there were some of each.
    - ii) The point is Jesus always lived to do the Father's Will. (See John 8:29)
    - iii) That is our goal as Christians, to always do the Father's will.
      - a) As I stated in the opening, we don't always know what that is. God does not verbalize to us his will to us daily. That is why we pray, "Thy will be done", so God can help guide us as to his will. That is why we study the bibles, and particularly Jesus life as a model for us as to how to do God's will. God's will for me is probably different than God's will for you. I can't give you the "particulars" for you. My job is to help you understand the bible better so you can learn how best to do God's will for your life.
19. With that, let's close in prayer. Father, we specifically ask today that "Your will be done". We ask that you reveal to us, that specific purpose(s) you have for our lives. We ask that you guide us, and give us the boldness to go forth in your name. We ask for strength during our times of trials and temptations. We put our trust in you that through your love, your grace and your strength, we can do your will. For we ask this in Jesus name, Amen.