

LESSON 15 – THE EARLY MINISTRY OF JESUS

CONTEXT...

WHO?

- John the Baptist: a “cousin” of Jesus, who was sent by God to prepare the way for the Savior by his message of repentance and baptism. He also had disciples of his own whom he pointed to Jesus.
- Andrew, John, Peter, Philip, and Nathaniel: the first men that Jesus called to follow and learn from him. Later he called them into full time ministry.
- Nicodemus: a member of the Jewish ruling council and a secret believer in Jesus

WHEN? – Jesus about 30 years old when he began his ministry (~28 A.D.)

WHERE? – Jordan River, Galilee, and Jerusalem

THE STORY

Read: John 1:35-51

1.) Find three examples in this section of one sinner leading another to Jesus.

Read: John 2:1-11

1.) The first miracle Jesus performed was turning water to wine at the wedding in Cana. What was the primary purpose of this miracle and all Christ’s miracles (2:11)?

Read: Luke 4:14-30

1.) Jesus went to preach in his hometown of Nazareth. At first the people were impressed with his words, but they quickly took offense at him and even wanted to kill him, why? (4:22,23)

Read: Luke 4:31-37

1.) The Bible tells us that there is a spiritual world of mighty angels and demons surrounding us that we cannot see. What comfort does this section give us?

Read: Luke 4:38-44

1.) The crowds wanted Jesus to stay and take care of them. What did Jesus say his primary mission was instead (4:43-44)?

*2.) Some churches say the mission of the church is making the world a better place. How does Jesus own example in verses 43-44 help us keep sight of our true mission?

Read: John 3:1-21

Jesus' miracles were attracting the attention of the religious leaders, but Jesus tells Nicodemus that they were focusing on the wrong thing. God's kingdom is not a matter of things seen, but the unseen working of the Holy Spirit.

*1.) Reread verses 3-6. Jesus explains that by nature sinners are trapped in a hopeless cycle of inherited sin: "flesh gives birth to flesh," which means sinners give birth to more sinners... Only the Holy Spirit can break that cycle by making someone spiritually alive or "reborn". The primary way that the Spirit does this is by "water and the Spirit." What is Jesus referring to here?

*"Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that **everyone** who believes in him may have eternal life. 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. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn **the world**, but to save **the world** through him. **Whoever** believes in him is not condemned." (John 3:14-18a)*

*2.) Jesus predicted that he would be lifted up on a pole = he would be crucified to give eternal life to the world. What special comfort can we find in the words: "everyone," "the world," and "whoever"?

*3.) In Jesus God has done absolutely everything needed to save sinners. What will be the sad fate for all who reject what Jesus has done for them (verse 18b)?

LAW & GOSPEL

Where do we see God's law?

Where do we see the Gospel?

ASSIGNMENT:

- Read: Matthew 4:18-25; 9:9-13; 5:1-16 (Jesus Calls and Teaches his Disciples – Part 1)
- Complete Reading Reflection Guide
- Memory Work:
 - *John 15:16*
 - *Matthew 5:16*