

The Third Sunday after the Epiphany 2020
Matthew 4

Hear! The Conqueror has spoken:
“Now the foe, Sin and woe, Death and hell are broken!”
God is man, man to deliver,
And the Son/Now is one/With our blood forever!

Matthew 4:12–25 Now when [Jesus] heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew into Galilee. And leaving Nazareth he went and lived in Capernaum by the sea, in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali, so that what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled: “The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles— the people dwelling in darkness have seen a great light, and for those dwelling in the region and shadow of death, on them a light has dawned.” From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

While walking by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon (who is called Peter) and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen. And he said to them, “Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.” Immediately they left their nets and followed him. And going on from there he saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets, and he called them. Immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.

And he went throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction among the people. So his fame spread throughout all Syria, and they brought him all the sick, those afflicted with various diseases and pains, those oppressed by demons, epileptics, and paralytics, and he healed them. And great crowds followed him from Galilee and the Decapolis, and from Jerusalem and Judea, and from beyond the Jordan.

In the Name of Jesus.

Our Lord summarizes the period ‘John the Prophet to Jesus the King’: (Matthew 11)

¹² From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven has suffered violence, and the violent take it by force. ¹

And JESUS does NOTHING to CHANGE THAT!

Praise God!

We are safe!

And ALL ll our race must look DOWN...NOW...TO...SEE...

HEAVEN!

Saint Matthew relishes the words of Isaiah, of our Old Testament reading today. The northern part of Israel was first to suffer violence and Exile at the hands of people like you and me, the clueless, the Gentiles, the violent. But when the Lord redeemed His people—AGAIN!—now, from the hands of the Babylonians—people like us, the clueless, the Gentiles, the violent—

The way of the Sea, Galilee of the Violent, Galilee of the Gentiles—was FIRST to welcome the exiles to the land of promise:

2 The people who walked in darkness
 have seen a great light;
 those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness,
 on them has light shined.
 3 You have multiplied the nation;
 you have increased its joy;

But no KING, of course. Those days were over: your Saul's, David's, Solomon's, and so weiter. 'WE needs us a PAHR-FULL feller! One what can lock horns and keep us SAFE—all the way to the horizon!'

¹ [*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*](#). (2016). (Mt 11:12). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

My dear ones: you ARE safe—me too!—to BEYOND the
nearsighted horizons WE take in!

Imagine—that CAN be a useful exercise!

‘If I WAS god!’ (Kinda funny, ain’t it? We PLAY god, daily and
much. There’s hardly a better definition of what’s wrong with us,
our clueless-ness! If the RIGHT MAN was god!’)

And IF...YOU...WAS...god—what’s that mean?

Money enough to....

Forces to direct, in order to....

Wisdom to convince ALL men, so that we could finally....

(NO! I am NOT running for president! But like all THOSE folk,
I’m just IMAGINING that I am God! Lord, have mercy!)

Oh!!!! After what God has NOW DONE, I want to say, ‘God is
DESPERATE!’ But underneath that word DESPERATE lies the
word DESPAIR and what GOD has now done—to BE God!—is
the FARTHEST thing FROM giving up hope. In fact, it is hope for
all!

Should we fear our God’s displeasure,
Who, to save, Freely gave/His most precious treasure?

To redeem us He has given
His own Son/From the throne/Of His might in heaven.

Before Jesus was enthroned on the cross—‘foolishness’ to our heads, hearts, souls!—He told Peter and Andrew, James and John and the rest, that they would see Him in GALILEE. Then, the hubbub AFTER the King’s rising from the dead—the account is so cheerful, I must quote:

28 Now after the Sabbath, toward the dawn of the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. ² And behold, there was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. ³ His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. ⁴ And for fear of him the guards trembled and became like dead men. ⁵ But the angel said to the women, “Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. ⁶ He is not here, for he has risen, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. ⁷ Then go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead, and behold, he is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him. See, I have told you.” ⁸ So they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. ⁹ And behold, Jesus met them and said, “Greetings!” And they came up and took hold of his feet and worshiped him. ¹⁰ Then Jesus said to them, “Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee, and there they will see me.” ²

Seems the important-est word of the whole deal is ‘Galilee!’

And we are safe.

And despair does not fit us now.

And we must look DOWN to see GOD!

² [*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*](#). (2016). (Mt 28:1–10). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

The distance Jerusalem to Galilee is just about your church building here to Alexandria. THERE'S salvation, my dear ones! Just go to ALEXANDRIA! (Let the reader understand!)

God has now, in Christ Jesus the King, Mary's boy---

God has now become man. He is with us; and He has pledged never to undo any of that.

Not just ANY man! But the MAN that MEN are LEAST ready to look for, for safety! No power. No stuff. No forces. Just the cross; and those who carry their own.

Well..... He DID gather His troops!

While walking by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon (who is called Peter) and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen. And he said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men."

'If I was GOD!' (We'd ALL do it better, wouldn't we, my dear ones?! Admit! Confess! Live! You are the baptized!)

HE—the MAN Jesus—our theology tells us that the GOD-MAN had FOREVER to plan HIS path to authority! And digging down into Himself as far as only GOD can dig; and having FOREVER to lay the groundwork for the kingdom of heaven; THIS is the FIRST MAN Jesus figured, 'Well, gotta START with Simon Peter!'

Should we fear our God's displeasure,
Who, to save, Freely gave/His most precious treasure?
To redeem us He has given
His own Son/From the throne/Of His might in heaven.

⁶⁹ Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard. And a servant girl came up to him and said, “You also were with Jesus the Galilean.” ⁷⁰ But he denied it before them all, saying, “I do not know what you mean.” ⁷¹ And when he went out to the entrance, another servant girl saw him, and she said to the bystanders, “This man was with Jesus of Nazareth.” ⁷² And again he denied it with an oath: “I do not know the man.” ⁷³ After a little while the bystanders came up and said to Peter, “Certainly you too are one of them, for your accent betrays you.” ⁷⁴ Then he began to invoke a curse on himself and to swear, “I do not know the man.” And immediately the rooster crowed. ⁷⁵ And Peter remembered the saying of Jesus, “Before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times.” And he went out and wept bitterly. ³

What’s the Master’s plan NOW? He laid it all out; in Galilee.

¹⁶ Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. ¹⁷ And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted. ¹⁸ And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” ⁴

Let’s sum up.

Are YOU in His kingdom? Well, has water fallen on you? At His authority? That covers just about everyone.

(Ohhhh! Dear ones! You make ANYTHING ELSE out of YOUR Baptism into Christ—‘HERE is where I AM WITH HIM ALWAYS!’ ‘HERE is the great CHANGE IN MEEEEEE....!!!’—that’s as close as we can ever get to canceling His rule!)

³ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Mt 26:69–75). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

⁴ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Mt 28:16–20). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

You've heard the Creed. You confess it. God gives air for you to breathe; but breathing does not make the air. He gives you HIMSELF in Holy Baptism; a pledge to trust! But trusting it does not make the pledge! Christ does!)

But do you still have—with your poor excuse standing here; with your fellow redeemed, who admit, confess, live in their Baptism!—

Do you still have E...V...E...R...Y...T...H...I...N...G to LEARN still, about your God?

Your poor pastor stuffed himself into white and stood up on his hind legs this morning, to BE YOUR CERTAINTY, that you too, are a student of Jesus, a disciples. And HE, I say to you, is with you to the End of your life, the End of this clueless-ness, the End of the Age!

See the Lamb, our sin once taking
To the cross, Suff'ring loss/Full atonement making.
For our life His own He tenders,
And His grace/All our race/Fit for glory renders.

In the Name of Jesus.