

In this lesson we hear that Paul is disturbed by news of factions in the young Corinthian church. Apparently the new converts were dividing into groups based on who it was who baptized them and whose teaching they were following. They must instead be unified in Jesus, in whose name alone they are baptized. Paul is grateful on this account that he himself has baptized very few of them, and that he does not preach with such eloquent wisdom that people would rely on him rather than the cross of Christ.

Please listen as I read Paul's words to the Corinthians

I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another in what you say and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly united in mind and thought. My brothers and sisters, some from Chloe's household have informed me that there are quarrels among you. What I mean is this: One of you says, "I follow Paul"; another, "I follow Apollos"; another, "I follow Cephas"; still another, "I follow Christ."

Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Were you baptized in the name of Paul? I thank God that I did not baptize any of you except Crispus and Gaius, so no one can say that you were baptized in my name. (Yes, I also baptized the household of Stephanas; beyond that, I don't remember if I baptized anyone else.) For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel - not with wisdom and eloquence, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.

For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

This is the word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Matthew 4:12-23

The gospel is a summary of the early ministry of Jesus: his preaching, the calling of disciples, and his acts of healing. After the arrest of John the Baptist, Jesus withdrew to Galilee, an area in which many Gentiles lived. The evangelist perceives in this a fulfillment of prophecy and a foreshadowing of the church's mission to bring the light of the gospel to darkened lives. Two sets of brothers are called to leave their nets and become fishers of people.

Hear now these words from the gospel of Matthew.

When Jesus heard that John had been put in prison, he withdrew to Galilee. Leaving Nazareth, he went and lived in Capernaum, which was by the lake in the area of Zebulun and Naphtali - to fulfill what was said through the prophet Isaiah:

“Land of Zebulun and land of Naphtali,
the Way of the Sea, beyond the Jordan,
Galilee of the Gentiles -
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.”

From that time on Jesus began to preach, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.”

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. “Come, follow me,” Jesus said, “and I will send you out to fish for people.” At once they left their nets and followed him.

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, and immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.

Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people.

Liturgist: This is the gospel message of our Lord and Savior

All: May the reading and the hearing of Your word inform our minds, comfort our souls, and guide our feet.