

Sunday Message

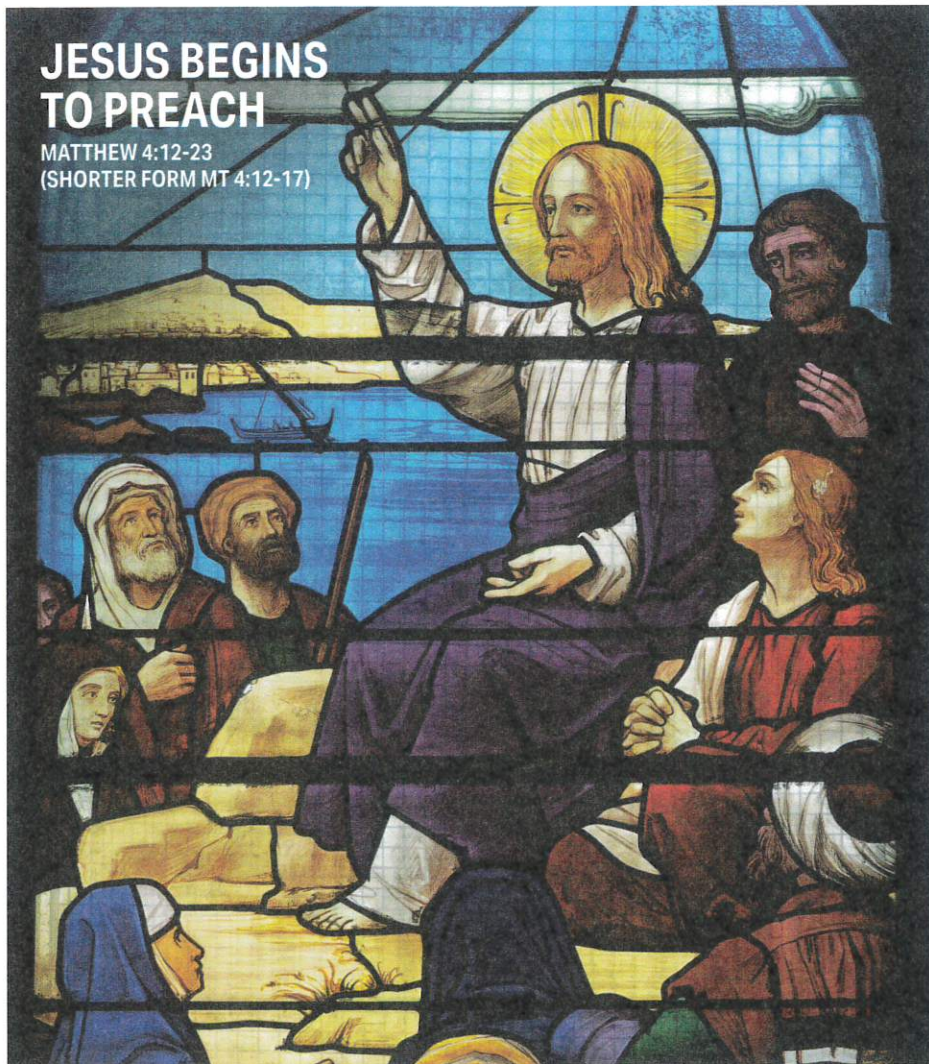
3RD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

THE WORD

Year A • 25 January 2026 • Psalter Week 3

JESUS BEGINS TO PREACH

MATTHEW 4:12-23
(SHORTER FORM MT 4:12-17)



This passage marks the beginning of Jesus' public ministry. After John the Baptist is arrested, Jesus leaves Nazareth and settles in Capernaum, a town by the Sea of Galilee. Matthew tells us this fulfils the prophecy of Isaiah: "The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light." Jesus brings light – hope, truth, and healing – to those who feel lost or forgotten.

From the very start, Jesus preaches a simple message: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Repentance doesn't just mean feeling sorry. It means turning around, reorienting your life, and making space for God's presence.

Then Jesus calls His first disciples – fishermen at work: Peter and Andrew, James and John. He invites them with just a few words: "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of people." Amazingly, they leave their nets, their boats, even their families, and follow Him. They don't yet know the full journey ahead, but they trust the One who calls.

This Gospel shows us that Jesus meets us in ordinary places – by the sea, at work, in everyday life – and invites us to follow Him. His light still shines in our darkness today, and His call still echoes: "Follow me." ■

DO

Read the Gospel passage slowly and prayerfully, then sit in silence for two minutes, simply saying in your heart: "Here I am, Lord – I want to follow You."

LEARN

Jesus calls us to follow Him with open hearts, to leave behind what holds us back, and to trust that His light will guide us into something greater.

REFLECT

Jesus begins His ministry with a message that's both simple and challenging: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is close at hand." That word – repent – can sound harsh, but it really means *turn around, change direction, come home to God*. Jesus doesn't begin with condemnation – He begins with an invitation.

Matthew tells us that Jesus brings light to those who sit in darkness. And we know that darkness – the darkness of fear, grief, failure, or loneliness. But Jesus enters into that shadow and brings hope. He comes to shine a light, not just for the world, but for each of us personally.

Then He calls His first disciples. They are fishermen – ordinary, hard-working people. Jesus doesn't ask for qualifications or perfection. He simply says, "Follow me." And they do. Not because they understand everything, but because something in His voice tells them this is the way.

Jesus is still calling today – not just the holy or the wise, but you and me. He meets us in our everyday lives, and says: *Come with me. I'll lead you into something deeper, something brighter.*

So if you feel stuck, tired, or uncertain – listen. His voice is near. The kingdom of heaven is close. And He is calling your name. ■

SAY

O good Cross, made beautiful by Christ's body,
you have been waiting for me.
Jesus, I followed you from the shore
when you called.
Help me now to follow you always –
with courage, with love, and with joy,
wherever you may lead.
Amen.



ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

*O sing a new song to the Lord;
sing to the Lord, all the earth.
In his presence are majesty and splendour,
strength and honour in his holy place.*

COLLECT

Almighty ever-living God,
direct our actions according to your good pleasure,
that in the name of your beloved Son
we may abound in good works.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever.

Amen.

FIRST READING Isaiah 9:1b-4

A reading from the Prophet Isaiah.

In the former time the Lord brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time he has made glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations.

The people who walked in darkness
have seen a great light;
those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness,
on them has light shone.
You have multiplied the nation;
you have increased its joy;
they rejoice before you
as with joy at the harvest,
as they are glad when they divide the spoil.
For the yoke of his burden,
and the staff for his shoulder,
the rod of his oppressor,
you have broken as on the day of Midian.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM Psalm 27(26):1. 4. 13-14. R. 1a

R: The LORD is my light and my salvation.

1. The LORD is my light and my salvation;
whom shall I fear?
The LORD is the stronghold of my life;
whom should I dread? **R.**
2. There is one thing I ask of the LORD,
only this do I seek:
to live in the house of the LORD
all the days of my life,
to gaze on the beauty of the LORD,
to enquire at his temple. **R.**
3. I believe I shall see the LORD's goodness
in the land of the living.
Wait for the LORD; be strong;
be stout-hearted, and wait for the LORD! **R.**

SECOND READING 1 Corinthians 1:10-13. 17

A reading from the First Letter of Saint Paul to the Corinthians.

I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgement. For it has been reported to me by Chloe's people that there is quarrelling among you, my brothers and sisters. What I mean is that each one of you says, 'I follow Paul', or 'I follow Apollos', or 'I follow Cephas', or 'I follow Christ.' Is Christ divided?

Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptised in the name of Paul? For Christ did not send me to baptise but to preach the gospel, and not with words of eloquent wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

ACCLAMATION BEFORE THE GOSPEL cf. Matthew 4:23

R: Alleluia, Alleluia.

Jesus proclaimed the gospel of the kingdom
and healed every affliction among the people.

R: Alleluia.

GOSPEL Matthew 4:12-23

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.

(for shorter form read between > <)

> 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.

> The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ. <

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Accept our offerings, O Lord, we pray,
and in sanctifying them
grant that they may profit us for salvation.
Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

*Look toward the Lord and be radiant;
let your faces not be abashed.*

Or

*I am the light of the world, says the Lord;
whoever follows me will not walk in darkness,
but will have the light of life.*

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Grant, we pray, almighty God,
that, receiving the grace
by which you bring us to new life,
we may always glory in your gift.
Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.