

Jesus begins His ministry.

The whole focus of Jesus's ministry was the kingdom of heaven, or the kingdom of God. (Matthew wrote to a Jewish audience who revered God's name and would not speak it). The Kingdom of God is very different to worldly kingdoms. It is a spiritual kingdom in people's hearts. It is a kingdom of light and hope, a personal kingdom where members can know Jesus the king personally. It is a kingdom of wholeness which will last forever.

Jesus did things differently from what was expected of Him. He began His ministry in Galilee to fulfil the prophesy of Isaiah 9:1. The people in this area from the tribes of Naphtali and Zebulum had suffered the most in the past and they saw Jesus' light first. These people were living side by side with Gentiles. Jesus preached first to both Jews and Gentiles and shows that the Kingdom of God is for everyone regardless of where they are from or their religious tradition. These people were also poor, uneducated and a long way from Jerusalem and often looked down on. These ordinary people were the ones Jesus came to first. His kingdom is for ordinary simple people, not just well educated and religious people.

To become a citizen of the kingdom of God we need to repent, to say sorry for the things we have done wrong and to turn from our old way of life to live a life Jesus wants us to live. It may be simple, but it is not easy. It involves a decision and a risk in following Jesus, but it is a risk worth taking as Jesus is with us in all our difficulties and trials and He helps us cope.

Jesus called people in Galilee. He still calls people today with the same invitation – Come follow Me. How will you respond to that invitation?