

HERO MAKING

Sermon-Based Study Guide
Good Shepherd Presbyterian Church
Matthew 4.18-22 | September 16, 2018

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I. Introduction to this Study

This week we continue our series *Hero Making*, looking at the four most important letters in the alphabet: I C N U.

II. Connecting with One Another

Have you ever been affirmed by someone? How did it feel? How did it impact you?

III. Study the Text

- a. In last week's message, we thought briefly about Joseph Campbell's book *The Hero With A Thousand Faces*, which describes the 12 stages of a hero's journey. Steps 1-3 are the ordinary world, the call to adventure, and the refusal. In the crucial fourth step the hero meets their mentor, their hero maker.

Read Matthew 3.13-4.11. Do you see any of Campbell's stages here? Are they as he describes them, or different?

Why would Jesus come to be baptized by John?

The devil offers several means for Jesus to achieve his goals. What are they? And why does Jesus reject them?

How do these temptations play on Jesus' identity as the Son of God?

- b. Read Matthew 4.12-17.

Matthew's Gospel speaks of the "Kingdom of Heaven" instead of "Kingdom of God." Using *heaven* instead of *God* was a common Jewish way of avoiding the word *God* out of reverence and respect. Either way, this phrase refers to God's rule here on earth.

In what sense could God's kingdom be "approaching" or "arriving"?

- c. As we discussed last week, "repent" does not mean "feel bad about yourself," but rather "think differently," "change direction," or "turn around." Despite God's people fighting for two centuries to "take Israel back for God," Rome was still very much in charge. As we've seen above, Jesus rejects power, privilege, and glory as a way to advance his agenda. Instead he quotes from Isaiah 9.1-7.

How is he saying that God's people need to repent and change direction?

What would it mean for us to change direction and receive God's Kingdom?

d. Read Matthew 4.18-25.

What strikes you about how Simon, Andrew, James, and John respond to Jesus?

e. In the first century, the Sea of Galilee was famous for its rich commercial fishery, which provided food for the wealthy. Fishermen, however, who spent their nights away from their home and families to provide such a luxury, were not honored for their work. But Jesus goes to these tired fishermen, in smelly boats, and dirty nets.

What does that tell us about who Jesus is sent to? What do you think he thought of these men?

f. Do you know anyone who set aside a promising or lucrative opportunity to take a job or follow a career because of Christian values or convictions?

g. Sometimes Jesus' call comes slowly, starting like a faint murmur. Other times he calls people as suddenly and dramatically as he called Peter and Andrew, James and John.

How and what first drew you to Jesus?

h. Why would people back then give up everything to follow a wandering preacher?

Why do people today give up lifestyles and practices that look attractive and lucrative in order to maintain honesty, integrity, faith, hope, and love?

i. The fishermen by the Sea of Galilee had no idea where following Jesus would lead them. How was being a disciple taken you in unexpected directions or turned out differently from the way you expected?

j. "Calling disciples" is something no self-respecting rabbi would do. They would instead require lengthy applications, filled out in triplicate, with stellar references!

What does it mean for you that Jesus calls disciples? And regular ol' people!?

IV. Pray

a. Pray that you will keep or regain that which first drew you to Jesus,

b. Pray about specific temptations you face, asking God to reveal ways to combat them,

c. Ask God to give you eyes to see the gifts of other people, to affirm them and encourage them.

This week's study guide was developed with a little help from N.T. Wright's *For Everyone Bible Study Guides: Matthew* <https://gdshp.ch/2Qr3qLw>

