DIVING DEEPER DISCUSSION GUIDE

TEXT SUMMARY

In today's text, Matt 4:12-17, we see Jesus move from Judea (where He was baptized and where He faced Satan's temptations) to His home region of Galilee. He then moves from His hometown of Nazareth to Capernaum, which will serve as the base of His ministry operations throughout His public ministry. Finally, we see His message: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

INTRODUCTION (observation):

1. What news prompted Jesus to leave Judea and return to Galilee? (In Matt 14:1-4, Matthew gives us a flashback to explain what happened.)

2. How does Jesus' presence in Capernaum fulfill the prophecy of the ancient prophet Isaiah? What is the context for Isaiah's original prophecies? (See Isa 9:2; 42:7.)

3. What was the backstory of the region of Zebulun and Naphtali, the part of Israel that first witnessed the public ministry of Jesus? (See 2 Kings 15:29.)

DISCUSSION (INTERPRETATION):

Unlike the urbane and pragmatic Judeans, the Galileans were hot-headed and prone to extremism. Galilee was the home of the kind of simmering revolutionary sentiment that kept both Roman and Jewish authorities awake at night. We know from Gamaliel's summary of Jewish messianic movements (Acts 5:33-35) that Jesus' announcement of the arrival of the kingdom was not a new message.

1. How would Jesus' announcement sound to Galilean ears?

2. How would His call to repentance create confusion for His Galilean hearers?

3. What kind of response was Jesus looking for from His hearers?

SO WHAT? (APPLICATION):

Jesus' announcement of the arrival of the kingdom of heaven was like John's. It was not a call to arms but a call to repentance. Genuine repentance includes two main components: confession and renunciation. Either one without the other is a futile act of self-deception.

1. **Genuine repentance must begin with confession.** This means we must abandon our justification for our sin and call it what it is. Our sin is never a mere violation of a rule, it is a rebellion, a betrayal, a violation of the covenant relationship. And we cannot deal honestly with our sin until we frankly acknowledge our wrongdoing.

    - There is genuine anguish in confession, in facing squarely the sordid nature of one's own heart. Have you ever tried to side-step that anguish by minimizing your sin?

    - What is your favorite method for minimizing and justifying your sin? Leading candidates include but are not limited to euphemism (polite description), comparison with the sins of others, and secrecy.

2. **But confession is only the first of two essential steps in genuine repentance: the second step is renunciation.** So long as I keep my options open, my repentance is false and incomplete. If I choose to protect my contact with the source of temptation, I might be sincere about my regret for my sin and I might even confess (call my sin what it is), but my heart hasn't changed.

    - Have you ever attempted to "repent" without cutting yourself off from temptation? What was the short-term result? The long-term result?

    - What lies have you told yourself to protect and maintain your exposure to your temptation?