

# *Who Do You Say That I Am?*

Seeing and Delighting in Jesus through an Expository  
Journey through the **Gospel of Matthew**

69- Jesus Demonstrates His Absolute Authority- Part 7  
The Demands of Salvation; and the Supremacy of the  
Incarnate God- Part 1

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Church September 10, 2023

## **Matthew 8:18-27**

**18 Now when Jesus saw a crowd around Him, He gave orders to depart to the other side of the sea.**

**19 Then a scribe came and said to Him, "Teacher, I will follow You wherever You go."**

**20 Jesus said to him, "The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head."**

**21 Another of the disciples said to Him, "Lord, permit me first to go and bury my father."**

**22 But Jesus said to him, "Follow Me, and allow the dead to bury their own dead."**

**23 When He got into the boat, His disciples followed Him.**

**24 And behold, there arose a great storm on the sea, so that the boat was being covered with the waves; but Jesus Himself was asleep.**

**25 And they came to Him and woke Him, saying, "Save us, Lord; we are perishing!"**

**26 He said to them, "Why are you afraid, you men of little faith?" Then He got up and rebuked the winds and the sea, and it became perfectly calm.**

**27 The men were amazed, and said, "What kind of a man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey Him?"**

*To the Glory of God the Father; God the Son;  
and God the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

We live in a very “*sanitized*” World. And in this sanitized World- we have “*sanitized Sins*” as well as “*sanitized Christianity*”. The “*sanitized Sins*” are those Sins that are *usually* acceptable to most people; and Sins that usually don’t elicit any negative Comments. And that is true- *precisely* because those Sins are so

common- nobody even raises an eyebrow over them anymore. They have been “*sanitized*”.

For example, the latest Statistics say that 6 out of every 10 men- *in the Church*- regularly look at Pornography. So, viewing sinful Images; looking and lusting after other people in order to become sexually aroused- touches the Lives of 60% of the men of the modern Church!

Why is there not a national Outcry over this Abomination? Why is there so much talk about Politics and who should be President in the Church- while 6 out of 10 men- *who say they are saved*- are literal slaves to Pornography? The Sin of Pornography has been “*sanitized*”.

In fact, it is so common-place nowadays that many Churches have completely *capitulated* to this great Evil; and no longer even teach against it. Elders and Deacons no longer counsel against it. There are many Leaders within the modern Church- who have *officially* and *formally* begun to teach that periodic use of Pornography is actually helpful and useful to Marriages. So, it is no wonder why ongoing Participation in this Evil is no longer disqualifying men from becoming Elders or Deacons in those Churches.

But even Christianity itself has become “*sanitized*” in far too many areas. There is a purposeful and concerted Effort by many Leaders today to make Christianity “*less Offensive*” and “*more Acceptable*” to the lost World. These people seek to “*water-down*” the Gospel so that it doesn’t make as many Demands on those who say they love Jesus.

So, it is common today for people who say they have experienced the Miracle of the New Birth- and who have go so far as to become a formal Member of a local Assembly- to view Church Attendance as something that is optional. So, they no longer attend the Church Services; or attend so infrequently that there is simply no way for those people to live in Obedience to what the inspired and inerrant Word of the living God says in **Hebrews 10:23-25**:

**23 Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful;**

**24 and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, 25 not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.**

These “*sanitized*” Church-Members have no idea what is going on in the Lives of their fellow-Believers- so they have no idea how to pray for them; or how to stimulate them to Love and to Good Deeds- because they are not around their fellow-believers enough. So, they live in constant Disobedience to this Command-

but are rarely- if ever- even convicted about it. How could that be? Well, the Bible says it happens because of the two Curses of:

1. The Worry of the World
2. The Deceitfulness of Wealth

... and Jesus said that these two things have the Power to “*choke the Word of God*” in their hearts and minds- so much so- that even the inspired; infallible; and inerrant Word of the living God has become “**unfruitful**” in their Lives (**Matthew 13:22**).

I received a phone call recently inviting me to participate in a Seminar in Dallas that was designed to help Church Leaders get their people to become more “*Committed*”. And the nice lady on the phone told me that Christians being *uncommitted* has become such a terrible Epidemic- that Church Leaders need help.

So, this Organization has developed various Man-made Techniques that are designed to get people- *who say they love Jesus*- to be *more Committed* to the Church.

And after she gave me her spill- I told that nice lady that I agree wholeheartedly that far too many people in the modern Church are totally uncommitted. But I said the Problem doesn't lie in the absence of Man-made Techniques designed to cause them to become *more Committed*. The Problem lies in the fact that the Church has let its guard down; and has allowed people who are NOT saved to become members of the Church.

I reminded her of what the Bible teaches about what actually happens to a person who experiences the Miracle of the New Birth- in verses like **2Corinthians 5:17** that says:

**Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.**

... and **Romans 6:1-4** that says:

**1 What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase?**

**2 May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it?**

**3 Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death?**

**4 Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.**

So, I told her that God is working in this Church to bring forth people who are willing to die for Jesus. Because if they are willing to die- the Commitment will take care of itself!

The nice lady then begin to tell me that I was being unreasonable; and that I was expecting too much from people. And that instead of holding people, who say they're saved- accountable- to live according to the Teachings of the Bible- all I needed to do was to fork over \$299 and come to their Seminar on how to get unsaved people to become more Committed to Jesus- by giving them Man-made Techniques. This is an example of what I mean when I talk about "*sanitized* Christianity".

Because you see the Bible teaches a completely different Way to get people to be Committed. For example, when Jesus approached Andrew and Peter- He simply said, "**Follow Me!**" (**Matthew 4:19**). And the very next verse says,

**Immediately they left their nets and followed Him. (Matthew 4:20)**

... and when the Apostle Matthew was saved- he was sitting at the Table where he collected the Taxes from the Jews to give that money to the Romans. And **Matthew 9:9** says,

**As Jesus went on from there, He saw a man called Matthew, sitting in the tax collector's booth; and He said to him, "Follow Me!" And he got up and followed Him.**

No arguing; no fuss; no begging these men to come to Church. No pleading with them to attend Prayer Meeting. They saw Jesus; they heard His Word; God changed their Hearts; they walked away from EVERYTHING they were doing; and IMMEDIATELY they began to follow Jesus! Now THAT is true Conversion! That is the Example of what Paul was talking about in **2Corinthians 3:18-4:6**:

**18 But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.**

**4:1 Therefore, since we have this ministry, as we received mercy, we do not lose heart,**

**2 but we have renounced the things hidden because of shame, not walking in craftiness or adulterating the word of God, but by the manifestation of truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.**

**3 And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing,**

**4 in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.**

**5 For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your bond-servants for Jesus' sake.**

**6 For God, who said, "Light shall shine out of darkness," is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.**

The Bible says here in verse 3 that satan has “**blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see**”. See what?

**the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God (v.4)**

... or...

**the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ. (v.6)**

... THAT is what satan is terrified that we will “see”. THAT is what satan works so hard to keep us from seeing. Why?

Because when sinners’ eyes and minds and hearts are “unveiled” by an Act of sovereign Grace- and they “see”; they “behold”; or they “comprehend” the “LIGHT of the Glory of Jesus Christ- Who is the Image of God” (v.4); or the “LIGHT of the Knowledge of the Glory of God in the Face (Person) of Jesus Christ” (v.6)- they are changed! Immediately! Supernaturally! Miraculously! And Permanently!

And the Example of what this Change looks like in verse 6 is when God spoke into the “nothingness” in the Act of Creation and LIGHT came forth!

But then look at what happens to the individual who is blessed to have his mind and eyes and heart unveiled; and who sees this glorious Light from Chapter 3 verse 18:

**But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.**

When a wicked sinner’s eyes and mind and heart are sovereignly “unveiled”- by God and that person “sees” the Glory of God in Jesus- He is

changed. And that Change is *measurable*; it is *obvious* to all who know that individual. And the Bible says this is what happens:

- His blind eyes and mind and heart are sovereignly opened
- He sees the Glory of God in Jesus Christ
- He *loves* what he sees
- He is *changed* into what he sees

... and that Change is “*Progressive*”; it is “*Ongoing*”; it is “*Relentless*”; and this Transformation is “*Eternal*”. The Mortal has been touched by the Immortal and the Mortal can’t ever be the same again!

Verse 18 says that when we see the Glory of God- we are “**transformed into the same image**”- which is the Image of Jesus Christ. But HOW are we transformed? Verse 18 goes on to say,

**... from glory to glory....**

We are transformed from one degree; or one realm of Glory to the next. How?

**... just as from the Lord, the Spirit.**

So, this ongoing; constant; progressive Change and Transformation that began when God sovereignly unveiled our eyes and mind and heart in the Miracle of the New Birth- leads us. It compels us; It draws us; drags us; and brings us from one degree of Glory to the next- NOT because we are strong ; NOT because we are guiding this Change; NOT because we are free from Problems; and NOT because we are better than other people.

No, the Transformation that *began* with the New Birth extends all the Way through our entire Lives until we stand before God in a new Body in Heaven- is ongoing- precisely because this Change and Transformation is being *orchestrated* by the Lord Himself- Who IS the Spirit!

So, excuse me if I don’t want to buy into the Man-made Techniques of getting people to become more Committed. I want THIS! Because if THIS happens to you- you WILL be infinitely better than merely Committed!

But when you stop and think about it- this is the Way it has ALWAYS been. Man has his Way of doing things while God has His. And when Flesh is in charge- what comes forth is always more Flesh and so, people will probably be a little more Committed and attend Church more frequently. But when God has His Way- what comes forth are people who have beheld the Glory of God; who love what

they see; and who are being changed into what they see! And those people not only Committed- their Delight is in the Lord! And they are willing to die for Jesus! 1,000 years before Jesus was born- God the Holy Spirit “moved” on David and he wrote this in **Psalm 63**:

**1 O God, You are my God; I shall seek You earnestly; My soul thirsts for You, my flesh yearns for You, In a dry and weary land where there is no water.**

**2 Thus I have seen You in the sanctuary, To see Your power and Your glory.**

**3 Because Your lovingkindness is better than life, My lips will praise You.**

**4 So I will bless You as long as I live; I will lift up my hands in Your name.**

**5 My soul is satisfied as with marrow and fatness, And my mouth offers praises with joyful lips.**

**6 When I remember You on my bed, I meditate on You in the night watches,**

**7 For You have been my help, And in the shadow of Your wings I sing for joy.**

**8 My soul clings to You; Your right hand upholds me.**

**9 But those who seek my life to destroy it, Will go into the depths of the earth.**

**10 They will be delivered over to the power of the sword; They will be a prey for foxes.**

**11 But the king will rejoice in God; Everyone who swears by Him will glory, For the mouths of those who speak lies will be stopped.**

Something had happened to this King and he responded to it by rejoicing in God- NOT when all was going well in his Life- but also when he was being hunted down like a dog. And the culmination; the summation; the totality of his Life is found in verse 3 when he said,

**Because Your lovingkindness is better than life, My lips will praise You.**

This is NOT the Way that normal people talk. But David talked this Way because his eyes and heart and mind had been sovereignly Unveiled and he had seen the Glory of God! And as David was blessed to behold the Glory of God in the Face of Christ- this sinful King began to love what he saw! And that is what *empowered* him to be changed into what he saw! And yet David only saw this Glory in Shadows and Types and in Symbols. We are able to see this Glory in Reality!

Now back when the Bible was preached- people rejoiced as they died- thanking God they had been saved; and had the Privilege of knowing Jesus; and of Him saving them. But now that we have traded the Bible for a “sanitized Christianity”- people can’t seem to find it in their hearts to even show up on the Lord’s Day. God help us!

Now in the Passage before us- Matthew *continues* to illustrate the true and full Deity of Jesus Christ to his Jewish readers (and us) by showing more Examples of His “*Absolute Authority*”. And part of Jesus’ absolute Authority was His Authority to make Demands on those He saves. So, here in verses 18-23 the Apostle illustrates the “*Demands of Salvation*”- which is what Jesus *requires* from those He chooses.

And then verses 24-27 display how Jesus had absolute Authority over “*Nature*” itself- which gives us another Example of the “*Supremacy of Jesus Christ*”.

And what is amazing about both of these things- is how “*matter-of-fact*” Jesus was to both of them. Jesus had absolute Authority over all Nature- *Of course He did*- He’s God and He knows that. So, this is nothing really unusual about God- that He controls- not only the *creation* of all things- but God is in absolute Authority over their “*day-to-day*” Operation.

You see, Christianity is NOT “*Deism*”- the false religion that teaches that God created all things- but then He stepped back and allows what He began to simply “*take its course*” and basically operate on Inertia. The Bible teaches in **Romans 8:28** that God not only *created* “all things”- but that He also sovereignly *governs* and *controls* all things- every minute of every day. And because of that absolute Authority over all things- *all the time*- God sovereignly and effectually *causes* all things to “*work together*” for two Purposes:

1. The *greater* “Good” of His Own Glory
2. The *ultimate* “Joy” of His people

... .. and so, God does “ALL THINGS” so that those two things will ALWAYS come to pass!

And that means that God is *intimately* involved in every Area of our Lives. And He is “*pushing this*” and “*pulling that*”; He is “*raising this up*” and “*casting that down*”; God is doing 10,000 things all at once (some we see but many more we don’t see)- so God ALONE will, *ultimately*, be glorified; and so that we, *ultimately*, will be completely satisfied in Him being glorified!

The Bible teaches that God actively “CAUSES” certain things- which we call, “*Good*”; but He also passively “ALLOWS” other things- which we call, “*Evil*”. And by sovereignly working- *both of them together*- those two things- God being Glorified and us being made Happy- ALWAYS comes to pass!

And that Truth tells us two other things about the God we worship:

1. God is much more “in control” of things than we can imagine



2. God passionately desires that we are joyful- in Who He is and in What He alone has done

So, “*Sovereignty*”, on a fundamental level- is NOT that God simply “knows” what will happen in the Future- but that He CONTROLS the Future- to the degree that His Will- ALWAYS comes to pass! So, God NEVER loses! He is NEVER defeated! Satan NEVER wins! And so, we can NEVER, *ultimately*, thwart God’s Will by our Choices or our Decisions! God ALWAYS gets what He *wants*!<sup>1</sup> And what He *wants* is to be glorified; for His Will to be done on the earth the Way His Will is done in Heaven; and for the people- *who carry His Name*- to be glad that He is glorified!

And that means that “*Salvation*” is really nothing more than God changing us *radically*; and *thoroughly*; and *eternally* (by and through what He alone does for us)- so that we find the *fullness* of our *own* Joy- in God alone being glorified!

But because we are conceived in our mother’s womb as- “Sinful” and “Fallen”- God not only has to *forgive* us from all Sin- but He also has to “*make us Righteous*” as well- so we will become “*fit for Heaven*”.

The shed Blood of the Lamb of God- Jesus Christ- cleanses us from ALL our Sins (**1John 1:7**); while the spotless “Righteousness”- that Jesus *earned* by living a sinless Life on earth for 33-1/2 years- is *imputed* to us (by Faith alone). And THAT is what makes us “*fit for Heaven*”.

But usually, God doesn’t take us to Heaven as soon as those two things are accomplished (*Justification*). God usually leaves us here- on this Sin cursed earth- to wage War against three foes:

1. The fallen world System
2. Our own fallen Flesh
3. The Devil

... and in, by, and through this ongoing Struggle against those three foes- we PROVE that we truly believe that Jesus is the “*Treasure of the Universe*”!

But we have to learn HOW to follow Jesus. Because we can’t simply *strive* to obey God. We must strive to obey God- Yes! But we MUST do that- in the Way God has already said for us to strive. In other words, we must do God’s Work in the earth- *in God’s Way*.

We cannot “*make up our own Way*”; or “*do our own thing*”; and we sure can’t “*do what is right in our own eyes*”. But in order to “*do God’s Work in God’s Way*” and successfully resist the Pull that the unconverted world “System”; and our

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<sup>1</sup> In God’s own Timing that He usually doesn’t share with us- so, we have to trust Him

fallen Flesh; and the devil- has on us- we must know what God has said. So, we must *read* the Bible; *study* the Bible; *understand* the Bible; *embrace* the Bible; *believe* the Bible; *love* the Bible; and then strive to *obey* the Bible- in two Ways:

1. In the Grace that God gives
2. To the Glory of God alone

... because that is the ONLY Way God will be glorified and the ONLY Way our Joy will be made full.

So, this “*following Jesus*” after we have experienced the Miracle of the New Birth; AFTER we have been justified; and AFTER we have been adopted into the Family of God- is a “*Process*”- a progressive, Life-long “*Process*” that we grow into. It is an ongoing “*Journey*” that involves many, many Steps. It is a long, protracted “*War*” against the Lusts of our Flesh- with many, many Battles- *some* that we win; and *some* that we lose. And it is an entire and complete “*Way of Life*”- which, for some strange Reason- the modern Church, for the most part, has decided to spend very little Time talking about. And that means that, “*following Jesus*” in humble and joyful Obedience- AFTER we have been born again; justified; and adopted- is NOT something we do for a couple of hours on Sunday morning.

Now, normally, the Christian Church calls this Life-long “*Journey*”; “*War*”; and “*Process*”- “*Discipleship*”. It is the long, protracted, part of Salvation that fashions and shapes and molds- already saved Believers- into the Image and Likeness of Jesus Christ.

But the Bible calls it, “*Sanctification*”<sup>2</sup>. And it is the part of Salvation that has to do with the ever-present; ongoing *Purifying* of the Believer- through a Series of Tests; Trials; Tumults; Afflictions; Persecutions; and Troubles that God either passively *allows*; or that He actively *causes* to come into our Lives. Please read with me what the unknown writer said in **Hebrews 12:4-11**:

**4 You have not yet resisted to the point of shedding blood in your striving against sin;**

**5 and you have forgotten the exhortation which is addressed to you as sons, "MY SON, DO NOT REGARD LIGHTLY THE DISCIPLINE OF THE LORD, NOR FAINT WHEN YOU ARE REPROVED BY HIM;**

**6 FOR THOSE WHOM THE LORD LOVES HE DISCIPLINES, AND HE SCOURGES EVERY SON WHOM HE RECEIVES."**

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<sup>2</sup> Because of a Language Problem- it became known as “*Sanctification*”. But if not for that Language Problem- it would have been called, “*Holification*”.

**7 It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline?**

**8 But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons.**

**9 Furthermore, we had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them; shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live?**

**10 For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but He disciplines us for our good, so that we may share His holiness.**

**11 All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.**

You see, even though we have experienced the Miracle of the New Birth; and even though we have been forgiven of all Sin (Past, Present, and Future); and even though we have been “made Righteous” (by Faith alone); and even though we have already been adopted into the Family of God- there are still Areas of our Lives that do NOT please the Lord! There are Areas in us that are NOT submitted to the Authority of the Word of God; and Areas that do NOT honor God nor bring Him Glory. So, in His Mercy- God has included *another* Part of Salvation that addresses that Problem.

And while many people call this part of Salvation: “*Discipleship*”; others call it “*following Jesus*”; others call it simply, “*Obedience*”; while still others call it “*Sanctification*”. But *whatever* you may call it- it is a very important Part of the over-all *Process* of Salvation- that began in “*Eternity Past*” with the single “*Decree of God*”; and it goes all the Way out into “*Eternity Future*” when we are all surrounding the Throne of God- in glorified Bodies- praising God for His Goodness- forever!

And this Part involves learning how to *yield* ourselves to God’s Will and Word. It has to do with learning *how* to love God MORE than we love anything or anyone else. And it has to do with us learning how to pray; how to please God- by joyfully and humbly submitting ourselves to the Authority of God’s Word- *in our daily Lives*- all to the Glory of God.

So, by Necessity- this Part REQUIRES that we change. That we *alter* the Way we live our Lives- sometimes *simply*; but in other Ways- *radically*. So, by God’s Grace and to God’s Glory; and through the Power of the indwelling Holy Spirit- we will no longer “*do this*”- but we will “*do that*”.

This Part REQUIRES that we all learn how to live our Lives for ONE overriding Reason: so that God is glorified! And that’s what it means to live our Lives with abandon- to the Glory of God. And, in doing that- the Promise from a

God, who cannot lie- is that we will also obtain the fullness of our own Joy as well!

And in this Passage- the Apostle Matthew gives us two very clear Examples of the “*Demands that Jesus makes on all who are saved*”. These two Examples show us what it looks like to “*follow Jesus*” in humble and joyful Obedience; and to live our Lives *solely* for God’s Glory! So, let’s look at them one at a time. Please read **Matthew 8:18-20** again together:

**18 Now when Jesus saw a crowd around Him, He gave orders to depart to the other side of the sea.**

**19 Then a scribe came and said to Him, "Teacher, I will follow You wherever You go."**

**20 Jesus said to him, "The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head."**

Now first off- I want you to focus on the last word in verse 18. It is the word, “**Sea**”. And because Jesus had just finished teaching what we call, the “*Sermon on the Mount*”- people just *assume* that Matthew was talking about the “*Sea of Galilee*” or what the Romans would have called, the “*Sea of Tiberius*”.

And this word, “**Sea**” is also found in verse 24 and then again in verse 27. But this “**Sea**” also and has to do with a very strange Event that Matthew wanted his Jewish audience to know about- that involved two demon possessed men; and a group of people who lived in a place he called, the “**country of the Gadarenes**” in verses 28-34 (that we will get into next week).

And notice that five things **MUST** be true- about this “**Sea**”:

1. It **MUST** have vicious and dangerous Weather
2. It **MUST** border the “**country of the Gadarenes**”
3. It **MUST** have a “cemetery” (**Tombs**) nearby where the demon-possessed men lived
4. It **MUST** border a “**Region**”- where the primary Business was raising pigs (at least back in the 1<sup>st</sup> Century)
5. It **MUST** have high Cliffs (**steep bank**)- where the pigs could run over and drown

... in addition- the Boat that Jesus and His Disciples were on- had to be large enough for Jesus to be asleep- until the Disciples woke Him up.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> The Bible tells us that Jesus was asleep in the “stem” of the ship (**Mark 4:38**). But on the small fishing boats that sailed the Sea of Galilee- the stern is where the Rudder was- that someone had to maintain at all times. Those boats were no longer than 20-25 feet- which is simply not large enough to accommodate a sleeping man- while the other man manned the rudder.

We also need to consider that there is no place anywhere within the Sea of Galilee that is further than 15 minutes to shore. And yet, in the Storm- Jesus' Disciples feared for their Lives- even though they were seasoned and experienced fisherman. This indicates that the "Sea" they were in- was much *larger* and much more *dangerous* than the Sea of Galilee.

So, when we put all these things together- there is simply NO area around the "Sea of Galilee" that fits ALL of these Requirements- either today or back in the 1<sup>st</sup> Century. There is one City, however, that *borders* the Sea of Galilee that many people have historically thought was the "**country of the Gadarenes**".

But if we want to use that City as the fulfillment of this inspired and inerrant Narrative by the Apostle Matthew- we have several Problems: For example- that City did NOT (and does not today) have any steep slopes or cliffs near the water. It did NOT (and does not) have tombs nearby. And the people of that City did NOT raise pigs either now or back in the 1<sup>st</sup> Century. So, that pretty much *eliminates* that City as being the one that Matthew was talking about.

Now all of this is NOT my Opinion, dear fiends- these are all facts of the Geography and the History of the Area around the Region of Galilee. And besides that- the Boats used on the Sea of Galilee were small<sup>4</sup> and it would have been very difficult for Jesus to lay down and go to sleep in one of those Boats- without being constantly sprayed with water.

So, when you put all of this together- the "Sea" that Matthew was talking about here very well *could* have been the "*Mediterranean Sea*" and NOT the much *smaller* "*Sea of Galilee*".

So, in any Event- when this man came up to Jesus in verse 19 and said,

**"Teacher, I will follow You wherever You go."**

... we would all be thrilled if somebody told us that!

But Jesus knew all things and He knew this man better than he knew himself.

And this is another Reason that I personally believe that Jesus was on the Mediterranean Sea and NOT the Sea of Galilee. This man is telling Jesus that he will go with Him- *wherever* He goes. But going from one side of the Sea of Galilee to the other is NOT that big of a deal. But going from Palestine to say, Spain- IS a huge deal. So, on the surface this man is looking better and better because now- it doesn't matter to him where Jesus goes- this man says he is willing to follow Him!

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<sup>4</sup> In 1986- Archeologists uncovered the ruins of a boat on the north-west shore of the Sea of Galilee (the "Jesus Boat") dating back to the 1<sup>st</sup> Century. The Boat was 27 feet long and 7-1/2 feet wide.

And that's what the Lord wants from us. He wants us to follow Him. To follow- NOT lead; Follow- NOT even walk by His Side. He wants us to go where He tells us to go; say what He tells us to say and to do what He tells us to do. That's what Jesus wants from EVERYBODY. And that's what "Obedience" is.

So, it really doesn't matter what it may cost us; or how hard it is; or how inconvenient it is. Our Ability to obey what Jesus says- is predicated on how much Value we have placed on Jesus. So, if Jesus is my "home-boy" or my "co-pilot"; or just my Friend- then I may follow to *some* degree- but there is a Limit to how *far*; and how *much*; and how *long*; I will follow. And if Jesus crosses that Line- I won't follow Him at all- and I will go back and walk away from Him.

But *if* God has sovereignly unveiled my eyes and heart and mind; and *if* I have beheld the Glory of God in the Face of; or in the Person of Jesus Christ; and *if* I have judged Jesus to be the Treasure of the Universe; the Lilly of my Valley; the bright and morning Star; *if* Jesus is the beautiful Rose of Sharon; and the Fairest of 10,000 to my soul; *if* Jesus is the One who has bought and paid for me with His own Blood; and the One who brings me to God clean and washed and made Righteous- then there is NO Limit to how *far*; or how *close*; or how *long*; I will follow Him!

Because to a person like that- *whatever* Demand Jesus may place on my Life is just fine. I was going to Hell before He found me- so I have no more room to complain; or to argue; or to rebel; or to bellyache with *whatever* Jesus tells me to do. He is mine and I am His; and I am certainly the Better for that! So, why would I argue with the Man who lived and died and rose again? Why would I resist the Man who pardoned ALL my Sins? Why would I rebel against the Man who took all of God's Wrath on Himself that *should* have fallen on me? Why would I not humbly and joyfully strive with every fiber of my Being to obey *whatever* He tells me to do?

Right after I started this Church some Pastors came to me and told me that I was making a terrible Mistake. They said I couldn't possibly expect people to sit and listen to a Sermon that was longer than 30 minutes. They told me that- *especially* during Football Season- you simply *cannot* go past Noon with a Church Service.

And my Response was, "*It all depends on how hungry for God's Word people are. Because if a person is hungering and thirsting after Righteousness- then NOTHING about God's Word would be too long or too far or too hard. But if a person is not saved; if he has never seen Jesus in His Glory- then 15 minutes is too long!*" The lack of Commitment among the people of the modern Church is directly connected to the Fact that those people have never seen the Glory of God in the Face of Jesus. But that also means they have never experienced the Miracle of the New Birth, either.

The *false* “gospel” that is being preached and taught and accepted and loved by the masses today- is NOT the biblical Gospel. That *false* “gospel” teaches that God is a cosmic “sugar-daddy” who will give his Children *whatever* they ask for; and will NEVER make any Demands on their Lives.

But the Gospel that we find in the 66 Books of the Holy Bible says that Jesus will *absolutely* make Demands on every single Soul He saves. And those Demands are so amazing; so high; so lofty; so out of our Reach- that we will have to spend the rest of our Lives- crying out to God for the Strength and Wisdom to accomplish them. And that is *exactly* what God wants. He not only desires that we need Him to save us- but that we also need Him to obey *whatever* He calls us to do, as well.

This man was looking for Comfort and Security. And as long as Jesus would supply those things for him- he was willing to follow Him. So, in his mind- he was saying, “*As long as You (God) do what I want- then I will follow You*”. Which is also saying, “*If You DON’T give me what I want- then I will NOT follow You*”.

But we CANNOT bargain with God, dear friends. We can humbly and joyfully accept the unconditional Surrender that Jesus demands from us- or we can die in our Sins. This man was looking for something that God would give to him in exchange for his Service- his Commitment. So, he very well might have gone to that Seminar.

You will notice that we don’t see or hear anymore about this scribe that told Jesus he would follow Him wherever He went. Because as soon as Jesus told this man,

**The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.**

... that man said, “*I didn’t sign up for that!*” and he walked away and left Jesus standing in the middle of the road.

So, this man was looking for some sort of “sanitized Commitment” to a “sentimental Jesus”- where he could “tip his hat” toward Jesus and Jesus would be so grateful that this man gave Him the time of Day- that Jesus would just shower him with Comforts and Security.

But as soon as this man was told what kind of Demands Jesus would make of him- his “sanitized Commitment” vanished; and this man was nowhere to be found. So, the Demand that Jesus made on this man outweighed the Value that this man had placed on Jesus.

May God help us that we will place the highest Value on our Lord and then whatever Jesus tells us to do- will be wonderful!

Amen. Let's pray.

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The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your pace. Soli Deo Gloria. For the Glory of God alone.