

# The Gospels: Understanding Them, Developing Curriculum, and Following Jesus

Mako A. Nagasawa

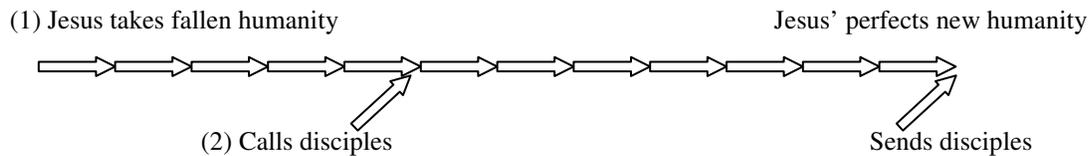
## THE WHOLE

### Major Theme #1: How is Jesus preparing to give us his new humanity?

- He is struggling to cleanse his own humanity and put its self-centeredness to death, to reunite his humanity fully with the Father by the Spirit
- He is retelling and redeeming larger stories (of King David, of Israel, of Adam)

### Major Theme #2: How is Jesus training his disciples in his mission to all humanity?

- He develops their understanding of themselves
  - How do they experience their own limitations?
  - How does their spiritual growth occur?
- He trains them to love others in his name and invite them to himself
  - What does Jesus want the disciples to learn about his mission?
  - What are they in fact learning? How?
- He helps them understand why some people reject him
  - Pharisees: Why?
  - Sadducees, Temple priests: Why?
  - Crowds: Why?
- He helps them understand how he is preparing to give them his new humanity (see #1 above)



## THE PARTS

An example text: Jesus healing the leper in Matthew 8:1 – 4 or Luke 5:12 – 16

### The Parts: They can (kind of) be interpreted as stand-alone stories

- What does Jesus' interaction reveal about God's heart for this person? For us?
  - Jesus is eager to touch places in us that are unclean
  - Jesus wants us to be sensitive to sin again rather than unfeeling

### The Parts: They always develop Theme #2:

- *Jesus' mission to reach all humanity*: How does this further Jesus' training of his disciples?
  - Jesus is teaching Simon Peter that he can cleanse sin (Luke)
  - Jesus is teaching his disciples that he can transform us by his word (Matthew)

### The Parts: They sometimes represent Theme #1:

- *Jesus' own humanity*: How does this symbolize how Jesus is cleansing his own humanity?
  - Jesus is cleansing uncleanness from his own humanity, so he would be able to share *his humanity*, resurrected and cleansed, with *all humanity*

The individual stories represent Jesus' larger story and develop the disciples' learning.

