

In the Name of God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.

Intro



Do you ever wonder what it might have been like watching the Evening News in Jesus' day?

“A new Prophet has begun his ministry on the shore of the Sea of Galilee.

“We switch you now to our Correspondent, Nathan of Bethsaida, with this live ‘News-chariot’ update.”

Wouldn't it have been great if that's the way they covered Jesus when his ministry began?

But they didn't.

There were no photographers taking before and after shots as Jesus did his miracles.

There were no tape recorders to take down his teaching and preaching.

There was no “Eye-Witness News” van around to record his every move.

So as Mark begins his account of Jesus' life and teaching, he does so by describing a TYPICAL DAY in the life of Jesus made up of a little of everything Jesus did: preaching, healing and calling followers.

Our Gospel today gives us one of those TYPICAL DAYS as Jesus begins his ministry and calls his first Disciples.

I. Jesus' Message

A. The first 13 verses of the Gospel – remember we are still in Chapter One – have prepared us for this critical moment of the Kingdom's arrival.



1. In the opening verses of Mark, Isaiah announces the coming of God's messenger and John appears in the desert proclaiming a Baptism of repentance.

2. John then announced the coming of a "Mightier One" who would baptize with the Holy Spirit.

3. Jesus then came from Galilee to be Baptized and received God's Spirit as the Heavenly Voice announced to him, "You are my Son whom I love; with you I am well pleased."

4. After spending forty days in the wilderness being tempted by Satan, Jesus now comes back into Galilee, after John's arrest, and begins to proclaim the Gospel of God.

5. "The time is fulfilled," he says, "and the Kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news."

B. For Jesus, the response to the Kingdom of God is **REPENTANCE**.

1. But just what is meant by this rather broad word?

2. The word Jesus used – translated from the Greek word *Metanoia* – means much more than to be sorry for one's sins – it means to turn around 180 degrees.

3. It is a deliberate turning away from one's sinful past and re-orienting one **whole self** towards God.

C. And the living out of this "Return to God" is belief in the Good News of God.

1. This belief, however, is not simply an intellectual agreement to a set of principles by the brain – nor is it an emotional reaction of the heart.

2. It is a **total response** of the whole person to the message of the Gospel.
3. To believe in the Good News is to have faith in what God has done in the past, and what God now promises to do.
4. One way to look at Mark is that the rest of Gospel is an expansion of these two verses – explaining what it means to **repent and believe** in the Gospel.
5. And the first illustration of what this means is the call of the first Disciples.

II. Call of the Disciples

A. Now, just who were these Disciples Jesus called?



1. Well, we know their names: Peter, Andrew, James and John.
2. We know what they did for a living – they were fishermen.
3. We what that two of them still worked with their father.
4. But what else do we know?
- Let's dig a little deeper and see what else we can find.

B. They were simple folks, fishermen from Galilee.

1. They weren't from Jerusalem or Rome.
2. They weren't from the best families or the best schools.
3. They weren't Captains of Industry or Venture Capitalists.
4. They had no money or power with which to finance or support this operation.
5. They were fishermen.
6. They were **plain ordinary working folks doing their regular daily work** – catching fish and mending nets.

C. And Jesus comes to them and calls them.

1. He says, “Follow me.”

2. He doesn’t say, “I have a theological system which I would like you to investigate; or

- I have certain theories I would like you to think over; or

- I have an ethical system I would like to discuss with you.

3. He simply said, “**Follow me,**” and immediately they did.

4. He called them from their regular everyday life to a life of service;

- to a life of helping others to learn about the love of God and to live out that love;

- in other words, he called them to do **ministry**.

III. Our Call

A. And Jesus issues this same call to us.

1. We TOO are called to **repent and believe in the Gospel**.

2. We too are called to turn our lives around and REDIRECT them towards God and God’s love.

3. We too are to live out the love of God in our lives and share it with those around us.

4. In other words, we too are to follow Jesus – we need to give up our **self-prioritized** ways – and do the things that God would have us do.

5. When Jesus called his first Disciples he gave them a task to do – he called them to a life of service – of ministry – and we too are given this same call – a call to a life of service in him.

B. Yes, we know WE have been called, but we also struggle with what this means.

1. We look up to heaven and ask: “God, what are you really calling me to do with my life?”

- And we can feel so overwhelmed that we can be paralyzed by the enormity of the task.

2. But in the Gospel Jesus says we are to “Fish for People.”

- It’s as simple as that.

C. But how can we “Fish for People” in a time of COVID?



1. It’s as simple as doing this. [PHONE]

2. Just pick up the phone and “let your fingers do the walking.”

3. Call a friend from church – call someone you miss – call them and check up on them – call them and let them know that someone cares about them.

4. One of the greatest difficulties in this time of pandemic is isolation and loneliness – and your simple phone call can go a long way to help with that.

5. Take a moment to think – who is it that you would like to talk with right now – and then call them – preferably after the service is over, but hey if you need to put us on pause go ahead – but just this once.

6. As the old AT&T jingle use to say: “Reach out and touch someone – reach out, call up and just say hi.”

- Just doing that is sharing the Good News of God

7. So call someone and let them know they are loved – and then do it again and again.

Conclusion

I end today with the words of one of my favorite hymns by John Bell, and I hope that soon and very soon we will be able to sing it together.

I invite you to listen to these words – let it flow through your head and your heart – that you may hear God’s continuing call to you.



Will you come and follow me if I but call your name?
Will you go where you don't know and never be the same?
Will you let my love be shown? Will you let my name be known?
Will you let my life be grown in you and you in me?
Will you leave yourself behind if I but call your name?
Will you care for cruel and kind and never be the same?
Will you risk the hostile stare should your life attract or scare?

Will you let me answer prayer in you and you in me?

Will you let the blinded see if I but call your name?

Will you set the pris'ner free and never be the same?

Will you kiss the leper clean, and such as this unseen?

And admit to what I mean in you and you in me?

Will you love the "you" you hide if I but call your name?

Will you quell the fear inside and never be the same

Will you use the faith you've found to reshape the world around

Through my sight and touch and sound in you and you in me?

Christ, your summons echoes true when you but call my name.

Let me turn and follow you and never be the same.

In your company I'll go where your love and footsteps show,

Thus I'll move and live and grow in you and you in me.

AMEN.