

The Call

Mark 1

November 11, 2017

DAY 1: The good news of Jesus

1. We began our study of the gospel of Mark, finding Jesus to be both fully human and fully divine. The first half of Mark's gospel emphasizes Jesus as our king, while the second half of Mark emphasizes the cross of Christ.

Mark 1:14 After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God.

2. When you think about Jesus' message proclaiming "good news," what comes to your mind?

3. What is "good" about His news?

4. It's interesting to me the timing of the last part of v. 14. It comes immediately after the first part of v. 14. I suppose even though John was in prison he heard that Jesus had come and that His ministry had begun. If you were in prison for following God, and you heard that Jesus' message was "good news," what would the "good news" mean to you?

5. It's very easy as a Christian to "assume" the "good news" means or implies things that it doesn't mean or imply. For example:

a. Would it keep John out of prison? Or bring an early release?

b. Would it mean some type of guarantee about your health? Your kids? Your singleness or marriage?

6. How do you think Jesus would answer the question, "What IS the good news?"

DAY 2: The kingdom of God; repent; believe the good news

Mark 1:15 "The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!"

1. These are Mark's first recorded words of Jesus. Is this what you would have expected the central core of Jesus' message to be?

2. What do you think Jesus meant by:

a. "The time has come"?

b. "The kingdom of God"?

c. "The kingdom of God *is near*"?

d. "Repent"?

e. "The gospel"?

3. "Repent" does not mean any of the following:

a. Feel bad about yourself, or feel worse about yourself than you already do.

b. Feel bad about your sin; mope; wallow; walk around with a frown

c. See yourself as unlovable.

4. "Repent" means any of the following:

a. A change the direction you're currently going.

b. A change of mind.

5. What strikes you most from our verse?

DAY 3: The call to follow Jesus

Mark 1:16 As Jesus walked beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen.

¹⁷ "Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will make you fishers of men."

1. Apparently this was not the first time Jesus met these men or these men had heard of Jesus. But this time He makes a call on their lives that is significant!

2. What is it He calls these two men to do?

3. If you had been in their place, how would you have responded?

Mark 1:18 At once they left their nets and followed him.

4. What did they do?

5. Why do you think they wanted to follow Him?

6. Is there significance in them leaving their nets? (They would go back to fishing after the resurrection of Jesus)

Mark 1:19 When he had gone a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John in a boat, preparing their nets. ²⁰ Without delay he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men and followed him.

7. The same story is repeated until there are twelve disciples.

8. Do you mean these men just left their vocations? And when James and John left their father did that lessen their relationship with him? What are we to make of this call of Jesus?

9. In looking at the scripture, not every Christian who is called to follow Jesus leaves their secular career and goes into "professional" ministry. There are many examples in Acts and the epistles of Christians working their trades, and that that work is noble and right.

10. If we can still follow Christ without leaving our employment, how should we think about what it means to follow Christ?

DAY 4: Your call to follow Jesus

1. The call of God on our lives is so profound, so all-encompassing, that it startles us or even shocks us. Though some Christians will leave their careers to pursue a ministerial career, it's clearly better that that number is a minority. We certainly have responsibilities to provide for our families and give back to the Lord.

2. That said, it should certainly cause us to think a lot differently about our jobs and careers than we used to... and ...

3. ... some other highly important things and people as well!

Luke 14:26 (RSV) "If any one comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple."

4. One of the principles of biblical interpretation (called hermeneutics) is that we interpret scripture in the light of the whole bible. Clearly, we are to love people. Instead of reading a contradiction in Jesus' use of "hate," we ask, *how* is Jesus using this word, "hate?"

5. He is speaking with two common communication styles:

a. Hyperbole, using an exaggerated statement to drive home an important point.

b. Compare and contrast, to illustrate an important point

6. In light of hyperbole and compare/contrast, reread Luke 14:26. In the space below, write down what you think Jesus is telling the people about what it means to follow Him.

7. How would you compare your love for Jesus to your love for the following?

a. Your father and mother?

b. Your husband or wife or best friend?

c. Your children?

d. Brothers and sisters?

e. Yourself? (This is not a call to like or dislike yourself. It is a call to other-centeredness)

8. What strikes you about Jesus' call to follow Him?

DAY 5: Why is the call of God so radical?

Luke 14:26 (RSV) "If any one comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple."

1. We may not understand such a call on our lives until we ask some deeper questions. Jot down what you think the bible's answers are to the following questions. (I have included some verses for further study to each question).

a. What is it God requires of all of us? (Matt. 22:37-40)

b. Assuming something is wrong with mankind in general and all of us in particular, what is wrong with man? (Genesis 6:5; Romans 3:23; 6:23; Isaiah 53:6; James 4:17;)

c. Can what's wrong with man be fixed? Assuming the answer is yes, what is it that will fix our sinful, rebellious, stubborn, wayward human nature? And what will prove to be inadequate to change our broken human nature? Check the one(s) below that you believe can actually change our human nature (not just our behavior, words, or intentions) (Ephesians 2:7-8; Titus 3:5-6; 1 Peter 3:18)

Education?

Being religious?

Trying harder?

Setting goals; being accountable?

Trying to live a life of giving/serving?

Trying hard to be a good person or better person?

2. The problem of sinful human nature is so profound, our sin nature runs so stubbornly in the wrong direction, we have orbited our "self" so tightly around our "self" that nothing we do has the power to dislodge our fundamental commitment to self ... except for one thing.

3. Jesus is clear that unless we get a glimpse of the kind of love God has for rebellious people, a love that will sacrifice itself, unjustly, a love where the innocent pays for the sins of the guilty, no one will be awakened from their natural, self-preoccupied commitment to self as priority in life. No one will be jolted to be any different than they already are.

John 14:6 "I am the way, the truth, the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

John 8:28 So Jesus said, "When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am [the one I claim to be] and that I do nothing on my own but speak just what the Father has taught me."

John 12:32 "But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself."

4. What strikes you most from today's devotional?