

20250413 Radical Calling : Following the King – Ps Bijoy

Mark 1: 14-20

In the calling of the first disciples, as seen in mark 1, we see how these men respond to Jesus as their Lord. Their response challenges us to think about how we view Jesus and follow Him.

Let's recall where we've been. The last time we saw Jesus, He was baptized. Both the Father and the Holy Spirit was present with Him, we see the clear picture of trinity there. After that, we saw Him in the wilderness, where He was tempted by Satan but remained completely unharmed as the Holy Spirit empowered Him and angels ministered to Him. Now, after John the Baptist is put in prison, Jesus begins His ministry in Galilee, speaking with clarity and authority. This part of the Gospel is familiar to many, but for some, it might be new. To better understand, Christ is preaching "The time has come, he said. The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!"

Mark 1:1 says, "The beginning of the gospel about Jesus Christ, the Son of God." In this verse, Mark introduces us to the story of Jesus and His ministry, starting with the message He brings.

Jesus' message is important because it challenges us not to create a version of Jesus that fits our own desires or ideas. Sometimes, we might try to shape Jesus into a figure that fits into our preferences or lifestyle, this is like making a "designer Christianity" that matches our individual wants. But Jesus doesn't allow us to do that. Instead, He calls us to conform to a standard of Life that He sets, not one of our own making.

When we look at the teaching of Jesus, people were amazed, asking, "What is this? A new teaching and with authority!" Jesus's teachings were very different from the long, repetitive, and legalistic teachings of the Pharisees. The Pharisees focused on outward rituals, such as the length of the tassels on their prayer shawls or the proper washing of utensils. These teachings were often dry and uninspiring. But when Jesus spoke, people listened. He brought God's Word with authority and clarity.

Interestingly, even though Jesus healed people and performed miracles, His primary work was to preach and proclaim God's Word. His main purpose was to share the good news. The people were drawn to Him because of the way He spoke with authority and freshness. Now, in verse 15 of Mark 1, we get a summary of the message Jesus brings. He says, "The time has come, the kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news."

Let's break down these phrases. First, "The time has come" or "The time is fulfilled." This means that God's plan, which had been unfolding throughout history, was now coming to completion. Jesus didn't just appear in Galilee without a purpose. His arrival was the fulfillment of everything God had been planning since the beginning of time. The gospel, or good news, is not just a random event, but the continuation of God's eternal purpose for humanity.

As C.S Lewis says, history can only be understood when seen through the lens of God's Word. It's not just about what happens in the world, it's about how God's Word interprets what is happening. When

Jesus says, "The time has come," He is declaring that God's plan for salvation is being fulfilled right before their eyes.

Next, Jesus says, "The kingdom of God is near." This means that God's rule and authority are becoming a reality in the lives of people. Jesus is saying that God's kingdom is not just a future event, but it is already starting to take place in the present through Him. God's rule is now being established in the hearts of those who follow Him.

To understand this better, think of the kingdom of God as God's people living under God's rule. Right now, this rule is still hidden, Jesus's reign is not fully visible to everyone. But one day, God's kingdom will be fully manifested. As we read in Revelation 21, there will be a new heaven and a new earth, where there will be no more pain, suffering, or death. But even now, God's kingdom is present in the lives of those who follow Jesus. His rule is already at work in the hearts of believers.

It's also important to understand that when Jesus says the kingdom of God is near, He is speaking of Himself. Jesus is the one who brings God's kingdom to people. The kingdom of God is not just an abstract idea or future event, it is embodied in the person of Jesus. He is the King, and His rule is breaking into the world through Him.

Finally, Jesus calls the people to "Repent and believe the good news." Repentance means turning away from sin and turning toward God. To believe the good news is to trust in Jesus as the one who brings salvation. The message is clear: the time has come, God's kingdom is near, and people must respond by repenting and believing.

Now, when we think about Jesus' role as King, we realise that His reign is both present and future. Right now, we don't see Jesus as a visible King, but He is still the King of the universe. One day, His reign will be made fully visible when He returns to establish His kingdom completely. Until then, He reigns in the lives of those who follow Him.

As believers, we are called to live under the rule of Christ. This means allowing Jesus to be in control of our lives, not just turning to Him when things go wrong, but giving Him the authority over all aspects of our lives. In our world today, most people don't recognize Jesus as King. But we, as His followers, are called to show others what it means to live under His reign. We do this by living lives that reflect His authority, showing others that He is the King and that His kingdom is real. The kingdom of Jesus is not just a future hope, it is a present reality that begins in the hearts of those who follow Him. And as we live out this truth, we are called to invite others into that kingdom by sharing the good news of Jesus.

We often don't want Jesus to interfere with our daily lives. We might sing, "Take my life and let it be consecrated, Lord, to thee," but deep down, we don't want that. We prefer to keep our moments and days to ourselves and only call on Jesus when we need Him. But that's not real loyalty to a King. The rule of Christ in our hearts and lives should be much more obvious. That's why Jesus says, "Repent and believe the good news." He's announcing that God's kingdom is near and that the time is now. This

message is repeated throughout the New Testament. For example, after Peter's sermon on Pentecost, people asked, "What should we do?" Peter responded, "Repent and be baptized."

Repentance means more than just feeling sorry for our actions. It's a complete change in our heart, mind, and direction. It's not just about feeling bad for being caught. True repentance happens when we are so impacted by Jesus' rule that we give control of every part of our lives to Him. Our hopes, dreams, emotions, relationships, work, and finances all fall under His rule. Naturally, our lives aren't like this. This kind of transformation doesn't happen on its own, it requires faith. Repentance isn't about becoming religious. It's about faith in Jesus Christ. Jesus died for us, He took the death we deserved. He was kind to those who rebelled against Him. When we truly grasp this, it only makes sense to let faith transform us. This transformation leads us to stop living for ourselves and to stop thinking, "I can do whatever I want." Following Jesus means surrendering to His will.

Jesus is clear: the kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news. When we do, we enter into real life, the kind of life that never ends. Life that makes sense of everything: who we are, why we're here, and where we're going. People spend their lives trying to make sense of these questions, often turning to the wrong places for answers.

Calling us to follow Him

In verse 15, Jesus introduces the good news of the kingdom. In verse 16, He starts His mission: to spread this good news. Jesus begins walking by the Sea of Galilee, calling ordinary fishermen to follow Him, it might seem underwhelming. But it's not. It's radical. Jesus interrupts their lives, telling them to drop everything and follow Him. Who does He think He is? But Jesus would answer, "I am the King, and my kingdom is your heart."

When we understand who Jesus is and what He offers, we see that real life begins with repentance and faith in Him. It's not about fixing ourselves or living in discomfort. It's about trusting in Jesus, who gave His life for ours. When we surrender to Him, we enter into a kingdom that changes everything, starting now and lasting forever.

What's remarkable is their response: "At once they left their nets and followed him." There's no hesitation. No "Let me think about it" or "Give me some time to pray about it." They leave everything immediately. The same thing happens when Jesus calls James and John. They leave their father, Zebedee, their family business, and their security to follow Him.

Why did they respond like this? Because when Jesus calls, He's not just offering a new job. He's offering a new life. There was something compelling and powerful about Jesus' presence that made them drop everything to follow Him. It's the same call today. Jesus still walks through our lives- through our routines, careers, and comforts and He still says, "Follow me." He's not asking us to add Him to our lives

when it's convenient. He's calling us to lay it all down and follow Him. The question is: How do we respond?

Mark gives us the details to show that this is an actual moment in time. Jesus sees Simon and Andrew casting nets into the lake, and then He calls them to follow Him. They immediately leave their nets and follow. Then He calls James and John, who leave their father, their family business, and their stability behind. It's not just about leaving their jobs - it's about a radical commitment to Jesus that changes their lives completely.

This is important because sometimes we view Christianity in a way that suggests it's about Jesus helping us with our careers, finances, or relationships. But when Jesus first called these men, He didn't promise them any of that. He didn't offer a blessing in the way we might expect. Instead, He said, "Follow me. Your life is about to radically change."

This call is not easy. It's not about making our lives more comfortable. It's about a complete change of direction. Following Jesus means counting the cost. It means repenting, believing, and following Him with everything we have and leaving behind what we know to pursue something greater.

When we read this passage, we might have become too familiar with it. Some of us might even sing the song "I will make you fishers of men" and forget just how radical this call was. Think about it, Jesus called strangers to follow Him with nothing more than one sentence. And they did it. Why? Because of who He is. Jesus is not just a man. He's the Son of God, the King promised by the prophets. He has authority, and when He speaks, things happen. People respond.

God's movement doesn't begin with the powerful or prestigious; it starts with regular people, in unexpected places. Why? So that everyone will see that this movement is not human-made. It's not because of our greatness- it's because of something greater than us.

This is why Jesus chose fishermen, ordinary men and why He put His treasure in "earthen vessels," fragile clay pots. He did this to show that the power behind the movement belongs to God, not to us. Our role is not to show how powerful or clever we are; it's to proclaim that the Kingdom of God has come.

The idea of God's Kingdom and Jesus' reign is upside down from the world's thinking. Instead of coming in power, He came in weakness. Instead of choosing the most influential people, He chose the humble, the overlooked. Instead of coming to conquer through might, He came to give His life as a ransom for many.

Easter is a perfect time to reflect on this truth, this invitation to follow the humble King who gave His life for us. Jesus didn't come to impress us with power; He came to offer us forgiveness and eternal life. He didn't come to make us think we can do everything on our own; He came to show us that we can't and that we need Him.