



Sermon-Based Study Guide
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Sermon Title: It's Here!

Sermon Text: Mark 1:14-20

Related Texts: Isaiah 11:6-8; Isaiah 32:1-8; Isaiah 35:1-10

Mark has introduced Jesus to his readers – he appeared in the wilderness, was baptized by John, was affirmed in his identity as God's beloved Son, then driven deeper into the wilderness where he was tested by Satan. For those struggling to follow Jesus in the "wilderness" of the Roman Empire the affirmation of their being God's children and the realization of the power of the Holy Spirit would be a great encouragement. Now Mark draws the curtain back even further as he begins to describe Jesus' activity.

I. Start It – Connecting With One Another

Do you have a "purpose statement" for your life? If you were to develop a statement that describes the focus for your life what would it contain?

II. Study the Text –Read the Gospel of Mark 1:14-20

- 1) According to Mark 1:14, what event marks the beginning of Jesus' ministry? Did you notice where Jesus is actively proclaiming good news? What does this express about the nature of the "good news of God?" (Hint: Galilee is populated by both Jews and non-Jews).
- 2) Verse 15 gives us the central message of Jesus – his focus for his life and ministry. There are two affirmations followed by one exhortation. Let's try to understand their meaning:
 - a. The time has come – what "time" is Jesus referring to?
 - b. The Kingdom of God is near – what is the "Kingdom of God" and what does it mean that it is "near" (this term can also mean "has arrived" or "has almost arrived")
 - c. Repent and believe the good news – what kind of response does the presence of God's Kingdom call for? From what must people turn? To what must people turn?

Note: The Kingdom of God is an expression that embodied the hope that God would one day (at a "time to come") act in a significant way to remove all evil from the world and inaugurate a new, unprecedented age of blessing, prosperity and joy. The Kingdom was spiritual because the power of sin would be destroyed and Yahweh would be universally worshiped as the one true God. It was political in that God's people would be released from the power of various Gentile governments that had afflicted them with so much suffering through the course of history. War and the lust for power would be replaced by the politics of peace (see Isaiah 9:7). It was an economic hope because the new world would know

nothing of poverty, hunger, famine, or deprivation (see Isaiah 32 and 35). The world would be transformed so that children could play safely with lions, bears and poisonous snakes (see Isaiah 11:6-8). The Kingdom of God expresses the hope for a world in which the powers of sin, death, and darkness are replaced by peace, justice, and the worship of God. It is the hope that the rule of God would be restored over all creation.

From our vantage point, the Kingdom is both **already present** through the death and resurrection of Jesus, the presence of the Holy Spirit in his followers, and God's activity in the world and the Kingdom is still **yet to come** in its fullness. That will be realized at the Second Advent or second coming of Jesus, the Messiah. This "present and yet to come Kingdom" calls for turning away from all expectations of how God's Kingdom comes and turning to (by believing) and affirming God's Kingdom - even when our expectations are not met.

- 3) Look at verses 16-18. Simon and Andrew are fishing from shore. Jesus commands them (it's the imperative tense) to "Come, follow me and I will make you fishers of men" (and by "men" he means people). "At once" or "immediately" (the Greek work "euthys" appears many times in Mark's gospel) they followed him. Assuming they had no prior knowledge of Jesus, what does this suggest about Jesus' authority?
- 4) Look at verses 19-20. A similar scenario but James and John are part of a family fishing business. What does this suggest about Jesus' authority? What does it cost them to drop the nets and follow Jesus?
- 5) What has and what does it cost you to be following Jesus and living out your focus upon his Kingdom?

III. Apply It - Reflect and Respond

Reflect:

How can you affirm the presence of God's Kingdom in the world and God's rule in your life more fully?

Respond:

Following Jesus can be costly, as it was for the four young men we just thought about. Are there ways in which you are unwilling to pay the cost of following Jesus? How can you be more willing to give yourself fully to the Kingdom of God?

IV. Pray It - Responding in Prayer

Prayer Requests: How can your group pray for you?

Prayer for our Community and World: Please pray for Good Shepherd to be faithful to do what Mark has done - proclaim the good news about Jesus Christ - to our friends, colleagues, and neighbors. Ask God to use us to help others become Jesus' disciples who connect with God in worship, grow in faith, and serve others in love. Ask God to use us to participate in His Kingdom as we confront evil and to do what we can to bring justice, healing, hope, and new life in Christ to people around us.