

**14 After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. 15 “The time has come,” he said. “The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!”**

**Jesus Calls His First Disciples**

**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 send you out to fish for people.” 18 At once they left their nets and followed him.**

**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.**

Dear Friends,

Around 1990 I was thinking about buying a computer. It was a big decision as those green screen computers cost more than \$1000. I was already typing my sermons on the church’s Apple 2c. A man in my congregation was selling computers, sang the praises of modern computers. I was convinced and bought one. I thought, “I am able to do email now!” I was not able to do that on the church’s old Apple 2c. It was a blessing.

In Mark chapter 1, Jesus is not singing the praises of computers or technology or anything that is earthly. Rather Jesus was proclaiming another kind of good news. This Good News brings hope to the hopeless. This Good News of salvation is for you and me.

While Jesus proclaimed this Good News, he knows that he needs others to help him in this ministry given to him by his heavenly Father. Today Jesus is calling you and me to help in this effort. Not everyone will help in the same way, but we can all help. Today we focus on this thought in Mark 1, **Jesus Wants the Good News Proclaimed.**

**1. Jesus proclaims the Good News.**

Jesus doesn't just send us out to proclaim Good News. This is so important that he spent time on earth proclaiming the Good News.

A. The reason Jesus was ready to roll up his sleeves and do the work is that the Good News is needed.

1. St. Mark share a sad piece of news. John, the Baptist, was put in prison. He does not give details, but we know that it was by King Herod. It is sad

because John had done nothing wrong and he was proclaiming Good News to a world that needed it.

It is the prophet Isaiah, 700 years earlier, describes the people of Galilee as **“living in the land of deep darkness.”** (Isaiah 9:2) The darkness he is talking about is that of sin and unbelief. Sin is rebellion against the living God. People were living their lives in a state of rebellion against the Lord God and they did not believe in his plan to send Savior to win forgiveness of sins for them. They were heading to an eternity of darkness in Hell.

Many years ago a man sat in a Lutheran Bible Instruction class and he marveled God’s plan of salvation in Jesus. He confessed that growing up as a Muslim, he had not known or understood the Bible. There was a time when we were born and we were in darkness of sin and unbelief. Some of us were saved early on at Baptism, others of you came through a Christian witness and a Bible Instruction class. The result was the same. We went from the darkness of unbelief to the light of salvation.

2. In the Isaiah 9 passage it mentions this, **“On those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned.”** (Isaiah 9:2) That prophecy was being fulfilled as Jesus went around proclaiming Good News. The Good News was God’s news that the Messiah had come into the world and he had the answer to the darkness. In fact, he was the Light. Jesus stated later during his ministry, **“I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”** (John 8:12)

B. The Good News is that Jesus brings the forgiveness of sins.

1. We are told that Jesus proclaimed the following message, **“The time has come,” he said. “The kingdom of God has come near.”** (15a) It is like a prosecutor putting a generous deal in front of a guilty criminal. Usually a person has a limited amount of time to take hold of that offer. If they delay, they may lose out. God does not make deals with us. However, his invitation to receive salvation will not go on forever. St. Paul later wrote, **“I tell you, now is the time of God’s favor, now is the day of salvation.”** (2 Corinthians 6:2) Back in the days of Martin Luther the Gospel spread and was proclaimed all over Europe, now it is more rare. The Gospel is today becoming more rare in our own country as the number of Biblically trained clergy is dwindling. Today is our chance to hear the Good News of salvation. Tomorrow, we may not have that chance.

2. Sometimes people don’t want to listen because of the message. Jesus preached, **“Repent and believe the good news!”** (15b) We hear that the

apostles were earning a living being fishermen. Then and now so many people want to earn more than living. They want to get rich. We don't want to depend on anyone. Jesus called on such people to repent and have a change of heart. They were to love God and put him first. Knowing this would have made Jesus hearers sorry for their sins and hungry for God's forgiveness.

As Jesus proclaimed, he no doubt pointed to the sacrifices of the lambs at the Temple and how forgiveness was pronounced on the worshipper. The Scriptures had promised that the Lord's Servant would lay down his life as a sacrifice for the sins of the people. In Mark, chapter 8, Jesus informs his disciples that he would be rejected by the people, that he would be killed and after three days rise again. Jesus would be our sacrifice for sin and the sins of the world. The Gospel Ministry proclaims that through Jesus we have forgiveness of sins with God and salvation. This is the Good News.

## **2. Jesus calls others to proclaim Good News.**

Did you notice the note on the church calendar about pastors' Seminary school. The WELS, our church body, provides for ongoing opportunities for pastors to continue their professional training. Jesus shows us the importance of training for ministry as we hear him in Mark 1 calling disciples to proclaim the Good News.

A. What we see is that Jesus calls specific men for a specific task.

1. **"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. 'Come, follow me,' Jesus said."** (16,17a) **"When he had gone a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John in a boat, preparing their nets."** (19) He was calling ordinary fishermen and later on he would call a tax collector and a zealot. Others might not have chosen these men, but God looks at the heart and knows whom he wants to serve in the public ministry.

2. Mark also notes that Jesus called them **"without delay."** The harvest for of God's church was ready and so Jesus does not waste time, but gathers those who will train with him. They train to be "fishers of people." They will catch souls for God's Kingdom with the Good News.

B. The people listed here responded to the call.

1. They left their occupations and their tools and they immediately followed Jesus. This was big commitment on their part. However, they knew Jesus

from spending time with him before. They believed that he was the Savior of the world. They were glad to help with the Gospel Ministry.

2. James and John left their father and the family business behind. I am sure that they were concerned about how dad would do without them. However, they also trusted the God would provide for their father and the business as they went off to do God work. When we take time to serve the Lord we also need to trust that he will help with the other business that we have going in our lives.

C. There are two ways for you and I to look at Jesus' call in Mark 1.

1. Those who might have a desire to serve in the preaching and teaching ministry should give thought to doing that. It is God's choice whether we ultimately receive a call or not. But we can prayerfully consider serving and then we present ourselves for ministry training.

If you are retired or already busy with another occupation, you have the role of recruiting people for ministry. We need to encourage those who might train that it is a very honorable calling and the called servant gets to present the Good News of salvation in Jesus to hungry souls. Perhaps you can share a story about how a pastor or teacher has helped you in your life. It will show the young person how the ministry has an impact.

2. Every one of us has a role in support of the Gospel ministry. We pray for called workers and we pray for future called workers. Our seminary classes of graduating students are very small and we need more.

You also support the gospel ministry when you help out at church. Many volunteers help out at church and it is appreciated.

You also support ministry when you bring offerings to the offering plate. Part of our offerings each year go to support the training of future pastors and teachers in the WELS. We also have the Church Worker Education Fund at our church. As we support the Gospel Ministry the Lord will bless our efforts.

Conclusion: The world works so hard to promote what it considers to be good news. If people have a football or basketball team in the various bowls or tournaments this winter, we sing their praises. Don't we all spread good news of the earthly variety?

How much more then should we be enthused to share THE Good News. Jesus did and it is about him bringing light into dark lives. He has done that for you and me through the forgiveness of sins. Now we can encourage young people for the ministry. We can support those who are ministering.

The Good News will be spread. Lives will be changed! This is why **Jesus Wants the Good News Proclaimed.** Amen.