

God Breaking In  
Mark 1:14-15, 16-20  
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When I first started out intentionally trying to grow in my faith and learn what I meant to be a Christian I was fascinated by the Bible. I don't mean fascinated like 'I couldn't put it down', but fascinated in sense that I wanted to know more. The Bible was complex to me, intriguing to me, in a word I felt the Bible was unknowable...

I had a great mentor in my life at that time that met with me regularly and encouraged me, and each time we met I would ask about a new Reading Plan I heard of, a new Commentary Series I was interested in or a new book I found that would 'Help me read the Bible Effectively' ... During one of these meetings my friend commented to me, 'If you want to learn more about the Bible, READ THE BIBLE, '!

What a novel idea! So I did, and in short order I realized that one of the most powerful things about the Bible is its COMPLEXITY. Think of an Iceberg, you see a little bit on the surface, but the true enormity of an ICEBERG is what's unseen and cannot be truly appreciated until you intentionally pursue its depth.

In the movie 'Shrek' there's a scene where Shrek (an Ogre) is trying to explain to his friend 'Donkey' that Ogres are not simple beings... Shrek argues that Ogres have layers - - The conversation then turns to Donkey describing Ogres as 'an Onion' where as Shrek much prefers the analogy of 'a cake' to explain the complexity of an Ogre, but the main point is that Ogre's have layers and cannot be simplified.

The Bible also has layers, cake or onion, I am not going to choose one, but the point I am trying to share is that if we try to simplify the Bible into categories

we lose part of its character - - It's Complexity and the Fact that there is always something more happening in the story.

And our NT Lesson this morning is a great example of this...

### **NT: Mark 1:14-15**

As we read our NT Lesson this morning, it's easy to jump right to the part of '*Jesus Calling the First Disciples*'. This is important, and we are going to spend some time talking about that part of the story this morning, but there are two lines at the beginning of our passage that could easily be forgotten or quickly brushed past:

*“<sup>14</sup> Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, <sup>15</sup> and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news.”*

In these verses we read that Jesus came to Galilee, AFTER JOHN THE BAPTIST WAS ARRESTED, proclaiming the Good News and announcing: '*The Time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the Good News*'... In all 4 Gospel Accounts (Matthew, Mark, Luke & John) the same Greek Verb is used to describe Jesus' Coming into Galilee as He begins His Earthly Ministry - - This verb emphasizes that this 'coming' of Jesus means the Kingdom of God is coming as well!

One Biblical Scholar writes that, 'These 2 verses, Mark 1:14 & 15, stand at the intersection between question & answer, expectation & fulfillment'... John the Baptist proclaimed and raised up the Hope of the Lord's coming throughout his ministry, emphasizing the importance of 'Repentance & Baptism', and now, after John's Arrest Jesus is announcing that the 'Good News' that John spoke of will be realized in Him.

Which brings us to the Second Part of our NT Lesson - - Jesus calls His First Disciples. Jesus announces the arrival of God's Kingdom, symbolizing the beginning of His ministry, and starts by building His team.

Jesus goes to the Sea of Galilee, and calls a couple of Fishermen to 'Follow Him'...

### **NT: Mark 1:16-20**

Now, the response of Peter, Andrew, James & John is an example of obedience to God's call... All Christian's are called to be Jesus' disciples in whatever path their lives take. We are all called to serve God every day! Jesus is calling us to be His disciple wherever we are and in whatever we do.

Here in our text, we see the power of Christ's words, and the authority Jesus has! James & John, along with Simon (better known as Peter) & Andrew leave immediately and decisively exemplifying their allegiance and trust for Jesus. You see...

The Zebedee family had been fishing for generations on the Sea of Galilee. In that country, and culture, a small family business would have been handed down from generation to generation for centuries! It's safe & secure, people know what to expect... But along came a young prophet from Nazareth calling them a different way, telling them to drop everything, leave it all behind and follow him. This is quite radical! Leave all they've ever known? Their friends, their comforts, their families, all that their family had built (and, it's important to note, that in this culture family solidarity was HUGELY important!) to follow a controversial, all be it at this time a relatively unknown prophet that promises to make them 'Fishers of ~~Men~~ People'.

The concept of 'calling' is interesting. We see callings occur all throughout scripture, from Abraham & Sarah, to Moses, the Apostle Paul

and to the Church, God calls us all. God does the calling, God issues the word... But it is up to humans to respond.

In this case Jesus is calling a group of fishermen, and gives them a straightforward task - - 'To be fishers of people'. Jesus is 'speaking their language', if you will, and explaining to them that by following Him, they will 'gather & collect' people for the Kingdom of God just as they have 'gathered & collected' fish in nets throughout their professional lives.

And how do they accomplish this objective? How are they to find, and gather these people? They use nets as fishermen, what are their tools for this new task being set before them...

Simple. They are to accomplish this mission set before them by Jesus, by FOLLOWING JESUS... Jesus' call is Simple - - 'Follow Me.'

But why them? Why these Men? Why Fishermen? Fishermen were the uneducated, the downtrodden, the hopeless, in a lot of ways the forgotten. So why were they called as the 'First Disciples'?

There is a lot to unpack here, and I cannot begin to try to explain the purposes and majesty of our great and powerful God, but I will point out - - Who better to demonstrate the power/splendor/redemption that can only be accomplished through the power of Christ.

From the onset there seems to be nothing commendable about these men other than their decisive obedience when called upon - - And it is important for me to remind you that there is also nothing commendable about us apart from the offer of hope and reconciliation that we are offered only through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

This was the main focus of John the Baptist's ministry of repentance! Our sinfulness separates us from our God. In the words of the Apostle

Paul in Romans 3, *'For ALL have sinned and Fall Short of the Glory of God'*. Which makes this narrative all the more exciting...

Jesus calls these ordinary men. They obediently follow with the goal of becoming *'Fishers of People'*. Through Following Jesus, and the Power of the Holy Spirit, they gain a following, sharing and teaching all that they have learned from Jesus' Instruction. This group of followers carries the message of HOPE & RECONCILIATION *'to the ends of the Earth'*, gaining more followers & more followers until the church as we know it today is formed, and Christ then calls us, as believers and disciples, to become 'Fishers' and we can only accomplish this objective ONE WAY...

By Following...

\*\* When I read this account from Mark I'm always challenged by One Question... Why?

Why would they drop everything and follow Jesus? Is there more to the story that isn't recorded... Had Jesus given a sales pitch? Was there Faith BIGGER than my own, BIGGER than anything I've ever experienced to forego everything they'd ever known to Follow Jesus??

But then I read passages like our OT Lesson this Morning, **Psalm 62**, where the Psalmist writes *'my hope is in God'* AND *'Put your trust in God ALWAYS, pour out your hearts before God, who is our Refuge,'* and the picture becomes a little clearer...

OT: Psalm 62:5-12

As humans we are tempted by A LOT... It's easy to blame our 'fast paced society' or the 'materialism/desire for more' culture that we live in, but this has been a problem since the beginning! Adam & Eve, as we read in Genesis, whose sole focus was to live and walk with God, were tempted and succumb to the desire of 'more'.

In Psalm 62 we read about the amazing hope that is only found in God, and this beautiful Psalm depicts the nature of true faith within a world filled with temptation.

In Psalm 62 we read that 'FAITH' is a condition of trust and confidence found in the heart that orients one in the world... It is only through Trusting in God, IN ALL CIRCUMSTANCES, that one can truly orient their life and find true meaning. God is unshakable & unmovable... Scholar Timothy Beach-Verhey writes, 'the last line of Psalm 62, "*for you repay to all according to their work,*" is not claiming that people get what they deserve, but that by orienting one's life towards God is the only way to truly find HOPE & PURPOSE,'.

\*\* I believe this is what the Fishermen demonstrated. James, John, Peter & Andrew saw a Power and Authority in Jesus they had never experienced before... And they HAD to be a part of it!!

Their lives as Fishermen, comfortable/definable/predictable, was worth sacrificing because of the Power, Presence & Purpose they were being offered in this moment by Jesus.

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Earlier I talked about the complexity of Scripture... How the Bible has layers and how there is always something more happening in the Story - -

This is a foundational story in Scripture! The beginning of Jesus' Earthly Ministry and the Calling of Jesus' First Disciples, a group that would go on to establish the church throughout the World and sharing the Call that we are to go and love and share the Good News to all... Yeah that's pretty important.

But here's the More - - Here's the Part that could possibly be Overlooked. Here we read how GOD IS BREAKING IN!!

GOD IS BREAKING INTO THE WORLD - - There's a New Way, a New Hope, a New Purpose.

Here we have this phenomenal example of these Obedient Fishermen leaving all they have, leaving all they've known to Follow Jesus...

GOD IS BREAKING IN - - Into the Lives of these Fishermen, Into the World as we know it, Into our Lives...

GOD IS BREAKING IN, And our Orders are Simple, Our Objective is Clear - - Jesus is still Calling with these Simple Instructions . . . *'Follow Me...'*