

#1814  
Cf. #410

Mark 1:14-20<sup>1</sup>  
Jesus calls disciples  
to be fishers of men.  
3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday after Epiphany  
Supplementary Lectionary  
Series "B," Gospels

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Grace WELS Durand MI  
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Potluck  
Annual Voters  
WSC & LWMS  
PCC Annual Mtg

<sup>14</sup> After John the Baptizer was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the Good News [the Gospel] of God. <sup>15</sup> "The time has come," he said. "The Kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the Good News [the Gospel]!"

<sup>16</sup> 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. <sup>17</sup> "Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will make you fishers of men." <sup>18</sup> At once, they left their nets and followed him.

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

JESUS MAKES FISHERS OF MEN  
I. THROUGH THE GOSPEL  
II. FOR THE GOSPEL

In the Name of Jesus who has called us to faith by the Gospel and sends us to proclaim that Gospel to others, Dear Fellow-Redeemed,

Our text is probably familiar to many. Jesus is walking along the shore of the Sea of Galilee and calls some fishermen, Andrew, Peter, James and John, to follow him, and he will make them "fishers of men."

These fishermen, Andrew, Peter, James and John, had been called to faith by the Gospel – the Good News about the Kingdom of God. Jesus calls them to follow him, learn from him, and be his witnesses concerning that same Gospel. So we see that ... JESUS MAKES FISHERS OF MEN. JESUS MAKES FISHERS OF MEN ... I. THROUGH THE GOSPEL; and, II. FOR THE GOSPEL.

JESUS MAKES FISHERS OF MEN  
I. THROUGH THE GOSPEL

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<sup>1</sup> *The New International Version*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House) 1984. All Scripture references are taken from this translation unless noted otherwise.

In last Sunday's text, John 1:35-51, we learned that John the Baptizer, the forerunner of Christ, had contact with Andrew, Peter, John (the Apostle), Philip and Nathanael. John the Baptizer probably also had contact with James, the brother of John (the Apostle). John the Baptizer was "preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins" (1:4). John then pointed to the One through whom the forgiveness of sins would come. John the Baptizer pointed to Jesus and said, "Behold! The Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29b,cf. 36b). John the Baptizer's ministry of pointing to Jesus was now over.

Our text records the fact that "John the Baptizer was put in prison" (1:14a). John had publicly rebuked King Herod for taking for himself Herodias, the wife of his brother. For this rebuke, Herod had imprisoned John. Later, spurred on by her mother, Herodias' daughter had asked for the head of John the Baptizer on a platter. Herod acceded to this request, and John was murdered (cf. Luke 3:19&20; Matthew 14:1-12; Mark 6:14-29). When John was put into prison, Jesus went north into the province of Galilee, and began his Galilean ministry.

The message which Jesus proclaimed was the same as that of John the Baptizer. "Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the Good News [the Gospel] of God. 'The time has come,' he said. 'The Kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the Good News [the Gospel]!" (1:14b,15).

"The Kingdom of God is near." The Kingdom of God is near wherever and whenever God's Word is proclaimed. That Word of God calls for repentance for sin and faith in the Good News – the Gospel of the forgiveness of sins.

Jesus, along with John the Baptizer, called for repentance. The Greek word for repentance is *metanoia* [metavnoia] and literally means a change of mind; but true repentance is much more than that. A change of mind could describe someone who thinks they made a mistake and simply said, "Oops!" True and genuine repentance involves the terror of understanding God's vehement rage and anger against sin and sinners.

It is popular to say that God hates sin but loves sinners (cf. John 3:16ff). However, listen to what King David says in Psalm 5,

**<sup>4</sup> You are not a God who takes pleasure in evil;  
with you the wicked cannot dwell.**

**<sup>5</sup> The arrogant cannot stand in your presence;  
you hate all who do wrong.**

**<sup>6</sup> You destroy those who tell lies;  
bloodthirsty and deceitful men  
the LORD abhors (Psalm 5:4-6).**

David says: "[God] hates all who do wrong." All people are guilty of doing wrong. That includes you and me and every other person for "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). God hates all who do wrong. That means also that God

hates you and me and everyone else, because we are sinners. St. Paul further describes God's anger and wrath against sin and against sinners.

Paul writes, "The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness" (Romans 1:18). Paul continues,

***<sup>29</sup> They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, <sup>30</sup> slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; <sup>31</sup> they are senseless, faithless, heartless, ruthless. <sup>32</sup> Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them*** (Romans 1:29-32).

Then St. Paul adds these sobering words, "You, therefore, have no excuse, you who pass judgment on someone else, for at whatever point you judge the other, you are condemning yourself" (Romans 2:1a). These words freeze hearts with terror and dread – yours and mine included. It is only when hearts are gripped with such terror and dread that the sweet news of the Gospel of the Kingdom of God – the Good News of the forgiveness of sins in Jesus – only then that the Gospel is believed and appreciated.

"Repent and believe the Good News [the Gospel]!" (1:15b), Jesus said. What is the Gospel? What is the Good News? What is the only Good News that can be proclaimed and given to people who are terrorized by their sins and by the eternal punishment their sins deserve? The Gospel is the Good News of the forgiveness of sins.

It was the forgiveness of sins that Jesus came into the world to earn. God's anger against sin and sinners had to be fulfilled, otherwise God would not be a just and righteous God. If God did not fulfill his anger against sin, then he would be like some are prone to picture him: A grandfather in heaven who winks his tolerant eye at the sins and shortcomings of his children. That is not a picture of God. God is a just judge who condemns sin. But God makes a great exchange.

God's great exchange is this: God places upon his holy, precious Son the sins of the world and pours out on his own Son all of his wrath and anger against sin. What do you think Jesus' words from the cross mean: "My God! My God! Why have you forsaken me?" (15:34b; Matthew 27:46b). God abandoned his own Son whom he loved, in order to punish him in the place of all. Moreover, Jesus' closing words from the cross, "It is finished!" (John 19:30), proclaim that Jesus has indeed taken upon himself and suffered the punishment from God for all. Jesus' resurrection on Easter Sunday morning, is the public proclamation that he has indeed taken away the sins of the world. This was the saving faith to which the disciples in our text as well as Jesus' other disciples were called.

#### APPROPRIATION

It is to this saving faith in Jesus that you also have been called. You have been called to this faith through “the Good News [the Gospel].” This Gospel has been brought to you in Word and Sacraments – Holy Baptism and Holy Communion. The Gospel in Holy Baptism has washed away your sins. The Gospel in Holy Communion again and again says to you, “Your sins are forgiven!” The Gospel in the Word proclaims the same message: “Your sins are forgiven!” Note well, however, that repentance is also part of your reaction to God’s Word.

Your repentance must be more than an “Oops! I made a mistake.” It must be more than a “Gee whiz, I’m really sorry.” Your repentance must come face to face with the anger and wrath and punishment you deserve from God because of your sinfulness – this is a gripping terror. It is a terror that recognizes that God hates both sin and the sinner, as you heard King David proclaim earlier in Psalm 5: “You hate all who do wrong” (Psalm 5:5b). For those who do not believe this, the cross of Christ holds no meaning.

The cross of Christ proclaims God’s anger, rage, wrath and punishment against sin – your sins and mine. Without the cross of Christ, God’s anger and punishment remain – remain on you. But, with the cross, God’s anger has been abated and satisfied. Here is the Good News of the cross – Jesus’ cross has taken away your sin.

Has that cross of Jesus taken away all your sin? Is there not perhaps just a little bit that you have to do or suffer? No. In the Gospel of Jesus, God proclaims, “Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool” (Isaiah 1:18b). King David proclaims in Psalm 103, “As far as the east is from the west, so far has [God] removed our transgressions from us” (Psalm 103:12). Speaking of this same forgiveness of sins in slightly different words, Isaiah says, “I delight greatly in the LORD; my soul rejoices in my God. For he has clothed me with garments of salvation and arrayed me in a robe of righteousness” (Isaiah 61:10a). Are there any of your sins left unforgiven? No! Is there anything you have to do to have this forgiveness? No! It is all yours by faith alone in Jesus – faith created in your heart through the Gospel.

It is the Gospel that has created faith in Jesus in your heart for the forgiveness of your sins. Should you not also proclaim this same faith to others?

### JESUS MAKES FISHERS OF MEN

- I. THROUGH THE GOSPEL; and,
- II. FOR THE GOSPEL

Jesus calls these believers to follow him in order to be “fishers of men” (1:17b). Our text last Sunday, John 1:35-51, revealed Jesus’ contact with Andrew, Peter, John, Philip and Nathanael; Jesus also probably had contact with James, John’s brother. Jesus had contact with many others, for he was going throughout Galilee proclaiming, “The Kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the Good News [the Gospel]!” (1:15b). Now, Jesus was calling believers, disciples, to proclaim to others that same Good News of the Gospel.

**<sup>16</sup> 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. <sup>17</sup> “Come, follow me,” Jesus said, “and I will make you fishers of men.” <sup>18</sup> At once, they left their nets and followed him (1:16-18).**

These men had previous contact with Jesus. These men were believers in Jesus. Now Jesus was going to use them to be “fishers of men.” What would they do? What would they use?

Simon and Andrew would use the same Word of God that Jesus had been using. They would preach repentance and the Good News of forgiveness in Jesus. And we note that there was no hesitancy about following Jesus. “At once, they left their nets and followed him” (1:18).

The same thing happens with John and James.

**<sup>19</sup> When [Jesus] had gone a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John in a boat, preparing their nets. <sup>20</sup> Without delay, he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men and followed him (1:19&20).**

Jesus calls James and John also to be “fishers of men.” Without any hesitancy on their part, they too follow Jesus. Why?

Why did these men, James, John, Peter and Andrew, react so quickly to forsake everything and follow Jesus? The answer is repentance and the Gospel of forgiveness.

They realized who they were. They realized that they were sinners who deserved God’s anger, wrath and punishment. They realized that they ought to suffer eternally in hell for their rebellion against God. They realized also that Jesus was the Lamb of God who would take away the sins of the world (cf. John 1:29b,36b) – their sins too. In Jesus, they had the forgiveness of sins. In that forgiveness, they willingly became part of that ministry to proclaim repentance and the forgiveness of sins to others. So also you have that ministry.

#### APPLICATION

Your response to the full and free forgiveness of sins that Jesus has earned for you by his cross and suffering, is, to at once, immediately and without delay, share that Good News with others. Measure what God has given to you, and what others also need.

You have been given repentance. It has been worked in your heart through the harsh words of God’s condemning Law. Unbelievers do not have this. Unbelievers can slough off their sins as inconsequential. Unbelievers can treat their sins as just another “Oops!” Unbelievers can and do blame others, or come up with the lame excuse: “Everybody’s doing it.” That may have been your reaction in the past but no more.

Through God's Word, which clearly describes his anger with sin and sinners, you have been brought to repentance. Proclaim to others, that same anger of God against sin and sinners. Without repentance, there is no forgiveness of sins. Who needs forgiveness, if there is no sense of guilt and punishment for sin? Then, for those in whom repentance has been created by your proclamation of God's Law and wrath – for those troubled by their sins – bring the Good News – the Gospel – of the full and free forgiveness of sins in Jesus.

Point to Jesus' cross! See the cross as God's wrath and punishment for the sins of the world. See the cross as the full payment for the sins of the world. You have been called to this faith in Jesus. Call others to that same faith – faith in Jesus through the Gospel.

### CONCLUSION

Jesus has seen to it that his Word has been proclaimed to you. Through that Word, repentance – terror for sin and the punishment you deserve – has been worked in your heart and soul. The Good News – the Gospel – of the forgiveness of sins in Jesus has also been proclaimed to you. That Gospel has created faith in your heart and soul. You have forgiveness of sins and eternal life in Jesus. Proclaim these same truths to others – repentance and forgiveness in Jesus. Amen.