

Building the Kingdom

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 06 November 2024

Preacher: Lee Roberts

[0 : 00] Our first two Mark lessons have shown us how quickly Mark's gospel moves, especially in the early chapters.

! In just two studies covering only 13 verses, John the Baptist first announced that the Messiah would be coming. Last week when Jesus arrived on the scene, we saw his baptism and temptation. Tonight we'll cover Mark chapter 1 verses 14 through 20. Between what happened in verse 13 and the event starting in verse 14, several months have passed.

Most conservative commentators believe that the elapsed time between verses 13 and 14 was about a year. John MacArthur says that the elapsed time was at least six months, but for our purposes tonight, we'll go with the majority view that about a year passed.

And here's how John Phillips described what happened during the white spaces between verse 13 and verse 14. He said, John chapters 1 through 3 have details about what happened during the gap in Mark.

[1 : 40] And just looking at the ESV's headings for John 1 through 3, we can see that Jesus was busy during that time. During that time, he first met several of the men who would later become part of his 12 apostles.

He did his first miracle by turning water into wine during the wedding at Cana. He cleansed the temple for the first time. Jesus and Nicodemus had their famous conversation that included John 3.16.

So throughout this time, the ministries of John the Baptist and Jesus overlapped. And that overlap is about to end. So let's resume Mark's account of what happened by reading tonight's verses.

Again, those verses are Mark chapter 1 verses 14 through 20. So here are Mark chapter 1 verses 14 through 20. Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee proclaiming the gospel of God and saying, The time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand.

Repent and believe in the gospel. Passing alongside the sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew, the brother of Simon, casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen.

[2 : 56] And Jesus said to them, Follow me and I will make you become fishers of men. And immediately they left their nets and followed him. And going on a little farther, he saw James, the son of Zebedee, and John, his brother, who were in their boat mending the nets.

And immediately he called them and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants and followed him. In these verses, Jesus proclaims his message and chooses followers who will spread that message everywhere.

And that's the main idea. Jesus proclaims his message and chooses followers who will help spread that message everywhere. One of the challenges with this passage is that the verses seem so familiar to us.

At first glance, Jesus' summary of the gospel is similar to what John the Baptist proclaimed in Mark 1.4. Of course, we should expect that similarity because the text was inerrantly inspired by the Holy Spirit.

And those of us who have been in church a long time have heard often the passage about Jesus making his followers fishers of men. As we dig into this passage, we'll see that it is consistent with the overall theme of Mark that we summarized during our first study two weeks ago.

[4 : 15] And that overall theme is that Jesus is the promised Messiah and son of God who fulfills Old and New Testament prophecy. We'll break tonight's verses down into two sections.

And in verses 14 and 15, we see the message summarized. So the message summarized is your first blink. Here are verses 14 and 15 again.

Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee proclaiming the gospel of God and saying, The time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent and believe in the gospel. These verses announce Jesus' victory over temptation that we saw last week. That's because there would be no good news for Jesus to proclaim if he had given in to temptation in verses 12 and 13. But these verses also prepare us for what is coming next. Many texts in Mark record Jesus' preaching without recording the substance of that preaching. And that's because Mark has already given us a summary of his message in the verses that we'll look at tonight.

[5 : 26] John the Baptist's arrest prompted Jesus to move to Galilee for at least two reasons. First, John's arrest showed that the political climate in Judea was becoming more hostile to the true gospel message.

And second, Jesus had many things to accomplish before he could allow himself to be arrested. When God's work is unwanted, God often moves out and leaves the evil people to their own wishes.

Christ leaving the southern portion of Judea and traveling north to the province of Galilee was a judgment move. John the Baptist was ministering in Judea. Herod arrested John and put him in prison.

And this showed hostility for Christ, so Christ left and moved north. We easily could go down a rabbit trail by spending more time considering the fact that when God's work is unwanted, God often moves out and leaves the evil people to their own wishes.

If you want to read more about that, just look at Romans chapter 1. For our purposes tonight, though, just recognize that the political climate when the events in Mark 1, 14 and 15 happened was very similar to what we see in the United States and most of the world today.

[6 : 40] Here's one other detail that occurred in the white space between Mark 1, 13 and Mark 1, 14. Jesus traveled to Galilee by going through Samaria, and that is where Jesus had his encounter with the woman at the well.

You can read about that encounter in John chapter 4, verses 1 through 26. But let's just look at the last two verses of Jesus' conversation with that woman.

Here are John 4, 25 and 26. John 4, 25 and 26 say, That gives you a little more context for the verses that we're studying tonight.

Mark 1, 14 begins the great Galilean ministry of Jesus, which will last for about one and a half years. From here to verse 45, we see a snapshot of Jesus' ministry in Galilee.

He preaches, calls disciples, casts out demons, and heals the sick. But these verses are structured to show the priority of preaching over healing.

[7 : 59] Casting out demons and healing the sick function as proof of the message that Jesus is preaching. When the disciples want Jesus to return to his healing ministry, he declares that they are taking them off mission.

He says that he's come out of heaven to preach the gospel, not merely to heal the sick. So with that overview, let's dig into the details. Verse 14 starts with, Now after John was arrested.

And this phrase is one of those classic Mark phrases where he tells us what happened and gives us a preview of future events. The word for arrested that Mark used there means to hand over, and it's used also to refer to the betrayal and the arrest of Jesus in Mark 9, 31, Mark 10, 33, Mark 14, 21, and Mark 14, 41.

Its use here with reference to John suggests that his death foreshadowed that of Jesus. And the use of the passive voice implies that what was done was done in accordance with God's purpose. John was handed over, and Jesus will be handed over as well. So already here we see a foreboding shadow that passes over the preaching of Jesus. If the forerunner, John, is rejected, what's going to happen to the actual Messiah?

[9 : 23] The people who arrested John were doing exactly what they wanted to do. Meanwhile, God and his sovereignty was weaving everything together into God's perfect plan.

Let's look at the next phrase. It says, Most Jews in that day had contempt for Galilee. Galilee was the northern region of the land of Israel.

From a first century Jewish perspective, it was regarded as the outskirts, located far away from the religious center of Jerusalem. The fact that Jesus launched his ministry in full power in Galilee was a rebuke to the apostasy and corruption that existed in Jerusalem at that time.

Tiberias was a major city in Galilee. No strict Jew would go to Tiberias because it was built on top of a cemetery. Foreign customs were much in evidence there, and it was the capital of Galilee in Jesus' day.

Despite the disdain from strict Jews, though, Galilee was cosmopolitan. It was a region where Roman, Greek, and the less strict Jews mixed and intermingled because the population of Galilee was as much Gentile as it was Jewish.

[10:41] John had sought out the wilderness in his ministry. Jesus sought out the people through great thoroughfares. John expected the people to come to him. Jesus went to the people.

The remainder of verse 14 tells us what Jesus did in Galilee. The text says that Jesus was proclaiming the gospel of God. The gospel of God is a New Testament term, and you see several references to that in your handout.

And that term refers to the truth that comes from God himself to the world concerning the salvation from sin and judgment that is available only through Jesus Christ. As in Mark 1.1, the term gospel carries the idea of a royal pronouncement, and the pronouncement is the arrival of a king and his kingdom.

Jesus' gospel proclamation was no exception to that. Verse 15 tells us what Jesus said. Look at verse 15 again. Jesus said, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand.

Repent and believe in the gospel. Two words in the Greek language are translated by the English word time. One is *chronos*, which refers to the moment-by-moment passage of time.

[12:00] The other word is *kairos*, which refers to a particular moment in time that is so significant that it defines everything that comes after it. The word translated as time in verse 15 is that word *kairos*.

We don't have similar distinction in English for *chronos* and *kairos*. The closest English words that we have are historical and historic. Everything that takes place in space and time is historical, but not everything that takes place is historic.

We reserve the word historic for events of great significance. And for something to be considered historic, it has to be so momentous, so important that it shapes history.

And what we see here tonight is that verse 14 and 15 are historic. The English also is unable to give us the significance of the word translated as fulfilled.

The Greek word that's translated as fulfilled means super fullness. So usually when we fill a cup of water or a cup of coffee, we leave a little room at the brim so that it doesn't spill over.

[13:12] But here, when we fill something with the sense of that word, we should get the sense that it's spilling over the edge. And Jesus was announcing that the time for the arrival of his kingdom was super full.

Throughout the Old Testament, from Genesis 3 to Malachi, the Messiah had been portrayed as the coming one. Now he had come. Prophecy had been fulfilled, it was being fulfilled, and it would continue to be fulfilled.

But the important thing here is that the time had come, the hour had arrived. The first reference to the Messiah in the Old Testament comes in Genesis 3.15, shortly after Adam and Eve committed the first sins.

In Genesis 3.15, God said to the serpent who deceived Eve, I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring, he shall bruise your head and you shall bruise his heel.

When Genesis 3.15 talks about the woman's offspring bruising the head of the serpent and the serpent bruising the heel of the woman's offspring, Jesus is the woman's offspring, of course.

[14:27] And then if we jump to the last book of the Old Testament and listen to Malachi 3.1, God is speaking in Malachi 3.1, and God says, Behold, I send my messenger and he will prepare the way before me.

And the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple and the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold, he is coming, says the Lord of hosts. Between Genesis and Malachi, Jesus' arrival fulfills other Old Testament prophecies.

Jesus' claim that the time is fulfilled highlights the fact that his preaching fulfills Isaiah's prophecies. Isaiah spoke of a voice crying in the wilderness who would prepare the way.

He then described a herald of good news who said, The Lord comes with might. And this herald would come in the power of the Spirit as the anointed one and bring good news for the poor, the

brokenhearted, the captive, and the prisoners.

In previous lessons, we've looked at some of the verses that we just quoted from there, but they're worth hearing again. Isaiah 40, verse 3 says, A voice cries in the wilderness, Prepare the way of the Lord.

[15 : 44] Make straight in the desert a highway for our God. A few verses later, here's what Isaiah 40, 10 says, Behold, the Lord comes with might and his arm rules for him.

Behold, his reward is with him and his recompense before him. Then in Isaiah 61, verse 1, we hear the Messiah himself speak.

And we'll read Isaiah 61, 1 all the way through verse 3. Those verses say, The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because the Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the poor.

He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and the opening of the prison to those who are bound, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn, to grant to those who mourn in Zion, to give them a beautiful headdress instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the garment of praise instead of a faint spirit, that they may be called oaks of righteousness, the planning of the Lord, that he may be glorified.

Anyone who's been a Christian for a while is susceptible to overlooking the significance of Jesus' words in Mark 1, 15. But try to put yourself in the position of someone hearing Jesus speak those words for the first time.

[17 : 15] The Jews living in Galilee would hear someone proclaiming that he is the Messiah who has been promised to them for hundreds of years. The typical Gentile in Galilee would be ignorant of the Jewish prophecies, but even an uneducated Gentile would notice that some new guy had arrived in town, and this wasn't just any new guy.

This new guy was proclaiming himself to be a king, and he was making a lot of commands. Check out the remainder of verse 15 again, it says, Jesus told them, the kingdom of God is at hand, repent, and believe the gospel.

What would you think if some stranger just came strolling down the street and started yelling that at you while you were downtown someday? Well, the promises of the Old Testament regarding the Messiah and his kingdom of salvation were about to be realized.

Jesus had come not only to conquer Satan, but to destroy sin itself and sin's consequences for his people. The new king had come to initiate his kingdom.

When we talk about the kingdom of God here, the kingdom of God was simply the rule of Messiah on earth. This had been promised in the Old Testament, and the Jewish people had longed for it.

[18 : 34] The kingdom is at hand because Jesus, the ruler of that kingdom, has now arrived. R.C. Sproul asked and answered some questions that you also may be asking.

He said, hasn't the kingdom of God always existed? Hasn't God been the omnipotent Lord from all eternity? Yes, but when the Old Testament speaks of the coming kingdom of God, it refers to God's personal visitation to this fallen world to manifest redemption.

The people of Israel in the Old Testament look forward to the day when God's rule would be manifest here on earth in the coming of his anointed one. Jesus here is sharing the glad tidings that the king has come, which means that the kingdom has come as well.

Jesus' teaching will show that the kingdom is hidden and seems small at that present time, but it will come to his fullness and power in the future. Look again at how Jesus said that people get into the kingdom.

The end of verse 15 says, repent and believe the gospel. The only way into this kingdom is to repent and believe.

[19 : 48] John had already been preaching the need for people to repent, but Jesus added the command to believe. Only through repentance from their sinfulness and belief in the good news, which is the gospel of Jesus Christ when people enter the kingdom.

Jesus was presenting an urgency about the nearness of God's kingdom and the need to act decisively. Jesus, like John, preached repentance, but the distinctive element in Jesus' message was faith or you could say commitment or even trust.

The necessity of faith is a major subject in the book of Mark, and your handout has several references that we'll look at when we get to those chapters later in our study through the book.

Repentance alone is not enough to save us even though God expects believers to turn from their sins. We must also put positive faith in Jesus Christ and carry his promise of salvation. Repentance without faith could become remorse, and remorse can destroy people who carry a burden of guilt. Let's dive a little deeper into how repentance and belief are two different things. [21 : 04] Repentance notes that we turn from sin. Belief highlights what or whom we turn toward. Both repent and believe are imperatives.

We are commanded to live in a state of repentance and trust. The call here is not a momentary one-time decision that has little lasting effect. This is a life-altering change, a radical transformation of our life orientation.

A king has arrived who rightly demands that we follow and radically obey him. This is the unchanging and uncompromising message and vision of the eternal kingdom of God.

Jesus said that people must repent. He said that the people must believe, and he said what the people must believe. People must believe the gospel of God.

So to enter the kingdom, people must turn in faith to the Lord Jesus Christ, trusting in him and his finished work of redemption from sin and his victory over death. As Paul said in Romans 10.9, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

[22 : 19] that kind of belief is not a vague or generic faith, but a wholehearted embrace of the person and the work of Jesus. You will hear people say that they have faith, but the important thing is what they have faith in.

Repentance now means a change of mind and a change of direction. It means turning from rebellion and submitting to the terms of surrender that the king has given us.

When we repent, there's a profound moment of realizing that our rebellion against the king has been the pattern of our life. We confess that we've tried to be our own king.

Faith then receives the terms of peace that have been extended to us through Jesus and it accepts Jesus as Lord. A good definition of faith is reliance.

And when we repent and believe, we turn from our rebellion to rely completely on what God has done to save us. The gospel is called the gospel of God because it comes from God and brings us to God.

[23 : 29] You also may hear it called the gospel of the kingdom. That's because faith in the Savior brings you into his kingdom. And you may hear it described as the gospel of Jesus Christ because Jesus Christ is the heart of it.

Without Jesus' life, death, and resurrection, there would be no good news. Paul even called the gospel the gospel of the grace of God because there can be no salvation apart from grace.

What we need to remember, though, is that there is only one gospel and it centers on what Jesus Christ did for us on the cross. Listen to these hard-hitting words from J.C. Ryle.

He said, Ryle continued, A new heart and a living faith in a Redeemer are absolutely necessary to salvation.

May we never rest till we know them by experience and can call them our own. With them, all true Christianity begins in the soul. Religious life consists in the exercise of them.

[24 : 53] It is only through the possession of them that people have peace in the end. Church membership and priestly absolution alone save no one. The only people who die in the Lord are those who repent and believe.

R.C. Sproul put it this way. Sproul said, People say, If you want to have a personal relationship with Jesus, then come forward to the altar, raise your hand, sign a card, or pray the sinner's prayer. All those techniques together add up to cheap grace because what is noticeably absent from those attempts to evangelize is any serious call to repentance. No one can enter the kingdom of God without repentance, without fleeing from sin and putting his trust in Christ alone.

This is how our Lord himself did evangelism. He announced the gospel and then he said, In essence, your response must be to repent and believe. So now that we've seen the message summarized, let's move to the second section of the passage.

Verses 16 through 20 show us the messengers selected. So the messengers selected is your second set of blanks. Here are verses 16 through 20 again.

[26 : 13] passing alongside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew, the brother of Simon, casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen. And Jesus said to them, Follow me, and I will

make you become fishers of men.

And immediately they left their nets and followed him. And going on a little further, he saw James, the son of Zebedee, and John, his brother, who were in their boat mending the nets.

And immediately he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants and followed him. The Sea of Galilee is a beautiful, freshwater lake.

It's fed by the waters of the upper Jordan River, and it's 700 feet below sea level, about 14 miles long and 6 miles wide. It's called by several names in the Bible.

It's also called the Lake of Gennesaret in Luke 5, 1. The Sea of Tiberias in John 6, 1 and John 21, 1. And in Old Testament times, this lake was known as the Sea of Kinnereth.

[27 : 23] And you can find that in Numbers 34, 11. A lot of fishing took place at this lake. Josephus, the Jewish historian, recorded that up to 350 boats sailed this lake.

Most of Jesus' teaching and miracles were performed in this area. Several months before, Jesus already had met Peter, Andrew, James, and John, and of course, Peter is who's referred to as Simon in these verses.

They had come to trust them, and for the first recorded experience with Andrew and Simon Peter, flip over to John 1, verses 35 through 42.

Here are John 1, verses 35 through 42. They say, the next day, again, John, and that's John the Baptist, was standing with two of his disciples, and he looked at Jesus as Jesus walked by and said, Behold, the Lamb of God.

The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus. Jesus turned and saw them following and said to them, What are you seeking? And they said to him, Rabbi, which means teacher, where are you staying?

[28 : 39] He said to them, Come, and you will see. So they came and saw where he was staying, and they stayed with him that day, for it was about the tenth hour. One of the two who heard John speak and followed Jesus was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother.

He first found his own brother, Simon, and said to him, We have found the Messiah, which means Christ. He brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, You are Simon, the son of John. You shall be called Cephas, which means Peter. Now, as for as James and John go, the mother of James and John was Salome, who seems to have been a sister of the Virgin Mary.

If so, then James and John were Jesus' cousin. Surely they had heard stories about the strange circumstances that had surrounded the birth of Jesus, at least in the family circle.

And Jesus' reputation for absolute goodness was already well known by this time. But they probably had questions like, If he's the Messiah, why did he wait so long to proclaim it?

[29 : 46] And why was he content to live in a place like Nazareth? The text of Jesus' first recorded encounter with Andrew and Simon Peter that we just read omits any specific references to James and John.

However, even if they were not Jesus' cousins, we can reasonably assume that they already knew of Jesus before the events recorded in our text tonight. After all, James and John were fishermen who fished the same lake as Andrew and Simon Peter.

Listen to Mark 1, 16 and 17 again and try to imagine that you are Andrew and Simon hearing these words for the first time.

It says, Passing along the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew, the brother of Simon, casting a net into the sea for they were fishermen. And Jesus said to them, Follow me and I will make you become fishers of men.

And immediately they left their nets and followed him. Jesus' actions and the actions of the people he called all were remarkable and we'll spend a little bit of time talking about why they're so remarkable.

[30 : 56] What Jesus was doing was very unusual. In the ancient Jewish world, rabbis never recruited students. Students applied to study with certain rabbis just as students apply to colleges today.

Those students had to pass examinations to demonstrate that they were qualified to study under their rabbi of choice. But Jesus was different from every other rabbi in Israel.

He went out and handpicked his students. The implications of his command were extreme and unmistakable. He was telling them to abandon everything, including your careers as fishermen and follow me.

It was a unique, non-negotiable, all-encompassing mandate from the king to his first chosen subjects. The Lord would later echo that same kind of call in spiritual terms to all who would come to follow him.

He said in Mark 8, 34, If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. This first call to his disciples here that we see tonight was an illustration of the comprehensive call that our Lord gives to all who would enter his kingdom, and he's telling them to abandon all their other masters.

[32 : 17] Let's dig a little deeper into what Jesus specifically said to Andrew and Simon Peter. Mark 1, 17 told us Jesus said, Follow me and I will make you become fishers of men.

So you see an obvious command here to the two of them. He said, Follow me. And in this sense, he's more like a prophet than a normal teacher. But here's the surprise.

Prophets don't call people to follow themselves. They call people to follow God. But Jesus commanded the people to follow me in his words.

So what we see here is that Jesus is subtly announcing that he's more than a prophet. He's the Lord and King, and his word choice emphasizes that he's the one that prophets were telling people that they should follow.

Consider something else about how Jesus started building his team. Conventional human wisdom says that a good leader should surround himself with people who are better than he is.

[33 : 19] Jesus didn't have that option because Jesus is the only perfect human who ever lived or ever will live. Instead, Jesus chose people who would be passed over by much of the outside world.

And Jesus then promised to make those people into what Jesus needed them to be. Can you imagine the conversation that might have happened between the early disciples? You know, you could kind of see him saying, well, Jesus, do you have some other people in mind that might join us?

And think of their reaction when he said, well, I'm thinking about this tax collector and I'm thinking about this zealot who would like to overthrow your government and got a couple of other people too and they might be thinking, are we really sure that we want to follow this guy?

But it should be encouraging to us that Jesus picks people that others would pass over. Listen to what Charles Spurgeon said to his congregation.

Spurgeon said, when Christ calls us by his grace, we ought not only to remember what we are, but we ought also to think of what he can make us.

[34 : 27] It did not seem a likely thing that lowly fishermen would develop into apostles, that men so handy with the net would be quite as much at home in preaching sermons and instructing converts.

One would have said, how can these things be? You cannot make founders of churches out of peasants of Galilee, but that is exactly what Jesus did. And when we are brought low in the sight of God by our sense of our own unworthiness, we may be encouraged to follow Jesus because of what he can make us.

Oh, you see in yourselves at present nothing that is desirable. Come you and follow Christ for the sake of what he can make out of you. Do you not hear a sweet voice calling to you and saying, follow me and I will make you fishers of men.

Jesus' choices for his first disciples also give us an echo of the Old Testament. Listen to Zechariah chapter 4, verse 6. Zechariah 4, 6 says, Then he said to me, This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel, not by might nor by power, but by my spirit, says the Lord of hosts.

Jesus' choices for his first disciples also point forward to many true believers who already have come since then and to many future believers, including us.

[35 : 49] Here are 1 Corinthians 1, verses 26 through 29. And in 1 Corinthians 1, 26 through 29, Paul wrote these words. He said, For consider your calling, brothers.

Not many of you were wise according to worldly standards. Not many were powerful. Not many were of noble birth. But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise.

God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong. God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, so that no human being might boast in the presence of God.

Going back to our Mark text, we need to see something else about what Jesus said to Andrew and Simon Peter. Jesus' use of the phrase, I will make you become fishers of men, is often overlooked

as a proof of Jesus' deity.

Jesus did not invent the imagery of fishers of men as a clever play on words. That imagery actually comes from the Old Testament prophets. In the Old Testament, God fishes for people, and the texts often are foreboding in the context of divine judgment.

[37 : 06] We'll look at a few examples of that. Here is Jeremiah 16.16. Jeremiah 16.16 says, Behold, I am sending for many fishers, declares the Lord, and they shall catch them.

And afterward, I will send for many hunters, and they shall hunt them from every mountain and every hill and out of the clefts of the rocks. And here are Ezekiel 29, verses 3 through 5.

Speak and say, Thus says the Lord God, Behold, I am against you, Pharaoh, king of Egypt, the great dragon that lies in the midst of the streams, that says, My Nile is my own, I made it for myself. I will put hooks in your jaws and make the fish of your streams stick to your scales, and I will draw you up out of the midst of your streams with all the fish of your streams that stick to your scales. And I will cast you out into the wilderness and you and all the fish of your streams. You shall fall on the open field and not be brought together or gathered.

[38 : 12] To the beast of the earth and to the birds of the heaven I give you as food. And this verse is Amos 4.2. Amos 4.2 says, The Lord God has sworn by His holiness that, behold, the days are coming upon you when they shall take you away with hooks even the last of you with fish hooks.

And these are just a few examples of where fishing and fish hooks are used as a symbol of judgment in the Old Testament. But think about what Jesus is doing here.

He's flipping the fishing for men metaphor from a negative to a positive using a play on words. And even more than that, Jesus uses the metaphor to make a claim for His own deity.

Jesus' use of the metaphor is a claim to deity because God Himself is always the one who sins for the fishers. Jesus was doing something that only God does because Jesus is God.

So we need to notice something here. Jesus is taking a negative concept from the Old Testament and turning it into a positive. And we're going to see that theme as we go all the way through Mark.

[39 : 23] We've seen it some already where Jesus took a negative temptation experience and turned it into a positive one because He overcame temptation. Now we've seen taking a metaphor that was used for judgment in the Old Testament and sometimes in actual reality when people would have their hooks put in their mouths when they were taken captive and turning that into a positive.

Jesus was rescuing those people from that judgment. And now let's consider Andrew and Simon Peter's actions. Mark 1.18 tells us what they did.

It simply says, And immediately they left their nets and followed Him. So even though Andrew and Simon Peter already had met Jesus and trusted Him, their actions were remarkable too.

These rugged fishermen were hardly pushovers but there was no resistance or hesitation on their part. They immediately dropped everything to follow Jesus and their response demonstrates both the Lord's authority and the power that moves those He calls to respond.

Look now at verses 19 and 20. It says, And going on a little further, He saw James the son of Zebedee and John his brother who were in their boat mending the nets.

[40 : 40] And immediately He called them and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants and followed Him. Jesus extended the same call to James and John who were known as the sons of Zebedee and the price of discipleship is further illustrated by their actions.

They left not only their livelihood, they also broke family ties and tradition by leaving their father sitting in the boat. Their response may seem shocking from a human perspective.

From a divine standpoint, though, it shouldn't be at all surprising. As Jesus explained to His disciples in John 15, 16, He said, You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide so that whatever you ask the Father in My name, He may give it to you.

Clearly, the scope of Jesus' authority encompassed the disciples whom He called to follow Him.

And it was through these regenerated and transformed sinners and their proclamation of the gospel that Jesus would advance His kingdom purposes.

So remember the main idea. Jesus proclaims His message and chooses followers who will help spread that message everywhere. The message that Jesus proclaimed in Mark 1, 15 still is the same message that true believers are called to proclaim today.

[42 : 08] And Jesus expects His followers today to proclaim that message everywhere. John MacArthur said, Having rescued believers from sin, the King employs them in His service, empowering them through His Spirit to be instruments for the advance of His kingdom.

All of this takes place under the authority of His sovereign prerogative. The one who defeated Satan, both in the wilderness and at the cross, the one who declared victory over sin through the proclamation of the gospel, and the one who continually demonstrates His power in the lives of those whom He saves and empowers, He alone is the messianic King.

All rule, authority, power, and dominion belong to Him. Jesus' ministry took place according to God's sovereign timetable. And here tonight we see that this was the hour for which the world had been waiting.

It was the most significant moment in earth's history. The Savior had arrived on the scene to pay in full the penalty for sin and provide salvation for all the elect.

And of course, that applies to everyone who's elect from the beginning of history to the end of history. For now, Jesus still is building His kingdom, and the good news for us is that we get to be a part of it.

[43 : 27] Jesus' words in the Great Commission apply to us. Listen to Matthew 28, verses 18 through 20. Matthew 28, 18 through 20 say, And Jesus came and said to them, All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.

And behold, I am with you always to the end of the age. Let's pray. Father, we thank you tonight for the reminder of not only the message that you sent Jesus to proclaim, but also for the reminder of the nature of the first disciples that He chose to follow Him.

When we are tempted to think that we are not good enough to proclaim Jesus' message everywhere, remember that we don't need to be good enough. Help us remember that we just need to trust in the Lord who will make us good enough to accomplish His purpose, just like He did for the four disciples that we met tonight.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.