

# Holy Textures

Meeting Jesus in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.  
Short, easy to use, faith-provoking insights.

## Mark 1:14-20

*The fact that Jesus is out alone at night and that the four all leave their families to follow / travel with Jesus is abnormal and deviant behaviour. By and large, most followers of Jesus today will never become itinerant night owls. However if we also never do anything that threatens the status quo, never do anything that is abnormal or deviant, then one wonders how exactly are we following Jesus?*

### Year B

### Epiphany 3

### January 22, 2012

*Sunday Between January 21 and January 27 Inclusive*

Read the passage at the bottom of this post: [Mark 1:14-20, The Message](#) or [Mark 1:14-20, The New Revised Standard Version \(NRSV\)](#).

Click [here](#) for an easy to print or email Adobe PDF version of this note.

Sermon by the [Rev. Dr. George Hermanson](#), "[Decisions](#)."

**Verse 14.** Scholars speculate that Jesus was a disciple of John the Baptist based on this reference that Jesus begins his public ministry after John is arrested.

**Verse 15.** Mark began his gospel with "the good news of Jesus the Christ, the Son of God," and now we hear Jesus' "sound bite" of just what that Good News is:

*The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God has come near; repent and believe in the good news.*

There are 4 important verbs in this Good News. The first 2 proclaim deeds that God is doing; the last 2 call for specific responses from us.

1. "The time is fulfilled" is tricky to fully convey the meaning of in English because such experiences of time are rare. This is an epoch making time, a defining moment time. A long held dream is about to begin taking shape, to be actually realized / completed / perfected / accomplished / consummated.
2. "Has come near" or "is at hand." These two verbs located the realm of God in both time - this defining moment; and space - at hand. But the verbs also indicate a deed / action that has now begun and is yet unfinished.
3. "Repent" does **NOT** mean to feel badly or guilty. It **DOES** mean to change one's behaviour; to re-align it with new principles, new beliefs, new understandings, new insights, new objectives, new goals.

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The feelings that accompany repentance can range from sorrow over past deeds, to joy for new options; from anger over past false hopes, to confidence for now finding firm ground.

The fact this is suggested as our first response to the Good News that the time is fulfilled and the Kingdom of God has come near implies that our current living is not based on this reality.

4. "Believe in the good news" is better translated as "**Trust into** the Good News," since the whole point is not, "Have an opinion about the Good News." Rather, Jesus is calling for a radical, total, unqualified basing of one's life on this Good News; a discover-its-meaning-by-living-into this Good News - even to the point of risking being killed for it.

The rest of the Gospel of Mark then describes how this message is actually made known.

Note that the first thing Jesus does is recruit followers.

Whatever else is true about the Good News that the time is fulfilled and the Kingdom of God has come near, it is **NOT** a one man show.

The first thing that is always true about the Good News is that it is about building up communities / creating relationships that embody the Good News.

**Verses 16 - 20.** Fishing was done at night so that the freshly caught fish could be sold as soon as possible in the morning.

Being out at night - and smelling of fish - made fishing a disreputable occupation.

It seems that Jesus sees Simon and Andrew at night (or just before dawn) as they are actively fishing; and then sees James and John after dawn as they are now finished fishing and are in their boat mending their nets.

The fact that Jesus is out alone at night and that the four all leave their families to follow / travel with Jesus is abnormal and deviant behaviour.

Their friends and neighbours would view them with alarm and suspicion - be very concerned about the break down in their social fabric.

Loyalty to one's family strictly observing all social conventions were paramount in Jesus' day. Any deviants were quickly brought back into line or expelled from the community.

By and large, most followers of Jesus today will never become itinerant night owls.

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Historical background information in this post is drawn primarily from Social-Science Commentary on the Synoptic Gospels, see link below, pages 148-149.

\* [Link to Amazon.com Bibliography for Bruce Malina, et. al.](#), Social Science Commentary on ... The Synoptic Gospels; The Gospel of John; The Book of Acts; The Letters of Paul; The Book of Revelation; and others.

## Mark 1:14-20 (NRSV)

<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."

<sup>16</sup> As Jesus passed along the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the sea—for they were fishermen. <sup>17</sup> And Jesus said to them, "Follow me and I will make you fish for people." <sup>18</sup> And immediately they left their nets and followed him. <sup>19</sup> As he went a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John, who were in their boat mending the nets. <sup>20</sup> Immediately he called them; and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men, and followed him.

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## Mark 1:14-20 (The Message)

<sup>14</sup> After John was arrested, Jesus went to Galilee preaching the Message of God: <sup>15</sup> "Time's up! God's kingdom is here. Change your life and believe the Message."

<sup>16</sup> Passing along the beach of Lake Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew net-fishing. Fishing was their regular work. <sup>17</sup> Jesus said to them, "Come with me. I'll make a new kind of fisherman out of you. I'll show you how to catch men and women instead of perch and bass." <sup>18</sup> They didn't ask questions. They dropped their nets and followed.

<sup>19</sup> A dozen yards or so down the beach, he saw the brothers James and John, Zebedee's sons. They were in the boat, mending their fishnets. <sup>20</sup> Right off, he made the same offer. Immediately, they left their father Zebedee, the boat, and the hired hands, and followed.

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