

## “Called by Jesus” – Mark 1:14-20

This morning, we continue our exploration of Mark’s Gospel. One thing about Mark; he gets right to the point. His a Gospel of action. He begins with an account of John the Baptist, who was called to prepare the way for the coming of Messiah. He talks about Jesus’ baptism at the hands of John, something that John was reluctant to do, because Jesus needed no repentance. He had no sin but it was necessary because Jesus came to identify with us in all points except sin. Doing so was necessary to fulfill all righteousness. And then, Mark writes briefly about Jesus’ temptation in the wilderness. There, Jesus succeeded where Adam failed. Satan gave it his best shot, but Jesus resisted his temptation by rightly quoting scripture. Jesus remained perfectly obedient to the Father’s will. He continued to fulfill all righteousness.

This morning, we pick up the account as Jesus begins His earthly ministry. We will find that it is a ministry of preaching, but it is also a ministry of relationship. Jesus began to call disciples to Himself for a specific purpose and He continues to call disciples to Himself today. He is calling you and He is calling me. First, He calls us to salvation. Then He calls us to sanctity. He calls us to service. And finally, He calls us to sacrifice.

So let’s now go to the word of God and read our text for this morning.

*Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel." And as He walked by the Sea of Galilee, He saw Simon and Andrew his brother casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. Then Jesus said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men." They immediately left their nets and followed Him. When He had gone a little farther from there, He saw James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, who also were in the boat mending their nets. And immediately He called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants, and went after Him. (Mark 1:14-20)*

Jesus is calling you to salvation. If you refuse to answer this call, the rest of my sermon will be completely useless to you. So, if you have never answered this call, you need to do so. This is first and foremost. You must repent and believe in the gospel. (v. 15)

When Jesus said, “The time is fulfilled,” He meant that today, human beings have a golden opportunity before them. Today is the day of salvation.

*The people who walked in darkness Have seen a great light; Those who dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, Upon them a light has shined. (Isaiah 9:2)*

*For He is our God, And we are the people of His pasture, And the sheep of His hand. Today, if you will hear His voice: "Do not harden your hearts, as in the rebellion, As in the day of trial in the wilderness, (Psalms 95:7-8)*

You see, the Kingdom of God is at hand. That doesn’t mean that God’s kingdom is just beginning, God has always ruled and reigned. God is always in complete control of His universe. God is absolutely sovereign. That has never changed and it never will change.

But with the arrival of Jesus Christ, His kingdom becomes available to us. We are, by nature, alienated from God. We’re all sinners and as sinners, we are God’s enemies and God will take vengeance on His enemies. It’s a guarantee. But when God the Son came to earth to live one, perfect human life, He made it possible for us to be reconciled to God. We can move from a position of being God’s enemies, to a place in God’s own family.

*For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 6:23)*

The kingdom of God is at hand; it is available to you. Jesus is calling you to salvation and all you need to do is repent and believe in the gospel.

To repent is *metanoēō* (*μετανοέω*) It literally means to think differently. It is a change of mind. What you need to do is change your mind about the state of your own righteousness. You need to agree with God that you are guilty of cosmic rebellion. You need to agree that you deserve the death penalty. You see, you cannot be saved if you don't recognize that you need to be saved. So, you must admit your sin and turn to Jesus.

You must believe the gospel. Believe the good news that Jesus died for your sins.

*But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. (Romans 5:8)*

Believe it! And believe that His righteousness is then transferred to you.

*For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. (2 Corinthians 5:21)*

Don't try to pay for it. It is a gift of God's grace, absolutely free to you. Hold your empty hands out to Jesus and let Him give you His salvation.

*For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. (Ephesians 2:8-9)*

Jesus calls you to salvation.

Jesus also calls you to sanctity. You are not saved by your piety. You are not saved by any good work you can do. But you are saved so that you can engage in a lifestyle that honors Jesus.

If Jesus is your Lord, He should get to call the shots, don't you think? Paul, in writing to the Romans, puts it this way:

*What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? (Romans 6:1-2)*

Before Jesus called you to salvation, you had no choice ... you were a sinner by nature. But Jesus gives you a new nature. He sends His Spirit to live within you and you are no longer a slave to your fallen nature. You now have a choice.

*Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace. (Romans 6:12-14)*

Jesus once said:

*"But why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do the things which I say? (Luke 6:46)*

Good question! Jesus is calling us to a life of obedience. If we are Christians, we should live like Christians. There should be a fundamental difference between us and

unbelievers. There should be a difference between how we live and how the world lives. We are called to sanctity.

Jesus prayed that we would be sanctified.

*Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth. (John 17:17)*

To be sanctified is to be set apart for a holy purpose and as Jesus prayed, the means to our sanctification is God's word. This Bible. You need to get into this Book and you need to let this Book get into you. You need to renew your mind ...

*... that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. (Romans 12:2)*

This Fall, we will be offering another Contenders class, Old Testament Survey. All of scripture points to Jesus, so we will look at Jesus through the lens of the Old Testament. We'll meet just one day a week, on Saturdays at 10:30 am. I'm telling you this now so that you can be praying about it, planning for it, getting excited about it. I'm not telling you so that you have time to come up with a creative excuse.

Jesus is calling you to sanctity If the Bible is our means for achieving sanctification, it makes sense that we should avail ourselves of every opportunity to learn more about the Bible, to learn more about how Jesus wants us to live.

As Christians, we are called to salvation and we are called to sanctity. We are also called to service. Look again, if you will, at verses 16 and 17.

*And as He walked by the Sea of Galilee, He saw Simon and Andrew his brother casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. Then Jesus said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men." (Mark 1:16-17)*

I've always liked that turn of phrase because evangelism is not like hunting. It's not an aggressive enterprise. We dangle the bait of the Gospel in order to entice. Like Peter says:

*But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear; (1 Peter 3:15)*

It really is like fishing. But I want you to notice how Simon Peter and Andrew responded.

*They immediately left their nets and followed Him. (Mark 1:18)*

When Jesus calls, the only reasonable response is to go. And notice that favorite word of Marks: Immediately, they left their nets. James and John responded in exactly the same way.

*When He had gone a little farther from there, He saw James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, who also were in the boat mending their nets. And immediately He called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants, and went after Him. (Mark 1:19-20)*

So four of the 12 Apostles are called. Now, this was not their first encounter with Jesus. In fact, Andrew was a follower of John the Baptist, who said: "Behold the Lamb of God" (John 1:36) He introduced his brother Simon to Jesus. Jesus gave Simon the name Peter, but it was a while before they were called to full-time service. That's the way it is with us, too. It is quite rare that someone is called to service at the same time they are called to

salvation. Jesus has to do some work on you. He has to prepare you for the ministry to which you are called.

But make no mistake, if you are a Christian, you are called to service. This is not a spectator sport where you get to cheer from the sidelines. Let me revisit a scripture I shared with you a little earlier:

*For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.*  
(Ephesians 2:8-10)

You cannot be saved by your works of service, but Jesus saves you so you can do works of service. He is calling you to be His hands and His feet and His voice in this darkening world. He is calling you to be His emissaries.

Now, we are not all called to the same kind of service. In fact, we may be called to different kinds of ministry at different points in our lives. At this point in my life, I have been called to be a full-time pastor. It is a tremendous blessing, but also a fearful responsibility. But guess what my job description is? You can find it in the Book of Ephesians.

*And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ,*  
(Ephesians 4:11-12)

My job is to prepare the saints for the work of ministry. That means your job is to do the work of ministry!

There you have it; you are called to service. And your ministry, whatever it is, must edify, that is, build up the body of Christ. We are all called to build the Church. And sometimes, that requires sacrifice.

Jesus calls us to salvation. He calls us to sanctity. He calls us to service. And yes, He calls us to sacrifice.

*Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it." (Matthew 16:24-25)*

Well, that's just a little bit sobering. "Jesus, I know what your cross is for; you died on it to save me from my sins, but what is my cross for?"

Jesus tells us: You have to give up your life too. You have to give up your self-centered existence. You can no longer be the boss of your life. Jesus won't share you with anyone. You must not add Jesus to your life like some sort of ornament, some sort of jewelry that you can take off when He's inconvenient. Like the song says, Jesus must be your life.

*"If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple." (Luke 14:26-27)*

If anything or anyone is more important to you than Jesus, then you have made that thing or that person into an idol. Our God is a jealous God. He loves you, and He will not share you. He has to come first.

But here's the thing; any so-called sacrifice you are called on to make for the cause of the kingdom will turn out to be no sacrifice at all. At one point, Peter told Jesus that they had left everything to follow Him.

*So He said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or parents or brothers or wife or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God, who shall not receive many times more in this present time, and in the age to come eternal life." (Luke 18:29-30)*

Jim Elliot, the martyred missionary to Ecuador once said: "**He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose.**" Don't ever be afraid to sacrifice any of the stuff and junk of this world for the sake of the kingdom.

*Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever. (1 John 2:15-17)*

Jesus is calling you this morning. He is calling you to salvation, to sanctity, to service and to sacrifice.

How will you answer?