

MARK 1:14-20

DECIDING TO FOLLOW JESUS

1. REVIEW – TEMPTATION TO SIN

A. QUESTION: HAVE YOU HAVE BEEN FIGHTING THE SAME TEMPTATION TO SIN FOR YEARS WITHOUT BEING ABLE TO OVERCOME IT?

a. IS IT LIKE A BROKEN RECORD: TEMPTATION... SIN... REGRET... REPEAT?

B. TEMPTATION TO SIN IS THE UNIVERSAL AFFLICTION OF BEING HUMAN... BUT, HOW WE CHOOSE TO RESPOND TO TEMPTATIONS MAKES ALL THE DIFFERENCE!

1. BEFORE THE FIRST SIN, THERE WAS THE FIRST TEMPTATION.

C. FOUR STEPS TO TAKE TO RESIST TEMPTATION TO SIN:

1. ONE: AVOID ENVIRONMENTS WHERE YOU ARE EASILY TEMPTED.

2. TWO: WHEN FACING TEMPTATION, GET AWAY QUICKLY.

3. THREE: SAY OUT LOUD: "I GIVE NO CONSENT TO THAT THOUGHT IN THE NAME AND POWER OF MY SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST."

4. FOUR: QUOTE SCRIPTURE INTO THE TEMPTATION... THAT'S WHAT JESUS DID... BUT FIRST WE MUST MEMORIZE AN APPLICABLE SCRIPTURE!!

5. QUESTION: HAVE YOU TRIED ANY OF THE "FOUR STEPS TO RESIST TEMPTATION TO SIN" IN THE LAST WEEK?

a. IF YOU DID, WERE YOU ENCOURAGED?

b. IF YOU DID NOT, IN THE WORDS OF THE OLD ALKA-SELTZER COMMERCIAL... "TRY IT, YOU'LL LIKE IT!"

2. INTRODUCTION TO MARK 1:14-20:

A. Mark 1:14-20 (NASB) Now after John had been taken into custody, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel." As He was going along by the Sea of Galilee, He saw Simon and Andrew, the brother of Simon, casting a net in the sea; for they were fishermen. And Jesus said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men." Immediately they left their nets and followed Him. Going on a little farther, He saw James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, who were also in the boat mending the nets. Immediately He called them; and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants, and went away to follow Him.

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B. TODAY'S LESSON IS IN THREE PARTS:

1. JESUS SAYS TO THE MULTITUDE... "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel."
2. JESUS SAYS TO THOSE WHO "REPENT AND BELIEVE"... "Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men."
3. THE PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS OF THOSE SCRIPTURES TO CHRISTIANS.

C. BACKGROUND: IN THE FIRST CENTURY ISRAEL WAS AT A NEW LOW POINT IN ITS LONG HISTORY.

1. CORRUPT POLITICIAN-PRIESTS HAD TURNED THE TEMPLE INTO A VIRTUAL ROMAN OUTPOST.
2. THE RICH LINED THEIR POCKETS WHILE THE POWERFUL CONSOLIDATED THEIR POWER.
3. MEANWHILE, THE MASSES OF GOD'S COVENANT PEOPLE GROPED ABOUT IN SPIRITUAL DARKNESS.

D. BUT... THEN "JESUS CAME INTO GALILEE" (1:14)... NOT ONLY WITH A PROCLAMATION OF "GOOD NEWS", BUT WITH A CALL TO SOMETHING GREATER THAN THEY HAD EVER HEARD... "Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men."

E. IN THIS ATMOSPHERE OF DESPAIR, "JESUS CAME PREACHING THE GOSPEL OF GOD"... THE "GOOD NEWS" (AND THE PEOPLE NEEDED SOME GOOD NEWS!) THAT JESUS WAS OFFERING HOPE, LOVING MERCY, FORGIVENESS FOR SINS, AND EVERLASTING LIFE THROUGH FAITH IN HIM AS MESSIAH, GOD'S SON.

3. JESUS SAYS TO THE MULTITUDE... "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel."

A. Mark 1:14-15 (NASB) Now after John had been taken into custody, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel."

B. WHEN JESUS CAME TO GALILEE PREACHING THE GOSPEL, HE CALLED FOR PEOPLE TO "REPENT" AND TO "BELIEVE" IN THE GOSPEL" (1:15).

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1. HE SAID THAT THE PEOPLE COULD RECEIVE THE GIFT OF SALVATION IF THEY CHOSE TO "REPENT" AND TO "BELIEVE".
2. TO "REPENT" IS TO CHANGE OUR MIND REGARDING A LIFESTYLE OF SELFISHNESS AND SIN AND TO TURN IN FAITH TO THE SAVIOR.
 - a. QUESTION: HOW DO WE DO THAT?... WE CHOOSE TO BELIEVE!
 - 1) THINK OF REPENTANCE AND BELIEF AS BELONGING TOGETHER... DON'T SEPARATE THEM.
 - 2) FEELING REMORSE FOR HAVING DONE BAD THINGS OR FOR BEING A BAD PERSON ISN'T ENOUGH... YOU HAVE NOT REALLY BELIEVED IN THE LORD JESUS CHRIST UNTIL YOU HAVE REPENTED.
 - 3) AND... YOU HAVE NOT REALLY REPENTED UNTIL YOU HAVE CHOSEN TO TURN AWAY FROM A LIFESTYLE THAT IS DOMINATED BY SELFISHNESS AND SIN.
- C. GENUINE FAITH SAYS, "GOD IS NOW IN CHARGE OF MY LIFE... NOT ME!"
 1. SALVATION IS TRULY THAT SIMPLE, AND THAT SURE.
 - a. "HE WHO HAS THE SON HAS THE LIFE," JOHN THE APOSTLE WROTE IN HIS LETTER TO THE FIRST-CENTURY CHURCHES (1 JN. 5:12).
 - b. NOTE: GOD DID NOT MAKE THE PATH TO HIMSELF THROUGH JESUS COMPLICATED OR UNCERTAIN... IT IS SIMPLE, REPENT AND BELIEVE... AND YOU WILL BE SAVED!
4. JESUS SAYS TO THOSE WHO "REPENT AND BELIEVE"... "Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men."
 - A. SIMON PETER AND HIS BROTHER ANDREW.
 - B. Mark 1:16-18 (NASB) As He was going along by the Sea of Galilee, He saw Simon and Andrew, the brother of Simon, casting a net in the sea; for they were fishermen. And Jesus said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men." Immediately (#3) they left their nets and followed Him.

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- C. THE “SEA” OF GALILEE IS ACTUALLY A FRESHWATER LAKE. (OUR MOST COMPARABLE LAKE IS LAKE BUCHANNAN) IT’S NEARLY 13 MILES LONG (30 MILES), HAS A SURFACE AREA OF 41,000 ACRES (22,333 ACRES), IS ALMOST 8 MILES WIDE (MAXIMUM OF ALMOST 6 MILES WIDE), RANGES FROM 80 TO 160 FEET DEEP (MAXIMUM OF 132’), AND IS AT THE BOTTOM OF A DEEP RIFT BOUNDED BY MOUNTAINS (HILL COUNTRY).

1. MARK PLACES JESUS ON THE SHORE OF THE SEA OF GALILEE. THE EXACT LOCATION IS NOT STATED, BUT IT COULDN’T HAVE BEEN FAR FROM CAPERNAUM, AS THAT WAS THE HOME PORT OF JAMES, JOHN, SIMON PETER, AND ANDREW.

- a. NOTE: THE FISHERMEN THAT JESUS CALLED WERE NOT INDIGENT DAY LABORERS.

1) IN ORDER TO SURVIVE IN THEIR MARKET, THEY NEEDED TO BE SHREWD AND SUCCESSFUL BUSINESSMEN.

- D. ACCORDING TO JOHN 1:35-42, BY THIS TIME SIMON PETER, ANDREW, AND SEVERAL OTHERS HAD BEEN INTRODUCED TO JESUS AND WERE AWARE OF THE CLAIMS THAT HE WAS THE LONG-AWAITED MESSIAH.

- E. NOTE: THE CALL, “FOLLOW ME,” REPRESENTED ENORMOUS RISK FOR THE FIRST DISCIPLES.

1. TO FOLLOW CHRIST, THE MEN WOULD HAVE TO LEAVE EVERYTHING FAMILIAR AND TRUST GOD TO PROVIDE FOR THEIR FAMILIES.

- F. THE CALL OF JAMES AND JOHN:

1. Mark 1:19-20 (NASB) Going on a little farther, He saw James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, who were also in the boat mending the nets. Immediately (#4) He called them; and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants, and went away to follow Him.

2. LIKE SIMON PETER AND ANDREW, JAMES AND JOHN LEFT THEIR BOATS AND EQUIPMENT IN THE CARE OF THEIR FATHER AND FOLLOWED JESUS FROM THAT MOMENT FORWARD.

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G. IN MARK'S QUICK-PACED STYLE... JESUS CALLED, AND THEY FOLLOWED!

5. PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS OF MARK 1:14-20:

A. IT HELPS TO RECOGNIZE TWO UNSPOKEN FACTS ABOUT JESUS' CALLING OF THE DISCIPLES.

1. FIRST: JESUS KNEW MORE THAN HE PROMISED THE DISCIPLES:

a. HE TOLD SIMON PETER, ANDREW, JAMES, AND JOHN THAT THEY WOULD BECOME FISHERS OF MEN... BUT HE DIDN'T EXPLAIN WHAT THAT WOULD MEAN.

b. FACT: THERE WAS SO MUCH MORE THAT JESUS KNEW... HE KNEW WHAT THEIR FOLLOWING HIM WOULD INVOLVE:

1) THEY WOULD ENDURE PAIN, SUFFER PERSECUTION, AND STRUGGLE THROUGH EXHAUSTION.

2) THEY WOULD ALSO FACE CIRCUMSTANCES AND POWERS SO DARK THEY WOULDN'T KNOW WHAT TO DO.

3) THEY WOULD BE ATTACKED, MISUNDERSTOOD, MISREPRESENTED, AND MALIGNED.

4) NEARLY ALL OF THEM WOULD BE KILLED AS A RESULT OF THEIR WORK FOR CHRIST.

5) BUT... THEY WOULD ALSO ENJOY INCREDIBLE TIMES OF EXHILARATION AND CELEBRATION.

c. FACT: MANY OF THOSE SAME THINGS MAY HAPPEN TO CHRISTIANS TODAY WHEN WE CHOOSE TO "FOLLOW JESUS" INSTEAD OF RELIGION AND RELIGIOUS LEADERS.

d. JESUS KNEW ALL OF THAT AND INSTEAD OF SPELLING OUT ALL THE DETAILS, HE SAID SIMPLY, "I WILL MAKE YOU BECOME FISHERS OF MEN."

2. SECOND: JESUS SAW IN THE DISCIPLES MUCH MORE THAN HE REVEALED:

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- 1) SIMON PETER, FOR EXAMPLE, SAW HIMSELF AS LITTLE MORE THAN A ROUGH-AND-RUGGED FISHERMAN... JESUS SAW WHAT SIMON PETER WOULD BECOME.
- 2) JESUS SAW PETER AS MICHELANGELO SAW DAVID IN A BLOCK OF MARBLE.
- 3) JESUS SAW AN APOSTLE IN A RUGGED FISHERMAN. HE SAW PETER CASTING HIS NET, HOWEVER AT THE SAME TIME HE SAW THREE THOUSAND SOULS BEING SAVED BY A SINGLE SERMON THAT PETER WOULD DELIVER ON A COMING PENTECOST.
- 4) JESUS SAW PETER, AND HE SAW GENTILES BEING ADDED TO THE CHURCH.
- 5) JESUS SAW PETER, AND HE SAW A MAN FAITHFUL UNTO DEATH, EVEN DEATH ON A CROSS.

B. REMEMBER: THAT WHEN JESUS CALLS US, HE SEES US AS WE ARE AND AS WE ARE TO BECOME.

1. PEOPLE WHO SEE US TODAY MIGHT NOT HAVE BELIEVED IT IF THEY HAD KNOWN US WHEN GOD FIRST INVITED US INTO HIS CALLING!
 - a. THAT'S BECAUSE THE LORD TEACHES US AND TRANSFORMS US TO BECOME HIS FISHERMEN.

C. THREE QUESTIONS FOR US TO CONSIDER:

1. FIRST QUESTION: WHERE DOES THE LORD FIND YOU TODAY?
 - a. I KNOW WHERE I MIGHT FIND YOU BUT I DON'T SEE YOU LIKE THE LORD SEES YOU, AND I CAN'T FIND YOU THE WAY HE FINDS YOU.
 - 1) HE SEES US INSIDE AND OUT. HE KNOWS OUR PAST AS WELL AS OUR FUTURE AND HE KNOWS OUR POTENTIAL.
 - b. NEXT, LET'S GO TO OUR HOME AND TO OUR FAMILY.
 - 1) WHERE DOES HE FIND US BEHIND THE CLOSED DOORS OF OUR HOME?

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- i. ARE THINGS **HARMONIOUS** AND **GLORIFYING GOD**? OR DOES HE **FIND** THAT THERE ARE SOME THINGS THAT HAVE BEEN **CORRUPTED** THROUGH **ACTS OF OMISSION** OR **COMMISSION** ON **OUR PART**?
- c. **WHERE** DOES HE **FIND** US AT OUR **WORK**?
 - 1) ARE WE **TRULY FULFILLED** IN WHAT WE **DO** FOR A **LIVING**... ARE WE **DILIGENT, FAITHFUL, AND RELIABLE**?
- d. **NOTE: JESUS MET** THESE **MEN WHERE THEY WERE**; HE **SAW EXACTLY WHERE THEY WERE, AND HE TOOK** THEM TO **WHERE ONLY HE COULD TAKE THEM**.
- e. BE **HONEST: WHERE** DOES THE **LORD FIND** US **TODAY**?
2. **SECOND QUESTION: WHAT IS THE LORD'S CALLING IN OUR LIFE**?
 - a. DO WE **HAVE A REASON FOR BEING**... DO WE **HAVE A FOCUSED SENSE OF PURPOSE**?
 - 1) DID YOU **NOTICE THE NEW PURPOSE** JESUS **GAVE** THESE **FOUR MEN**... "YOU'RE GOING TO BECOME FISHERS OF MEN."
 - 2) **WHAT IS THE LORD'S CALLING IN OUR LIFE**?
 - i. **WHAT PURPOSE** HAS HE **GIVEN** US THAT **TRANSCENDS OUR OCCUPATION**?
 - ii. **IF YOU'RE RETIRED, WHAT PURPOSE** HAS HE **GIVEN** YOU THAT **TRANSCENDS OUR RETIREMENT**?
3. **THIRD QUESTION: HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE** FOR US TO SAY **"YES"** TO THE **LORD'S CALLING**?
 - a. **PERHAPS WE'RE WAITING** UNTIL **ALL OF OUR QUESTIONS** ARE **ANSWERED**.
 - 1) **NOTE: WE'LL NEVER SAY "YES" IF WE WAIT** TO GET **ALL THOSE QUESTIONS ANSWERED**.

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- b. THE SAME GOES FOR **RISKS**... IF WE WANT **ALL THE RISKS REMOVED BEFORE** WE **CONSIDER** SAYING **"YES"** TO HIS **CALLING**, WE'LL BE **PARALYZED** TO A **PERPETUAL "NO"**.
- D. IF WE'RE **WILLING** TO **TAKE HIM AT HIS WORD** AND **TRUST** HIM TO **LEAD US** AS HE **INVITES** US TO **FOLLOW HIM**, THEN OUR **ANSWER** IS **NOT ONLY "YES"**... IT CAN BE AN **IMMEDIATE "YES"**.
- E. **NOTE: THE ANSWER TO THOSE QUESTIONS DOES NOT NECESSARILY MEAN FULL TIME MINISTRY IN "DEEPEST DARKEST AFRICA"!**
1. THE **POINT** IS THAT WE CAN **ANSWER GOD'S' CALL** TO **"FOLLOW HIM" WHEREVER HE FINDS US!**
 2. **REMEMBER: WE SERVE GOD WHEN WE SERVE OTHERS.**
 - a. **Matthew 25:34-40 (NASB)** "Then the King will say to those on His right, 'Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. 'For I was hungry, and you gave Me something to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me something to drink; I was a stranger, and you invited Me in; naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me.' "Then the righteous will answer Him, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry, and feed You, or thirsty, and give You something to drink? 'And when did we see You a stranger, and invite You in, or naked, and clothe You? 'When did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?' "The King will answer and say to them, 'Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me.'
- F. **DISCUSS: WAYS WE CAN "FOLLOW JESUS"**.
6. **CLOSING: CHORUS "FAMILY OF GOD"**

I'm so glad I'm a part of the Family of God,
I've been washed in the fountain, cleansed by His Blood!
Joint heirs with Jesus as we travel this sod,
For I'm part of the family,
The Family of God.