

The title for today's message is: **Is it really good news?**

Jesus said: **"The time has come," "The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!"**

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

In our text for today, we see Jesus at the very beginning of His ministry. He has just spent 40 days in the wilderness being tempted by Satan.

The news on the street, was that John the Baptist, who had baptized Jesus just a few weeks earlier, had been arrested, and thrown into prison.

Now, Mark begins by telling us that Jesus went up to Galilee where He grew up, and began to preach, "the good news".

He was like one of those old newspaper salesman standing on the corner of the street yelling out; "Extra, Extra read all about it".

**"The time has come," "The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!"**

It was as if every event in the past, and everything that would happen in the future, came together at this point in history.

And we can say that this was history's defining moment. Why? Because Jesus had now come to fulfill the prophecies, of the Old Testament.

That's right, Jesus had come to bring the Kingdom of God to all people, ruling like a King, that is, in their hearts.

But before He could reign in their hearts, the people first had to see, and understand, that they had a real need for Him.

Jesus simply said: **Repent and believe the good news!**" Repent, one little word that literally brings men and women to their knees.

Now, the word "Repent is a profound change of mind, involving the changing of ones direction in life.

Repentance is the conversion, or the actual turning to God in order to receive His love, and grace and also His forgiveness, for our sins.

Now, the law mentioned here, was something everyone knew all to well. It was the law of Moses, you know, the ten Commandments.

They were quite aware, that they hadn't, and couldn't, keep even one of God's commandments perfectly, as God demands all people to do.

Therefore, they also saw the punishment they deserved for failing to keep the Law. Which is; eternal suffering and anguish of hell.

Again, all in one little word, "Repent." Jesus showed them that they needed a Savior, that they needed Him.

But Jesus didn't stop with that single word, He also told the people there to **"believe the good news."**

And what was the good news? It was that the long awaited savior, the promised Messiah had now come to earth.

You can almost hear someone say; Extra, extra read all about it, **God is here to save us all.** Look, this was and still is the message today.

Now, as Jesus walked along the shore of the Sea of Galilee He began choosing His disciples.

First Simon, later called Peter, and his brother Andrew, then James, and his brother John, who by the way were disciples of John the Baptist.

Earlier, in fact, at the time of Jesus' baptism, John the Baptist told his disciples, Simon, Andrew, James and John something very important.

John said as Jesus approached him to be baptized: **"Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"**

He was in a sense, telling his own disciples that Jesus was the one they should follow now, that his purpose had come to a end.

And for the next three years, Jesus prepared them, along with eight other disciples, to work as fishermen. However they would fish for men, not fish.

Jesus not only taught them the Word, but He also allowed them to see many miraculous miracles, promising to empower them by His Holy Spirit.

So you might say these guys were well prepared for their fishing trip. And the same for us today, we too have been well prepared.

He has called us to be fishers of men, proclaiming that **"the time has come the kingdom of God is near."**

Today, like every day, is the day of our Salvation. Right now, this very moment, God is calling us, to follow Him as one of His disciples.

And He continues to this day to prepare us through His Word, and when we come here to worship Him.

But there's one more thing we have to do, and without it, we wont catch anything. We must go on the fishing trip.

Now, Mark tells us that Simon, Andrew, James and John left their boats, and nets behind, to follow Jesus. That's right they went on the fishing trip.

Were even told that James and John left their father and the helpers sitting in their boat in order to follow Jesus immediately.

Look, it was through their faith that worked in their hearts by the Holy Spirit, that they were excited, to go with Jesus.

However, as the scriptures have taught us, the fishing wasn't always easy. Most of the fish, well, the people, wouldn't listen to them.

The Government persecuted them, they were thrown into prison, and all except John were executed in horrible ways, just for following Jesus.

And just like over two thousand years ago when Jesus called those Galileans, He is calling us, and His message is the same, "Repent".

Let me ask you, when you were a child, how many times did you "Not" listen to your parents?

For example, you went where your parents told you not to go, and you did what ever they told you not to do.

But now that your an adult, you do much better don't you? Your much more obedient right? No! you aren't any better at all.

Look, were all the same. We lie, we get angry, we gossip, and we have lustful thoughts.

When we look into the mirror of God's law, we see that we are ugly, and deformed sinners, who deserve God's eternal punishment in hell.

All because that one little word "Repent" reminds us of our sinful nature, that we are sinners.

However it reminds us of something good, that is that we are in great need of a savior.

We're continually reminded of the man standing on the street corner shouting out, "Extra, extra read all about it, ***Jesus is here to save us.***

It's all about how our Holy, and all-powerful God, came into this world as a man, to suffer in our place, and to die for our sins.

We have the good news, that each and everyone of our sins are forgiven, because of Christ's sacrifice on the cross.

And because of His sacrifice, He prepared us for our fishing trip. He started this preparation in our Baptism, and when He called us to faith.

My friends, Jesus has invited you and I to go on this same fishing trip. How are you going to react? will you be excited, are you excited.

Are you willing to stand on the street corner yelling out, "Extra, extra, read all about it, "The time has come," "The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!"

Or will you be like most people in the world, saying sorry, I've got other things to do, or I don't know what to say, I won't catch anybody anyway.

Who's going to listen to me, I'm no one special. Look, those kinds of excuses didn't work for Moses, when God invited him on the trip.

So neither will it work for you, or me. God has called us all to be fishers of men. It's not just a trip for pastors, everyone has been invited on the trip.

Jesus said in Matthew Chapter 28: "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations"

I've often asked myself, how could I not get excited about going on the most exciting fishing trip ever?

I mean what a privilege it is, when I see the love that God has showered upon me as an individual.

And what a privilege it is to know that God has chosen me, one person out of millions, to be one of His representatives. A fishermen.

It won't be easy all the time, we won't always get a bite, but if we endure, and keep our hook in the water, we will catch a big one.

I think, its when we see God's amazing grace, we will want to share His wonderful news with everyone we see.

And don't fool yourself, there's many, many opportunities out there for us to share the good news, we just have to be there.

We all have neighbors, friends and family members, who are searching for something.

We also have all these people who live around the church. Who, for what ever reason, don't know about the grace of God.

My friends, it's time to go fishing.

Amen

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the Love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all. Amen