



True Good News
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The Crossing Church
Las Vegas, Nevada

OPENING

Last week we experienced the joy and new hope that Jesus' resurrection brought to the world 2000 years ago – that same joy that His Holy Spirit inspires within us today. When Jesus showed up on the pages of history, everywhere He went there were crowds. They weren't just a select group of people – they were the religious and the not so religious, the rich and poor, the young and old, men and women and children, Jews and Gentiles, healthy and sick, the powerful and the outcasts. All of them were **MARKED** by Jesus and we, too, have the opportunity to be marked by Him today.

QUESTION: What are you most looking forward to doing with your family when the social isolation ends?

QUESTION: What is inspiring you to look for good news today?

SCRIPTURE¹

Mark 1:1 The beginning of good news about Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God.

Mark 1:14-20 After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. "The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!" As Jesus walked beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. "Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will send you out to fish for people." At once they left their nets and followed him. When he had gone a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John in a boat, preparing their nets. Without delay he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men and followed him.

1 Peter 2:23-24a When they hurled insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly. He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross.

1 Peter 1:3 He has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

OBSERVATION

Whenever Jesus came in contact with people, they were forever marked. Sometimes there was a good outcome – they were forever changed and chose to follow Jesus. Sometimes the story was different and they rejected Him. Each of us will be confronted by that decision at one time or another in our lives. The man who is telling this story is John Mark (we know Him as Mark) who was not one of the twelve apostles, but got his information from the Simon Peter so this book could have been called the Gospel of Peter. It begins with the announcement in verse 1:1 that the coming of Jesus, the Messiah, was good news and Jesus Himself proclaimed it to be so. He said, "The time has come!" Over the centuries, beginning with Abraham, the coming of this day had been promised by God in a covenant for all mankind. To facilitate the spreading of the gospel, God planned that Alexander the Great, in 350 B. C. would conquer Greece and the world would have a common language. It is no coincidence that the New Testament was written in Greek for all to read.

¹ All scripture is NIV unless otherwise indicated

Additionally, the Romans, as they conquered the known world, built roads and opened commerce everywhere they went. Therefore, God introduced a common language, understandable scriptures, a time of world peace, and open roads to provide the first information superhighway because Jesus was coming to introduce a new kingdom-- a new perspective -- called good news!

QUESTION: God prepared for Christ's arrival and message in many ways over the centuries. What other events can you think of in the Old Testament that were choreographed by Him for that purpose?

APPLICATION

Jesus talked about the Kingdom of God. Some of us grew up believing that the Kingdom of God would be experienced when we died and went to heaven, but that is not the good news that Jesus brings. He tells us that He has brought the Kingdom of God near to us. He is never far off – it is a kingdom of the **NOW** and not the future. It is an upside down kingdom where loving God and loving others is the ultimate priority.

QUESTION: What was your definition of "The Kingdom of God" before reading these scriptures?

QUESTION: How would you describe the kingdom of God now for an unbeliever?

We hear John the Baptist saying, "Repent and believe the good news!" This word repent simply means to change the direction of a life. We are all invited to be a part of this new kingdom if we will be honest with ourselves and declare that we are sinners in need of forgiveness and that we want our lives to change.

QUESTION: For those of you who have not received Jesus as your Lord and Savior, how are you reacting to the call to repent and experience a new and changed life? What do you think is holding you back from making this choice for Him?

Mark 1:16 begins the calling of Jesus' disciples. He called Peter and his brother Andrew and they respond immediately – they left everything behind, even the family fishing business, and followed. Then Jesus found and chose John and James, the brothers called the Sons of Thunder, and they, too, chose to follow the charismatic, powerful, loving God of the ages and enter a whole new life in His Kingdom. Notice that Jesus chose them personally and uniquely to impact the world on His behalf – their choice was to follow. Every other Rabbi would have said, "Change and you can follow me." Jesus says, "Follow me and you will change." This concept alone should change our relationship with Him.

QUESTION: Describe for us your perception of what it would have been like to be Peter, Andrew, James or John and hear Jesus say, "Follow Me!" What was it about Him that caused such an immediate choice to follow?

QUESTION: Jesus saw something in each one they themselves did not see. What is He seeing in you?

By the time Peter gives his account through Mark, James, his fishing pal has been martyred by Herod Agrippa and Peter is close to being sent to the upside down cross by Nero. Eight other disciples faced the same fate and would soon die by various horrible means. He may have asked the question, "Why is this good news for me?" In his Bible book, 1 Peter, he reminds us that "Jesus has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus from the dead."

The resurrection is the reason we believe today. Old Testament believers followed by faith, we follow because of the **fact** that God raised His Son from the dead. During the forty years that Jesus walked the earth after the resurrection, over five hundred witnesses testified that they had seen Jesus. Even Josephus, a first century historian, documents this truth. No other religion in the history of the world, can say that their god(s) defeated death.

QUESTION: Are you living your life like it is good news? What do you think it looks like to others?

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, thank You for the good news of Jesus. We pray for those who have heard Jesus' call to follow Him, and responded immediately, no questions asked. We also pray for those who have heard the call, but have not made up their minds about Him yet. Please bring the people around them who can tell their own stories of salvation and witness Jesus' love, mercy and grace. **This is the time!** In Jesus' name, Amen.



QUESTIONS

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QUESTION: What was your definition of "The kingdom of God" before reading these scriptures?

QUESTION: How would you describe the kingdom of God now for an unbeliever?

QUESTION: For those of you who have not received Jesus as your Lord and Savior, how are you reacting to John the Baptist's call to repent and experience a new and changed life? What do you think is holding you back from making this choice? What would you need to see or hear to help you make a choice for Him?

QUESTION: Describe for us your perception of what it would have been like to be Peter, Andrew, James or John and hear Jesus say, "Follow Me!" What was it about Him that caused such an amazing choice to follow?

QUESTION: Jesus saw something in each one they themselves did not see. What is He seeing in you?

QUESTION: Are you living your life like it is good news? What do you think it looks like to others?

QUESTIONS YOU MAY WANT TO ADD

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.