

Mark 1: 14-20.

14 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.'

16 As Jesus passed along the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake—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.

Commentary: Jesus begins his ministry with a message. What is the message (see vs. 15)? The kingdom of God is a spiritual place that Jesus wants us to enter, a place that will keep us safe and secure in a treacherous world. But how do we get there? Repent and believe in the good news. We have discussed repentance with John, but what is the good news? With Jesus the forgiveness of sins is not some future hope but a present possibility open to us now. The kingdom of God is near, so near that we can access it now.

Jesus not only preached the message. He immediately called people to come to him and follow him. By calling those first disciples, Jesus was calling, is calling, every individual to come to him. But in order to come to him and receive the kingdom of God, we must repent and open up ourselves before God. This process leads to a deeper state of peace based on the renewing experience that whoever we are and whatever we have done, we are forgiven, accepted, and loved deeply by the one who has formed us in the womb.

Questions: Can you accept this message? Will you heed Jesus' call to you today?

Prayer: Lord God, I want to come to you so that you can fill me with your renewing peace, and so that I can emanate this peace to all who come into contact with me. Help me to open up all to you ever more deeply so that your kingdom may be established in me ever more richly.  
Amen.