



**A BETTER
WORD**

THE GOSPEL OF MARK

A Study Through the Life of King Jesus | with Pastor Nick Gatzke

Jesus Enters the Ministry

Mark 1:14–20

THE BIG IDEA

The kingdom of God is at hand — and the way in is to repent, believe, and follow.

SERMON SUMMARY

The public ministry of Jesus begins with an arrest. John the Baptist is taken into custody just as Jesus steps forward, and that timing is no coincidence. John's suffering foreshadows Jesus' own arrest and death, and by extension the suffering of everyone who would carry this message afterward. The road of the gospel is not a road of comfort. And onto that road Jesus walks with a three-part announcement: the time is fulfilled, the kingdom of God is at hand, repent and believe the gospel.

For people living under the glory of Rome, the claim that another kingdom had arrived was staggering. Access to this new kingdom would come through repentance and belief — turning away from sin and turning toward God — two twins that always move together. Then Jesus walks the shore of Galilee and calls four fishermen. They respond immediately, they sacrifice greatly, they step into the unknown, and they receive a new mission: people. Admirers stand at a distance. Disciples follow.

DIGGING DEEPER

1. Mark notes that Jesus' ministry begins right after John is arrested (v. 14). What does that timing foreshadow about the road ahead — for Jesus, for the first-century church under, and for those who follow him today?
2. Jesus' announcement has three parts: the kingdom is at hand, repent, and believe (v. 15). How would you define the kingdom of God in your own words? What made that claim so provocative for people living under Caesar?
3. If repenting is turning away from sin, believing is turning toward God. Read Acts 16:31 and Romans 3:28. Why can these two never be separated — and why does Scripture insist that faith, not works, is what saves us?
4. Simon, Andrew, James, and John left their nets at once (vv. 18, 20). Four things marked their response: they answered immediately, they sacrificed, they entered the unknown, and they took on a new mission. Which of the four would be most costly for you?
5. Jesus promised to make them "fishers of men" (v. 17). If people are what matter most to God, then they should matter most to his followers too. What does that do to the way you have been measuring a successful life?

LIVING IT OUT

It is possible to be a distant follower of Jesus without ever being his disciple — to attend the lectures without ever becoming a student. Admirers stand at a distance and change nothing. Christ never asked for admirers. He asked for followers.

Heart Check: What has Jesus been calling you to that you keep putting off until tomorrow? Is there a sin you are holding onto because you love it, or a step of obedience — serving, giving, committing to a local church, being baptized — that you keep delaying?

This Week: Take the one step you have been postponing. Put it on the calendar this week, tell one person you are doing it, and do not move the date.

REFLECTION & PRAYER

“The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.”
— **Mark 1:15**

Thank God that his kingdom has come near to you — then ask him for the courage to stop admiring Jesus from a distance and to follow him without delay.

Your Prayer:

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