

Sunday Sermon: January 28, 2018

Sermon Text: Mark 1: 14-20

Sermon Theme: The Time Has Come

¹⁴ After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. ¹⁵ “The time has come,” he said. “The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!”

¹⁶ 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. ¹⁷ “Come, follow me,” Jesus said, “and I will make you fishers of men.” ¹⁸ At once they left their nets and followed him.

¹⁹ When he had gone a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John in a boat, preparing their nets. ²⁰ Without delay he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men and followed him.

It's time. These little words can mean many things to many people in many different situations. For the person entering surgery it can be a little scary to hear, *it's time*. For the pregnant couple, there can be both fear and anticipation when the doctor says, *it's time*. For the actor about to go on stage, there are nerves when they hear, *it's time*.

But *it's time* can also be very good. We are usually happy when we hear, *It's time for supper*. We are happy when *it's time* to open presents on Christmas morning. We are excited when *it's time* to head out the door for the long anticipated vacation.

Depending on what kind of situation you are in, *it's time* can be a very bad thing or a very good one.

In our sermon text for this morning Jesus says *it's time*. When he says, *The time has come*, this is the best news that sinful people like you and I could ever hear. These small words should fill us with joy and expectation. Our Savior is telling us that *it's time* for the Gospel to be spread to sinful people like you and me who need to hear it. Jesus shows us the time has come for the Gospel to be preached and for people to hear and believe it.

Many times, when we think about Jesus earthly life we probably think about Jesus preaching and teaching and being surrounded by huge crowds while he was doing miracles. This is very true of parts of Jesus' earthly life, but not all of it. Jesus' preaching and teaching ministry was actually a very small portion of his life, it was only about 3 years.

For 30 years, Jesus did not have large crowds following him, he did not preach and teach that he was the Savior, he did not do miracles to prove who he was. For 30 years, Jesus work was done fairly quietly without a lot of fanfare and celebration. During those first 30 years, Jesus was obediently following all of the Laws of God perfectly for us. For 30 years, no one knew that the Savior was on the earth already doing the work that was necessary to save them. That was because it was not yet time for Jesus to reveal himself as the Savior.

But it was not God's will that he would save the world in secret. The Old Testament prophecies proclaimed that the Messiah would come proclaiming the good news of forgiveness. The Old Testament promised that he would come with the power of God and would show the whole world that he was the one sent from God. The Old Testament told the people to wait and watch for the time because it would be clear that the Messiah had come.

God said that when it was time for the Savior to come, he would send a great prophet, like the prophets of old, who would preach with the power of God. We don't know how long John the Baptist was preaching and baptizing before Jesus earthly ministry began, but it was long enough that there were people who were listening to John, people who had been baptized for forgiveness because they knew the time of the Savior had come. It was also long enough that he had made some powerful enemies.

John was very clear that he was not the Savior. God did not want competing messengers, he wanted one unified message pointing to Jesus as the Savior. He wanted John to warm up the crowd, to get them ready, but then when the main attraction, Jesus, came, John would exit the stage and the light would be on Jesus alone.

And that is what happened. John was imprisoned and eventually put to death, but the message of the Savior did not die because *The time had come*. The time had come when the greater one would speak for himself, when he would share the good news of forgiveness and eternal life from his own lips and he would

prove to the people that he was the Messiah with his words and miracles. It was time for Jesus to get to work spreading the Gospel.

The first words that we hear Jesus speak in the Gospel of Mark have to do with the mission his Father sent him to do. *The Time Has Come*. It was time for Jesus to reveal himself to the world, not as a carpenter's son, but as the world's Savior.

Jesus' words are personal, it was time for him to begin his earthly ministry that would include public preaching and teaching. But they were also a call to the people, *the Time has Come: Repent and Believe*.

Repent and believe was a message that went back long before Jesus and John the Baptist. This was the loving, compassionate message of the God of the covenant from the Old Testament. Long before John ever called people at the Jordan, Moses was calling to the children of Israel with God's message that they should repent of their sins and follow God. Many of God's prophets called out with God's simple message Repent of your sins and believe in the true God. God's promise was always there that when the people saw their sins and turned from their sins in faith, their God was there with love and compassion and would forgive and give peace and eternal life.

It seemed so simple, but for sinful people, following God is anything but simple. The Old Testament Israelites had lives that were filled with sins. The people at Jesus' time has lives filled with sin and so do we.

Our lives are really not a whole lot different from theirs. They sinned in weakness and by choice, so do we. They sinned in thought, word and action, so do we. They sinned by not listening to God's Word, we do too. They sinned by taking God's forgiveness and love for granted, so do we. Finally they sinned, by not having any sorrow in their hearts over the sins that they had committed, and we have the same problem.

When Jesus said it is time, it was a call to sinful people with sinful hearts, that have been living with their sins too long. He calls out to us. Repent ---- examine your sinful hearts, See how sinful they really are. Turn from those sins that separate you from God and when you turn from them, hear the good news that he has for you. Your sins are forgiven do not live in them any longer.

Jesus doesn't want anyone to live in their sins and face eternal hell. Jesus wants all people to turn from their sins and believe in him.

Jesus has given us his Word to hear, read and study. This Word is just as powerful today as when Jesus said it almost 2000 years ago. That's because these words are not the words of men, they are the words of God. God's call and promises remain forever.

When Jesus said, The time has come, it showed that he would spread the Gospel to a sinful world that needed it, but it was also a call for people to hear and believe that Word. But it was also a call to the people that as they heard and believe that Word, they should respond by sharing the Gospel themselves.

Jesus did not try to do it all himself. He was not a micromanager of spreading the Gospel. Jesus knew that while he would begin the work of preaching and teaching, there would be a time when this work would need to continue without him. As Jesus preached and taught he was also training and equipping people to do the work of preaching and teaching so others could share the Gospel too.

Almost from the first day of his ministry, Jesus was bringing to himself people who would faithfully carry his Word to others. Last week we saw that Jesus called Phillip and Nathaniel to follow him, this week he calls Simon, Andrew, John and James to be fishers of men. These men would see firsthand what Jesus had done and would be witnesses of all that Jesus had done.

As fishers of men, their job was not to net each individual fish, instead they were to cast the nets of the Gospel far and wide through their faithful words and lives and trust that God would bring the fish to them.

God has always equipped and trained his people for service, some for private ministry, others for public ministry. He has given us the Holy Spirit who works faith in Jesus. This is the most powerful tool in God's arsenal to spread the Word.

Still, even though we are equipped as they were, it is easy to think that we are not on the same level with men like Elisha, the disciples, and Paul and Barnabas. We get intimidated by what God allowed them to do and we think we can't or couldn't do the same.

God equipped those men in the same way that he has equipped you. God did not choose these men because they had special skills or special knowledge. God chose them because they had faith in him. Elisha did not go to a Seminary, he was plowing in the fields. The disciples were not college level professors, they

were fishermen. God used what they had, a love for their Savior and a heart of thanks for the forgiveness they had. The Holy Spirit worked in their hearts a love for souls that needed Jesus.

That is also how God has chosen you and me. Jesus has equipped us with the same gifts he gave to these men, he gives us faith which believes, minds that can think and the Holy Spirit to help us along the way. Then he makes our job clear. Go and tell others what I have done. The time has come. The time is now.

Jesus says, "it's time." It's time for the Gospel to be preached to the world. As he preached the Gospel the people heard it and believed and as they believed they were moved to tell other about this Savior. May God work in us a faith which believes this good news and is ready to share this wonderful news of a Savior.