

## Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> January 2021 – Bulwell United Reformed Church

In this Sunday's reading, Mark 1.14-20, John's work is done and Jesus' ministry begins in Galilee, a region where Jews and Gentiles lived. Jesus proclaims that the kingdom of God has come near and calls four fishermen to follow him and become fishers of all people. *A short service for personal communion focusing on confessing Jesus is Lord is included. Please have your bread & wine/juice ready.*

### **Call to worship**

Let us come from our everyday and our routine  
and meet with God – the one who made us,  
and who gave us our daily bread  
through the week just gone.

### **A prayer of confession**

Lord Jesus, once John was arrested  
you knew the time was right  
for you to step up and preach with urgency.  
Forgive us when we hold back  
from that which we know we are called to,  
and grant us courage, humility, trust,  
and an awareness of your presence with us  
in all we do and say.

**Amen.**

**Our Father who art in heaven...**

**Song**            **I, the Lord of sea and sky - The Arundel & Brighton Diocesan Singers.**

[\(335\) I, the Lord of Sea and Sky \(Here I Am, Lord\) \[with lyrics for congregations\] - YouTube](#)

**Mark 1:14-20 - Jesus announces the good news.**

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

**Jesus calls his first disciples**

<sup>16</sup> 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. <sup>17</sup> 'Come, follow me,' Jesus said, 'and I will send you out to fish for people.' <sup>18</sup> At once they left their nets and followed him.



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

### **The Call on our lives – Mark 1: 14-20**

Jesus' ministry starts with the proclamation of the good news of God, the gospel. The content of this message was that God's kingdom was near, i.e., fast approaching, almost here, and so people had to prepare for it by repenting and believing in the good news. God's kingdom should be interpreted as God's reign, for the word used here for 'kingdom' refers more to a dominion, the power to reign, than to a specific place.

The Kingdom of God, then, is not a geographical kingdom but can simply be defined as the rule and reign of God in the hearts and lives of his followers. The teaching and parables of Jesus illuminate the kingdom and his deeds illustrate the kingdom – the compassion, love forgiveness, grace, mercy, healings and miracles.

Nearly all of Jesus parables were about the kingdom of God (or Heaven according to Matthew). The kingdom of God is like a mustard seed or a pearl of great price. It's about something precious I will give my all for and something that grows, has influence and renews individuals and society.

This is why there is immediacy about Jesus' call that led Simon, Andrew, James, John, and others to leave their homes and families to follow Jesus. There was something remarkably compelling about Jesus to cause these and others to follow him into an uncertain future.

The twelve persons Jesus called to be his companions were ordinary men. As far as we can tell, Jesus didn't do background checks to determine IQ levels, financial acumen, professional skills, or temple education. He picked people probably much like you and me. Furthermore, his disciples were anything but perfect. Many times they misunderstood him. They often hesitated to follow him. Judas betrayed him and Peter denied him. But these would be the persons who would continue Jesus' work on earth after he left — ordinary people, like you and me. They were called.

Every one of the disciples was chosen and called personally by Jesus. We believe that God calls each one of us - those of us who know the rule and reign of God in our hearts because we have found Him through Jesus and know love and forgiveness. This is something so precious it brings us peace, spiritual wholeness and eternal promise. It is that precious thing that Jesus talks of in his parables. In response, we commit ourselves to a life of faith and we trust that our lives of discipleship and deeds with others in the church – the agent of the kingdom - will have a profound and dynamic effect in my community and society at large. This is surely what we are about at our church and indeed what any church will be striving towards.

In the Lord's Prayer we pray, 'Your kingdom come...' Let's not do this by rote but with a clear vision of the powerful dynamic of the kingdom of God. He will surely honour us. As a famous prayer says:

*Christ has no body now on earth but yours.  
Yours are the only hands with which he can do his work,  
yours are the only feet with which he can go about the world.  
Yours are the only eyes through which his compassion  
can shine forth upon a troubled world.  
Christ has no body now on earth but yours.*

### **A prayer of intercession**

Ever-loving God, we come before you  
to pray for our world and its people.

We pray for those who govern around the world,  
for those who have power over others,  
that they might use their position to bring about peace  
and an equal sharing of resources,  
and to reconcile those who are divided  
by war, race or creed.

We pray for those who take the message of the gospel  
into the communities around them.  
Give them a sensitivity towards those with whom they share,  
and may they know your presence and power.

We pray for those for whom life is a struggle each day,  
for those who do not know where the next meal is coming from,  
for those who do not know if they will have work this week,  
for those who are ill, in pain or are lonely,  
for those for whom the light at the end of the tunnel seems a long way off.

*Please add your prayers for others you wish to pray for today . . .*

Loving God, who each day brings forth new life and new hope,  
may those for whom we pray know your presence with them,  
may your care and healing power surrounding them,  
not only this day but everyday.

**Amen.**

**Song            All I once held dear – Robin Mark**

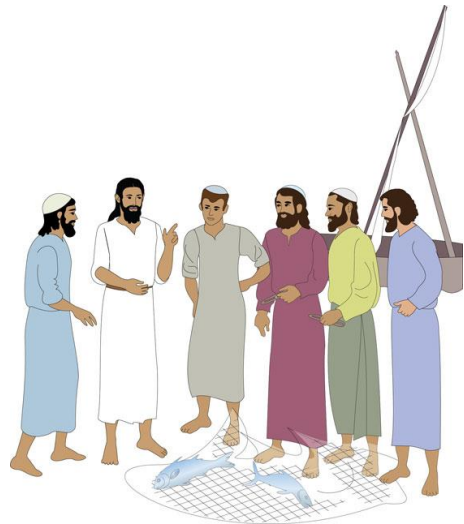
[\(335\) All I once held dear - Robin Mark - YouTube](#)

### **HOLY COMMUNION**

Jesus was often a guest.  
He shared many meals with his friends,  
and they long remembered his words at the table.  
Though some disapproved of the company he kept,



Jesus ate and drank with all kinds of people  
and showed everyone the love of God.  
Wherever people met together  
Jesus was glad to be welcomed and to be fed.  
Today, we are the guests of Jesus.  
He welcomes us,  
whoever we are and whatever we bring,  
and he will feed us at his table.  
Old or young, rich or poor, joyful or in sorrow,  
Jesus invites us  
to share bread and wine with him,  
to remember the story of his life and death,  
and to celebrate his presence with us today.  
On the night before he died,  
Jesus shared a meal with twelve of his disciples  
in an upstairs room in Jerusalem.  
The Gospel writer tells us what happened that night.



### **The Story of the Lord's Supper**

While they were eating, he took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to them, and said, 'Take; this is my body'. Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them, and all of them drank from it. He said to them, 'This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many. Truly, I tell you, I will never again drink the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God.'

**Mark 14: 22-25**

We are the friends and disciples of Jesus today.  
He invites us to break bread together,  
to remember him and to pray that God's  
Kingdom will come.

### **Prayer after communion**

Let us pray. Loving God, you have fed us generously at this table, as we have remembered Jesus and rejoiced that he is with us today. We are ready now to follow him, and to be your people in the world. May your Holy Spirit show us the way, make us holy and fill us with love. **Amen**

### **Blessing**

The blessing of God be upon us,  
the One who loves us,  
the Christ who calls us,  
the Spirit who makes us holy,  
today and always. **Amen**



