



## Mark 1.14-45: The Kingdom of God

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**<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 is near. Repent and believe the good news!’**  
Why is the news good? What kind of king is he? What kind of kingdom does he rule?

### Responding to the King v16-20

The disciples already knew Jesus, but even so, this was a call to a drastic commitment. They were leaving their familiar work and venturing into the unknown. In Lk 14.33 Jesus said: **In the same way, any of you who does not give up everything he has cannot be my disciple.** That is repentance in the deepest sense, turning from our self-determination. Coming into the kingdom is not an add-on goodie to our existing way of life. It involves a belief which implies a new and total commitment. Still today this sort of repentance is the basic requirement if we are to follow the King: But how encouraging that Jesus called ordinary working people - fishermen - those who were of no account in the spiritual hierarchy of the day. Anybody willing can be a servant of the King.

### The authority and power of the King v21-28

He started by teaching, because that was their most fundamental need. People need to know the facts before deciding what their response to the King is to be. Teaching the Word of God is an absolutely basic requirement if we want to draw men and women into the kingdom of God. There were people in that synagogue with all sorts of needs, but Jesus didn't begin by healing, he began by preaching. And with an authority that amazed the people. He brought the good news that there is another King and another kingdom, dramatically demonstrating the power and blessing of that kingdom by casting a demon out of a man. It showed the power of the King over the Prince of this world (Jn12.37, 14.30 and 16.11). There is no more extreme example of a person subject to the Prince of this world than someone possessed by a demon. But the response of the congregation was 'gee whiz!' The kind of belief needed to enter the kingdom involves a fundamental change, not just intellectual acceptance. There are people who admire Jesus and respect him but... Jas 2.19 **You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that - and shudder.** We need to believe in the way the disciples believed, a way that has real and lasting consequences for us. The tragedy of Capernaum was that there was amazement and recognition of the authority of Jesus – but that was all. Note Mt 11.23.

### The King's compassion v29-34

The healed woman is instructive because she immediately begins to serve. Like the disciples, there was no delay in her response. But there was good news for all those in need v32, not just friends or family. Can you imagine the demands emotionally and spiritually of a massive session of healing and exorcism which, because of the Sabbath, didn't start until after 6pm? It was costly compassion.

### **The priorities of the King v35-39**

He must have been exhausted, but Jesus considered prayer to be so important that he rose early and went where he could be undisturbed, probably quite a long way away. If he needed to pray that much, shouldn't we make prayer a pretty high priority as individuals and as a church in our daily and weekly programme? And Jesus got straight on with his preaching plans. The emphasis is not on healing but on preaching **so that I can preach there also. That is why I have come.**' Rom 10.17 we need to be told before we can respond.

### **The King's authority is rejected v40-45**

What a good start! The man came in humility and in faith. He gives us an excellent example of how to approach the King in prayer and worship. Jesus healed the man but followed this with a commandment v43. He tells the healed man to go to the religious authorities and obey the commandment of Moses see Mt 23.2. The man's testimony could have been such a positive thing with the religious authorities. But he gave way to his own overpowering impulse to broadcast what had happened to him v45. Jesus' preaching plans were upset and he was forced to live in the wilderness, no doubt in considerable discomfort. The King knows best and we must obey him. In 1 Thess 2.12 Paul describes his ministry to the early Christians like this: **...encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory.** And he still calls us into his kingdom today.