

Apostles Houston
Life Group Study: Mark 1:14-20

Love and Laughter

Creating a Sacred Space

Welcome→ Embrace→ Refresh

Remembering Our Purpose

Why Do We Do Life Groups? *(feel free to communicate this in your own words)*

In Acts 2, we read how early Christ followers devoted themselves to the apostles' teachings, to fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and to prayer. In Life Groups we follow their example with the hope of becoming more like Jesus, the goal of our salvation.

Being Known

Story Telling

We believe that loving God and others begins by being known.

In 5-7 minutes, what do you want us to know about yourself (~5Hs)?

Pray and Celebrate

Be sure to honor whatever is good or beautiful about their story, and ask one or two people to pray over those who just shared.

Following Up

Responding to God's Word

Last week, we were encouraged to pray each day for God to reveal Himself to us, and to obey whatever he said. How did that go? How was your experience with this practice?

Hearing the Word

Hearing: (Read "Context" and then Mark 1: 14-20. Then pray for God's grace to understand.)

- Before we dive in, what are some big themes that stand out to you as significant in this passage? Or from the sermon this past weekend?
- In vv. 14-15, Jesus says that the gospel (good news) is that "the kingdom of God is at hand," meaning, through Christ, God has returned to set up his rule over the world. What did that look like for God's people, then? What does it mean for us, today? What would the proper response look like in our own lives?
- In vv. 16-20, Jesus begins calling disciples to follow him, saying that he would make them "fishers of people" (an allusion to Jeremiah 16.16-17). On one hand, this can be understood as a call to winsomely invite people into the life of the church. On the other, it's a call to "warn" people about a forthcoming judgment if they do not repent (per the Jeremiah allusion). Why are both of these approaches important? Thinking back on your story, which message motivated you?
- Notice, when Jesus calls the disciples, they are already fully employed as fishermen. Yet, they understand the call to follow Jesus to be one of complete abandonment, so they do so *immediately*. Why is the call to follow Jesus so totalizing? How has the call of Jesus been costly in your life?

Obeying (application):

- As God continues to call us to Himself, consider what else you need to leave behind in order to follow him more fully? What "nets" (good or bad) stand between you and God's call on your life? In your quiet time this week, spend time asking God to reveal this to you. And, taking inspiration from the disciples, practice responding *immediately*.

Soul Care

Prayer Requests

As people share their needs, pause and ask for a volunteer to lift that need up when we begin praying. Depending on the size of your group, decide if it is best to split up or pray as a group.

Announcements

- Next Week: Meal Night!

Teacher's Notes

Context

As we return to our study of the life and ministry of Jesus, this week will focus on the beginning of Jesus' ministry, as he began preaching and calling disciples. As you read, it will be helpful to remember that the Jewish people were living under the oppressive rule of Rome at this time, and that they were awaiting God to send the Messiah to deliver them from evil. For context, this passage is situated between Jesus' baptism and wilderness showdown with Satan on one end, and several encounters with demonic forces on the other. As you read, notice common themes like "gospel," and "fishers of men," and how they are used in this passage to illustrate what it looks like to follow Jesus. Finally, one of Mark's favorite words in this gospel is the word, "immediately." He uses it twice in this passage, nine times in chapter one, and 36 times overall. Consider the frequency of this word and what Mark is trying to communicate through it.

Specific Insights

- As the people of God were awaiting the Messiah to set them free from Rome's oppression, they would have originally heard this as the "good news" that God was finally going to do just that. However, as the context suggests, Jesus had not come just to set them free from Rome, but from the dark forces that animated Rome, and even their own evil inclinations. As such, the arrival of the kingdom, the life and ministry of Jesus, meant that God was calling everyone, Jews and Gentiles, individuals and institutions, to abandon their former ways of life, and to follow Jesus into the life of the kingdom.
- Both messages are important because they are two sides of the same coin. In Christ, God has launched *new creation* and is inviting *everyone* to join him in bringing it about. It will be the realization of every pure desire our hearts have ever longed for, and should be proclaimed as such (good news!) Nevertheless, to resist *new creation*, is to set ourselves up as enemies of God, in danger of judgment. And overtime, as we lose the ability to hear the winsome call, we need to be *awakened* by the sober reminder that God will judge the world one day, sending into exile (for good) those who refuse to follow and obey. Both messages are true and important. Both are part of the good news that God's kingdom has come at last, and is still coming.
- The calling of Christ is so complete and totalizing, because the world he is creating is so radically different from the one we presently live in. In his world, the first are last, and the last are first. And those who would lead must be the servant of all. Even what it means to be family—brothers and sisters, sons and daughters—is different in God's *new creation*. And it can only be entered into by a total abandonment of the life we have formerly known..