

## English Bible Study: Mark 1: 14-20;

### Introduction:

Many people say that we do not need the Gospel of Mark. It only has 16 chapters. Most of the stories in Mark's Gospel are in the other Gospels. Matthew includes more details and Luke is "a better writer". So do we need to read the Gospel of Mark? The answer is "yes". In these studies over the next few weeks, we will see some of the themes that Mark emphasises. In fact, Mark is VERY important, because he makes us see new things. We should note that Mark writes in simple, everyday Greek. That means, he writes so that ordinary people can understand what he is saying. He is not writing for scholars or people who have had a lot of education. Perhaps Mark was writing for a special purpose. Someone who could read would read his Gospel out loud in Church. Then, people who could not read, and perhaps had never been to school, could hear and understand the Gospel. However, we should not think that Mark's Gospel is "simple", even though the language style is simple. Mark tells some important things that we need to think deeply about. Mark in this passage makes us think about the Kingdom of God"

### Notes:

1. In verse 15, Jesus says "*The time has come.*" These words do not appear in Matthew (chapter 4) or Luke (Chapter 5). Mark here emphasises (i) the time to make a decision about the Gospel has come. (ii) The Kingdom of God has arrived and (iii) you must change your minds and hearts.
2. *Repent*: from the Greek word *metanoia* to change one's mind. In psychology, *metanoia* means to reconstruct your mind and thought in a positive and healthy way after a mental breakdown.
3. "*At once*" (v.18) and "*without delay*" (v.20); Marks stresses the point that the disciples immediately follow Jesus without any questions.

### Questions

1. Why do you think that Simon, Andrew, James and John simply drop their nets and follow Jesus? Do you think they had heard Jesus before?
2. When Jesus says "the time has come", what do you think he means?
3. A Russian atheist astronaut flew far out into space. He said he did not see God or Heaven and so neither exists. Was he right? What should a Christian say? When Jesus says; "the Kingdom of God is near", what does he mean?
4. What does it mean to change your minds and hearts? What causes people to do this?
5. Jesus says that the disciples will now catch people like they caught fish. How do expert fishermen catch fish? How should we catch people?

### Conclusion

Jesus announces the Good News that the Kingdom of God has arrived. We see God's Kingdom in the love and grace of Jesus Christ. But in a way, "the Good News" is also "challenging news." The time has come for us to make a decision. Like the disciples, we need to decide whether we will follow Jesus or not. The disciples follow Jesus because they hear the power and grace in his call and in his voice. They know this is a special person and so they leave everything immediately to follow him. Mark constantly stresses

this point. Jesus is the Son of God and we should follow him too. However, everyone responds to the call of Jesus in different ways and we must be careful not to force anyone to follow us in OUR way.