

## ***"Repent, Believe, Follow"***

***Mark 1:14–20***

***Darren Johnson***

### **Background**

Join us on Sunday as we jump into week four of our sermon series, “Jesus is Good News”. We’ll be exploring Mark 1:14–20 where Mark captures Jesus’ opening words as he begins his ministry. It is here, at the very beginning, where we see Jesus’ tying the good news or “gospel” to the immediacy of the kingdom of God’s availability right there in front of them; in the person of Jesus himself. What we will see on Sunday is that the good news of the kingdom of God solicits three responses from those who hear or who encounter this kingdom; repent, believe, and follow. Take some time before Sunday to reflect on those three responses. What has been your experience of repentance, belief, and following Jesus? How might those three responses be an hourly, daily, or weekly response of our will on a consistent basis? See you Sunday!

### **Sermon Text *Mark 1:14-20***

*<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!”*

*<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.*

### **Discussion Questions**

#### **1. Preparation**

- What is one thing you hoped to talk about today/tonight?
- What question(s) did you come away with from the sermon?
- What is the best thing you heard on Sunday?

#### **2. Sunday Questions:**

##### **1. The Embodiment of the Gospel**

The sermon states that the gospel is not merely a set of truth statements about our spiritual condition or a mechanism for how God rescues us. Instead, Pastor Darren asserts that the good news is a real person—Jesus himself—and that everything he says, does, and embodies *is* the gospel.

- **Discussion Question:** How does viewing the gospel as a living person alter your relationship with faith compared to viewing it primarily as a list of doctrines, rules, or theological propositions? What does it look like to "see the gospel in person" in our everyday interactions?

## 2. The "Wash, Rinse, Repeat" of the Soul

Pastor Darren uses the metaphor of physical showering—referencing a mission trip where a week without a shower made it difficult to even lather his hair—to illustrate how our souls require constant attention. He notes that repentance and belief are not "one-and-done" events, but ongoing, daily, and even hourly realities.

- **Discussion Question:** Why do you think believers are easily tempted to view repentance and belief as routine, past events rather than continuous lifestyles? Practically speaking, what does an "hourly or daily" cycle of repentance and belief look like in the midst of a busy, modern schedule?

## 3. The Availability of the Kingdom vs. Legalism

The manuscript highlights a historical context where religious systems skewed the truth of God by teaching legalism and a lifeless faith (e.g., believing God only loves you when you do right, or that sickness equals God's displeasure). In contrast, the sermon uses Dallas Willard's perspective to show that the Beatitudes are not instructions to earn blessings, but proof that God's rule is available to people in circumstances completely beyond human hope.

- **Discussion Question:** In what ways do we still see modern versions of the legalistic mindset that says "God only loves you when you do what is right"? How does Jesus' announcement that the Kingdom of God has "come near" to the broken and hurting fundamentally change how we view our own failures and life circumstances?

## 4. The Interconnected Flow of Repentance, Belief, and Following

The sermon breaks down three responses to the good news: *repentance* (willfully turning away from sin and the idolatry of self) , *belief* (the action of turning toward and actively pursuing Jesus' ways) , and *following* (the natural end result of the first two where we look to Jesus as our standard of life).

- **Discussion Question:** The speaker notes that these three concepts naturally flow together rather than being strictly itemized. What happens to our spiritual walk if we try to "follow" Jesus without genuinely repenting of self-worship, or if we try to "believe" without physically moving in a new direction?

## 5. Navigating Pride and the Divine "GPS"

Using the illustration of getting lost in a golf cart on Isla Mujeres, Pastor Darren admits that despite having a GPS, his own pride caused him to argue with the directions and head north when he thought he was going south. He links this to how sin subtly takes us off track, requiring us to give up, turn around, and submit to the Holy Spirit's directions.

- **Discussion Question:** Why is human pride such a powerful force in keeping us moving in the wrong direction, even when our spiritual "GPS" (the Spirit/Scripture) tells us we are off track? What does it practically look like to "resign oneself to the mistake" and submit to Jesus' directions when you firmly believe your own perspective is right?