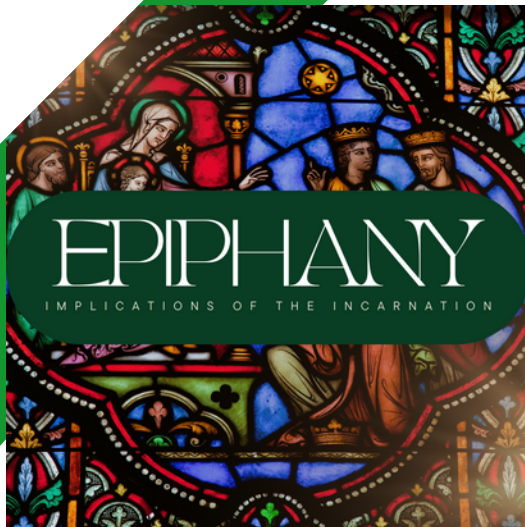
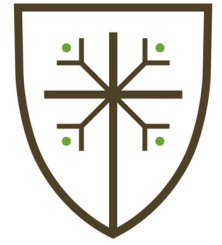


SERMON NOTES



January 21, 2024

SERMON INFO

TITLE

"Heeding the Call"

PREACHER

Rev. Brent Baker

TEXTS

Jonah 3:1-5, 10

1 Corinthians 7:29-31

Mark 1:14-20

DISCUSSION QUESTION

1. What are the things in your life that keep you from answering the urgent call of Jesus? Or that tempt you to put it off for later?
2. Where are the places you frequent that you feel called to "fish for men" as Jesus says in Mark?

SERMON IN SUMMARY

The word "Epiphany" literally means "to reveal" or "make known." And this week's gospel passage shows Jesus doing just that, making himself known and calling people to follow him. Jesus' first words recorded here are "the time has come" and his first act is to go to ordinary men and call them to himself. In his sermon this week, Brent looked at three characteristics of Jesus' call here and his call to us – it is urgent, disruptive, and, finally, dignifying.

Urgent

One of the features of the gospel of Mark is that it highlights the urgency of Jesus' mission on earth. Jesus calls his first disciples to come now and they do. Mark records that they follow immediately, dropping everything that they are doing. When Jesus comes, it is suddenly and when he calls, it is urgent. So many of us put off the call for later, but Epiphany opens our eyes to the fact that God has already intervened in the world. God is here with us calling us to follow him now, not later and fully, not half-heartedly. We tend to practice our religion cautiously, with an overarching restraint so as not to offend or disturb – in order not to be labeled as "those Christians." But Jesus tells us in Mark that "the time has come." Heaven has broken into earth now. And there is no time for, and no such thing as, part-time discipleship.

Disruptive

Jesus' call is not only urgent but it also disrupts the lives of those he calls. First, he interrupts Simon and Andrew working. And then, he interrupts James and John with their father, carrying on the family business. By disrupting the two things that are generally seen as the most important areas of life – work and family – Jesus claims what he has to offer is better, more important. Jesus' call is intended to reorient life around something greater.

Jesus not only disrupts the lives of the disciples. His call to these ordinary men to follow him as their rabbi disrupts the whole system of rabbinic education. Students were supposed to ask to follow a rabbi, teachers of great reputation. But here, Jesus calls ordinary people, fishermen who weren't even seeking a rabbi, through whom he will do world-altering things.

Dignifying

The good news? Jesus enhances everything he disrupts. His call is urgent, and it is likely disruptive, but it is a call to share in his life. Those who answer the call to follow him, like the wise men with whom we began the season, return home changed, return home by a different way from how they came.

Finally, Jesus' call to follow him is also a call for us to become fishers of men just as he was. To start exactly where he has placed you with the heart intention of fishing for others to lead them to him.