

Mark 1:14-15 Discussion Guide

TEXT - Read Mark 1:9-13 (ESV) **Jesus Begins His Ministry**

14 Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, 15 and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.”

- What sticks out to you in this text? Any questions that come up?
- What is going on in this text (summarize the main points)? What is the context for the text?
- Are there OT references in this text? If so, how do the NT writers interpret this text?
- How does this text connect with the Gospel? What Gospel themes do you see in the text?

THEOLOGY - What do we learn about God from this text?

- What attributes or aspects of the character and nature of God do you see in these passages? What else can we learn about God from the text? Take a moment to list these out together.

LIFE

- The Jews would have understood that their long-awaited time of rescue was being proclaimed by Jesus. From what do you need to be rescued today?
- King Jesus announces that His kingdom is now at hand. What part of your little “kingdom” do you find it most challenging to give up?
- Jesus calls first for repentance. Do you find His call offensive? If so, why? How do you live a life of continual repentance?
- Jesus doesn’t say believe in God here. He is saying believe God. What has God said in His Word that you have the most trouble believing?

PRAYER

- Pray in response to what God revealed to you in this text. If there is sin, confess it to him in prayer. If there is a need, petition God in prayer. If there is encouragement, praise God and share with others.
- What is one personal need you have that we can pray for you as a group?
- Pray for one friend, family member, or coworker with who you want to share the love of Jesus with.

Commentary on Mark 1:14-15

Overview:

1. Everything that is done is according to a plan laid by the Divine wisdom, and never performed till the time appointed was *filled up*.
2. That the kingdom and reign of sin are to be destroyed, and the *kingdom of grace* and *heaven* established in their place.
3. That the kingdom of God, and his reign by grace, begins with *repentance* for past sins.
4. That this reign of grace is *at hand*; and that nothing but an obstinate perseverance in sin and impenitence can keep any soul out of it; and that now is the accepted time to enter in.

v. 14 After John was put in prison: There is a detailed description of John's fate in prison in [Mark 6:17-28](#).

Jesus came to Galilee: Jesus spent most of His time in the region of **Galilee**, usually only going up to Jerusalem for the appointed feasts. Galilee was a large, populated area north of Judea and Jerusalem, where Jews and Gentiles lived together, though usually in their own distinct cities.

Galilee was not a small backwater region. According to the ancient Jewish historian Josephus, Galilee was an area of about 60 by 30 miles and had 204 villages, with none less than 15,000 people. This means there were more than 3 million people in the extended region.

Preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God: Jesus was a *preacher* and He brought the message of God's rule on earth, though not in the manner that was popularly expected or desired. Most people wanted a political kingdom that would replace the oppressive occupation of the Romans.

Contrary to the expectations of most people in His day, Jesus brought a kingdom of love, not subjugation; of grace, not law; of humility, not pride; for all men, not only the Jews; to be received voluntarily by man, not imposed by force.

The Gospel of Mark – and the rest of this chapter – will stress the *work* of Jesus and His wonderful miracles. But with this opening statement, Mark reminds us that the focus of Jesus' ministry was **preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God**. Jesus was a preacher who did wonderful miracles, not a miracle worker who sometimes preached.

v. 15 Saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand": When Jesus preached the **gospel of the kingdom of God**, He wanted people to know that it was *near* – as close as your **hand**. It wasn't as distant or as dreamy as they had imagined. Now was the time for them to encounter **the kingdom of God**.

The time is fulfilled: There are two ancient Greek words that can be translated *time*. One is *chronos*, meaning simple chronological time. The other is *kairos*, meaning “the strategic opportunity, the decisive time.” Jesus used this second word when He said, “**the time is fulfilled.**” His idea was, “The strategic time for the kingdom of God is now. Now is your time of opportunity. Don’t let it pass you by.”

Saying... “Repent”: When Jesus preached the **gospel of the kingdom of God**, He wanted people to know what entering that kingdom was like. They could not enter the kingdom going the same way they had been going. They had to *change their direction* to experience **the kingdom of God**.

Some people think that repentance is mostly about *feelings*, especially feeling sorry for your sin. It is wonderful to feel sorry about your sin, but **repent** isn’t a “feelings” word. It is an *action* word. Jesus told us to make a change of the mind, not merely to feel sorry for what we have done. Repentance speaks of a change of direction, not a sorrow in the heart.

Repentance does not describe something we must do *before* we come to God; it describes what coming to God is like. If you are in New York, and I tell you to come to Los Angeles, I don’t really need to say “Leave New York and come to Los Angeles.” To come to Los Angeles *is* to leave New York, and if I haven’t left New York, I certainly can’t come to Los Angeles. We can’t come to the **kingdom of God** unless we leave our sin and the self-life.

Saying... “Believe”: When Jesus preached the **gospel of the kingdom of God**, He wanted people to know what it was like to live in the kingdom. The kingdom Jesus preached was not just about a moral renewal. It was about trusting God, taking Him at His word, and living a relationship of dependence on Him.

The ancient Greek word Jesus used for **believe** (*pisteuo*) means much more than knowledge or agreement in the mind. It speaks of a relationship of trust and dependence.

“There are many people who believe the Gospel, but they do not believe *in* it. It was an appeal not only to accept it as an intellectually accurate statement; but to rest in it, to repose in it. It was a call to let the heart find ease in it.” (Morgan)