



24 - 30 January 2021 Do something different

Related Bible reading(s): Mark 1.14-20

Bible study on Mark 1.14-20

This study can be used by a small family/ household group, or by an online group, or – sometimes with a little adaptation - by an individual.

See our [Guidelines for a weekly Bible study](#)

Begin with an opening prayer

Loving Lord,
thank you that you meet us where we are,
in the middle and muddle of our daily tasks.
Help us to hear your call,
to recognise your voice,
and to respond to your invitation
to be with you now.

Amen.

Read the passage

Consider different ways to read the text. For example, hearing it in more than one version of the Bible.

In an online group, you could share parts between those present, or use/adapt this week's Share the Word suggestion: Use the Jump to this week's menu on the right to go to Share the Word and scroll down to find the Gospel reading.

Explore and respond to the text

Start by reading the Bible notes below. You may want to read them more than once, or pause after each paragraph to reflect on what you have read.

Bible notes

If there is one phrase that characterises Mark, it is 'and immediately'. It's found twice in this short reading alone, and it reflects the urgency of sharing the gospel as widely as possible. The time is now! Jesus expresses this in the first words he speaks in this Gospel. The word used for time (v.15) is *kairos*, which means 'the right time' or even 'crisis moment'. Jesus' verbs pick up on the same urgency: 'is fulfilled', 'has come near'. He has a crucial message to share. God's kingdom is about to dawn! So, he invites people to change their way of life, picking up on John the baptizer's message (1.4), and put their trust in the good news, the work that God is doing in and through him. There is an undercurrent of tension contributing to the urgency. Mark introduced us to John as the forerunner. Now we learn that John has been arrested (v.14). How long will Jesus have before he suffers the same fate?

Jesus' urgent words are illustrated by his call to the disciples and their unhesitating response. There are vivid images: Simon and Andrew casting their net, then letting it fall to follow Jesus. They abandon the net, which has been their means of making a living, and they let go of their well-honed skill in using it. James and John leave their father in the boat – how would he have reacted to the loss of his two sons and their economic contribution to the family? These instantaneous decisions had difficult consequences for many. Ched Myers comments that the first step in radical discipleship is to overturn the socio-economic position of the disciples.

The disciples are embarking on a new way of life. Jesus' invitation to change is vividly expressed: 'Come behind me', he says, and gives us an image of this little group making their way behind their new leader to start fishing for people. They had no idea where the journey would take them, but it was the beginning of something radically different.

Reflection

Spend a few moments thinking about what stands out for you from the Bible reading. This idea may help.

People change direction in life frequently today. Almost no one has a job for life any more; many people have several careers. What does it feel like to retrain and begin a new line of work? Is it exciting, scary or both? How does this experience relate to the story of the disciples abandoning their careers in fishing and following Jesus? Is this a life choice the disciples make, or a response to being chosen by Jesus? What difference does it make if you believe that you're answering a call from God?

Questions for reflection

You may wish to use these questions and the picture to help you think about or discuss issues arising from this week's Bible passage.



- What do you feel about the idea that you are chosen by Jesus?
- What is it about Jesus that would make you want to say, 'yes'?
- What might make you hesitate in your response to Jesus?

A simple worship activity

Pray for the week ahead.

Display a calendar or diary and turn to the page for the previous week. Invite people to recall again the past week (see Gather). Was there any place or time where you felt that you ignored or dismissed God speaking to you?

Now turn the calendar/diary to the week ahead. Invite people to look ahead and think about people that they will have contact with in the coming week. What problems, anxieties or worries might you be facing? What might stop you from hearing God's voice?

Gather these thoughts together and offer them in prayer.

Use the Jump to this week's menu on the right to go to more activities in Explore and respond

Prayer

Adapt to your local context.

We thank you, Lord, for all these blessings caught in your net of good news.

Thank you for the changes you have brought about in our lives, and the difference you continue to make as we follow and learn from you.

Thank you that you never ask us to go beyond our capabilities.

Thank you for the many blessings we receive when we follow through on what you ask of us.

May we be a blessing to others in your name, by spreading the good news.

Amen.

*Use the Jump to this week's menu on the right to find more prayers, including up-to-date intercessions in **The week in focus.***

A prayer to end the Bible study

Loving Lord,
thank you that you meet us where we are,
in the middle and muddle of our daily lives.
Help us to hear your call,
to recognise your voice,
and to respond to your invitation
to follow you whatever we might be doing.
Amen.

Go with God 24/7

Encourage everyone to put their faith into action.

Set an alarm for the day/time on the slip of paper you had at the end of today's worship. When the alarm sounds, consciously and deliberately listen for Jesus' voice speaking to you in that moment. If you can, share your insights when you meet next Sunday.

*Encourage everyone to explore their faith this week with the **ROOTS at home** resource.*