

"The kingdom of God is at hand"

Reading 1: Jon 3:1-5, 10
 Reading 2: 1 Cor 7:29-31

Responsorial Psalm: Ps: 24:4-9
 Gospel : Mark 1:14-20

Gospel Reading: Matthew 16:21-27

Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent, and believe in the gospel." And passing along by the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew the brother of Simon casting a net in the sea; for they were fishermen. And Jesus said to them, "Follow me and I will make you become fishers of men." And immediately they left their nets and followed him. And going on a little farther, he saw James the son of Zebedee and John his brother, who were in their boat mending the nets. And immediately he called them; and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants, and followed him.

Meditation:

What is the Gospel of God which Jesus came to preach? The word "gospel" literally means "good news". When a king had good news to deliver to his subjects he sent messengers or heralds throughout the land to make a public announcement - such as the birth of a newborn king or the victory over an invading army or occupied force. God sent his prophets to announce the coming of God's anointed King and Messiah. After Jesus was baptized in the River Jordan and anointed by the Spirit he begins his ministry of preaching the Gospel - the good news that the kingdom of God was now at hand for all who were ready to receive it.

God rules over all

What is the kingdom of God? The word "kingdom" means something more than a territory or an area of land. It literally means "sovereignty" or "reign" and the power to "rule" and exercise authority. The prophets announced that God would establish a kingdom not just for one nation or people but for the whole world. The Scriptures tell us that God's throne is in heaven and his rule is over all (Psalm 103:19). His kingdom is bigger and more powerful than anything we can imagine because it is universal and everlasting (Daniel 4:3). His kingdom is full of glory, power, and splendor (Psalm 145:11-13).

In the Book of Daniel we are told that this kingdom is given to the Son of Man (Daniel 7:14, 18, 22, 27). The Son of Man is a Messianic title for God's anointed King. The New Testament word for "Messiah" is "Christ" which literally means the "Anointed One" or the "Anointed King". God sent us his Son not to establish an earthly kingdom but to bring us into his heavenly kingdom - a kingdom ruled by truth, justice, peace, and holiness. The kingdom of God is the central theme of Jesus' mission. It's the core of his gospel message.

As soon as John the Baptist had finished his testimony, Jesus began his in Galilee, his home district. John's enemies had sought to silence him, but the gospel cannot be silenced. Jesus proclaimed that the time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand. Jesus takes up John's message of repentance and calls disciples to believe in the gospel - the good news he has come to deliver. What is the good news which Jesus delivers? It is the good news of peace (restoration of relationship with God - Ephesians 6:15), of hope (the hope of heaven and everlasting life - Colossians 1:23), of truth (God's word is true and reliable - Colossians 1:5), of promise (he rewards those who seek him - Ephesians 3:6, of immortality (God gives everlasting life - 2 Timothy 1:10), and the good news of salvation (liberty from sin and freedom to live as sons and daughters of God - Ephesians 1:13).

Questions for Community Faith Sharing:

1. What do you think is the "Good News"
2. Are you ready to leave all your comforts and your old life behind and be transformed and to follow Jesus calling?
3. Share some of your ways of proclaiming the "Good News" in your everyday life?

"Lord Jesus, you have called me personally by name, just as you called your first disciples, Simon, Andrew, James, and John. Help me to believe your word and follow you faithfully. Fill me with the joy of the gospel that your light may shine through me to many others."