

Mark 1: 14 – 20

'Repentance'

Prayer ...

Imagine that you're walking along Green End towards the High Street and you see someone speaking loudly ahead of you ...

As you get closer you hear that they are calling out: **"Repent, repent!!"**

What would you do?

(we talked among ourselves ... walk past quickly, join in, turn and go in opposite direction! Etc.)

I gather the last time someone was doing that in the middle of Whitchurch – they were subject to considerable heckling!

There's rarely a positive response!!

But from our Gospels – this morning reminds us that it wasn't only John-the-Baptist who called people to repentance – it was also Jesus.

Perhaps we've been so put off by the way in which some people do this – that we don't listen at all ... yet Jesus linked repentance to Good News! It was a positive message.

I think that those first four disciples, Simon, Andrew, James and John – I think they viewed it differently. Being a fisherman then – was just as tough as it is now – if not worse.

So another question: suppose you were a fisherman – you'd worked all night in the boat, you knew that your family was waiting for you back home – and money was tight ...

You land your catch ... and the Romans – who are in control – take most of it away ... you sell some of what you're left with – and the Romans tax you – taking quite a bit of the money away

How do you feel? (we chatted among ourselves ... angry, sad, furious ... Etc.)

And it's to these people, feeling this way – that Jesus – having talked about repentance and good news – it's to these people that Jesus says – **come and I will make you fishers of people.**

I wonder if that reminded them of something?

For in two of the Old Testament Books (Amos and Ezekiel) – hooking of fish is linked to judging any of those who are rich who treat the poor badly. So maybe they understood Jesus to be saying: ***come and help me usher in God's kingdom – a kingdom of justice for the poor, mercy for the oppressed, and abundance for all.***

This, I think is what Climate Activists are asking us all to do for the sake of God's earth. To repent – to change – to live in new ways.

I remember seeing one speech by Greta Thunberg to world leaders in 2019: **“How dare you ... How dare you look away ... and come here saying that you're doing enough?”**

That was and is a call to repent – to change our ways ... and a call that if heeded and acted upon, will lead to good news.

To repent means to change direction ...

So, let's not downplay or write off repentance ... because in so doing we lose the Good News too.

It's why the questions: ***Do you repent of your sins?*** Or the two questions: ***Do you reject evil and do you turn to Christ?*** are in the Baptism and Confirmation services.

Repenting and turning to Christ are relevant at the level of each of our individual lives ... what do we need to turn away from in order to receive more of Christ's abundant life ... and it's important at wider societal levels too.

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<https://www.journeywithjesus.net/essays/1623-fishing-for-people>