

Isn't that the question?

First Lesson. Is a thought about fishing. We don't understand it. If you talk about fishing, in Ohio, or Michigan – then we are talking about bait and hooks. But in the biblical story – fishing is about nets in which the fish are drawn in. I think this difference is helpful and necessary when we consider “being a fisher of people”. It would be nice if we weren't baiting and hooking people, but were drawing them toward God with the net of God's love.

Second lesson: disciple to the Rabbi. In ancient Israel there was not a position which was more vaunted than disciple to the Rabbi (except the Rabbi himself). This was a position for only the best and the brightest. It wasn't for ordinary folk. Yet Jesus calls to himself ordinary folk, and even a tax collector.

Third thought: just drop everything. This lesson is an extension of the epiphany story. Do you think that the wise men had nothing better to do, than to drop everything and make a cross country expedition to follow a star? Yet they did! In the same way, Jesus calls people from their daily work, from their daily lives to the path of God. Just drop everything – come! Follow me!

Which brings us to the lesson of the day.

14 Now after John was imprisoned, Jesus went into Galilee and proclaimed the gospel of God. 15 He said, "The time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the gospel!" Mark 1:14-5

It is just an incidental sentence in the gospel of Mark. After all it is only about the beginning of Jesus ministry. But what if we took this verse seriously and verse 15 was the context of everything that follows? What if Jesus ministry was fundamentally a prophetic ministry: announcing God's presence at hand and the announcement of the Kingdom?

Because actually, the announcement of the Kingdom isn't a statement – it is a question. To announce the Kingdom is to re-order peoples' lives. The announcement of the Kingdom is the restatement of the age old joke: how do you answer the king when he says jump? You ask- in the air, “how high?”

If the King is announced it insists there is a question: is this the king? Because if this is the king, then our old priorities just went out the window and we need to be in the air saying, “how high, Lord?”

If the King is announced then life has one point: what do you want Lord? How shall we serve you?

My second point of the day is to focus on the power of the question.

Last week we began a discussion of how the church could be welcoming and attractive. (Last week Nathaneal said – I think this guy may be the one. Come and see) This week I would like to push it further.

What if Jesus isn't the answer. (dull thud)

What if Jesus is the question?

Here is the problem – you can't share an answer. You either subscribe and there is no conversation because there is agreement. Or you differ in which case – since you don't subscribe to **the answer** there is no discussion.

The church has been in "Jesus is the answer" mode ever since 313 AD when Constantine used Christianity to glue the empire together and began to put down any other religious form. And the church got in bed with government and the church began to love the power of enforcing belief.

But faith and life aren't **answered**. The life journey is an ongoing discussion. In faith we try to understand what is going on and what God wants. Jesus poses us the questions of life and its meaning.

Along the way – we can share our questions with others. In fact their questions are very likely quite similar: How do I live? What really matters? What is important?

If we share questions then together we could find answers.

Incidentally the questions we share are the ones Jesus poses.

Is this the Kingdom?

If it is – what is our purpose?

In Christ, what is our new life?

How shall we share God's love?

It is with these questions that we meet God's world, sharing God's kingdom questions and sharing God's love.