

The King Has Come

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 29 August 2026

Preacher: Chris Wylie

[0:00] I'll be reading from Mark chapter 1, verse 1 to 20. Verse 1. The beginning of the good news about Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God, as it is written in Isaiah the prophet.

I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way. A voice of one calling in the wilderness, prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him. And so John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. The whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem went out to him. Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River. John wore clothing made of camel's hair with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey.

And this was his message. After me comes the one more powerful than I, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.

At that time, Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. Just as Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove.

[1:14] And a voice came from heaven, you are my son, whom I love. With you I am well pleased. At once the Spirit sent him out into the wilderness, and he was in the wilderness forty days, being tempted by Satan.

He was with the wild animals, and angels attended him. After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. The time has come, he said. The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news.

As Jesus walked beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. Come, follow me, Jesus said, and I will send you out to fish for people.

At once they left their nets and followed him. When he had gone a little further, he saw James, son of Zebedee, and his brother John in a boat, preparing their nets.

Without delay, he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men and followed him. This is the word of the Lord. I have now the pleasure to invite Chris to speak to us.

[2:30] All right, thank you.

All right, well, thank you so much for, again, inviting me. And it's a privilege to be here to worship with you and to bring God's word to you.

From what I said, one of my favorite books of the Bible, Mark's Gospel. I'm more stable.

Okay, all right. All right, just give us a second. Thank you. Thanks so much. Yeah, yeah, that looks good. Well, why don't I pray for us as we come to God's word now.

Father, thank you for this church family camp. Lord, thank you for bringing us together and bringing us under your word. Lord, please help me to communicate from your word clearly.

[3:49] Help us to be good listeners. Help us to have hearts that are responsive to your word. Wills that want to obey.

Speak to us, we pray, in Jesus' name. Amen. Well, you've heard Mark's Gospel being read, chapter 1, verses 1 to 20. Doesn't Mark's Gospel just take your breath away?

It moves so quickly. So much happens in such a short time. The pace is rapid and relentless. I think if the Gospels were made into movies, if they were different genres, I feel like Mark's Gospel would be the action movie of them all.

The one that keeps you on the edge of your seat. The one that is just action-packed. I love Mark's Gospel. It's a privilege to share four messages from Mark this weekend.

And the series of messages, it's entitled, Called to Follow. And even now, just in our reading, you heard Jesus calling people to follow him.

[5:05] And he's called us to follow him too. That's why we're here. But what does it mean to follow Jesus? What does that look like, following Jesus?

That's pretty basic stuff, isn't it? That's the stuff of Christianity 101, isn't it? But basic doesn't make it easy.

Basic doesn't make it come naturally. Basic doesn't mean that we don't need reminders, that we don't need refreshers from time to time.

Maybe we've even drifted a bit as followers of Jesus. Maybe we need to be recalibrated in line with the one whom we follow.

Or maybe there are some here, I don't know, some who perhaps haven't started to follow Jesus yet. We need to respond to Jesus, to his call.

[6:08] And if you are someone who hasn't responded yet, then I certainly pray that you will hear that call and you will respond to Jesus. Following Jesus is the most exciting and fulfilling adventure we could ever have in our lives.

And I pray that we all get excited about that all over again. Well, let's start off this evening with a reality check.

Now, as I was preparing for this retreat, I thought I should get to know a bit more about your church. And one way to do that is to look at the website of a church.

You all know you have a website, right? Okay, good. Yeah, okay. That's a good sign, Brian, right? And on your website, well, I have to say your website is much better than my church's website. So well done on that. And I was also happy to see on your website that you've got a vision statement and you've got a mission statement. You all know that, right? You all know your vision and you can quote it, right?

[7:09] Okay. Well, I tell you what, I'll help you out. Here's your statement. Is it the right one? I think it is. Yeah, it says, We, by God's grace, will be a Christ-centered, Bible-based, spirit-led community of believers, wholeheartedly pursuing God in worship, creatively serving one another in love, actively making disciples of all ethnic groups in Kooching and beyond.

It's a great statement. It's bold. It's ambitious. I love that it ends with a very outward-looking mission to actively make disciples of all ethnic groups in Kooching and beyond.

But what if I told you that making disciples, that's all about changing people, and changing people is something that you can't do.

Oh, sorry, what? What did our guest speaker say? You can't do it. Yeah, I did say that.

Did you invite the wrong speaker, maybe? Shouldn't this be a time to encourage you and to tell you what a great job you're doing and what an influence you're having?

[8:34] Well, this is the reality check. And you do need to understand this point. And also bear in mind, there is good news coming, so you do want to stick with me, okay?

But this is a reality check. Let me explain why I believe you can't change anyone. You see, to really change people, you have to change them on the inside and not just on the outside.

And I don't believe that you, or even I, can do that. Now, I think I need to kind of tighten this. I'm not quite sure how to do that, but it seems to be slowly drifting.

Okay, thank you. Now, how can I convince you that you can't change people? I want to illustrate that with someone that you might think is as good a candidate as anyone to be able to change other people.

This guy was kind of a celebrity of his time. If he was alive today, I think he would be blowing up on social media. Jesus even said he was the greatest person to ever live.

[9:56] And yet, here's the thing. He couldn't change anyone. Who was he? His name was Johannes, but we know him better as John the Baptist.

And you can read about him in the Bible. Actually, you can read a bit about him outside the Bible too. That's how famous he was. It wasn't just in the Bible. Mark's gospel introduces John the Baptist in Mark chapter 1, verses 2 to 8, with three promising hints that here is someone who could really make a difference, who could really change things, who could turn the world upside down.

And yet, in the end, we realize that's not the case. The first hint that perhaps John could do something spectacular is found in verses 2 to 3, buried in some Old Testament promises that people have been waiting to see fulfilled.

Waiting, waiting. It's not easy to wait, is it? Last year, I had to buy, our family had to buy a new TV. And we had to wait for it to be delivered. You know, everything is bought online these days. The thing was that my old TV had started flickering. Every time you tried to watch something, it was just flickering like a strobe light.

[11:16] And you could turn the lights off in my living room and you'd think you were in a disco. But that's not what TVs are supposed to do.

So I ordered a new TV. And I was quite desperate for this TV to come because my son, Micah, you've seen the picture of him. Well, this is, he was, yeah, he was three or four at the time. Here's the thing. He didn't mind the flashing light. He was quite happy watching his cartoons on this TV that was just flashing away. And I was going crazy.

Well, thankfully, after a few days that felt very, very long, the promised TV arrived. Now, if waiting for a new TV is hard for a few days, now imagine being a Jew and reading prophets like Malachi and Isaiah and waiting.

Not just days, not just years, but hundreds of years for those promises to come true.

[12:23] You see, Mark quotes from Malachi 3 verse 1. That's in verse 2 of Mark's gospel, chapter 1. And he quotes from Isaiah chapter 40 verse 3.

That's in verse 3 of Mark's gospel, chapter 1. Malachi, Isaiah, two prophets who promised a messenger, a voice calling in the wilderness, a man on a mission from God, and yet they promised these things hundreds of years before it happened.

And then Mark declares in verse 4, and so John the Baptist appeared. That's Mark telling us John is that promised one of those prophecies, right?

So John's got to be something great. He's got to do something great for God, right? So that's kind of a hint that here's someone who surely can do great things and make great changes.

Not everyone in the Bible, let alone us, gets introduced with two prophecies from the Old Testament. But there's more.

[13:37] Let's keep going to see just how impressive this guy John was. John the Baptist starts shaking things up in verses 4 and 5. Yes, his methods are a little bit unusual.

He doesn't go to a city like Kuching or KL or even Jerusalem to make a name for himself. No, he goes to the desert. He goes to the wilderness a few miles north of Jerusalem.

But that actually fulfills Isaiah's prophecy back in verse 3. He is meant to be a voice in the wilderness. And why the wilderness? Well, think about some Bible stories.

Think about something exciting that started in the wilderness in the Bible. Do you remember that? How God rescued Israel from Egypt and brought them out of slavery, led them through the Red Sea into the wilderness to start a new life in relationship with him, the one true and living God.

And there they spent 40 formative years in the wilderness before entering the promised land. And now John is in the wilderness.

[14:55] Could John's preaching, could his baptism in the wilderness, could it give people a new life with God again? Could John be leading all the people to a new promised land? And when I say all the people, I really do mean all the people.

Just look at all the people he was attracting, even out there in the dry and dusty desert. Look at verse 5. It says the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem went out to him. I mean, if he was on TikTok, he would be a mega influencer with millions of followers. His influence even reached a famous first century historian, Josephus, who writes things about John the Baptist outside the Bible, telling us things like he was a good man and he commanded righteousness toward one another and piety towards God.

Josephus says that people came in crowds about him. And Josephus even says that King Herod feared the great influence John had over the people, for they seemed ready to do anything he should advise.

Well, get that. John even caught the attention of the king of his day. Those of you on Instagram or Facebook, who do you have among your followers?

[16:15] I wonder if you have the governor or the premier of Sarawak? Or PMX? Or the Argonne?

No? Oh, well, I guess you don't have that much influence then. Not compared to John the Baptist. And then what did all these people see when they went out to see this desert celeb?

According to verse 6, he had this unique diet and this unique fashion sense. John wore clothing made of camel's hair with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey.

Hang on a minute. This is the guy everyone follows? Doesn't sound quite so attractive now. But that's not how they would have seen him 2,000 years ago.

Not the way we imagine John. You see, to them, his rather odd appearance was actually very impressive. Because it reminded them of someone else who was a bit odd, but very impressive in the Bible.

[17 : 22] Do you know who that was? Who did they imagine when they saw John the Baptist? The prophet Elijah. Yeah, because he's described like this in 2 Kings 1.8.

2 Kings 1.8, you don't have to look it up, but it says this, that Elijah had a garment of hair and had a leather belt around his waist. And it was on the basis of that description alone, which is not a lot, that in his day, in Elijah's day, the king could say, ah, I heard that description.

I know who that is. That's Elijah the Tishbite. That's how famous he was, how well-known he was, simply based on his dress sense.

Elijah was a famous prophet. He preached to people, even the king. And now we meet John the Baptist, and he's in the same prophet's clothes. He dressed exactly like Elijah, and he's preaching to people, even reaching the king.

In other words, John the Baptist is the real deal, a real prophet of God, just like Elijah. So now you've seen the three hints that I mentioned, all these hints that John would do something spectacular, perhaps he could really change people.

[18 : 41] He's a promised preacher. He's an immense influencer. He's a prophet with the same tailor as Elijah the Tishbite. If anyone could make a change, surely it's this guy.

But here's the thing. He can't. And even he admits it. After all the build-up to John in verses 2 to 6, let's finally listen to John's own words.

When he finally does speak, what does he say? In verse 7, he says, After me comes the one. Dot, dot, dot. Now, just pause there for a minute.

Do you see what this great man is doing? He's got this captive audience. Mark has finally given the mic to John. And with his opening words, he's already pointing people away from himself, pointing towards someone else.

I mean, can you imagine Donald Trump or Mr. Beast or Taylor Swift telling everyone to unfollow them on social media and start following someone else instead?

[19 : 53] Can you imagine that? Unthinkable. But John does it. He points away from himself. He points to the one who comes after him.

And we should have seen this coming because if we looked at the prophecies carefully in verses 2 to 3, they're doing the same thing. Ultimately pointing away from John to someone else.

The one who comes after John. For example, in verse 3, John the Baptist is merely the voice preparing the way, but preparing for who? The Lord.

God didn't promise to send a man to change the world. God didn't promise to choose a church to change the world.

He promised to send the Messiah, his son, the Lord Jesus, to change the world, to change people.

[20 : 53] Let's go back to John's message. How does John describe Jesus in verses 7 and 8?

Basically, he says that Jesus is more powerful than him.

Jesus is more important than him. And Jesus is going to do something far more amazing than him. What is that amazing thing that Jesus is going to do?

Well, I'll come back to that later. But for now, just get this point. What John is saying very clearly is this. I'm no one. I can't begin to compare with Jesus in power or importance.

Jesus can do what I can't. And so John's job is not to change people. It's to point people to Jesus. What a great lesson for us too. Our job is not to change people, but to point people to Jesus. If someone as influential and as insta-famous as John the Baptist understood that, then we really should understand that too.

[22 : 02] I mean, who are we compared to John the Baptist? If we understand this, it will save us a lot of frustration, a lot of disappointment, perhaps save us from pride and arrogance.

It will center our hearts on the one we need to change us and the one that we can really boast about.

So that, friends, is the reality check. Yes, we have a mission. Your church has a mission. My church has a mission. Your church has a mission statement. Mine also has a mission statement.

But like John the Baptist, we can't change anyone and we aren't going to change anyone without pointing them to Jesus. Which leads us to the good news that Jesus can change anyone. So let's talk about Jesus. And from the minute Jesus appears in Mark's gospel in verse 9 to the end of Mark's gospel, it is now all about Jesus.

[23:07] I mean, even in these first introductory verses, verses 9 to 13, you can already see what kind of world-changing hero Jesus is. Jesus is powerful enough.

He's good enough. He's tough enough. He's selfless enough to do things that no one else can do. Let's think about this one.

Now, hands up if you've been baptized. Okay. You can check who's still going to get baptized, Brian. I know. Okay. But hands up if your baptism was exactly like Jesus' baptism in verses 10 and 11.

Oh, no hands. Well, neither was mine. For starters, when Jesus was baptized, heaven was torn open. And then what? The Holy Spirit descends like a dove.

It's telling us Jesus is uniquely empowered with God's Spirit and therefore can do anything. And one of the things he does is he gives us the Spirit.

[24:13] That's what John is talking about back in verse 8. He said, I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.

Now, baptism of the Holy Spirit, that's something that happens to all people when they become Christians. Jesus gives you the Holy Spirit of God to live in you, to work in you, to change you from the inside out.

Of course, we should desire to be filled with the Spirit again and again, but every Christian is born of the Spirit and has the Spirit thanks to Jesus. And only Jesus is powerful enough to give the Spirit of God because he himself is God.

If you need proof that the Spirit that Jesus gives can change someone, well, there are surely many testimonies in this very room.

And I'm one more as well. God's Spirit changed me when I was 19 years old, when I was in a wrong relationship and I was pursuing the wrong goals and I was indulging the wrong desires.

[25:24] And I even thought at that time that I could carry on with all of that and have a label that said Christian, but I was just living for myself.

But it was when I was around 19 that God unexpectedly convicted me and turned my life around 180 degrees so that I followed Jesus instead.

I can't explain that except when I think about the Holy Spirit and what he did in me.

So as God and as the giver of the Holy Spirit, Jesus is powerful enough to do what no one else can do. And Jesus is good enough to do what no one else can do as well.

What else happened during Jesus' baptism? Apart from the Spirit descending on him, God himself spoke from heaven and said something amazing. He said, you are my son whom I love.

[26:22] With you, I am well pleased. Again, those of you who are baptized, does that tally with your experience of being baptized? Did you get that voice from heaven?

No? Me neither. When I got baptized, what I knew was that I was a sinner and I needed forgiveness. But Jesus is so different.

And so in Mark's gospel before, Jesus has done anything to prove himself. No healing of the sick. No casting out of demons. No raising the dead. Not yet.

But God can already say, Jesus is good enough for him. Jesus has nothing to prove. Doesn't need to earn God's respect or get on God's good side.

Just like that. Jesus is good enough. He's perfect. He's the Son of God. He's eternally loved by the Father. And that's not like us.

[27:24] I've been talking about changing people, something we can't do. But let's be even more honest. We can't change people.

We can't even change ourselves. We can't even be good people by our own standard of what is good. Let alone by God's standards.

But Jesus, as I said, before he's done anything in Mark's gospel, he is good enough. God is well pleased. And it means that Jesus is the only person in the world, not only powerful enough, but also good enough to do what we can't do.

He can change you into a person who pleases God. And there's more. Jesus is also tough enough to do what no one else can do. Tough enough to withstand temptation, to defeat our age-old

enemy, Satan, in verses 12 and 13.

Unlike Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, unlike Israel in the wilderness, unlike you and me every single day, Jesus is tough enough to take on Satan, so tough that he can tahan 40 days in the wilderness, being tempted by Satan, and not fall into sin.

[28 : 42] In fact, Jesus is tough enough to completely take out Satan. And if Jesus can beat our biggest enemy, then you can be sure that there's nothing that he can't do for you and me.

I hope you're beginning to see why John the Baptist pointed everyone to Jesus, not to himself. Jesus is powerful enough. He's good enough. He's tough enough to do what no one else can do, which is to actually change people.

But that still leaves a question. How? How will Jesus achieve that mission? Well, of course, that's the climax of Mark's gospel. This evening, we're just starting the story.

And I'm sure that all of you, or most of you, know how this book ends. You don't need a spoiler alert before I tell you that he's going to die on a cross and be raised from the dead.

And that's how Jesus will change the world. But it is an act of supreme selflessness. Jesus is selfless enough to do what no one else could do, by giving his life as a ransom for many.

[29 : 53] This is God's plan for Jesus. But even here at the start of Mark's gospel, we do actually have a hint of that plan. You see, Jesus' baptism is surprising.

And it is connected to his selfless act of the cross at the other end of this book. What's the link? Well, you see, just as the cross wasn't meant for perfect people like Jesus, so also baptism wasn't meant for perfect people either.

I mean, look at verse 4. What is this baptism? John's baptism was a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. What's Jesus doing? Jesus didn't need to repent.

Jesus didn't need forgiveness. Jesus didn't have any sins. And yet he chose to be baptized. In other words, the most powerful person, the best person, the toughest person in the world, chose to humble himself and put himself in the shoes or the swimming trunks, perhaps, of sinners like you and me.

Why would he do that? Why would he do that? He did it for you and me because he loves us selflessly, enough to identify with us in the Jordan River, enough to take our place on a Roman cross as well.

[31 : 23] It is wonderfully good news to know Jesus, to know this one and only person who can change you and me and anyone else. Thank God for Jesus.

And if anyone is hearing this, perhaps for the first time, perhaps or perhaps just today it's beginning to make a bit more sense, please speak to me, speak to Pastor Brian.

Find out more. Because this is good news that demands a response. And that's where we're going now in the next few verses, 14 to 20.

Remember how we heard the first words from John's lips in verse 7 and how those words told us a lot about John. Well, now let's listen to the first words from Jesus' lips in Mark's Gospel and let's see what they tell us about Jesus.

Verse 14. He says, The time has come. The kingdom of God has come near. When Jesus spoke these words, the Jews were hoping for a time of radical change.

[32 : 32] Instead of the Roman Empire of Tiberius Caesar, they were hoping for the kingdom of God, a perfect, peaceful kingdom ruled by a powerful king as promised in the Bible.

Jesus' opening words declare that the time for change has come, yet not entirely as the Jews expected.

The time for God's kingdom has come because Jesus, God's king, has come. And now King Jesus calls people into his kingdom.

And we wouldn't want to miss the boat. Now the king has come. We must respond while there is still time. But how? Well, it's simple, isn't it?

It's repent, it's believe, and it's follow. So let's start with repent in verse 15. Sadly, this was something that my teenage self, even though I was going to a church at that point, this was something that I just never grasped.

[33 : 40] At the time, I guess for me, Christianity was just a set of beliefs. And it was a nice message about a forgiving God.

And that's about it. And I thought, when I wasn't in church hearing those things, I could then just live as I liked. And then I could come back to church and get some more fuzzy feelings of forgiveness

and then repeat everything again the following week.

In other words, there was no repentance in my life or in my heart. There was no change. What does repent mean? Repent literally means changing your mind.

But in practice, it means changing direction. It's that 180 degree turning from living your own way to living God's way.

What might that look like? Well, for some, it might be deciding that swearing and using God's name or Jesus' name in vain is offensive to God.

[34 : 48] And so what do you do? You pray for forgiveness and you pray for the Holy Spirit to help you to stop doing that thing that's been your habit for so long and then you choose to bite your tongue when everyone else at work is swearing and you choose to clean up your language because you want to honour God.

Or another example, perhaps it's realising that actually God sees all your thoughts inside your head. And so you realise that indulging in impure fantasies in your mind, it is wrong.

And so what do you do? You pray for forgiveness and you ask God by His Holy Spirit to help you. And when your mind goes in that direction, you pray again for help and you actively fill your mind with something else, something good, something pure, something clean.

or another example, accepting that God's will for you is to be generous even if you really want to buy more and more things for yourself.

So what do you do? When you realise that you're not generous, pray for forgiveness and you ask the Holy Spirit to help you and you choose to develop the habit of giving to church and giving to those who really need it.

[36 : 12] And when you see something online that you really like but you don't really need, you stop scrolling and you put down your phone and you choose to be joyfully contented instead.

Following Jesus means following God's way for your life. You can't do that if you're still living life your way, on your terms, for your own happiness. you have to repent.

Have you repented of living life your way? What do you still need to repent of? Following Jesus means a lifelong journey of repentance.

Whenever God's word and God's spirit shows you something and convicts you again, repent and believe. Since God's king has come, we must repent but we must also believe.

Now, if I missed out on the command to repent as a teenager, I think I misunderstood the command to believe when I was a teenager.

[37 : 19] You see, I believed there was a God. I believed even enough that I thought sometimes I could argue with my atheist friends at school about God. And I think I believed in Jesus too and I believed he was the son of God and I believed he came to the world 2,000 years ago.

But was that enough? Notice in verse 15, Jesus himself doesn't say, believe in God. Believe I'm the son of God.

What does he say in verse 15? He says, believe the good news. Which takes us back to Mark 1 verse 1. This is the good news about Jesus the Messiah, the son of God.

This is the good news or the gospel that everyone needs to believe. In other words, believe the good news that God has sent his son, Jesus, into this world to be his chosen king who goes to the cross, who cleanses our hearts and changes us forever.

Believe this and become a member of God's kingdom. I think when we say believe, sometimes it's more helpful to say trust, isn't it?

[38 : 35] Put all your trust in this. My favorite movie growing up was Star Wars. I'm so old that the, when I say Star Wars, I mean the original Star Wars, you know, 1977, the year I was born.

And one of the most famous lines in the movie, I think, is when Luke, Luke, comes into contact with R2-D2 and C-3PO and then R2-D2 starts playing this hologram message and do you remember the line?

It's Princess Leia and she's saying a message and a line, very famous, help me, oh dear, help me. It's, help me, Obi-Wan Kenobi, you're my only hope. Help me, Obi-Wan Kenobi, you're my only hope. In a way, it's a great example of putting all your trust in someone when you know that no one else can help you, no one else can save you.

Jesus calls us to put all our trust in him, help me, Jesus Christ, you're my only hope. only hope. Help me, Jesus Christ, you're my only hope.

[39 : 55] That's believing. That's a right response to Jesus. Have you done that? And are you still doing that?

Are you still putting all your trust in Jesus instead of putting a trust in perhaps how good you've become now you're a Christian, that God should really be pleased with you?

No. Help me, Jesus Christ, you're my only hope. Repent, believe, and finally, follow. In just five verses, verses 16 to 20, Jesus calls four people to follow him.

Simon, Andrew, James, John, and they do. And they become the first disciples and they teach us a lot about what it means to follow Jesus. The first thing we need to know is that following Jesus means obeying him.

Oh, okay, so I can see my slides have slipped. Okay, hopefully you can still see what's there.

Following Jesus means obeying him.

[41 : 00] I mean, that's literally what Simon, Andrew, James, and John did. Jesus simply said, follow me, and they did exactly that. When you hear the word, when you read the word, do you take the word that seriously?

That you just get up and go? Do you say, that's what I'm going to do because Jesus said it? Well, that would be a good sign that you're his disciple.

The other thing that followers do is they become like their teacher. We Christians talk so much about discipleship that we might think that we invented it.

And yet, in the ancient world, there were plenty of teachers and philosophers who had disciples or followers. And their followers did exactly that.

They followed them around. they shadowed them. They learned from them. They absorbed everything they could, hoping one day to be like their teacher. Well, that's a good picture of following Jesus with the goal of becoming like him.

[42 : 17] That's what Jesus wanted for Simon and Andrew when he said to them in verse 17, come, follow me, and I will send you out to fish for people. No more fishermen, but fishers of men.

And that's what Jesus himself is doing in these verses, isn't it? So he's saying, come and be like me. He's fishing for men, calling people to follow him, drawing them into his kingdom to become like him.

Are you a disciple of Jesus? Ask yourself, am I reading Jesus' words in the Bible and is reading the Bible important to me? Am I responding to and obeying those words?

Is there something that Jesus has said that I'm not obeying? Am I following Jesus and learning from Jesus? Is he the master of my life? Am I becoming more like Jesus?

Am I continuing his mission on earth? I think these are good questions to ask ourselves if we are following him. And finally, if we're going to follow him, we need to count the cost as well.

[43 : 26] And I think James and John particularly in this passage illustrate that best for us. You see, Mark goes to the trouble of telling us a bit about James and John and their situation.

They were fishing with a few other people. They were there with their father Zebedee. So I guess we're picturing a family business going on here. Maybe dad is the big boss.

And the business was doing alright. It was doing okay. Enough for them to hire other men to work with them in the boat too.

So the picture I have is James and John that they're learning up the family business. And dad probably has this hope that one day one of them will become the boss.

And then everything changes because of Jesus. Jesus called James and John and according to verse 20 they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men and followed him.

[44 : 32] That decision to follow Jesus it must have cost something. It must have cost something in their relationship with their dad.

It must have cost something in their hopes for a comfortable future. I don't know what the cost is for you to follow Jesus.

Or maybe some of you are actually struggling with that cost right now. But I do want to reassure you that following Jesus is the right response even if there is a cost.

Whatever we lose when we follow Jesus we will gain far more. It is worth it because Jesus is worth it.

And there is no one else like him as we have already seen. And I say that as someone who has followed Jesus for more than 25 years now. And in all those years in all the ups and downs I will say that Jesus has only ever been good to me.

[45:41] I also say that now more recently as someone who has got to know Christian Pakistanis. in KL. People who would rather live a difficult and uncertain life as a refugee here in Malaysia than a very comfortable life if they had simply converted to Islam in their home country.

There is a cost but it's always the right response to follow Jesus. friends the king has come. We have such exciting news for the world but let's not get grand ideas about ourselves instead let's point people to Jesus.

There is no one like him. He alone changes people and he calls people to follow him. and so let's be sure that we are heeding that call for ourselves first and foremost as people who repent and believe and follow him and tomorrow we'll see how Jesus can then actually use us to make a difference in the world.

to be these fishers of men that he called Peter and Andrew to be. Or in the language of Mark 4 how to sow the word, the seed of God's word.

Well that will be tomorrow. So let me pray and then I've got some discussion questions but I'm not sure if we're going to do something else before the discussion so I'll let Brian tell me in a moment but let me pray first.

[47:27] Heavenly Father thank you for the good news about Jesus the Messiah the Son of God. Thank you that with Jesus the kingdom has come.

Our King has come and our King is calling us to come into your kingdom. Thank you for Jesus for there is no one like him.

Lord many of us may have been following Jesus for a long time now but help us to honestly reflect and evaluate ourselves as followers of Jesus how we have repented and continue to repent how we believe and trust that no one can save us but Jesus alone and how we are truly following Jesus and becoming more like him even becoming fishes of men and carrying on his mission in this world.

Lord please continue doing your work in our lives in our hearts by the power of your Holy Spirit because there is no other power that can change us. We can't change ourselves no one else can change us.

We need you. Father I pray that over the next couple of days that you would do a deep work in our hearts that only you know and only you can see but we need it.

[49:08] We ask that you will do that work. We pray in Jesus name. Amen.