Homily for Epiphany 3, 2021
Mark 1:14-20
'The time is here'
Pastor Joshua Pfeiffer

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TEXT - Mark 1:14-20

[14] Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, [15]and saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news.'
[16] As Jesus passed along the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake—for they were fishermen. [17]And Jesus said to them, 'Follow me and I will make you fish for people.' [18]And immediately they left their nets and followed him. [19]As he went a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John, who were in their boat mending the nets. [20]Immediately he called them; and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men, and followed him.

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INTRODUCTION

Have you ever noticed how ***time*** is a mysterious thing?

It's something so basic to our lives,
Yet, it can be strange.

We say 'time flies when we're having fun',
And that 'time seems to stand still',
when things aren't so fun.

Those are not just flippant phrases,
They express something real in our experience.

We don't encounter every sequence of minutes, hours and days in the same way,
Time is mysterious.

Perhaps that's why no matter how long I go on holidays,
It always feels like I need just one more week!

But the mystery it's not just in how we move through the *quantities* of time,

It's also,

that time has a *qualitative* dimension as well.

We speak of 'quality time', don't we?

We know that there are times in each of our lives,

Which seem to be much more significant and critical than others.

As the writer of Ecclesiastes famously says:
'For everything there is a season,
*And a **time** for every matter under heaven...'* Ecc 3

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As Jesus began his ministry proclaiming the good news of God,

He said *'The time is fulfilled'.*

Here, now,
In the coming of Jesus,

This is the definitive *moment* of God's intervention in history.

And so,
Our texts shows that this time of Jesus' coming is a time of grace,
It's good news,

But that's there also a sense of urgency,

Then,
And still today.

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TIME OF KINGDOM DRAWING NEAR

The time has come, Jesus says,

The time for what?

The time has come for '*the kingdom of God to draw near*'.

People then,
As now,

May have looked around at the many competing kingdoms of this world,
And wonder, who is really in charge?

To whom should we give our allegiance,

Who rules and reigns in this world?

Jesus announces,

That now is the time of God reign.

The kingdom of God has drawn near,

The rule and reign of God has come into this world and it will not compete with any other kingdom,

Its rule will be over every other claim to power and authority.

And yet,
as the people there heard this announcement and looked around them for the kingdom,
This rule and reign of God,

What did they see?

Jesus said it was near,
So where was it?

Well, the thing that was actually near to them,
Was Jesus.

He brings the kingdom,
Because he's the king.

But he was easy to miss,
Because he came in an unexpected way,
In humility and lowliness,

He comes not to be served but to serve,

This King comes to give his life as a ransom for many.

St Paul says,
'For while we were still weak,

*At the **right time**,*
Christ died for the ungodly'. Rom 5:6
Death and resurrection,
That's how God ushers in his kingdom in Jesus.

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In our world,
The words of Psalm 46 as always relevant:

'The nations are in an uproar,
The kingdoms totter...' Psalm 46

'Put not your trust in princes...' Psalm 146

In Jesus,
The time has come,
For the kingdom ***of God*** to draw near.

That's why we pray continually,
'Your kingdom come...'

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TIME FOR REPENTANCE, FATH & FOLLOWING

And because of this,

The time to ***respond*** to the coming of this King becomes a critical one as well,

It's time, Jesus says,
to ***repent***,
To **believe**,
And to ***follow*** Jesus.

Which direction do we orient our lives in this world?

What messages do we put our trust in?

What or whom do we follow?

Jesus, the King,
Call us to himself and good news of God he announces.

He calls you to repent,

To turn from the paths of life which are spiritual dead ends,
To turn from the paths of self-destructive behavior,
To turn from the paths of sin and idolatry,

And to turn to him in faith,
To trust in Christ as the King who comes to bring the just and gentle rule of God into our lives.

Christ Jesus has come and in his kingdom is forgiveness, life, and salvation,

It's all for you,

The time is now,
To repent,
to believe,

and,
to follow him like those first disciples.

Simon and Andrew,
James and John,

Who were called from their worldly vocations,
Who were called to sacrifice,
To leave certain things behind,

In order to ***follow*** Jesus on the path ***he*** chose.

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So,
Consider for yourself,
Personally,

What are the areas of your life,

In this ***time***,

Where you especially need to hear your Lord's call to you,
to repent,
To believe the good news,
And to follow Jesus?

St Pauls writes to the Corinthians,
'We urge you not to accept the grace of God in vain...
See, now is the acceptable ***time****,*
Now is the day of salvation'. 2 Corinthians 6:2

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TIME FOR FISHING

And because of all this,

Because the time of Jesus' rule and reign has come,
Because the time for repentance, faith and following has come,

For those who are called,

Jesus reminds us,

That it's also time for fishing.

Fishing,
Not off the jetties or boats on the beautiful beaches of South Australia,
Fishing not for Tommys or whiting and gar,

But for people,

'Follow me,
And I will make you fish for people'.

God wants all people caught up in the net of his kingdom,

So He calls his disciples to join him on this great mission,

Of announcing to the world that in Christ Jesus the rule and reign of God has come,

And amidst all the bad news of our world,
This is good news.

That God comes to us in Christ Jesus,

That as we follow him in his kingdom we are called to serve in everlasting righteousness,
Innocence and blessedness.

The time has been fulfilled and so the time for reaching out with this good news is now,

There is an urgency to the mission of the Church.

Now, to be sure,
not every Christian is called to preaching and teaching,
to frontline evangelism and mission.

Just like not every person on the fishing boat need to be holding the nets and dragging in the fish.

But no matter what task you have,
The mission of the fishing boat is to catch fish,

And the mission of the Church is to cast the net of God's gracious invitation to those around us,

So that many more can be brought to Christ Jesus.

As a congregation,
In all our activities and planning for the year head,
Let's keep this focus in mind.

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CONCLUSION

Time is a mysterious thing.

In the workings of God,
he too has particular times he intervenes to act,

in judgment,
And for salvation.

In Christ Jesus the time has been fulfilled,

And so the time to repent, believe and follow is here.

And so,
I'll leave you with words written to the early Christians in Ephesus,

'Be careful then how you live,
No as unwise people but as wise,
*Making the most of the **time** – or 'redeeming the time' –*

Because the days are evil'. Eph 5:15

God grant it for Jesus' sake, Amen.