

“COME WITH ME”

Mark 1:14-20 [MW18-02]

Sermon preached by Rev Wayne Thornton at Mangawhai and Wellsford, Sunday 21 January 2018

What kind of things might you be found doing at this time of year ... ?

- imagine Jesus coming up to you while you were doing something like that and saying: “come with me”
- there's me in the middle of writing a sermon
you might be loading the car to go for a picnic
weeding the garden (you'd probably be keen to leave that!)
painting the house
about to go to the movies

Jesus says: “come with me”

- do you drop everything and go?
is it practical, realistic, sensible
to leave what you are doing, to leave others where they are
- and go ...

I invite you to hold on to that thought and your response

- and also keep in mind these words from Joy Cowley:

The call gets louder and more insistent.

“Leave your boat. Forget your nets.

You are hungering for more than fish.

*Come with me, discover the breath of my life in yours,
and your soul will be filled with the goodness of God.”*

In our gospel reading this morning

- in one sense Jesus is offering Simon, Andrew, James and John the chance of a lifetime
- here in Aotearoa New Zealand, what do so many young boys aspire to?
... represent their country at sports, wear the silver fern, be an All Black
- in first century Palestine young boys aspired to be a famous rabbi
rabbis were the rockstars in Jesus' time
- they were the ones people looked up to
they were the ones guys wanted to be
or at the very least, be a disciple of

In first century Palestine all Jewish boys were schooled in the Torah

- what we know as the first five books of the Bible, at the local synagogue
after 5 years, those who showed the most promise went on to the next level
the rest returned home to learn a trade or work in the family business
- after the next five years or so of learning
the very best went on to become disciples of a rabbi
the others went back home to the ordinary business of earning a living
- the interesting thing is those young men who were eligible
chose which rabbi they would follow
chose from among the local rabbis, which one they would become a disciple of

Imagine Steve Hansen coming to a 20 year old guy at work

- may be this young bloke's a panel beater, may be he's a law clerk doesn't matter
- Steve Hansen goes up and says to this young guy: "come with me, you're in the All Black squad"
- what do you think the response would be???

It seems that a huge aspiration of Hebrew boys and teenagers

- was to follow, and then hopefully become, a famous rabbi and they did this with as much energy, desire, enthusiasm as a young person today might be keen to represent our country at the Olympics, on the sportsfield, at an e-game tournament

In our gospel reading, Jesus comes along in that Steve Hansen role

- when Jesus showed up on the shore of Lake Galilee in spite of there being no such thing as no tv news, texting, facebook, magazines, newspapers, google or any kind of advertising
- no one had any doubt about who he was he was a rabbi who was making a name for himself
- Andrew, Simon, James and John would have been very aware of that

In a complete reversal of roles, they were hand-picked by Jesus

- these four blokes had been left out and passed over they'd had to get on with the ordinary business of earning a living they'd done their time at the synagogue and they were not chosen
- no wonder they were so keen that when Jesus said: "come with me" they literally dropped everything and went with him
- it was every young man's dream ...

John, James, Simon and Andrew didn't need to be asked twice

- sure they had no idea it would go the way it did and I'm sure they wondered what the heck this "fishing for people" thing was but they went
- they did know it would be very different from fishing on the lake they left what they knew they left what was safe and comfortable
- because of the invitation: "come with me" because it didn't come from just anyone
- it was not just the invitation, not just the words but who said them

"Come with me"

- most probably none of us will be in the situation Andrew, Simon, James and John found themselves in where Jesus physically and actually came to where they were
- but it could happen and it could even happen that you might actually hear Jesus' voice it is possible
- however today, in this reading from Mark's gospel Jesus makes an invitation which is for each one of us: "come with me"

This is an invitation from no ordinary person

- it comes from the Son of God
from the Creator of all that is, who left the heavens to share our life
from the one who lived, died on the cross and rose to new life
in order that we might have life in all its fullness
- this one calls your name and says: “come with me”

What might that mean ... ?

- at the very least it asks you to be very aware of where Jesus is going
right here, right now
- it calls you to see where Jesus is present in your day to day life
and be with him

Mark's gospel is sometimes characterised as the “immediate” or “action” gospel

- because it has an almost breathless pace
saying things like “immediately ...” “right away ...” “then ...” “next ...”
“as soon as ...” “after this ...” “at once ...”
- and it's the same with this account of Andrew, Simon, James and John
responding to Jesus' invitation
but I checked the accounts in Matthew's and Luke's gospel
and we get the same kind of picture

Jesus says “come with me” to Andrew and Simon

- right then the two brothers dropped their nets and went with him
then “at once” Jesus asked James and John to come with him
they left their father in the boat with the hired workers
and went with him
- they dropped their nets and left some people ...

It's still almost the beginning of the year, it's still January – the first month

- an appropriate time to consider such things
Jesus might be asking you to “drop” something
or leave something behind this year
- not necessarily leaving your job or your usual situation
but you may be being invited to consider a particular change
- such things can seem a bit (or more!) scary
however remember that Andrew and the others saw this as an invitation
an invitation to a life of promise and opportunity
- so I encourage you to be open to all of this at the beginning of 2018

Often it seems we are told that we are a “sent” people

- that we are to “go”
go where Jesus leads
- the invitation this morning is to “come”
come *with* Jesus, with Jesus

For most of us this will probably not involve a change in where we live

- it may involve a change in people we spend time with
in the things we do
that's not for me to say ...

What is for me to say is to really strongly encourage you to hear this invitation
from Jesus: "come with me"
to reflect on it and respond to it

So let me encourage this reflection by reading Joy Cowley's "The Call"
- which is where those earlier words came from
after this there will be a time of silence to allow this process to continue ...
- then I'll close in prayer

"The Call" (from *Come and See*, page 22-23)

*At first the call is gentle, no more than a whisper,
a small ripple in the flow of a busy day
and it's only the third or fourth time
that I stop to listen and then laugh. Who? Me?
This is silly. I must be imagining things.
And anyway, I'm the independent kind,
not made to follow a leader.*

*The call gets louder and more insistent.
"Leave your boat. Forget your nets.
You are hungering for more than fish.
Come with me, discover the breadth of my life in yours,
and your soul will be filled with the goodness of God."*

*The call is real enough, but I still don't follow.
To tell the truth I feel rather uncomfortable.
Why should the Holy One seek me out?
I know boats and nets and how to sell fish
and that's all there is to my experience.
Shouldn't he call a better qualified person,
someone who's been trained for discipleship?*

*But He keeps on saying it. "Come with me."
And when I lift me eyes from my boats, my nets
and a preoccupation with my separate existence,
I see a world made large by his love.
For the call is made not to me alone
but to every living soul on this planet.
We all have the light of his life in us.
We are all made to feats on the goodness of God.*

Time for reflection

Prayer