

JESUS CALLS THE DISCIPLES

Mark 1:1 – 3:35

Key Verses 3:13, 14

"Jesus went up on a mountainside and called to him those he wanted, and they came to him. He appointed twelve--designating them apostles --that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach."

We thank God for the study of John's Gospel from February last year to this April. John testified that Jesus is God and that all who believe in Him have eternal life (John 1:1,14; 3:16). Jesus revealed himself to his disciples as God's Son and called them his friends (John 15:14). Then he helped them confess their love for him and instructed them to feed his sheep (John 21:15). Let us thank God for the servanthip of God's servant and all messengers through whom we have been able to deepen our love relationship with Jesus and now, like John, defend and spread the faith in Jesus, the Son of God.

This summer we are studying the Gospel of Mark in five lessons. Mark emphasizes Jesus' spiritual authority and servanthip in his Gospel. Mark 10:45 says, "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." We will see that Jesus' authority comes from His hope, His shepherd's heart, His life-giving servanthip, His faith in God, and His obedience to the point of death on the cross.

In Mark 1 - 3, Mark records the beginning of Jesus' ministry, beginning with John the Baptist's preaching, Jesus' baptism and temptation (1:1-13), Jesus' ministry in Galilee (1:14-2:12), the appointment of the Twelve (3:13-19), and Jesus' witness to the scribes and his relatives (3:20-35). We see in this passage how Jesus led with authority, namely preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God and restoring and healing numerous people. We also see how he called

the disciples and appointed the twelve. His authority came from his hope and vision. Today, we want to know Jesus' hope and vision with which he served and called the disciples as fishers of men and appointed twelve of them as apostles.

1. The Beginning of Jesus' Ministry (1:1-45)

Let's look at verse 1: "The beginning of the gospel about Jesus Christ, the Son of God." "Gospel" means good news or good tidings. Mark calls the account of Jesus' life and ministry good news. It is the good news that the Son of God came to give his life as a ransom for many. Look at verse 2. Jesus' ministry was prepared - as Isaiah had predicted - by John the Baptist. John was in the wilderness preaching the baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. Many came to him, and he baptized them in the Jordan and then testified about Jesus (1:7,8), "And this was his message: "After me will come one more powerful than I, the thongs 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." This is how Jesus' ministry was prepared: That sinners learned to repent in order to receive forgiveness of sins and the Holy Spirit through faith in Jesus.

Let's look at verses 9-13. Jesus now came from Nazareth to the Jordan River and was baptized by John. Jesus did not need a baptism of repentance. But he thus continued the work of God that God had prepared through John, testifying to his decision to

obediently accept the calling as the Lamb of God. Then the Holy Spirit came visibly like a dove upon him. God confirmed by a voice from heaven, "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased." Through his obedience, Jesus received authority to begin his messianic work. Immediately after his investiture, Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness and tempted by Satan, but he overcame the temptation with the Word of God.

Verses 14ff tell about how Jesus preached the gospel of the kingdom of God, and called the first disciples.

First, Jesus preached the good news of the kingdom of God. Let us read 1:14, 15: "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 is near. Repent and believe the good news!" "

Jesus testified that the kingdom of God had come and urged people to repent and believe in the gospel. In Jesus, the kingdom of God has come. By repenting and believing in this fact of the gospel, sinners are freed from the dominion of sin and begin a new life under Jesus' lordship. Chapter 1 repeatedly speaks of the fact that there were many sick and possessed people in those days. Even in the synagogue there were those possessed by the unclean spirit (1:23). The religious leaders had no authority (1:22). Jesus, however, had authority. When Jesus preached, even the evil spirits went out (1:27). The people listened to him with joy and marveled greatly, exclaiming, "What is this? A new teaching in authority!" Jesus' authority came from the Word of God.

A leader needs the authority of the Word of God. A young leader came as a student missionary to a foreign country that was known as a stronghold of humanism. Not even the church preached the gospel anymore. The missionary saw how the young people were suffering under the power of sin and death because of false teachings, especially relativism. With the word of God

from Mark 11:22, he decided to devote himself to Bible study and serve them with the word of God. Through faith in God, he attracted God's authority and fought day and night against the lies of godless humanism. His Bible students heard the word of God in authority through him. He experienced many miracles as the evil spirits went out, the hearts of proud people were touched, and Germany was changed from a stronghold of humanism to a shepherd nation. Jesus began his work by preaching the gospel with authority: "The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!" Without the Word of God, people are like lost sheep and helpless under the power of sin. They need a shepherd who preaches the Word of God with authority. Jesus was that shepherd who brought them the good news so that they might receive the kingdom of God through repentance and faith in the gospel.

Second, Jesus began his ministry by calling disciples. Let's read verses 1:16-18, "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 make you fishers of men." At once they left their nets and followed him." A little later, Jesus also saw James and John in the boat with their father Zebedee, mending their nets, and called them to follow Him as well. Chapter 2 records that he saw Levi the son of Alphaeus sitting at the toll and called him, "Come, follow me!" Immediately at the beginning of his ministry, Jesus called these disciples to be fishers of men. His choice amazes us. Wasn't he supposed to call the best graduates of Pharisee High School? Jesus began his work with fishermen and tax collectors, seemingly ordinary people, losers and outsiders. Nor did he first make a test of character. Didn't Jesus know how selfish, haughty, cold and narrow-minded they were? But Jesus called them and said, "Come, follow me, and I will make you fishers of men!" When they heard Jesus' call, they responded immediately. They got up and left everything and followed him.

Jesus called his disciples with authority. He could do this because he had God's hope for them. He revealed to them right at the beginning the grace of God and the purpose of the calling: to make them fishers of men. In their hearts, these men knew that being fishermen could not be their real goal in life. Of course, they had to feed themselves and their families. But catching fish was not their reason for being. According to Genesis 1:28, God created man for mission. Therefore, a person will not be blessed until he can live a fruitful life for God. Until now, no one had spoken to them about this, their actual goal in life. But Jesus spoke to them with the hope of God. Moreover, they recognized in him their good shepherd. Jesus wanted to take care of them and help them to lead the new blessed life according to God's grace: "Come, follow me, and I will make you fishers of men!" When Jesus called them like this, they were moved by the hope of God. His calling with the hope of God had authority to lead them to an immediate life decision. They left everything and followed him.

We see God's hope in Levi. He was a hopeless person. He had betrayed his identity as an Israelite in order to earn money. However, even though he earned a lot of money, he was so unhappy that he cried out every night. But Jesus saw him with the hope of God to change him into a shepherd and evangelist. Levi personally accepted Jesus' Immanuel grace. Jesus' grace healed him and changed him into Matthew, who brought Jesus' words of life to countless people. Jesus is the God of hope and the spiritual doctor. For him, there is no such thing as a hopeless case.

As a student, I had the best conditions and a good place to study. But I could not see any meaning or goal. I withdrew more and more to my room and avoided other people and finally did not even go to the lectures. Spiritually I was dead and humanly I was a dropout. But my Bible teacher preached on Paul's goal in life from Philippians 3:10, to know Christ, and called me with the hope of

God and invited me to follow him as a shepherd and prayer worker in the world campus mission. Because of God's hope, I was allowed to make an immediate decision to follow Jesus, starting from early morning prayer and life together. It is God's grace that I was allowed to meet a shepherd who had God's hope and called young people with authority, so that I can now follow Jesus as a shepherd of His flock, Bible teacher and spiritual father for countless descendants!

Our God is the God of hope. God said to Abram, a seventy-five-year-old childless man (Genesis 12:2), "I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing." God raised him for 25 years and made him the father of many nations. Jesus saw the fishermen, who cast their nets into the sea, and the tax collector, who counted his money, as fishers of men and called them to follow him. We sometimes wonder how Jesus' work can happen among the young students of this generation. But it always happens where someone sees young people with the hope of God and addresses them and invites them to discipleship to lead them to the blessed life as fishers of men. Jesus, the God of hope, will start a new work among the students in every faculty of the University of Bonn, the University of Applied Sciences Bonn-Rhein-Sieg and the University of Koblenz also this year according to Nehemiah 2:17.

We may have God's hope also for the next generation. Some people are surprised that we invite children and young people to give lectures on inductive Bible study, to preach, or to join us in early morning prayer. They say they are too young or interested in other things. But Jesus has hope to use them as His living witnesses and global spiritual leaders. The hope of God gave us parents and co-workers authority and mobilized the next generation co-workers to work together, and the Holy Spirit worked in them. Samuel Abraham is graduating from high school these days with excellent grades, perhaps even as one of the top of the

grade. But because his parents and grandparents live with the hope of God, he may live with the incomparable grace of being a servant of God's word like the prophet Samuel and a blessing and father of faith like Abraham.

We are living in a time when some communities have almost completely lost their youth. But among the youth of the Gideon, Ezekiel and Josiah teams, God is working with His hope. They no longer conform to this world or are like chaff blown away by the wind, but follow Jesus as people of mission and grow in the grace of God into Bible teachers for Europe, authors of Daily Bread, and fathers and mothers of faith as far away as Muslim countries, Cambodia and North Korea.

Let us read again 1:17: "Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will make you fishers of men." Jesus' authority came from the hope of God. The hope of God awakened spiritually dead bones and made them leave everything and follow Jesus as fishers of men. May God give us God's hope for the students, classmates, children and youth.

2. Jesus' Installation of the Apostles (2:1 - 3:35)

Look at 2:1-2, "A few days later, when Jesus again entered Capernaum, the people heard that he had come home. So many gathered that there was no room left, not even outside the door, and he preached the word to them.." Chapters 2 and 3 record the powerful work of God through Jesus' leadership. At the same time, we see the increasing confrontation with the religious authorities.

In Capernaum, Jesus gave a new life to a paralytic by forgiving his sins (2:5): "Son, your sins are forgiven." Some criticized this as blasphemy because they did not recognize Jesus' authority as the Son of God. Jesus, however, revealed his authority to forgive sins on earth by allowing the paralytic to get up and walk.

He then sat at table with Levi and many sinners and tax collectors. The Pharisees criticized him. They themselves knew no mercy and were therefore not shepherds but preventers. Jesus rebuked them: "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners." Then the Pharisees, full of self-righteousness, criticized his disciples for not fasting as much as they did, and for plucking ears of corn on the Sabbath. The Pharisees did not know the joy of fellowship with Jesus, nor did they understand the Scriptures. Instead, they set their own rules above the Word of God. Finally, they even lurked in the synagogue to see if he would heal a man with a withered hand on the Sabbath. Jesus looked at them all around with anger and healed this lost sheep. The Pharisees now took counsel as to how they would kill him. Jesus escaped with his disciples, but still many came to him, and Jesus healed them.

Jesus led the people with authority as the good shepherd, caring for each sheep and healing them. The Pharisees, on the other hand, led out of their own righteousness. They had no heart for the people, but even exploited them for their own advantage. Thus, they eventually became the enemies of God. True leadership is done with the love and authority of the Holy Spirit. Where there are such leaders, the people are happy and follow them wherever they go.

Let us read 3:13: "Jesus went up on a mountainside and called to him those he wanted, and they came to him." Jesus went up a mountain to pray. Luke says that he prayed all night (Luke 6:12). After praying, he called to him those he wanted, and they went to him. Verse 14 says, "He appointed twelve--designating them apostles--that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach." Of those who followed him, he called twelve to him and appointed them as apostles. Why twelve, why not 120 or 500? Jesus appointed twelve because he wanted to give them his full attention. For him, each of the twelve was a whole people. He called those he

wanted, each one by name. God's work is not only the work of great numbers, but also the work of intensive disciple-making. Jesus saw each of these twelve as leaders for the world mission. He appointed twelve with the vision for the world mission that the gospel of the kingdom of God would be preached to every creature (Mark 16:15). Because of God's vision for each one of them, twelve was already a large number.

At each of the Global Leadership Empowerment Forums 2018 to 2020 so far, God's servants put much into helping a few young people intensively that each of them grows as a self-motivated responsible Bible teacher who is able to raise disciples in turn. They helped a young man, in the midst of various challenges and temptations, to coordinate the preparations, prepare the Factual Study and various lectures, prepare questionnaires, lead the Bible study, and set up a follow-up program. As a result, the young man learned faith and leadership like Nehemiah. It happened with the vision for world mission. The vision made God's servants realize how precious one person is. To God, one person is the whole world. A young leader or a house church learning from Jesus is like a whole nation or army. GLEF became such a work as the appointment of the Twelve, through which the campus mission through UBF spreads to the ends of the earth in the spirit of the previous generation.

Let us read 3:13-15: "Jesus went up on a mountainside and called to him those he wanted, and they came to him. He appointed twelve--designating them apostles--that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach and to have authority to drive out demons." Jesus appointed the twelve to send them out to preach and to cast out evil spirits. Jesus wanted to continue his work of salvation through them. To do this, they had to be with him. Practically, he took them to be near him and learn from him. He shared his life with these twelve disciples, although it was anything but easy. They were with him from early morning until late evening. In

those three and a half years with Jesus, they learned Jesus' heart, Jesus' mind, and Jesus' hope and vision. They learned about Jesus' life with the Word of God. They saw how he ministered and led with the hope and love of God. Finally, they saw his life with faith. God's Spirit worked in them. They were changed from self-centered, selfish, carnal-minded people to spiritual-minded people and leaders. In the end, they had a personal love relationship with Jesus. Now they themselves were empowered to raise up disciples. In those three and a half years with Jesus, they learned incomparably more than they could have learned in a hundred years at the best universities in the world. Through these twelve, God changed the world. The work of making disciples is God's grace for fallen sinners. It is also God's wisdom to reach all sinners, even to the ends of the earth.

From Jesus, we learn to raise a man with the vision for the world mission and share our lives with him. Like Jesus, we may open our hearts, our homes, our wallets, our schedules, and use our imagination and creativity and effort to help those entrusted to us grow in blessed relationship so that God's work of world mission is done through them. A shepherdess unconditionally accepted a young Muslim man who was full of questions and doubts, and helped him with the vision that through him many questioning Muslims would know Jesus as the way, the truth, and the life. He moved to another country but still remembers her servanthip and has already witnessed to many Muslims who Jesus is and what he has done. The vision of God gives us authority not only to call disciples, but also to help them live with the Word of God, with the love of God, and with faith in one-on-one Bible study teams and through life fellowship and leadership training on a daily basis. In short, through Bible study in life fellowship. Even if we can only help one person in learning the life of Jesus, we are serving the world mission.

Let's look at verses 22-30. Jesus' empowering ministry also caused opposition to grow

stronger. The scribes accused Jesus of casting out evil spirits through their chief. They could not deny Jesus' authority, so they slandered him as Beelzebul. In doing so, they blasphemed the Holy Spirit. Jesus rebuked them clearly and warned them that this sin cannot be forgiven. Jesus' work experienced opposition from the beginning. From the temptation of Satan to the hostility of the Pharisees to malicious slander, Jesus' work was constantly hindered. Jesus struggled to honor God with the patience and truth of God's Word.

Look at verses 31-35. The expectation of relatives also hindered his work. His relatives also had to learn to understand his mission. Jesus said it: those who do the will of God were his true relatives. Later, his brothers became good prayer workers among the first Christians.

Today we learn about the beginning of Jesus' ministry. Jesus began his work by preaching the Word of God in the midst of opposition and obstacles, calling the disciples and appointing twelve of them as apostles. Jesus' authority came from his hope and vision. May God give us grace to appoint disciples of Jesus and to experience how God uses Germany as a shepherd nation and Europe as a missionary sending continent.