

Good News – Passage (Mark 1. 14, 15)

Intro to Good News

If you take a thermometer to our culture and asked “what do you think about Christianity?”, I wonder how many people would describe Christianity as good news? At its heart its all goodness and that its newsworthy? I don’t think that the % who responded in that way would be very high in Bath in 2021? And what about us? If someone came up to us in the street and Said X I know you’re a Christian why is it good news what would you say? What response would you give to capture the essence of the goodness of Christianity and the News at the centre that would grab someone’s attention?

We’re going to spend the beginning of the summer term looking at the Good News of Christianity. What’s worth celebrating, and what can we share with others? Each preacher will bring a passage that captures the heart of the good news for them. We hope it helps you as you seek to share the good news with others.

A number of years ago a book was written (that I’ve mentioned before) called “Unchristian”. It was a book surveying the younger generation in America about what they thought Christianity was all about and how the message of “Good News” had been lost. (the predominant impressions were of being hypocritical, get saved, antihomosexual, sheltered, too political, judgemental), so somehow if WE as christians are Christ’s ambassadors on earth somehow we’re not getting the message across.

Passage

This is how Mark begins his account of Jesus’s life *“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!’ – Mark 1. 14, 15*

The word gospel, which Christians often use is translated from the Greek word in the Bible *Euangelion* which is translated here in the NIV as ‘good news’. Jesus went proclaiming the good news of God and Repent and believe the good news. *Euangelion* combines two Greek words - *angelos* which is the word for ‘announcing news’ with *eu-* which means ‘joyful’, so A Literal translation is – **‘news that brings joy’**

It wasn’t a religious term it was used in the culture of the time to announce history-making, life-shaping news, as opposed to just routine daily news. So for example it was used to announce the news of a new emperor ascending to the throne or a great

battle victory. This was historical news that had magnitude and would change lives and their status forever.

In the use of ' Good News, 'Right here we see the difference between Christianity and all other religions or other philosophies, they all offer advice – Christianity is news. Other religions and philosophies say this is what you have to do to be acceptable or work your way to God. Christianity is news of what Jesus Christ has done for you.

However good advice is it ultimately weighs you down, because you've got to live up to it, News is all about what the person of Jesus Christ has done for you in history and simply needs to be believed and received.

So what is the good news of the Kingdom of God?

In the past few years I've shared what a couple of theologians have said at capturing what the good news of Christianity is all about. One of the most renowned thinkers about the Christian faith was asked the substance of this question by a group of students – Karl Barth answered "Jesus loves me this I know, for the Bible tells me so" – "Jesus loves me this I know for the Bible tells me so"

A few years ago I encouraged some of us to read the book BothAnd by Rich Nathan – this was his stab at the question (RN) "The good News is that the crucified and Risen Jesus is Lord, and that his life, death and resurrection began to transform the world and that this transformation can happen to us if we trust in and receive Jesus as our Lord and Saviour. We get to partner with God in the great project of world transformation. Christ lived, died and rose again and gave us the Holy Spirit to transform the world. The process will not be completed until the Lord returns."

The events of Easter that we celebrated last week are absolutely central to an understanding of what is at the heart of the Good News we have to share. Here's another version of capturing the heart of the good news

"We were created by a good loving God to be in whole and healthy relationships with God our King , with one another and creation. But we chose to be our own king, going our own way, choosing selfishness and self-absorption in the garden of Eden and as a consequence our relationships became broken and fractured. As a consequence the world is not the way its supposed to be. It's marred by wars, family breakdowns, racism, sexism and class wars, sickness and disease, anxiety and fear, and the pain of death itself - its not the way it was intended. The true king in Jesus (God's only Son) came back into the world to heal, save and restore our relationships. Jesus is that King, that

saviour. That's why Easter is such big news! - Jesus is that King, that saviour, that Healer."

Like when a child blossoms and thrives under a loving, wise and good parent, so do we begin to heal under the royal hands of the risen and ascended Jesus when we trust in Him.

Jesus came proclaiming and announcing the good news of God's kingdom and calling people to believe. To repent and turn away from their lives of selfishness and self-absorption and believe in the Eternal King.

Conclusion

I passionately believe people are still longing to find a true king to follow and believe in, a community of God's grace, love and good news. A place and a people of God's presence where they can find healing and hope again, a community where they can find healing, become their true selves and thrive.

So what do you think of this news? Are you prepared to believe that Jesus was THE ONE?

Are you prepared to repent and turn to Him This morning? To believe (Cranhill)

Lets Pray