

Third Sunday after Epiphany

OLD TESTAMENT – Jonah 3:1-5, 10

Then the word of the LORD came to Jonah the second time, saying, 2 “Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and call out against it the message that I tell you.” 3 So Jonah arose and went to Nineveh, according to the word of the LORD. Now Nineveh was an exceedingly great city, three days' journey in breadth. 4 Jonah began to go into the city, going a day's journey. And he called out, “Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!” 5 And the people of Nineveh believed God. They called for a fast and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them to the least of them.

3:1 *second time.* God made a new beginning with Jonah, giving him a second chance. (TLSB)

Peter would later experience a similar reinstatement into his office as an apostle (John 21:15-19). When Peter called the Lord “the God of all grace” (1 Peter 5:10), he showed he fully understood how the Lord could re-commission him by grace, pure and undeserved grace. (PBC)

3:2 The repetition of Yahweh’s call to Jonah using the same verbs in 1:2 and 3:2 accents an ongoing theme in the book. What Yahweh commands, says, and does will eventually accomplish his will. Even if Yahweh’s Word is not heeded or fulfilled immediately, as it is not in chapters 1–2, it will be fulfilled in time, as it is in chapter 3. He will not be thwarted. After all, he is the God of the heavens, who made the sea and the dry land (1:9). (CC)

Nineveh that great city – Jonah 4:11 mentions there were “a hundred and twenty thousand people who cannot tell their right hand from their left.” We understand this to refer to children who had not yet reached the age of discretion (Deut 1:39). Adding an older brother or sister and two parents to the family of each of the 120,000 gives a rough estimate of perhaps 500,000 inhabitants in Nineveh. (PBC)

the message I give you. A prophet was the bearer of a message from God, not primarily a foreteller of coming events. (CSB)

God would give Jonah the words to speak against Nineveh, reflecting God’s will rather than Jonah’s. (TLSB)

Literally, the proclamation I am about to say to you. The first time the Lord told Jonah to “preach against [Nineveh] because of its wickedness has come up before me” (1:2). The second time the Lord’s directive to Jonah was less specific, implying the Lord would brief Jonah on the way regarding what to preach. (PBC)

3:3 *arose and went.* But reluctantly, still wanting the Ninevites to be destroyed (4:1–5). (CSB)

Jonah had learned his lesson and now followed God’s directions. (TLSB)

Summary of Scene 4

Jonah 3:1–3a does not explicitly state that Jonah has repented, that the experience with the sea and the great fish have humbled him, that Yahweh’s salvation (2:9) prompts his obedience, or that he now plans to change his theology to accommodate God’s desire to save all people, even pagan Gentiles like the Ninevites (Jonah resents that in 4:1–2). (CC)

So why does Jonah go to Nineveh this time? After all, this was a demanding journey of about five hundred miles from the Mediterranean coast across desert routes. The approximate travel time in antiquity

from Jerusalem to Nineveh is estimated to have been between a month and forty-five days, based on caravan speed. So why go? (CC)

One answer might be that Jonah realizes he cannot escape Yahweh. (CC)

Another answer as to why Jonah goes to Nineveh this time might be that he hopes or anticipates that the Ninevites will not respond, in which case they would be destroyed. (CC)

Or perhaps Jonah goes to the great city because of his renewed faith. After all, Yahweh had saved him from the death he surely knew he deserved. (CC)

But if this is true, it will become apparent in chapter 4 that Jonah is still *simul iustus et peccator*, “saint and sinner at the same time,” and this to the very end of the narrative. (CC)

very exceedingly great city.† See 4:11, which says the city had more than 120,000 inhabitants. Archaeological excavations indicate that the later imperial city of Nineveh was about eight miles around. The fact, however, that “a visit required three days” may suggest a larger area, such as the four-city complex of Nineveh, Rehoboth Ir, Calah and Resen mentioned in Ge 10:11–12. Greater Nineveh covered an area of some 60 miles in circumference. On the other hand, “three days” may have been a conventional way of describing a medium-length distance (see Ge 30:36; Ex 3:18; Jos 9:16–17). Or the term may refer to a “preaching circuit” through the city’s gates and plazas. (CSB)

Indicates not Nineveh’s size, but God’s concern for the city. (TLSB)

Here were stationed the fierce troops and the swift cavalry of the king. The citizens of Nineveh felt secure behind its massive walls – 100 feet high and broad enough for three chariots to be driven abreast on the roadway running along its top. (PBC)

three days journey – There are basically three interpretations.

1. The three days was the time required to walk the circumference of the city.
2. Another interpretation understands the three days’ journey as the time required to walk through Nineveh.
3. The three days’ walk is interpreted by many to be the time required to travel the main streets and neighborhoods.

This commentary prefers the third interpretation. (PBC)

3:4 *a day’s journey*. On the first day of Jonah’s anticipated three-day visit, the people of Nineveh already responded to his message. (TLSB)

FORTY MORE DAYS – The number forty is often associated with testing and judgment. (PBC)

be overthrown – Or, “overturned.” The message that God told Jonah to deliver may be understood in two ways: Jonah hoped that Nineveh would be overturned in destruction; instead, the city was overturned in repentance and faith. God then overturned His decision for judgment and granted them mercy (v 10). Nineveh changed and God changed His judgment, but Jonah did not. After Jonah delivered God’s message, nothing more is heard of him in ch 3. (TLSB)

We can learn a double lesson from Jonah’s effective preaching. First, he was brief and to the point. He let the Word do the talking for him. Second, Jonah did not seek to draw attention to himself by his preaching. (PBC)

3:5–6 *fast ... sackcloth ... dust*. Customary signs of humbling oneself in repentance (see 1Ki 21:27; Ne 9:1). (CSB)

Here is the greatest miracle in the book of Jonah and one of the greatest in all of Scripture. An entire city brought to repentance. Think of it – perhaps a half-million people. What a miracle of mercy! (PBC)

Nineveh’s repentance manifests itself in a form that rivals even the most pious Israelite times of repentance. Not only the king, but all the people and even the livestock put on sackcloth and fast (Jonah 3:5–8). Jonah 3:8 is worded to suggest that just like the people, the livestock too covered themselves with sackcloth! In that way, the Ninevites’ penitence exceeds any recorded for Israel. (CC)

believed God. This may mean that the Ninevites genuinely turned to the Lord (cf. Mt 12:41). On the other hand, their belief in God may have gone no deeper than had the sailors’ fear of God (see note on 1:16). At least they took the prophet’s warning seriously and acted accordingly. (CSB)

The Holy Spirit working through the Word convinced the people of Nineveh that God would indeed overthrow their city if they did not repent. This miracle of faith was even greater than Jonah’s rescue by a great fish. Clement of Rome (1st Epistle): “Jonah proclaimed destruction to the Ninevites; but they, repenting of their sins ... obtained salvation, although they were aliens [to the covenant] of God” (ANF 1:7). (TLSB)

The Hebrew word for “believed” is the word from which “Amen” is derived. In effect the Ninevites said “Amen, it is true.” To Jonah’s message. (PBC)

fast ... sackcloth. Traditional signs of repentance and mourning. (TLSB)

greatest ... least. Every level of Ninevite society responded to God’s Word. Their quick response was in stark contrast to Israel’s frequent hardness of heart (e.g., Nu 14:11; Dt 1:32; 2Ki 17:14). Luther: “Take note that the people of Nineveh do some things that God does not command them. Yet Jonah relates this. For instance, they fast and put on sackcloth. What does God care about fasting and sackcloth? He wants the heart; He wants to see a person’s whole life transformed. Also, God did not demand these things from them through Jonah. All He asked was that they cease their villainy.... Jonah does not praise their fasting and their sackcloth later on, but he reports that ‘they turned from their evil way’ (v. 10)” (AE 19:86). (TLSB)

3:1–5 God is concerned for all people, even those we might write off. The people of Nineveh hardly seem like “good prospects.” However, the message they hear is from God, and God makes sure that it bears the fruit of repentance. Do you assume some people are unable or unwilling to respond to the Gospel? Leave conversion in God’s hands and faithfully fulfill your role as His witness. He has promised that His Word will bear fruit, and He is concerned that all people have the opportunity to be saved. Thank God, His Word bore the fruit of repentance in Nineveh and also in your life. • Savior of the nations, keep me from doubting the effectiveness of Your Word. Amen. (TLSB)

10 When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil way, God relented of the disaster that he had said he would do to them, and he did not do it.

3:10 *God relented.* God exercised His mercy. (TLSB)

Whether all the Ninevites of that generation continued in their new faith, we do not know. No doubt many grew careless and allowed their faith to be choked off like the plant in Jesus’ parable of the sower (Matthew 13:20ff). At any rate, some 150 years later, in 612 BC, Nineveh was destroyed. Were there any believers left then? We do not know; we can only hope so. (PBC)

Luke 15:7 “I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.”

1 John 1:9 “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.”

disaster. Lit, “evil.” If the Ninevites had not repented, God would have destroyed them. “[The Ninevites] by their repentance (all of repentance) were reconciled to God and received the favor that their city was not destroyed” (Ap XIIB 69). (TLSB)

3:6–10 Jesus declared that “the men of Nineveh will rise up at the judgment ... and condemn” His own generation of hearers who failed to repent (Mt 12:41). God continues to call us to repentance for our sins of thought, word, and deed. The men of Nineveh furnish us with an example to follow. May they not condemn us on the Day of Judgment! May the Holy Spirit rather lead us daily to repent of our sins and trust Christ for pardon and peace. • Father in heaven, have mercy on me, a sinner. Grant me full confidence in the truth and power of Your Word, and give me peace. Amen. (TLSB)

Summary of Scene 5

Little effort, poor skills, a short sermon—and total success! Even with crooked human writers, Yahweh writes straight. Jonah’s message in 3:4 is concise and blunt. Jonah apparently hoped that the outcome would be the destruction of his hearers (see 4:1). His sermon says nothing explicit about salvation and states no contingencies or qualifications depending on how the Ninevites respond. At face value, the prophecy seems to assume the people will ignore it. Yet in the next verse (3:5), the pagan Gentiles believe in ways that are simply amazing! The astonishing salvation of Gentiles through faith, by the power of the preached Word, will recur on a far larger scale in the NT and in subsequent world history, as countless Gentiles are grafted into the true Israel of God through faith in Jesus Christ (Rom 10:10–17; Gal 6:16). (CC)

EPISTLE – 1 Corinthians 7:29-31

29 What I mean, brothers and sisters, is that the time is short. From now on those who have wives should live as if they do not; 30 those who mourn, as if they did not; those who are happy, as if they were not; those who buy something, as if it were not theirs to keep; 31 those who use the things of the world, as if not engrossed in them. For this world in its present form is passing away.

7:29 *brothers* – Paul now speaks with pastoral affection to the whole church, calling the Corinthians “brothers.” (CC)

Paul now speaks with pastoral affection to the whole church, calling the Corinthians “brothers” (7:29). He reminds them that they live in the last days. “The Lord is at hand” (Phil 4:5); their salvation is nearer than when they first believed (Rom 13:11); the days have been shortened (Mt 24:22). Thus they should live “eschatologically”—as people who are always aware they may have to leave this world at any moment. This heightened awareness of our transience has been well illustrated by the analogy to the terminally ill. The person who knows his remaining time is limited has a changed perspective. He sees, hears, and values everything in a new way. (CC)

time... is short. The time for doing the Lord’s work has become increasingly short. Life is fleeting, as times of persecution remind us. Do not be unduly concerned with the affairs of this world (vv. 29–31) because material things are changing and disappearing (v. 31). Some think the reference is to the Lord’s second coming. (CSB)

The end of time (cf Dn 8:19; 11:27, 29, 35). (TLSB)

During the time that remains to them in this world, believers should “focus on eternal essentials.” This does not mean they should cultivate a stoic aloofness and detachment from the concerns of the present age.⁶ But they should not let their lives be dominated by the world and its values. They should not become too preoccupied, too absorbed, too engrossed in this transient existence. Their true citizenship is in heaven (Phil 3:20; cf. Heb 13:14; 1 Pet 1:4). Thus, in the middle of all these legitimate earthly concerns, they should always have the attitude of someone who can do without the things this world has to offer (cf. Lk 14:26). (CC)

Kairos means not just “time” in general, but “an opportune or favorable period of time,” “the right season.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 7, Part 1)

The verb *sustello* means “to draw together, to limit, to shorten;” the form is perfect passive participle. Thus the translation of these words is not just “the time is short, but rather “The time period has been shortened,” During this NT age in which we live, this “now but not yet” era before the Second Coming, our lives have a particular urgency. We do not have “all the time in the world,” for the present world will soon pass away. . (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 7, Part 1)

from now on – The phrase *to loipon* means “henceforth, from this time forward.” Because of what Paul had just said about the time having been shortened, the Corinthians Christians were to live from then on in the way he was about to describe. . (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 7, Part 1)

7:30 *those who rejoice* – Mourning is a temporary feature of this present world (Rev. 21:4). Christians experience the pain of separation, but they understand that release from these things is assured. Therefore, they do not grieve as those who have no hope (1 Th 4:13). (TLSB)

Chairontes is best translated not as “happy,” but as “rejoicing” or “joyful.” Again Paul warns people against getting so wrapped up in the ups and downs of life that they lose sight of what lasts beyond life. The earthly sorrows and joys that Christian experience are passing and are not so to captivate them that they lose sight of the everlasting comfort and joy that they have in Christ. . (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 7, Part 1)

buy – People engaged in business, occupied in a station which deals exclusively with matters of this world, must not let their hearts be wrapped up in the gain and in the enjoyment of the world, but always keep their eyes directed to the greatest gift and blessing, that of the final consummation of salvation in heaven. As one commentator has it, we have here “the picture of spiritual detachment in the various situations in life.” (Kretzmann)

had no goods – Because of the temporary nature of all things in this world, we do not really “own” any earthly thing in an ultimate or lasting sense. Therefore, we are to regard such things in the proper way; that is, as stewards of God’s gifts and resources. . (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 7, Part 1)

1 Timothy 6:7 “For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it.”

7:31 *had no dealings with* – A literal translation has a slightly different connotation: “Those who use the world as if not overusing it.” Paul, then, is speaking not just about “things,” but about all the affairs and doings of the world. As ones who live in the world but are not of the world, we are to “use the world” in moderation, so to speak, and not in such a fashion that we become engrossed and absorbed in its affairs. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 7, Part 1)

present form – Everything will be dissolved to make way for the new heavens and new earth (2 Pt 3:13). (TLSB)

passing away – Describing the end of this world (cf 2 Pt 3:10). (TLSB)

Even right now, not the present tense, the form of this world is passing away. Why, then, should someone invest an entire life in such a thing that is decaying and will be destroyed? This theme of the passing away of the old world and the coming of the new is evocative of Holy Baptism, in which we ourselves passed away and then were made new. We were buried with Christ and raised with him by water and the Word (Col 2:12; Rom 6:3-5). Christ is the center and the substance of the new creation; therefore, when we are in him by Baptism and faith, we ourselves are made heirs of the glory of the new heavens and the new earth. . (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 7, Part 1)

Matthew 6:19-21 “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

GOSPEL – Mark 1:14-20

14 Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, 15 and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.”

1:14-15 As noted above, verses 14-15 have already been covered in the *Notes* for The Gospel for Epiphany III. Therefore, they are not treated here. But several observations are made here. (Buls)

There is a sense in which the Temptation of Jesus and also His suffering and death is the preaching of Law. They show us how dearly it cost the Son of God to redeem us from sin, death and the devil. He came not to be served but to serve, to give His life as a ransom for many, which means all. The sinless Son of God took my place when He was actually and severely tempted by Satan for forty days. The sinless Son of God took my place when He was despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. The sinless Son of God took my place when He laid down His life and took it again. If it cost Him that dearly I must confess my sins. But I must also believe the Gospel. "If ever we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." 1 John 1:9. (Buls)

1:14 *After John was put in prison* – Mentioned in passing; 6:14-29 gives the full account of the prophet's imprisonment and execution. Mark focuses on Jesus and the ministry He is beginning. (TLSB)

It is significant that Jesus does not enter his own distinctive ministry until after John has been arrested. Mark's formulation suggests that Jesus is restrained by God from his ministry of proclamation until the Baptist is removed from the scene. His arrest indicates that the time has come for Jesus to act. Jesus enters into Galilee proclaiming the gospel of God. NOTE: When Jesus ascends the Holy Spirit leads the disciples in their proclamation. (Lane)

came into Galilee – Since the days of the Judges this large territory had been exposed to political and military aggression from the north (Syria, Assyria, etc) and to the corrosive moral and religious influences of a pagan environment. At the time of Jesus the people of Galilee were a mixture of Jews and Gentiles,

pagan people, by and large. These people who were sitting in spiritual darkness saw a great Light, Jesus. (B)

ēlthen He “came.” Directly, with business on his mind. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 1)

the good news of God. The good news from, as well as about, God. (CSB)

“the gospel of God.” Mark does not spend time defining the Gospel of God. He wants us to find our place in it. So our interest in whether the genitive means the Gospel is about God or from God (perhaps both are intended) isn’t what Mark has in mind. He wants us to repent and believe! (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 1)

1:15 *the time – peplērōtai:* This is the *kairos*. The time of waiting has been filled. Now is the decisive time for action. Seize the opportunity. This is Kingdom time. Mark, like Luke and John, uses the term “kingdom of God.” Matthew uses “kingdom of heaven.” The evangelists equate the Kingdom itself with Jesus himself, who is God. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 1)

The time that has come is *kairos*, the decisive time. It is that moment when things change. Here the prophecies of the Messiah have been fulfilled. The perfect tense indicates Jesus’ arrival has come, but it also has lasting significance. The passive shows this momentous moment is God’s doing and not some natural course of events. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 1)

The kingdom of God – The “kingdom” is the rule, or reign, of God. The Kingdom was present then as Jesus stood proclaiming—in authority. It is present now as Jesus’ ascension has him sitting at God’s right hand ruling, particularly on behalf of the Church. But God’s kingdom will come on the Last Day, when every knee will bow and every tongue will confess him as Lord. The expectations of the people whom Jesus is calling to repent and believe were close to the mark: sin destroyed; God’s people released from poverty, hunger, and disease; economic prosperity; safety and peace in a new garden, where children and animals play together; and liberty from foreign domination. They just had the timing wrong for the complete fulfillment of this wondrous Kingdom. That Last Day ultimate expression of the Kingdom first needed to go through his Kingdom that comes to us in suffering and death. So he chooses four fishermen to follow him rather than raising up an army as the Kingdom was inaugurated then. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 1)

Jesus declares that the critical moment has come; God begins to act in a new and decisive way, bringing his promise of ultimate redemption to the point of fulfillment. The kingdom of God is a distinctive component of redemptive history. It belongs to the God who comes and invades history in order to secure man’s redemption. The emphasis falls upon God who is doing something and who will do something that radically affects men in their alienation and rebellion against himself. (Lane)

It is not a confined geographical territory, but wherever and whenever people are ruled by God through their faith in His Son. The kingdom has come in the advent of Jesus (the verb “is” emphasizes completed action), for He came to fulfill all of God’s promises about the salvation of the world. Throughout His ministry, Jesus invites people to enjoy God’s kind of rule by living under His grace and righteousness. Luther says, “Once we have His Word, true doctrine, and true worship, we also pray that His kingdom may be in us and remain in us; that is, that He may govern us in this doctrine and life, that He may protect and preserve us against all the power of the devil and his kingdom, and that He may shatter all the kingdoms that rage against His kingdom, so that it alone may remain. (TLSB)

is near. The coming of Christ (the King) brings the kingdom near to the people. (CSB)

Or, “here.” (TLSB)

The kingdom of God has drawn near, meaning that the Kingdom of God is present in its fulfillment in the person, Word and work of Jesus. (B)

repent and believe – Echoes John’s call for a public show of contrition and an adoption of a new way of life (cf vv 2–4). (TLSB)

Only through repentance can a man participate with joy in the kingdom when it does break forth. Jesus accordingly calls men to radical decision. In Jesus men are confronted by the word and act of God; he himself is the crucial term by which belief and unbelief come to fruition. The either/or character of this decision is of immense importance and permits of no postponement. (Lane)

Metanoete and *pisteuete* reinforce the sense of urgency that Mark brings to us. Again, he “cuts to the quick.” No time for fooling around. When Christ is present, the time is *kairos*. Consider the quick response of the Ninevites (Jonah 3:5). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 1)

His message led its first hearers back into the Scripture which they had heard in their synagogues and which some of them did understand in its proper religious sense. (PBC)

gospel – In its proper sense, “Gospel” does not mean the preaching of repentance, but only the preaching of God’s grace. This follows directly after the preaching of repentance. (TLSB)

1:14–15 On the one hand, Jesus’ message sounds much like the message of John and the prophets. On the other hand, the arrival of the Messiah fulfills prophecy and ushers in a new era. The Church’s message today has the same combination of new and old. True, it focuses on the age-old problem of sin and human failure. However, the Gospel delivers the forgiveness of sins and with it the hope of an eternal future with God. • Lord, help us to see You clearly and so believe that Your kingdom is still among us. Move us to a steadfast hope for the future and to daily repentance and new life. Amen. (TLSB)

Jesus Calls the First Disciples

16 Passing alongside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew the brother of Simon casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen. **17** And Jesus said to them, **“Follow me, and I will make you become fishers of men.”** **18** And immediately they left their nets and followed him. **19** And going on a little farther, he saw James the son of Zebedee and John his brother, who were in their boat mending the nets. **20** And immediately he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants and followed him.

1:16 *Sea of Galilee*. A beautiful lake, almost 700 feet below sea level, 14 miles long and 6 miles wide, fed by the waters of the upper Jordan River. It was also called the Lake of Gennesaret (Lk 5:1) and the Sea of Tiberias (Jn 6:1; 21:1). In OT times it was known as the Sea of Kinnereth (e.g., Nu 34:11). (CSB)

καὶ παράγων παρὰ τὴν θάλασσαν—Note that we do not put a paragraph break here, or (worse) start the body of the Gospel narrative here (as do those who see the introduction ending at 1:15). The transition between 1:15 and 1:16 is smooth in the Greek. See, by contrast, 1:14a, with the initial infinitive construction. The use of *παρὰ* here indicates that Jesus was walking “along” the shore, “beside” (at the side of) the lake. (CC)

Galilee was home for most of the disciples and also for the majority of the first Christians. Galilee, even though also under the control of Herod who imprisoned John the Baptist, was nevertheless very open to non-Jewish influence. When opposition surfaced in Jerusalem, Jesus moved the thrust of his ministry to Galilee. Much remained to be done and to be taught before the disciples would be prepared for Jesus' passion. (PBC)

Simon. Probably a contraction of the OT name Simeon. Jesus gave Simon the name Peter (3:16; Mt 16:18; Jn 1:42). (CSB)

τὸν ἀδελφὸν Σίμωνος—With this verbiage Mark precludes the possible misunderstanding that Andrew was the brother of Jesus. (CC)

Of the disciples named here, Peter is mentioned first. From the start he became the spokesman of the apostolic group. The picturesque details in this account and elsewhere in Mark, details that could come only from Peter, demonstrate that

Peter was the personal source on whom Mark drew in writing his Gospel. The contact between Peter and Mark was a close one. At the close of his First Epistle, Peter sent greetings to the Christians in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia from “my son Mark. (PBC)

net. See note on Mt 4:18. (CSB)

Circular and c 10-15 ft in diameter, it could be thrown either the shore or from a boat. (TLSB)

1:17 *Come, follow me*. The call to discipleship is definite and demands a response of total commitment. This was not Jesus' first encounter with Simon and Andrew (see Jn 1:35–42). (CSB)

Jesus' practice contrasts sharply with that of other rabbis, who were chosen by those who wanted to follow their teaching. Jesus, however, chose those whom He wished to follow Him. (TLSB)

I will make you – poiēsō humas genesthai: “I will cause you to become.” Again directness and conviction are expressed in no uncertain terms. Note, however, that the initiative for the action comes from the outside. It is an “alien” effort as Luther would be comfortable in saying. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 1)

fishers of men. Evangelists (see Lk 5:10). (CSB)

anthropoid means men, women and children.

Like fishermen, then, Jesus' disciples were likewise expected to draw others into the Kingdom. (TLSB)

1:18 *at once...followed* – Emphasizes the disciples' unquestioning response to Jesus' call. Given that the promises of God's kingdom were being fulfilled (v 15), one might expect all people to respond to Jesus' invitation as did Peter and Andrew. (TLSB)

They complied immediately. What caused that? Obviously, what is said in verse 14-15. They had heard the Gospel of God. They knew the opportune time had come. They knew that the Kingdom of God had permanently come in the person, Word, and work of Jesus. It must have taken much courage. They were living in pagan Galilee, surrounded by unbelievers. (B)

euthus: What should we expect? An immediate response keeps true to the spirit of Mark and the *kairos* of the Christ. There is a divine compulsion in the words of Jesus (much like in his miracle incidents), and it cannot be resisted. That Word is powerful. By it the universe was created (Genesis 1); it became flesh and dwelt among us (John 1); it empowers the water of Baptism and the bread and wine of the Eucharist (Luther's Small Catechism, Baptism III and Communion III). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 1)

When Jesus called, they were ready to follow him, for they had learned to love him and believe in him. Business, wealth, family – all were secondary to following Jesus and becoming fishers of men. The same faith that filled their hearts should also fill ours, whether we are pastors, teachers, missionaries or lay Christians. Christ must be first in our lives. (PBC)

1:19-20 *euthus* again. *Euthus* contains the prefix *eu* from which come so many words in the Greek signaling “good, well, straight”: *heuriskō*, the eureka of discovery, and even the Eucharist itself. Immediate good is to be found in having been serendipitously discovered. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 1)

Ekalesen: Consider the call of Isaiah and Jeremiah, also Rom 8:30; 1 Cor 1:9; and 1 Pet 1:15; etc. The initiative comes from God (and his Anointed One). The disciples do not by their own initiative hurry after Jesus; rather they are chosen by him and drawn after him by his word. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 1)

1:19 *going on a little further* – Evidently he walked up the shore a short way. Simon and Andrew were walking with him. (B)

James ... John. Brothers later dubbed “Sons of Thunder” by Jesus (3:17). Along with Peter, they formed something of an inner circle among the 12 apostles (cf 5:37; 9:2; 14:33). (TLSB)

mending the nets. A regular task for fishermen. (TLSB)

1:20 *left their father...with hired servants* – James and John's fishing business was large enough that it supported laborers from outside the family. Walking away from this business, therefore, meant leaving a successful trade and a relatively secure future. (TLSB)

They, too, comply immediately and for the same reason as Simon and Andrew. It is a fair conclusion that the family possessed means, and that Zebedee's business was of some proportions. The fact that his sons left their father's prosperous business shows how devoted they were to Jesus. The hired men could be depended upon to find ways in which to fill the gap. Provision has been made for every need. The point is that their leaving their father did not amount to disrespect or disobedience. (B)

Zebedee did not object. Without a doubt he together with the hired men continued to bring great sacrifices to support Jesus' mission and the training of his disciples. (PBC)

1:16–20 The first thing Jesus does in His public ministry is to call two pairs of brothers. They respond by dropping everything, following Him, and becoming “fishers of men.” The same invitation to discipleship confronts people today: either drop everything and, in faith, follow Jesus and make sacrifices, or run the risk of missing out on the Kingdom. Thankfully, we are not left to our own devices in this regard. God's Holy Spirit, working through the Word and Sacraments, moves us to faithful discipleship and so also to eternal life. • Lord, thank You for

calling us into Your kingdom, for which You declare us fit by Your grace. Keep us faithful in our calling, for Jesus' sake. Amen. (TLSB)