

Following the King Matthew 4:12-25

“We live in dark, difficult and fragile times.” **What examples would you point to from your own life, our culture or the wider world to illustrate the this?**

V16 says that a new day has dawned. A light has come. This is Jesus!

V17 Jesus came, first and foremost to preach/proclaim/announce/herald Good News. **What’s the essence of the Good News that Jesus came to bring?** [The Kingdom of Heaven/God is here, the authority of God is decisively being pressed into the darkness and brokenness. There is hope... through the work of Jesus in the Cross and Resurrection....] **What’s the significance of the D Day/ VE Day illustration when it comes to understanding what Jesus means when he says that the Kingdom of heaven is here?** [There is a now and not yet. We see the Kingdom breaking in but not everywhere all the time.] **What happens if we don’t get this right? What happens if we think that D Day is in fact VE Day or that D Day is not decisive?**

What is the appropriate response to the announcement that the Kingdom of Heaven is here? [Repentance. Unpack what this means. Really try and look at it from a number of angles. It means changing our minds (Greek: metanoia (meta (change) + noein (to think, from nous mind))). It means putting down our agenda and picking up God’s. It means turning around.] **Why is this the right response to hearing Good News?** Compare this to the response to good advice (which would be activity and work).

Explore what this response of repentance looks like in the lives of ordinary people. What did it mean for these four fishermen? [Notice that there was a complete reprioritisation of work, security and family.] **What does this look like for us? What does putting Jesus at the centre look like for us?** [Listening to Jesus and being prepared to have Him disagree with us, being addressed by Him through the Word. It means having our plans/ desires/ aspirations shaped by Him. It means running to Him as our refuge rather than our default being to run to other things when we are Hurting Angry Lonely Tired. Following Jesus, repenting and embracing the fact that He is the King and the Kingdom has come means trusting Him and embracing Him.]

What’s the difference between inviting Jesus to join us and help us with our plans and Him inviting us into His mission? [This is a significant concept and one that’s worth spending some time on. We are living sub-Christian lives if we think it’s just about asking for Jesus’ help with things we find difficult. That’s a great start but it’s not the point....]

Why is it important to recognise that the miracles Jesus does are signs/ tokens/ foretastes of the coming Kingdom and the work of the King rather than the whole of the Christian message? [The most important thing is that we live in the reality of the fact that a light has dawned. With Jesus coming there is a new day, there is ultimate hope for eternity when all things will be made new. Our hope is not that we can see some healing here and there or that we can get help with things we find difficult (although we absolutely can!!!) but that our biggest need (to have our sin and sinful hearts dealt with) has been decisively met in Christ.] **How does the D Day/ VE Day analogy speak into this?** [The victories and defeats post 6 June 1944 were relativized by the fact of the decisive victory that was secured in Normandy. The final victory was now certain. This affects how individual defeats and victories are perceived.]

Were the “memory stick pen” and the “dancing to music” illustrations useful when it comes to understanding the focus of the Christian life and the way in which we should follow Jesus respectively? [Do we sometimes give the impression (or maybe it’s reality!) that it’s all about “the pen” rather than “the memory stick”? Do we focus on what Jesus does to help us here and now and miss the most significant truth of all?]

Take a moment to think about your respective Frontlines (the places where you spend time with those who are not Christians). How might this teaching about following Jesus in His mission of announcing/ declaring (through words and actions) the Good News of what God has done in Christ be worked out on your Frontline?

Pray that you’re able to hear the “music” that announces the Good News of the Kingdom of God. Allow this music to move & stir your heart to enable you to live as faithful followers of Jesus who join Him in His mission of declaring that light and a new day has come. It’s this music of grace that we need if we are to live well for Christ.