

LIFEGROUP NOTES: MARK 1:14-15

A brief interlude in our Judges series, because of our baptismal service on 5 November. As ever, please use (or discard!) these ideas as is most suitable for your group. Don't feel you have to use everything.

FOR DISCUSSION:

1. "Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God" (v.14). The gospel really is good news, even though not everyone in Jesus' day received it that way, just as some don't today. But are there ways in which we ourselves inadvertently make the good news look and sound like bad news? Consider this quotation from the philosopher Nietzsche: *"If that glad message of your Bible were written in your faces, you would not need to demand belief in the authority of that book in such stiff-necked fashion."* What do we need to do – and what do we need to avoid – to maximize the likelihood of people hearing the gospel as good news?
2. Jesus said, "The time has come. The kingdom of God has come near" (v.15). What happens if our desire is "MY kingdom come" rather than "THY kingdom come"? What results when everyone tries to build their own kingdom? How does life under God's rule differ? Why? How does the cross show us that Jesus is a different kind of king, and that God's kingdom is radically different from all other kingdoms? Why is this good news?
3. "Repent and believe the good news" (v.15). How would you explain this in your own words to someone who was hearing the gospel for the first time? In what way does repentance go beyond mere remorse? To what extent is the call to repentance as warning, and to what extent is it a gracious invitation to come home?
4. "When our Lord and Master, Jesus Christ, said 'Repent ...', He meant that the whole life of believers should be one of penitence" (Martin Luther). Where does the call to repent and believe the good news challenge you afresh today? In what ways are you not loving God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength, and your neighbour as yourself? How is the good news calling you to a fresh resolve to follow our Lord?

Responding in Prayer

- Ask God to help you bring to Him any "no-go areas" in your life where you've been reluctant to give Him access to clean up. Thank Him for the good news of forgiveness and new life in Christ. Pray that together we will increasingly look and sound like good news people.

Eddie Larkman, November 2017