

Spreading the Good News

Key Verse: *“Jesus said unto them, Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men.”*
—Mark 1:17

Selected Scripture:
Mark 1:14-28

THE TITLE OF TODAY’S

lesson, “Spreading the Good News,” points to the heartfelt subject of glad tidings which Jesus came to preach. It was a message of peace, hope, and Truth, all of which are a part of the good news of God’s promise.

Shortly after John the Baptist had been put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the Gospel of the kingdom of God. His message was, “The kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.”—Mark 1:15

Jesus was not to travel alone, however, so walking along the shore of Galilee he saw two fishermen, Simon and his brother Andrew, casting a net into the sea. He approached them and said, ‘Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men.’ (vs. 17) They immediately left their nets and became the first followers of Jesus in his new undertaking. Going a little farther, he saw James, the son of Zebedee, and his brother John, in their boat mending their nets. Jesus called them, and immediately they left their father with the hired servants in the boat and accompanied Jesus.

“They went into Capernaum; and straightway on the sabbath day he entered into the synagogue, and taught.” (vs. 21) A synagogue could consist of a rather small group, as few as ten Jewish families, administered by a ruler, thus providing an excellent site for presenting a new message like Jesus was preaching. “They were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one that had authority, and not as the scribes.” (vs. 22) All at once a man moved by an evil spirit shouted, “Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God. And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him. And when the unclean spirit had torn him, and cried with a loud voice, he came out of him.” (vss. 24-26) They were all amazed and questioned among themselves, “What new doctrine is this? for with authority commandeth he even the unclean spirits, and they do obey him.” (vs. 27) Soon the story of what Jesus had done, spread through all the district of Galilee.

An instance of this practice is recorded in Luke 8:1. Jesus was not merely, “preaching” the Gospel of the kingdom but he was also actively “shewing” his ability to heal physical ailments and cast out demons from those possessed.

On another occasion, two demoniacs coming out of the tombs met Jesus. They were so fierce that no one could pass that way. They cried out, “Art thou come hither to torment us before the time?” A herd of many swine was feeding nearby, and the demons begged him, “If thou cast us out, suffer us to go away into the herd of swine.” He said to them, “Go.” So they came out and went into the swine: and the whole herd rushed down the steep bank into the sea, and perished in the water. The herdsmen fled, and going into the city they told everything, and what had happened to the demoniacs. (Matt. 8:28-33) Speaking the good news had a dynamic beginning. ■