

Third Sunday After Epiphany 21st of January 2018.

Rev'd Peter Deng Mayen. St. Mark's Parish.

Readings: Jonah 3: 1-10, Ps 62:5-12, 1 Corinthians 7:29-31, Mark 1:14-20.

Prayer:

May the LORD God bless us and keep us, May the LORD God make His face shine in us upon our whole families and be gracious to us as His children, and May the LORD our loving God lift up His countenance upon us and give us eternal peace. Amen.

Theme: Hear the Good News of God Kingdom, Repent and Believe:

The human family has had tales across millennia, with a variety of good and bad news. For example we have heard stories of war and peace, famine and restoration.

The four readings this Sunday convey God divine message of good news, Jesus Christ the Son was the person telling us the good news of the kingdom of God revealed to us in the reading of today. Therefore, the Gospel of Mark invites us to respond immediately like the people of Nineveh's who heeded to the proclamation of Jonah and immediately turned to God for forgiveness and salvation. The four disciples from these two families did the same thing, they immediately respond with obedience faith turning to God and follow Jesus for the sake of sharing the good news of repentance and believe.

What are some of the good news we share in our lives? I believe we have a lot of very good news about our families, new home, new house, new car, new school, weddings, and birthday parties, graduations from educational institutions, and more significantly about Easter and Christmas celebrations and the list goes on. Sometime we also, heard sudden news that upset and shocked us, for example,

news about our health, death and war, tsunami and earthquake or global financial breakdown. We hear these messages on our daily televisions or in our social media outlets.

My recent visit to Kenya and Uganda after 30 years of being separated from my immediate family, immediately touches our lives. We shared a lot of good news on how God has protected us and brought us together again. We shared the good news of me personally coming home as an ordained Anglican priest. Not only did we shared all that was good, but we also shared difficult news about the death and loss of our beloved family members. All the more, we gave thanks to God for His blessings and graciousness upon family during our reunion as His children.

Indeed, the context of responding to God depends upon each and every person, sometime it exciting to hear the good news of the kingdom and sometime its can be a long journey to respond to God and hear the good news. Let me assured you all, it's fine. Just God wants us to respond and be save. Let us remember, God time is always the best time to hear the good news with repentant heart through obedience faith and readiness to being disciples of Jesus through our lives and our participation in the Church ministry.

Today, there are seven of us from the Mayen family who will be sharing this amazing good news of God kingdom this year and may be in the years to come. We have today the preacher as Peter Mayen and those sitting in the congregation we have Rachel, Michael, Abraham, Sarah, Elizabeth and Israel Mayen. All of us where resident of Brisbane and Ipswich. But today we are part of the three Centre's in St. Luke's Anglican community in Toowoomba. This appointment happened By the authority of the Anglican Diocese of Brisbane with the blessing of Archbishop Phillip and my acceptance to serve as Priest here in the Church of God. I and my family have immediately respond to come to St. Mark's Anglican Church joyfully to share this great news of our live through faith in Jesus Christ. You have all witnessed our presence here today, because of our faith, we are following Lord Jesus as His disciples.

How can we or do we respond to God's calling embracing ministering with one another as a community of faithful believers?

I think the Gospel of Mark explicitly demonstrates to us how John the Baptist, Jesus our Lord and all the four disciples responded for the proclamation and spreading of the good news as the sign of God indwelling in our spiritual life. Jesus said, "The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God has come near, repent and believe in the

good news". What! , to repent and believe the good news of the Kingdom of God? We will come back to repenting and believing later in the sermon.

But Let us be reminded when we first learnt how to drive a car, our driving instructors gave us advised to have a car, that was fully operational, they instructed us also how to turn on the key to start up the car, than gradually moved the wheel to then turned the car either to the right or left gently and steadily. Considering the chilling reminder and excitement of driving on the road, we need clear instructions and correct tools for safe driving. This is also the same in serving as God's disciples, each person needs obedience faith and commitment in following Jesus's invitation.

So in our vocation to respond to God's good news, we are to repent and believe in Jesus Christ good news. Our hearts and mind need to turn to God calling. Therefore, coming back to the definition of repentance and believe: to repent is to turn away from putting your trust and faith outside God's words and teaching and turning around completely to God your redeemer, totally surrendering your whole being to Him for the forgiveness of sin. That is the meaning of repentance .the word believing is putting God first in all the things that matter in your life and completely surrendering and become dependent on God.

These words repent and believe challenge us to moved our territorial demarcation, moving away from our comfort zone to the most scary situation. May be there are things we need to repent from in our lives, each persons has the responsibility to figured out those areas God's words is mirroring in your own hearts today, it could be a habit or similar pattern or addictive cultures that stop us from moving forward and sharing with other people. God's words invites us to repent and believes the good of His kingdom for our salvation. If there are things that bothered us or clamped us down, let us rise and surrender to God and be save, because Jesus's invitation is for us all, to come and hear the good news of His Father's kingdom through obedient faith.

For example, the four disciples respond to Jesus calling as soon as they heard Him inviting them to be fishers of God's people for the good news of the Kingdom. What we have seen happening to the four disciples in responding to God's divine calling need also to happen to us here in our life and through our ministry. We need to relinquished or pretty much budget our time to fit in discipleship as Jesus commands us to share the good news. You may be here in this church community, with the most desirable talents as: a pilot, a lawyer, a medical doctor, an engineer, a laborer, accountant, a teacher, a professor or a cleaner which was my last job before being ordained last year. You or we together as the body of Christ, we need

to consider such invitations for being disciple and obediently accepting to participate and allocating some of your precious time and energy for the physical, social, and spiritual growth of our Christian communities. To do this command, we need God's help through our prayers as we follow what the Scriptures reveals to us during our reading and reflection.

Jesus's preaching on repentance, forgiveness in human brokenness call us to surrender to God through obedient faith and trusting in Jesus Christ's redemptive salvation. Therefore, as God's family worshipping at St. Mark's Anglican Church, our top responsibility is how respond to be faithful to God, to be merciful and how to respond to be united in loving one another and God as we interact with each other compassionately across our three parish centers and through our response to towards our neighbors, friends and those people not known to us.

Today gospel also, encourage us to understand that, God's salvation and calling does not belong to a particular country, nation or family but is very inclusive for all human race who respond to God by faith and good work. Our talents and skilled are God's given instruments for true and honest edification of the Church when we labor in unity with God's embracing love in our hearts.

Like Peter, Andrew, James, and John, we respond in faith and serve as Jesus Christ disciples excited to share the good news of God's Kingdom brought to us through the teaching of God's people. Brothers and sisters these four disciples mentioned in the reading this morning, call us to carry our cross of being God's disciple with total submission to Jesus's calling and not be reluctant to serve in the Church as faithful believers. The reality is we must all consider to repent, believe and be saved.

Let us pray:

Loving God continue to fill our hearts and minds through faith in Jesus Christ. Help us respond to your invitation and great commission to become your disciples for our own lives and for the sake of your kingdom. God our Father open our hearts and souls by the power of your Holy Spirit in order for us to embrace your gift of love.

Amen.

HEAR THE GOOD NEWS OF GOD'S KINGDOM, REPENT, BELIEVE AND BE SAVE.