

REPENTANCE-DOING THINGS DIFFERENTLY

Text: “The time has come,” he said. “The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!” (Mark 1:15)

Reading: Jonah 3.1-5,10; Mark 1:14-20

Hymn: Jesus calls us! O'er the tumult (StF 250)

The Hebrew word used in Jonah for ‘repent’, is **shuwv**. It means to turn back, change course, or do things differently. Upon hearing the message of Jonah about the impending doom, the king of Nineveh proclaimed a fast, instructing all to ‘turn’ from their evil ways, hoping that God will ‘turn’ from his plans and give them a second chance. God indeed turned from his plan and gave Nineveh a second chance.

In the gospel, the word Mark uses for repentance is **metanoia**. It generally means turning back 180°, changing one’s mind and doing things differently. Jesus, begun his ministry after the arrest of John the Baptist. The urgency that he sees leads him to call for people to repent – turn from their ways to gain the kingdom of God. In the sense of doing things differently, even though Mark does not use **metanoia** for the disciples, it can apply to them because, they turned from their old life, occupation and probably even family, to follow Jesus, to a different way of life.

Repentance is a matter of urgency. When the people of Nineveh heard the message of Jonah, they responded immediately with repentance. Jesus begun his ministry with a sense of urgency calling for repentance: “The time has come,” he said. “The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!” (Mark 1:15). The word Mark uses for time is **kairos**, which is the opportune time, or even crisis time. The time to act, Jesus seemed to say, is now. When the disciples heard the call of Jesus, they did not ask Jesus to give them time to think about it. They just got on with it and followed Jesus immediately.

This is the urgency of repentance. If life needs a turning around then it must be done immediately. As churches, we need to repent from our old ways of doing things and flow immediately with the spirit of God who is leading us into new ways of life. Reaching out to the world as disciples of Christ, can no more be done the old way. Times have changed and we must respond immediately to do things differently.