

**“Trust This Good News”**  
**Mark 1:14-20**  
**Sermon #86**  
**3rd Sunday After the Epiphany**  
**46th Sunday in the COVID-19 Pandemi**  
**1.24.21**

**Mark 1:14-20 CEB**

14 After John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee announcing God’s good news, 15 saying, “Now is the time! Here comes God’s kingdom! Change your hearts and lives, and trust this good news!”

16 As Jesus passed alongside the Galilee Sea, he saw two brothers, Simon and Andrew, throwing fishing nets into the sea, for they were fishermen. 17 “Come, follow me,” he said, “and I’ll show you how to fish for people.” 18 Right away, they left their nets and followed him. 19 After going a little farther, he saw James and John, Zebedee’s sons, in their boat repairing the fishing nets. 20 At that very moment he called them. They followed him, leaving their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired workers.

The Word of the LORD. **Thanks be to God!**

Let us pray: May the words of my mouth and the meditations of our hearts be acceptable in your sight, O God, our Rock and our Redeemer. Amen.

Miriam-Webster's online dictionary defines believe (transitive verb) as follows:

1. (a) to consider to be true or honest, (b) to accept the word or evidence of
2. to hold as an opinion

On the other hand, Miriam-Webster defines trust (transitive verb) in this way:

1. (a) to rely on the truthfulness or accuracy of, (b) to place confidence in, (c) to hope or expect confidently
2. (a) to place in one's care or keeping, (b) to permit to stay or go or to do something without fear

Many interpretations of the Bible translate the Greek as “believe” in Mark 1:15. But, the Common English Bible translates the verb as “trust”.

Earlier this week, I talked with a colleague of mine about today's verses and we did exactly what you and I just did: Read Miriam-Webster's definitions of these two words as transitive verbs, words that take a direct object. Did you notice the differences?

Believe or trust? For most of our conversation, my friend and I talked about *believe* and *trust*.

Both of us agreed about *believe*: You can believe something or someone and still keep them at arm's length. For example: Many people say they believe in God. But, that's the end of it. They believe in a higher power who is distant. Many may say they believe in a particular person, but that's as far as the relationship goes. They may hold that person to be truthful, but it ends there.

Yet, when we pivoted to trust, we noticed something radically different. Trust is not as rigid. Trust feels more organic. For example, let's say a couple who has been dealing with infidelity and is working on the relationship is building trust again. A friendship

has been broken and trust has to be restored. A particular institution has not worked in the best interest of the people and has to earn the people's trust again.

To me, trust is not built solely on opinion, but in developing or repairing a relationship. It's not a one and done thing, but an organism that develops. Trust doesn't keep people at arm's length, but seeks a relationship with them.

Mark 1:14-20. Jesus says his first words in these verses. He has just finished 40 days in the desert, John the Baptizer has been arrested, and now he's out preaching in Galilee and the first words we hear from him are in verse 15:

*Now is the time! Here comes God's kingdom!*

*Change your hearts and lives, and trust this good news!*

Imagine yourselves listening to these words in the 1st century world: Who does he think he is?!? The time for what? I live in the Roman Empire. Trust in good news? We live as conquered people and I have barely enough money to feed my family!

The good news that God's kingdom was on its way in the 1st century world. The good news of God's kingdom that is not merely a territory, but a reign.....a continuous action. An organism, like trust, that reveals itself over time. God's kingdom is infinite. The Roman Empire is finite. And that was just the beginning of the Good News about Jesus Christ, God's Son.

This Good News that Jesus preached and lived was not the prosperity gospel of living your best life now or simply thinking positively about something. The Good News that is declared throughout Mark's Gospel is the Good News of trust. We place our trust in God's kingdom that knows no bounds. We place our trust in the name of the LORD, the Maker of Heaven and Earth. We boldly claim that our trust rests in no one else except in our Savior Jesus Christ. The trust we place in God's coming kingdom, the Maker of Heaven and Earth, and in the Savior of humanity is not a simple action, but a continuous action that has consequences.

Trust struggles because trust is based in love. It constantly evolves. Sometimes, trust between people is bruised or even broken. Yet, trust beckons us to examine our hearts and lives and,

by the Spirit's power, change. Trust doesn't hold people at arm's length, but is intimate.

Just look at verses 16-20 in Mark 1. We are given an example of trust. Jesus sees Simon and Andrew and says to them "Come follow me and I'll show you how to fish for people." Are these fishermen believing in some opinion about some philosophy or the government? No, they "join with Jesus himself on the way he is going"<sup>1</sup>. They are joining with Jesus on the journey and are starting a new relationship and giving up an old way of living. Heck, they also pick up James and John right after this moment who leave their father, Zebedee, behind.

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<sup>1</sup> M. Eugene Boring. *Mark*. WJK Press: Louisville, 2006, p. 59



These new disciples aren't blindly trusting in a distant savior, opinion, or philosophy. These new disciples are placing their trust in the intimate Savior of humanity.

As we journey forward into 2021, where do we place our trust as a society? Where do we place our trust as a congregation? Are we simply believing in traditions and beliefs because so much around us has changed and continues to change? Are we content to do what we've always done because that's what we know best? Or are we willing to place our hope, our love, our trust in God's kingdom that has no end and demands from us to seriously examine our hearts? Are we willing to place our hope, our love, our trust in the name of the One who made Heaven and Earth? Are we willing to place our hope, our love, our trust in the Savior of the world, Jesus Christ, who comes to us in the unlikeliest of places

and times and says “Come, follow me”? Are we willing to place our hope, our love, our TRUST in the Spirit who opens our hearts, minds, ears, and eyes to the possibilities that await us?

Beloved, trust this Good News.

In the name of God the Creator, God the Redeemer, and God the Sustainer. Amen.