

**“Review your plans for living and base your life on this remarkable new opportunity.”**

Dallas Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy*, p.15

### Jesus' baptism and beginning of ministry

Jesus public ministry began at his baptism, where God affirmed him as His Son and His Beloved. Just what was Jesus' message after that?

#### Scripture:

In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. And a voice came from heaven, “You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.”

Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news.”

As Jesus passed along the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the sea—for they were fishermen. And Jesus said to them, “Follow me and I will make you fish for people.” And immediately they left their nets and followed him. As he went a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John, who were in their boat mending the nets. Immediately he called them; and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men, and followed him. (Mark 1:9-11, 14-20, New Revised Standard)

#### Voice of wisdom:

“Having established a beachhead of divine life in an ordinary human existence, Jesus finally stepped into the public arena to expose his life publicly and to make it available to the world. Mark's Gospel reports that ‘Jesus then came into Galilee announcing the good news from God. “All the preliminaries have been taken care of,” he said, “and the rule of God is now accessible to everyone. Review your plans for living and base your life on this remarkable new opportunity”’ (Mark 1:15).

“In Matthew's account of Jesus' deeds and words, the formulation repeatedly used is the well-known ‘Repent, for the kingdom of the heavens is at hand’ (3:2; 4:17; 10:7). This is a call for us to reconsider how we have been approaching our life, in light of the fact that we now, in the presence of Jesus, have the option of living within the surrounding movements of God's eternal purposes, of taking our life into his life.

“What Jesus and his earliest friends meant by such words as these is made clear by the response they generated in hearers....His fame grew to the point where crowds were in the thousands. People trampled one another (Luke 12:1) and ripped roofs off houses (Mark 2:4) to gain access to him.

“But they were only responding to *the striking availability of God to meet present human need through the actions of Jesus*. He simply was the good news about the kingdom. He still is.”

Dallas Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy*, pgs. 15-17.

## Study 6

### **Contemplation:**

What key words and ideas stand out to you? How do they help you take a deeper look at what Jesus' message was?

Compare the NRS version of Jesus' gospel message with 1) Dallas Willard's version, and 2) your version of what the "gospel message" is. What insights do you find?

Jesus' also called people to "Follow me." This meant an intentional change in lifestyle for those people. What does following Jesus look like for you?

### **Practices:**

Write down one or two of the key phrases that are important to you. Hold them (literally) before God and wait silently on him. Record any further thoughts he may give you.

Keep reading in Mark 1: 21ff. Read each of Jesus' encounters with people slowly, picturing yourself as part of the scenario. How does Jesus relate to those around him? What is his message in both words and deeds? What is his message to you in these narratives?

©sharonracke These contemplative studies are the result of the thoughtful and transformative teaching I have received both at The Dwelling Place ([dwellingplaceindy.org](http://dwellingplaceindy.org)), and as a student of The Renovare Institute ([renovare.org](http://renovare.org)). I pray that as you use them, you will experience the presence and love of God, and learn more about living with Christ daily. Sharon Racke ([recess.racke@gmail.com](mailto:recess.racke@gmail.com))