



St Luke's Uniting Church, Highton,

**Scripture readings:** Isaiah 40: 21 – 31, Psalm 147: 1 – 11, 1 Corinthians  
9: 16 – 23, Mark 1: 29 - 39

Good morning and welcome to worship. It is good to be in church together as we celebrate the life transforming love of God made known to us, and alive in us, through Jesus Christ and the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Mark's Gospel does not talk about the birth of Christ – no Bethlehem, no shepherds, no three Wise men, no angels, no Mary or Joseph or baby Jesus. By the time Mark picks up the story, he writes briefly about John the Baptist, Jesus' baptism and temptation in the wilderness. Mark goes straight to the four fisherman who are just minding their own business. Christ comes to them and says, “Follow me”. First, Simon and his brother Andrew, then James and John who were sitting with their father mending their nets. They left everything and followed him.

There is no time to grab a breath. Jesus now comes to proclaim and demonstrate the kingdom of God on earth, and he does this by opposing the forces of evil which would deny us of all that God hopes and intends for us. Right at the beginning of the Gospel, Mark shows us that Jesus has the power over things that frighten us and ruins our lives. Mark is making the point that the will and purpose of God present in Jesus is engaging and fighting against the purposes of evil that exists among humanity. Christ comes to destroy but he rebuilds, reconstructs, recreates, remakes us in the image of God.

In our reading from Mark's Gospel, notice that Jesus doesn't just seek people who are sick, instead they come to him, either on their own or through the disciples. Simon's mother-in-law is brought to Jesus' attention as soon as they got to the house. As soon as Jesus heals her, she immediately goes about serving Jesus and others in the house.

After a busy night of ministering to the needs of the community, Jesus seeks out a quiet place to pray before going on. Jesus relies on prayer as he continues his ministry. When Jesus was praying, Simon and his companions hunted for him. They said to him. “Everyone is searching for you.” Jesus answered, “Let us go on...” Jesus is telling his disciples that he did not come into the world specifically for the purpose of healing people. The needs of the world around us are overwhelming. We could help people whole day but we may not satisfy all their needs. Jesus is teaching us to say “no” to something. He is teaching us how to discern what God is calling us to do. Jesus' mission has taken him from a mother-in-law's sick room to the whole of Galilee and to the whole world.

Jesus' call was always first and foremost to proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom of God. Everything else, including miracles, exorcisms was secondary. Jesus did not want to be known as a 'wonder worker' because that was not his mission. His mission was to proclaim that the Kingdom of God is here, through God's authority. Indeed, through Jesus Christ, God our Father was working to reconcile the world to himself.

Blessings,

*Raymond Surujpal*



**Image: Calling Disciples**  
**He Qi, from 'Art in the Christian Tradition'**  
**a project of the Vanderbilt library, Nashville, TN**