

The fourth Sunday of epiphany, January 24, 2021
Readings Jonah chapter 3 versus 1 to 5 and 10
Gospel of Mark chapter 1 verse 14 to 2

Two weeks ago I told I taught you a Greek word Metanoia, if you remember it means a new beginning. Today's Greek word is KAIRIOS.

In verse 15 Jesus says the time has come, the word we have for time is Kairios. it is a Form of time, kairios time is about a breaking of something new, a tipping point if you like or a crisis. Kairios time is gods time for something to happen.

Just this week we have the inauguration of a new president in the USA. For many this has been a sigh of relief, for others moment of defeat, but in fact it is very similar to the kairios time we are talking about. A new era, a new sense of optimism and some new people have broken onto the stage.

If you don't know who Amanda Gorman is I suggest you look at the poetry of the day and see this wonderful 22-year-old giving her poetic introduction to this new era. You won't be disappointed. In addition to this there is also the cellist Yo-Yo Ma who played a rendition of amazing Grace And the theme from the new world symphony, which we

would recognise as the Hovis tune, which brought tears to his eyes. Again something else worth looking at.

We live in days when we are seeking a kairios moment to change our circumstances and situation.

In this Epiphany season, we've been seeing how Jesus is revealed to the world, and today, this word kairios, is used by Mark at the start of Jesus's ministry, where John the Baptist left off, Jesus steps in with a similar introductory call. Where John the Baptist called for repentance or Metanoia, a new beginning, now Jesus picks up the immediacy and says "the kingdom of God has come near, repent and believe the good news"

This made a connection between Johns ministry and the start of Jesus's ministry. Jesus is announcing a new beginning the kingdom of God, this phrase has not been heard before. It is Jesus phrase, for in the kingdom of God is something fresh that Jesus brings.

The time, kairios moment, is God doing a new thing, his kingdom is of love mercy and compassion. Justice and truth, along with healing and wholeness are breaking in through Jesus.

This of course is in contrast to the religion of the day, of rules, of sacrifices, of trying to work your way into gods good books.

Jesus is saying there is a new aspect to Gods character being revealed, it is by grace. Gods grace of acceptance and forgiveness. This is such a contrast to the old way of doing things and no wonder Jesus clashed with the religious of his day. The religion of works was unachievable by so many, and it was unattainable by the majority.

This is perhaps why the fishermen were so willing to leave their livelihoods behind, for they saw in Jesus something new, they saw an opportunity which had not been previously been available to normal hard-working men and women. So they willingly responded to Jesus invitation to “come follow me”.

Fisherman Peter and Andrew, James and John left their nets, it was a kairios moment for them, a moment of decision. They responded to what they heard of this new kingdom, the kingdom of God was for them, a kingdom of compassion not rules. The kingdom of God is justice, not man’s interpretation. Gods rule was breaking in with a new sense of urgency.

That kairios moment was a crisis for them to make a decision, to leave everything and follow Jesus. Ordinary people could see how Jesus was for them,

they could see how the kingdom of God was going to work with them and not against them, in contrast to the religious elite who had done for so long. The religious elite who had made rules that diminished life, marked people out as unclean, and removed the joy of living from so many.

If we just take a moment to consider the first reading from Jonah, note this is the second time God has called Jonah to go to Nineveh. This is after his whale journey and his own kairios moment of discovering God still wants to use him.

This time Jonah obeys Gods call and goes to the great city of Nineveh. It is a massive city which takes him three days to get to the heart of. As he walks through the city he declares God’s judgement, this too is a kairios moment, a crisis moment to make a decision, to repent and turn back from evil ways. the people respond to his call, people declare a day of fasting and prayer. They take off their fine robes and wear sackcloth, which is normally used for mourning, but here used to show repentance. Gods response is to relent from destruction as people change their ways.

Today I’ve introduced to you the word kairios, a crisis, a breaking in, a new beginning of God’s

kingdom. The kingdom of compassion justice truth and mercy.

The church of today has a part to play in declaring God's kairios moment. God is breaking in, breaking in with truth, compassion, justice and mercy.

Our part is also to declare God's kingdom is near, God's kingdom is now. Just as the inauguration in Washington heralded a new president, so the church is to be announcing Gods kingdom. This is the kairios moment for the church, to work out its role and life in society in this lockdown and in the months to come.

God is present, God is persistent, God wants his kingdom to grow in each generation, in each community, in each nation and we are part of that activity as the Church of God in 2021. Jesus said the time has come the kingdom of God is near, repent and believe the good news. That's the message we are to make known each and every day. Amen.