

JESUS THE KING
Lent Worship Series – Week 1
The Call
March 10, 2019

WORSHIP SERVICE OUTLINES

Each worship outline contains all elements needed for your worship service. The order of each service presented is only a *suggestion*. No doubt changes will be needed to accommodate the flow and worship style of your corps. The outlines are flexible and allow opportunities to “cut and paste” as needed. If you are blessed with instrumental or vocal music resources, you may find there is more structured material here than needed.

Announcements and Offering

Following the King

Call to Worship:

Every year as Easter approaches, there are numerous media features about Jesus. *Newsweek* religion editor Lisa Miller explained that “Easter is...a celebration of the final act of the Passion, in which Jesus rose from his tomb three days after his execution.... The Gospels insist on the veracity of this supernatural event... Jesus died and rose again so that all his followers could, eventually, do the same. This story has strained the willingness to believe of even the most devoted follower. For, truly, it’s unbelievable.”

As we begin Lent, we will focus on the historical Christian premise that Jesus’s life, death, and resurrection form the central event of cosmic and human history as well as the central organizing principle of our lives. Said another way, the whole story of the world—and of how we fit into it—is most clearly understood through a careful, direct look at the story of Jesus. The purpose of this series is to try to show, through his words and actions, how beautifully his life makes sense of ours.

(Jesus the King, pp. xiii-xiv)

HC#141 – All Hail the Power SB#73 – All hail the power of Jesus’ name!	HC-141 TB-69 – Diadem TB-306 – Coronation	HCD13-T11 HTD6-T7 (4 vs.) HTD5-T5 (4 vs.)
Additional Optional Songs		
HC#76 – Shout to the Lord SB#264 – My Jesus, my Savior	HC-76 TB-824 – same	HCD6-T16 No CD
HC#99 – Shine, Jesus, Shine SB#261 – Lord, the light of Your love is shining	HC-99 TB-822 – same	HCD8-T19 No CD
HC#151 – Fairest Lord Jesus SB#77 – Fairest Lord Jesus	HC-151 HT-206 – Ascalon	HCD14-T11 HTD5-T1 (3 vs.)

HC#161 – My Great Redeemer’s Praise SB#89 – O for a thousand tongues to sing	HC-161 TB-59 – Azmon TB-89 – Grimsby	HCD15-T11 HTD3-T4 (4 vs.) No CD
HC#164 – Before the Throne of God Above SB#243 – Before the throne of God above	HC-164 TB-52 – same	HCD15-T14 No CD
HC#221 – Servants of God SB#97 – Ye servants of God	HC-221 TB-479 – Hanover	HCD21-T11 HTD4-T4 (3 vs.)
HC#264 – Jesus shall reign SB#258 – Jesus shall reign	HC-264 TB-11 – Duke Street	HCD25-T14 HTD3-T8 (4 vs.)
SB#241 – And can it be that I should gain	TB-445 – Sagina	HTD4-T13 (4 vs.)
SB#242 – Arise, my soul, arise	TB-200 – Darwalls	HTD1-T7 (3 vs.)
SB#262 – Love divine, all loves excelling	TB-361 – Blaenwern TB-370 – Hyfrydol	HTD5-T3 (3 vs.) HTD1-T14 (3 vs.) HCD10-T14
SB#456 – Dear Lord and Father of mankind	TB-105 – Repton	HTD8-T13 (3 vs.)
SB#509 – O boundless salvation!	TB-506 – My Jesus, I love Thee	HTD2-T3 (4 vs.)

Responsive Reading:

Leader: We will study the life of Jesus through the book of Mark. Jesus has come; anything can happen now. Mark wants us to see that the coming of Jesus calls for decisive action. Jesus is seen as a man of action, moving quickly and decisively from event to event. There is relatively little of Jesus’s *teaching* in the Gospel of Mark—mainly, we see Jesus *doing*. Therefore we can’t remain neutral; we need to respond actively.

All: ¹⁴*Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God.* ¹⁵*“The time has come,” he said. “The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!”*

Leader: The first time we hear Jesus’s voice in Mark’s Gospel, he says, “Repent and believe the good news!” As soon as Jesus begins to speak about the kingdom of God publicly, he selects twelve men to be his disciples—his core group of friends and followers. Mark records the first of these encounters:

All: ¹⁶*As Jesus walked beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen.* ¹⁷*“Come, follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.”* ¹⁸*At once they left their nets and followed him.* ¹⁹*When he had gone a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John in a boat, preparing their nets.* ²⁰*Without delay he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men and followed him.*

Leader: Jesus immediately calls people to follow him. The good news is that you don't need to earn your way to God; Jesus has already done it for you. And it's a gift that you receive by sheer grace—through God's thoroughly unmerited favor. We are called to follow a King. Not just someone with the power and authority to tell you what needs to be done—but someone with the power and authority to *do* what needs to be done, and then to offer it to you as good news. Mark continues to build on this theme:

All: *21 They went to Capernaum, and when the Sabbath came, Jesus went into the synagogue and began to teach. 22 The people were amazed at his teaching, because he taught them as one who had authority, not as the teachers of the law.*

Leader: Mark uses the term *authority* for the first time; the word literally means “out of the original stuff.” It comes from the same word as *author*. His listeners sensed somehow that he was explaining the story of their lives *as the author*, and it left them dumbfounded. Mark then takes the theme of authority to the next level:

All: *29 As soon as they left the synagogue, they went with James and John to the home of Simon and Andrew. 30 Simon's mother-in-law was in bed with a fever, and they immediately told Jesus about her. 31 So he went to her, took her hand and helped her up. The fever left her and she began to wait on them.*

Leader: The healing shows that Jesus is concerned with and king over the physical world—not just the spiritual. He shows he has real power over sickness—just a touch of his hand and the fever is cured. And this happens over and over. There are, in fact, thirty healings recorded in the Gospels, all showing us that Jesus has authority over sickness.

All: *Come, follow me.* Jesus is saying, “Follow me because I'm the King you've been looking for. Follow me because I have authority over everything, yet I have humbled myself for you.”

Leader: Why? “Because I died on the cross for you when you didn't have the right beliefs or the right behavior. Because I have brought you good news, not advice. Because I'm your true love, your true life—follow me.”

(Jesus the King, pp. xviii, 14, 19, 22-24; Mark 1:14-22, 29-31, NIV)

HC#269 – People Need the Lord	HC-269	HCD25-T19
SB#418 – Every day they pass me by	TB-797 – same	No CD
Additional Optional Songs		
SB#515 – Out of my darkness God called me	TB-410 – same	No CD
SB#255 – I'm set apart for Jesus	TB-213 – Aurelia	HTD3-T3 (3 vs.)
SB#613 – O Jesus, I have promised	TB-213 – Aurelia	HTD3-T3 (3 vs.)

HC#172 – Here I Am, Lord SB#1002 – I, the Lord of sea and sky	HC-172 TB-689 – same	HCD16-T12 No CD
Additional Optional Songs		
HC#58 – Praise You	HC-58	HCD4-T18
HC#87 – Passion	HC-87	HCD7-T17

Prayers of Praise [Prayers from the congregation]

Pastoral Prayer

Testimony of Faith – My Calling [Choose someone from the congregation who can testify on this theme.]

Following the Call

Drama – Help Wanted

Message – The Call

SB#613 – O Jesus, I have promised	TB-213 – Aurelia	HTD3-T3 (3 vs.)
Additional Optional Songs		
HC#24 – Lord, You Know That We Love You! SB#506 – Lord, you know that we love you	HC-24 TB-950 – same	HCD2A-T14 No CD
HC#30 – All That I Am SB#568 – All that I am	HC-30 TB-546 – same	HCD2A-T20 HPC1-T3/4 (chorus only)
HC#58 – Praise You	HC-58	HCD4-T18
HC#87 – Passion	HC-87	HCD7-T17
HC#112 – The Potter’s Hand SB#355 – Beautiful Lord, wonderful Savior	HC-112 TB-867 – same	HCD10-T12 No CD
HC#139 – There Is a Message SB#439 – There is a message	HC-139 TB-879 – same	HCD12-T19 No CD
HC#160 – I Surrender	HC-160	HCD14-T20
HC#164 – Before the Throne of God Above SB#243 – Before the throne of God above	HC-164 TB-52 – same	HCD15-T14 No CD
HC#167 – I’m in His Hands SB#848 – I’m in His hands	HC-167 TB-659 – His way is best (chorus only)	HCD15-T17 No CD
HC#172 – Here I Am, Lord SB#1002 – I, the Lord of sea and sky	HC-172 TB-689 – same	HCD16-T12 No CD

HC#173 – In This Quiet Moment SB#595 – In this quiet moment	HC-173 TB-186 – same	HCD16-T13 No CD
SB#436 – Softly and tenderly Jesus is calling	TB-590 – Come Home!	No CD
SB#515 – Out of my darkness God called me	TB-410 – same	No CD
SB#580 – Dear Lord, I do surrender	TB-235 – To the uttermost He saves	No CD
SB#589 – I heard a voice so gently calling	TB-691 – I’ll follow Thee	No CD
SB#591 – I would be Thy holy temple	TB-411 – Showers of blessing	HTD7-T17 (3 vs.)
SB#637 – By the peaceful shores of Galilee	TB-614 – Follow thou Me	No CD
SB#653 – Jesus calls us; o’er the tumult	TB-326 – Galilee	No CD
SB#682 – Thou hast called me from the byway	TB-379 – South Shields	HTD10-T13 (3 vs.)
SB#730 – O God, what offering shall I give	TB-447 – St Catherine	HTD5-T19 (3 vs.)

Benediction:

Now may the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

(Hebrews 13:20-21, NIV)

SB#959 – I’ll go in the strength of the Lord	TB-433 – In the strength of the Lord	HTD4-T8 (3 vs. with extended ending)
Additional Optional Songs		
HC#198 – In Jesus’ Name	HC-198	HCD18-T18
HC#250 – Hear the Call of the Kingdom	HC-250	HCD23-T20
SB#960 – In the Army of Jesus we’ve taken our stand	TB-962 – I’ll stand for Christ	HTD4-T7 (4 vs.)

Jesus the King: Understanding the Life and Death of the Son of God by Timothy Keller, 2013; previously published as *King’s Cross: The Story of the World in the Life of Jesus*, 2011 (Penguin Books).

Lent 2019 Week #1	
DRAMA	
Help Wanted	
By Martyn Scott Thomas	
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Topic:	Discipleship, Calling
Scripture:	Mark 1:16-20
Synopsis:	A successful businessman is recruited by the unlikeliest of employers.
Characters:	Kyle (or Kylie) Sutton – Senior Vice-President of Sutton Technologies Joshua – non-descript job recruiter
Props/Costumes:	Business dress for Kyle. Casual dress for Joshua. A table with two chairs. Two coffee cups. A cell phone for Kyle.
Setting:	Any coffee shop.
Running time:	5 minutes

[*Kyle is seated drinking coffee and looking at his phone.*]

Joshua: [*enters with a cup in his hand and walks to Kyle*] Is this seat taken?

Kyle: [*looking up*] No, go ahead.

Joshua: [*sits*] Thanks.

Kyle: [*startled, backs his chair away a little*] Whoa. I didn't realize you were going to sit here. I thought you wanted to take it to another table.

Joshua: [*calmly*] Relax, Kyle. I just want to talk.

Kyle: [*surprised*] How'd you know my name?

Joshua: [*still calm*] I know a lot about you.

Kyle: [*slightly panicked*] What are you, some kind of stalker? Do I need to call the manager over here?

Joshua: [*reassuring*] There's no need for that.

Kyle: [*relaxing a bit*] Then what do you want?

Joshua: I have a proposal for you.

Kyle: Well, you'll have to go through our research and development department, just like everybody else.

Joshua: It's not for your company, Kyle. It's a job proposal for you.

Kyle: Well, if you know so much about me, you'd know I already have a job.

Joshua: Yes, you're the Senior Vice-President of Sutton Technologies, a company founded by your father, Walter Sutton. You have an MBA from Harvard, you drive a Lexus, and you've been married to your college sweetheart, Jennifer, for twelve years. You have two children, Cody and Alex, a dog, a hamster, and two goldfish.

Kyle: [*stares blankly – after a brief pause*] One of the fish died last night.

Joshua: Yes, but you haven't told your kids yet, and you planned on buying a replacement on the way home today, hoping they would never notice.

Kyle: [*confidently*] I knew you were a stalker. [*pulls phone out*] You have ten seconds to explain yourself or I'm calling the cops.

Joshua: Like I said, Kyle, I have a job proposal for you.

Kyle: And I told you, I already have a job.

Joshua: [*calmly*] Will you at least hear me out?

Kyle: [*puts phone away, resigning*] So what's this job?

Joshua: [*plainly*] Come work for me.

Kyle: I don't even know what you do. I don't even know your name.

Joshua: I'm Joshua and I help people.

Kyle: [*waiting, amazed*] That's it? You must not be in sales, because that was a terrible pitch.

Joshua: So what do you say?

Kyle: Seriously? [*sarcastically*] Uh, no.

Joshua: [*continuing*] I think you'd make an excellent addition to my team.

Kyle: I said, no. And what do you mean, your team?

Joshua: [*points over his shoulder*] See those three over there?

Kyle: [*looking*] Where? Behind those scruffy looking guys.

Joshua: No. I'm talking about those scruffy looking guys.

Kyle: [*sighing*] I have to tell you, Josh, they're not helping your case.

Joshua: I'm assembling a team of twelve to travel with me around the state to change people's lives. We could really use someone with your abilities.

Kyle: So is this some sort of Publisher's Clearinghouse thing?

Joshua: No, I'm talking about real change.

Kyle: I don't think I follow.

Joshua: In your work with Sutton Technologies, you bring innovation into people's homes to make life easier. I want to help people see that life is about more than what they have – it's about who they are.

Kyle: And who are they?

Joshua: They're God's children. And he wants to have a relationship with them.

Kyle: [*realizing*] Oh, you're one of them.

Joshua: [*questioning*] One of them?

Kyle: You know, one of those religious types. You probably just want my money.

Joshua: No, Kyle. [*deliberately*] I want you.

Kyle: [*stopping, thinking*] You're serious, aren't you?

Joshua: Absolutely.

Kyle: And you just travel around the state? Is this like Monday to Friday? Do I get weekends off?

Joshua: Why don't you come meet the others and we'll talk some more? [*stands*]

Kyle: But what about my job? What about my family?

Joshua: Come work for me. [*waves him on*] Everything will be taken care of. [*exits*]

Kyle: [*pause – sets coffee down, stands*] This is either the dumbest or the smartest thing I've ever done. There's only one way to find out. [*exits, following Joshua*]

[*Blackout*]

JESUS THE KING:
Understanding the Life and Death of the Son of God
Lent Sermon – Week 1
The Call
March 10, 2019

Title: The Call

Scripture: Mark 1:14-31

***Jesus the King* (Keller, 2011): Chapter 2**

Are you able to recall the first time you heard the name “Jesus” spoken in a kind, loving and tender way? [*Pause*] For some, the response would be far different had I asked if you were able to recall the first time you heard the name, “Jesus.” [*Pause*] There is a great difference in the use of Jesus’ name! The same would have held true in Jesus’ day.

When we study the life of Jesus Christ today, we come to understand we are thinking and speaking of the second person of the Godhead. We learn from the four New Testament Gospels the story of His birth, teachings, miracles, death and resurrection from the dead. We come to love, honor and revere Him for who He is, and for the lengths to which He has gone to bring us back to a right relationship with God.

When Jesus of Nazareth bursts on the scene in the first century, the people around Him saw a common person. As they carefully watched Him, they began to understand His uniqueness. This caused some to speak His name with great awe and wonder because of the ways He interacted with them. Equally, Jesus’ uniqueness caused others to snarl His name and plot to kill Him. Jesus was in His day, as in ours, a rather polarizing figure. People loved Him and spoke His name in reverence. Or, people disregarded and disrespected Him, causing His name to be used as profanity.

In today’s Scripture reading, Mark 1:14-31, we read the details of the inauguration of Jesus’ public ministry through the pen of Mark, as he writes his Gospel account. Mark uses great economy of words in his writing style. Many details the other Gospel writers include are missing from Mark’s account. Mark paints a picture of Jesus as a homeless, itinerant preacher who never unpacks his meager backpack! He is always active and on the move. If you take time to read the short sixteen chapters, you may notice Mark’s favorite transition phrase between activities is “and immediately.” Jesus has a mission to accomplish in a short period of time, and He is one active man!

I. **The Gospel Call. (1:14-15)**

The inauguration of Jesus’ public ministry takes place as his cousin, John the Baptist’s is ending. Mark indicates in verse 14, John the Baptist is handed over to prison. Jesus takes up John’s cry, preaching the same message. “The time has come. The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!” (1:15, NIV)

Today, we name this short three-sentence sermon, “the Gospel message” or “the Good News.” What does this mean? Jesus’ original hearers were quick to understand his meaning. We, on the other hand, are a bit slower to see how the Gospel call contains “good news.”

In Jesus’ day, the word *euangelion*, “good news,” or “gospel” was in common use. Timothy Keller indicates “It meant history-making, life-shaping news, as opposed to just daily news” (*Jesus the King*, 15). When Israel won a great battle over an enemy, a runner was dispatched to call out the “good news.” When Caesar appointed a new ruler, a messenger was sent to announce the “good news.” History was being announced. Life was changing. Life would not be the same again.

You understand this concept if you are a Chicago Cubs baseball fan. In October 2016, when the Chicago Cubs won the World Series, a long losing streak was broken. If you happened to be anywhere near Wrigley Field when the final play was made, you understand a modern application of announcing *euangelion*, “good news.” There was *great joy and elation* for Cubs fans of all ages! Long time losers had finally become winners!

The Gospel call Jesus trumpets is history-making and life-shaping news as well. Jesus’ good news is that God Himself is stepping into the human scene, and will accomplish for us what we can never accomplish for ourselves—the restoration of a right relationship with God. Jesus announces that God is King, and He is calling people to pledge their allegiance to His leadership and Kingdom.

Entrance to God’s Kingdom comes through “repentance,” which means “to turn around,” to “change your course in an opposite direction,” to “change your mindset,” or “to turn away from something.” Simply stated, accepting Jesus’ good news is to turn away from a self-centered, selfish lifestyle with our self as king, and allow God to take His rightful place as supreme Sovereign over our life.

II. **The Disciples’ Call. (1:16-20)**

Mark gives no further details of Jesus’ inaugural sermon. He illustrates it, however, in the next few verses, as ordinary men respond to Jesus’ invitation. As Jesus invites specific individuals to follow Him, we see what the Gospel call entails.

¹⁶ As Jesus walked beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. ¹⁷ “Come, follow me,” Jesus said, “and I will send you out to fish for people.” ¹⁸ At once they left their nets and followed him.

¹⁹ When he had gone a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John in a boat, preparing their nets. ²⁰ Without delay he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men and followed him (1:16-20, NIV).

In Jesus’ day, Jewish men who wanted to learn from a rabbi sought out the desired teacher. Here, we see the reverse in play. Abruptly and seemingly out of nowhere, Jesus takes the

initiative and seeks four men to join him. He calls to them and says, “Come, follow me, and I will send you out to fish for people.”

Just as abruptly, they show true repentance, by turning from what they are doing, and follow Jesus. They drop everything to follow Jesus’ call. David Garland suggests, “Their repentance is more than just a matter of an internal transformation; they turn into something that they are not now, from fishermen to fishers of men” (*NIV Application Commentary*, 69). Jesus is calling to their remembrance words of the Old Testament prophets who had predicted on several occasions that God would “fish” for people, gathering them for judgment. (Jer. 16:14-16; Amos 4:2; Hab. 1:14-17). These four would become a part of the new fulfillment of the prophetic word under Jesus’ leadership.

Further comment by David Garland adds significance to Jesus’ calling of the four. “When the fisherman hooks a fish, it has fatal consequences for the fish; life cannot go on as before. This image fits the transforming power of God’s rule that brings judgment and death to the old, yet promises a new creation” (*NIV Application Commentary*, 69).

The fishermen, in this instance, have been “caught.” Through one decision, their lives turn completely upside down. They leave their families and their occupations and follow Jesus. Jesus is their new leader, and they sign on immediately as his constant apprentices. Everything that had once controlled and filled their lives was now in second place. Following Jesus by learning from His teachings and example were now the first and controlling priority of their lives. This is an example of a radical and complete response to the call—to the good news of Jesus.

III. The Authenticity of Jesus’ call. (1:21-31)

Most of us would not have immediately dropped everything to follow Jesus. Of course, that was true in Jesus’ day as well. Many people when they hear the call of Jesus to His radical way of life and discipleship skeptically respond with, “Who made Him the boss? What authority does He have to back up these demands”? Just as we are mulling these questions in our mind, Mark just as quickly answers them with examples of Jesus’ authority, proving the authenticity of His call.

Not long after the calling of the four fishermen turned disciples, they find themselves in the synagogue at Capernaum with Jesus. During this visit, Jesus will give them several proofs of the authenticity of His authority to call them. We will quickly look at three.

Mark tells us that the visit to Capernaum happens on the Sabbath day. Jesus and the disciples go to the city’s synagogue, where Jesus teaches those who have assembled. In Jesus’ day, synagogues did not have professional teachers. The Ruler of the Synagogue invited anyone who displayed competency as a teacher to read the Scripture and then provide commentary (Barclay, *Mark*, 22). Normal commentary (the “sermon”) consisted of quoting the teachings of others to back up the chosen text. The opinions of the speaker himself were never shared.

Mark gives no details about the text read or the sermon preached in the Capernaum Synagogue. He only indicates the results. Mark tells us that the people in the synagogue are amazed because Jesus teaches in a different way—with authority. William Barclay helpfully adds; “When Jesus spoke, He spoke as if He needed no authority beyond Himself. He spoke with utter independence. He cited no authorities and quoted no experts. He spoke with the finality of the voice of God” (Barclay, *Mark*, 24).

As if on cue, a man possessed by an “impure spirit” (NIV), or a demon begins to loudly challenge both Jesus’ message and authority. The results must have been bone chilling for those in attendance. Mark tells us that the man cried out, “What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God” (1:23-24, NIV)! A gauntlet has been thrown down.

Jesus responds to this test of authority by silencing the man. “Be quiet” is how the NIV translates Jesus’ words. This is too mild a translation, however. What he really says to the demon is “Shut up!” The words the demon has spoken are absolutely true. However, truth is not the point. The point is that “Jesus does not want testimony that is demonic. He will not accept the hollow confessions of spirits that are not cleansed and transformed” (Garland, *NIV Application Commentary*, 71).

The words silencing the demon are followed by a stern command, “Come out of him” (25)! Again, in an economy of words and a lack of detail, Mark records, “The impure spirit shook the man violently and came out of him with a shriek” (26). That’s one stirring altar call! This adds another layer of authenticity to the call of Jesus, as “casting out demons is an undeniable sign that the kingdom of God has come and Satan’s realm is being routed” (Garland, *NIV Application Commentary*, 81).

Mark records the response of the synagogue participants. “The people were all so amazed that they asked each other, ‘What is this? A new teaching—and with authority! He even gives orders to impure spirits and they obey him.’ News about him spread quickly over the whole region of Galilee” (27-28).

The third proof of Jesus’ authority comes as they move from the synagogue, to go to the house of Simon Peter’s mother-in-law, which is just a few feet away and across the street. When they arrive, they find the mother-in-law sick and in bed with a fever. In Jesus’ day, this was not just a common illness, but carried a theological significance. They believed that God was punishing one who had a fever because of breaking the Covenant in some way. There was no possible human intervention for the cure of a fever. Fever was sent by God, and was only cured because of God’s direct intervention. (Garland, *NIV Application Commentary*, 72).

Imagine the disciple’s shock when Jesus walks over to the bedside, takes her hand in his and helps her to her feet. As he does this, the fever breaks, and she is well again. In their mind, Jesus is showing them His ability to extinguish a heaven-sent fire—something only God Himself could accomplish. No wonder they kept following Jesus! At every turn, He confirms His unique authority to call them to follow Him.

Conclusion

All of this is well and good. If we stop with the historic narrative, and do not apply it to our own situation and lives, we stop short of God's intended goal of Scripture. You see, Jesus is still in the business of calling modern day disciples. His call to apprenticeship was not just to first century people. No. He has continued throughout the centuries to use the very same words to call individuals to follow Him. Jesus says to you and me today, "The time has come. The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news" (15)!

Timothy Keller writes;

The gospel isn't advice: It's the good news that you don't need to earn your way to God; Jesus has already done it for you. And it's a gift that you receive by sheer grace—through God's thoroughly unmerited favor. If you seize that gift and keep holding on to it, then Jesus' call won't draw you into fanaticism or moderation. You will be passionate to make Jesus your absolute goal and priority, to orbit around him. . ." (22) [. . .]

Come, follow me, Jesus is saying, "Follow me because I'm the King you've been looking for. Follow me because I have authority over everything, yet I've humbled myself for you. Because I died on the cross for you when you didn't have the right beliefs or the right behavior. Because I have brought you news, not advice. Because I'm your true love, your true life—follow me" (24).

Do you hear the kind, tender and loving words of Jesus as He speaks them to your soul right now? He asks each of us to stop where we are and turn our complete focus on Him. Repent. Turn around the trajectory of your life—change your mind and heart—if it is not pointing only toward Jesus and His ways. Believe the good news! The good news is that God has stepped into history and everything is changing!

The next step is yours. Will you accept the call of Jesus? Will you follow as His apprentice?

Jesus the King: Understanding the Life and Death of the Son of God by Timothy Keller, 2013; previously published as *King's Cross: The Story of the World in the Life of Jesus*, 2011 (Penguin Books).