

<sup>12</sup>Now when Jesus heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew to Galilee. <sup>13</sup>He left Nazareth and made his home in Capernaum by the sea, in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali, <sup>14</sup>so that what had been spoken through the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled: <sup>15</sup>“Land of Zebulun, land of Naphtali, on the road by the sea, across the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles— <sup>16</sup>the people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, and for those who sat in the region and shadow of death light has dawned.” <sup>17</sup>From that time Jesus began to proclaim, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.”

<sup>18</sup>As he walked by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea—for they were fishermen. <sup>19</sup>And he said to them, “Follow me, and I will make you fish for people.” <sup>20</sup>Immediately they left their nets and followed him. <sup>21</sup>As he went from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John, in the boat with their father Zebedee, mending their nets, and he called them. <sup>22</sup>Immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed him.

<sup>23</sup>Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and curing every disease and every sickness among the people.

“Now when Jesus heard that John had been arrested he went back to Galilee.”

John had been out there by the Jordan baptizing. Crowds had gathered, great crowds. Something was happening here, in John. Hopes were high. Then John was arrested, a puncture in the great balloon of their hopes, everything collapsed and sank to the ground. The great crowds could have gathered in rebellion, but they did not. They might have surrounded Herod's palace demanding John be freed, but they did not. The crowds went home and with them, Jesus.

“Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near,” John proclaimed. God is close, about to crash through the door of this world. And when God breaks through sorrow and sighing will flee away. The wolf will lie down with the lamb. All of the battle armor and soldiers boots and clothes will be thrown out, useless trash. No more war, only peace, endless peace.

You and I will be able to walk down Hough Avenue at midnight without fear when God breaks into the world. Or when someone from Hough Avenue walks down your street at 2 am your first reaction will no longer be to call the police.

When God breaks through we will board up the hospitals, all sickness and dying will hide from the presence of God. The ninety year old will race with the teenager and sometimes win.

And nowhere will people fear oppression. The rich and the powerful will no longer stand on the backs of the poor.

God's rule, God's reign, God's kingdom is near, John said, very near. Then John was arrested, and the crowds repented of their hope. They went home to live in darkness. They returned to living in the region and in the shadow of death.

And Jesus went back to Galilee. The NRSV even uses the word withdrew, Jesus withdrew to Galilee, his home. It almost sounds like he was like all the rest. But then we read, "From that time on Jesus began to proclaim, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.'" - in the very place where Herod ruled – Galilee - (Herod who had just arrested John) -in that very place Jesus took up the message of John: "The Kingdom of heaven has come near."

God is about to break through, right here, right now.

And Jesus cured every disease and every sickness among the people. And God was breaking through.

And he called Simon and Andrew and James and John and they left behind darkness and joined the light of Jesus and God was breaking through. They stopped watching the evening news and going to bed in despair over what this world is coming to, and they made news with Jesus. Jesus and Simon and Andrew and James and John were God's breaking through into a world where John the Baptizer was arrested and Jesus would be crucified. For Herod and Pilate could not stop God from breaking through.

And neither can sickness or disease or violence or even death keep God from breaking through in you. Through you.

Only fear can keep God out - my fear and yours.

For fear will send us into our back yards to bury whatever God has given us - like the man who was given the talent but was afraid, and buried it.

Fear will keep us at home, and alone, clutching what little we have. And we will build higher walls, buy better alarm systems. We will feed on our meager fish and bread alone.

But for Simon and Andrew and James and John there will be a feasting in green pastures as five loaves and two fish feed thousands.

The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, and for those who sat in the region and shadow of death light has dawned.

Where Jesus is God breaks through and light dawns. Jesus is here and the light of God is shining on you, in you, through you.