

There's something so comforting about being back at Jesus calling the disciples at the river Jordan. After a lot of the infant Jesus and Joseph and Mary and the Magi and the Shepherds (who are still technically present as we hang out in Epiphany), its good to be back with our pals Simon Peter and Andrew and James and John as they ditch their day jobs and hit the road with Jesus. I'm pretty big Muppets guy and that song that Kermit the Frog and Fozzy Bear start singing "Moving Right Along" as they head out in their yellow volkswagon Beatle, "a frog and a bear, seeing America" but instead its Jesus and these four in that volkswagon saying "a carpenter and fishermen, seeing Judea!"

There's something that feels routine and expected, this is not a new story. And yet, as is the case with every word of scripture and every moment of our lives, even though words and events may look the same, they are everytime wholly new.

That is one of the lessons of our Gospel today, a lesson tucked away in a single word that colors the whole thing for me. It's never really stuck out for me as much as it has this morning. And that word is "repent!" It's a word that I love because I fixate on it when I hear it, its one of those buzz words that makes me both want to say it like Foghorn Leghorn and southern Baptist it up, Now I say here y'all gotta cut that sinnin' out and repent" and it makes me want to unpack it and explore it beyond the usage so commonly used publicly today. I would suspect that when most people hear the word repent they think of turning away from evil lest they be caught up in the wrath and judgement of God. I remember vividly in highschool the messages about how we got hit with hurricane Katrina because of all the state lack of repenting and all the sinning we were up to. It's not a message I remember making me too keen on Christianity.

And yet Jesus goes about "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." And using

that word “repent” like its just as wonderful as the Gospel, the good news, and the kingdom of God.

So... what if it is?

There plenty of translations of the Greek word here, metanoeo, the most common one I heard growing up being to turn around. But turns out a divinity school degree hooks you up with some tools so you can check it out for yourself, incidentally, if you're EVER wondering about a word in a passage of scripture that gives you pause I'm here to hook you up with whatever you need to explore what that original word might have been, in anycase, metanoeo, to repent, the first definition that comes up is to think differently. And heck if that doesn't sound pretty encouraging to me.

This passage is so, so, SO cool because its saying that the Christian miracle of transformation doesn't just occur in the future, doesn't just happen for a future generation towards which we love and work, it doesn't just happen in someday to come and it will, the miracle of transformation is right here, right now as I live and breathe and preach at y'all and as y'all may wonder how long crazy ol' Rev. Arceneaux is gonna go on today. The time is fulfilled now. The kingdom of God ain't coming near. It HAS come near. Repent, metanoeo, think differently now and believe the good news that the world is transformed, God's here, and new life is here and here abundantly.

What does that look like? It looks like a bunch of guys going about their day jobs and seeing that their lives and efforts mean more than just a day's wage. It looks like your recognition that even if you are in the midst of a job that isn't life giving, or your just in a place that seems to say that your life isn't as important as it used to be. If you get any notion that you don't matter all that much, our Gospel's message that is as ancient can be and old as can be is here to remind you in the newness of

today that any such notions are bupkiss. That you do matter. That you are a citizen of God's kingdom and the good you do is to the benefit of the world.

This Sunday, and ever day, every new moment you're called to think differently than how some woes of life would want you to think. You're called to believe the good news that you matter right here right now even if you don't feel that way or if the hardships of life might seem to say others.

But God has come near. Let's throw down our nets, let go of whatever says our lives are only meant trivial meniality, and follow that man proclaiming the good news. Amen.