

## Active Waiting

Mark 1: 1-8 (December 10, 2017)

### **Mark 1: 1-3**

<sup>1</sup>The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

<sup>2</sup>As it is written in the prophet Isaiah, "See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way;<sup>3</sup> the voice of one crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight,'"

### *Historical Context*

**Good news, Greek - εὐαγγελίου - good tidings, good news, gospel.**

Mark's introduction of his story as the "beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ..." has political overtones. His is not the only "good news" that the world knows. Good news was a political term associated with Caesar and tidings of the victories of the Roman Legions. The inscription from [Priene, circa 9 C.E.](#), (in modern Turkey) connects the term "good news" with Augustus and the empire. Mark is co-opting a term from the empire to introduce a counter narrative about good news. His statement is treasonous.

### *Theme: Active Waiting*

Advent is all about promises. And the thing about promises is that they are not static. Rather, promises – if you hear and believe them – create an expectation about the future and set something in motion.

The same is true about God's promise. And that, perhaps, is the key message of Advent. That in the stable at Bethlehem God is not only *keeping* promises God made to Israel but also *making* promises to us. That in Jesus, God *hears* our cries of fear and concern and doubt at our lowest points and *responds*. And to these cries for deliverance, God responds with promises of healing, peace, and justice in and through the life, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus.

Maybe we've heard that kind of promise before. But consider this: What if God's promises are not all something we wait patiently for until the end of time? What if we are invited to participate *here and now* in the promises of God by contributing to them in the present? What if part of how God keeps God's promises is through our efforts to heal, comfort, help, and bring justice?

So the question is: what kind of waiting do we want to do this Advent season? We can sit around and wait for Christmas, or Christ's return, for that matter. Or we can get in the game, see how we can spend our time, energy, wealth, and lives making a difference *right now*. Because it's not just John who is called to prepare the way. It's all of us. Right here, right now, waiting *actively*, by making a difference in the lives of the people God has put all around us. God is continuing the story of the good news of Jesus in and through our words and actions and each of us will have a hundred and one opportunities this very week to contribute to that sacred story, to make it come alive, to help God keep God's promises here and now.