



**Key Passage:** Mark 1:14-15

## INTRO

I'm glad you're here today as we begin a new series today called "The Words of Easter" that will focus on several different key words in the life and teachings of Jesus. We'll explore what these words meant to Jesus and His first listeners, and what they can mean for us.

The first word is TIME.

Where does your mind go when hear that word?

Minutes, hours, clocks, history, moments.

Do you wish you had more time?

### ***Oxford English Dictionary***

*the indefinite continued progress of existence and events in the past, present, and future regarded as a whole*

In the Gospel of Mark – which is the earliest of the four Gospels – the very first words we hear from Jesus are about time. Mark does not begin like Matthew and Luke with the birth of Jesus. Chapter 1 begins with John the Baptist, who was prophesying about the coming Messiah.

But John got shut down. He was arrested.

And in verses 14-15, Mark described the beginning of Jesus' ministry.

### **MARK 1:14-15 (ESV)**

*<sup>14</sup> Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, <sup>15</sup> and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel."*

The gospel, the good news of God, proclaimed for the very first time by Jesus, was this: *"Time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand..."*

The New Testament was written in the Greek language, and there are two ancient Greek words for *time*.

- One is *chronos*, which designates a length of time.
- The other is *kairos*, which means "an opportune or appointed time; a

decisive moment."

The word used here by Jesus is KAIROS. Used in connection with the following phrase about the kingdom of God, Jesus was saying that the appointed time or the decisive moment for the kingdom of God had arrived. Jesus said that was a critical moment of fulfillment.

To understand what this means, we have to place this moment into a larger timeline. Theologians and historians have commonly referred to God's timeline throughout history as the "The Grand Narrative." One scholar named N.T. Wright divides it into several acts like a play. So let's talk about the different acts in this timeline that have led to this moment.

### **Act 1 – CREATION**

The first act took place in Genesis 1 & 2 and it's called "Creation." We learn in Genesis 1 & 2 that the story of humanity began with a Creator who made everything, including humans. And this world God created was full of love and peace and beauty. God lived in the Garden with Adam and Eve, and everything was perfect.

#### **Genesis 1:31 (ESV)**

*"And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good."*

This is how TIME began, in peace and harmony, with God and humans in right relationship. But as you know, it quickly gave way to the second act of the story.

### **Act 2 – THE FALL**

In Genesis 3, a serpent showed up and convinced Adam and Eve to reject God's rules in the Garden. They ate from the one tree that was off limits. We call this "The Fall." Sin entered the world, and there were consequences, which included separation from God, expulsion from the Garden, and eventually death.

The takeaway for us is that we have inherited these consequences. We live in a world that is, in many ways, broken by sin. **Romans 3:23** (ESV) says *"all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."*

The story started out perfect, but sin screwed that up, and the worst part about that was that humans lost the ability to live in direct community with God.

### **Act 3 – ISRAEL**

Act 1 & Act 2 happened in the first three chapters of the Bible, but Act 3 takes up the rest of the Old Testament. Let's call this part of the timeline "Israel" because that's the name of the people of God, and this is where we find out what happened to them between The Fall and Jesus.

We learn that God did not abandon His people, but He did give them a complex system of rules that they needed to follow in order to be right with Him: offerings, sacrifices, feasts, laws.

And the people of Israel didn't always get it right. This part of the story is full of crazy moments, some of which are so R-rated that we rarely talk about them in church! It's dramatic and it's full of ups and downs. God's people continuously made stupid mistakes and then they repented and cleaned up their acts, only to screw up again.

They spent a significant amount of this timeline being oppressed by their enemies, forced into exile, and longing for a future filled with hope.

Throughout this era, God sent prophets to His people – like Ezekiel, Jeremiah, and Isaiah – and one of the recurring themes that these prophets spoke about was that God was going to send a hero, a new king to save His people. Good news and salvation were on the way.

#### **Isaiah 53:4-6 (NIV)**

*<sup>4</sup> Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered him punished by God, stricken by him, and afflicted. <sup>5</sup> But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed. <sup>6</sup> We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.*

- So in Act 1 we saw that creation was perfect and people were with God.
- In Act 2 we saw how sin separates people from God and causes death and brokenness.

- In Act 3 we saw how the people could not fix it for themselves. They needed a Savior.

And in the 400 or so years that spanned between the last book of the Old Testament and the life of Jesus, several important historical events took place.

- Alexander the Great went on an absolute tear in the 4<sup>th</sup> century B.C. As the Greek empire spread, the world experienced something called Hellenization. Greek culture, and particularly the language, became the new norm across the empire, including in the Jewish community.
- In 164 B.C. the Jews revolted. They took back control, and it stayed that way for 100 years.
- But then a new superpower arose: ROME. Once again the Jewish people were subjected to foreign rule, desperate for the Savior that God has promised them for centuries.

And that leads us to Act 4...

## **Act 4 – JESUS**

### **Galatians 4:4 (ESV)**

*But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son*

God did something remarkable, even by His standards.

The storyteller entered the story.

The creator of the timeline stepped into time.

And the very first words of His ministry: "*TIME IS FULFILLED.*"

Redemptive history had been building to this climactic moment. The prophecies were being fulfilled. God was ready to exert His rule and authority in a new way to save His people, defeat their enemies, and reveal His glory in the world.

Jesus was not just announcing this; He was *embodying* it.

He was the Savior that time had been marching toward.

In other words, Jesus says: "The time is fulfilled! I am the one the prophets spoke of. My ministry is the arrival of the long-awaited kingdom of healing and salvation and freedom from oppression. God is now revealing Himself as king on Earth, and He is revealing Himself through me."

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