

**I.** Not long after John Baptizes the Son of God, John is taken by Herod. The time of preparation is ended. The first thing Jesus does is to leave Nazareth, which is a place of danger for him, and go to a “house of comfort and isolation” — Capernaum by the coast of the sea, next to Zabulon & Nephthalim — Gentile lands.

God is so unlike us:

God does not begin by confronting danger in the world and opposing it *there*.  
And especially, not in others.

The Bl Theophlact says that, by leaving Nazareth for Capernaum, Christ-God, Jesus the Christ, is “teaching us not to throw ourselves into dangers.” He left a place that was dangerous to Him, and moved to a place that was for Him, a place of comfort and consolation, but for us — those who sit in darkness, a revelation of light.  
There is great irony here.

He went to live there, fulfilling a prophecy of Isaiah:

“a people which sat in darkness saw a great light; light dawned on them who sat in the region and shadow of death.” This is how all of us begin.

At first, the Gentiles are easier for God to reveal himself to than the Jews.

It is easiest to reveal the truth to someone who does not believe they already know the truth. What is the Truth? Jesus Christ, the Son of God. He *IS* all Truth.

The truth of God — & *of us*. Us — not me; not me alone. God does not belong to me.

**II.** Jesus first sermon. Very short: “Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.

The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand? Where?

Again, Christ-God incarnate, He is the Kingdom within.

After this brief and almost silent revelation — Jesus is *en route* to the Crucifixion.

What was the content of that 1st Sermon?

Jesus was saying: *I am that I am*. I am the One.

But He will not go alone.

He gradually chooses 12 Apostles & many others — disciples follow Him. There is the center, those close, and those who follow and never get lost: Christians. Followers.

He begins with Peter and Andrew, but as Theophlact reminds us,

“this is their *second* time with Christ.

They had been with Him before, but they left him.

***They preferred*** John the Baptist.

[Heresy: preference of one part —

Back when John said: “Behold the Lamb of God,” there were already two future Apostles with John.

And when John was arrested, these future Apostles did not return to Jesus Christ — they went back to fishing.

So now he comes to them again. And this time He *says* to them: “follow me.”

But three years later, when Jesus was arrested and brought to trial — Peter left Him again. Imagine.

And once again, it was Jesus Christ who came to Peter after Peter had left Him.

This time, it was the crucified and arisen Christ — who came to Peter. ***[who had by then, experienced life without the presence of Christ — death]***

But this time Peter followed him beyond the end of his own life — beyond the reach & power of death. — throughout this life and down to now — Peter become leader of the Apostles and is faithful. When Jesus Christ died on the Cross the old Peter died with Him. When the risen Christ came to Peter after the Resurrection, He came to a man in whom the old Peter was dead. Peter died and arose with Christ.

And that is why he never left God, ever again.

### **III.** What is the moral of this?

The problem is not so much in knowing where to *find* God,

but in what we do afterward. What do we do? Like Peter:

we leave and return. We fall and get up. ***[that is, we are by the grace of God, being saved.]***

And we have to wonder: in which position with God find us in the end?

So our part is to always get up quickly — *very* quickly.

And there is this: do not wallow in despair. Get up from despair.

All things have been dealt with, even this — even death itself. Remember Thomas:

“Be faithful and not doubting.” “Repent, for the Kingdom of God is at hand.”

Get up and *do* something. Anything. Well, something good.

God reveals to us what we are without Him. It is not a pretty picture.

### ***Repentance? — repent of what?***

But after all, without Him we really are not ourselves.

***Jesus Christ is not a message for angels — He is our message — our Truth.***

He is what makes us — us. Before He came to us, we lived in shadow and did not see.

But He is the light. And we understand God’s first & shortest sermon:

“Repent, for the Kingdom of God is at hand.”

The first thing is to confront & deal with what is wrong with the the world — *from within ourselves.*

That is the *source* of what is wrong with the world. [Judas’ question: Is it ME?

You have said so.].

The problem is that is wrong with the world has become second nature in us.

Jesus Christ is here to deal with that. The battle is already won by Him.

We are, after all, not like warriors in the world. Paul says, put on all of your armor. Then what? Then descend into yourself. That is the place of unseen warfare. But the *rules* of that battle are not the same as in the world. They are revealed by how we see Christ live. He does violence to violence. Confronted by violence, Jesus He says to Peter: put up your sword. He who lives by the sword dies by the sword. *Inner* warfare is remarkably peace-affirming.