

Reflection on Mark 1.21-28 by Rev'd Peter Shaw

Dear Friends

Are we leaders or followers? How do we see ourselves?

I think that for all of us there are points of our lives where we are either one or the other. But it is probably true to say that most people in the world are, by and large, followers. Perhaps more than we care to admit we are ruled by the attitudes, ideas, beliefs, habits, tastes and fashions of others. Most people wouldn't dare to be different unless a good number of others are "being different" too!

In itself there is nothing wrong with being a follower. We were made to be followers. There is something within us that predisposes us to look up to and listen to and emulate and follow... God. He is the Creator and made us that way. God meant us to become mature people too who can be responsible and think and work things out and make good decisions - **but** very importantly, always in a relation with him.

The problem with the human race is that we thought we could have absolute freedom, an absolute independence even from our Creator. But it has never worked out. In our grab for the leadership of our own lives, we have ended up followers after all.

Think again about that scene in the Garden of Eden. "Come on! Just eat some! It won't hurt you! Find out for yourself! Grow up! You'll be like God! You'll know good and bad for yourself!"

Can't you see in the situation all the plausible enticements of any other more modern temptation? Might it not be the peer pressure of friends that makes us take that first alcoholic drink or smoke?

O yes, we are followers all right! Just that we must be careful who we follow in this world. Above all, learn all over again what it means to put our trust in Jesus - to follow God. He made us with the ability to think and he means us to use it – as a loving parent he gives us free choice, but hopes that we will choose to put our trust in him.

Amen