

**First Baptist Church Merritt Island**  
**Senior Pastor Titus Green**  
**April 2, 2023**  
**The Baptism & Temptation of Jesus**  
**Mark 1:9-13**

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This morning, we are continuing our study of the book of Mark. And before we look at our text, I want to give you a very brief quiz. And, when I say 'brief,' I mean it. It's only one question. What did Jesus do to change your standing before God?

As someone who has grown up in Christianity, I can tell you how I would have answered that question most of my life. I would have said something like, "Jesus died on the cross to pay for my sins."

And I don't think I'm the only one who would give an answer like that. Most people I speak with about their relationship with Jesus say something very similar to that. The focus is forgiveness that comes through the death of Jesus. And before you all start pegging me as a heretic, let me say it is absolutely true that Jesus died on the cross to pay for our sins so we can be forgiven by God. There's good reason we celebrate Palm Sunday as the day Jesus entered the city of Jerusalem on a mission to lay down His life as a sacrifice for our sins.

But it's not just the death of Jesus that changes our standing before God. The life of Jesus (what He did before He went to the cross) brings a change to our standing, as well. And that's what we see highlighted in our text this morning. We see two things about the life of Jesus that have an eternal impact on our standing before God.

**Mark 1:9–13**

***In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. 10 And when he came up out of the water, immediately he saw the heavens being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. 11 And a voice came from heaven, "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased." 12 The Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. 13 And he was in the wilderness forty days, being tempted by Satan. And he was with the wild animals, and the angels were ministering to him.***

One of the things that makes the first chapter of the Gospel of Mark difficult to teach is that he jumps into the life of Christ at a full sprint. In five quick verses, Mark summarizes two monumental events at the beginning of Christ's earthly ministry. In verses 9-11, he summarizes the baptism of Jesus. In verses 12-13, he summarizes the temptation of Christ in the wilderness. And he leaves out most of the details we find in Matthew, Luke, and John, which forces us to consider the big-picture implications of Christ's baptism and temptation.

So, let's try to see the big picture Mark is highlighting for us here, starting with the Baptism of Jesus. And I think a good place to begin is by asking a question we brought up last week: Why did Jesus get baptized?

If you weren't here last week, let me quickly recap what we saw. John the Baptist was sent by God to prepare the way for Jesus. And there were two things John did that prepared people's heart to receive Christ.

1. John told people the truth about Jesus. He told people that Jesus is mighty, worthy, and holy. And, while that is wonderful it is also sobering because we aren't mighty, worthy, or holy. We are

unholy sinners who are dead in our sin and unworthy of God's presence. We are weak, unworthy, and unholy.

2. John called people to repent of their sin. And the way John called people to repent was through the act of baptism.

*Mark 1:4 – John appeared, baptizing in the wilderness and proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.*

So, John is in the wilderness, calling people to repent and be baptized because Jesus was on His way. Then, Jesus appears on the scene. And the first thing He does is get baptized by John. But Jesus hadn't sinned. That means Jesus didn't need to repent. So, why was Jesus baptized? This is where we need to go to one of the other accounts of Jesus's baptism to get an answer.

*Matthew 3:13-15*

*Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John, to be baptized by him. 14 John would have prevented him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" 15 But Jesus answered him, "Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he consented.*

When Jesus approached John to be baptized, John had the same reaction we have. He tried to prevent Jesus from being baptized. He knew that Jesus was the perfect Lamb of God who came to take away the sins of the world. He knew that Jesus didn't need to repent so John thought Jesus didn't need to be baptized. And He seems to know that if Jesus gets baptized, it will identify Him with people who are sinners. And Jesus doesn't correct John. He doesn't say, "John, you don't know it, but I have sinned, and I need to repent." Jesus doesn't say that. He also doesn't say, "John, you're right. I don't want to be identified with sinners." He says, "John, there's another reason I am to be baptized. It's to fulfill all righteousness."

That phrase "fulfill all righteousness", basically means to do everything according to the will of God. Now, some of this remains a mystery because we don't have the background on when God the Father made it known to Jesus that He was to be baptized but, Jesus is essentially telling John that God's perfect plan for His life included being baptized by John, even if it identified Him with sinners like us.

And that's a significant part of the mission of Christ. He came to be a human being, one of us, to be identified with sinful humanity. And, when He came, He didn't go directly to the cross. That wasn't the plan. He lived a full life that was filled with good works according to the will of God. He did everything we have failed to do. You see, sin is not just doing wrong things. Sin is failing to do right things.

*James 4:17*

*So whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin.*

We call these types of sin "sins of omission." It's when we fail to do what is right. And all of us have sinned in this way. We have failed to always love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength. We have failed to always love our neighbors as ourselves. We have failed to be completely truthful. We have failed to be perfectly generous. We have failed to live into the good design of God for mankind.

So, Jesus came as one of us to fulfill righteousness on our behalf. So, it is fitting that at the very beginning of Jesus' ministry, His first public act would be to do what is right by obeying God the Father. That's why Jesus was baptized – to fulfill righteousness as one of us.

And just think how that connects to what we saw last week. As people were being baptized as an expression of their repentance, they weren't just saying they wanted to be done with sin. They were effectively saying they wanted to be pure and clean in the eyes of God. They wanted to be righteous.

And that's essentially what Jesus was saying, too. While He didn't have to repent of any sin, He did need to express that His intention was to live a life that was completely pure and holy in the eyes of God. He was able to be what everyone else who was baptized by John said they wanted to be but hadn't been, fully righteous. And that brings us back to our text. What happened when Jesus expressed that desire for righteousness?

*Mark 1:10-11*

*And when he came up out of the water, immediately he saw the heavens being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased."*

Jesus went under the water as an expression of His commitment to be pure and holy before God. And, as a side note, this is another good example of why we are baptized by immersion. It says that Jesus came up out of the water. In the original language, it's clear that Jesus came up out of the water because He was completely immersed into the water. You don't come up out of the water when you are sprinkled but, I digress...when Jesus came up out of the water, something happened that hadn't happened to any of the multitudes that had been baptized by John. In one of the great Trinitarian scenes in the Bible, the heavens opened up, and God the Holy Spirit descended on Jesus and God the Father audibly spoke from heaven, saying, "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased."

God the Father publicly affirmed that Jesus was completely pleasing to Him. In other words, God the Father was affirming that Jesus was, indeed, completely righteous. So, Jesus was baptized to fulfill righteousness on our behalf and God the Father confirmed that Jesus was completely and fully righteous. And what's the very next thing Mark records? The temptation of Jesus.

Verses 12-13 tell us that the Holy Spirit sent Jesus into the wilderness for 40 days to be tempted by Satan. Again, Mark doesn't give us any of the details. He just tells us that it happened. Matthew tells us that He fasted during that entire time. So, He was physically weak. He was isolated in a desolate place. And He endured every temptation that Satan could throw at Him.

And just think about what we are seeing here. Jesus is fully a man. As a matter of fact, one of the reasons we studied Philippians 2 before we started Mark was so that we could see that Jesus laid aside His rightful attributes as God in order to become a man. So, as Jesus goes into the wilderness to be tempted, He is going as one of us. In a sense, humanity is getting a second chance. Jesus is doing what the first man, Adam, had the opportunity to do but failed to do. He is enduring the temptation of Satan. Satan is testing the righteousness of Jesus by trying to get Him to do what is wrong. We call those sins of commission. Where sins of omission are failing to do what is right, sins of commission are actively doing what is wrong. Unlike the first Adam and every other human since, Jesus perfectly resisted the temptation of Satan.

*Hebrews 4:15*

*For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.*

Jesus came to identify with us. That included facing every form of temptation that we face. But Jesus never sinned. Now, put these two monumental events together. In the baptism and temptation of Jesus, we see that Jesus came to fulfill righteousness and to resist unrighteousness on our behalf.

And that's our big idea:

**Jesus came to fulfill righteousness and resist unrighteousness on our behalf.**

And that brings me back to the question I asked at the beginning. What did Jesus do change your standing before God? And the answer many of us would give is that Jesus died to forgive our sin. Again, that's absolutely correct. But Jesus's death isn't the only thing that changes our standing before God. Jesus's life changes our standing, too. You see, because of Christ we are more than forgiven by God. We are counted perfectly righteous in Christ. We are made perfectly pleasing in the sight of God.

Think of it this way. Imagine that you have no record of right or wrong before God. Imagine you haven't done anything good or bad. You're at a zero on God's ledger. That's not a bad thing but it's also not a good thing. Then, imagine you sin and that takes you to a negative 10 on God's ledger. That would be a bad thing. You'd be in debt to God. What would forgiveness do? It would put you back at zero. And compared to negative ten, I guess zero would be kind of good.

But how would Jesus count in God's ledger? Well, I don't know how to put a number on it but He would have as much credit with God as you could possibly get. He would be a million. Or a million times a million. Or a googleplex (which is what my Junior High math teacher told me was the biggest number). Because Jesus never sinned and always completely did what was right, His standing before God the Father is as good as it gets.

And that's what Jesus came to do for us. He didn't just come to get us back to zero. He didn't just come to provide forgiven status. Where God is neutral toward us. He came to give us His status. He came to fulfill all righteousness and to give us that same status. We are completely righteous in Christ. You probably want some Bible to back that up. So, let me give you some.

*Romans 5:18-19*

*Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. 19 For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous.*

Through Adam's sin, all of humanity became sinners because he was the first representative of humanity before God. But, through Christ's obedience, everyone who is in Christ through faith becomes righteous. That's what it means to be justified. The word "justified" means to be considered perfectly right in the sight of God.

*2 Corinthians 5:21*

*For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*

When we trust in Jesus as our Lord and Savior, not only is our sin placed on Jesus so that it can be punished at the cross, Christ's perfect life is applied to us so that we can literally have His perfect standing. We become the righteousness of God Himself.

And friends, that is amazingly good news. Because of Jesus, we aren't at zero in God's book. Our standing before God isn't just forgiven. Our standing is completely and perfectly righteous. Here's what that means: if you are trusting in Jesus, God looks at you and sees the perfection of His own Son. Let me put it a different way. As our holy God looks at you, what do you think He has to say?

Some of us don't want to think about that. More than anyone around us, we know the things we've done. We know the things we have thought. We know the wicked things we have desired and the wonderful things we haven't desired. And we also know that God sees it all. He knows every thought and intention of our hearts. He knows every secret sin and every evil deed. And we don't want to think about what He would say.

Some of us live with the guilt from past sins. Some of us struggle to pray because we feel so inadequate. Some of us work as hard as we can to try and get God to like us. Some of us feel so in debt to our past that we can't enjoy our present and we dread our future because we think someday God is going to let the bottom fall out from under our lives. Some of us feel insecure in all our relationships because we have never felt completely wanted or accepted by anyone, let alone God. Some of us are tempted to give up on the Christian life because we feel our weakness and it seems like we take one step forward and two steps back and surely God must be tired of us by now. And there are a hundred other conditions in our hearts that stem from not understanding the gospel.

But, if you are trusting in Christ, do you know what God has to say about you? I'll tell you. It's what He said about Jesus. God says, "You are my beloved son. You are my beloved daughter. With you, I am well pleased."

Hear the voice of God the Father, Christian. You are more than forgiven. God looks at you and sees the righteousness of His own Son. With you, God is completely pleased. With you, God is completely pleased. You don't have to work to earn His pleasure. You don't have to work to improve your standing. With you, God is completely pleased. Let that wash over you. Don't rush by this too quickly. If you are trusting in Jesus, right now God is completely pleased with you.

So, what do we do? What is the practical response to this truth? Let me give you two practical ways to respond to this truth:

1. Trust in Jesus. Stop trying to earn your standing before God. You can't do it. That's why we need Jesus. Trust in Jesus. Trust that His perfect life was lived on your behalf to overcome every evil thing you have done and to make up for every good thing you've failed to do. Trust that His sacrificial death provides forgiveness for your sin. Trust that His resurrection power will raise you up to live His righteous life by the power of the Holy Spirit. Trust Jesus.
2. Thank God for His unspeakable gift. Be thankful today. We don't just need Jesus, we have Him.

And that brings us to the Lord's Supper. This is a Thanksgiving meal. It's an opportunity for us to meditate on the life and death of Jesus on our behalf.

- Body – In His flesh, He fulfilled the will of God on your behalf.
- Blood – New Covenant, an agreement that defines a relationship. And the new covenant agreement guarantees that God will relate to us on the basis of Christ's righteousness. He will treat us like Jesus, not because of our record but because of Christ's.