

The Gospel of Mark
Chapter 1

Mark 1:1-8 [1:1] *The beginning of the gospel of **Jesus Christ, the Son of God.***

[2] *As it is **written in Isaiah** the prophet,
"Behold, I send my messenger before your face,
who will prepare your way,
[3] the voice of one crying in the wilderness:
'Prepare the way of the Lord,
make his paths straight,'"*

[4] **John appeared**, baptizing in the wilderness and **proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.**

[5] *And all the country of Judea and all Jerusalem were going out to him and were being **baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins.** [6] Now John was clothed with camel's hair and wore a leather belt around his waist and ate locusts and wild honey. [7] And he preached, saying, "After me comes he who is mightier than I, **the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie.** [8] I have baptized you with water, **but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.**"*

John the Baptist was Jesus' cousin. He leapt in his mother's womb when Mary visited and she was pregnant with Jesus.

John was a bit of a crazy dude. The clothes, the diet. He was foretold by the prophet Isaiah. He came to prepare a way for the coming of the Lord. He came to get the people's attention.

John's baptism could demonstrate repentance, but it couldn't forgive sin, nor could it impart the Holy Spirit in the way Jesus would after His work on the cross was completed.

the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. This might sound like spiritual exaggeration on John's part. But John said this because in his day, the rabbis taught that a teacher might require just about anything of his followers, **except to make them take off their sandals.** That was considered to be too much. But John said that he was not even worthy to do this for Jesus.

The Baptism of Jesus

Mark 1:9-11 [9] *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.**"*

When this voice of God spoke from heaven, everyone knew that Jesus was not just another man being baptized.

Jesus life was lived as fully God and fully Man. He came to identify with sinful men. And while He was sinless, He was yet baptized to be identified *with* sinful man, but He was also baptized to be identified *to* sinful man.

This scene reveals a humble beginning:

- Jesus: A common, unremarkable name.
- From Nazareth: An unremarkable, despised village.
- Of Galilee: The unspiritual region, not the "Bible belt" of the area at that time. (Seattle or Portland)
- Was baptized: Identified with **sinful man.**
- In the Jordan: An unremarkable - unpleasant - river. Early rabbinic tradition **explicitly disqualifies** the River Jordan for purification.

The scene also reveals great glory:

- The heavens parting: Heaven opened wide for this.
- The Spirit descending: The Spirit of God was present, and in some way His presence was discernible.
- Like a dove: Luke 3:22 puts it like this: *And the Holy Spirit descended in bodily form like a dove upon Him.*
- A voice came from heaven: It's rare in the Bible when we read that God speaks audibly from heaven, but this is one of those glorious occasions.
- **You are My beloved Son**, with you I am well pleased: What could be more glorious than to have God the Father **praise and affirm you publicly?**

The Temptation of Jesus

Mark 1:12-13 [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.*

Jesus was identified with sinners in His baptism. **He was also identified with sinners in their temptations.**

Hebrews 4:15 [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 Begins His Ministry

Mark 1:14-15 [14] *Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, [15] and saying, **“The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.”***

The focus of Jesus' ministry was **preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God**. Jesus was a preacher who did wonderful miracles, not a miracle worker who sometimes preached.

Jesus is saying: The strategic time for the kingdom of God is now. Now is your time of opportunity. Don't let it pass you by.

Jesus Calls the first Disciples

Mark 1:16-20 [16] *Passing alongside the Sea of Galilee, he saw **Simon and Andrew** the brother of Simon casting a net into the sea, **for they were fishermen.** [17] And Jesus said to them, **“Follow me, and I will make you become fishers of men.”** [18] **And immediately they left their nets and followed him.** [19] And going on a little farther, he saw **James** the son of Zebedee and **John** his brother, who were in their boat mending the nets. [20] **And immediately he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants and followed him.***

This was not the first time Jesus had met this group of men. John 1:35-4:54 describes their previous meeting.

These were common men. Working men. Not the high brow educated folks. Not theological giants of scripture. Folks like you and me.

Christianity is not about theological systems, rules, or even helping people - **it is about following Jesus**. He called them to do what He did. He was the greatest fisher of men ever.

Mark 1:21-28 [21] *And they went into Capernaum, and **immediately** on the Sabbath he entered the synagogue and was teaching. [22] And they were **astonished at his teaching**, for he taught them as one who **had authority**, and not as the scribes. [23] And immediately there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit. And he cried out, [24] **“What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God.”** [25] But Jesus rebuked him, saying, **“Be silent, and come out of him!”** [26] And the unclean spirit, convulsing him and crying out with a loud voice, came out of him. [27] And they were all amazed, so that they questioned among themselves, saying, **“What is this? A new teaching with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him.”** [28] *And at once his fame spread everywhere throughout all the surrounding region of Galilee.**

We first saw the **submitted** Jesus - submitted to His Father in baptism, submitted to the Holy Spirit in going out to the wilderness.

Now we see the **authority** of Jesus. Authority comes from submission.

The demon himself testified that Jesus was holy and pure. Jesus didn't need to rely on hocus-pocus or ceremonies. He simply demonstrated the authority of God.

Mark 1:29-34 [29] And **immediately** he left the synagogue and entered the **house of Simon and Andrew**, with James and John. [30] Now Simon's mother-in-law **lay ill with a fever**, and **immediately** they told him about her. [31] And he came and took her by the hand and lifted her up, and the fever left her, and she began to serve them.

[32] That evening at sundown they brought to him **all who were sick or oppressed by demons**. [33] And the **whole city** was gathered together at the door. [34] And he healed many who were sick with various diseases, and cast out many demons. And he would not permit the demons to speak, **because they knew him**.

Mark 1:35-39 [35] And rising very **early in the morning**, while it was still dark, he departed and went out to a desolate place, and there he prayed. [36] And Simon and those who were with him searched for him, [37] and they found him and said to him, "Everyone is looking for you." [38] And he said to them, "**Let us go on to the next towns, that I may preach there also, for that is why I came out.**" [39] And he went throughout all Galilee, **preaching** in their synagogues and casting out demons.

This passage shows us something about the prayer life of Jesus.

- For Jesus, fellowship with God was something for more than just the Sabbath.
- Jesus wanted to be **alone to pray**.
- Jesus wanted to **be alone** so He could **pour out His heart** to His Father.

Mark 1:40-45 [40] And a leper came to him, imploring him, **and kneeling** said to him, "**If you will**, you can make me clean." [41] **Moved with pity**, he stretched out his hand and touched him and said to him, "**I will; be clean.**" [42] And **immediately** the leprosy left him, and he was made clean. [43] And Jesus **sternly charged him** and sent him away at once, [44] and said to him, "**See that you say nothing to anyone, but go, show yourself to the priest and offer for your cleansing what Moses commanded, for a proof to them.**" [45] But he went out and began to talk freely about it, and to **spread the news**, so that Jesus could no longer openly enter a town, but was out in desolate places, **and people were coming to him from every quarter**.

In all of these miracles and preaching and casting out demons... Jesus is getting the attention of the people. He is meeting their basic needs. He is showing them the way of salvation.

In just this first chapter of Mark we see that God wants our attention. Remember what He did in the Christmas story, God moved Heaven and earth to fulfill His prophecies. He's moved Heaven and earth to bring Christ into our world. He's moving Heaven and earth to get the attention of these people... and He'll move Heaven and earth to save us and bring us to Him.

Has God got your attention yet? Do you know and serve Jesus yet?

Are you stuck? Are you stagnant? Are you avoiding your next steps?

Have you been away for a long time? Do you think your chance has passed you by?

Have you made a mess of your life and now you are coming back to Him?

What we have just read about Jesus tells us this:

1. There is such a person as Jesus
2. He has done great things.
3. He is able to cast out the powers of evil.
4. He may cast them out from you and deliver you.

When we encounter Jesus, we must make a response, there is no neutrality when Jesus enters the scene. We either say no or yes.

But it is the wisest choice to run to Jesus...

1. He is the Son of the Most High God
2. He is the great enemy of our enemy, the devil
3. He is abundantly able to drive out a legion of demons.
4. He can cause us to be clothed, and in our right mind.
5. He permits us right now to draw near and worship Him.

As I speak to you this morning... and you have encountered Jesus... I implore you to run to Him. A soul in distress runs to Jesus. And God in His compassion... runs to meet us.

Jesus is saying: The strategic time for the kingdom of God is now. Now is your time of opportunity. Don't let it pass you by.