

The Servant Arrives (TIJ Mark 1:9-45) Pleasant Plains 2-16-2010PM Nick Angel

- ***READ Mark 1:1-3*** As we noted last month in our introduction to Mark's Gospel, Mark's main goal in the writing this account is simply to show that Jesus truly is the Son of God. He begins by setting the precedent of Jesus being the fulfillment of so much that has been said and written up to this point in the history of God's people Israel through the writings of the prophets of the Old Testament. Mark quotes from **Malachi 3:1** & **Isaiah 40:1** concerning the messenger who would precede the promised Lord. Mark identifies this messenger as being John the Baptist, and he details the ministry that he carried out in preparing the way of the Lord through teaching the people of the need for confession of sins, repentance, and baptism for the forgiveness of sins. While doing all of this, John continued to speak how *"One who is more powerful than I am is coming after me. I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the strap of His sandals. I baptize you with water, but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."* (**Mark 1:7,8**) The Incredible Jesus was on His way!
- For those reading Mark's Gospel, they did not have to wait long for this individual to show up on the scene. Following the Messianic Messenger, the Servant does arrive on the scene. He is not expressly identified as a servant in Mark's Gospel, but Mark's heavy use of the Messianic prophecies in Isaiah, the work He performs, and the principles He teaches surely impresses upon us the reality that Jesus is the great Servant of God who came to fulfill the desires of His Father.
- As we continue on in Mark's Gospel this evening, we are going to consider the rest of chapter 1, and the first thing we are going to notice is that Jesus arrives on the scene and quickly gets to work in a variety of ways. Framing Jesus in this particular busy way would have very much appealed to the assumed Roman audience because that culture was very much all about being busy and accomplishing good work which is exactly what we find Jesus doing throughout Mark's Gospel account. As we read and study through this text, keep notice of the different time signifying language that is used so as *"as soon as"*, *"immediate"*, *"right away"*, and *"at once."* The very first thing we are told about Jesus that should be an evidence of Him being the Son of God and the prophesied Messiah is His baptism by John in the Jordan River.

I. Jesus's Quick Start

A. His Baptism (1:9-11)

1. Jesus comes from His town of Nazareth and is baptized by John, but there are a couple of things that I would like for us to note. Firstly, Mark identifies Jesus as being from Nazareth in Galilee. Those familiar with that area in Galilee would have recognized Nazareth as being a no-named place of no positive reputation. Therefore, for this to be the place where the Messianic Servant would come from would be truly incredible.
2. That is exactly what ends up being the case as we read of Jesus coming up out of the water. The text tells us *"He saw the heavens being torn open"* which is a direct reference to another Isaiah text in **Isaiah 64:1**. That context of Isaiah with the previous chapters is focusing on the prophet begging for God to come and deliver His people as He had did during the time of the exodus. **Isaiah 64:1** states, *"If only you would tear open the heavens and come down..."* Those familiar with Isaiah would have to make the connection that this is God doing exactly as Isaiah is begging God to do, and God's confirmation of Jesus being His beloved Son with whom He is well pleased only further solidifies that this man is truly the promised one to come. God not only states this to show His affection towards Jesus, but it also identifies the uniqueness of Jesus. This baptism of Jesus fulfills the words of Isaiah in **Isaiah 42:1**.

B. His Temptations (1:12,13)

1. Immediately from this occasion, Mark tells us of Jesus being driven out to the wilderness where He was tempted by the devil for forty days. The language of Him being driven out to

the wilderness shouldn't be understood as Him being forced against His will, but it is more of a term to describe the intensity and necessity of the situation. (Weirsbe) Jesus has no time to bask in the glory of Him being lauded by God. It is time for Him to show His power over evil.

2. We might be tempted to just glance over the fact that Jesus was out in the wilderness for forty days, but we need to recognize the significance of this number because it appears often in Scripture. Most notably we should consider Jesus's forty days of temptation in light of the forty years that Israel spent in the wilderness. Whereas Israel often failed in their temptations to be rebellious against God, Jesus suffered no such failure. He was totally victorious against every one of the temptations that were hurled against Him.

C. His Preaching (1:14,15)

1. With this victory over the evil one, Jesus was now prepared to go and call a new people to covenant with God which is what He did as he began His own ministry following the arrest of John. This shouldn't be taken as if Jesus needed John to get out of His way so that there was no competition for Him, but this is stated more to signify that the task of the preparer to make ready the way of the Lord was completed. With this work completed, now is the time for that greater One to begin the work that He was tasked by the Father to do.
2. Specifically, Mark writes of Jesus *"proclaiming the good news of God: 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near: Repent and believe the good news!'"* Speaking of the kingdom being near wasn't a reference to time but more of a reference to location. This means that Jesus is saying that the kingdom of God was near the people, and He absolutely could say such a thing based upon the fact that the kingdom's King was standing there right before them as He made such a proclamation. Preaching this good news of God and His Glory returning to His people will continue to be a key theme within Mark's Gospel account.

D. His First Disciples (1:16-20)

1. With the King arriving on the scene, it shouldn't surprise us that He sees fit to begin gathering subjects and followers unto Himself. Those first followers are found along the Sea of Galilee and their names are Simon (Peter), Andrew, James, and John. The text tells us that Jesus first saw Simon and Andrew busy at work fishing and he'll notice the same about James and John. We might imagine this work as simply being work that would feed their families, but we need to recognize that these men all had serious jobs. We can tell this is true by the fact that at least James and John had men who had been hired to work for them. They were not leaving just a side job, but they were giving up their livelihoods to follow Jesus.
2. Further, they were willing to follow Jesus although He was saying something that was completely the opposite of what you would expect to hear from a rabbi or a prophet. The faithful rabbis and prophets would have been continuously saying "follow God!", but Jesus was saying *"Follow Me."* This could only be rightfully said by someone who was more than just a human rabbi or prophet, and these men obviously believed that to be so. But why?
3. For a long time I have wondered why it is that these men would immediately leave their families and livelihoods in order to follow Jesus. Maybe you have thought like me that Jesus pulled some sort of Jedi mind trick to persuade them to do so, but the reality is that it seems like these men were already aware of Jesus being someone worthy of considering to follow. Weirsbe points out in his writings on Mark that it seems as if these men had already had an encounter with Jesus. This is recorded in **John 1:35-49**. The text tells us of John the Baptist standing with two of his disciples when Jesus comes by. When he sees Jesus, he identifies Him as the Lamb of God and those two disciples begin to follow Jesus and interact with Him. It seems that some time has past from then to now and that John is out of the picture, Jesus takes up His ministry and those who previously identified Jesus as special begin to follow Him.

II. Serving In Capernaum & Galilee

A. Jesus teaches with authority. (1:21,22)

1. Mark again points out that as Jesus comes into a new place in Capernaum, Jesus right away enters the synagogue on the Sabbath where Jews would no doubt be gathered for teaching and worship. He Himself begins to teach, and the people are astonished at the way He teaches because instead of teaching like a rabbi who would found his teaching in the authority of Scripture or what had been stated by previous teachings or upon the traditions of the elders...Jesus was teaching with authority all His own.
2. We are not given any specifics as to what Jesus was teaching and how exactly it was different, but if we consider how Jesus taught in the Sermon on the Mount, we might gain some insight into what this would look like. Remember He would state, *"You have heard it said...but I tell you..."* He did not seek to root His teachings in anything other than Himself and surely this would have really stood out to those who heard His teachings.

B. An unclean spirit is casted out. (1:23-28)

1. And if that wasn't enough, we are told that a man with an unclean spirit came into the synagogue and begins to cause a scene. He immediately cries out to Jesus and identifies Him as the *"Holy One of God."* He acknowledges that Jesus has the power to destroy Him, but Jesus immediately only tells him to be quiet concerning identifying who He was.
2. To identify Jesus as the *"Holy One of God"* would have made it plain to anyone around who this demon believed Jesus to be. He was in his mind the one who was able to act with the power and authority that God possesses over all of the supernatural beings in existence, and Jesus does show this power when He commands the demon to *"be silent, and come out of him!"* This might be another part of the Gospels that leaves us with questions.
3. Why is it that Jesus commands the demon to be quiet in this moment? I believe this is true based upon the fact that Jesus is new on the scene, and He hasn't done enough to allow the people to truly understand the significance of Him being the Son of God. There would come a time when that will be made more obvious and clear, but the time was not now. And this announcement being made at this moment could actually lead to great misunderstandings. Therefore, He commands silence and for the demon to come out which again fills the people with awe because He even has the authority to command the demons. Because of this occurrence, His fame quickly spreads throughout the entire are of Galilee.

C. Simon's mother-in-law and others are healed. (1:29-34)

1. Jesus and His disciples move on quickly to the house of Simon and Andrew where they find Simon's mother-in-law sick with a fever. Jesus goes to her, takes her hand, and raises her up with the fever being immediately alleviated. This then leads to many people coming to the house in the evening time to be healed by Jesus. People with all sorts of diseases and even those possessed by demons were brought to and healed by Jesus, and again He would not permit the demons to speak concerning who He was.
2. We need to recognize the significance of such work by Jesus, and the primary significance being that Jesus was fulfilling the predictions of Isaiah in **Isaiah 53 & 57** where the promised Messianic Servant would come to bear the sicknesses and pains of men and to bring comfort upon a people who were hurting and broken. We might see this in a spiritual sense, which I believe is the ultimate significance, but we see these words as also being literally carried out as Jesus healed the infirmities of the people of His day.

D. Jesus takes a brief reprieve. (1:35-38)

1. Yet, even the Son of God was in need of a reprieve to recharge Himself in the middle of all of the work He was accomplishing which is why we find Him going to a deserted place to pray and refocus Himself. But it isn't long before the disciples come looking for Him and remind Him that everyone else is looking for Him, as well.
2. It is in this moment that Jesus pauses to reaffirm the fact that He had been sent to preach and proclaim. *"Let's go on to the neighboring villages so that I may preach there too. This is why I have come."* Jesus took some time to get away and recharge, but that didn't mean that He had lost focus on what He had come to do. Now it was time to get back to work in proclaiming the good news of God.

E. Jesus preaches in the synagogue & heals a leper. (1:39-45)

1. Preaching is exactly what we see Jesus doing next as He goes into all of Galilee in the synagogues, and He is even casting out demons along the way. It is during His time in Galilee that a man with leprosy comes to Jesus and makes the bold claim that *"If You are willing, You can make me clean."* This was a nearly outrageous claim for this man to make for leprosy was the most serious of conditions during the days of Jesus and for hundreds of years before. Sections of the Law were dedicated to how people were to deal with lepers which included living outside of the communities of Israel. They were to be readily identifiable so as to not risk infecting others with their dreaded disease and one way being required to identify themselves as being unclean by shouting to others, "Unclean! Unclean!" Those infected were often the most ostracized people in Israel as death seemed to hang over them and no one desired their company.
2. Yet, this man was willing to come to Jesus and state his faith in Him being able to heal him. This was bold for the simple reason that Jesus was often surrounded by people and He surely would have been when this man came to make this request. Even if He wasn't with others, this man would still have been putting Jesus at risk by coming to Him even if he stayed away the Talmud required distance of six feet. So why come to Jesus and take such a risk?
3. It must have been because He believed Jesus could heal Him, but even that is crazy because leprosy wasn't something that was simply healed. Any Old Testament story of leprosy being healed with done through miraculous means with God involved. This must mean that this man associated God as being with Jesus which led to this bold request. Jesus is willing to heal this man, but He tells him to not spread how this has happened presumably for the same reasons we stated concerning silencing the demons, but to instead just follow through with the rituals for announcing cleansing as is written in detail in **Leviticus 14**. But instead, this man goes and begins to spread the news of Jesus to all who will listen. The result being that Jesus has to withdraw into the deserted places in order to minister to the masses.

III. Application Questions:

A. Are we impressed with Jesus enough to leave all and follow Him?

1. Simon, Andrew, James, and John were the first to leave everything and follow Jesus and others would follow once the incredible nature of who He was was made known. Those four men seemingly learned through John concerning the incredible nature of Jesus, but so many others were so impressed by what they saw elsewhere that they were coming to Him.
2. Yet, we should not fail to emphasize the fact that the original four men didn't follow after Jesus and then return home after an eight hour day. No, it seems clear that these men were all in with Jesus because they recognized His greatness worthiness to be followed. Do we recognize that about Jesus to the extend that they do?

3. Do we recognize His ultimate power to heal and set free from sin? That is really the picture that is painted with His healing of the leper as leprosy was often used as a metaphor for sin. Jesus healing this man shows His power to forgive sin which we will examine more in our next study in this series.
4. But sufficed to say at this moment that we have to decide whether or not Jesus is worthy of giving up everything we have in order to follow Him. Men did that in this text and we have to make that same decision day in and day out.

B. Are we willing to serve like Jesus?

1. The first few verses of Mark's Gospel account make it clear that Jesus is incredible in every sense of the word. He is approved by God and His Spirit. He is powerful enough to overcome the evil one. He is the King of his kingdom, and people were willing to follow Him at the drop of a hat. And yet...we find we find Him constantly serving other people. Are we willing to follow His incredible example in doing so?
2. Jesus is so impressive in His willingness to serve because he was willing to serve anyone who came to Him. He served the man possessed by the demon by freeing him. He healed Simon's mother-in-law. He took time to serve all of those who were brought to Him during the evening time. He even took time to serve the despised leper. There was no one that Jesus saw as unworthy of serving, but do we have that same attitude? Are we willing to serve anyone and everyone who we can when the opportunity presents itself and we have ability? If we are willing then we are following in the footsteps of Jesus.

C. Are we finding the proper balance in our discipleship.

- Lastly, I want to recognize that though Jesus knew His purpose here on earth, He still took time to do what was necessary to recharge His batteries before continuing on in the work. We need to not only be busy working, but we need to take time to catch our breath through removing ourselves from time to time and simply spend time praying to God. We must remember that a burned out candle isn't able to share its light with those around it.

As we make our way through this Gospel of Mark, may we continually seek to recognize those characteristics of Jesus, His character, and His work that make Him incredible. Tonight we have seen Him approved by the Father and the Spirit. We've seen Him victorious head to head against Satan. He has gathered followers, taught with authority, healed the masses, and commanded demons. If you're like me and thoroughly impressed by Jesus, then our response to Jesus ought to be similar to those of the leper. Though Jesus had commanded him to stay quiet this man still ***"went out and began to proclaim it widely and to spread the news."*** (Mark 1:45) May this be our response to Jesus as we seek to lead others into the arms of our incredible Savior.