

The Gospel of Mark – Chapter One

Collect for Lent

ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, who hatest nothing that thou hast made, and dost forgive the sins of all those who are penitent; Create and make in us new and contrite hearts, that we, worthily lamenting our sins and acknowledging our wretchedness. May obtain of thee, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness; through Jesus Christ our Lord

Amen

Mark 1:1-13

The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. As it is written in Isaiah the prophet, "Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, who shall prepare thy way; the voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight -- " John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And there went out to him all the country of Judea, and all the people of Jerusalem; and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. Now John was clothed with camel's hair, and had a leather girdle around his waist, and ate locusts and wild honey. And he preached, saying, "After me comes he who is mightier than I, the thong of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit." In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And when he came up out of the water, immediately he saw the heavens opened and the Spirit descending upon him like a dove; and a voice came from heaven, "Thou art my beloved Son; with thee I am well pleased." The Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. And he was in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered to him.

What are your general observations about this passage of Mark's Gospel?

The density of the material – the complete nature of the revelation concerning Jesus – the connection with J. Bap. - And the O.T.

I. Mark, the first to use the term says this is the "Good News"

Is the same Good News proclaimed by all of the Gospels?

A. For Mark it is narrative proclamation of the Christ Event

B. It is addressed to Christians who would have undergone a conversion experience

1. The details about who Jesus was – lineage

2. Statements of Faith – Creeds such as in Paul would have been known by the community

C. The purpose is not to prove Jesus was the Son of God or to give biographical information

D. The Purpose of Mark is to engage the read in the story of the Christ

II. The Prologue –Verses 1-13

A. Gives insider information about the Christ Event before we engage the human side of Jesus

B. Note the use of the O.T.

1. Jesus is the one who Isaiah spoke of coming out the wilderness

2. J. Bap. (The Last Prophet of the O.T.) Calls people to repentance and notes his function to prepare the way for the stronger one

3. Mark uses O.T. language to note the arrival – In those days... common narrative form to announce an important event

C. The Event of Jesus Baptism

1. Immersion in Water

2. The Heavens open

3. Divine Adoption

4. Commissioning of Jesus

5. His testing in the wilderness

Of what does this remind you? Baptism and the Christian Life

D. The Similarity of Jesus and the O.T. Heroes

1. Moses, David, Elijah – Tested in the Wilderness
2. Gathered God's people and revealed God to them

III. Isaiah and Post-Exilic Israel

A. Isaiah 40 - 55 – second Isaiah – the same beginning as Mark – we begin this section in the wilderness

B. Isaiah 56 - 66 – Third Isaiah

C. The Judaism of this period – Two Main Understandings

1. The remnant – the Holy Seed – Ezra and Nehemiah
 - a. Rebuilding the past
 - b. Avoiding contamination intermarriage
2. The Gathering of God's People – Isaiah 52,63, Jonah, Ruth Judith

The tension is among those who want to remain segregated and those who see the more universal salvation offer to all who seek God with clean hands and a pure heart. Psalm 24:4 Mark clearly identifies with the second group and finds this compatible with Christian Belief. (remember there is no real separation yet) Into this experience is time and place of the coming of the Christ, the Messiah.

IV. Mark on the Relationship between J. Bap. And Jesus

- A. All the synoptic record J. Bap as preceding Jesus
- B. Matthew and Luke portray him as an Elijah like figure
- C. Mark focuses on both preaching repentance and preparing for the Stronger One
- D. John (Remember I mentioned there were interesting connection between the first and the last Gospels)

John shows the main function of John is to prepare for Jesus

E. mark also puts on Herod's lips the confusion between John and Jesus

John is identified with Elijah and He is defined as the herald of the Son of Man 9:11-13

V. The final feature of the Prologue is the identification with the Reader

- A. These first century Christians, mostly Jews root their faith in the O.T. promise
- B. Their conversion is heightened through Baptism
- C. They are experiencing trial in the wilderness of life

Mark 1:14-15

Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent, and believe in the gospel."

I. The First Summary

- A. A mechanism of Mark often repeated
- B. Also used as a bridge to introduce a new section – homiletic technique

II. What Mark Said

- A. Verse 15 is the proclamation
- B. The proper Human Response is a change of heart

Mark 1:16-20

And passing along by the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew the brother of Simon casting a net in the sea; for they were fishermen. And Jesus said to them, "Follow me and I will make you become fishers of men." And immediately they left their nets and followed him. 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. And immediately he called them; and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants, and followed him.

I. Summoning of People to follow Jesus

- A. The Process is Set

We are to see not only the continuation of this same process with others in the Gospel narrative, but also identify with our own Journey of Faith

1. The invitation from Jesus – God invites us to faith
2. The Call comes while people are engaged in normal daily activities
3. The call is a summons – “Follow Me”
4. The Call is to share in the activity of ministry
5. The response is immediate and without reflection - *euthys* (immediately)
6. The response is not just a private response but a join with others

II. Two essential Elements of the Call

- A. The call is to **Be** with Jesus
- B. The call is to engage in the same work of ministry as Jesus

III. Source material for this understanding and difficulties with those sources

- A. Elijah and Elisha **BUT** Elisha did not follow immediately
- B. Rabbinic teachers had disciples **BUT** the disciples sought the teachers not the other way around

IV. Another way to understand the Message of the Call

- A. mark is relating to the message from the Disciples about their call
- B. The people who read are placing the information into the perspective of their own experience
 1. This example also reminds us our contemporary stories of conversion
 2. Or historical - St. Augustine's Confession, Thomas Merton's Seven Story Mountain

What is to be noted here is the radical change in life and life style that occurred for the individuals. **How do we consider our own conversion and the changes we made?**

Now we get to consider what it was like to spend the day with Jesus – The First Day after the Call

Mark 1:21-34

And they went into Capernaum; and immediately on the Sabbath he entered the synagogue and taught. And they were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as one who had authority, and not as the scribes. And immediately there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit; and he cried out, "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." But Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Be silent, and come out of him!" And the unclean spirit, convulsing him and crying with a loud voice, came out of him. 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." And at once his fame spread everywhere throughout all the surrounding region of Galilee. And immediately he left the synagogue, and entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. Now Simon's mother-in-law lay sick with a fever, and immediately they told him of her. And he came and took her by the hand and lifted her up, and the fever left her; and she served them. That evening, at sundown, they brought to him all who were sick or possessed with demons. And the whole city was gathered together about the door. 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.

I. The Sabbath Day – What does Sabbath mean to you? rest

- A. The holy day, God's Day
- B. The day begins and ends with Jesus casting out a demon
- C. We are to be looking forward to another Sabbath Day – the time between Jesus Death and Resurrection

II. In the Synagogue

- A. Jesus teaches with authority – the people note something new
- B. The exorcism is confirmation of the identity of Jesus and His authority
- C. Mark does not use the word Exorcism or Exorcist I rather he uses a word *exorkizein* that in Greek, means I solemnly adjure you - **note words in our prayer book**

II. The form used for Casting out demons – often repeated in Mark

- A. The encounter of Jesus or His disciple and the demon
- B. The attempt of the demon is resist the divine power
- C. The powerful response of the exorcist – usually to be silent
- D. The command to leave
- E. The departure of the demon
- F. The reactions of amazement by the witnesses

III. Only Mark

- A. Only Mark begins Jesus Ministry with an exorcism
 - 1. Matthew omits it completely
 - 2. Luke locates it after the proclamation of Jesus and His rejection to note the good news begin proclaimed to the captives
- B. Mark places the healing of Peter's mother at the end of this passage to note the ancient concept between physical health and the influence of evil spirits

IV. The Form of Healing Miracles

- A. The arrival of miracle worker
- B. The description of the problem
- C. The request to be healed
- D. The healing by gesture or word
- E. The deed itself
- F. The reaction of the assembled

V. The Christological Function of Exorcism and Healing

- A. Only God can do these things
- B. The Disciples are to be witnesses and then respond to what they have witnessed
- C. Peters Mother-in law is an example of the response from healing to service

Mark 1:35-45

And in the morning, a great while before day, he rose and went out to a lonely place, and there he prayed. And Simon and those who were with him pursued him, and they found him and said to him, "Everyone is searching for you." 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." And he went throughout all Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and casting out demons. And a leper came to him beseeching him, and kneeling said to him, "If you will, you can make me clean." Moved with pity, he stretched out his hand and touched him, and said to him, "I will; be clean." And immediately the leprosy left him, and he was made clean. **And with a deep groan** Jesus, and sent him away at once, and said to him, "See that you say nothing to any one; but go, show yourself to the priest, and offer for your cleansing what Moses commanded, for a proof to the people." 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 the country; and people came to him from every quarter.

I. The Second Day

- A. Jesus rises early and seeks the lonely place to be with God His Father
 - 1. We are reminded of the O.T. Moses, Elijah meeting God in the Wilderness
 - 2. The Jews seeking the solicitude in the wilderness or high places to be away and closer to God
- B. We are to understand the mission of Jesus will continue to unfold.
- C. The rapid change from solitude to the encounter with the leper is part of Mark's style

II. The Leper

- A. We do not have the same type of location as "in the synagogue" but this is a vivid encounter

B. The actions of the leper are important

1. Beseeching
2. Falling to his knees
3. Requesting a cure with conviction of the outcome

C. Jesus response is also to be noted (what we note is His humanity)

1. Jesus is moved with compassion
2. He touches the leper - this I strictly against the Law
3. Jesus groans
 - a. The Gk. *Embrimesamenos* translates as snorting, groaning or growling
 - b. This word is let out of some translations
 - c. Matthew and Luke omit "Jesus groaned deeply"
4. Then he orders the leper to obey the Law

In this healing, Jesus touching the leper, prefigures for us the fact that for the sake of the people Jesus will ignore the ritual laws.