

Bibles???

The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority

One of the most recognizable Peanut cartoons ever is where Lucy asks poor Charlie Brown to kick the football –

And we know what usually happens right, as Charlie Brown runs up to the ball, Lucy swipes the ball away and Charlie Brown fall flat on his back.

It happens every time.

One day, Lucy was holding the ball, but Charlie Brown would not kick it. Lucy said "Please?" But Charlie Brown said, "No! Every time I try to kick it, you pull it away and I fall on my back." They argued back and forth for the longest time. Finally, Lucy says "Charlie Brown, I have treated you so badly over the years. But I've seen the error of my ways! I was wrong. Won't you please give me another chance?"

Charlie Brown felt bad for her. He said "Of course, I'll give you another chance." He steps back. He runs toward the ball. At the last second, Lucy picks up the ball and Charlie Brown falls flat on his back.

Lucy walks over to him and says **"Recognizing your faults and actually changing your ways are two different things, Charlie Brown!"**

Poor Charlie Brown. It appears that Lucy doesn't know the true meaning of repentance.

Let's pray...

So by the grace of God, we finished the book of Philippians last week and it only took us 12 Sundays.

Now, in our studies – we found Apostle Paul repeatedly making reference to the gospel.

He spoke about their fellowship in the gospel

The confirmation of the gospel

The furtherance of the gospel

The defense of the gospel

He told the church us to let our conduct be worthy of the gospel

And pressed us to be of one mind striving for the gospel

Paul also spoke about serving and laboring with each other in the gospel

The word gospel can be translated as “Good News” and the Holy Spirit inspired four individuals to pen four proclamations of this “good news”

Four testimonies of the most amazing historical event ever: That God became flesh and walked among us in the person of the Messiah, Jesus Christ.

The proclamation of good news that we are going to begin studying today is the one from Mark.

So I would like to start off with a brief introduction.

Who is Mark?

Mark was not one of the 12 disciples of Jesus Christ, he was much younger than they were but it appears that he walked within their inner circle.

There is an incident that only Mark writes about in the Garden of Gethsemane when Jesus Christ is betrayed - in which a young man is following Jesus as they

arrested Him and they grab this young man and pull his garments off and he runs away naked. Many scholars speculate that the young man was Mark himself.

He is the same person that we find in the book of Acts named John Mark. John being his Hebrew name while Mark being his Latin name.

Mark went along with Paul in his first missionary journey – however, it seems like he got homesick and went home.

When Paul wanted to embark on his second missionary trip, Barnabas (who was also Mark's uncle) wanted to take John Mark but Paul refused and the disagreement had them going their own separate ways.

However, Mark seems to have matured over time because we see Apostle Paul asking for him by name in some of the letters that Paul writes to the churches.

Many scholars also conclude that Mark received most of his information from Peter as Peter considered Mark his spiritual son.

One of the things that we will see as we study the gospel of Mark is that Mark focuses on the actions of Jesus Christ instead of the words that were spoken by Jesus Christ.

We will not find as many parables in the gospel of Mark when you compare it to the gospels of Matthew and Luke.

It is believed that the gospel of Mark was the first gospel written.

The gospel of Mark is a very busy book, it is to the point, always moving from one event to the next. In fact you will find the word immediately over 40 times in this gospel alone.

If I was going to pick out one verse in Mark that summarizes it – it would be.

[Mark 10:45 NKJV] 45 "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

So, we will see the focus of this gospel as, Jesus Christ – the servant.

[Mark 1:1-8 NKJV] 1 The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. 2

As it is written in the Prophets: "Behold, I send My messenger before Your face, Who will prepare Your way before You." 3 "The voice of one crying in the

wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the LORD; Make His paths straight.' " 4 John came baptizing in the wilderness and preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. 5 Then all the land of Judea, and those from Jerusalem, went out to him and were all baptized by him in the Jordan River, confessing their sins. 6 Now John was clothed with camel's hair and with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. 7 And he preached, saying, "There comes One after me who is mightier than I, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to stoop down and loose. 8 "I indeed baptized you with water, but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

In the scriptures, we have multiple beginnings,

The book of Genesis starts off on the beginning of creation. In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

The gospel of John starts off on the eternal beginning – In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God.

Mark begins with the beginning of the ministry of Jesus Christ.

No reference to the birth of Jesus or his upbringing. Mark 1 starts off with Jesus as a 30 year old.

Mark quotes these two verse listed here in verses 2 and 3 from Malachi 3:1 and Isaiah 40:3

These two Old Testament verses are in reference to John the Baptist. These are the only two prophecies that Mark mentions in his gospel.

Now, scriptures tell us that John the Baptist was the messenger that was going to come and prepare the way for Jesus Christ.

Back then when kings would visit a city, they would send their people ahead of time to make preparations – they were the ones that made sure that the streets were all cleaned up and the potholes fixed and so on.

This is what John the Baptist was doing. However, instead of fixing the pothole on the road, he was preparing the people – urging them to get their heart right before God.

And he did this through baptism.

4 John came baptizing in the wilderness and preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.

John's message was about repentance and forgiveness.

His message was that if you would turn from your sins, you would find forgiveness.

Being baptized was a way of showing other people that you had made a choice to turn from your sins to get ready for the coming of the Messiah.

It is important to note that baptism was already practiced in the Jewish community in the form of ceremonial immersions but typically it was only among Gentiles who wished to become Jews.

For a Jew in John's day to submit to baptism was essentially to say, "I confess that I am as far away from God as a Gentile and I need to get right with Him."

This is what the preparation of the hearts was doing –

Verse six gives us a glimpse into what John the Baptist looks like –

He walks around in a garment made out of camel hair, he wears this leather belt around his waist.

In the gospel of Luke it makes reference to John the Baptist being a Nazarite – meaning he had taken the vow of consecration similar to Samson of the Old Testament – so he probably had long hair and a bushy beard filled with dried up honey and locust.

I always picture John the Baptist as Grizzly Adams –

7 And he preached, saying, "There comes One after me who is mightier than I, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to stoop down and loose. 8 "I indeed baptized you with water, but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

John the Baptist had the crowds following him during his ministry. People were listening to him – this message of repentance.

But, John never lost sight of the big picture.

He knew that it was never about him.

[John 3:26-30 NKJV] 26 And they came to John and said to him, "Rabbi, He who was with you beyond the Jordan, to whom you have testified--behold, He is

baptizing, and all are coming to Him!" 27 John answered and said, "A man can receive nothing unless it has been given to him from heaven. 28 "You yourselves bear me witness, that I said, 'I am not the Christ,' but, 'I have been sent before Him.' 29 "He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. Therefore this joy of mine is fulfilled. 30 "He must increase, but I [must] decrease.

Here in Mark, he says that he is not even worthy to stoop down and untie the straps of the sandals of Jesus Christ.

This was a job reserved for the servants – and John says I am not worthy to do even that.

I baptize you with water but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.

John knew that his baptism of water was symbolic and a prelude to the baptism that Jesus Christ was going to bring forth later on.

So now we come to Jesus being baptized.

[Mark 1:9-11 NKJV] 9 It came to pass in those days [that] Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized by John in the Jordan. 10 And immediately, coming up from the water, He saw the heavens parting and the Spirit descending upon Him like a dove. 11 Then a voice came from heaven, "You are My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

Many people ask the question, "Why did Jesus have to be baptized?"

It is a good question – after all, since He never sinned, He didn't need repentance right? He had nothing to be cleansed of.

There are a few reasons that Jesus needed to be baptized.

1. **God wanted Jesus to be baptized.**

Jesus is demonstrating His obedience to the Father by going through baptism.

He was also setting an example for us to follow.

Water Baptism is not a requirement for salvation but it is an outward sign of an inward commitment meaning we are not saved because we are baptized but we do partake of baptism because we are saved.

Also through baptism, **Jesus identified with sinful man.**

[Matthew 3:13-15 NKJV] 13 Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him. 14 And John [tried to] prevent Him, saying, "I need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?" 15 But Jesus answered and said to him, "Permit [it to be so] now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he allowed Him.

Jesus was also baptized in order to reveal Himself to the world.

[John 1:31 NLT] 31 I did not recognize him as the Messiah, but I have been baptizing with water so that he might be revealed to Israel."

So Jesus is baptized, we see the Holy Spirit descending upon Him like a dove and we also see God the Father speak. We see the entire trinity in action here in verses 10-11.

So far in the Gospel of Mark we see four witnesses, each of them testifying to the identity of Jesus.

- Mark said Jesus is the Son of God (Mark 1:1).
- The prophets said Jesus is LORD (Mark 1:2-3).

· John the Baptist said Jesus was the One after me who is mightier than I (Mark 1:7-8).

· God the Father said Jesus is the Beloved Son of God (Mark 1:10-11).

[Mark 1:12-20 NKJV] 12 immediately the Spirit drove Him into the wilderness. 13

And He was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan, and was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered to Him.

Mark spends only 2 verses on the time Jesus spends in the wilderness, if we want a broader account of what happened in the wilderness we can go in to the gospels of Matthew or Luke.

The interesting thing here in the gospel of Mark is that the Spirit drove Jesus into the wilderness to be tempted and tested for 40 days.

God the Father is going to demonstrate to us through Jesus that it is possible to overcome temptation.

It is possible to overcome the fleshly desires.

Turn with me to 1 Corinthians

Sometimes there will be someone who says – well you don't know what I am going through – my temptation is simply too great for me to overcome.

And that is why the scriptures tell us in.

[1 Corinthians 10:13 NKJV] 13 No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God [is] faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear [it].

Joseph chose the way of escape when he was confronted by Potipher's wife and he ran out the house naked.

King David didn't chose the way of escape as he gave into the temptation of his lustful desires when he saw Bathsheba bathing.

There is always a way out. Whether we choose the way out is still up to us.

If you read the other accounts of Jesus in the wilderness, Jesus refutes the temptations by Satan with one thing – **the Word of God.**

That is all He needed and that is all we need.

Therefore, always remember that when temptations, trials, difficulties, wilderness experiences, hard times come our way, it is because God the Father has allowed them into our lives in order to silence Satan's accusation that we only serve God in easy times, and also to show us off to a doubting world.

14 Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, 15 and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel."

Here Jesus begins to preach –

What was He preaching? The gospel of the Kingdom of God.

If we want to partake in the Kingdom of God we have to do two things,

Repent and believe in the gospel –

Repent is a word that we hear a lot in church but many times we mistake it for remorse.

You see, it is a lot easier for us to feel remorse than to repent of what we have done.

Remorse means to simply feel sorry for what I just did.

When people are arrested on those TV cop reality shows and they show them crying. That is remorse – many of them are sorry that they got caught. However, once they are released from prison, they go back and do the same thing that they were arrested for. No repentance.

Repentance means to change one's mind, to change one's mind for the better.

It means that you know that you've been living your life wrong. It means that you change your mind and are ready to turn your life around.

Not only do we need to repent – we need to believe in the gospel.

Now, there are many people who believe the Gospel, but they do not believe in it.

Let me explain.

The word that is used here for believe goes beyond simply believing something intellectually or having knowledge of.

Turn with me to Jude -

[Jude 1:5 NKJV] 5 But I want to remind you, though you once knew this, that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe.

This verse speaks of the children of Israel as Moses led them out of Egypt. The children of Israel believed God – after all, they had seen Him part the Red Sea, they had seen God provide for them manna from the sky. They were witnesses to all the plagues that God had brought upon Egypt.

They knew God intellectually – however, they were destroyed because they didn't trust in Him, they were not dependent of Him.

That is what the word believe means here in Jude and in Mark 1:15. And throughout many of the gospels – it is the same word that is used when whenever we see the word believe.

John 3:16: "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever **believes** in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

It is whoever trusts in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

16 And as He walked by the Sea of Galilee, He saw Simon and Andrew his brother casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. 17 Then Jesus said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men." 18 They immediately left their nets and followed Him. 19 When He had gone a little

farther from there, He saw James the [son] of Zebedee, and John his brother, who also [were] in the boat mending their nets. 20 And immediately He called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants, and went after Him.

Our study ends this morning with the call of four of the disciples.

Simon (Peter)

Andrew

And the brothers, James and John – this is the John who writes the gospel of John as well as the epistles and the book of Revelation and this James is the one who is martyred in the book of Acts.

Out of the 12 disciples, at least seven of them are fisherman.

Simon and Andrew were seen casting their nets into the water while James and John are seen mending their nets.

This is interesting because Simon and Andrew throughout their ministry were the ones that were reaching out to people with the gospel. They were always casting their nets to the multitudes while James and John were the ones that behind the

scene mending people through their emphasis on the both the heartfelt and practical nature of love.

“Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men.” Jesus challenged them.

You see, they were hard at work, making a living, casting their nets into the sea and lifting fish out of the water. Jesus challenged them by calling them to a new and different way of life.

They didn't sleep on it to determine what the cost would be to follow Jesus – they simply responded in obedience.

Jesus calls us to come to Him and learn to live the way we were meant to live by our Creator.

When Jesus calls a person, He calls them to what appears to be a new, radical, challenging way of living, but it is really the right and original way that God designed us to live.

Jesus calls us to come and live in a personal relationship with God through Him in the Spirit.

That is what discipleship is all about, it is about putting our faith in Jesus and trusting in Him to show us a new way of thinking, of living and loving in a personal relationship with Him.

May we respond in the same manner as Andrew and Simon did.

Amen.

Let's pray...

To Receive Christ do the following:

Admit, "I am a sinner."

Confess and be willing to turn from your sin.

Believe, by faith that Jesus Christ died for you on the cross.

Receive, through prayer, Jesus Christ into your heart and receive eternal life.

Dear Lord Jesus,

I know that I am a sinner and need Your forgiveness. I believe that You died on the cross for my sins. Please forgive me for my sins and cleanse me by Your blood. I accept You by faith as my personal Lord and Savior. Give me a thirst for Your Word and Help me to follow You all of my days. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.