

life groups

NorthStar Church

Kingdom Come Series

Pt. 1 - Mark 1

Aug 5 & 6, 2017

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Main Idea

The 4 gospels give us 4 different perspectives of the arrival, life, death and resurrection of the Messiah. The gospel of Mark clearly reveals the identity and authority of Jesus Christ.

Introduction

If a fireman walked into your Life Group right now, how would you identify him as a fireman? A doctor? A nurse?

Now, what if a school teacher walked in? An accountant? An engineer? (a little harder to identify, right?)

Today we will see how clear Mark is able to identify Jesus as God in human form.

Understanding

Read Mark 1: 1-11. Pastor Scott first pointed out 5 key witnesses to Christ's identity. Read and discuss the following in your group.

1. Himself v.1
2. The Old Testament prophets v. 2-3
3. John the Baptist v. 4-8, Mal 4:5
4. The Holy Spirit v. 9-10
5. God the Father v. 11

The second way Christ is revealed is through authority. Read and discuss the following in your group. In what ways is the reality that Jesus is God easy to recognize.

1. During His preparation v. 12-13
2. In His preaching v. 14-15
3. In calling disciples v. 16-20
4. In His teaching v. 21-28
5. In His healing v. 29-34
6. In His prayer life v. 35-45

Application

Pastor Scott also gave us three truths about Kingdom Calling. Read and discuss these in your group.

1. Often times you have to leave good to do great!
2. It won't always make human sense!
3. It won't always be popular with the crowd!

Prayer-

Pray for Pastor Scott and The Kingdom Come series that will be shared over the next 7 weeks. Pray for the power of Christ in you to be easily seen by others around you. Pray specifically for someone you know that needs to be invited to "Come and See" who Jesus is. Follow up by inviting that person.

Commentary

Mark 1:1-11

Already in Mark 1:1 the titles applied to Jesus point to His suffering and death. The Greek term "Christ" corresponds to the Hebrew "Messiah," meaning anointed king. Jesus would be anointed in preparation for His burial (14:3, 8). "Son of God" was used as a title for kings descended from David (2 Sam. 7:14; Ps. 2:6-7). Jesus is, however, a king unlike other kings. By some mystery Mark did not explain, Jesus is both "Son of David" and "David's Lord" (12:35-37). Though the demons discerned Jesus' mysterious identity from the start (1:24, 34; 3:11), only the cross opened human eyes to the "Son of God" (15:39).

For Mark the "good news of Jesus Christ" began with John the Baptizer. John's God-authorized ministry (see 11:29-32) fulfilled Scripture (Mal. 3:1; Isa. 40:3). Both John's clothing (2 Kgs. 1:8) and his preaching of repentance and forgiveness (Mal. 4:5-6) recall the prophet Elijah. John's baptism symbolized an inner commitment to lead a changed life. Mark's audience doubtless understood Jesus to be the more powerful Coming One John anticipated. On receiving John's baptism, Jesus was confirmed as the beloved Son who pleased God by His identification with sinners.

Mark 1:16-20

v. 16. From the beginning of His public ministry, Jesus set about involving other people in His work. The Sea of Galilee geographically dominated the region where Jesus ministered. This large freshwater lake is 13 miles long and 8 miles wide. Its productive fishing provided a livelihood for many. Major trade routes passed near the sea. Flourishing towns dotted the seashore. In this setting Jesus spotted Simon and Andrew. He found these fishermen brothers busy at their work. Jesus always met people in the context of their day-to-day lives. Take note that Mark identified Simon (later called Peter) as the first of the disciples Jesus called. This lends support to the traditional view of Peter's influence on Mark and the Gospel.

v. 17. Jesus spoke to them in an authoritative tone, "Follow Me." These words came with a challenge to respond without hesitation. But the challenge included more than following Jesus for the day. It meant a change of direction for their lives. Jesus determined to change their vocation to fish for people. This explained the focus of Jesus' role. These men spent their days fishing for sea life. Now their objective became fishing for life on land. People concerned Jesus. They needed something only He could provide. He began early in His public ministry to teach (disciple) a select few about how to join Him in the task of reaching out to people.

v. 18. With no hesitation, Simon and Andrew responded immediately. The brothers left their nets at great personal sacrifice. Their vocation provided a good lifestyle. Although what Jesus made available promised no

financial security, it provided something better. The men trusted Jesus and demonstrated instantaneous and complete obedience as they followed Him. Although they did not know Jesus' destination, they followed.

v. 19. Jesus went a little farther. He continued His search for disciples, apparently in a purposeful way. Another fisherman duo, James the son of Zebedee and his brother John, caught Jesus' attention. He discovered them also going about their work mending their nets. A good fisherman attended to this tedious detail at the end of the day. Even small tears in the nets resulted in loss of fish and thus income.

v. 20. Jesus called James and John to follow. They left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men. This highlights the immediacy of their response. James and John stopped what they were doing that very moment to follow. They sensed urgency in Jesus' call. The verse indicates an additional sacrifice Jesus asked of them. The two left family behind to become a part of Jesus' ministry family.

Mark 1:29-34

1:29-31. According to Jewish custom, the Sabbath meal came immediately after the worship service in the synagogue—at the sixth hour, or around noon. The Jewish day began at 6 a.m. and the hours were counted from there. It appears that Simon (Peter) and Andrew's house was close to the synagogue. This miracle was private, and not public, possibly to begin to solidify the faith of these early disciples in the claims of their leader. The "team" found Peter's mother-in-law in bed with a fever. Simon and Andrew told Jesus about her condition. This was a personal need, and they felt comfortable in going to Jesus with their needs. In Jesus' time, many people considered fever an illness in itself and not a symptom of a disease. According to Leviticus 26:16 and Deuteronomy 28:22, a fever could be interpreted as a punishment sent by God to those who violated His covenant. According to custom, only God could intervene in such cases. And He did. The recovery of Peter's mother-in-law was so complete that she began to wait on them. Jesus showed His compassion and love in the way He healed her. Notice that He went to her, took her hand and helped her up. Then the fever left her. He could have just spoken the words, but Jesus reached out and touched her. Jesus came to enter into our pain—not just observe it.

1:32-34. The people waited until that evening after sunset because Jewish law did not allow the carrying of any burden through a town on the Sabbath. That would have been considered work, so it was forbidden on that day. A new day began after 6:00 p.m. The people probably knew it was safe to come out and not break the law when the sun had set and the stars were out. The whole town gathered at the door, and Jesus healed many people of their diseases and cast out demons. Everyone in Capernaum knew Jesus was in town. The exorcism (casting out of demons) of verse 26 and the healings of verse 31 were not isolated cases. Jesus also continued to prevent the demons from speaking because they knew who he was. Jesus wanted to show by word and deed what kind of Messiah He was before He declared Himself openly as the Messiah. He would declare who He was—not the demons.

Mark 1:34-45

1:35. The word translated "solitary place" is the same that is translated "desert" in 1:3, 4,12,13 and perhaps suggests the same kind of spiritual testing described in the last two. There was no desert near Capernaum, and obviously Jesus wanted to find a secluded place apart from the crowds and even the disciples. The imperfect tense suggests prolonged prayer. In only two other places did Mark indicate that Jesus prayed, in 6:46 after walking on the water and in 14:32-42 in Gethsemane. All three were times of crisis when Jesus was tempted to take an easy way rather than that of suffering and death.

1:36. Mark perhaps referred to "Simon and his companions" (Andrew, James, and John?, vv. 16-20) rather than the disciples because they did not act as disciples should (though Mark did not use the term disciple at all until 2:15). The verb translated "went to look for" usually means to pursue with hostile intent. Of course it reflects Mark's point of view, not that of the disciples.

1:37. Here Mark indicated the error of the disciples. They wanted Jesus to take advantage of His growing popularity and perform more miracles. However, Jesus' primary mission was not to be a miracle-worker but a redeemer. The disciples failed to understand that the popularity itself made Jesus want to withdraw. The people of Capernaum apparently had no interest in Jesus beyond His miracles or any interest in coming under the reign of God. The verb Mark chose near the end of verse 37 is filled with irony. Whatever Aramaic verb the disciples used, they meant it in a good sense. Everywhere else in Mark, however, the Greek verb, which is not the same as in verse 36, translated "looking for" means to seek with evil or inappropriate intention. Mark recognized that the acclaim of the crowd was not good. Verse 37 is the first instance in Mark where the disciples failed to understand the mission of Jesus.

1:38. Jesus' answer contains an ambiguity. The last statement could be translated literally, "For this [purpose] I have come out." The question is whether the reference is to leaving Capernaum, going into all of Galilee, or having come from God. Luke's parallel (4:43) takes the third possibility, and Mark probably meant the same thing (cf. Mark 1:24).

1:39. This Markan summary characterizes Jesus' ministry as one of synagogue preaching and exorcisms. "Their synagogues" possibly reflects the separation of the church and synagogue in the time of Mark, or it may have been a reference to Galilean synagogues.

1:40. Widespread agreement exists among commentators that in the Bible "leprosy" is a general term covering various chronic skin diseases and is not limited to Hansen's disease, as is the contemporary use of the word. Without treatment in a hot climate, many skin diseases were vicious. Not only was the disease painful and debilitating but it rendered the victims religiously and socially unclean. They were required to live outside of cities and towns, have no contact with anyone, and declare themselves unclean when anyone approached. The law regarding leprosy is found in Lev 13–14. The Bible never speaks of healing leprosy, always of cleansing it. Part of the reason may be the loathsome nature of the disease, but a more likely explanation is that leprosy is a symbol of sin that must be cleansed. The episode implies that Jesus can forgive sin and therefore prepares for 2:1-12. The account further implies that, contrary to the law, the man approached very near to Jesus. By the statement "If you are willing," Mark probably did not intend to suggest any doubt on the leper's part.

1:41-42 This verse contains a more important textual problem. The vast majority of textual witnesses, including those usually considered the most reliable, have a word meaning filled with compassion. Only one Greek manuscript, four Old Latin manuscripts, and one early Christian writer—all of medium value—have a word meaning having become angry. Whether Jesus was "filled with compassion" or "moved to anger," He displayed human emotion. Mark had no reservations about depicting the humanity of Jesus.

The question then arises, About what or with whom was Jesus angry? Was He angry with the leper? Most interpreters insist that such a thing would be out of character for Jesus, and certainly the idea that Jesus was angry with the leper for interrupting Him or approaching Him contrary to the law may be set aside. Most who adopt the variant reading take the position that Jesus was angry with the strangely unnamed religious authorities for being unable or unwilling to help the man or that Jesus was angry with the entire evil order in which suffering has such a prominent part. Before a decision can be made about the object of Jesus' wrath, the stern verbs of verse 43 need to be considered. Jesus was perhaps angered that the leper doubted that the God active in Jesus' ministry desired his cleansing (cf. Jesus' reaction to doubt in 9:22-23).

Before leaving verse 41 we should observe that even if "with compassion" is not the original reading, the compassion of Jesus comes out clearly in the fact that He touched the leper. Such a thing was unheard of and made Jesus ceremonially unclean. Ritual uncleanness, however, was of no consequence to Jesus in comparison with human need. At many points He is depicted as being indifferent to ritualistic prescriptions. To

the Jewish leaders, however, such an attitude was a threat to the established order and could not be condoned.

1:43 The verb translated “sent ... away” usually means to cast out and is often used with reference to expelling demons (vv. 34,39). Unless Mark used the verbs in this verse with milder-than-usual meanings, it appears that Jesus was angry with the man and that He cast him out (of a house or synagogue?). It is highly probable therefore that verse 41 also indicates that Jesus was angry with the leper. If anyone except Jesus had been involved, few would ever have suggested any other interpretation. Why then was Jesus so angry with the man that He threw him out? Jesus may well have realized that the man would disobey His command to be silent and that this would greatly hinder His ministry. Furthermore Jesus—and Mark—wanted to make very plain that His primary ministry was not healing but redemption. This interpretation, as difficult as it may seem, is quite in keeping with the candor Mark displayed elsewhere.

1:44 Here we find another example of the “messianic secret.” In the last part of verse 44, Jesus is pictured as upholding the law, an appropriate balance to the subsequent conflict stories where He appears to have violated it. The early church may have found this account useful in disputes with Jews to show that Jesus did not indiscriminately violate the law. Whether the man had to go to Jerusalem is uncertain. Presumably, a priest anywhere could declare him cleansed, but sacrifices could be made only in the temple.

Still another problem is the meaning of the last item in the verse. The word “them” probably refers to the priests, even though the word “priest” earlier in the verse is singular. Alternatively, it could refer to the people generally; but in this case there is no antecedent for the pronoun. In Greek, the testimony can be either “to them” or “against them.” If the former, evidence of the healing is presented; but this is so obvious that it need not be stated. If the latter, the priests who do not recognize the power of God at work in Jesus produce evidence against their worthiness to hold the office. In 6:11, the same three words certainly mean “against them,” and that is probably the idea here.

1:45 This verse contains the first instance of disobedience to the command to be silent. The word “preach” or “talk freely” usually refers to the proclamation of the gospel, and the word “word” often refers to the word of God; but they sometimes have a more general meaning. The context requires that the reference be to the leper. Why would Jesus preach widely if the result were that He could no longer enter a city? No confident answer can be given. In any event, the secret cannot be kept. So overpowering was Jesus that not even His own command could hide Him.