

Title: The Book of Mark: Part 2

Speaker: Charles Stone

Passage: Mark 1:9-20

Big Idea: Events during the beginning of Jesus' public ministry reveal 6 truths we must embrace to match our walk to our talk.



Do you love Jesus?

Does your conduct and character indicate that you are truly, fully following Him each day?

If I were to ask any true Christian this question, "Do you love Jesus?"
What would their answer be?
It would be "yes". No delay.

If I were to ask any true Christian this question, "To what degree does our walk match our talk?"
What would their answer be?
I would expect some hesitancy, delay, and an attempt to qualify him/her.

The difficulty in the Christian life is to make our profession, I love Jesus, match how we live, matching our walk with our talk.

Well, as we continue our series in the book of Mark, we will get some clarity on how we can become more consistent in matching our profession to our conduct and character, matching our walk with our talk.



BIG IDEA

Events during the beginning of Jesus' public ministry reveal **6 truths** you must embrace to match your walk to your talk.



Last week's message sets up today's message very well. Last week I asked four questions that related to the four persons Mark wrote about in the first few verses of Mark.

Jesus: How pre-eminent is He in your life?

Isaiah: Is anything hindering your walk in the path of Jesus?

John the Baptist: How well does your life embody your profession?

The Holy Spirit: How consistent do you yield your heart to the spirit's promptings?

Today's message actually fleshes out how we might answer these questions.

⁹ At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. ¹⁰ As Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. ¹¹ And a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased."

¹² At once the Spirit sent him out into the desert, ¹³ and he was in the desert forty days, being tempted by Satan. He was with the wild animals, and angels attended him.

¹⁴ After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. ¹⁵ "The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!"

¹⁶ As Jesus walked beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. ¹⁷ "Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will make you fishers of men." ¹⁸ At once they left their nets and followed him.

¹⁹ When he had gone a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John in a boat, preparing their nets. ²⁰ Without delay he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men and followed him.

Mark 1.9-20

Mark 1:9-10 "At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. As Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove."

One question this passage raises is this: Why did Jesus get baptized?

There are four reasons why:

1. To identify with human nature and weakness. Jesus had no sin, so he did not need to repent, but his baptism was his way to identify with our weakness. By his baptism He associated with us as sinners, placing himself among the guilty, not for his salvation, but to pay for our guilt, by taking our sin on Himself while on the cross. So, His baptism meant the cross.
2. To connect with and honor John's ministry. John was paving the way for people to believe in Jesus as the promised Messiah. Jesus highly respected John the Baptist.
3. To make a public statement that he intended to follow His heavenly Father.
4. To set an example for us. Baptism means to dip or immerse. Here, we see baptism illustrated as immersion for Jesus came out of the water. So, he was baptized by immersion, what we teach at WestPark.

Next, when Mark describes heaven being torn open it's his way to describe this earthshaking event, God's approval upon Jesus, the Holy Spirit empowering and filling Him, as Jesus begins his public ministry.

It's a Jewish literature technique to describe God's power by using cataclysmic words like torn open. The word was also used when Jesus died by describing the huge curtain in the temple being torn from top to bottom. Both of these supernatural occurrences attest to the fact that Jesus was truly God's Son, and we learn this truth not from something man said but what God declared.

When Mark uses the image of a dove, he's not implying that the Holy Spirit looks like a dove. Rather it's a manner of descent like a dove gently coming down for a landing. A dove symbolized gentleness. Jesus came to conquer sin, but with love, grace, and gentleness, yet He was no pushover.

The Greek actually read descending “into” Him indicating Jesus’ complete filling and empowering for ministry by the Holy Spirit. Jesus Himself claimed this anointing when he said in Luke 4.18, “The Spirit of the Lord is on me.”

Mark 1:11 “And a voice came from heaven: ‘You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased.’”

Jesus was the only one who heard this voice and he obviously told Peter about his experience who in turn told Mark who wrote it down.

God is stating His ultimate approval of Jesus His Son. The divine proclamation expresses the steadfast love of the Father for the Son as well as their essential unity.¹

So, Jesus’ baptism is a keystone event in His life and ministry. The empowerment by the Spirit to be God’s servant, and the declaration from heaven, “You are my Son” enables Jesus not only to speak and act for God but as God.²

You would think there would be some reception or celebration for this pivotal event. But, no, Jesus immediately does something opposite from a celebration.

Mark 1:12-13 “At once the Spirit sent him out into the desert, and he was in the desert forty days, being tempted by Satan. He was with the wild animals, and angels attended him.”

Jesus is thrust into the wilderness by the Holy Spirit to prepare for the ministry for which He is called to do. In Jewish thought the wilderness was viewed as a place of danger, gloom, and where demons lived.³

It was a forty-day experience that included fasting. Other biblical characters also spent 40 days in a wilderness: Moses and Elijah the prophet. These 40-day wilderness experiences were somewhat of a proving ground, a test for faithfulness along with a promise of deliverance.

So, the same Spirit who has come upon, and in Jesus, sends Him into the desert to be tested to determine if he will submit Himself to obedience to His Father. This may seem to be an odd statement because we know that Jesus was sinless.

But Jesus’ success in resisting Satan in the wilderness reminds us that Jesus was not only fully God but also fully man and He chose to make God’s will His own. With the Holy Spirit’s power, he refused to sin.

Satan means adversary and is the essence of everything that is against God. Satan tempted Jesus to sin. In response Jesus drew upon the power of the Holy Spirit to resist the temptation. That is good news for you and me. We have the same Spirit who empowers us to obey God when tempted.

The angels also attended to Jesus and Jesus was in danger from even the wild animals. His mention of wild animals provided a very specific point of contact with the Roman Christians who experienced Emperor Nero’s savagery toward them. It reminded these early Christians that Christ, too, was thrown to wild beasts, and as the angels ministered to him, so, too, will they minister to Roman Christians facing martyrdom.⁴ So, Jesus’ adversaries are both physical (wild animals) and spiritual (Satan).

The Greek word for temptation is the same word for test. You see, God does not tempt us, but He tests to make us stronger. Satan does not test us, but he tempts us to make us fall. God tests and Satan tempts.

So, Jesus humbled himself to be baptized, identifying with our sin, though he had no sin. He identified with the temptation we face when he battled Satan’s onslaught of temptations in the wilderness.

¹ Edwards, J. R. (2002). *The Gospel according to Mark* (p. 38). Eerdmans; Apollos.

² Edwards, J. R. (2002). *The Gospel according to Mark* (p. 38). Eerdmans; Apollos.

³ Hughes, R. K. (1989). *Mark: Jesus, servant and savior* (Vol. 1, p. 28). Crossway Books.

⁴ Edwards, J. R. (2002). *The Gospel according to Mark* (p. 41). Eerdmans; Apollos.

Mark 1:14 “After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. ‘The time has come,’ he said. ‘The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!’”

This is one of the key verses in the book of Mark.

This good news is news from God and about God. It is the very best news because it contains the message of:

- forgiveness,
- restoration,
- new life in Christ,
- truth,
- hope,
- peace,
- eternal life,
- God’s promises,
- salvation.

The Good news is the Gospel, the content of Jesus’ teaching plus the person of Christ as well. Jesus proclaimed the Gospel, and he also WAS the Gospel.

The time is now.

Time here not only means clock time, chronology, but also a decisive, opportune, significant time for God’s action. It is a kind of time different from all other time. God had promised the coming Messiah. John the Baptist had been a tool in God’s hand to prepare for this decisive moment. Jesus fulfilled that promise and was fulfilling other prophecies about Himself. This is a definitive, defining moment in history.

Good news does not mean easy. Mark writes about the Good News right after he mentions that John was put into prison and was later killed for his faith.

Mark uses the Kingdom of God 14x in the book.

The Jewish people were expecting a physical kingdom that the coming Messiah would rule over as an earthly king. Jesus, however, refers to it as a spiritual kingdom, both now and in the future.

The Kingdom of God is the current and future rule, reign, and realm of God manifested in His followers’ hearts and actions. It is both present and future.

It’s here but not yet. Its full expression is nearer now than yesterday. In the future Jesus will return to restore his creation back to its intended order. That time is closer, but not yet. So, we live in the Kingdom of God, and it is yet to be fulfilled.

The Kingdom of God is also a phrase that captures the substance of Jesus’ teaching and is identified in the closest way possible to his own person and ministry. In Jesus the Kingdom of God makes a personal appearance. This Kingdom has come in the God-man Jesus and will be fully made known when Jesus returns again to set up an earthly, perfect, Kingdom.

Because of that, the only appropriate response is repentance and faith.

“Repent and believe the good news!”

Repent and believe are like two sides of a coin, they complete each other in salvation. We looked at this last week. To repent means to turn from something, turn from our sin and to believe means we turn toward something, the Gospel, Jesus. They refer to the total allegiance of believers. To believe presupposes repentance.

The Greek form of these words imply an ongoing condition of a life, to live in repentance and belief. God’s blessing is in the Kingdom of God and our response is repentance and belief.

To believe is to take Jesus at his word, to believe that God is the kind of God that Jesus has told us about.

Again, to repent means that we turn from our sin, that we hate it, not just that we hate consequences of it when we get caught.

We next see the first recorded public act of Jesus was not something sensational, but simply summoning four men to follow Him.

Mark 1:16-18 “As Jesus walked beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. “Come, follow me,” Jesus said, “and I will make you fishers of men.” At once they left their nets and followed him.”

The Sea of Galilee is 22 km by 9 km. Fishing in the Sea of Galilee was big business with over 300 boats and crew fishing from 16 ports. Fish was a main food source, not red meat, and fish from the Sea of Galilee were prized and were even exported as far away as to Egypt.

The kind of net Simon and Andrew were using was a round net with weights around it and a fisherman would throw it out, let it sink, and then pull it to himself to catch the fish.

Mark 1:19-20 “When he had gone a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John in a boat, preparing their nets. Without delay he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men and followed him.”

What do we know about these men?

- They were ordinary folks like you and me. They weren't from aristocracy, highly educated, or wealthy although James and John apparently had a pretty successful business to be able to hire workers.
- They had probably heard Jesus preaching before at a distance, so he wasn't a total stranger to them. They had probably talked a lot about what they heard Jesus say.
- He appealed to their heart and will. He did not propose to them some philosophical system, but simply said follow me.
- This was no absolute renunciation of their family because the Gospels tell us that the disciples were back in their homes which probably served as a home base after their various missionary journeys.
- “To follow” means discipleship, to follow Jesus means that you are a learner, a follower of Jesus, that you are committed to Him. It's the idea of responding to a summons that leads to acceptance of that person as having authority over you and one that you would become attached to.

Mark gives us three components of discipleship, what it means to follow Jesus.

1. Jesus does the calling. Jesus was a very different leader than other rabbis at the time who also had followers or disciples. Other rabbis would not call their students into their school. The initiative was on the potential student to seek out a rabbi and their chief allegiance was to the torah, the first five books of the Old Testament, not to a particular rabbi.
 - a. In Jesus case, however, he called them to himself, not to some philosophical teaching. Other students were required to know the Torah or pass a qualifying exam in theology to get into their schools. For Jesus, however, what His disciples needed to learn and do would happen only in the context of following Jesus. So, Jesus searches for them not the other way around.
2. It's a call to service. The original language is more like I shall make you become fishers of men. Being a disciple of Jesus is a slow and challenging process as we see in what Mark records later about how the disciples struggled. But they were called not to a philosophy, but to serving God and serving others. This is what Jesus would model for them and teach about. To follow Jesus requires a total change in perspective. It's not about what I get, but how I can serve Him and others.
3. It's formed with others (fellowship). Following Jesus happens in community. It's not a solo effort. That's why it's important for us to gather in small and large groups. That's why we have these

fellowships after church every couple of months, to build relationships and fellowship. That's why Kimberly Enns leads our small groups ministry and it's growing.

So, a lot happened has happened in 9 verses. 5 pivotal events happened in Jesus' life.

5 pivotal events

1. He got baptized.
2. The Holy Spirit anointed Him.
3. He spent 40 days in the wilderness.
4. He began his public ministry of preaching.
5. He began picking His disciples.



What are the implications for you and me, for disciples of Jesus, for followers of Jesus? In a word it's obedience, another way of saying match your walk to your talk.

God has a plan for each of us just as He had a plan for these fishermen. We are to 'follow him.' That plan means we are to spread the gospel in everything you do. You most likely won't be called to be a preacher like me or a street preacher that we might describe John the Baptist as. God called me to do what I do. But God wants you to be faithful in being God's hands, feet, and mouthpiece in your job, school, and community, to be fishers of men.

Remember this question?

Do you love Jesus?

To what degree does our walk match our talk?

1. Repent and believe.

That was what both Jesus and John the Baptist were preaching. The rest of these truths mean nothing if you don't have a relationship with Jesus. Repent means turning from something, sin, and believe means turning to someone, Jesus.

2. Make your profession public (baptism).

One of the reasons Jesus was baptized was to provide an example of something we should do to declare our allegiance to Jesus. If you haven't been baptized, why not when Jesus clearly demonstrated its importance?

3. Obey God's promptings immediately.

Obedience requires an immediate response. Mark used "at once" for the Spirit sending Jesus out into the wilderness. He used the same word for the 4 disciples responding to Jesus' call.

I've shared before an idea called the 10 second rule. If God prompts you to do something and you don't act on it in some way right then, you'll probably forget it in 10 seconds. Obey right then or if it's something in the future or in a different place or toward someone not with you that the Holy Spirit prompts you to do, write it down, send yourself an email, use something to help you remember later.

4. Don't quit when tested.

The Christian life is a struggle. We will face temptations and tests as did Jesus in the wilderness. Don't quit. Don't give up. Don't give in. We will see in the weeks ahead that the disciples struggled to understand and follow Jesus. Fully following Jesus is a struggle sometimes. In the struggle is the worst time to quit.

5. Pay the price.

Following Jesus is costly. The disciples gave up their income, their livelihoods, and stability to follow Jesus. John cut some things out of his life like fancy clothes and a normal diet. I'm not saying the God wants you to do exactly the same thing they did. But following Jesus does mean sacrifice. He may want you to let go of some things you are holding on to that hinder your walk with God. And that might cost you something, time, money, a harmful relationship.

6. Trust that God will provide.

Here is the good news as you fully follow Him. When you obey God, He will meet your needs. God used the angels to minister to Jesus during his time in the wilderness. The Holy Spirit equipped Jesus to fulfill God's plan for Him. God will provide the extra help, sustenance, wisdom, friends, and strength so that we can persevere as we fully follow and obey Him. God's grace is sufficient for our daily needs and our trials. He will take care of you.



Which of these resonated the most with you?
Pick your top 1-2 to focus on this week.