

## **SERMON SERIES: GETTING TO KNOW JESUS.**

**Subject: The Beginning of the Gospel**

**Scripture: Mark 1:1-8**

**Sermon No. 2**

### **Introduction**

Evidence indicates that Mark was the first one to write about the life of Christ. His mother owned the house in Jerusalem where the early disciples gathered to pray (Acts 12:12). More than likely the house where the Lord instituted the Lord's Supper (Luke 22:12; Acts 1:13). Jesus was probably a close friend of Mark's family.

During the days when this book was written, around 60AD, It was tough to be a Christian. Nero was the emperor of Rome, and a very poor leader. He blamed Christians for many of the ills in the Roman Empire to cover up his blundering leadership. Martyrdom was not unusual. Bodily harm was a fact of life. Christians needed strength to face persecution; they needed hope for the future; and encouragement to continue despite the threat of losing one's life. *But how do you get strength, hope and encouragement in tough times?*

### **I. GOD PREPARED JOHN MARK TO DELIVER THIS NEEDED MESSAGE.**

Mark was a young man when Jesus traveled the roads of Palestine.

**1. Mark was a companion on the first missionary journey with Paul and Barnabas.** But he got cold feet and left as the trip turned toward Asia. When the second missionary journey was planned, Paul and Barnabas had a huge argument over whether or not to take Mark. Paul didn't want to, and Barnabas did. Over this young man, Paul and Barnabas split from each other and Paul teamed up with Silas, and Barnabas with Mark.

**2. We don't hear much of Mark until Peter's letters.** There we find out that Peter had taken Mark under his wing and taught him to be a leader in the church. And finally we learn that Mark and Paul reconciled their differences, because Paul wrote:

**2 Timothy 4:11** Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, because he is helpful to me in my ministry. *The lesson we need to acknowledge from Marks life is that ...*

**3. God chooses imperfect people to accomplish His task.** You don't have to be perfect or great to be useful in God's ministry. You are not useless, you have something to offer Jesus and this church. *Keeping in mind the theme of Mark, " Getting to Know Jesus Better" we shall now observe.....*

**II. JESUS CHRIST AND THE BEGINNING OF THE GOSPEL (MARK 1:1).** The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God; As we get to know Jesus better we have to understand one fact, who Jesus is ....

**1. Jesus was before the beginning of the gospel.** He was before the beginning of time. Jesus was always there! He is eternal. And since only God is eternal, Jesus is God.

**Illustrate:** Genesis 1:1 **In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.** God was the One who was behind the creative forces that made the heavens and the earth out of nothing. But He was not alone during creation. There was God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, known as the Trinity, all involved in the creation process at the very beginning.

**III. MARK TELLS US SOME IMPORTANT THINGS CONCERNING THE GOSPEL. (1:1-3)** **The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God;** As it is written in the prophets, **Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee. The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.** It is important that we understand the conditions that existed at the time of Mark's writing...AD 60. *Christians faced persecution from religious leaders*

**1. The Life Style of Religious Leaders.** Mark makes reference to Malachi 3:2-4. The religious leaders were ...

- a) Ignoring God's Word and God's Commands.
- b) Selfish and self-centered, giving the second rate stuff to God.
- c) They viewed their Temple duties as burdens.
- d) They were not teaching purity and righteousness.
- e) They had become tolerant of sin.
- f) And they accepted mediocre commitment from the people.

**2. Into these conditions of the first century the gospel of Jesus Christ came in order to change things.** And friends, that's why a clear understanding of the gospel is so important to us, today. We must recognize what God recognizes, **the only way to change and purify the sinful condition of human beings is the Gospel of Jesus Christ.**

**Illustrate:** Perhaps you have heard of Mutiny on the Bounty, written by Charles Nordhoff or seen the movie Mutiny on the Bounty.

It tells what happened to the crew who mutinied on the ship known as the Bounty. The mutineers put ashore on Pitcairn Island. There nine mutineers, six native men, ten native women and a 15 year old girl started a life together. One of the crew men succeeded in making crude alcohol. And a terrible situation ensued after many of them got drunk. A fight broke out and all the mutineers killed each other, except one man by the name of Alexander Smith. After all this happened, Smith found a Bible among some of the things they had rescued from the Bounty. He started to read it. And he made up his mind that he was going to build a society on that island based directly on the Word of God.

Twenty years later, an American sailing ship discovered the island. What they found was very interesting. They found a completely Christian community. There was no jail, because there was no crime. There was no hospital because there was no disease. There was no illiteracy because they were all taught to read God's Word.

And there was complete harmony between all the people. **The message of the Gospel had literally cleansed a society.**

**IV. MARK INTRODUCES US TO THE PREACHING OF JOHN (3-6).** The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. 5 And there went out unto him all the land of Judea, and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins. 6 And John was clothed with camel's hair, and with a girdle of a skin about his loins; and did eat locust and wild honey. (Simplicity) There are three parts to John's sermon: (1) Repentance (2) Confessing (3) Simplicity.

Repentance is good! Confessing is great! Simplicity is wonderful! That's only the beginning of salvation. **Without the One John refers to in vs. 7-8 the Gospel is incomplete.** And preached saying, there cometh One mightier than I after me, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose. 8 I indeed have baptized you with water; but he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost. *If you want a permanent change in your life...*

**1. You need a power outside yourself!** A power to keep you from returning to sin! A power to keep you focused on righteousness. That power is God's Holy Spirit! And the Holy Spirit only comes when you commit yourself to Jesus Christ as your personal Savior. Don't trust church membership! Don't trust any organization! Don't trust works! Don't trust your good deeds! Trust in Jesus Christ alone!! *Question, have you started at the beginning!*

**2. What do you think of Christ?** Either you are here this morning because you have a relationship with God through Jesus Christ and you are trusting Him to put your life into perspective; ...or you're searching for a relationship with God that you hope will help put your life into perspective. Either way..., for you to have a relationship with God that makes sense out of life, you have to start at the beginning with the basics from these first 8 verses in Mark, chapter 1. **I indeed have baptized you with water; but he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost.** Speaking of Jesus.

## **Conclusion**

How can I have a proper relationship that will put my life in order?

**1. When you sin, repent.** Swallow your pride and admit to God that you have violated what He wants from your life. Then stop whatever it is that you're doing that's wrong.

**2. Accept His forgiveness.** There is not a person who has ever lived whom God has turned away, when they've asked Him for forgiveness.

**1 John 1:9** If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

**3. Don't try to complicate things with religion.** Religion is man-made, a relationship is God-made. Don't complicate the Gospel. It is designed to be simple. -Repent and -accept God's forgiveness.