

Series:

Mark – Every Man’s Gospel

Title: In the Wilderness

Text:

Mark 1:1-8

Introduction:

Jesus had been gone for three decades. Thirty years had gone by since Jesus had been seen ascending back up into heaven. Jerusalem was, likely, under siege by the Romans. The disciples had mostly scattered. Peter had been preaching the gospel for some time in Rome, where he settled, and **there were no written accounts of the life of Jesus.**

Everything up to that point had been preached orally. Paul had written to the Corinthians and the Galatians warning them to beware of false gospels and to remain true to the one they had heard...not read. But as persecution was heating up and the disciples starting to die off, it became more and more urgent for there to be a written record accounting for the life of Jesus. Mark’s account came first.

It is paramount that we have a written, preserved accounting of the life and works of Jesus Christ. And so they were written by Mark, then Matthew, John and Luke (probably in that order). They are all so different. Mark is obviously the shortest. He wants to just strip everything down to nothing but Jesus. “Here he is!” There is no filler. There is no background. There is no commentary. There is little teaching. In fact, there is not much of Jesus’ teaching. It’s simply Jesus’ character and conduct. Here is who He is and what He did! Bang! Done!

- Matthew starts with a long genealogy and has lots of Jesus’ words and sermons. Here is who Jesus is and what He said.
- Luke has a lot of context and color commentary.
- John has even more personal commentary. Here is who He was and what He said and did and what we thought.
- But not Mark. Here is Jesus, plain and simple.

Four books of the Bible begin with the word “beginning” (Genesis, Hosea, John and Mark). The beginning of the gospel era began when Jesus became human.

But it is so much more than that. This is the beginning of the good news that about Jesus, the Christ. Jesus and Christ are not synonyms. When I say Jesus, you hear “Christ.” When I say, “Christ” you hear “Jesus” as though they were synonymous. They are not. Jesus is his name. Christ is his title. He is Jesus, the *anointed* King.

The King Is Come

In ancient times, whenever a king would defeat city with his troops, he would take up residency there. There would be a palace built in that city. Kings in ancient times did not rule over nations or countries but over cities and regions. It was not until the time of the emperors that you had rulers over several cities with kings under him.

Many days before a king moved in to a newly conquered city, thousands of slaves would work feverishly to prepare the king's highway, a road that led straight into the town. As the king entered the city to take command and ownership, the people would line the streets and cheer him paying homage to their new lord.

Because you are familiar with the story, you can immediately see the connections with Jesus.

Mark says that this is the beginning of the Gospel of Jesus, the anointed King.

And this anointed King is the promised Messiah of Isaiah. There would come a forerunner who would build the king's highway. He would make it possible for the king to enter the city. This, of course, is in reference to John the Baptist.

The End of the Beginning

Notice the two quotes

- Malachi 3:1
- Isaiah 40:3

Isaiah prophesied that there would be a day when the Lord himself would come to Jerusalem. The word used by Isaiah for "Lord" is Yahweh – the covenant name for God.

Mark is offering a complete bombshell. God is human!

When Mark begins by quoting Isaiah, he is rooting his gospel into the ancient hope of Israel of a coming king that would take down every mountain, break through and heal the world of all its diseases and poverty. THAT king has come.

How You Meet Him – Go to the Wilderness

Wilderness is a motif of Scripture – desert (not a forest) – a place of loneliness, thirst and hunger.

- Thirst: There is no water – the wells have all dried up
- Thorns: There is no bread – cannot sustain life, thorns, nothing grows,
- Threats: There are no cities – cannot sustain community. The wilderness is home to thieves, animals and drifters.

It is metaphor in Scripture for two things: (1) hard times (2) the meeting place of God

Gen. 16:7 – Abraham and Sarai

Exodus 3:1 – Moses and the burning bush

Exodus 13:8 – Israel and the Exodus

15:22 – no water

16:3 – no food

Deut. 1:31 – to see the Lord carry you as a man carries a son.

Lev 7:38 – Mt. Sinai

1 Sam. 23 – David pursued by Saul

Ps. 55:7

Ps. 63:1

Hosea 2:14 – a place of wooing – to see the Lord loves us like a caring spouse.

Something has to happen in your life so that all the longing you have get challenged and you realize you will die without Christ.

You encounter God in the wilderness. You find God in Jesus

John the Baptist is in the wilderness (1:3-5; Jesus in 1:12).

All wells eventually dry up

All bread molds