

Mark 1:14-20

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[0 : 00] Mark, while, as we said, nearly 95% of what is contained in Mark is also contained in Matthew and Luke.

! Not that 95% of it's in the Gospel of Matthew and 95% of it's in the Gospel of Luke, but when you put Matthew and Luke together, a full 95% of what we find in Mark can be found in those two books as well.

So we have the tendency to say, oh, well, let's just look past and move beyond that. But that's not the case. There was an intention for his writing. There was intention for the way he wrote it. There was a set and a very specific demographic of people that he was writing to. And all of that helps us to really take it in its proper context.

So we want to be sure to approach the Gospel that is so unique. It is brief. It moves very quickly. We want to approach it in its context so that we can fully understand it.

But this morning, we've already kind of set that context, so we're going to pick up in verse 14, and we're going to read down to verse 20. Now, if you need to know, from verse 14 on to the end of the first chapter, it really kind of spills over into the chapters which follow.

[1 : 07] It's all about the kingdom, okay? So it's about the kingdom of God and about the kingdom of heaven being at hand. What we'll be looking at this morning, verses 14 through 20, is the proclamation of the kingdom.

What follows is the power of the kingdom. And then after that, it would be the possession or the position of the kingdom. So this morning, we're going to be looking at the proclamation of the kingdom found in the Gospel of Mark, chapter 1, verses 14 through 20.

So if you are physically able and desire to do so, would you join with me as we stand together and we read the Word of God with one another, starting in verse 14. The Word of God says, Going on a little further, he saw James, the son of Zebedee, and John, his brother, who were also in the boat mending the nets.

Immediately, he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants and went away to follow him. Let's pray. Father, we thank you for this day. We thank you for the opportunity we've had to lift up our voices in song.

We thank you for the grand privilege of being able to fellowship with one another. Lord, to be able to give for the sake of the kingdom. And Lord, we pray now as we come to the reading and hearing of your Word, that you would speak to us.

[2 : 46] Father, it has been good to be together. But Lord, it will be great to hear a word from you. So we ask that you would speak to us and that we would have ears to hear, eyes to see, minds and hearts to accept it, and lives to live it out for your glory.

And we ask it all in Jesus' name. Amen. I want you to see this morning the proclamation of the kingdom. The proclamation of the kingdom found for us in Mark chapter 1, verses 14 through 20. Mark doesn't spend a lot of time on secondary issues or the early life of Christ. As you remember, we have no birth narrative.

We have no early years narrative. We have no genealogy recorded in the gospel of Mark. Mark introduces the gospel, the good news to us. He introduces at the very beginning of his gospel that Jesus is the Son of God.

We saw last week how there is the bracketing of that. He introduces in the very first chapter that it is Jesus, the Son of God. And then we find the centurion at the cross when Jesus dies that he says, surely this is God's Son.

[3 : 55] So without a doubt, Mark is writing to us concerning the good news proclaimed by and the good news of Jesus Christ, who is the Son of God.

Now, it is not just the good news about him. It is also the good news which he declared. And that is very important. And you will see why in just a moment. Because in our text this morning, we are told that Jesus came preaching the gospel of the kingdom.

Preaching the good news. And so we understand here that Jesus came proclaiming a great truth. And it was a proclamation of the kingdom.

Now, Mark is writing to Roman individuals, Gentile individuals, that is, non-Jewish people. But in specific, those who occupied the city of Rome.

And he is writing to the early church of Romans who understood what it was to be a ruler and a leader. But also understood what it was to be a servant. And the theme of Mark is Mark chapter 10, verse 45.

[4 : 58] Is that the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give his life a ransom for many. So we know that Mark's overall theme is about the servant of Christ who is the Son of God and is the Savior of man.

But yet we also understand that Mark gives us some unique attributes to this individual. And that is the proclamation which he declares. We would long to move right beyond this.

It actually was my tendency to want to look at the remainder of the first chapter. And we can see a number of things here that is in the remainder of the first chapter. Because Mark moves very rapidly. But as I shared with some brothers this morning, though Mark wants to move fast, we're going to try to slow him down just a little bit and look at things in smaller sections.

Because by the time we get to the first chapter, Jesus has done an unbelievable amount of things. But we want to slow down and see exactly what is the kingdom all about.

It says, now after John had been taken into custody. Now this is important for us. Because this is a demarcation of time. Mark doesn't concern himself with writing things chronologically.

[6 : 07] Sometimes his things are out of order. But that is not his purpose. His purpose is not to write things decently and in order. He is not trying to write chronologically. Much as when we read some of the Old Testament books.

They are not concerned with being chronologically written. If you are with me on Sunday nights or Wednesday nights, we're making our way through the book of 2 Chronicles. And you will understand that even 2 Chronicles is not chronologically written.

Because it was written for a purpose. So that doesn't, even though that may kind of be offensive to our American mindset, it shouldn't upset us when we read the reality that it is going for a purpose and a point.

And there is a matter behind it. But here we have before us one of those unique times when Mark gives us something that would help us to set the time.

He says, And this is how he started it.

[7 : 27] Now, we have a tendency to want to read right past this. But really, the weight of the New Testament does not let us read right past it. Because we say, oh, well, it's a timing thing. It was after John was taken captive.

But look at what it says. Jesus came and said, this is how he introduced the gospel of God. This is how he introduced the kingdom mindset. Look at what it says. The time is fulfilled.

The time is fulfilled. You say, oh, yes. It just means, okay, it's time to start this. Well, not really. It says the time is fulfilled.

And the kingdom of God is at hand. We'll get to the rest of this verse in just a moment. But notice what he says. The time is fulfilled. And the kingdom of God has come. Or is at hand.

So very clearly, when we look at this proclamation of the kingdom, we see that it pertains to time. Jesus came according to a divine orchestrated timetable.

[8 : 28] As a matter of fact, we cannot escape this reality when we read the weight of the New Testament. Over and over again, we have this repeated refrain. I love how John brings this up in his gospel.

Because John tells us over and over and over again that they sought to kill him. But they could not lay hands on him for his time had not yet come. And again, they wanted to stone him. But Jesus passed through the midst of them. This isn't Jesus using supernatural powers to hide himself.

This is Jesus walking through a crowd of angry people, each holding a rock, who wanted to stone him. But they couldn't because there was a restraint to them. Why? For his time had not yet come. And then again, we find them wanting to push him off a cliff.

But they couldn't touch him for his time had not yet come. But when we come to John chapter 13, when it says, Jesus knowing that the time had come. So we understand that Jesus operated on a divine timetable.

Things were always done in time. As a matter of fact, what we find here is the introduction of the kingdom. I love how Paul says it. Paul says it in the book of Titus.

[9 : 28] No, that pastoral epistle, which we think only pertains to pastors. But in the book of Titus, chapter 1, verses 2 and 3, Paul makes this grand assessment and this grand statement. Paul says that he is preaching.

Now, it's one of the run-on sentences, so I won't read it to you in its entirety. But essentially what Paul is saying is that salvation is a matter that had been promised from eternity past.

That the salvation, the promise of salvation is a promise from eternity past. Think about that for just a moment. Let that settle with you for just a moment. That the salvation of man is an eternal past event.

You say, well, pastor, how can you say that? Well, because I can say that before the foundations of the world were lain, he was the lamb slain. That he has written in the book of life the names of those before they were born.

You say, oh, the pastor makes my mind smoke. It makes mine smoke too, but just because I can't comprehend it doesn't mean I don't need to accept it. Because when Paul makes this declarative statement that the promise of salvation is a matter of eternal past events.

[10 : 41] We say, well, then how do we come to know it? Listen to this, because he says there in the third verse, Now stay with me.

That is, when Jesus stood up after John had been taken captive and said, The time is fulfilled. The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Jesus was manifesting in time what had been ordained for all of eternity.

He was making public that which God had always known. And for the first time in history, now we are beginning to see it introduced to us through manifestation.

See, the promise of salvation is not something that is constrained to the New Testament. My friend, listen to me. It's not even something that is constrained to the 66 books of the entirety of Scripture. We can find salvation promised throughout the Old Testament. We find salvation fulfilled and manifested in the New Testament. But Paul says in the book of Titus, This is something that has existed for eternity past.

[11 : 58] That God has always known about it. And you say, well, how can God always know about it? Because if God has not always known about it, then he is not God. And you have to accept that.

Because if there is ever something that God does not know, then God is not God. You say, wow, I have never thought about it like that. It is because greater are his ways than our ways.

Higher are his thoughts than our thoughts. But Paul says that he manifested it in time through the proclamation of the gospel. And what Jesus is doing is going public with what the Father has always known.

And not only that, the time is fulfilled. That word fulfilled there we can find repeated again in Scripture. It tells us in Galatians chapter 4 verse 4 that at the fullness of time Christ came preaching the kingdom.

At the fullness of time. The book of Hebrews in Hebrews chapter 9, I believe it's verse 26, says it this way. He came at the consummation of the ages.

[12 : 59] The fullness of time and the consummation of the ages means the same thing. That means it is when time is brought to its completion. Friend, I got news for you. You are living in the last days.

You say, oh, I know I can look around and all I have to do is open a newspaper or turn on the news. No, the last days were introduced the moment Jesus says the time is fulfilled. You say, pastor, that was over 2,000 years ago.

I know, it's been a long time. There are a lot of last days, right? But we cannot declare how many there should or there shouldn't be. But we are in the last days. You cannot escape the reality when you read the New Testament that each and every one of the apostles and each and every one of the authors of Scripture believed without a doubt that they were in the latter days, that they were in the end times.

And if it was so much more so then, how much more so now? Because the reality is the pinnacle of history was reached when the consummation of the ages came.

And that is all of creation was moving towards the redemption of man. And with the coming of Christ, the time is fulfilled. The redemption of man is now come.

[14:09] And we are in the latter days. We are not in the latter days because the history around us or the world events shows us of wars and rumors of wars and earthquakes and fires in various places.

We are not in the latter days because we are in the latter days because everything that man needs has already been done. History does not exist for us to accumulate a bunch of material possessions.

History progressed so that man would have the opportunity to be restored through a relationship to the Holy Father. And with the coming of Christ, the time is fulfilled. Everything after that is just waiting until it's completely over.

See, there's a lot in that the time is fulfilled. He is introducing something which God had already put into place.

And he is ending the history that had been leading up until that time. It is the consummation of the ages. And it is the fullness of time.

[15:13] We don't look back and go, well, we need to go back to those Old Testament times because everything that was leading up to this time finds its fullness and completion and its consummation in Jesus Christ.

The kingdom came with time. Number two, we also see the truth that comes with the proclamation of the kingdom. Jesus says, it says in verse 15, The kingdom of God is at hand.

The kingdom of God is at hand. What ensured that the time had come to its completion? Well, it was the arrival of the kingdom.

John the Baptist preached the message of the kingdom of God is near. John the Baptist, who is the forerunner of Jesus Christ, who went before him to prepare the hearts and minds of individuals, to turn the hearts of the children back to their fathers, to prepare the way, it tells us in the book of Malachi, preached one message.

The kingdom of heaven is near. The kingdom of heaven is near. The kingdom of heaven is near. Jesus stood up and said, the kingdom of heaven is here. There's a big difference between near and here.

[16:27] Right? When you're going somewhere to meet somebody and they send you a message, though you shouldn't be texting while you're driving, we're not here to say we ought to be doing that. Maybe you're doing speak to text.

We're going to say that, right? Or maybe your phone answers for you. And you're on your way. You're saying, I'm almost there. I'm getting near. I'm getting near. But then when you get here, they begin to look for you, right? They begin to say, oh, they're here somewhere. I know they're here. What John was doing was arousing their attention, saying it's getting closer. It's getting closer. It's getting closer. And then one day Jesus said, it's here. It's a grand shift.

It's a big difference. He says, the kingdom of God is at hand. Now, what is the kingdom of God? Because the early readers to this in Jewish thought would have thought that he is there to set up the messianic reign, to take over rule from the Roman Empire, to assume his position as the rightful heir to the throne of David.

Mark is writing to Romans, who are probably happy with the Roman Empire because they are experiencing the benefit of the Pax Romana, the peace of Rome and the expansion of that kingdom. Surely he's not writing to them, telling them that the kingdom of heaven or the kingdom of God is taking over the kingdom of Rome because we understand the reality that Jesus did not come to set up an earthly rule or an earthly reign yet because we know that he could have in any given moment.

[17:47] But rather, the introduction of the kingdom is to say that the sovereign rule of the Father is now present on the earth among his people. Now, stay with me in that.

That is God's sovereignty. Everything that is represented by his kingdom now exists in the realm of earth through his rulership over his people.

That's a long way of saying that it's here because he's the king of your life. He's ruling over you and you are his representative in this world.

God has purchased, he has redeemed back those who were given over to the enemy. And the nearness of the kingdom is the proclamation of Jesus.

And here's the truth. Look at what he says. Repent and believe in the gospel. Not only is the kingdom of heaven here, now he says you are to repent and believe in the gospel.

[18:49] Again, we contradict this with the preaching of John the Baptist. John the Baptist, who was preaching of the kingdom being near, said you are to repent. That is, change your ways and be baptized.

Do something, right? Make a public display to everyone around you that you are going to begin to live differently. That's exactly what baptism was. It was a change of direction in a public humiliating way during that time.

Not so humiliating now. But it was a sign of humiliation saying that I'm willing, even as a Jewish believer, as a Jewish individual, to say that my practice of faith up until this time is insufficient. So I need to change my ways. And they would go out to him, to John the Baptist, and be baptized in the Jordan River. And he was saying, you need to change and do something. Notice what Jesus says.

Notice the truth. He says you need to repent. Now repentance means to have a change of heart or a change of mind. That is, you need to acknowledge the reality that what you're doing is not working. But he doesn't say, he says something starkly different than what John the Baptist says.

[19:49] John the Baptist says, and be baptized. Jesus says, and believe. And believe. To believe is to put one's trust in the gospel.

He says, there's nothing you can do but to put all of your confidence and trust in the good news of God.

And the good news is that Jesus Christ came. He died a substitutionary death. He bore our penalties. He took on our suffering. He hung upon the cross.

He paid our debts in full. And after paying our debts, he said, it is finished. He gave up his spirit. He was literally dead and literally buried in the ground.

Three days later, he raised to walk in the newness of life and came forth with him holding both death, hell, and the grave captive. And he went forth victoriously to go and send to the right hand of the Father to intercede for us.

[20:48] That's the good news. So what does the kingdom come? What truth does it proclaim? That there's something you must do? No, it proclaims that you must believe. Right? You must put all of your confidence and faith and absolute assurance in the reality that what God has done is enough.

You say, well, what about baptism? Don't you believe in baptism? Yes, I do. For those who are already redeemed. It is a sign of a past event that you have been saved, so now you are going to be baptized to make a public profession to all who are watching.

But the proclamation of Christ is to understand that the kingdom of heaven is near and what must take place is you must admit and agree because, by the way, and this is a great historical argument, I don't believe any man comes to be drawn by the...

I don't believe repentance is a natural aspect of mankind, so it's not like you sit around and think, well, I need to change my ways. I believe the conviction comes because the Spirit makes His residence and makes His place among your life and He starts to bring what we call holy conviction upon you and you begin to be concerned about your ways and you begin to think about these matters.

And so I believe, just to be honest with you, I don't mind being this transformed. I believe even the act of repentance is the work of a holy God in the life of the individual because every heart is wicked.

[22:16] There is none righteous. No, not one. So left to our own, we don't... Let's just be transparent. We don't want to change our ways until conviction falls and we say, woe is me.

And He begins to draw us and say, I've got to change something. Well, how am I... What do you need to do to change? Believe. Believe. That's what it says, right?

Believe in the gospel, the good news of God. So here we see the time, the truth.

Number three, the test. Look at the testing of this reality because how do we know if we're putting our confidence in it?

How do we say, how can we say, well, I... How can we say, yes, I know I'm standing in salvific belief. James would say it this way, faith without works is dead or useless.

[23 : 25] That you cannot display your faith to me without your works. You're not saved by your works, but you display your faith by your works and through your works.

After preaching the message that the kingdom of God is near, is here, John the Baptist passed the mantle on to Christ who came and said the kingdom of God is here and Jesus said that you need to repent and believe and then he follows that here with a call to do something based upon that belief. By the way, my friend, listen. Belief that doesn't ask you to do anything is not really belief. Notice what follows. As he was going along by the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew, the brother of Simon, casting a net to the sea for they were fishermen and Jesus said to them, follow me and I will make you become fishers of men.

Immediately they left their nets and followed after him. Going on a little further, he saw James, the son of Zebedee, and John, his brother, who were also in the boat, men in the nets.

Immediately he called them and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants and went away to follow him. Now we see two different groups here.

[24 : 39] We see Andrew and Peter who evidently were a small fishing business and we see James and John who evidently were a large fishing business because they left their boat and James and John left their father with his hired servants in his boat.

So some walked away from their own work, some walked away from their father and his prospering business because if you had hired servants to work in your boat, then you were doing all right.

Some had to walk away from much, some walked away from all.

But we see the call here to do something in response. And it says, and immediately they left their nets. Now, do you remember that phrase when I said, after John had been taken captive?

Do you remember that phrase I introduced to you? I introduced it to you for this point. this point. Full transparency. When I first came to Christ, I was reading through the scripture.

I came to Christ. Many of you know from studying and reading the book of Romans. So I began just to read more and more after coming to Christ. I read the book of Romans and I began to read.

[25 : 47] I said, well, I need to read in the gospels and I was a very new believer and just full transparency. I looked through the gospels and I said, well, Mark looks pretty short. I'll read Mark. So I started reading. I mean, none of you did that?

So I started reading Mark and then all of a sudden I began to grow under great conviction and I remember I still have the Bible that I used to carry in my lunchbox. It's back there in my office and it's on the shelf.

I don't open it up anymore because the pages all fall out. But you could read and it's all kind of smudged and there's a lot of ink in this area and I was always underlining and circling that word immediately, immediately, immediately, immediately.

I didn't know much about context. I didn't know much about authorship. I didn't know that was a favorite word of Mark. All I knew is I was a believer and man, Jesus issued a call and immediately they fell and then this conviction began to rest upon me.

It's like, man, I am so slow to respond like that and I began to go, woe is me and Satan began to sit on my shoulder and be like, yeah, see, you don't respond.

[26 : 46] You're not doing everything your Savior is asking you to do and I was struggling and I was like, man, Jesus issued a call. They're out here mending their nets and they just walk away from it so shouldn't I be able to do that, right?

And at the same time, I'm in youth ministry and you said, I thought you were a new believer. I was. I was a new believer in youth ministry so I was really thrown into the fire and then I was kind of wrestling with this whole call to preach thing and I didn't want to be a pastor but teaching teenagers was pretty cool and so I was kind of, maybe I should just walk away from everything and at the same time I had a wife who was, we had a three-year-old and she was pregnant about to give birth and she was like, you don't walk away from anything and so we were kind of like, what do I do and I was just wrestling.

Let me calm you down just a little bit because there were things I missed. Now do I believe that we ought to respond the moment Christ calls us? Yes. Let's put it in its proper context.

After John had been taken into captivity. If you reconcile this with the other Gospels, Matthew and Luke, you will find the setting exactly the same.

But it's when you open up the Gospel of John. You ever wonder why there's four Gospels? This will be one of the reasons why. When you open up the Gospel of John, you will find out that this is not the first encounter that Peter and Andrew have with Jesus.

[28 : 11] As a matter of fact, the first time Andrew and Peter see Jesus is when John the Baptist is not in captivity. Rather, it is when John the Baptist says, Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

And what happens? Peter and Andrew leave John the Baptist and start hanging out with Jesus. And then if you read in John chapter 2, they not only hang out with him, they go to a wedding at Cana.

And in Cana, they see Jesus turn water into wine. Now the next time Andrew and Peter meet Jesus, they're sitting in their boat and Jesus says, Follow me and I'll make you fishers of men. Based upon their past encounters, that's probably not a bad idea. They've already been told by John the Baptist he is the Lamb of God slain before the foundation of the world.

They've already seen him display his power by taking jugs full of tap water and turning it into the greatest wine that's ever been known to man. They've already seen his mother say, Son, do something.

[29 : 16] He says, What's that got to do with me? They've already celebrated with him. They've already heard him. They've already known his reality. They've come to understand just a little bit about him. And now when Jesus says, Follow me, they say, Okay, we will.

Now, we don't know if James and John were at the wedding. But we do know James and John's boat was parked next to Andrew and Peter's and fishermen talk.

And this wasn't going on in some hidden place under a rock. See, stay with me on this. I'm going somewhere. What Jesus was doing was calling them to a deeper, closer relationship.

I know at times this is one of my major issues, okay? It's one of my big rocks. It's one of my big rocks. Maybe it's not a big rock with you, but it's one of my big rocks.

It's just one of the things I say, Okay, I'm going to, in my ministry, we have big rocks and little rocks. Big rocks, we put them in there first. We don't change big rocks. Each of us do that in our lives.

Little rocks.

[30 : 30] And if we disagree on the little rocks, it's okay. Not all of my big rocks are your big rocks, but this is one of mine. When I read Scripture, the way people come to know Jesus Christ is because He continuously draws them closer to Him.

It's not because they make a one-time decision. Now, I believe salvation happens in a moment. But it's because He's drawing, He's drawing, He's drawing, He's drawing. If over 2,000 years can be the last days, He is sovereign enough to draw you closer and closer and closer.

You say, Pastor, you don't know if this will be the last day that somebody hears you preach. With all of my heart, with all of my soul, I hope that everyone that ever hears me will come to the salvific knowledge of Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior.

I want them to surrender their lives and give their lives completely and entirely to Him. I want Him to be Lord of their lives, to be King of kings, to reign over them so that they may be in eternity with me someday, standing around the throne of God, casting our crowns before His feet.

[31 : 58] But I don't want them to think they're going there because I led them and persuaded them to repeat after me. I just say it. I want them to go there because they saw in the Word of God the Son of God lifted on high and that the Son of God was magnified through the Word of God and I'm trusting in the sovereignty of God that God knows the days of your life.

You say, Pastor, you don't know if this is the last time they've ever heard you. No, but I also don't know how many times God's drawn them and they've rejected it. I want them to understand what biblical salvation is.

That they know they're redeemed not because they raised their hand, not because they went to an altar and prayed with an individual. They know they're redeemed because the Word of God says so. because the Word of God says so. And I will make you.

Friend, my greatest invitation I could ever extend to anybody is follow after the Savior and see what He makes you. Well, how do you do that?

Listen to the proclamation of the kingdom. Get into the Word of God and let the Word of God get into you. Listen to the King proclaim the gospel over and over and over to your hearts.

[33 : 22] Watch Him and see how He leads. See what He does. And when you get to know Him, oh, I promise you, you'll never be able to leave Him.

Because you'll turn into Peter who will say, Lord, where shall we go? For there's no one who has words of life. other than you. There's the test.

Not have you repeated the prayer? Not have you raised your hand? Not did you walk down an aisle? But are you following after the Savior? A little more each and every day.

A little more each and every day. Where do you stand before this King who proclaims this kingdom? Let's pray. Father, we thank you so much.

We thank you for this day. We thank you for your faithfulness, your goodness, and your love and mercy which you've bestowed upon each and every one of us.

[34 : 30] we pray, Lord Jesus, that we would respond to the call. Come and follow. That we would be those who follow hard after the Savior.

Never content with any milestone or marker we've reached. but following you more and more every day.

As the word literally means to go after you. May we go after the Savior for the glory of the King.

It's in your name we pray. Amen. Amen. Please stand and turn to hymn number 530.

I'd rather have Jesus. Amen.

[35 : 40] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[38 : 10] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.