**The Gospel of Mark Introductory Sermon**

Theme of Mark:

Jesus: Messiah and Son of God: suffering servant and savior of mankind.

Theme verse: Mark 10:45 For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.

Q: What was Jesus’ purpose?

Q: Did his life agree with his stated purpose/mission?

Q: What is your mission statement?

Q: Does your life agree with your mission statement?

Fun fact:

The unanimous tradition of the early Church fathers (Irenaeus, Eusebius [quotes Papias, from very early second century “the interpreter of Peter”] for example) is that Mark was a scribe for Peter and that his gospel reflects the teaching of Peter. This is supported by 1 Peter 5:13 “my son Mark.” Is Mark the anonymous witness in Mark 14:51?

Basic Outline of Mark:

I Mark 1:1-13 Prologue: Preparing for Jesus’ ministry

II Mark 1:14-8:30 Galilean ministry

III Mark 8:31-16:8 (or 16:20) Passion and Death of Jesus

Mark 8:31-38 As I will serve and suffer, so will you, as disciples serve and suffer.

Jesus’ purpose is our purpose. Jesus lifestyle is our lifestyle.

Style of Mark:

Vivid, fast-paced, action-packed narrative, with an authoritative Jesus completely in control.

1. Fast-paced: Greek *euthys* immediately 42 times (Matthew 5, Luke 1 time)

Ex: Mark 1:10,12,18,20,21,23,28,29,30,42,43 Q: What impression about Jesus does this create?

Illustration: John Madden Boom!!! (tough actin’ Tinactin) Jesus: a man with a mission.

Q: Are you a man or a woman with a mission.

The point of Mark in showing Jesus as a man of action is that disciples, too, are called to a radical lifestyle of service and suffering.

2. Apostles put in a relatively negative light. 4:13,40, 6:37,52, 7:18, 8:4,32, 9:19,32,38, 10:13,37,41 and many, many more. They fail to understand, they are surprised at his power, they miss that he is Messiah, they are prideful and self-focused, and Jesus rebukes them. They totally miss that Jesus must suffer, so that he has to remind them repeatedly. Note, in Mark, the restoration of the apostles is not mentioned. The last thing we see of them is running away at Jesus’ hour of greatest need.

The point to take from this is that in Mark, the apostles are stand-ins for us. We can see us responding as they did and can reflect on how we are like them. “There, but for the grace of God, go I.”

**The Text**

**I. Mark 1:1-13 Preparation for Jesus’ ministry**

1:1 The beginning of the gospel…. Mark gets right down to business. Thepreceeding 30+ years were relatively insignificant. Now the story gets started.

Mark begins by quoting Malachi 3:1 (and Isaiah 40:3)

Mark (and God) sees the Gospel to be in complete coherence with the Old Testament. v. 2 Like the prophets said….

Malachi 3:1 “Behold, I will send my messenger who will prepare the way…. Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple.”

He could have quoted from Malachi 4:5 I will send you the prophet Elijah before the great and dreadful day of the Lord comes.

Why does Mark begin here?

Because this is the connection with the OT. The OT ends by God saying the next thing you will see is the messenger who will prepare the way for the Messiah.

Proclamation: There is a prophet among you for the first time since Malachi. The kingdom of God is coming. The Messiah is here.

Like JTB says in the parallel Matthew 3:2 “The kingdom of God is at hand.”

Mark 1:4-8 John baptizes

Q: What was John’s baptism about? Were people saved by this baptism?

Answer: No! But isn’t forgiveness equal to salvation? No

Like it says in Luke 7:28, the least in the kingdom is greater than John the Baptist. Why? Because we have what he did not have. We have the Holy Spirit, and that is what the baptism of John did not include. (Acts 19:3 then whose baptism did you receive?)

Why did John baptize? “To prepare the way” Q: How? By calling to repentance.

How to prepare to receive the message of Jesus? Repentance.

Mark 1:9-13 Jesus baptized. Jesus went into the desert to prepare.

1:11 Like John the Baptist (v. 7,8) God puts his stamp on the event. The fulfillment of the ages is upon us.

Then… boom! (v. 12 at once…)

**II The Galilean Ministry Mark 1:14-3:12 The Kingdom of God is here.**

Mark will hit on his main themes immediately!

Mark 1:14-20 The calling of the first disciples. Note, we are hitting the theme of raising up the disciples immediately.

v. 14 JTB already said the time has come (v. 7-8). God has already said the time has come (v. 11), now Jesus is saying the time has come. Do you get the message? The time has come. (2 Corinthians 6:2…. I tell you, now is the time of God’s favor, now is the day of salvation. Urgency)

Q: What is the first point Mark is having Jesus make about discipleship?

v. 17 Now is the time to come. v. 20 They came without delay. Q: What is the message?

Was this the first time he had met James and John? No! (John 1:35-42)

Note: At once (v.18) Without delay (v. 20) Jesus is a man of action who is calling us to be people of action.

The point: The kingdom of God has come. All that worldly stuff is now of much less importance. He may not literally be asking us to physically do what they did, but he definitely is asking us to, in our minds and hearts, do what they did.

Have you been fishing for people?

Have you been like Jesus: the suffering servant and savior of mankind?

**The Gospel of Mark Sermon #2**

Theme of Mark:

Jesus: Messiah and Son of God: suffering servant and savior of mankind.

Theme verse: Mark 10:45 For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.

**The Galilean Ministry Mark 1:14-3:12 The Kingdom of God is here.**

Mark 1:21-34, 40-45 The power and authority of Jesus over both spiritual and physical illness.

1:21-24 Note the amazement (v. 22, v. 27) They were astounded 2:12

Jesus is astounding.

Q: Are you amazed by Jesus. He is truly amazing.

and the authority (v. 22)

v. 23 Even the demons acknowledge the authority of Christ.

Q: Do you acknowledge the authority of God in your life?

And notice also the irony (v. 24) the demons are the first to acknowledge that Jesus is the Messiah.

v. 25 Jesus tells a demon to be quiet and the demon obeys.

v. 43 Jesus tells the man healed of leprosy to go and show himself to the priest and he disobeys.

The point: Hey, even the demons obey, so why don’t you obey.

v. 28 quickly v. 29 immediately. Jesus is about his mission. He is urgent.

v. 21-28 Jesus’ authority over the spirit world

v. 29-34 Jesus authority over the physical world.

Q: Which is more significant/important to you?

v. 35-39 Jesus may be a powerful man of action with great authority, but even he needed to pray.

Q: Do you feel that you need to pray? Who needs to pray more, you or Jesus?

v. 38 Why did Jesus come? To preach. What about you? Have you been preaching the good news to your friends? (note: this is not the only reason he came, Mark 10:45 “For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give his life—a ransom for many.” Luke 19:10 to seek and save the lost.)

v. 40-45 Jesus heals the unclean.

a. Jesus touches the unclean.

b. Jesus heals the unclean.

We were unclean. Romans 5:8 But God proves his love for us in that while we were sinners, Christ died for us.

Will you hang out with the “unclean?”

Judaism expected Jesus to be made unclean by touching the leper. Instead, Jesus made the leper clean.

We are involved in God doing that as well.

Gal 6:1 Brothers, if someone is caught in any wrongdoing, you who are spiritual should restore such a person with a gentle spirit, watching out for yourselves so you won’t be tempted also.

With that caution, we are to “touch” the lepers around us.

Mark 2:1-12 Jesus’ authority. Q: How much authority does Jesus have? He can even forgive sins!!!

Mark 2:1 This thing is cranking. Things are happening fast. There is already such a crowd that people cannot even get into the house. If we are truly a Jesus ministry people will be astounded, things will be cranking and people will be wanting to break into church (luckily, they will not have to)

v. 4 Are you seeking after God as these men were?

By the way, which is easier? (v. 9) I have always wondered….

Q: Which is more important to you? To be healed physically or spiritually by Jesus?

2:12 The people were amazed.

Q: Are you amazed by Jesus? We tend to lose our amazement over time.

Mark 2:13-17 Back to the theme of the call to discipleship. The calling of Matthew.

The point: Your past does not matter. Aren’t you glad your past does not matter? Jesus is turning things upside down. All that matters is your answer to this question: Will you answer the call to “come, follow me.”

2:18-22 Jesus: Now that I am here, everything is new. I am not improving things. I am starting from scratch. God is not trying to reform our old self. He is trying to replace our old self with a completely new self.

Q: Are you trying to make adjustments to your life?

You need to get off the old train and get on a completely different train. Get on board.

Mark 2:23-28 How much authority does Jesus have? “The Son of Man is Lord, even of the Sabbath.” He has authority, even over the Sabbath. This is blow-away for a Jew.

v. 24 Here the unlawfulness is probably not even correct (whereas in 1:40-45 Jesus in fact broke the law). Harvesting was not allowed, of course, but picking a single apple (or in this case a few grains of wheat on the spot) was not working. Jesus upends both aspects of the Law (leprosy) and the religious tradition (in this case).

Whenever he overturns either law or tradition, it is toward the result of helping people—not rebelliousness. Similarly, we as a church have some traditions/rules which we should perhaps at times overturn, but only because it will produce a positive good for someone.

v. 28 I am the Lord of the Sabbath! Imagine the people’s jaws dropping to the floor. They don’t even know what to day. They are beyond amazed.

Here we see Jesus’ authority, his astoundingness

Summary;

Jesus is astounding

Jesus has all authority

Jesus has power over both the spiritual and the physical world

Yet, despite all this, Jesus has great compassion.

Jesus wants to make everything new. Let’s get on board that train.

**The Gospel of Mark Sermon #3**

Theme of Mark:

Jesus: Messiah and Son of God: suffering servant and savior of mankind.

Theme verse: Mark 10:45 For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.

What is our superhero Jesus doing? He is healing many, he is working miracles and he is teaching in parables. And he is doing it immediately (*euthys*)!

I. Mark 4:1-20 Parable of the Soils (a better name that Parable of the Sower)

Parables both conceal and reveal. (Mark 4:11)

Jesus used every-day examples.

Today he might use a football example, or a video game or pop culture. For them? Farming!

What is the seed? It is the Word of God (Luke 8:11)

What are the soils? They are our individual hearts on which the seed falls.

1. The hard path. (v. 4, 15) This is the path along which people walk as they work the field. Narrow. Possibly paved with stones.

Hard heart. Never even give it a chance. You’re here. You’re not this soil.

But if you are this soil, then you need to do some plowing!!!

2. Rocky soil. (v. 5-6, 16-17) Shallow heart. No root. No depth. Fair weather Christian. Trouble comes, fall away.

They became a Christian because it was exciting, or because they liked the relationships, or because it gave them a good feeling. Gave a sense of purpose.

But then they lost a job and moved for a “better job” or a family member fell into crisis, or they had a problem with one of the members, or….

Jer 17:7-8 Blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in Him. They will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit.

So, what do you do to fix this? Send down roots.

Begin to trust in God rather than church, fun, good relationships,…

Start a genuine prayer life.

Get real with someone about yourself.

Make a decision to devote yourself to God first.

Take part in our #Jesus lessons this whole year.

3. Thorny soil. (v. 7, 18-19) It did not die, but it did not produce any fruit. Mixed heart. Not a “bad” heart. Not a heart that does not love God, but a heart that has mixed loyalties.

Like the Santiago’s house!

This heart probably actually makes it to heaven, but does not experience the blessing God wants for them in this life. (Parable of the Weeds Matt 13:24-30)

When I plant a garden, I do not simply turn the weeds into the soil. I pull them out. Why?

You cannot just break off the dandelions. You need to go down to the root.

You don’t trim the vine, work around the edges.

Q: What is growing in your garden? What is the weed you need to pull?

Is it deceitfulness, lust, greed, laziness, alcohol, anger, gambling, greed, selfish ambition.

These may not be the “obvious” sins. It may be (v.18)

The worries of this life

The deceitfulness of wealth

The desire for things (the storage industry)

Is yours a divided heart? Are you whole-hearted? Who can you think of who is truly whole-hearted for God?

Q: Do you want to be fruitful? What might be choking you spiritually?

4. Good soil. Result? A lot of fruit. Full life. Productive life. Life with meaning.

John 15:16 I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last.

What is the good soil?

a. It is turned over and soft

b. It puts down deep roots in God

c. It pulls out the weeds of this world.

II. Mark 4:30-34 Parable of the Mustard Seed.

v. 34 When he was with his disciples… So that is what I am doing here.

Q: What is the Kingdom of God like?

It is a place where things happen! They are not static! They grow.

HOPE Dance Academy is like a Mustard Seed.

CSUB campus ministry is like a Mustard Seed.

Joe Parker and I last Spring at BC

The Cortez Bible group, if you will accept God’s vision is a mustard seed.

What is your life like? Is it showing evidence of the kingdom? Is it dynamic? Is there growth?

**The Gospel of Mark Sermon #4**

**Miracles of Jesus**

Mark 4:35-41 Jesus just finished telling the Parable of the Mustard Seed.

A huge storm. Boat nearly swamped. (intense squalls are not that uncommon at the Sea of Galilee/Tiberias) What is Jesus doing? Sleeping. Don’t you care? You are not worrying enough!!!

Q: Does he care? Of course he does!!!!! Caring does not = worrying.

Q: What does this tell you about Jesus? He has great trust in God.

Leading this small church, all kinds of stuff happens. Eve was sharing with Jan yesterday…

Q: Do you trust God to take care of you as he will—whether it means blessings or struggles?

What does Jesus say to those of us who are all upset? “Quiet! Be Still!!!”

Psalm 46:10 “Be still and know that I am God.”

v. 40 A great question: Why are you so afraid? Do you have faith or not?

4:41 They were terrified. Who is this guy?

Why such a reaction? Had Jesus not healed, turned water to wine, etc… To us, these are all the same, but when Jesus calmed the storm….

Jesus has power over nature. To an agrarian society this is a blow-away.

So many of the “gods” were gods of nature. Jesus calmed a storm!!!!

Do you get it? Are there any “storms” in your life right now? Have you had some sleepless nights?

If you are like Jesus, you can sleep like a baby. Why? Because you know that it is not up to you. You are not in control. God is.

Heb 13:5 “Never will I leave you, never will I forsake you. So we say with confidence, The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can mere mortals do to me?”

Q: Do you believe that Jesus really did this—that he calmed a great squall by saying “Quiet! Be still!”?

Four logical possibilities:

1. He neither worked miracles at all, nor claimed to work miracles.

2. He claimed to work great miracles, but was a charlatan.

3. He worked genuine miracles, but he was a sorcerer/worked for Satan. (as his enemies claimed in Matthew 12:24-29)

4. He worked genuine miracles and they validate his claims.

Reasons to believe that Jesus did in fact work wonders, signs and miracles.

1. A great number of the miracles were done publicly, often in front of the greatest skeptics and harshest critics of Jesus. Acts 2:22 “As you yourselves know.”

2. There were tens of thousands of eyewitnesses from every background to these events.

3. The apostles openly proclaimed that Jesus worked a great variety of miracles during the lifetime of those who could have refuted the claims. This is a matter of historical record. (This fact is a notable exception to the claims the believers in other great religious leaders have made.)

4. Both Roman and Jewish histories report at least the general fact that Jesus worked “wonders.” (Josephus, Talmud)

Babylonian Talmud (late first or second century AD) Babylonian Sanhedrin43a-b

On the eve of the Passover they hanged Yeshu and the herald went before him for forty days saying [Yeshu] is going forth to be stoned in that he hate practiced sorcery and beguiled and led astray Israel

Josephus:

About this time there lived Jesus, a wise man, for he was one who wrought surprising feats and was a teacher of such people as accept the truth gladly. He won over many Jews and many of the Greeks. When Pilate, upon hearing him accused by men of the highest standing amongst us, had condemned him to be crucified, those who had in the first place come to love him did not give up their affection for him. for the prophets of God had prophesied these and countless other marvelous things about him. And the tribe of Christians, so called after him, has still to this day not disappeared.

5. Because the wonders and signs of Jesus were common knowledge, the Pharisees and Rabbis in the time period in question tended to claim Jesus did his signs by the power of demons, rather than refute that the miracles occurred.

6. Those who recorded the miracles most carefully and thoroughly (the gospel writers) have every appearance of being absolutely reliable and from eyewitnesses. If Jesus was just a man, then these guys are blatant in-your-face liars.

Why did Jesus work miracles?

1. Because he had compassion. Matthew 14:14 He had compassion on them and healed their sick (and fed them as well)

2. To fulfill prophecy. Matthew 12:40 “For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.” Isaiah 35:5-6 Then will the eyes of the blind be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped. Isaiah 42:6 A light to the nations, in order to open blind eyes, to bring out prisoners from the dungeon…

3. To validate his message. John 10:36-39

“Do not believe me unless I do what my Father does. But if I do it, even though you do not believe me, believe the miracles, that you may learn and understand that the Father is in me and I in the Father.”

4. As a response to faith. Matthew 8:8-13 centurion Matt 15:21-28 dogs

5. Out of submission to his mom. John 2:1-11.

The Miracles Jesus Did Not Do.

Q: If you had been Jesus, what miracles would you have done?

Jesus had great power with miraculous restraint.

1. Meeting his own needs. Jesus never did a miracle to feed himself (even after 40 days, even when tempted by Satan to do it), to make nice clothing, to make himself less tired…. John 4:6 tired. John 19:28 Jesus thirsty. Mark 11:12, Luke 4:3-4 hungry

Implications: Jesus fully accepted his being made human.

2. Working miracles in order to convince the hard-hearted.

Jesus did not try to take advantage of his position of power to force people to believe.

“And he did not do many miracles there [in Nazareth] because of their lack of faith. Matthew 13:55-58. Miracles can encourage a nascent faith, but should not be used to manipulate the emotions of non-believers.

3. Work a miracle because of a challenge to do so. God cannot be manipulated. Jesus never took the bait to defend his pride. Ex.: Satan in the wilderness.

Matthew 12:38-41 Then some of the Pharisees and teachers of the law said to him, “Teacher, we want to see a miraculous sign from you.”

Will Jesus take the bait?

He answered, “A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a miraculous sign! But none will be given it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. The men of Nineveh will stand up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it; for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and now one greater than Jonah is here.”

4. Judgment miracle. (I did not come to judge the world but to save it.) Jesus did not retaliate.

The scene in Luke 9:52–56 serves as a good example of the attitude of the apostles.

They went into a Samaritan village to get things ready for him, but the people there did not welcome him, because he was heading for Jerusalem. When the disciples James and John saw this, they asked, “Lord, do you want us to call fire down from heaven to destroy this village?” But Jesus turned and rebuked them, and they went to another village.

5. Jesus did not force people’s will or take away their freedom to choose.

Imagine having the ability to force people to love you or to serve you or to die for you!

God is serious about giving us free will. Satan has no such ethical standard!

6. Jesus did not end the crucifixion. Jesus was willingly killed, and willingly took on the sins of the whole world.

What do we learn from this miracle that Jesus did not do?

We learn that Jesus loves us,

that he respects our freedom,

that he accepted his humanity (he did not consider equality with God something to be clung onto)

that he willingly died for our sins

**The Gospel of Mark Sermon #5**

**The Lord Looks at the Heart**

Mark 5:1-20 Parable of the demon-possessed man

Gerasenes on the East side of Sea of Galilee This man was very scary!!!

In a sense, this man is us outside of Christ. Though we may not have been possessed by demons, we were controlled by many different sins and addictions.

Interesting:

v. 6-8 Demons know who Jesus is (Son of the most high God) when people do not.

Demons prefer to be sent among the pigs. Hmmm…. (pork?)

v. 15 Imagine the scene…

v. 17 Please leave our region. They were not excited about this man. The “world” may be the same about your losing your demons. v. 16-17 They were more worried about their income than that the man had been healed.

v. 18 Man wanted to join the apostles, but Jesus says no. Because he was not a Jew?

What do I learn from this parable?

Mark 4:35-41 Jesus has power over nature

Mark 5:1-20 Jesus has power over the spiritual world/demons

Demons are real.

Demons can have power over people.

But… Jesus has power over the demon world. We do not need to fear.

With Jesus’ help we can overcome our controlling sins and addictions. We can have our “right mind” again.

Jesus has compassion on Gentiles as well as Jews

Skip Jesus heals Jarius’ son, and a bleeding woman (who, by the way, would have been like a leper—permanently unclean)

Jesus sends out the 12 (we will cover in Luke)

John the Baptist beheaded (Matthew)

Jesus feeds the 5000 and walks on water (John)

Mark 7:1-20

Pharisees come all the way from Jerusalem to check out what Jesus is doing.

Jesus is healing people, feeding people, walking on water, teaching powerfully, but what are they concerned about? Eating food with improperly washed hands.

Q: Are you a nit-picker?

Nits are the eggs of lice. There is nothing inherently wrong with picking nits.

Do you major in the minors?

Do you look at the outer things, and fail the see the matters of the heart?

Parents?

How could that happen? We take our eyes off of Jesus.

v. 6 Jesus does not tolerate fools. He gets right to the heart of the issue.

What does he call the nit-pickers, the “Pharisees? Hypocrites.

What is a “Pharisee” in this situation? A nit-picker who is more concerned about her or his man-made rule than the heart.

Enforcing “rules” about dating. “Rules” about parenting. “Rules” about what movie you can watch. “Rules” about what kind of music a Christian can listen to.

“Rules” about what kind of clothes are appropriate. “Rules” about what kind of car a Christian ought to drive, etc…

v. 8 You have let go of the commands of God.

Their answer: What commands? To love God and to love your neighbor (Mark 12:29-31)

Remember, there is nothing wrong with picking nits. You need to pick nits.

And there is nothing wrong with washing hands as a symbol/reminder of kosher purity.

But you need to love the person and you need to love God!

2 kinds of “bad” traditions

1. The kind that is taught as if it is a command of God when it is not. (v. 6-7)

At this point, it is easy to point to Roman Catholic traditions such as wearing of robes, saying Ave Marias, all that stuff… But does this help us?

Generally, it is an attempt to (legitimately?) enforce a biblical principle. As a guideline, it is not bad.

But if we ever lose the heart behind the tradition and enforce it as doctrine, we are blowing it!

Our rules need to be truly redemptive—truly helpful toward people obeying God and loving God.

2. The kind that, if we give undue attention to them, we would actually be caused to disobey God! (v. 9-14)

Corban (literally devoted to God) is a real thing (see the archaeological artifact from Jerusalem)

Tradition of praying Jesus into your heart.

Tradition of asceticism (becoming a monk or nun) (example from Philip Sheldrake this past weekend)

Clergy/laity distinction, when Bible says we are all priests and all one in Christ.

Giving undue attention to the leader, when, in James, we are told not to show favoritism.

v. 14-22 Sisters and brothers: Let us always remember to look to the heart, and not to the external matters of Christianity.

v. 20 Pharisees are looking at the effect, not the cause.

Are the external things important? Well…. Yes, but what are you going to focus in on.

Parents, take note!!!

Spouses take note!!!

(as a side note, Jesus declared all foods clean. Right, but this is truly a side note!!!!

Because his whole point is that such things are not important.

v. 20 Last point. It is what comes out of the heart that is important.

Here is the problem: We can’t see the outside!

We need to learn to discern the heart behind the action.

Not so we can judge people, but so we can help people get their hearts right.

If time: 1 Samuel 16:1-13

If not: 1 Sam 16:7 “Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance (and those people are Pharisees), but the Lord looks at the heart.

Summary:

Jesus has power over nature.

Jesus has power over the spiritual world and demons.

Jesus has the power necessary to root out those inner demons—those deep-rooted sins and addictions.

Are you a nit-picker? Are you a Pharisee?

Let us be like Jesus. Do not stop picking nits, but ALWAYS remember that the Lord looks at the heart.

**The Gospel of Mark Sermon #6**

**Lessons on Discipleship**

We have seen Jesus as the suffering servant.

We have seen Jesus as a kind of superhero, traveling around, healing people.

We have seen Jesus who has power over nature (calmed the storm).

We have seen Jesus as one who has power over the spiritual/demon world.

Mark 8:22-26 Jesus heals a blind man.

It is curious that he is only partially healed at first…

Does this mean that Jesus is not sufficiently powerful?

No. Look at the next section to get the point!

Mark 8:27-38 But then look at the next story, where the disciples can also only partially see. After much struggle (for example in Mark 8:14-21 when they do not even get that Jesus can feed 4000 “Do you still not see or understand? Are your hearts hardened? Do you have eyes that fail to see, and ears that fail to hear?), they now “see” that Jesus is the Messiah.

Peter: Ahhhhh… Now I get it. You are the Messiah, [the Son of the living God] (Matthew).

But they are still partially “blind” to the fact that he must suffer (as they must suffer)

Jesus predicts his death three times! Mark 8:31-33, Mark 9:30-31 (they still were like the blind man… they did not understand), Mark 10:32-34 the most clear yet. (again, we see here the theme of Mark. Jesus the suffering servant and Savior of mankind)

Are you like Peter? Are you trying to make Christianity a thing which does not include suffering? A thing that has a Messiah, but not a Lord. Are you counseling people to avoid hard situations so that they will not be hurt? (this is a matter of balance, is it not?)

Many people are fired up about Jesus as Savior, but are “blind” to the cost of discipleship—hardship and suffering. They don’t get it. What about you?

Mark 8:34-38 (parallel to the more well-used Luke 9:23-27)

Put yourself in their sandals: What image came into their minds when they thought about crosses?

Q: Have you ever made the decision to deny yourself and take up your cross?

Q: Have you made a decision this week to deny yourself and take up your cross?

v. 36-37 Q: What are some of the things that people give in exchange for their souls?

Esau: a bowl of lentil stew.

People I have known: A more prestigious job. A boyfriend. A moment of pleasure. “Success” for your children.

v. 38 Have you been ashamed of his word? (ex: me hiding my Bible)

Mark 9:1 One of them (Judas) would not see the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2)

Skipping the Transfiguration (will cover later) and the Boy possessed by an evil spirit.

Mark 9:38-41 Don’t stop them. If they are not against us, they are for us.

But what about Matthew 12:30-32

Mark 9 is about a person who calls him/herself a Christian (but probably is not actually saved), and is doing good in Jesus name. Do not challenge them, but encourage then. (I would go so far as to day the same thing about a Muslim or a Hindu or an atheist who is serving people, although they do not do it in Jesus’ name)

Matthew 12 is about a person who opposes Christianity—who denies Jesus is the Son of God and Savior of mankind. They say they are not against Jesus. Such a person is not neutral on Jesus. To not agree with Christianity is to oppose the truth and to oppose Jesus.

There is no middle, neutral ground with regard to Jesus. Those who do not accept him for who he says he is are opposing him. (but still… do not rebuke them if they are doing good things!)

Mark 9:42-50 Jesus gets radical here! But Jesus is using hyperbole.

Q: Would it literally be better to have a millstone tied around your neck and be thrown into the sea than to cause a young Christian or child to stumble?

OK, can you think of a better idea? Does Jesus intend we do this?

Q: Would it literally be better to have a hand or a foot cut off than to use it to sin, leading you to hell for eternity?

OK, can you think of a better alternative? Does Jesus want anyone to do this?

Q: Would it literally be better to pluck your own eye out with a knife or spoon than to look at pornography or another impure thing, to sin to the point that you would lose your salvation?

OK, can you think of a better alternative? Should we have a bunch of one-eyed Christians walking around?

Will there literally be worms eating our bodies and fire burning our bodies in hell?

The message: We need to be REALLY radical in our own lives and in each other’s

lives when it comes to sin!

Mark 9:50 Salt is a preservative. It prevents spoilage.

“Have salt among yourselves.” He is talking about being in each other’s lives and, as a faith community, helping one another overcome sin.

Summary:

Let us decide today to take Jesus, not only as Savior, but also as Lord and let us go with him to the cross.

Let us make a decision to pick up the cross every single day, even as we are stuck in our homes.

Let us help one another together to deal with sin, and cut it off by whatever means we can (short of gouging out one another’s eyes). Let us be salt to one another.

**The Gospel of Mark Sermon #7**

**The Cost of Discipleship**

We have seen Jesus as the suffering servant.

We have seen Jesus as a kind of superhero, traveling around, healing people.

We have seen Jesus who has power over nature (calmed the storm).

We have seen Jesus as one who has power over the spiritual/demon world.

We have seen Jesus explaining and demonstrating discipleship

This part is optional: I did not cover it. [Mark 10:1-12 Teaching on divorce.

Q: What is the lesson for us?

1. God does and always has hated divorce. (Malachi 2:16 For I hate divorce NASV ) Marriage is about having one flesh! Don’t even think about it!!!! I have known of men (and women?) who almost hope that their spouse will give them an excuse to end the marriage.

2. More importantly, he is rebuking their attitude. Their attitude is this: What is permitted by God?

Wrong question: What is God’s desire and will?

Q: Do you ask what is permitted/allowed?

-dating

-finances

-gambling, drinking, etc….]

Mark 10:13-16 Jesus and children.

In the ancient world (including, unfortunately the Jews, the man was king, wives were second class citizens and chidren were third or fourth class citizens...

Q: Why does the kingdom of God belong to those like children?

Child-like, not childish.

In the Near Eastern context, probably Jesus is not so much referring to the positive qualities of children (humility, willingness to trust, teachability), but to their low status. We need to adopt the attitude of littleness (Phil 2:4f) God works powerfully through our weakness, not through our strength.

The Rich Young Ruler

“Good Teacher” Probably this man thought of himself as good. His question is something like this: How can I turn my goodness to advantage in the afterlife? Any hints in case I am missing something small?

No one is good except God alone. Jesus: Do you know what you are saying? An enigmatic statement. Is Jesus claiming to be good? Is he claiming to be God?

Illustration: The man who told me, as he neared death, that he was the best person he had known.

v. 19-20 Keep the commandments and you will have life!

The man: Well, I guess I am good to go! Is he being arrogant: Apparently not, because looked at him and loved him.

Because he loves him, Jesus tells him, not what he wants to hear, but what he needs to hear.

Being in the top 1% is not good enough!!! Q: Do you really understand that?

Jesus: Go and sell everything you have and give it to the poor. Q: Are we to take Jesus literally here? What about my car?

Ex: Zachaeus. Why did Jesus not ask him to go and sell all he had.

Q: What do you value more than God? God wants you to give that thing up, literally!!!

Result: He counted the cost and was not willing to pay it!

v. 23 How hard it is…

Us: Yeah! You tell those rich people!

The apostles were shocked, because they assumed rich people are closer to heaven than poor. (Prov 10:22) If it hard for them, then what about me…

Jesus dropped a bombshell here, almost as great as his statement that he would suffer and die!

Q: What about you. All of us know intellectually (and by experience?) that money does not buy happiness, but is there a part of which still clings on to the desire for more money—we still want more….

v. 24 Dear children. Affection, but also, how much do children desire money? How wise they are in this area!

How hard is it to enter heaven by our own righteous deeds? Like a camel (the largest animal in the Near East) going through the eye of a needle. Ie. impossible!!!!

Note: Preachers have always tried to downplay this statement. There is the famous illustration about the “Camel’s Gate” in Jerusalem, which was low enough that you had to unpack your camel to get through the gate. There is one problem with this illustration. It is not true. It was invented by a preacher who wanted to soften this statement by Jesus.

So: What must you do? Nothing you do. Only God can do this. Do you get this?

We cannot buy our way into the kingdom. We only enter it by submitting fully to the king.

Peter: Feeling like he cannot make it. He has given up everything. He has made Jesus Lord.

You will receive 100-fold. Q: Quantity or quality?

Mark 10:35-45 and John make a request

Jesus: We have just a teensy little favor to ask.

We would not be so bold, but are we like them?

Remember Mark 8:27-33 They are still thinking that Jesus’ role as Messiah will lead them to glorification, not to suffering and death. They think of his ability to calm the storm and to defeat demons as evidence that he is a kind of superhero. They are SO wrong. They are still half-blind.

Q: What about you? Is your Jesus one who brings victory or is he a suffering servant? Are you a suffering servant?

Luke 17:10 So you also, when you have done everything you were told to do, should say, “We are unworthy servants; we have only done our duty.”

Matthew 25:23 Well done, good and faithful servant.

Quote from Genesis Targum on p. 326 of Mark Commentary.

Mark 10:45 For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.

This is discipleship, folks. To walk in the footsteps of Jesus.

**Mark VIII Easter Sermon The Death and Resurrection of Jesus**

I. First, let us talk about the crucifixion and death of Jesus.

Mark’s version is relatively short. I want to focus in on the Lord’s Supper. We will come back to the actual account of the trials, suffering and crucifixion of Jesus in Matthew.

Context: Jesus had already told them 3 times that the Messiah must suffer and die. Mark 8:31-33, Mark 9:30-31, Mark 10:32-34 the most clear yet. “We are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and the teachers of the law. They will condemn him to death and will hand him over to the Gentiles, who will mock him and spit on him, flog him and kill him. Three days later he will rise.”

Pretty clear, yes?

Mark 14:13-26

Here is version #4. It is an acted out parable, like Ezekiel did, but he asks us to act out this parable on a regular basis. He gives us a physical reminder.

This is no accident.

A few things I notice here:

1. [with hindsight] It could not be more clear that Jesus knows exactly what is happening and, in some sense, he is in control of what is happening. v. 13-15

This is on 14 Nisan. The day before the Passover.

2. This is the Passover meal, the Seder, which is actually celebrated on the eve of the Passover, as the Lord “passed over” Israel that night because of the perfect Passover lambs that were killed and whose blood was smeared on the wooden beams above their doors. This is a foreshadow of Jesus’ blood which was shed the next day so that we could avoid death for our sins and be saved from slavery “in Egypt.”

3. v. 20 One of you who dips bread into the bowl with me will betray me.

This was a communal sharing of bread and wine (and bitter herbs and lamb which are, curiously, not mentioned). Like a meal in Thailand where they dip the rice into the bowls, or in Ethiopia where they dip the injera into the bowls.

It involved smell, touch, sight, smell, and hearing (Exodus 13:14-16)

Not like my family meals.

Definitely not like typical Americans eating dinner in front of the TV!!!

4. Jesus gave the bread and the wine deep symbolic meaning.

a. v. 22 Jesus broke the bread. Take: this is my body.

[ What did they think? Did they “get it” yet?]

b. v. 23-24 They passed the cup and everyone drank from the one cup, which was not the custom. This was a communal remembrance for a reason.

10:45 Remembrance of an atoning death. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.

For the Jews, covenants were sealed with blood (Exodus 24:3-8 Zechariah 9:11). This blood created a new community, gathered around a table.

5. We will eat it again in the kingdom of God. Think about the next time they ate this meal together as a church. Their memories were certainly triggered. Similarly, our memories ought to be triggered.

Jesus: This bread is me!!! (not was… “is’’)

This is my blood. Jews have great aversion to blood!!! (The life is in the blood Lev 17:11, so they drained all blood before cooking meat.)

Jesus said: Drink the blood!!!!

Embrace the forgiveness/redemption you have in me!!!

I want us to move more toward our Communion actually being a communion.

I want us to come forward, break off a piece of bread, and dip it into the cup (or cups), sharing and remembering together. It is a time to “examine ourselves.” (1 Corinthians 11:28) individually, but also as a community. Just look at 1 Cor 12. 1 Cor 11:33 you should all eat together.

Jesus ends the Last Supper with a glimmer of hope of a new breaking in of the Kingdom. Like the apostles, we are drinking this “anew in the kingdom of God.” (Mark 14:25) There is great hope, and this hope is found in the resurrection.

II. Next, let us talk about the resurrection of Jesus.

Christians are odd. We associate blood with death, but we also associate it with renewed life!

1 Cor 15:1-8 This is the gospel!

1. The cross is where we find forgiveness. 1 Cor 15:3

2. 1 Cor 15:4 The cross is where we find love. Christ willingly gave his life. It is the ultimate demonstration of love. Christ held us in one big mental hug. Whoever is there in the room with you, please give each other big fat mental hugs.

3. 1 Cor 15:4 But the cross is also victory.

He rose on the 3rd day “according to the scriptures” (for example in Genesis 22 when Abraham received Isaac back from the dead on the 3rd day or Jonah 2, when Jonah was saved from death on the 3rd day)

The cross is where we find victory over the powers of this fallen world. Mark 15:25-37, 42-47. Jesus is dead, and our last hope has evaporated.

Satan is saying YES!!!!! I have won!!!!

But wait. The death of Jesus is a triumph, not a defeat. Mark 15:38-39.

Coll 2:13-15 Triumphing over them by the cross. Satan thought he had us once and for all. Boy, was he wrong!!!

Rev 12:10-11 “Now have come the salvation and power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Messiah. For the accuser of our brothers and sisters, who accuses them before our God day and night has been hurled down. They triumphed over him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony.

Eph 1:21 Christ is seated at the right hand of the Father “far above all rule and authority, power and dominion and every name that is invoked, not only in the present ag, but also in the one to come.

The cross is about a substitutionary death, but it is also about triumph over worldly powers!!!

Brothers and sisters, by the cross and by the resurrection we are triumphant. Satan is once and for all defeated. We overcome him by the blood of Jesus and by our testimony. Q: How is your testimony going? Stuck in your house? How about a phone call!

The oppressor no longer has power over us. Those who would abuse us no longer can control us.

4. The cross is where we find new life. 1 Cor 15:4-7 Mark 16:1-6. Think about Louie. He was dead in his sins, but God is making him alive in Christ. 2 Cor 5:17 Behold! The old has gone the new has come! This is because of the resurrection.

We find a second chance Think about Vincent. He was studying, but was drawn back into the world. The world taught him a few lessons—all negative—and God gave him a second chance. Now he has been given a completely new life.

We gain the opportunity to become what we were intended to be in the first place. God’s vice-regents in this world.

But remember, this new life is “already but not yet. We need to allow God to transform us into what he already sees us as being. 2 Cor 3:15-18 We are being transformed into what he already sees us as.

Also, think about Angelica (but we will hear from her in a minute).

Finish by reading 1 Cor 15:42-58.

Summary:

In the cross and in the resurrection of Jesus we have:  
Forgiveness

The ultimate example of love

Triumph over the forces of this world and the spiritual powers of darkness

A new, risen life. A second, a third and a fourth chance.

This is what we remember as we share the bread and the juice/wine and as we, as a community celebrate the gospel together in this common meal.