

## Mark 1:14-20 Repent and Believe in the Gospel

Today we begin Mark chapter 1 verses 14 through 20. Remember Mark's Gospel was written to the Romans in a style that ministers to the Roman way of thinking. And the Romans always thought along the line of the judicial system, they wanted the facts. They wanted to be able to make up their minds based on the facts. So Mark wrote his gospel in short episodes, sticking with the facts, so that it would minister to the Roman way of thinking.

We saw and finished last week the prologue, verses 1 through 13. We saw the creed of Mark in Mark chapter 1 verse 1, that this is the beginning, or the first stages of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. So everything he presents is a challenge as to who is this Jesus? You decide, with the facts.

We saw in Mark chapter 1 verses 2 through 8, the credentials of John the baptizer. Yochanan haMatbil, to the Jews. How he is the sent messenger to introduce Jesus to Israel as their promised coming Messiah.

And then we saw in verses 9 through 13, the credentials of Jesus and how John baptized Him to fulfill all righteousness. And when He was coming up out of the water, **the heavens were split, and the Spirit** (that is, the Holy Spirit) **coming down as if a dove upon Him**. As a sign from heaven that this is the Anointed One of God. **And there became a voice out of heavens, "You Yourself are My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased."** The testimony of God the Father. So you have the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit all coordinated together to manifest who Jesus is.

Verses 12 and 13 that we left off with last week. Immediately the Spirit drives Him out into the wilderness. And He was there in the wilderness forty days, being tempted by Satan himself, not just demons, but Satan himself out in the wilderness. And was with the wild beasts. And in the end, the angels were ministering to Him. Angels minister with the physical things, so they probably brought Him food, brought Him water, took care of His physical needs out in the wilderness.

Now the next main section by Mark is Mark chapter 1 verse 14 - that we start today - through chapter 9 verse 50. It is all one section. The presentation of the Servant in Galilee, which is interesting because after Jesus was tempted in the wilderness, the Gospel of John tells us that Jesus began His ministry in Judea and then Samaria. John chapters 2 and 3 describe the Judean Ministry that Jesus started out with. And then John chapter 4 - how Jesus passed through Samaria and ministered there before He came to Galilee. So Mark omits that first ministry in Judea and Samaria and starts out with the ministry in Galilee. If you remember the Galilean ministry runs through chapter 9 verse 50 but chapter 10 is the Lord's ministry in Judea as He goes back to Jerusalem. And then chapters 11 through 16 present the servant in Jerusalem. So this is the Lord's ministry in Galilee.

The text tells us in Mark chapter 1 verses 14 and 15, the change in messengers. That is the first thing we are presented with.

Verse 14 says, **Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God.** "After John was arrested," he does not give the details.

This is John the baptizer. Mark does not give the details as to how he was arrested or why he was arrested. We will see that when we get into Mark chapter 6 verse 14 to 29, how John the baptizer was thrown into prison by Herod because John said to him, "You are living in sin. You are married to your brother's wife." And so Herod put him into prison, and he eventually was beheaded there in prison after a time, and we will study that when we get into Mark chapter 6.

But with John being arrested what Mark is saying is that John eventually disappears from the scene, and we have a new messenger. Now it is all Jesus. People have to come to Christ. There is no more baptism of repentance, people must repent and come straight to Jesus. So after John was arrested, **Jesus came into Galilee**. Now Galilee was the northern region of the land of Israel.

Verse 15, **And saying that**, here is what He was preaching, "**The time has been fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has drawn near; repent, and believe in the gospel.**" This time that has been fulfilled is a fulfillment of Daniel chapter 9 verse 25 when he talked about the time that the Messiah is coming. Jesus said, **The time has been fulfilled**. But look what He is preaching, **Repent and believe in the gospel**. Two things, two commands. The word *repent* and the word *believe* are commands in the Greek text. *Repent* is our word **μετανοέω** (metanoēō) in Greek and it literally means *to make a decision for change*. We have discussed this many times before but it is interesting that both John the Baptizer's message is repent, and now Jesus is continuing the message that there needs to be repentance.

And as we said you before it is literally used in a way to mean *to make a decision for change*. Some of the more wooden-headed definitions say it means to make up your mind, to change your mind. But it means to make a decision to change, change the direction of your life. But also within this word is contained the meaning that as I repent and make a decision for change in my life, I cannot make that change on my own. I must look to Christ. I must make the decision to change, but it is Christ who makes the change at repentance.

People are not told this today. Very rarely do you hear the message of repentance. They are told that if you accept Jesus as your Savior, you will have your sins forgiven and you will go to heaven when you die. That is categorized as *easy believism*. "Accept Jesus as your Savior," that is not in the Bible. The Bible says one must *receive* Christ and be born of His Spirit and experience a spiritual birth with the Spirit of Christ coming in. So people are being misled today because of our American Western culture way of presenting things, we present things to make Jesus look good and acceptable and beautiful and He is, except there is no message of repentance. See, many Christians do not even know the principle of repentance in the Bible. That is why it is such a struggle for many Christians. They think they receive Jesus, and they take Him with them wherever they go, and call upon Him whenever they need Him. But God has a plan and a will for everyone's life and we keep pulling against His will to go our own way.

Now the Bible describes *sin* in Isaiah chapter 53 verse 6 where it says, **All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to our own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all**. Going our way is sin according to the Bible. That is where sin originates, the ego that wants to do what I want to do. And when you hear some of the presentations of Jesus today - some would even make the bold statements to say, whatever your goals are if you accept Jesus into your life He will help you meet those goals. But in reality going my own way, doing it my way, doing my own thing, is not repentance.

Repentance is making the decision to change the way your life goes. And you change by submitting to Christ coming in. And His Spirit now leads, He is now the Lord of your life. He died on the cross as our Savior, but He is also our Lord. But then when people to hear the true presentation they are scared half to death as to what the Lord is going to do with them if they commit their life to Christ. They are afraid of the changes He is going to make so they hesitate to surrender to the Lord. So repentance is a very real message. It is part of the gospel, and it is not preached today because it does not sit well with us Western culture people. We want to reach our goals, and we want what the world has for us. One even preaches, "Live your best life now." And for some people it is their best life now because they do not have eternal life in Christ.

But then He says the second command is to believe. **Believe in the gospel.** The word *believe* in the Greek text means put your trust in something or someone. I always use the example of the chair. You set up a chair, "Do you believe that chair will hold you up?" I can believe it, but putting my trust in the chair and believing is when I go and sit in the chair. It is not what I believe about the chair. It is not what a person believes about Jesus Christ. Many people believe the Christian doctrine, and they believe what the Bible says about Jesus Christ, and concerning Jesus Christ but they do not entrust their life to Him. They do not surrender by receiving Him into their heart and into their life.

It is interesting, I ran across an article this week where a brother was presenting, "Satan is the most religious person in the world," and, "Satan is a believer." It says in James chapter 2 verse 19 where James says, **You believe that God is one. You do well. But even the demons are believing and trembling.** We will see next week as we study about the ministry of Christ casting out a demon in a man's life, that demon confessed the truth about who Jesus is. Satan and demons can make a confession of truth. And they believe the truth about Jesus but they did not surrender their life, there is not repentance, there is no serving the Lord as the Lord. So trust in Christ is to surrender, Christ give your life to Christ. Just like sitting in the chair - you can believe the truth about it but it is not until you sit in it that this word *belief* comes to fruition.

So he is saying, **Believe in the gospel,** put your trust in the gospel and what it is telling you. It is for what it is, the word of God. The gospel says you must submit your life to and in Jesus Christ to be saved. You either trust that and believe it to be the truth and what you need to do to make that decision to repent, or you dismiss it. But you have to make a decision, repent and believe in the gospel. So these people in Rome who are receiving this letter they are faced with the Lord's message to repent and believe in the gospel. They either will or they will not. They either reject it or receive it.

Now Mark chapter 1 verses 16 through 20, the calling of the four disciples. Verse 16, **And walking along the Sea of Galilee He saw Simon and Andrew his brother, casting a circular net in the sea; for they were fishermen.** Jesus began His ministry about seventy-six miles north of Jerusalem at the Sea of Galilee and the major portion of His ministry took place around there. The only time He came into Jerusalem was for a major feast and then He left. And then when it came time for Him to come to Jerusalem during the Passover week, and die as the Passover Lamb, He passed through Judea and ministered there and then He came into Jerusalem. But just so you know in your mind's eye that this is not happening around Jerusalem because they did not receive Him. This happened in Galilee. It says, **He was walking along the Sea of Galilee.**

The Sea of Galilee is a large freshwater lake measuring thirteen miles long and seven miles wide at its widest point. It is also known in the Scriptures as the Sea of Tiberius in John chapter 6 verse 1 and John chapter 21 verse 1.

**He was walking along the Sea, and He saw Simon and Andrew his brother.** This is Simon Peter. Our man Peter and Andrew his brother. According to the Gospel of John, Jesus already had met these men. Andrew was with John the baptizer, when in John chapter 1 verses 36 and 40, he says **Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.** And Andrew and one other person followed Jesus at the bidding of John the baptizer. And he spent a whole day with Jesus and then went back home. It tells us in John chapter 1 verses 41 through 42 that Andrew went and found his brother Simon Peter who also came to see the Lord. So they have met Him and spent time with Jesus before this. So this is sometime later, some even estimate anywhere from six months to a year later, after John's baptism, that Jesus came along and saw these two.

Now the net they were casting is likely a large and circular net up to twenty feet in diameter with weights positioned around the perimeter of the net to make the net sink in the water after it is thrown out and spread out on the lake. This is done in shallow water fishing. It is a hand thrown net. And so Simon Peter and Andrew were in the shallow water casting their nets, these circular nets, to catch fish, when Jesus came along.

Verse 17, **And Jesus said to them, "Come behind Me, and I will make you to become fishers of men."** Notice in the English text, English translations, it says that Jesus said, "Come after Me," but it is literally *behind Me*. Come behind Me. Jesus will point this out later, that the proper position in following Christ is behind Him not alongside of Him, not going ahead of Him, but following behind Jesus Christ. He told everybody, **If you want to be My disciple you must deny yourself (reject yourself), take up your cross, and follow behind Me.** So we are always following behind Him because we have made Him the Lord of our life and we go where He goes.

But notice these two things. He says in verse 17, **And I will make you to become fishers of men.** Notice, *and I will make you*: Jesus is the one who makes us to be what He wants us to be. He does not give us the challenge, "Make yourself a good Christian." The Lord will make us who He wants us to be if we just follow Him. It is not by own effort. And then He says, **I will make you to become fishers of men.** *To become* shows process. *I will make you to become*: I will make you to go through the process to become fishers of men. It is a play on words. You are fishermen, but I am going to make you fishers of men.

Verse 18, **And immediately having left their nets, they followed Him.** Look at the word *immediately*, one of Mark's favorite words, used some forty-two times in his gospel. **Immediately they left**, they just dropped everything and followed after Jesus. They did not say, "Give me a chance to sell my business first and then I will be right with You." They did not say that. They just dropped everything and left. They did not say, "Where are You going?" All Jesus said was, "Come after Me, come behind Me." They did not say, "Where are You going?" They did not say, "How are we going to make our living?" He called them to come behind Him and to do it immediately. They did not question Him at all. They obeyed His command to come immediately.

Now we are told in the Bible that there are other places where people came up to Jesus and volunteered themselves - some of them - to come to Jesus and be His disciple. In Luke chapter 9 verses 57 through 62 it tells us that a man came up to Jesus and said, "I will follow You wherever You go." Jesus said, **The foxes have holes and birds have nests, but I have no place to lay My head.** So He was challenging this man's commitment and desire to follow after Him. Are you willing to sleep out in the garden? This guy could have had a condo in Jerusalem somewhere. And in order to follow Jesus, he would have to follow Him out in the garden and follow Him around the countryside. But he would not do it.

The second person came by and Jesus said, "Follow Me." He said, "Let me first go bury my father, and then I will join up with You." And Jesus said what seems to be very harsh words, but it is the urgency of the time. Jesus said, "Let the dead bury their own dead, you come and follow Me." That is pretty harsh. He cannot even go bury his father.

Then another man came up to Him and said, "I will follow You but let me first go say goodbye to my household before I do it." And Jesus said, "He who has put his hand to the plow and is looking back is not fit for the kingdom of God." In other words, you come now. It is immediate when Jesus calls.

So who is this Man who can come along and command people to come after Him, behind Him, and they drop everything and come? Who is this Jesus?

Verse 19, **And having gone on from there a little, He saw James the son of Zebedee and John his brother, and they were in the boat mending the nets.** This is not John the baptizer. This is the one who eventually become known as the apostle John, the one who wrote the Gospel of John; I, II, and III John; and the Book of Revelation. So, **He saw James the son of Zebedee and John his brother.**

In Mark chapter 3 verse 17 we find that they are nicknamed *Sons of Thunder*, because they were going with Jesus along to go into Jerusalem and a village saw that Jesus was heading through to go to Jerusalem, so they did not receive Him. So James and John said, "Do You want us to call down fire from heaven and consume them?" Fiery people, Sons of Thunder: James and the apostle John.

Look what they were doing. **They were in the boat mending their nets.** The word for *mending* is the word **καταρτίζω** (katartidzō). I have told you this word before. It is actually a medical term and means to mend, like you place a broken bone in place for mending purposes. **καταρτίζω** (katartidzō), *to mend*, they were mending their nets.

The reason why it means so much to me is because the noun form **καταρτισμός** (katartismos) is found in Ephesians chapter 4 verse 12 in the phrase *the equipping of the saints*. It is this word *mend*. Many use this term in Ephesians chapter 4 verse 12 to mean to teach people to learn Scripture, and how to witness: equipping people. But it literally means *to mend*. Ephesians chapter 4 verse 11 says that the Lord put within the body of Christ apostles, prophets, evangelists, and pastor teachers. And in Ephesians chapter 4 verse 12 there are three prepositional phrases: *for the mending of the saints* is one; *for the building up of the body of Christ* is two; *for the work of service* is the third. There is a progression there. These people have been placed in the body of Christ for ministry for the mending of the saints. People need to be mended, more now than any other time in history the need for the mending process, for the building up of the body of Christ for the work of service. Then

work of service comes after a person is mended. People need to be mended. They need to grow.

You see, once you receive Christ you become a new creation according to II Corinthians chapter 5 verse 17. And then the second phase of the Christian life - the Lord says, "You need to be renewed in the spirit of your mind," Ephesians chapter 4 verse 23. Who you are a person is up here in the cortex of your brain. All those experiences and the effects of sin and all of the abuses of the things that you experienced in your whole life are still in the cortex of your brain. You are saved but in reality those experiences and effects of sin are still there. So after He saves us God's Spirit comes in through His word and He mends us. Over a period of time He rewrites the cortex of the brain with His word and His ways. So that is very important to understand the mending of the saints. And how we all need to be mended, to spend years under the hearing and study of the Word of God so that we can be mended.

Verse 20, **And immediately He called them; and having left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants, they went away behind Him.** They followed behind Him. This is a pretty large fishing company: **their father with the hired servants.** So they really did not leave him in the lurch too bad, but it was what they gave up. You see, they walked out of their inheritance. Just got up and walked away to follow Jesus, behind Him. They could have said, "Cannot follow you now Lord because we have to take over for dad when he moves on and cannot lose this big fishing industry." But when Jesus says, "Come after Me," they left. Going after Him, that is, behind Him.

So all of this is presented to ask the question, *who is this Jesus?* He did not come as a king, He came as a servant. So who is the servant who is presented as the Messiah that can command people to come behind Him and they come immediately? Leave everything and just follow behind Him.

I read in a commentary once that somebody said that Jesus gave them an invitation to come after Him. No, He did not give an invitation. He gave the command, "Come after Me. Come behind Me." And as I said earlier, that is the only position to follow Christ is behind Him and following His lead and entrusting ourselves into His hands.

Let's close in prayer.