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Grace Evangelical Church
New Winter/Spring Series
"The Jesus We Need To Know In 2010"
Considerations In The Gospel Of Mark
Sunday, January 10, 2010
"The Introduction We Need"
Mark 1:1-14

I remember being introduced to Terry Branstad, the then Governor of Iowa. In fact He came and spoke at our church on a Sunday Evening Sanctify of Life Service. He was a very humble yet gifted man. I remember being introduced to John Ashcroft when he was thinking about running for President. He had a warm and vibrant personality. I also remember being introduced to Jack Kemp, who at that time was running in the primary to be President of the United States. In fact he spoke at our church in Des Moines during the Iowa primary. I also remember being introduced to Elizabeth Dole when she was thinking about running for President. She had true passion for her Lord and her country. Being in Iowa where the first election primaries were held, we were able to have contact with some of these personalities. It was a fun experience to meet these people who have served their state and country in different ways.

Perhaps you have different individuals that you have been introduced to in your life contacts.

But the person who really changed my life when I was introduced to Him was Jesus Christ. He made the eternal difference in my life. As former President George Bush said when asked who was the most significant person in his life, his answer, as you may remember, was simple yet profound – Jesus Christ.

Since Jesus Christ should be the most significant person in each of our lives through faith in Him, I thought it would be well at the beginning of this New Year to consider, "The Jesus We Need To Know In 2010."

To do that I have chosen to consider Jesus as presented by Mark in his gospel.

I. Mark the Man.

Acts 12:12 - Mark (meaning "war-like" in Latin) also called John Mark was the son of Mary – a woman of wealth and position in Jerusalem – at her house tradition has it that the last supper was held. From Act 12:12, it seems to be the center for the Jerusalem Church.

Colossians 4:10 – Barnabas was Mark's cousin.

I Peter 5:13 – He was a close friend of Peter, a possibly a convert of Peter. There Peter calls Mark his son, a spiritual son in the faith it means.

Mark accompanied Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey but failed to stay with them through the entire mission. Due to this reality, Paul refused to take Mark on his second missionary journey, so he went with Barnabas to Cyprus (Acts 15:38-40).

Colossians 4:10; Philemon 24 – About a dozen years later Mark was with the apostle Paul, when he wrote the Book of Colossians.

II Timothy 4:11, before his execution, Paul urges Timothy to bring Mark to Rome with him for He is useful for service. Evidently the breach between him and the Apostle Paul had been healed.

God had a very important purpose for Mark. He used him to record for those in his day and for us today who Jesus Christ was and what He did for all who would believe in Him as personal Savior. He used Mark to introduce people to Jesus Christ, in his day and down through history to us today, by writing the first gospel about the Lord Jesus Christ.

II. Mark the Writer.

1. His reason for writing.

To present the true person of Jesus Christ as God's Son (Mark 1:1).
"The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the son of God."

2. The time Mark wrote.

There are differences of opinion as to when Mark wrote his gospel.

The prophecy of Christ concerning the destruction of the temple in Mark 13:2 means that the Book of Mark must be dated before A.D. 70. Since Acts was written by Luke around A.D. 61, and if Luke's gospel proceeded the Book of Luke, and Luke used Mark in writing his gospel, then we can assume that Mark may have written his gospel as early as A.D. 50. However, some conservative scholars believe that Mark did not write until after the death of Peter in A.D. 67 but before A.D. 70. I take the earlier view. And of course James wrote his book before Mark wrote his gospel.

3. Mark's initial readers

Mark wrote to the Gentiles, to the Romans. That's why he omits a number of items not meaningful to the Gentiles such as the genealogy of Christ, the Sermon On The Mount, the condemnation of Jewish sects, and references to Jewish law and other Jewish customs.

Early tradition has it that Mark probably wrote from Rome.

4. Mark's theme and literary style

Mark's theme is that Jesus Christ is the Servant of the Lord (Mark 10:45).

Jesus said that He did not come to be served, but to serve and give His life a ransom for many.

Mark's writing style is vivid and fast moving. "Straightway" or "immediately" appears many times in the Book of Mark. (I found 7 times the word, "immediately" is used in Mark 1. Mark's style would appeal to the Romans who were "on the go.")

Almost 40% of Mark's gospel is devoted to a detailed account of the last eight days of Jesus' life climaxing with His resurrection.

Mark uses the passion and resurrection of Jesus Christ as a means by which the rest of his ministry may be measured.

5. Mark's Gospel in relationship to the other three Gospels – Matthew, Luke, and John.

Matthew, Mark, and Luke are called the Synoptic Gospels – that is they have the same common view of Jesus Christ in His life, death, and bodily resurrection. But in doing so they have different themes and emphasis.

****Matthew** presents Christ, writing to Jews, as their Messiah and King (Matthew 1:1).

****Mark, as mentioned, writing to the Romans, presents Christ as the Servant (Mark 10:45).**

****Luke presents Christ, writing to Gentiles, as the Son of Man (Luke 19:10).**

****John** on the other hand does not contradict the Synoptic Gospels but surveys the life of Christ from another standpoint, adding more information having his own theme of Jesus as the Son of God (John 1:1, 14). He is deity, as John presents Christ as the one full of grace and truth to all of his readers. John is the most theological of the four Gospels.

6. Mark's obtaining of His information.

- Some came from direct knowledge.
- Some came from oral teaching.
- Some came from short written accounts.

God superintended Mark and the other Gospel writers, along with the other writers of Scripture, to pen what He wanted presented about His Son Jesus Christ the Savior of the world (John 16:13-14). None of the Gospel writers meant to be exhaustive. The different writers were to be supplementary to each other. They do not contradict one another as the critics like to say.

Each of the writers of the gospels is like a reporter giving us a little different description or emphasis so that we might get a total complete picture of what God wants to have of His Son. God, the Holy Spirit, superintended the

writers so that we might have an accurate account of the life, ministry, and work of Jesus Christ for the salvation of all who accept Him as personal Savior.

Just let me give you one example of what I am talking about.

The inscription on the cross telling who Jesus was.

Mark records (15:26) – “The King of the Jews.”

Matthew records (27:37) – “This is Jesus King of the Jews.”

Luke records (Luke 23:38) – “This is the King of the Jews.”

John records (John 19:19) – Jesus the Nazarene King of the Jews”

John’s record is what the inscription over Jesus’ cross said. The others don’t contradict that but don’t give the full description.

Those who try to destroy the Gospel records do so to their own detriment, denying in the process, who Jesus is and what He did for them, and the inspiration of Scripture. The biblical God is a miracle God who can use writers to record historically accurate and trustworthy information, not based on one’s reason, but on His eternal unchanging character which can not lie.

7. Mark’s environment when He lived and wrote.

Antipas, Herod the Great’s son was governor over Galilee and Perea. He was called a king but was not one officially. He was responsible for the imprisonment of John the Baptist (Mark 6:14-29; Matthew 14:1-12; Luke 3:19-20). In Mark 8:15, Herod is referred to in the light of secularism and worldliness.

Herod the Great’s grandson, Agrippa, was named ruler over Palestine by the Roman emperor Caligula. He is known as the persecutor of early Christians. He had James put to death, and had Peter arrested. Due to his blasphemy and cruelty, he was slain by an angel (Acts 12).

Then there was Herod the Great’s great grandson, Agrippa II before whom the Apostle Paul appeared in Acts 25-26.

All of these governmental dynamics were present with the Jewish culture, and Greek thinking, along with the ungodliness of the day, when Mark lived in Jerusalem, ministered with the Apostle Paul and Barnabas, and eventually wrote his gospel that we have before us today.

In that unsettled and somewhat dangerous environment, God chose Mark to be an introducer of Jesus Christ to His initial readers, to all who have read, read, and will read his Gospel. Yes God chose Mark to be His messenger to be His channel to tell others about Jesus, His eternal Son who came not to be served but to serve and give His life a ransom for many.

III. Mark the Introducer – God’s Messenger.

1. Mark tells us who He is introducing (Mark 1:1) (I have a friend I would like you to meet).

Mark’s introduction of his friend, Jesus Christ, assumes some things.

He has accepted Jesus Christ as His Savior. He has a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. He has some knowledge of Him and some personal experience with Him. He also has some knowledge of the Bible, of the Old Testament, in Mark’s day, since he was the first gospel in the New Testament. Mark does not talk off the top of his head here. He is speaking from His personal experience with the Lord. I think we don’t talk about the Lord to others because our experience with Him is old. We live on past blessings rather than living in the present challenge God has for us to do some risking for Him!

So what does He say about his Friend, Jesus Christ.

(1) He has a title that describes His humanity and deity.

Jesus = Savior, stressing His humanity.

Christ = anointed One of God – He is deity, the One foretold in the Old Testament.

(2) He is unique in His person.

He is the Son of God – that is in His nature He is of the same substance as God His Father. He is not a created being. Jesus is the eternal Son of God.

(3) His message is life-changing.

Christ's message is the Gospel – the good news about Himself and the eternal life and forgiveness that He brings through His death, burial and bodily resurrection (I Corinthians 15:3-5; John 1:12; 3:16; Ephesians 1:7; II Corinthians 5:17).

2. Mark shows how Jesus Christ is entirely different from any other person (Mark 1:2-8) (I have a friend to tell you about who is different, unique from all other individuals).

(1) Jesus Christ is linked to time past (Mark 1:2-3a).

Isaiah, the prophet (740-680 B.C.), in the Old Testament, foretold that Jesus Christ's coming would be announced, or introduced by a messenger.

But even more than that . . .

(2) Jesus Christ is linked to eternity past (1:3b, 7-8).

A messenger would announce, yes, introduce the LORD'S coming, His arrival.

Note the words used here from Isaiah 40:3 – Jesus is called LORD, capitalized. In the Old Testament when LORD is capitalized it is referred to Jehovah, the self-existent ONE, the I AM (Exodus 3:14, John 8:58). In other words, this quote from Isaiah is telling us the Jesus Christ is the Jehovah of the Old Testament. John 1:23 says the same thing. Those who come knocking on your door that don't recognize that Jesus Christ is Jehovah God have a real problem here. The Scripture can't be denied.

(3) Jesus Christ is part of time present and time future (1:4-8).

**John the Baptist was used by the God to announce Christ coming fulfilling prophecy of Isaiah 40:3 (cf Isaiah 1:4a).

**His message is one of the baptism of repentance to the forgiveness of sins (Mark 1:4b-5). It was a baptism to Judaism, not to a testimony of one's faith in Christ as we do today. Many confessed their sins and believed in the God revealed in the Old Testament.

**John the Baptist had a unique life-style (Mark 1:6).

**John the Baptist announced that Jesus, the one coming, he was not fit to stoop down and untie His sandals (a servant did that, and John didn't feel he qualified). He would baptize with the Holy Spirit not with water as he did. Jesus, then, would bring a new kind of power. Jesus would be mightier than John. He was God. He would carry out a future ministry in time until he ascended into heaven after His bodily resurrection.

(4) Jesus Christ is also part of eternity present and eternity future (HE IS LORD).

What you have here is Jesus Christ, who is LORD – the eternal God, foretold in time in the Old Testament, coming into time as the God-man, who is still part of eternity past, present, and eternity future. He is the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. Eternity and time are wrapped up in Jesus Christ.

But don't miss here how grounded Mark was in the Scripture. John the Baptist was also grounded in the Scripture, for John in his gospel tells us that John the Baptist actually used the words, "I am a voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the LORD." (John 1:23; Isaiah 40:3).

Why could Mark use these word from Isaiah applying them to John the Baptist who would be the announcer of the coming of Jesus Christ? He knew the Bible and was given the understanding that this applied to Jesus Christ.

If we're going to talk about Jesus, teach about Jesus, we need not only know the Lord personally, but we need to have some knowledge of what the Word of God says about HIM.

Mark, is saying, "My friend, Jesus that I would like you to meet is both God and man. In fact the Old Testament foretold that He would come into time, and His coming would be announced by a man called John the Baptist." Did that happen? DEFINITELY, without a shadow of a doubt.

3. Mark clarifies why Jesus Christ truly has a life –changing message and ministry (Mark 1:9-14).

(I want you to know what my friend can do for you in the most important part of your life, your spiritual life in your spiritual journey).

(1) Jesus Christ can provide forgiveness of sin (Mark 1:9).

Jesus Christ was baptized by John. Why so? This was not a baptism like John the Baptist performed for those who were believing in God and repenting of their sin. Neither was Christ's baptism like believer baptism today. Rather Christ's baptism was His initiation into His office as High Priest, as He would fulfill the Old Testament office as High Priest and offer the final sacrifice for the sins of the world. (The Old Testament priest (s) were washed and anointed with oil, a sign of the Holy Spirit coming upon them – Exodus 29:4-7).

Matthew tells us that this was to fulfill all righteousness, or the law (Matthew 3:15). Here Christ was completely identifying with humanity so now He could become the Savior of the world to provide forgiveness of sin for any who would accept Him as personal Savior (cf. Hebrews 9:11-14; 7:23-25).

How wonderful to know that there is the SAVIOR, Jesus Christ, who has come, fulfilled God's law, and paid for our breaking it in His death, but He conquered the grave bodily to tell us that forgiveness of sin is available to anyone who will accept Him as personal Savior.

But He is also the believer's High Priest where he or she can come to the throne of grace to find grace and help in time of need. How great is that!

2. Jesus Christ provides the basis for the believer in Him to have power to live for HIM (Mark 1:10).

Jesus Christ was anointed, empowered by the Holy Spirit (the symbol of the dove coming out of heaven upon HIM (Mark 1:10)). This, as mentioned above, is linked with the anointing of the Old Testament priest with oil (Exodus 29:7), a sign of the Holy Spirit coming upon the Priest.

Empowered by the Holy Spirit, Christ fulfilled the law of God, was obedient unto death, the death of the cross, and conquered the grave that through faith in HIM we can be indwelt by the Holy Spirit and please Him in our thoughts, words, and deeds.

We can obey the indwelling Spirit of God.

3. As the Father approves of and encourages His Son, Jesus Christ, the heavenly Father approves of the believer in Christ and encourages him or her on in life with HIM (Mark 1:11).

This is an amazing account as the Father from heaven approves and encourages His Son on as He begins His ministry on earth. He is telling His Son that He is behind Him in all that He does even to fulfill His mission of going to the cross to pay the sins of the world.

We have God's backing as well. Since God is for us who is against us says the Scripture. In fact the Holy Spirit is our encourager to hang in there when it seems humanly possible. God never gives up on us, so we should not give up on ourselves.

4. Although Jesus Christ is tempted by Satan, He wins, so that now the believer in Jesus Christ can win over temptation and live victoriously for HIM (Mark 1:12-14).

Mark's account is very, very brief here in comparison to Matthew's and Luke's accounts. It's the abbreviated version. Mark just tells us that Spirit impelled Jesus to go into the wilderness where He was tempted 40 days among the wild beasts, and the angels ministered unto Him. but Jesus was victorious over the evil one. He used Scripture to defeat the enemy as Matthew 4 tells us. He came forth victorious over Satan, the tempter.

Jesus never let down His guard even before He began His ministry. He knew what the evil one was trying to do. To get Him off course, to stop His mission of being His Father's servant and winning redemption for all who would accept Him by faith. Jesus never lost focus while on earth, even during His temptation. In fact if you read Mark 10:32, it tells us that Jesus walked on ahead of them (the disciples), and they were amazed, and those who followed were fearful. What is that saying. Jesus' determination to go to Jerusalem caused them to be amazed and afraid. They never saw such a commitment from Jesus.

Jesus never lost sight of His mission while on earth. To please His heavenly Father in all that He did but to complete the ultimate work He was sent to do – win redemption for all.

And Jesus wants us to be strong in Him in the power of the Spirit and put on the whole armor of God that we may be able to withstand the temptations of the evil one and be victorious! Then, we can be triumphant in Jesus Christ in the Spirit's power. Jesus wants us to keep focused in 2010 on pleasing Him so that we can accomplish what He wants us to do in making disciples. May we not lose our focus in doing His will for His glory.

Mark says, let me introduce you to my friend, Jesus Christ. Yes, I didn't always keep focused in my life. I changed my mind about ministry, but God didn't give up on me and now by His grace, I am a messenger of His. Yes, I have the privilege to introduce my Savior and daily Friend who loves me with an everlasting love.

He is LORD – Capitalized – The God –man. The I AM. He is unique from all others. Eternity in Time. Foretold in the Old Testament and announced by John the Baptist.

This Jesus came – He was initiated into His High Priestly office so that He might provide forgiveness of sin through His death burial and bodily resurrection.

He provides power for living for those who accept Him as personal Savior.

He backs us at all times, even when we fail and sin. He is right there to forgive us when we ask Him, to pick us up and encourage us on.

Yes, He wants us to be victorious over temptation and live a life of fullness in the Spirit's power. To keep focused on our mission to glorify Him.

Mark would add. Do you know Him, who is LORD through faith in HIM?

If you know Him, are you living in His power keeping focused on the mission of glorifying Him.

If so, then are you introducing Him to others by life and by word as you have opportunity?

Let's be the LORD'S introducers, His messengers this week!!