

**Pastor Paul Bawden**  
**Grace Evangelical Church**  
**Sunday, January 17, 2010**  
**Sanctity Of Life Sunday**  
**"Jesus In Action"**  
**Mark 1:14-2:12; 10:13-16**

Jesus. What comes to your mind when you hear the name, Jesus?

Sad to say, to some the name of Jesus is a curse word. I've never heard people say, "George Washington or Winston Churchill, when in a tight spot or something goes wrong.

Others today like to think of Jesus as meek and mild character. Yes, He's a nice guy who is like us, and loves everybody, so He is not real vital to my life or anything I do. He is at church when I go on Sunday, but that is where He stays.

And even the church seems to have tamed Jesus, who as one writer expressed, "very efficiently pared the claws of the Lion of Judah, certified Him as a fitting household pet for pale curates and pious old ladies."

Still there are those today who promote Jesus as tough meeting life head on, and dealing directly with it as He faces each day, while in the process offering His forgiveness to those who respond to Him in faith.

Our text in Mark, as we continue our series, "The Jesus We Need To Know," shows us who Jesus really is - The Jesus we need to know personally by faith and serve without reservation.

### **1. Jesus presents a life-changing message (Mark 1:14-15; 21-22).**

#### **(1) For those in Jesus' day.**

What is Jesus' message? The gospel.

What is the content of the gospel? The kingdom of God is at hand.

What is to be the response to the gospel? Repent and believe in the gospel. Change your mind about your sin, and accept Jesus Christ as your Messiah. Your life will be changed by my forgiveness and grace, for you will receive my life.

It's well to keep in mind here that the gospel message that the kingdom of God is at hand is referring to the Messianic kingdom that the prophets in the Old Testament foretold. The kingdom which the Jewish people looked for and longed for. That's why the disciples asked Jesus in Acts 1, after His bodily resurrection, "Is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?" They thought that Jesus was going to bring in the kingdom foretold in the Old Testament but He was crucified. Now that He was resurrected bodily, they thought for sure that Jesus would establish His kingdom on earth and alleviate the nation of Israel from being under Roman rule.

What happened, though, was that the people of Israel rejected their Messiah and His offer of the Messianic Kingdom, attributing His works to Satan (Mark 3:22-30). Their rejection resulted in Christ's crucifixion, His burial, and bodily resurrection.

Now instead of establishing His Messianic kingdom, as Jesus told His disciples in Acts 1, it was not for them to know the times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority. At the same time, Jesus didn't say that the kingdom for the nation of Israel wouldn't be established. That would still happen according to the Old Testament Scriptures.

But they would receive power after that the Holy Spirit has come upon them and they would be the Lord's witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the remotest part of the earth.

This led to the establishment of the church at Pentecost which would include both Jew and Gentile in one body as both were attached to Jesus Christ through faith in HIM. This relationship to Christ came about through believing not the gospel of the kingdom, but the gospel of Jesus Christ, that He died in the unbeliever's place, to pay the penalty for sin, which is death, He was buried, He rose bodily from the grave the third day, and was seen of others.

## **(2) For us today.**

The message of Jesus for us today, then, is not to repent for the kingdom of God is at hand – the Messianic kingdom. Rather, the message for us today is to accept the gospel of Jesus Christ that He died for our sins, was buried, and rose again (Romans 10:9-13). In so doing, we become members of Christ's church, His body, regardless of our ethnicity, background, or status in life.

For we never hear Paul or Peter, or any of the other apostles telling people to repent for the kingdom of God is at hand, that is the Messianic kingdom of Jesus Christ. Rather people are to accept Jesus Christ as Savior, by believing the gospel of Jesus Christ. That is why Paul told the Romans that the gospel is the power of God unto salvation to all who believe, or accept Christ as personal Savior. At Pentecost God started a new organism, Jew & Gentile in one body, His church, which continues to this day, which we are a part of here at Grace through faith in the Lord.

Such is true, for God's revelation to us is progressive. Jesus came bringing news that the Kingdom of God for Israel was at hand, for in His Person He was offering that to them. They rejected Jesus and His offer of the kingdom to them. Through His death, burial, and bodily resurrection and ascension, Jesus opened the way for an entirely new entity to come into His existence, His church. People become members of Christ's church through believing the gospel of Jesus Christ. At the same time, the nation of Israel still has a future. You can count on that!!

**Question to each of us is: Have we believed the gospel of Jesus Christ?** Does His Spirit bear witness with ours that we are in His forever family, that we are members one of another in Jesus Christ? For accepting Jesus Christ as our Savior, we are to follow Him daily. Note the text that is next.

## **2.Jesus calls people (us) to be a part of His life-changing ministry (Mark 1:16-20).**

Jesus knows that if His ministry is going to expand on earth now and continue to expand after His ascension, He will have to select workers while on earth, and train them for ministry. Here we see Jesus doing just that.

### **(1) Jesus calls Simon (Peter) and his brother Andrew (1:16-17).**

"Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men."

It really says, "Come after Me." It is an exhortation to follow Jesus and He will continually make (stressing His teaching ministry put into the shoe leather of life), you fishers of men (reach others for Christ).

What was their response? Immediately, they left their nets and followed Him (Jesus).

### **(2) Jesus also called James and his brother John (both sons of Zebedee).**

What was their response? The same as Peter's and Andrew's response. They immediately left the boat where they were mending their fishing nets, and followed Jesus.

It doesn't appear here that Jesus was a stranger to Peter, Andrew, James and John. For if you read John's Gospel, he gives a little more information regarding know something of Jesus.

But there is a double emphasis here.

**First, the authority of Jesus** - His decisiveness in picking out those who would be His disciples, His learners, His servants to represent Him. Certainly, as God, He knows what He is doing, and who He wants to be His disciples.

**Secondly, the response** of Peter, Andrew, James and John is quite phenomenal to say the least. There was no hesitation on their part. There were no excuses offered. They just left what they were doing at the moment and followed Jesus Christ.

**Being in the presence of Jesus was an awesome thing for these first disciples Jesus called. I like what Oswald Chambers in His book, "My Utmost For His Highest," wrote "When our Lord called His disciples there was no irresistible compulsion from outside. The quiet passionate insistence of His "Follow Me" was spoken to men with every power wide awake. If we let the Spirit of God bring us**

**face to face with God, we too shall hear something akin to what Isaiah heard, the still small voice of God; and in perfect freedom will say, "Here am I; send me."**

Being in Jesus' bodily presence changed these men into being avid followers of Jesus Christ. Today we are not in the physical presence of Jesus, but His spiritual presence, and meeting with Jesus each day through prayer, and letting Him live out His life through us in the power of the Holy Spirit, should provide us the daily impetus to keep following hard after Him. If that is not our response with visible action, we need to check up on our relationship with Jesus Christ.

As Jesus called men to follow Him, He also displayed His power over. . . .

### **3. Jesus displays power over the evil one and his world (Mark 1:23-28).**

#### **(1) The false world of Satan and his demons is a real world (1:23).**

Here we see Jesus encountering a man in the synagogue a man who had an unclean spirit, possessed by a demon. That's why Paul writing later in Ephesians 6 that we wrestle not against flesh and blood but against the world forces of darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.

#### **(2) This demon recognized who Jesus was (1:24).**

Note that the demons said, "What business do we have with each other, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are - the Holy One of God!"

How interesting that the demon recognized who Jesus was – God in the flesh, which of course many today do not recognize that reality. Satan has them deceived even though he believes it himself.

That is why James writing before Mark wrote penned, "The demons believe, and tremble or sudder." The demons believe in the biblical God. Regardless, they along with Satan oppose Him and are seeking to bring down His kingdom.

#### **(3) Jesus as God in the flesh had authority over the demon (1:25-26).**

Note Jesus words in Mark 1:25, "Be quiet, (be muzzled, be speechless) and come out of him." The demon obeyed Jesus command. Jesus had more power than the demon, because Jesus was the Creator, and the demon was a created being who had rebelled against God. Jesus came to defeat the evil one who was totally against HIM. Here we see that Jesus has power over the evil one and his world.

Jesus had just defeated Satan's temptation in the wilderness before He began His ministry. Now having been initiated into His ministry through baptism, empowered by the Holy Spirit, approved by His heavenly Father, starting to preach His message to the people, and calling individuals to minister with Him, Jesus encounters a demon in the synagogue who recognize HIM. How would Jesus fare? He demonstrated that He was God and had authority over the demonic world.

Of course, later through His death, burial, and bodily resurrection, Jesus demonstrated that the father of death, Satan, himself, was a defeated foe and would eventually be put out of commission entirely when he would be cast into the lake of fire. Right now the believer in Jesus Christ, indwelt by God, the Father, Christ and the Holy Spirit, has power to resist the devil and he will flee from him or her. The believer is to use the armor of god in Ephesians 6. Since the believer is indwelt by God, I don't believe that a demon can possess a follower of Jesus Christ. A demon can certainly harass a believer and tempt a believer. But we must remember that Satan is not able to be present everywhere at the same time. He is not God. That's why Satan's demons are active for him to tempt believers to not follow the Lord.

Certainly Satan and his demons are influencing the world today, and I believe can indwell people outside of Christ. I believe that what is going on in our nation's capitol is a spiritual battle as well as what is happening in our world as believers in Christ are persecuted and martyred for their faith, as well as nations that want to destroy Israel the United States and rule the world.

The ultimate indwelling in a person will be Satan's indwelling of the Anti-Christ to accomplish his full development of his program against God during the tribulation period as he comes and sets himself up as god in the temple and rules the world during the 7 year tribulation yet to come on earth. Of course he will be defeated by Christ Himself at His coming to earth at the end of the tribulation period. Eventually Satan will be cast into the lake of fire with his demons along with the Antichrist and his lieutenant.

Jesus will demonstrate then that He has all authority over the devil and his kingdom.

**Jesus continues His ministry.**

**4. Jesus shows that God is a God of physical health (Mark 1:29-45).**

**(1) Jesus heals Peter's mother-in-law who is sick of a fever (1:30-31).**

**(2) At evening time, they brought to Jesus those who were demon possessed and many who had various diseases. Jesus healed them all (1:32-34;) He also healed the leper in Mark 1:40-45).**

What a heart Jesus had for people who were sick physically. His compassion is second to none. Why so? He is God in flesh ministering to people who are ravaged by the fall of Adam, whose bodies get sick, because of being plagued by physical death and sin. Where did such death and sin come from? Of course from Satan himself. The biblical God is not a God of death, but a God of LIFE.

**Yes, God's judgment can bring death, but God is not the Author of death. God is the Author of physical LIFE. Satan is the author of death. Moved by His compassion as Creator, Christ healed people physically, and cast out demons of people because He is a God of LIFE. His very actions demonstrated that He was the victor over sin, death, and the evil one. He confronted these circumstances head on and won dramatically.**

**What compassion Jesus had for those in need physically! Look at Mark 1:38-39, where Jesus stated that he must move unto other nearby towns and minister His life-giving ministry.**

**Note, though, that Christ didn't carry out His ministry on His own strength.**

**5. Jesus showed His dependence on His heavenly Father in His ministry by getting away to pray (Mark 1:35).**

In the midst of His active ministry, Jesus did not forget to have personal fellowship with His heavenly Father through prayer. He depended on His heavenly Father for success in His ministry.

What an example for all of us to follow!! To Christ prayer was the ministry.

That's why we have had a week of prayer. No prayer. No ministry with God's power.

**6. Jesus demonstrates that God is a God of both spiritual and physical health (Mark 2:1-12).**

Jesus not only healed people physically, He also healed people spiritually. This is what the incident of Jesus healing the paralytic is all about in Mark 2:1-12.

Due to the crowds in the house where Jesus was, the four men carrying the paralytic could not get the man to Jesus so they went up the outside stairs to the top of the flat roof. They dug a hole through the clay and branches supported by the wooden beams, and let the man through so he would be by Jesus.

Seeing their faith, Jesus said to the paralytic man, "Son, your sins are forgiven you." Those hearing Jesus' words realized that only God can forgive sins and said among themselves that only God can forgive sins.

Knowing what they were saying among themselves, Jesus said in Mark 2:9, "Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven or to say, Get up and pick up your pallet and walk? But so you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins, Jesus said, 'I say to you, get up, pick up your pallet and go home.'"

**Immediately the man picked up his pallet and went out through the crowd gathered in the house. The people glorify God saying we have never seen anything like this.**

**Jesus power to heal this man showed that Jesus also had the power to forgive the man his sins - both indicating that He was God. Although the religious leaders would not accept that fact, it was true, and the people glorified the Lord, recognizing that God was among them.**

**This incident of the paralytic man, shows that Jesus knows that man has first a spiritual need of receiving His forgiveness before God (his spiritual health is at stake). In fact, we all are standing in the need of God's forgiveness through His grace, in accepting Christ as personal Savior.**

**Then Jesus knew that the man had a need of physical health – he needed his body healed.**

**Of course Jesus forgiving sin spiritually and healing people physically look forward to that time when we will have eternal spiritual and physical health, when we will have no sin nature and a body like our Lord's glorious body.**

**Jesus healing ministry, whether for physical needs or a spiritual need tell us that God gives infinite value to life. Sin brought all the challenges physically and spiritually to our lives. Jesus has come to touch us physically in His will and to provide us His forgiveness and grace through faith in Him.**

### **7. Jesus gives His eternal value to children (Mark 10:13-16).**

As Jesus ministered to adults with various physical and spiritual challenges, He also ministered to children.

Mark 10:13-16 tells us that the disciples rebuked the people for bringing their children to Jesus to be touched.

**What was Jesus' response to the disciples' action? Notice 10:14 - -**

**Jesus was indignant!! What does that mean. It means that Jesus became very angry righteously. They were putting down the little ones He had created, while putting down their parents as well.**

Then Jesus said, "Permit (forbid not) the children to come to Me; do not hinder them; for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Truly I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child will not enter it at all."

**Jesus is not saying that we are to become like children in action but children in trust, as they have complete trust in their parents and in those caring for them. Simple trust in Jesus like the trust of a child gives a person entrance in to the kingdom of God.**

Jesus took the little children into His arms and began blessing them and laying His hands on them.

**What a picture is that!** God taking little children in His arms and blessing them. Those children certainly had something to talk about when they went home. People stand in line at the mall to see Santa Claus and the Easter Bunny who aren't real characters represent Christmas and Easter. Here little children were standing in line to be held by their Creator and Redeemer and be blessed by Him. No greater experience for a child than to be held in the arms of your Creator and Redeemer. On top of that be used as an example of what real trust, real faith in Him is, without any doubts.

**Now Jesus is not just giving eternal value to spiritual and physical life, He is also giving value to our children being made in the image of God. Certainly Jesus would agree with the Psalmist that we are fearfully and wonderfully made and that in one's mother's womb one is skillfully made.**

### **Why? He is the Creator of a child from conception!!**

Only the biblical Jesus, the biblical God gives eternal value to life from conception to birth, to infants, to children, to teenagers, to adults, to old age, to all of life. Yes, Jesus gives eternal value to those who have physical challenges and diseases, to those who are disabled in different ways. Yes to the less fortunate.

**God is the Author of physical and spiritual LIFE. Christ's ministry on earth was to remind all of us that the physical and spiritual challenges in life are what He came to minister to. He came to provide forgiveness of sin for all who accept Him by faith but also to demonstrate that His desire is to reverse what sin has brought to plague the LIFE He has created.**

**That's why Christ said that He came to provide life, and to provide it in surplus (John 10:b).**

**But what does the enemy of our soul do?**

**John 10:10a right before John 10:b says, "The thief comes only to steal and kill, and destroy."**

**Only the biblical God in Jesus gives true eternal value to life regardless of one's physical or spiritual condition.**

**On the other hand the thief, Satan and his demons, come to steal (yes to deceive, distort and mislead), to kill, to take life, and to destroy, bring death, cause people to take their own lives.**

**These are great reminders on this Sanctity of Life Sunday, when LIFE is not given's God's value in the public arena today!**

We live, unfortunately in a "culture of death." More innocent human beings are put to death every day than those who died in the 9/11 attacks – 3,000. Abortion ends the lives of more that 1.3 million unborn children in America every year. Fully 25% of all pregnancies end in abortion.

The overwhelming majority of those innocent children are simply sacrificed on the altar of convenience. Nearly 50 million unborn have been murdered by abortion since the Supreme Court ruling on January 22, 1973.

- We need to pray for the Defense of the Defenseless.
- Pray that abortion will be stopped in our country. 40 Days for Life has seen some wonderful God accomplishments in this regard.
- Stay informed about threats to our God-given right to life.
- Support Care Net with our monies (which we have done – see the enclosed flyer in our bulletin today) and volunteer there as we can.
- Contact our government officials and speak up for the unborn especially in the light of pending action on a health care plan that may include abortion. Urge our U.S. Representatives and Senators to Vote "NO" on any health care legislation that does not explicitly exclude abortion coverage.

Jesus came to give LIFE – As Creator and Redeemer He touched those with physical and spiritual needs reversing their physical and spiritual conditions. Then He took the little children in His arms telling us that life from conception is sacred and holy before God. We are to have that trust as a child to enter God's kingdom.

**Let's show God's value for life in our relationships to each other, giving value to one another in our words and actions. At the same time let's hold high the banner for the unborn, minister as we have opportunity to those who are disabled, honor and respect those who are older in life, and help those less fortunate.**

**That's what Jesus did. May we do the same!!**

Let's affirm God's LIFE together.

**\*\*We affirm that God is the Creator of all that exists, and the Creator of human life.**

**\*\*We affirm that all life belongs to God, "for it is He that has made us and we are his" (Psalm 100:3).**

**\*\*We affirm that God creates all human life: born and unborn, helpless and healthy, young and old, for the purpose of glorifying Him and enjoying Him forever.**

**\*\*We affirm God's power to heal and restore our broken lives when we confess our sin and turn to Him through faith in Jesus Christ.**

**\*\*We affirm that the church is to gather around every pregnant mother and every person with special needs and cherish every life that God has entrusted to their care.**

**\*\*We affirm that no sin exceeds God's grace to forgive and that our confession and repentance is always met by the forgiving grace extended through Christ's death on the cross.**

**\*\*We affirm that God's will for us and for our children – born and unborn – is life and not death. God raised His Son Jesus Christ from the dead, breaking the power of death and willing for us eternal, abundant, and joyful life in His company forever through faith in HIM.**

**And all God's people said, "Amen."**