

Immediately

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[0 : 00] Mark chapter 1, we are walking with Jesus through the gospel of Mark and you're going to pick up your pace and walk fast because I want you to keep up and mark moves at a rapid pace.

He covers a lot of ground. He told us nothing about the birth of Christ. The gospel of Luke tells us most of those details that we have.

He does not speak of the prophecy of Christ. The gospel of Luke again tells us most of that. He speaks nothing about the childhood visit to the temple.

You know who tells us that? Luke. Luke tells us that. Mark begins by telling us about the man who baptized Jesus and then telling us of his baptism and of his temptation in the desert.

And I call his time in the desert his seminary experience. And the reason why I call it that is because of my own experience. My seminary experience was a time of a way to focus on God's plan and God's preparation for me for ministry.

[1 : 24] It worked out that way for me. Education happens a lot of different ways these days. But in those days, we had no internet. And so I got in my Honda Civic, packed everything I had and drove 600 miles from my mom and daddy.

And got to New Orleans. And about three weeks in went, why Lord? Why? Why? Because he pulled me away for a time to plan and prepare to learn.

Six months in, gave me the opportunity to pastor and learn what that process means. Or begin to learn. I'm still learning. So I call it Jesus' seminary experience because before he started his ministry, he went into the desert.

And faced in those temptations a lot of the things that people would throw at him after that. And he was, he had a plan. He had prep.

And he went forward with what God's plan was for his life. But when he leaves the desert, Jesus ministers in Judea and in Galilee and in Jerusalem.

[2 : 49] For somewhere between six months and a year. And none of that is covered in Mark. As a matter of fact, the only gospel that we have that covers that is John chapter 2 through John chapter 4.

That's where you find Jesus going to the wedding at Cana. Turning the water into wine. He goes into Jerusalem. He meets Nicodemus at night.

He meets the Samaritan woman at the well. All of that happens. John records it. No one else records it in Scripture.

And so that up to a year is considered the year of obscurity for Christ. Because we know little about it except for a few conversations along the way.

Our knowledge is just not as complete about that. We do know that during that period, after Jesus' baptism, that John, the one that baptized him, was arrested.

[3 : 58] Sometimes six months to a year after the baptism of Jesus, John is arrested and he will lose his life in prison. And now Christ begins his ministry.

And begins calling his disciples to follow him. And I want you to notice a trend or look for a trend in our passage this morning.

It's in Mark chapter 1, beginning in verse 14, it says this. Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee proclaiming the gospel of God and saying, the time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand.

Repent and believe in the gospel. Passing alongside the sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew, the brother of Simon, casting a net into the sea for they were fishermen.

And Jesus said to them, follow me and I'll make you become fishers of men. And going on a little further, he saw James, the son of Zebedee, and John, his brother, who were in their boats,

mending their nets.

[5 : 09] And immediately he called them and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants and followed him. He says in the beginning of this passage that he is proclaiming the gospel of God.

The euangelion, it's the Greek term, the euangelion of God. And the reason why I bring that up is because that term became kind of popular with Caesar Augustus about himself.

It's the euangelion of Caesar Augustus. He liked to talk about the good news of himself. And so Mark, about that same time frame, is trying to clarify, I'm not talking about Caesar here.

I'm talking about the real gospel, the real good news, the real euangelion, and that is God. It's about God. And so he establishes the difference in that by saying that he came proclaiming the gospel of God.

Now what is the gospel? Well, the gospel is the proclamation and the demonstration of the good news that Christ has come to save us from our sins both now and for eternity and that if we'll repent of our sins and we'll trust Christ as our Savior and live for him from this day forward, for his honor and his glory, we'll spend eternity with him.

[6 : 37] Everything will change instantly when you follow Christ immediately. And that's the gospel, the real gospel.

Luke tells us more. Mark's very succinct. He just says that Christ said the time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent and believe in the gospel.

But listen to how Luke describes that scene. It's in Luke chapter 4 verse 16. It says this, And Jesus came to Nazareth where he had been brought up, and as was his custom, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and he stood up to read.

And the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written, The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor.

For he has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.

[7 : 48] And he rolled up the scroll, and he gave it back to the attendant, and he sat down. And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him.

And he began to say to them, Today, this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.

And all spoke well of him, and marveled at the gracious words that were coming from his mouth.

And they said, Is not this Joseph's son?

I want you to get this scene. It's fabulous. Jesus went to his home synagogue. They knew him. And he takes up the scroll, and he reads Isaiah.

I mentioned this a couple of weeks ago, I believe. But Isaiah, there's two prophets that really stand out. One of them is Elijah. Elijah's kind of the prophet of prophets of sorts.

[8 : 56] But there's things written about Elijah, but Elijah didn't write them. But Isaiah wrote extensively. His prophecies are extensive.

And it is not only the largest book of prophecy that we have in Scripture, but it is the most popular. It was in the first century, and it's well known today.

But they really thought a lot of Isaiah. And so for him to speak of Isaiah, and to read from Isaiah,

he's got everybody's attention. He reads Isaiah, and then he says, I am fulfilling this Scripture now.

And he drops the mic. I mean, it's that kind of moment, folks. It is. And they were amazed. And they were affirmative.

And they were blown away. And they were thinking, this is our hometown boy. Listen to him. That's Joseph's son.

[10 : 03] And then he started talking some more. And by the time Jesus got done speaking in the synagogue, they wanted to kill him. But he kept ministering to them and around them.

All Mark says about that is that Christ said, the time is fulfilled. The kingdom of God is at hand.

Repent and believe in the gospel. Listen, he's very succinct.

If Mark was preaching today, you'd get out early. But he's not. He then passed by the sea. And he calls Simon and Andrew.

Now, what Mark does not speak of is the ministry and the teaching that Christ did over the months that are not covered. And the reality is, in John 1, it tells us that Simon Peter and his brother Andrew spent a day with Jesus before he walked by the lake that day.

And so they knew him. And they knew he was the Messiah. They were familiar with him. And then one day, while they were busy doing their jobs, he walked by.

[11:16] And when he walked by them, as well as James and John, the sons of Zebedee, when he walked by, those four men's response are a great example for us to know how to respond when Jesus walks by, when Jesus speaks to us.

And I want you to get that today. When Jesus walks by, respond immediately. Immediately.

I'm always struck by the immediacy of their response. Both Simon Peter and his brother Andrew dropped what they were doing and followed Jesus immediately.

Now, there's a difference in delayed obedience and immediate obedience. If you leave here today and you are driving toward a traffic light and it turns yellow and you intend to obey, but you delay, you're going to do one of two things.

One is you're going to go through it, all right, and hope you beat the red one and you probably won't. Or either you're going to stop too late and you're going to stop in the middle of the intersection, okay?

[12:40] I'll confess, I've done both, all right? But the reality is delayed obedience is the same as disobedience because that's not what they intended when they put a red light there.

If my children were told to make up their beds when they were growing up and four hours later their beds were not made, that's not delayed obedience.

That's disobedience. And the reality is when God convicts us about doing what we're doing and we continue to do that, even if it's just for a little while longer, that's not delayed obedience.

That's disobedience. That's disobedience. It's disobedience and it does not honor God. When God tells us to act and we wait a while on it, that's disobedience.

And the reality is when you read God's Word, and I read God's Word every morning, usually chapters of God's Word, and I'm looking for one verse.

[13:57] God, give me one verse today where you speak volumes to me. Help that to be inspiring for other people as well, but Lord, more importantly, speak to me through that.

Show me what you'd have me to know. And God gives me a verse. I keep digging until I find it, but very seldom do the lights cut on and my heart palpitate and I just feel like that my whole day has been changed because He's revealed something to me I've never seen.

And I pray daily and I ask God to give me direction and guidance and I ask it for my family and I ask it for this church and I pray over the matters that are dealing with, you're dealing with in your life that you bother to share and very seldom is there something that just seems earth-shattering that I've got to get up and go do immediately.

But it happens. It happens. And there's times when God gives me a passage of Scripture it just burns in my heart as if before the foundations of the earth and before I was ever thought of by anybody else except God that God had established that I would read that verse that day for what was going on in my life at that time.

And when you have one of those type moments you need to pay attention to it. when God speaks to your circumstances not generally but specifically you need to respond immediately.

[15:51] And when Jesus looked at them and said come follow me they went. they responded immediately.

Second thing is they put Christ first. And that's what we must do is put Christ first. It is easy to put something else before Christ.

It is natural for us to do that. It's human nature for us to do that but beyond that we're born into sin and even if we wasn't born into sin we were sinners. We'd have messed up if we weren't born into sin but we are born into sin so we're better at messing up.

So now we've got a nature about us as well as a sin nature about us that is contrary to what God would have us to do. It is natural for us to put God second in our life.

We can come up with all kinds of reason to put Christ off instead of put him first. And they could have too. They had stuff in their lives as well. They were busy as a matter of fact.

[16:54] At the time he came by they had businesses and they had assets in that business. And Simon and Andrew left their nets.

James and John had a family business. I think it was called Zebedee and Sons Fish Supply. They had people working under them in their boat which means they had a decent sized boat as well.

They had it going on. And they left it and they went with the Lord. Most Christ followers don't have to give up their job.

And there's evidence that these men continued fishing as well. But if so they never let that get in the way of their service to the Lord.

And the reality is some people don't want to make any changes in their lifestyle. I mean God I want to be obedient but I don't want you I don't want to change a thing. I've got my plans and I don't care to change them.

[18:00] Let me tell you something. You follow Christ it'll change your plans. He'll disrupt your circumstances.

He'll change your plans. Don't wait to be obedient because you want to get things in your life straight first.

I've got news for you. You're never going to get everything straight. It's life. You're not going to do it. And if you're putting off being obedient to God until you get all your ducks in a row your ducks will waddle away on a random basis and you'll never get it straight.

When God reveals to us the moment that he does we must immediately follow Christ. Thankfully he takes us as we are and he makes us and molds us to be what he wants us to be.

[19:06] Listen these men could have blamed it on their family as well. They could have. That happens often. I mean it does. Either spiritual decisions are based upon family or they're blamed upon family.

It happens so very often. But I want to be clear about something. It is not your spouse's fault that you're not living for the Lord. It's not.

Yes they influence you no doubt about that but it's not their fault if you're not living for the Lord. and it's not your kids difficulties that have kept you from being everything that God wants you to be.

There's only so much you can do to direct somebody else's life and God entrusts you with a number of years to do your best to do that. But I got news for you.

It's not your kids difficulties that keep you from being everything that God would have you to be.

And don't blame it on a poor example from a parent.

[20:15] If you are grown and choose to live in sin it's not your parents fault. It's not. Listen and I realize I was blessed by godly parents got godly parents and I realize I have a step up because of that.

I get that. But if you were raised with sorry examples do not follow in that legacy.

Don't do it. Start a new legacy. Start something new. The next generation is at stake folks. Christ enables us to be different.

And if you're in your 20s or in your 30s and you're still more concerned about what your mom thinks about your life direction than what God thinks about your life direction you're aiming in the wrong direction.

You need to follow what the Lord would have for you to do. Zebedee was left in the boat with his servants by his sons. Did he agree with James and John's direction?

[21:26] I don't know. There's evidence they didn't ask him. They just went with what God wanted. Folks go with God.

He'll take care of your family. He may help you reach your family for Christ. They could have said Jesus I can't go I'm worried about my family.

But they didn't. Jesus I can't go I'm worried about my business. They didn't. They stood on their own two spiritual feet and they served the Lord and I'm going to tell you God honors such as that.

Put Christ first. Third thing you need to know is this. Don't expect all the details. You're not going to get them.

You're not. These men didn't get all the details. You know what they got? Follow me and I'll make you fishers of men. That's what they got. They knew they were surrendering to the Lord.

[22:29] But they didn't know what that would entail but they went. And they were fishermen. They knew how to fish. They didn't know how to gather crowds together. They didn't know how to preach.

They didn't really know how to share. They didn't know how to lead. They didn't know how to heal.

They didn't know how to feed masses of folks.

They had never done that. They knew nothing about that. They knew how to fish. But they were willing to surrender to the Lord and to a relationship in which he would show them how to minister.

How did he do that? I want you to get this. He showed them through what they knew best, fishing. He met them where they are.

Even in this passage he tells them I will make you fishers of men. You may not know what he meant by that. They knew what he meant by that. He would teach them how to catch people for the cause and the kingdom of Christ.

[23 : 37] He would teach them what they needed to know. He would teach them how to have faith. Where did he teach them how to have faith? On the lake. On the same lake that they worked on.

He taught them there in the midst of the storm. He met them where they were and taught them what they needed to know. When he fed the 5,000 and their families in Mark 6, they didn't get it.

What did he do? He came to them in the midst of a storm on the water and taught them not to be afraid. He taught them about the power of his presence through a storm.

Where did he teach them that? In a boat in their territory.! What they knew when he had a crowd he taught them how to speak. When he sent them out he taught them how to go out when they had other questions he taught them through everyday examples and when they still didn't get it when they were wondering among themselves and asking questions among themselves he either heard them or discerned it in his heart or both he responded!

They didn't wait for all those details before they surrendered and let me tell you something we don't need to either we don't need to wait until we get all the details of what it means to serve the Lord in that capacity because we're not going to get all those details we're going to take it day by day by day we just have to trust him and the good news is he's more worthy to be trusted than anybody you've ever met you can trust him he loves you cares for you wants the best for you wants to use you mightily he's worth it trust him but don't expect all the details now as a guy who can ruin a vacation by mapping it out to such details that takes some wrapping your head around for me but the reality is

[25 : 51] I didn't know the hairpin turns that I went through a couple of months ago and I don't know what they are next I have no idea and you don't either so what do we do a breath at a time a minute at a time a day at a time we just trust the Lord we respond to him immediately we follow his plan for our lives and we we trust him don't expect all the details and if we'll do that we will be used mightily say we're used mightily I love Acts chapter 4 verse 13 God is using Peter and John mightily and they stand before the council of the elite and they're filled with the spirit of God and they speak boldly and they speak clearly and they're standing before the Sanhedrin and they're standing before the high priest and they're standing before

Caiaphas I mean listen these are fellows who are trained in the law and know the letter of the law and what I mean by that is religious law they knew the Torah the first five books of the Bible they knew it like the back of their hand they were steeped in it they were proud of themselves in a lot of ways and Christ goes after them in his ministry but I don't want you to discount how dedicated these men were to what they knew of the Word of God I mean they they knew it well they were the road scholars of the day they were the PhDs in Bible and fishermen stood up in front of them and said in Acts 4 verse 12 and there is salvation in no one else for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved and I want you to listen to the aristocrats respond to that it says in verse 13 now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John and perceived that they were uneducated common men they were astonished and they recognized they had been with

Jesus what in the world are we waiting on God speaks to our hearts and lives about a matter in our lives that we need to deal with we need to respond immediately whatever that concern is they drop theirs we need to drop ours and leave it behind and follow Christ immediately and the difference their decision for Christ made in their lives was absolutely tremendous it makes a difference in our lives how God used them quite honestly they found meaning they found purpose they made a difference listen they are legends for Christ why because Jesus walked by and they just said okay and dropped whatever they had and trusted him with the next move they selflessly surrendered their lives to God immediately and they followed him what in the world are we waiting on what's holding us back if you're here this morning and there's never been a time when you've surrendered your life to the

Lord Jesus I didn't ask you if you've joined a church I didn't ask you if you've been baptized I didn't ask you if you raised your hand when nobody was looking or you repeated a prayer after somebody I ask you if there's never been a time in your life when you've submitted your life to Christ and said from this day forward to the dear Lord I don't want what I want I want what you want I want you to save me take away my sins I want you to know today's the day of salvation and I believe that if you feel any inkling of that it did not come from you because scripture says that we're dead in our

transgressions and sins the reality is that he has sparked that within us and all we must do is exactly what they did on the side of that lake and that is respond immediately to what he'd have for us to do and trust him we're going to stand and we're going to sing in just a moment if you've never given your heart and life of the Lord Jesus Christ the wisest decision you'll ever make maybe the quickest decision you'll ever make the most life changing decision you'll ever make is to come give your life to

Christ and I'd love to guide you in obedience is disobedience obey Christ in that matter maybe you're here and God's drawing you to First Baptist Church and you know that's what God would have you to do follow the Lord in that but listen for the rest of us is there something in your life that God's been making fully aware to you you need to deal with and he's knocked on your heart's door or he's he shook your conscience again maybe again there's a stronghold in your life that you need to lay down before the

[32 : 02] Lord and say from this day forward I want to respond to you immediately to put you first me second everybody else behind you first do what you'd have me to do I don't have to know all the details I don't have to know how it's all going to work out I'm just going to trust you God I give you who I am and ask you to change my life help me to be obedient every step of the way delayed obedience is disobedience do what God's telling you to do heavenly father I love you and I thank you for your love for us and I ask right now dear God that you'll lead us to a point of obedience with boldness as can only come from you in Jesus precious name amen