



‘Now!’ Sermon Series

Sermon #3

Sunday, April 21st, 2024

‘Follow the Leader!’

Mark 1:9-13

Last week in ‘NOW’ sermon series:

- Last Sunday in our ‘NOW’ sermon series I preached from Mark 1:1-8, with a sermon entitled ‘A Cousin Clears the Way!’.
 - I asked the question: **How does Mark begin his Gospel by showing us the relevance of Jesus’ cousin, John, and how he cleared the way for Jesus?**
 - **Point 1: The Foretelling by the Prophets. (V. 2-3)**
 - **Point 2: The Forerunner Preaching. (V. 4-5)**
 - **Point 3: The Facts Presented. (V. 6-8)**

- Based on last week’s message, how did you prepare the way for Jesus’ second coming to earth this week?
 - How did you take the Gospel to people?
 - How did you grow in your own walk and in your quiet time with Him?

‘Follow the Leader!’

Mark 1:9-13

Sermon in a Sentence:

We can follow Jesus as our leader by following Him in Believer’s Baptism by Immersion, and Battling Temptation when we are confronted with it.

Intro:

- Some of my earliest memories from recess in elementary school had to do with the classic game, ‘follow the leader’.
 - *In this classic game, players (children) are to choose who is going to be the first ‘head of the line’, the leader.*
 - *Once that is decided, all the children will line up behind the leader.*
 - *Then it’s the leader’s job to move around and perform different actions.*
 - If any of the players fail to mimic the leaders actions (a lot like Simon says), they are out of the game.

- **The game is played until only one follower remains. Then, that person will become the new leader and the game starts over again.**
 - The game is so well known, that in Ludington, Michigan, there's a sculpture called 'Follow the Leader' in the harbor there.
- **In our scripture text this morning, I truly believe that Mark wanted to give us reasons as to why we should follow Jesus as our leader.**
 - Mark is going to briefly touch on two things that happened in the life of Jesus before He began His ministry.
 - **This morning we are going to see that Jesus was baptized, and that He also battled temptation.**
 - As believers in Christ, we know that Jesus is our leader.
 - **So, we need to be following Him in believer's Baptism, but also in battling temptation.**
 - Jesus is our leader. And in Mark's Gospel we are going to find several different ways that we can and need to be following Him and obeying Him.
- **While you might think that most adults don't play the childhood game 'follow the leader' anymore, I want to tell you that I just don't think that is so.**

- **All across our world and society, there are countless adults that are playing follow the leader.**
 - Whether it's keeping up with Joneses, doing things just because others are doing it, or simply following others is just socially acceptable.
 - It's not 'socially acceptable' to go outside of the guardrails that our society has often placed on us.
- **I believe that this morning, and all throughout our study in Mark, that we are going to see the NEED to follow Jesus as our Leader, and not the world.**

Read Mark 1:9-13

Question to Ask:

How does Mark describe to us the two things that Jesus did before beginning His public ministry, and how we are to follow Him as our Leader?

Point 1: Follow Jesus in Baptism. (V. 9-11)

- **'In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. 10 And when he came up out of the water, immediately he saw the heavens being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. 11 And a voice came from heaven, "You are my beloved Son; [a] with you I am well pleased."**

- Mark describes the Baptism of Jesus in just 53 greek words in the original greek text.
- **The quantity of words that Mark uses to describe the event, do not equate to the significance of this event.**
- **In fact, all Gospel writers include the Baptism of Jesus in their Gospels.**
 - Matthew does so in Matthew 3:13-17.
 - Luke does so in Luke 3:21-22.
 - John does so in John 1:28-34.
 - **The words 'Baptize/baptism' occur 6 times in the first 9 verses of Mark.**
- Now, we may find it odd that Jesus was baptized, John, His cousin, certainly found it strange.
 - **John asked Jesus this question in Matthew 3:14:**
 - 'John would have prevented him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?"' Matthew 3:14 ESV
 - **This is how Jesus answered John in Matthew 3:15:**
 - 'But Jesus answered him, "Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he consented.' Matthew 3:15
- **So Jesus tells John that He (Jesus) needs to be baptized to 'fulfill all righteousness'. But what on earth does this mean?**
- In looking at Mark 1:9-11, I believe we can find our answer by pointing out the following **5** things.
- Before we do that, I am reminded by what the Pastor of Capitol Hill Baptist Church in Washington D.C. said concerning this:
 - **'It is no more odd for Jesus to be baptized in the Jordan River than for Him to hang on the cross at Calvary as the sinless and spotless Son of God.'** Mark Dever.
 - **What makes the Baptism of Christ and the Crucifixion of Christ so similar, is that Jesus didn't fit in either one, yet He did it for you and for me.**
- **Unlikely Hometown. (V. 9a)**
 - 'In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee' Mark 1:9a
 - As many of you know, Jesus was born in Bethlehem.
 - **But to escape the persecution enacted by King Herod, the family had to move to Egypt for several years.**
 - **When Herod died, the family moved to Nazareth, and this is where Jesus grew up.**
 - 'But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there, and being warned in a dream he withdrew to the district of Galilee. **23** And he went

- and lived in a city called Nazareth, so that what was spoken by the prophets might be fulfilled, that he would be called a Nazarene.’ Matthew 2:22-23
- *Nazareth was a small town in the region of Galilee.*
 - Galilee itself was despised by many due to its distance from Jerusalem and the amount of Gentiles that lived in the region.
 - *It is believed in the first century that the population of the region of Galilee was 25,000 to 30,000 people.*
 - But the city of Nazareth was much smaller.
 - It was halfway between the Sea of Galilee and the Mediterranean Sea.
 - *The city of Nazareth was avoided by Jews and created the picture of an unlikely place for the King of the World to be raised and to grow up.*
 - Other than in relation to Jesus’ life and ministry, you won’t find Nazareth mentioned elsewhere in the Bible.
 - *Scholar James Brooks said ‘Nazareth was such an obscure village it is not mentioned in the OT, Josephus, or Rabbinic literature.’*
 - This was an unlikely town for Jesus to grow up in, but it did fulfill scripture.
 - What is also interesting is...
 - *Union with Fallen Humanity. (V. 9b)*
 - ‘and was baptized by John in the Jordan’
 - *The Baptism of Jesus is an example of His union with Fallen Humanity. It is another scriptural example of the redemption plan of God at work through Jesus.*
 - *So, we know that Jesus’ baptism was not a baptism of Repentance.*
 - *So in the Union of Jesus with Fallen Humanity, we are led to ask the question, why was Jesus Baptized?*
 - *I believe that Jesus was baptized in Jordan to give us the example we are to follow, as well as to align Himself with the ones that He came to save.*
 - Jesus met us where we were, to save us. This is what makes it so unique.
 - *Scholar Kent Hughes said ‘in His baptism He associated Himself with us sinners and placed Himself among the guilty-not for His own salvation but for ours-not for his guilt but for ours-not because He feared the wrath to come*

but to save us from it. His baptism meant the Cross!'

- Jesus' Baptism in the Jordan reminds me of what Paul wrote to the Church at Corinth:
 - ***'For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.'* 2nd Corinthians 5:21**
- Jesus was also baptized to obey His Father fully and completely.
 - ***John 1:33 shows us that it was God's will for John to baptize the people.***
- During Jesus life, He perfectly submitted to the will of God in everything.
 - ***So, in this we see that the Baptism of Jesus was complete, and He fulfilled the requirements that God the father had.***
- JM said ***'God had authorized John's baptism, Jesus submitted to it.'***
 - Jesus was not baptized because He was a sinner. Jesus was baptized because He came to save sinners.
- ***This union may not make sense to many, and it certainly didn't to John, but don't forget how Jesus answered John in Matthew 3:15.***
 - 'But Jesus answered him, "Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he consented.'

- Jesus had a mission from the Father, He was going to complete that mission.

- ***Uniqueness of Jesus' Baptism. (V. 10)***

- 'And when he came up out of the water, immediately he saw the heavens being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove.' Mark 1:10.
- ***Early on, one of Mark's favorite words is Baptism/Baptize. But he also uses the word immediately that we find in verse 10, 42 times in the entire Gospel. This is the first occurrence of that word.***
- ****Word Study****
 - The english word '*immediately*' comes from the greek word ***Eutheos***-εὐθέως ***and it literally means at once, suddenly, and straightaway.***
 - ***Jesus was obedient to His Father in being Baptized although John didn't think it was a good idea.***
 - ***Jesus does obey and aligns Himself with those He came to save. And God shows out in what I see as the most unique baptism ever.***

- *Imagine this, as Jesus is coming up out of the water after being baptized by His cousin John, He sees the Heavens opening up and the Holy Spirit, through a Dove descended on Him.*
 - **Word Study**
 - The word choice that Mark uses to describe the Heavens opening up is a dramatic one.
 - The words ‘*torn open*’ come from the greek word ‘*Schizo*’ -σχίζομένουσ *which literally means to split open.*
 - *This verb only occurs 11 times in the NT and Mark only uses it twice.*
 - *The only other time that Mark uses it, is when the veil in the temple was torn after Jesus death in Mark 15:38.*
 - *What we find here at Jesus Baptism, is similar to what we see Isaiah the prophet said in Isaiah 64:1.*
 - ‘Oh that you would rend the heavens and come down, that the mountains might quake at your presence’
 - Here that is fulfilled.
 - *What also makes Jesus’ Baptism very unique, is the fact that the Holy Spirit descends on Him like a dove.*
- We know that in Genesis 1:2 the Spirit of God hovered over the waters, Jesus was there.
 - We know that in Genesis 8:8-12 that the dove carried the news to Noah that the waters had receded.
- One scholar said *‘The descending of the Spirit signified God’s workings in the world; the arrival of the Messiah would have been marked by the descending of the spirit, in this case, in the form of a dove.’*
- *Unity of the Trinity. (V. 11)*
 - ‘And a voice came from heaven, “You are my beloved Son;[a] with you I am well pleased.”’
 - *Through the baptism of Jesus, the deity of WHO Jesus is was affirmed.*
 - We see the Third person in the trinity descending on Jesus in the form of a dove, and now we have the first person in the trinity, God the Father, verbally affirming and confirming His Son.
 - *I believe that God literally spoke to His Son, and showed His love and approval for Him.*
 - What Jesus was doing here was far greater than anything anyone had ever done before or will do in the future.
 - *Because of Jesus, we can all become sons of God, but we must remember that the*

relationship that Jesus had with His Father was much different.

■ *No one had ever heard these words from God before.*

- Isaiah 41:8 tells us that Abraham was a friend.
- Deuteronomy 34:5 tells us that Moses was a servant.
- Psalms 105:26 tells us that Aaron was a chosen one.
- 1st Samuel 13:4 tells us that David was a man after God's own heart.

■ *Dr. Daniel Aiken says, 'As the Messiah and Son of God, Jesus is a second Adam, and a new Israel, and a perfect King who will succeed where they each failed!'*

- This is incredible. Jesus truly is our Messiah!
- *Upstart of Jesus Public Ministry. (V. 9-11)*
 - Verses 9-11 summarize to me, the fact that Jesus was starting His public ministry.
 - *It is believed at this time that Jesus was in His early 30's.*
 - *His three and a half year ministry that turned the world upside down, was beginning.*
 - He had affirmation from His Father, and the presence of the Third person in the trinity.
 - *The people around the Jordan that day had seen something incredible.*

○ *The Messiah was starting His work and ministry. It would change the world, including our very lives.*

Point 2: *Follow Jesus in Battling Temptation. (V. 12-13)*

- Every person that has ever lived, has had to deal with temptation.
 - *These next two verses in our text this morning show us that so did our Lord.*
- *Now it's very important for us to remember that Mark only uses 2 verses to describe the temptation that Jesus went through in the wilderness.*
 - While we won't study the other Gospel accounts today for times sake, I do encourage you to read what Matthew and Luke describe concerning this temptation that Jesus battled.
 - *You can find that in Matthew 4:1-11 and Luke 4:1-13.*
 - *So, this time of tempting that Jesus went through has also been called 'the war in the wilderness'*
 - *Just after Jesus was commissioned by God and given the Holy Spirit, now comes a time of testing.*
 - Dr. Daniel Aiken said *'The battle begins here, but it will rage all the way to a Roman Cross and an empty tomb. Here is Christ in deadly combat for the eternal souls of men. If He loses, we are lost.'*

the Heavenly dove. The servant had a task to perform and He immediately went to do it.'

- There was a darkness, but Jesus was trusting and obeying His Father. There were and are also, dangers.
- ***Dangers. (V. 13)***
 - 'And he was in the wilderness forty days, being tempted by Satan. And he was with the wild animals, and the angels were ministering to him.'
 - Mark, as he will do all throughout his Gospel, his quick, concise and to the point.
 - ***I think it's interesting that Jesus was tempted 40 days and was in the wilderness.***
 - ***We know that Israel was in the wilderness for 40 years and were tested time and time again and failed quite often.***
 - ***Because Jesus won and defeated the dangers of temptation, He could begin His ministry lead so many more people (including us), to our spiritual inheritance.***
 - ***We can also see the parallel here between Jesus and the Israelites in the desert, by looking at the fact that the name Jesus in the Greek, is a form of the name Joshua.***

- Joshua led the Israelites out of the wilderness and into the promised land, just like Jesus was leading the Jews and eventually everyone, away from the dangers of a life in sin.

- Scholar David Aiken said ***'Jesus is a new adam and a second Israel.'***
- I believe there are several dangers that Jesus faced during this time of temptation that we need to consider, these are also tactics Satan will sometimes use on us. So, we need to call on the one who has already defeated temptation and death, once and for all!
 - ***#1. Satan and Jesus square off in a desert, not a garden.***
 - When you face temptation, often it won't be where you feel the 'best' but when you're at your 'weakest'.
 - ***#2: Jesus has been fasting 40 days according to Matthew 4:2.***
 - For us, this takes 'Hangry' to a whole different level.
 - ***#3: Jesus is alone.***
 - For those who feel alone today, Jesus was also alone. He can relate and knows what we go through.

- #4: *The wilderness is full of animals.*
 - The way that the animals are discussed coming right after satan is mentioned, gives the connotation that they are in partnership together to come against Christ.
 - And at this time, people associated wild animals with adversity and persecution.
- *On enemy territory, this is a big deal. That Jesus is up against this.*
 - *The dangers that Jesus faced and then overcame, show us that Jesus knows what you are going through.*
- *You may ask the question, why was satan coming against Jesus and tempting Him in the wilderness?*
 - *I personally believe that satan wanted to get Jesus off course, so that Jesus wouldn't go to the cross.*
 - If satan could keep Jesus off the cross, than satan could keep death in his pocket.
- Instead, we know that Jesus owns the key now.

Conclusion:

- While both of these events that Jesus went through certainly seem like an interesting way to inaugurate the

ministry of our King, we need to remember He did for us.

- *Jesus was baptized and went through temptation to show us that He is greater and that He can relate and help us in our time of need!*
- *This morning, maybe it is time that you truly dedicate and commit to Following the Leader (Jesus).*
 - Hopefully today is the day that you begin to take your faith seriously. Today may be the day that you start following the leader like never before.
 - *If you haven't been following Him closely and you want to start, today would be the best day to start.*
 - **Point 1: *Follow Jesus in Baptism. (V. 9-11)***
 - **Point 2: *Follow Jesus in Battling Temptation. (V. 12-13)***