

A Witness in the Wilderness

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Mark 1:1-8

Mark 1:1 NIV

The beginning of the gospel about Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

3 Key terms:

- ♦ _____ most commonly used to refer to “good news” about _____
- ♦ _____ literally means “anointed royal figure,” referring to the _____
- ♦ _____ a claim of outright divinity, again used most commonly to refer to _____

Mark 1:2-3 *It is written in Isaiah the prophet: “I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way – a voice of one calling in the desert, ‘Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.’”*

What does verse 1 tell us about the kingdom?

The good news of the Kingdom’s new accessibility centers around _____: the promised Messiah - who is _____.

3 Referenced Passages

- ♦ _____ 23:20 drawn from the _____.
- ♦ _____ 40:3 drawn from the _____ period of Israel’s history.
- ♦ _____ 3:1 drawn from the _____ period of Israel’s history.

What do verses 2 and 3 tell us about the kingdom?

They reveal to us that all of Israel’s history _____ and these events surrounding Him – that this is all part of a _____.

THE KINGDOM IN ACTION

October
14
2012

Mark 1:4-5 *And so John came, baptizing in the desert region and preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. The whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem went out to him. Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River.*

2 Key Terms:

- ♦ _____ a practice reserved for _____ but now an invitation being issued to _____.
- ♦ _____ John is calling the people of Israel back to their _____ - a “second exodus” through which God will establish _____ for himself.

What do verses 4 and 5 tell us about the kingdom?

They reveal to us that everyone is on _____ - all _____ of God’s dream – and that we need to literally _____ and return to Him.

Mark 1:6-7 *John wore clothing made of camel’s hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. And this was his message: “After me will come one more powerful than I, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie.”*

- ♦ John wore the clothes of a _____ (Zech. 13:4) - namely drawing parallels to _____. (2 Kings 1:7-9).
- ♦ This was a _____. (Malachi 4:5-6 & Mark 9:11-13).
- ♦ John’s appearance and lifestyle were ultimately about _____. (John 3:30)
- ♦ He was the _____ and this is why he had _____.

What do verses 6 & 7 tell us about the kingdom?

John models for us the posture that will grant us access to the kingdom that of living in true humility. Luke 7:29

Mark 1:8 *I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.*

The Jewish Law condemns the people’s sin and leads them to _____. Yet, repentance is not enough to _____ them - they need God’s _____ (the baptism of the Holy Spirit). God is doing for us what _____.

What does verse 8 tell us about the kingdom?

That, in order to live in the kingdom, we need to be _____ in the deepest place of our being - _____ by the action of God within us.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

A Witness in the Wilderness: Mark 1:1-8

- 1) What from this passage and Sunday's teaching stood out to you?
- 2) In *Mark for Everyone*, N.T. Wright describes the condition of the Israelite people as *"looking in the wrong direction. It was time to turn around and go the right way (that's what repentance means). It was time to stop dreaming and wake up to God's reality."*

What does this mean to you?

In light of this statement how significant is repentance to engaging the Kingdom of God here on earth?

"This messenger was John the Baptist. He was in the wilderness and preached that people should be baptized to show they had repented of their sins and turned to God to be forgiven. All of Judea, including all the people of Jerusalem, went out to see and hear John. And when they confessed their sins he baptized them in the Jordan River." Mark 1:4-5 (NLT)

In this passage Mark refers to both repentance and confession. The word confess means to admit or acknowledge something that we have done and as we've just been discussing the word repentance means to make a different choice, to change our behaviour as a result of the remorse we feel. Ideally confession and repentance go hand in hand. We confess our sin, admitting what we have done wrong and move forward in changed behaviour. Often times however, we confess sin but do not move forward in true repentance in such a way that our behaviour changes.

- 3) Do you feel, at times, you have treated confession and repentance as the same thing?

In his sermon on Sunday Pastor Nathan spoke about the significance of the Wilderness for the Israelite people after their captivity in Egypt. He stated that it was in the wilderness where Israel received her identity and that John was essentially calling the Israelites into a second wilderness experience, a *second Exodus* as he called them to repentance. He stated that "God was once again establishing a new people for Himself". All of us either have been or are currently in the Wilderness. We are going through difficult and painful circumstances. We are in a time of uncertainty. In his sermon Nathan said that "In order to live in the Kingdom we need to be changed in the deepest place". Often The Holy Spirit brings about this work in us through our Wilderness Experience.

- 4) a. Have you ever considered the desert to be a place of freedom where Jesus is pulling you away from the things that have enslaved you so that you can grow in your apprenticeship journey with Him?

b. Look back on some of your Wilderness experiences. What are some of the ways that Jesus has changed you through those experiences?

- 5) Can you describe a moment in your life where you knew that God was moving in your heart wanting to do a new work in your life?

Have you ever felt God inviting you into something new with Him? Describe this experience with your group.

- 6) Regularly on a Sunday morning we have talked about how we are not interested in information for information sake, but instead so that Jesus can bring about His transformation in our lives. In light of this, what are some of the next steps that you feel Jesus is calling you to in your life?