

the Gospel of Mark

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Date: 04 October 2026

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[0:00] One of the other sessions that was just phenomenal was by Dennis Rainey. And Dennis said that as a young man, he really struggled with doubts.

! There were questions about the Bible that he could not answer, and there were things that he just was like, he's always looking at, you know, how does this work and what does this mean? And he said there came the day, there came a day when he realized that I had to turn from the agony of questions that cannot be answered to the reality of answers I cannot escape.

I had to turn from the agony of questions that cannot be answered and deal with the answers that I cannot escape. Answers like, I'm a sinner. I need a savior. Answers like, God calls us to live holy. Answers, we're not holy. You know, and it was really tremendous. It was just great. And so we're going to be taking a look in the gospel of Mark chapter 1 today. And the key idea that I want to emphasize is, let us not be subject to our doubts. Ooh, doesn't that sound spiritual? Let us not be subject to our doubts. But let us live our convictions. Okay, so if you've got your Bible open to Mark chapter 1, I'm going to read what happened there. We're picking it up in verse 16, and I'm going to read down a little ways. Passing through 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 will make you become fishers of men. And immediately they left their nets and followed him. And going on a little further, he saw James, the son of Zebedee, and John, his brother, who were in their boat, mending their nets. And immediately he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants and followed him. Really? I mean, the dude just walking by the Sea of Galilee and says, come follow me. And so they abandoned their lifelong family business and take off at, that's what it says.

All right, let's move on. And when they went into Capernaum, and immediately on the Sabbath, he entered the synagogue and was teaching. And they were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as one who had authority and not as the scribes. And immediately there was in the synagogue a man with an unclean spirit. And he cried out, what have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God.

[3:08] But Jesus rebuked him saying, be silent and come out of him. And the unclean spirit convulsed the man and crying out with a loud voice came out of him. And they were all amazed so that they questioned among themselves saying, what is this? A new teaching with authority. He commands...

[illegible]

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[5:59] Thank you.

Thank you.

Where is it? Where do I say it? Being under the control of an unclean spirit is not like getting a cold. Preach it, brother. It is the result of time and again choosing evil.

Of time and again turning from God. When you constantly choose sin and Satan, he accepts your choice and eventually moves in.

In time, he has total and complete control. Romans 6, verse 6, verse 16 says, the more you submit to them, the more authority they have.

[7:59] That's true of Satan and that's true of God. But, and there is a huge condition here. So, we are all slaves of Satan is a controlling master who dominates his subjects.

I want you to take an honest moment and think about what's going on in the world today. Have you heard people out there shouting freedom and tolerance?

We demand freedom. We demand freedom. We demand tolerance. Anybody ever heard that? Let's be honest. Right? With cries of freedom and tolerance, they murder millions of children and call it health care.

With cries of freedom and tolerance, they say men can be women and women can be men and nobody can tell you differently. And if you don't toe the line, you are subject to all sorts of just brutal punishment.

Have you ever seen somebody who abandoned the party line from those people calling for freedom and tolerance? Those people who abandon that, who go from saying abortion is great to saying, you know, the murder of innocent children is bad.

[9:22] What happens? Do they receive tolerance? Do they receive freedom? No, they're brutalized. You know, when you woke up and you said, hey, men are men and women are women.

Brutal. Well, because Satan is a horrific master who demands your every bit.

And the more you get into him, the more he demands. And at any point you step outside, he is a brutal taskmaster. Let us compare that with God, with Jehovah, with he who created all things.

In contrast to Satan, God is a good master who gives freedom. 2 Corinthians 3, verse 17.

Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is, anybody? Freedom. Liberty. God is about freedom.

[10:41] Galatians 5, verse 1. For freedom Christ has set us free. Stand firm, therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.

And then Galatians 5, verse 13 says, For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.

If you have been here for a while, you have heard me say this. And some people don't like hearing it. Some people react violently, and I've had people get in my face and tell me that I was wrong. And they're wrong. And my statement is this. Love the Lord God with all your heart and do whatever you want.

Love the Lord God with your whole heart and do whatever you want. For freedom He has set us free. What does He say in Matthew?

[11:49] My yoke is easy and my burden is light. How many times has God given us freedom? Every time. You see, we can follow salvation from all the way in the garden.

And God created us with the ability to reject God. God, that's freedom. Do you know what Satan would do if you rejected Him?

He'd crush you. What did God do? God said, get out of the garden, go figure out that you screwed up. And that's what the whole Bible is about. God reaching out to His fallen humanity to bring us back so that we would willingly choose to freely serve Him.

And to be honest, sometimes we get it wrong.

And that's okay. Because God loves us and gives us freedom. All right. While the people were a mate, okay, so I'm done with demon possession.

[12:56] Demon possession, look, you choose who you're going to serve. The more you choose, the more likely it is you're going to be under control of one. And if you're choosing Satan, you're going to end up oppressed. If you're choosing God, you're going to end up liberated.

Now, I want to talk about the people and how they responded to Jesus in Mark chapter 1. You see, Jesus came to the temple and He amazed them. They were like, Ooh, He commands the demons. He teaches them. It's awesome. And what was the result? Anybody still got their Bible open to Mark chapter 1? Mark chapter 1 is...

What did He say? Verse 28. And Jesus basically became famous.

What doesn't it say? How many people in the synagogue chose to follow Christ? None. They were just like, Oh, this is really cool.

[14:03] It doesn't say anything about them choosing to follow Christ. Just that at once His fame spread everywhere throughout the surrounding region of Galilee. While the people were amazed and Jesus' fame spread, there is no record of people turning to Him in faith.

There is no confession. There is no repentance. There is no salvation. In fact, these people, the crowd, are the same ones who will seek to stone Jesus and in fact will call for His death upon a cross.

Even though they had this miracle in front of them. How many times have you said, Oh, if only I could see real evidence. Oh, if only I could see this.

How many times have you run into people who say, Yeah, but I don't see any proof of it. It's not proof that makes the difference. These people had all the proof they needed.

But they didn't turn to God. What about Peter's response? In Mark, it looks like Peter, for no known reason, ups and leaves his family's business and follows Jesus.

[15:15] Some random guy walks by his boat and says, Follow me, I'll make you a fisher of men. And he's like, Yay, let's go. Okay? I really don't think that's what happened.

Let's take a look. Let's take a closer look at Jesus and Peter's interaction on the shoreline. Turn to Luke chapter 4.

You see, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John are what type of books? Gospels. They are not histories. They are gospels.

They were written for a specific purpose, to reach a certain people and to convey a certain truth about Jesus Christ. Matthew, Jesus is the lion of the tribe of Judah.

Mark, he's the suffering servant. Luke, Luke wrote his so that everybody would have an orderly account. And John wrote his so that people would come to salvation.

[16:16] Okay? There's different purposes. But in Luke chapter 4, we're going to run into some really cool things here.

Where am I? Why did I say it?

Luke 4, 31 through 37. Woo-hoo! Found it. 31. Jesus went down to Capernaum, a sea of Gal, and he was teaching on the Sabbath, and they were astonished.

He was teaching. This is him healing the guy with a demon possession, right? But look what we find in chapter 5. According to the Gospel of Luke, the confrontation on the seashore happened after Peter had seen Jesus heal the man.

And that apparently happened down south. They've moved back up to Galilee. And look what we read here. Chapter 5, verse 1. On one occasion, while the crowd was pressing in on him to hear the word of God, he was standing by the lake of Gennesaret.

[17:30] That's the Sea of Galilee. And he saw two boats by the lake, but the fishermen had gone out of them, and they were washing their nets. Getting into one of the boats, which was Simon's, he asked him to put out a little way from the land, and he sat down and taught the people from the boat.

And when he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, put out into the deep water and let your nets for a catch. And Simon said, we've been at this all night, and we haven't got one.

But, you've done a pretty good job teaching. I'm going to go ahead and do it. And the result was, dude, bring the other boat. Because there was so many fish in the net, right?

And it was after that, they enclosed a large number of fish, and their nets were breaking. They signaled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And when they came, it filled both boats so that they began to sink.

But when Simon Peter saw it, and this is key, pay attention to this. When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.

[18:41] What do we call that? Confession. When confronted with Christ, Peter confessed that he was a sinner.

And then what happens? Let's see. For he and all who were with him were astonished by the catch, and soared James, John, some of these, who were partners of Simon.

And Jesus said to Simon, do not be afraid. From now on, you will be catching men. And when they had brought their boats to the land, they left everything and followed him.

That, my friends, is repentance. That is turning from the old way. That is salvation. In Mark, all we get is Jesus walked by and said, dude, let's go.

And they all follow. But if we read the rest of the Gospels, we understand that Peter and Jesus had met a couple of times. Peter had listened to his teaching and had received conviction in his heart, confessed and repented.

[19:42] And we know Peter, right? He was that really shy guy who cut off the high priest's servant's ear. He was that guy who was like, Lord, if it's you walking across the water, tell me and I'll jump on the water.

And then he saw the waves and began to sink. Peter was, he was just bold, right? But man, did he love Jesus. Man, was he sold out. Others heard Jesus teaching.

Others witnessed a miracle. But it is only when we take a good, hard look at ourselves and choose Christ that we enter into salvation.

And this, amazing truth is open to all. Matthew chapter 11, come to me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.

[21:04] This is the truth that we live in every day. We have the freedom to choose Jesus.

For those of us who have already made the decision, it is the truth we live in every day. Every day we get to get up and serve our Lord and maker.

Every day we get to walk in freedom. Every day. And here's the thing. When we fail, which none of us has ever done, right?

All of us, once we've been being Christians, became perfect. Can I get an amen? Amen? No? You don't think so? No. But when we fail, when we make the bad choice, we do not face the wrath of God.

For freedom, He has set us free to willingly choose to serve Him.

[22:08] God loves us. He knows what's best. He tells us, look, this is the right way. Walk therein and be free and be good, you know? And I'm getting old, all right?

Nor near as old as Frank, but I'm working on it, okay? Be 60 pretty soon. Good. Like, what happened? It was 25 yesterday. But I'm going to tell you something.

It's not always been easy. It's not always been easy. But it has always been better. It has not always been tea and crumpets.

But I never for one day have regretted accepting Christ. Never once. And I challenge you.

Hear the word of God. And if you're saved, hear the word of God. Be encouraged. Get up and serve Him in the freedom that He gives you.

[23:15] And if you are struggling with that choice, know that He loves you, He is a gentle master, and He only wants your good.

Let's pray. Thank you.