

Untitled (58)

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Preacher: Joel Grigg

[0:00] Amen. Now, Father, we pray, may only your word be spoken and only your word heard.

! And we ask this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.

Mark is that very, very thin gospel. Very, very thin book. Right there, right after you have it. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. So you get there, if you go to John, you've gone to the right too much.

You've got to go back to the left. You have Matthew, Mark. Mark is a wonderful, wonderful gospel for today. Now, me, I won a baby boomer growing up in modernity in the 60s.

In the 70s, in the 80s. We liked John. We did. Or we do. Okay? It still holds a wonderful place in all of our hearts.

[1:34] But over the past few years, I think it's time for the church to really reconsider its hold on the gospel of John when you're evangelizing people.

Why is that? Because think about the postmodern mind. Think about millennials. All right? Think about Gen Zers.

Those are the ones who were in high school. Okay? And so on. Or entering the workforce now. Think about it. With computers.

Social media. With our technology. And we even want it now. We want it now, don't we? We want it short, don't we? We want it right there, really quick.

Got it. Nope. No beating around the bush. There we are. Right? And you know something? That is the gospel of Mark. I mean, if you really ask the question, which of the four gospels?

[2:37] I mean, Matthew is wonderful because everything is given a basis of everything that Jesus does and so on. Luke, the healing that Luke describes. And there are the wonderful accounts that we have.

The prodigal son and so on. And Luke and John is so wonderful for the thinker. And this sounds bad, but today we want to experience Jesus before we want to think about him.

We want to experience him. What do I mean by that? Just look at all our praise music that we have today in the church. You know, a gentleman, he went with his daughter to a church for homeless people.

For the homeless. This was a ministry in Pittsburgh. They would go drive down to downtown Pittsburgh on a bus. And gather up people who were homeless.

Who didn't have a place to go. They would all hop on the bus. Travel out on a Sunday evening. And go to church. And they would worship. And I mean, when you say worship. Brothers and sisters, they worshipped.

[3:56] Okay? They really did. And right in the middle of their worship, the dad looked down at his daughter and said, There's not much theology in the words of this music, is it?

And you know what she did? She looked up, and bless her heart, She looked up at her dad and said, Dad, these people don't need theology. They just need Jesus.

And that's the gospel of Mark. That's the gospel of Mark. I mean, how does he begin his gospel? He doesn't go through how the angel came and announced to Mary.

And he doesn't have how, like Luke has, the good narrative of the nativity. No. Mark just begins the beginning of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And boom, he's gone. Okay? Obviously, Mark had in mind guys when he wrote his gospel. Okay? He really did. Guys, how do we do that?

[4:57] Hey, we're going shopping. We're gone. We are gone. How do the ladies? Okay, we're going to make out our shopping list. We're going to do that and so on. That's Mark and Luke and John. Okay, no.

Gospel of Mark. We're going. We're going. And that's what he does. He immediately starts up. And we pick up today, right away, as we hear him saying, John is out there.

John the Baptist. The baptizer. He is out. He is out proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ. You know what I said? That now he was clothed in camel's hair and wore a leather belt.

Whoa. Sounds like of our high schoolers today, don't you? Anyway. But he ate locusts and wild honey. And they preached, saying, After me comes one who is mightier than I, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie.

Then I have baptized you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit. Now, it says, the people were going out, in verse 5, it says, And all the country of Judea and all Jerusalem were going out to him and were being baptized.

[6:19] They were all heading out. They were all going out to the Jordan River. They were heading out. There was an air of expectation. There was excitement around.

These people were ready. Now, mind you, they didn't have the buses back then in Jerusalem. You know, they didn't hop around, go on out here. Hey, we're going to the Jordan River.

Come on, let's go be baptized. Go on. No, they were all walking out. They're walking out. They were going. They needed to go. And there was no doubt the reason they were going out there.

To see this man wearing strange clothes and preaching the gospel and baptizing. They were ready. Are you ready?

Are we ready today? Or are we just waiting? Or are we just waiting? Are we sitting at home saying, Okay, Lord, here I am.

[7:22] I'm waiting. Go ahead. Do it. Or are we really living with expectant hearts?

Are we in our lives going out to the Jordan River? Ready to meet our Lord? See, that was an expectation.

God was doing something special here. And John was very clear. It ain't me. That's not me. There's one who's going to be here.

Notice he didn't look and say, Okay, wait. Here comes Jesus now. Break out to the trumpets. Okay. You know? Here it comes. It wasn't until we hear in John.

It's almost as if Jesus is kind of walking along in the Gospel of John in John chapter 1 when he points out to his disciples and says, Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.

[8:27] And what good does it do, John? Two of his disciples leave him and they start following Jesus. But, what do they do? They're waiting.

They're ready. Jesus joins the excitement. He comes in. Now you remember last week when we finished our Gospel reading. He was with Joseph and Mary heading to Galilee, heading to Nazareth to live.

And now he's back on the scene. And here he is. He's coming and he's there. And all John says, is again going back how Mark says, all he, as quickly as what he does, he says, In those days, Jesus came from Nazareth to Galilee to be baptized by John in the Jordan.

Very quick. Boom. Nothing. He's been baptized. That's it. Okay. You know, to Mark, one of the most exciting words in the Gospel of Mark, if you wanted to describe it, was in Greek, it's youthus.

Youthus. It's an adjective. Means immediately. Now. He goes, boom, boom, boom, boom, boom, boom. And he keeps on going.

[9:48] He doesn't wait. Okay. Jesus came to be baptized. John baptized him. Whoop. Okay. He doesn't go into the explanations as Matthew does.

He doesn't go into anything else. He just says, he was baptized. The expectation is there. The expectation is there.

And Jesus joins him. Jesus joins him. And he is baptized. Now, some of you might be familiar with a Christian writer.

And John White is his name. He's written a number of books. A couple of them. It's called The Fight. And Leadership in the Gospel. And John White describes a story that when he was in medical school as a young man and he missed a lecture or he missed the opportunity to take part in a practicum.

And so he had to make up this class. And so in order to make this up, he went out to a clinic in a horror section of the town.

[11:03] And so he went out to this clinic and he talks in his experience. He got there, but he got there a little bit early. And there was a lineup of people waiting to get into the clinic.

And so what's he do? He went up to the door. He knocked on the door. Hello. Hello. I'm John White. The nurse there, it wasn't time to open yet, looked at him and said, so get in line.

Get in line. But you don't understand. I'm here. And he said, no, go. So the nurse said, go back, go get in line. So he kind of waited a little bit and stuff.

And then finally, after standing in line, he went up to the nurse, knocked on the door again. Hello. Hey, I'm John White. I'm here to be at the clinic.

The nurse looked and said, so is everybody else. Get in line. Get in line. And he said, no, no, wait. I'm here.

[12:08] And so finally, finally, after a while, after standing in line with everybody, he had to wait. He finally got to go in and he explained who he was and why he was there.

And he was able to then minister to the individuals in line. The same individuals who he had been standing there, talking with, and waiting.

He was now able to work with them. And he describes, in the end, I had managed to explain to her, but he said, I still felt a sense of shame that made me the bulk to stand with these individuals who needed medical help.

But yet, he still did it. Like Jesus. Jesus entered into that excitement and with the people, he was baptized.

It wasn't a matter of him. Oh, I can't get down there and get wet with them. No, we can't have that.

[13:28] No. Jesus went in and was baptized with everyone else. Just as John White experienced that bond with the same people he was about to minister to, so Jesus stood and was baptized, creating that bond.

But if we just take this gospel at that and saying, that's what this day is about as we remember our Lord's baptism. Yeah, he's binding with us. He's standing with us.

You know, we have the incarnate God incarnate with us. If we stop there, our excitement is worthless.

It is absolutely worthless. Yes, our Lord, the one who created and through whom the world and everything that was created identifies with mankind.

But his baptism is more than that. because the baptism of our Lord is what we remember and Mark so quickly brings us out. It is a recreation of humanity in this simple, simple passage.

[14:55] See, in it, Mark, as we look and we say, when Jesus came up out of the water, he says, immediately he saw the heavens being torn out and the Spirit descending on him as a dove.

Immediately, there was a visual expression of the glory of God coming down, of the renewing work of God, of what he was doing.

Jesus, in this vision, and there was a voice. But in this vision, then, we hear and we see the most outstanding, renewing act of God.

And it's not anything great. It's simple. For a moment, think back a little bit. Go back to 2 Kings.

Go back to 2 Kings for a moment. I realize for Episcopalians and Anglicans, Anglicans, it's dangerous for them to do that because you look at 2 Kings and they said, what? Where's that?

[16:00] You didn't have to look at it in the Bible and so on. But for 2 Kings, we have the story of Naaman, a Syrian general who has leprosy. And he doesn't know what to do and his servant girl or his wife's servant girl says to him, hey, listen, there's a prophet in Israel.

He can help you. So he says, sure, I'll go ahead and do this and he expects he's going to send him all this stuff and he's going to expect something, some great reception by Elisha, the prophet.

He's expecting something great and Elisha, even before Naaman gets to him, Elisha says, hey, just tell him go wash seven times of the Jordan River and he'll be healed.

No fanfare, no wonders. Okay, Elisha wasn't going to walk out and meet Naaman, look at him, hold his head and say, behale, bam, and watch him go down.

Nothing. Naaman had a fit. He says, wait a minute, wait a minute. At least he could have said go take a bath in one of the really nice rivers, okay, like the Euphrates or something like that.

[17:17] The Jordan River is nothing. It's just, it's maybe, you know, 100 miles from the end and so on. It's shallow. Nothing.

Nothing. No fanfare. Very common. Very common.

But in Jesus' baptism, God makes it uncommon. He makes it and he delivers it. He delivers us and our views in this view of expectation.

Where it is God's work that he's doing it as Jesus comes out. He sees the vision. A revelation of God you might see.

The heavens parting. We're reminded of the heavens parting. This is a, this is an image that God is announcing something new here to his people.

[18:16] And Jesus sees the heavens part. The next time we see things part is on that day.

it's dark. It's the middle of the day. The sun should be shining but the clouds have come up and a man on a cross says it is finished and dies.

And at that moment the huge curtain is divided. the same image that we have there on Good Friday is the image that we have today.

God is doing something wonderful and new and spectacular because we now have access to God. Going back to the Jordan River on that day yes, there's a high expectation.

They've had 400 years without seeing a revelation from God waiting for him to move and Jesus looks up and the heavens are opening. They're renting open.

[19:32] God is in the midst of them. This isn't any normal baptism. God himself is in the midst of his people.

The new perfect revelation of God is about to walk with them to heal them to teach them to guide them and above all three years later die for them.

This is a special time. It is a time of renewing because God himself is recreating his people because he is now walking with and he is now walking with us.

So the heavens parted and just to get the message across it's not just okay the heavens part it's that the Holy Spirit comes down in the form of a dove in the form of a dove and he comes down and now when you think of a dove and there's all kinds of different ideas that we have with the Holy Spirit I want for a moment to think back a little bit to the book of Genesis in fact Genesis chapter 6 7 and 8 you're saying what yeah remember Noah remember Noah built the ark okay animals in the world they went in why because God told him he said the sin has got so bad sin is so people have become so so evil in the world Noah I'm going to do a work and you are going to be my vehicle for what this renewing work will happen the rains came and then said he opened a window and as the rains finished wanted to see if there was dry land what did

God do he sent out or excuse me Noah he put out a dove a dove now the rabbinic literature you say well so much so so what but the dove went to and forth back and forth back and forth finding no place to rest until the second time he came back that next time he had an olive branch but there was still no place from the rest until the third time when the dove came now there was a place for him to rest no one knew that the world is recreated there was a recreation and he could step out are we restless going to and fro looking for something just like that dove as a holy spirit put in our hearts to be restless to look and say what do

[22:52] I need to do how am I supposed to serve God not rest right now but actually do something else for God getting ready preparing finding that olive branch of our ministries that we're supposed to do and then on the third time boom here we're supposed to do something and now here we go led by the Holy Spirit in order to minister!

You see when Jesus came up out of the water he saw the vision there was a revelation of God and a renewing work in the power of the Holy Spirit if we just look at this passage in terms of Jesus identifying with us we're missing a key holy moment for Jesus and ourselves because God how he blessed Jesus and he filled him with the Holy Spirit the dove coming down so God in each and every one of us is filling us in the power of the Holy Spirit in our baptism and he fills us and he calls us to go out to step out and to work for him to work for him to guide and be his people and for us today we remember that baptism which was the start the spirit of expectation in the midst of it Jesus and the Holy Spirit God himself came and invited in his son and the recreation work starts from there said a voice came from heaven and you are my beloved son with you I am well pleased brothers and sisters someday you and I will stand before God we will stand before what will God say to us with you I am well pleased good question don't you think what are the gifts and abilities that he has given to each and every one of us all different all different for every person sitting here individually we have a different mixture made by the

Holy Spirit just for each and every one of us individually so that we can answer that call so that we can stand up and walk out of here as changed and to be his people to minister in his name to be the disciples that he's calling us to be but oh so often what do we do we sit at home and we look around and we say well now Lord should I do something now should I do something now I don't know how

[28:07] being included are really struggling with silence sometimes we struggle when we don't hear anything we want to look up at heaven and we say Lord why what's going on but in the meantime we look up and we say Lord what's going on and all he does he looks down and he says what are you waiting for what are you waiting for I've given you I've given you your gifts I've given you your calling and now it's time for you to minister the recreation work that we recognize today that Jesus was baptized for us and we today recognize that newness the new work of the

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