

Transitioning To Jesus (2)

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[0 : 00] The following sermon is made available by Lakeside Bible Church in Cornelius, North Carolina.

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Well, we introduced this passage of verses last Sunday as we are specifically looking here at the transition that Mark is describing from the ministry of John the Baptist or John the baptizer to the ministry of Christ.

And we've rehearsed over and over the purpose statement of the gospel of Mark. As Mark gives it to us in verse number one, he says that this is the beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

[1 : 09] In other words, everything that comes in this book as we study through is meant to support that thesis statement, the statement that Jesus is the Messiah, that he is the Son of God.

And if he is the Messiah and is the Son of God, then that means he is the one that the scriptures have foretold for hundreds of years that would come and would bring God's kingdom and provide salvation.

And so everything that flows in this book serves that purpose statement. But it's not until verse number nine that we're ever introduced by Mark to who Jesus is. And we see that this man named Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized of John.

We're told in verse five that people from all over Judea and Jerusalem were flocking to the wilderness to hear this message that John was preaching, to participate in the baptism that he was baptizing with.

And it was a unique and radical ministry as we understand it in the scriptures. He was calling for Jews to identify themselves as Gentiles, as those who are unclean and outside of God's kingdom.

[2 : 22] And so he preached a message of repentance and involved them in a baptism that represented that repentance. And so we see this time of transitioning begins to come because it was only meant for John to serve the Lord for just a little while.

His time of ministry was relatively short and that was purposefully short. His calling of God was to prepare the way for Christ and then to get out of the way.

And that's exactly what he did. And so as we understand this transition taking place, it was time for John to move off of the scene and it was time for Jesus to move on to the scene.

And Mark uses verses nine through 15, I believe, to describe this transition. And he describes it in three distinct phases.

The first one is the one that we covered last Sunday and it was the baptism of Jesus. And then immediately after this baptism, we see Jesus pulled of the spirit, driven of the spirit, compelled of the spirit to go into the wilderness.

[3 : 28] But we looked last week at what this baptism was and what it represented. And really we asked ourselves the question, why was it even necessary? We gave three explanations for that last week.

The first one was confirmation. He was confirming and affirming the message and ministry of John the Baptist. He was putting his public stamp of approval on the fact that all of these Jews really did need this gospel.

They really didn't need to respond to this message that John was preaching. And of course, by affirming the ministry of John, he affirmed his own identity as the Messiah.

So why did Jesus get baptized? For confirmation. Secondly, we saw that it was for identification. Specifically, identifying himself with those whom he had come to save.

We see in Christ's baptism a foreshadowing of what Christian baptism would eventually look back to and represent. And that is the gospel.

[4 : 29] The death and burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. But most prominently in Mark's gospel, the reason was revelation. This amazing thing happens as Jesus comes into the water and as he comes up out of the water, Mark and the other gospel writers agree that the heavens opened, that the Spirit of God descended on him like a dove.

And in this voice, God the Father spoke from heaven audibly in a way that people could hear. And he said, this is my beloved son. Or rather, he directed his language directly to Jesus.

Jesus, you are my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased. It's a monumental moment for the people of God.

A monumental moment as John and the others perhaps gathered on the side of the Jordan River that day, heard this voice, heard this great declaration, witnessed this amazing, extraordinary thing unlike anything they had witnessed or experienced before.

Now when we read the Bible and we see lots of things like this happen, right? If you just start at the beginning in Genesis and you just read through, you almost grow accustomed to God's miraculous works.

[5 : 49] But then when you consider the everyday life that you live, the everyday life that these people would have lived, it's not everyday that the heavens open and God speaks audibly for everyone to hear and isolates a single individual to say that this is his son in whom he is well pleased.

This is a monumental moment in the life of believers. And especially for John the Baptist. It became the basis for his witness of Jesus Christ later on as we study the Gospel of John.

He said, I saw it with my own eyes. I heard it with my own ears. This is indeed the Son of God, Jesus of Nazareth. This is who he is.

And so there's this amazing thing that takes place. And Mark describes it for us briefly in verses 9 through 11. Well, that was the first phase of transition as Mark describes it here in his Gospel.

Let's move on to the second phase of this transition, which is the temptation of Jesus. The temptation of Jesus in verses 12 through 13. Let's read them together again. Look with me at verse 12.

[6 : 51] Now the extraordinary revelation in verses 9 through 11 at Jesus' baptism is immediately followed by an intense battle of the will in verses 12 and 13.

Now each time the Bible speaks of this occasion, it's recorded in more detail in Matthew chapter 4 and in Luke chapter 4. Every time it's mentioned in the Scripture, it emphasizes the fact that it was the Holy Spirit, the third person of the triune God, that immediately led Jesus to the wilderness.

For this time of testing. And in doing so, it gives us a glimpse into the unique union and fellowship and communion and oneness that the three persons of the Trinity have together.

God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Now our kids are learning about this right now. Last week in our Lakeside Kids program last Sunday night, we talked about the Trinity.

You kids remember that, right? Let's work through our questions real quick to see if you remember, right? The question number one, what is our hope in life and death? And the answer is? That we are not our own, but we belong to God.

[8 : 32] That we are not our own, but we belong to God. And the second question that flows from that one is, what then is God? What's God? He's the creator of everyone and everything.

And then there was the third question. How many persons are there in God? And the answer is? There are three persons in one God. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. One God, three persons. We see them together in the baptism of Jesus in one place, described in that way for the first time as we studied it last Sunday.

In one place, we see the visibility of the Son of God in the water being baptized. We see the visibility of the Holy Spirit descending upon Jesus there.

They didn't even know how to describe him, so they said it was like a dove. We didn't know how else to describe the Holy Spirit's descension, but it was kind of like a dove descending upon him. And then they hear the audible voice all at one time.

[9 : 39] And then immediately in connection with that, we see this incredible communion and oneness and unity that these three persons have together as it is the Holy Spirit that then immediately drives Jesus, the Son of God, into the wilderness in order that he might fulfill the righteousness of and follow the will of the Father.

No person of the Trinity acts independently of the others. They are one God and therefore act in complete unity. And indeed, this is a great mystery to us.

It's not very easy to understand and comprehend all that that means and all of who God is. But this is exactly how the scriptures describe Jesus, God the Father, and God the Holy Spirit.

Now, the emphasis of the Holy Spirit driving Jesus into the wilderness, temptation, shows that this event was absolutely necessary to fulfill the will of God the Father.

In fact, James Edwards is helpful here. He said, The temptation of Jesus is not presented as an unfortunate circumstance or as a hardship resulting from a lapse or failure on Jesus' part.

[10 : 56] What happens to Jesus in the wilderness is as divinely orchestrated as what happened to him at the Jordan. In other words, this didn't happen by chance.

Jesus didn't get baptized and then just decide he was going to go on a wilderness exploration. And while he was on this exploration, he got caught up in some hardship and he didn't have any food with him.

And then he faced this incredible temptation. This didn't happen by chance. The emphasis of the Holy Spirit's role shows that this was necessary. This was necessary for Jesus to go through in order to fulfill the will of God the Father.

So like the baptism of Jesus, we must consider why this severe temptation and suffering of Jesus was a necessary part of God's plan. So let's look first at the necessity of the temptation.

Why was it necessary for Jesus to be tempted? Matthew, Mark, and Luke all connect the temptation directly to Jesus' baptism.

[12 : 04] Those are the three of the four Gospels that actually reference every aspect of these two stories together. But every time Matthew, Mark, and Luke reference the temptation of Jesus, it is always directly connected to his baptism.

And that's for a reason. Now, Mark has a habit of using this word immediately. He uses it at least 10 times in chapter 1 alone. And most often, he uses it to keep the narrative of the story moving along. He's very concise in his writing, and he keeps the story moving. If you're using a King James this morning, you'll see it mostly translated as straightway. But it's the same word immediately, keeping the story moving along.

But when we get to the temptation of Jesus in verse 12, it's not that Mark is just trying to move the narrative along. In this case, it does have a significance to the timing of events.

The Gospel writers didn't want us to understand the temptation of Jesus apart from the baptism of Jesus. They're companions in this body of evidence.

[13 : 14] Now, remember, that's what Mark is doing. He's writing this body of evidence to support his thesis statement in verse 1, that Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ, the Son of God.

And example number one is the voice in the wilderness, John the Baptist. And then flowing from that case of work is the baptism and the temptation. They are companions in Mark's evidence here. So the declaration of Jesus in his baptism as the Son of God that is well-pleasing was immediately put to the test.

And we might expect that that would be the case. If Jesus really was the Messiah, if he really was the Son of God, he's going to have to prove it.

He's going to have to prove it. Not because we demanded that proof of evidence, but because God the Father in his sovereign will desired to give us that proof.

[14 : 12] And we see that connected to the baptism. As this voice thunders from heaven and says, You are my beloved Son, and then immediately that is put to the test, and it is proven. For the Messiah to free us from sin and death, he must prove that he has power over both.

Jesus' power over death is proven by his resurrection. But Jesus' demonstration of power over sin and Satan is first seen in this season of wilderness temptation.

And it's not only that Jesus proved this power, but it's a monumental moment in the gospel story. In fact, MacArthur helps us again here.

He says he could not claim absolute power over sin itself if he did not demonstrate personal power in defeating Satan. His call to deliver sinners would have been meaningless if Jesus himself had not

been able to quench the fiery darts of the evil one.

The temptation of Jesus was necessary because it gives immediate support to what the voice from heaven stated during his baptism. If this was truly the Son of God, he would have to perfectly fulfill the will of the Father, something no other human being has ever done.

[15 : 39] No other person has ever done what Jesus did in this passage. Why was it necessary for him to go through this temptation? So that he could prove that he is indeed the Son of God that has the power over sin, that has the power over Satan, that will one day prove that he has the power over death itself.

So this season of temptation provides us with confidence. Confidence that Jesus would continue in obedience to the will of the Father.

In every temptation that he would face, he would follow suit with what he experienced in this passage. And then we see that being so meaningful for us as we see once again in the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus praying to the Father, no doubt being tempted once again.

And Jesus praying, not my will, but thy will be done. And praise God that that was the prayer that he prayed. That pattern of submitting to the will of the Father is set here.

So we see the necessity of Jesus' temptation. Secondly, let's look at more practically the nature of his temptation. The nature of his temptation. Look at verse 13. Now I want you to flip over with me just a few pages to the left.

[17 : 16] If you'll go to Matthew chapter 4. You really could take your pick. You could go to Luke chapter 4 too, but I'm going to read from Matthew chapter 4. And we're not going to explore in great depth Matthew's account of this, but I at least want you to hear read the fullness of what takes place in this moment.

Matthew chapter 4, beginning at verse 1. Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. And when he had fasted 40 days and 40 nights, he was afterward hungry. And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. But Jesus answered and said, It is written, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.

And again the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them. And said unto him, All these things will I give you, if you will fall down and worship me.

Then Jesus said unto him, Get thee hence, Satan. For it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.

[18 : 59] Then the devil left him, and behold, angels came and ministered unto him. Now I want you to flip back to Mark chapter 1. That gives us a little bit more of a fullness of what Jesus goes through in this moment that Mark doesn't fill in for us.

And I'll leave it to you to study that in probably greater depth on your own. But what I want for you to consider at this point is the conditions in which Jesus proved this power over sin and Satan from Mark chapter 1.

Three conditions. First, desolation. Desolation. Look at verse 13 again. He was in the wilderness is the description given.

There's nothing comfortable about where Jesus was. There's nothing luxurious about where Jesus faced this temptation.

He wasn't able to retreat to any kind of luxury in order to find solace or recovery. As he goes through this time of temptation, there's no breaks given to him.

[20 : 03] He's in desolate places. He's in the wilderness. It literally is a desolate place. It's treacherous. It's hard to be mobile in that area.

It's hot. There's no food. There's barely any water. It's a terrible place to be. Completely desolate. And it is in this place that Jesus is driven to face this temptation.

Now, the wilderness has a particular significance to the seasons of trial and temptation in the Old Testament. And as Jesus goes to this wilderness to be tempted, he identifies with his people from hundreds of years before as they too had been tested and tried in the wilderness.

And yet they had miserably failed. He goes to the wilderness to be tested and to be tried, except he does not fail. He identifies with them in their temptation, but he conquers that temptation.

So desolation. Secondly, we see starvation. Starvation. Now, Mark doesn't tell this part to us. That's why we read Matthew chapter 4. Matthew and Luke both say that in the 40 days that Jesus spent in

the wilderness, he did so fasting.

[21 : 21] He didn't eat for 40 days while he was there. There's only two other people in the Bible that did this. One was Moses and the other was Elijah. One representing the law. One representing the prophets.

And now we have the third representing the Messiah, who is indeed the Messiah. And he fasted for 40 days. Physically speaking, not only is he in a desolate place in the wilderness, but physically speaking, he is at his weakest moment in life.

He's literally at the point of death. He can go no longer without food as a human without dying. And it's in this vulnerable state that Satan comes and brings his temptation.

And it sounds familiar to us, doesn't it? But in this way, Jesus identified with those who have been tested and tried in the midst of physical weakness.

And in the midst of physical illness. And in the depravity of worldly possessions and comforts and luxuries.

[22 : 33] So Jesus identifies with his people as he conquers a sin in a desolate place that they could not conquer. And then he identifies with his people once again as he conquers sin and temptation in weakness and in illness and in frailty.

A temptation that we do not have the power to conquer in and of ourselves. How many times have we been in a place of physical weakness and the temptation be that much stronger as we face the deprivation of things that we not only want but things that we need.

And we're tempted to doubt and we're tempted to sin against the Lord. Jesus identifies with us in this except he conquers that sin for us in this. And then there's isolation.

Look with me again at verse 13. He was in the wilderness for 40 days, tempted of Satan. And he was with the wild beast. Now, Mark gives just kind of this side note, I think, to just remind us that not only was Jesus in a desolate place, but he was utterly alone.

There was no one there to comfort him except the wild beast that posed a great danger to him. How many times have we been in moments of temptation, moments of weakness and frustration?

[23 : 47] But yet, in God's providence, we have had a spouse or friend or parent, someone we could run to for emotional support and emotional comfort.

Jesus had none of that. He was utterly alone. Now, how many of us have also felt utterly alone? And in the midst of that loneliness, experience temptation and be unable to resist it.

Well, Jesus identifies with us here. Not only is he in a desolate place, not only is he starving to death, but he's utterly alone. At his weakest moment, facing the severest of temptations, yet without sin, he does everything we needed him to do.

Matthew and Luke tell us about these three specific temptations that Satan brought to Jesus. And while he could have assaulted Jesus with these temptations all throughout the 40 days, and there's some indications that that might have been the case, it does seem like the severest of these temptations, at least, came at the conclusion of the 40 days, when Jesus was at his most vulnerable place, which is exactly where Satan does his most severe temptation for us, when we're our most vulnerable, in desolation and starvation and isolation.

Now, remember the three temptations. I'm going to leave it to you to study them, but it's hard for me not to at least talk about them a little bit. Three temptations are recorded for us in Matthew and Luke. All of them have the same purpose.

[25 : 23] There is one singular goal that Satan has as he is tempting Jesus. Now, his name itself means adversary, which means he is adversarial against everything that is God's will.

His goal in these temptations is not necessarily to expose that Jesus is not the Son of God. He probably would have been happy for a fraud to exist claiming to be the Son of God.

He would have had much use for a man like that, and he will have much use for a man like that in the end times. But as Satan comes to this temptation, he has a singular purpose, to get Jesus to go against the will of the Father.

And in all three temptations, that's his goal. The first temptation, Jesus is hungry. And Satan comes and says, if you are the Son of God, take these rocks and turn them into bread and eat.

Satisfy yourself. The problem was, it was the will of God the Father, driven by the Holy Spirit, that Jesus would fast for 40 days in the wilderness. For him to have turned those stones into bread and to have eaten would have just been something that would have gone against the will of his Father.

[26 : 31] The Father had not told him to do that. In fact, the Father had instructed him to do opposite of that. So he's trying to get him to go against the will of the Father. And how does Jesus respond? Men shall not live by bread alone, but by what?

Every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God. In other words, my goal and your goal is to fulfill the will of the Father, not the will of our flesh.

So no, he responds with Scripture, Deuteronomy chapter 6. And then the second temptation comes. And it says that Satan takes him to the pinnacle of a temple, the highest peak on the temple in Jerusalem.

There's a great abyss down at the bottom, a rocky crag. And he says, if you are the Son of God, jump off the pinnacle because you have all the angels that will come and will rescue you. He actually quotes a psalm that says that that would be the case. Except he misquotes the psalm. Right in the middle of his quotation, he leaves out the part that the angels will help him fulfill all righteousness.

[27 : 32] And he just says, if you jump, the angels will save you, irregardless of whether it's the right thing to do or not. But Jesus says the same thing. Don't tempt the Lord your God.

It wasn't the will of the Father for him to do that. That wasn't going to be the demonstration that the Father had set aside for the Son to demonstrate that he was the Son of God. That was going to come on the cross. Not jumping off the temple in this great spectacle of angelic salvation.

Then there was the third temptation. Satan takes him on the mountaintop. Shows him the kingdoms of the world. All of this that you want. This worship from the nations, Jesus.

You can have it all. I'll give it to you. And you don't have to go to the cross to do it. That's the point of that temptation. You can have everything that you're looking for.

All of the worship. All of the praise. But you don't have to go to the cross. I'll just give it to you. All you have to do is worship me. And he commands him to leave. Worship only the Lord thy God.

[28 : 34] Only him shall you serve. Third time he quotes scripture from Deuteronomy chapter 6 or Deuteronomy chapter 8. What was the purpose of all that? He's trying to get him to circumvent the will of the Father.

Specifically circumvent the will of the Father for him to go to the cross to pay for the sins of mankind. And in each of those situations, Jesus conquered the temptation by submitting to the will of the Father.

Which is your purpose and my purpose. And every time we fall into sin, it is because of the same temptation. Trying to get us to go against the will of the Father. Trying to get us to go against the word of God.

And where we have fallen, Jesus did not fall. Unlike Adam, Jesus endured the temptation and never sinned.

Now think about the differences between those two temptations. Remember Adam's temptation was in a utopian place. He wasn't in a desolate place.

[29 : 41] He was in the most beautiful garden to have ever existed on earth. He wasn't starving. He had all the food that he needed. At his beckoning call.

He wasn't alone. He had companionship given to him by the Father. Perfect companionship. Perfect union with another human being.

He was in a perfect place. Under perfect circumstances. And yet, he fell. But here comes the second Adam. Jesus Christ, the Son of God. And he's in the worst of places.

He's in desolation. And he's in starvation. And he has no companionship. And even the companions that he has, they all leave him. Eventually. And what does he do?

He endures the temptation that we cannot endure. Listen, there is only one person that could ever do this. Only one person could do this.

[30 : 38] And that's the point of why Mark is including it here. Yes, there's this extraordinary thing where the heavens open and a voice says, You are my beloved Son. But that is proven here as Jesus conquers the thing that none of us can conquer.

And he did it for us. It's a proof that he does have power over sin. He does have power over Satan. A power that we do not have.

What does this mean for us? Hebrews chapter 4 tells us. Remember verse 15. You know it. We do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has been tempted in all things as we are.

Yet without sin, the writer says. And then he makes the application in verse 16. And he says, Therefore, because of this, let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace.

Let us come boldly before the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace and help in time of need. Why should the temptation of Jesus matter to you and matter to me?

[31 : 50] Because it is his power over this temptation that gives us confidence as we approach the throne of grace and approach the throne of mercy. That he sympathizes with us because he has been where we are.

He has endured what we are trying to endure. And so he sympathizes with us. Therefore, come boldly to him for that mercy. It's an unending supply.

Though his deity precluded him from any sinful action, Jesus' humanity made him subject to all of the same struggles and temptations as us.

He can sympathize with our weakness because he has experienced that very weakness. He can sympathize with your loneliness because he has experienced that loneliness.

He can sympathize with your ailment because he too has experienced that ailment. But he did it all without ever sinning.

[32 : 54] And because of this, we can come boldly and confidently to him. Because Jesus conquered sin and Satan, we can receive mercy and grace through him.

Now I want you to think about this throne of grace real quickly before we wrap all of this up. See, Jesus conquered all of this. And then it says we can come boldly to this throne.

We can come with confidence to this throne. We see in this the very heart of Christ. We get in our minds sometimes that because of our sinfulness, because of our inability to do what Jesus did, we feel as if we are repellent to him.

Because God is holy and we are sinful, we believe that we cannot come with confidence to the throne because we disgust him. But this tells us the heart of Christ. The heart of Christ does not view you in your sin and turn away.

He sees you in your sin and he pursues you in that sin. It is your weakness. It is your sin. It is your frailness that actually ignites a fire in his heart to pursue you with love and mercy and grace.

[34 : 15] That's the heart of Christ for you. Why do we come boldly to the throne? Because he wants us to. That's what he wants. He wants you to come believing him.

He wants you to come casting yourself on his goodness and on his grace. Because in his heart, his heart for you and his heart for the world, is that he might extend that mercy and grace.

And the more he sees your sin, the more he is drawn to you. Why? Because he can sympathize with your weakness. He's been there. He knows how hard it is. He knows what the struggle is.

Yet he has conquered it on your behalf. And if you will just come to him, he will grasp you in his mercy and in his love. So you can come boldly to him today.

Say, you don't know what I've done. No, I don't know what you've done. But he does. And he says, even though he knows what you've done, you can come with confidence to the throne of grace.

[35 : 10] If you will just come to him, he will provide the mercy and forgiveness that you are desperately in need of. He will give you a love that no other person will ever give. He will give you a grace that no other person is capable of giving.

Why? Because he's been where you are. And he conquered it on your behalf. Well, that's the temptation. There's a third phase to this transition. We'll quickly cover it.

Verses 14 and 15. We see the ministry of Jesus, or if you like, the message of Jesus. So we see his baptism is the first phase. We're transitioning from John to Jesus now.

The temptation is the second phase. Jesus is being tempted as John is ministering. And now we get to the third phase where John is really being intentionally moved off the scene so that Jesus can begin his public ministry.

Look at verse 14. After that, John was put in prison. We'll study about that in detail later on in Mark's gospel. And after he was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee.

[36 : 14] And here's what he did. He preached the gospel of the kingdom of God. This is what he said. The time is fulfilled. The kingdom of God is at hand.

Repent and believe the gospel. Repent and believe the gospel. The transition from the herald to the king was made complete as John was arrested.

He was put into prison. And Jesus began his public ministry in Galilee. Now these two verses provide a summary for us of everything that Mark will expound in Jesus' teaching and purpose

throughout the rest of his book.

Jesus had come to preach the gospel of the kingdom. He was introducing a new covenant to the people. This covenant would mark the beginning of the establishment of his eternal kingdom. The eternal kingdom that they dreamed of as they themselves studied Daniel chapter 7 that we read a few moments ago. His ministry was marked by the distinct message that is summarized in verse 15.

[37 : 23] Let's just break it down quickly. The first thing he says, the time is fulfilled. The time is fulfilled. In other words, the critical moment of all of history is now taking place.

All of history prior to Jesus' first advent was rushing toward that moment. It was all pushing toward this moment. And Jesus is saying the critical moment of all of human history is now. It is here. And it is me. That's what he's saying. The time is fulfilled. It has come. The kingdom has come. He was stating that the critical moment of eternity was now fulfilled and he was that fulfillment.

The time is fulfilled. Secondly, he says, the kingdom of God is at hand. It would take some time for the people to understand exactly what this meant.

It takes time for us to fully understand what this means. They were expecting a different kind of kingdom. They were expecting that kingdom that Daniel spoke of as being at the end of the age.

[38 : 27] They were expecting that to be what Jesus was bringing. A revolution that would cast down the empire of Rome. That would establish this perfect kingdom.

But it wasn't time for that. That time is still ahead. Jesus was beginning this kingdom now. A spiritual kingdom.

A spiritual people. In fact, this term that the kingdom is at hand or the kingdom is near, it really speaks less of a chronological time frame and more of a spatial matter.

In other words, he was the kingdom that was near. Not the grand, perfect kingdom that would one day be established, but he was the representative of that kingdom.

That as he said, the kingdom is near. He's really saying, I am near. I am near. Spatially is what he's speaking to. William Lane said, the coming of the kingdom remains future.

[39 : 26] But it is certain precisely because God has begun to bring it to pass in the coming of his son. He is the kingdom. Thirdly, he says, repent and believe the gospel.

And this is important for us this morning as we close. The declaration that the critical time had come and that the kingdom of God was at hand demanded a response.

Do you notice the three phases of Jesus' message? The first two are proclamations. The time has come. The kingdom is near. The third was a summons.

Because of the two proclamations, he says, repent and believe. He demanded a response from the people.

Why? Why? Because of his baptism and his temptation. That's how it all fits together here in Mark's gospel. Jesus calls men to a radical decision.

[40 : 35] He proclaims the kingdom not to give content, but to convey a summons. Either a man submits to that summons of God, or he chooses this world and its riches and honor.

If you want to enter the kingdom of God, Jesus says, you must repent and believe the gospel. That Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.

That's the way to the kingdom. You say, what's Mark doing with this? What's the whole point of this? If he's going to spend this whole book conveying this message and showing us all this stuff, why is he mentioning it here?

It's the third part. Do you see it? He quickly tells us, Jesus gets baptized and there's this great revelation. You are my beloved son.

And then immediately in connection with that, he is driven of the spirit and he conquers this sin and death. And if this is who Jesus is, if he really is the Son of God, if he really did prove it by conquering sin and Satan in the wilderness, then we must listen to his message.

[41 : 45] And his message is, repent and believe. If you want the kingdom, if you want life, if you want joy, if you want God, if you want all the blessings that God is proclaiming, look at who Jesus is.

See how he has conquered and then listen to his message, which is repent of your sin. Repent of your way and believe me, Jesus says.

If this is who Jesus is, what are you going to do with his message? Jesus said in John 14, 6, you probably know the verse.

He said, I am the way. I am the truth. I am the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. That's not an arrogant statement on Jesus' part. That's a truthful statement on Jesus' part. It's a compassionate statement. Rather than leave you in your desperate condition, he cries out a message that says you are not enough.

[43 : 00] Your goodness can never compare. But I am enough. And if you will abandon every other effort for eternal salvation and life and follow me as Lord and Savior, Jesus said, I will put you on the way.

And I will open your heart to the truth. And I will give you life. Thank you for listening to this sermon made available by Lakeside Bible Church. Feel free to share it wherever you'd like.

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