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PW5500 – New Media

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Sample Blog Posts

Module 2 Revised

Thursday, June 28, 2014

PREVIEW OF THE MONTHS AHEAD

Through December 2014 we'll be making posts about the Gospel of Mark, and we invite our followers to join in the reading and discussion. The best way to do this will be to read the assigned material ahead of time.

You will need a Bible since the readings are directly from the New Testament. You can also access a free Bible online at: www.biblegateway.com.

We'll post on Tuesday with questions and more discussion. We post again on Thursday to prepare for the next reading section. Your questions and comments are welcomed; we may post more often if you have lots of questions. You can also join our email list to stay abreast of updates and special events at: chathamchurchofchrist@verizon.net.

As we read through the Gospel, participants will gain the most by doing the following:

- Read each week's reading as you read the post
- Think about any questions made in the posts
- Post your comments to the blog

A NOTE ABOUT READING THE BIBLE: Most people have some difficulty reading and understanding the Bible by themselves. This is neither unusual nor a reflection on anyone's ability. The Bible was meant to be read in a community where lots of discussion takes place and where people can learn from one another. That is why we encourage participation by joining our online blog. The famous quote by a poet, "No man is an island," holds particularly true when it comes to understanding this material. And so, we are here only to help, not to criticize or judge.

Post #1: Thursday, July 3, 2014

INTRODUCTION: GOSPEL OF MARK



The Gospels in the New Testament describe the life and work of Jesus Christ. They reveal some remarkable things about a remarkable historical figure, a man the Bible writers considered to be God in the flesh (John 1:14).

Who Is Mark?

Tradition has it that [Mark](#) (not one of the original twelve apostles) wrote an account based on the memories of [Simon Peter](#) (one of the twelve). Mark is very likely the same person Peter mentions in his letter ([1 Peter 5:13](#)). He was one of the evangelists who traveled throughout the Mediterranean region, and his name appears in the New Testament in several places.

The Ministry of Power and Authority

Mark portrays Jesus as a person of power and authority. This was consistent with what the Jews believed about the [Messiah](#) or Christ. He attracted large crowds of followers; he exercised power over evil spirits; he healed intractable diseases; he confounded the religious authorities.

Most of his contemporaries, including his disciples, expected the Messiah would be a political revolutionary. Jesus did not live up to that expectation, and it perplexed his followers as well as his critics.

The Ministry of Suffering

Three times in Mark, Jesus informs his followers that he will be mistreated by the religious and secular authorities, be killed, but be resurrected from the dead. They chafed under the first two items and even attempted to dissuade him from enduring them. They misunderstood the part about the resurrection until after it happened.

His suffering was an essential part of his work and along with his power and authority forms a complete picture of who Jesus was.

Read for next week – [Mark 1:1 – 13](#)

For reflection: In thinking about your own knowledge of the Christmas story, what do you notice about this first part of Mark's Gospel?

HAPPY FOURTH OF JULY TO ALL OUR LOYAL READERS!

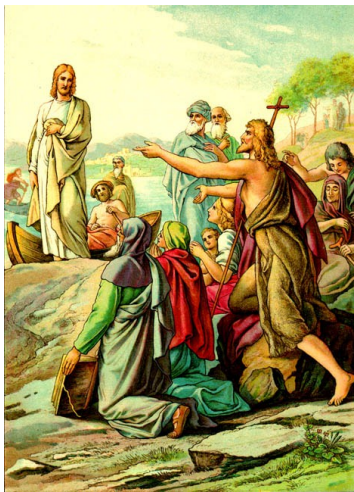
Post #2: Thursday, July 10, 2014

“LET ME INTRODUCE YOU TO MY SON,” SAID GOD.

MARK 1:1 – 13

A good narrative normally introduces the reader to the characters quickly. In this first part of Mark’s writing, think about it as an introduction to his main character.

John Speaks First



The important thing to remember is that Mark was not the first one doing the introducing. Mark gave John the Baptist the first word. His primary role was to prepare others for Jesus’ arrival. Some of the statements he made about Jesus are:

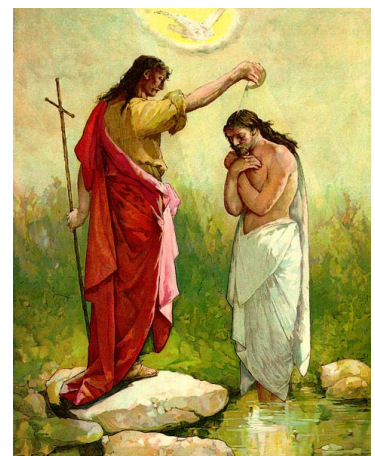
- “After me will come one more powerful than I”
- “The thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie”
- “He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit”

If you were introduced to someone and these things were said about him, what would you expect?

The Next Voice You Hear

Perhaps we’ve been conditioned to reject anyone who claims that God has spoken directly to him. Do not allow this pre-conditioned attitude prevent you from seeing what happens next in Mark’s story.

Jesus appears at the Jordan River; John baptizes him; John sees the Spirit descend on Jesus, and he hears a voice. The voice says, “You are my son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased.” This was not a voice inside Jesus’ head, the delusion of a man with a God complex. This was a disembodied voice that John heard and was accompanied by the vision of the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove.



Essentially God was introducing Jesus to those who were there. It's as if God had said to the world, "Let me introduce you to my son."

Read for next week – [Mark 1:14 – 45](#)

Post #3: Thursday, July 17, 2014

POPULARITY AND POWER, MARK 1:14 – 45

First and Second Things

We notice the first words out of Jesus' mouth involved two things: repentance and the Kingdom of God.

First, people usually associate the word repent with penance. The meaning of the two words is not the same. Penance has to do with performing some act of contrition to make up for one's wrongdoing, often a set of prescribed prayers or religious rituals.

On the other hand, the word "repent" carries no connotation of making amends for misdeeds, rather it means to change. Making amends may be a step in the process, but the essence of repentance is changed behavior.

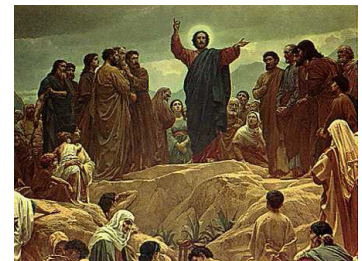
Second, Jesus announces the nearness of a Kingdom. Along with prophecies that spoke of a coming messiah, the Old Testament predicted that God would set up a kingdom, one that would never pass away. In the first century many people expected this to come about.

Jesus had a lot to say about the establishment and nature of this kingdom. His pronouncement early in Mark's narrative impacts the direction of his work as well as his ability to gather a following.

Popularity

Even in these early episodes Jesus attracted a lot of followers.

- Many people followed him, verse 20
- News spread about him, verse 28
- On one occasion, the whole town gathered, verse 33
- He attracted a lot of attention, verse 45



Power

His power was readily on display for everyone to see.

- Demons recognized him and he commanded them, verses 23-27
- He had power over bodily ailments, verses 29-34
- Yet he was moved by compassion, verse 41

For Reflection – After John the Baptist and God introduce Jesus, how do others react when they meet him?

Read for next week – [Mark 2:1 – 22](#)

Post #4: Thursday, July 24, 2014

CONTROVERSY, MARK 2:1 - 22

Two issues erupted into controversy because of what Jesus said and did: he claimed to forgive sins and he ate with people who were not very religious.

Forgiving Sins

Jesus offered to forgive the sins of a paralyzed man (Mark 2:5). It might seem perplexing that this is the first thing Jesus offered a man who cannot even move his arms and legs. Yet Jesus knows mankind's deepest needs. He began his ministry telling people to change (repent), and here he drew on the same idea by implying that the man's real need was for the healing of his soul. Jesus does both, much to the amazement of the crowd.



Eating with "Sinners"

The word "sinners" does not mean that these people were worse than anyone else. The word was a pejorative label used for people who weren't deemed worthy by the religious leaders of the day.

Jesus spent time with what some considered the wrong crowd. His defense was that the sick need a physician, not healthy people. To a sin-sick people Jesus extended his fellowship and his help.

For Reflection: What do you think about Jesus' choice of companions?

Read for next week – [Mark 2:23 – 3:6](#)