

Presbyterian Church of Henderson

Worship Service 10:00 AM

January 10, 2021

Gospel of Mark Series

Ringing of the Bell

Welcome and Announcements Pastor Eric Hoey

Organ Prelude Kristin Jones, Director of Music

*Call to Worship

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.

The Spirit of God swept over the face of the waters;

then God said: Let there be light, and God saw that it was good.

At the beginning of his ministry, Jesus was baptized by John.

The heavens opened, and the Spirit descended like a dove;

then God said: This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

*Hymn PH 343 Called as Partners in Christ's Service

1 Called as partners in Christ's service
Called to ministries of grace
We respond with deep commitment
Fresh new lines of faith to trace
May we learn the art of sharing
Side by side and friend with friend
Equal partners in our caring
To fulfil God's chosen end

3 Thus new patterns for Christ's mission
In a small or global sense
Help us bear each other's burdens
Breaking down each wall or fence
Words of comfort words of vision
Words of challenge said with care
Bring new power and strength for action
Make us colleagues free and fair

2 Christ's example Christ's inspiring
Christ's clear call to work and worth
Let us follow never faltering
Reconciling folk on earth
Men and women richer poorer
All God's people young and old
Blending human skills together
Gracious gifts from God unfold

4 So God grant us for tomorrow
Ways to order human life
That surround each person's sorrow
With a calm that conquers strife
Make us partners in our living
Our compassion to increase
Messengers of faith thus giving
Hope and confidence and peace

*Call to Confession

A prophet appeared in the wilderness, calling the people to repent, be baptized, and prepare the way of the Lord. We return to the water to confess our sins, giving thanks for the grace of Jesus Christ, the one who has come to save us.

*Prayer of Confession (unison)

God of all glory, you look from heaven and see us as we are—not worthy to kneel at your feet, not ready to welcome your way. Forgive us, gracious God. In Christ, stoop down to save us; loosen the ties that bind us to sin and set us free to love and serve you; in Jesus 'name. Amen.

*Assurance of Pardon

Hear the good news of the gospel: As a voice from heaven said to Jesus, so God says to each of us: You are my beloved child, and with you I am well pleased. In Jesus Christ we are forgiven. Thanks be to God.

***Gloria Patri (PH 579)**

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. Amen.

***Passing the Peace**

Please turn and bow to someone out of respect and love— “The peace of Christ be with you”

Prayer for Illumination

Send down your Holy Spirit, O God— tear open the veil of heaven and speak to us as beloved children so that we may hear and believe the good news of your Word made flesh, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

First Reading Genesis 1:1-5

In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. Then God said, “Let there be light”; and there was light. And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

Special Music Betty Norment, soloist

Second Reading Mark 1:1-13

The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. As it is written in the prophet Isaiah, “See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way; the voice of one crying out in the wilderness: ‘**Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight,**’” John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. Now John was clothed with camel’s hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. He proclaimed, “The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”

In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. And a voice came from heaven, “You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.”

And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. He was in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him.

Children’s Sermon Pastor Eric

- How many of you have ever taken a test in school?
- When you get older, the teacher will put a letter grade on your test.
- Does anyone know which letter is the most desirable?
- Right? You want to get an "A" on your test instead of an "F" on your test.
- How do you get "A's" on your test?
- KEY: The more a person prepares for the test, the better the grade.
- ISW: In our text today, John the Baptist tells people to prepare for Jesus.
- What do you think it takes to prepare for Jesus?
- A desire to acknowledge that you want to choose God's ways rather than your own, and say sorry.

SERMON "Why is Jesus Good News?"

Mark 1:1-13

January 10, 2021

- This morning we begin a new series in the Gospel of Mark to answer the question, "What Does It Mean to Follow Jesus?"
- Did anyone have a chance to see before Christmas what was so called the Christmas star where the alignment of Jupiter and Saturn was up in the sky to be seen?
- The planets regularly appear to pass each other in the solar system, with the positions of Jupiter and Saturn being aligned in the sky about once every 20 years.
- It's been nearly 400 years since the planets passed this close to each other in the sky, and nearly 800 years since the alignment of Saturn and Jupiter occurred at night.
- In the same way the alignment of Saturn and Jupiter was an exciting moment in the history of the earth, when Jesus came to earth as the Emmanuel or "God with us" it was THE significant moment in the history of the earth where God breaks into humanity to continue His redemptive plan through His Son, Jesus Christ.
- Prior to that the people of Israel had not heard anything for 400 years since the last prophet.
- Mark had the privilege of putting his observations in paper.
- In fact, since it is one of the shortest Gospels, it is believed that he wrote his material first.
- The Gospel of Mark is not a chronicle of God's mighty deeds or a set of reflections from His followers, but it is a theological proclamation to a particular audience of God's Good News centered in the historical events of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection.
- But why is Jesus' advent, good news like we read in the Christmas story when the angels said, "I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people." (Luke 2:10)?
- Let us turn to the beginning of Mark to see how he explains this Good News.

1. Good News Was Expected

1 The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. 2 As it is written in the prophet Isaiah, See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way;

- The opening verse immediately sets the tone and introduction to Mark's writings with the book's title and theme.
- "The beginning" strikes familiarity with Genesis when it says, "In the beginning"
- Mark is establishing the fact that God is making a great step forward or a new start
- Then Mark uses the word gospel or good news.
- In the Old Testament when the word gospel is used it was used as a breaking-in of God's kingly rule.
- **Mark here is emphasizing God breaking into the world with a new redemptive plan with God's rule in Jesus Christ.**
- This is the big deal, that Jesus Christ is the Messiah, the long awaited king.
- Think about it...the Son of God, God in the flesh breaking into our world to begin a new type of reign and rule, and that is the rule in our hearts.
- WHY? Because it was foretold in Scripture through the prophet Isaiah that someone will lead the way to prepare and point people to Jesus.
- Can you image that God's redemptive plan was so immensely significant that God used someone to prepare the way for the Messiah who was prophesied 700 years earlier?
- You think, the four weeks of Advent is long, this was probably an excruciating, multi-generational, long wait.
- Q: What keeps hope alive when the wait is beyond our lifetime? What kept the Israelites from not giving up on God and His Word?
- *Psalm 25:1, 5 To you, O LORD, I lift up my soul. O my God, in you I trust; ... Lead me in your truth, and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation; for you I wait all day long.*
- What kept hope alive was their absolute trust in God!
- D. Elton Trueblood, Quaker theologian, "Faith is not belief without proof, but trust without reservation."
- Friends, faithfulness is tied to the trust in God's promises.

2. Good News Was Prepared

3 the voice of one crying out in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight,"4 John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. 5 And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. 6 Now John was clothed with camel s hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey.

- So the prophet Isaiah not only predicts a messenger, but here in this text, tells about the message of the messenger..."the voice of one crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight'"
- The messenger had the sole purpose of preparing people for the Lord.
- 7 He proclaimed, "The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. 8 I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."*
- The message prepares by pointing to the greatness of the one after him who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.
- Notice the significance of the wilderness.
 - The prophesy: voice crying out of the wilderness

- John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness and dressed like a wild man or a person from the wilderness
- People leaving the city of Jerusalem to go to the wilderness
- Later in our text, Jesus is driven out to the wilderness to be tempted by Satan
- Preparation occurs in the wilderness
- We will see later that the wilderness experience where Jesus was tested was absolutely necessary in preparation for something greater in His ministry.
- John the Baptist was the vehicle to help people come to the wilderness for the spiritual preparation for something greater.
- You have heard of the phrase “a mountaintop experience” where a person feels closest to God on a mountaintop.
- This is kind of the opposite where a person is prepared for something greater than their current situation.
- In John the Baptist’s preaching ministry, he preached, “a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.”
- The wilderness was significant to help people become prepared through cleansing both physically and spiritually by baptism and the forgiveness of sins.
- So only in the wilderness, God prepares, refines, renews, and even tests us for something greater
- Q: What kind of wilderness experience are you currently going through?
- Consider your wilderness situation.
- Is God preparing you for something greater than you could imagine?
- ILL: I was asked to join a team on the annual Bourbon Chase. Basically it was a 200 mile relay with a team of 12 people where everyone took turns running a segment of the relay around the clock for 48 hours. The course ran from one distillery to another and conclude in downtown Lexington. In order to be apart of the team, I had to run everyday with the team. Once a week they brought us to a track, where we had to sprint one lap and jog another lap four or five times in two sets. We had one break between each set. I hated those times because it would make my lungs hurt from breathing so hard. But in the end, we all saw how, what I called those “wilderness workouts,” made us stronger and faster for the Bourbon Chase.
- In the same way, often times God needs to take us out to the wilderness to get our attention, call us to repentance, and work us over in order that we can lean more upon Him in obedience for possibly something greater in our lives.

3. Good News Was Affirmed

9 In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan.

- When theologians look at this text and ask a simple question: If John offered a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, why would Jesus, who was without sin, need to be baptized by John? Why did he go to the Jordan in the first place?
- When Jesus came to the Jordan, and John saw him in Mathew’s gospel — “I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?” But Jesus answered him, “Let it be so now; for it is proper for us in this way to fulfill all righteousness.” Then he consented. (Matt. 3:14-15)
- Jesus was baptized for the “fulfillment of all righteousness.”
- You see, John prepared the way for Jesus, and now John’s baptism of Jesus was the complete fulfillment of everything the OT prophets had been declaring.

- Jesus baptism was the initiation of the beginning of Jesus' ministry as the righteous lamb of God.
- By baptizing Jesus, John was declaring to everyone in the wilderness that Jesus was the One they had been waiting for, the Son of God, and the perfect righteous lamb of God.
- This is why Jesus baptism scene is so dramatic.
10 And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. 11 And a voice came from heaven, You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased."
- When Jesus came out of the water, something significant happened.
 - The **heavens were torn open** - In the OT the expression was used to introduce a divine revelation
 - *Isaiah 64:1 O that you would tear open the heavens and come down, so that the mountains would quake at your presence—*
 - *Ezekiel 1:1 In the thirtieth year, in the fourth month, on the fifth day of the month, as I was among the exiles by the river Chebar, the heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God.*
 - The Spirit descended upon Jesus like a dove
 - Voice from heaven saying, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased."
- People have asked, was this a voice for all to hear or a voice between God and Jesus?
- We are not sure.
- Regardless, the scene was a dramatic moment to inaugurate the beginning of Jesus ministry.
- By the way, the reason for the drama in this scene was because the triune God shows his full colors as Father (speaking), Son, (Jesus), and Holy Spirit (dove)
- Jesus the Emmanuel, who is God in the flesh, was from God **and loved by God**.
- This is how God affirmed the Good News.

4. Good News Was Humanized

12 And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. 13 He was in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him.

- Mark makes this section of text sound like, no sooner after Jesus clothes dried from his baptism, Jesus was driven into the wilderness.
- This demonstrates Mark's sense of urgency in his writings where the description of one account to the next is "immediately" done, thus making his gospel one of brevity and also the shortest.
- An example of this is in the wilderness where Mark's version is the most brief compared to the other gospels.
- Mark also does not describe—Jesus' victory over the temptation of Satan—in the way the other gospel writer do.
- All Mark says is that Jesus was driven into the wilderness for 40 days tempted by Satan with wild beasts.
- No other gospel mentions that Jesus was with wild beasts, and was used by Mark to emphasize the remote, isolated, savage part of the desert.
- Jesus had to go into the isolated desert to be tempted.
- Why did Jesus have to be tempted?

- Jesus had to be tempted because it was necessary for Jesus to be in every respect like us.
 - *Hebrews 2:17* Therefore he had to become like his brothers and sisters in every respect, so that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make a sacrifice of atonement for the sins of the people.
 - Since he himself had gone through temptation and suffering, he is able to help us when we are being tempted.
 - So here in this text, we find the wilderness experience again where Jesus was tempted.
 - Friends, in the same way when we go through our wilderness, the places where we are tempted and tested, we can rely upon the one who has successfully gone through it (without sin) and offers to help us through the wilderness.
 - Jesus was not a God who can not be modeled after, but the God-man who can deeply relate to the challenges we face in this world.
 - The Good News was humanized for our sake.
1. Good News Was Expected
 2. Good News Was Prepared
 3. Good News Was Affirmed
 4. Good News Was Humanized

Offering

The earth belongs to God, our creator; every good thing is a gift from the Lord. Let us glorify God through the gifts of our lives.

*Doxology

Praise God from whom all blessing flow. Praise Him all creatures here below.

Praise him above the heavenly host. Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost

*Prayer of Dedication

We give you thanks, O God, for every blessing and spiritual gift you have poured out upon us. Let the gifts of our lives be a source of blessing in your world, all to the glory of your holy name. Amen.

*Affirmation of Faith (Apostle's Creed)

Minister:

Brothers and Sisters in Christ, what do you believe?

All:

I BELIEVE in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic Church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.

Prayers of the People

Let us turn to the Lord in prayer.

All-glorious God, maker of heaven and earth, we pray for the world you have made.... Make yourself known during these troubled times during this pandemic. Help us find expedited channels of delivery for the vaccine so that people can receive the vaccine sooner.

We pray for this country you have given to us to reside. To see the events upon our capitol and our own state government this past week, we pray for peace. Only you can bring unity and healing that we need so that peace prevails on our country.

We pray for the church you have redeemed.... Renew in us the gifts of your Spirit and the call to Christian discipleship. Where history and heresy have divided us, make us one in the baptism we share.

We pray for the peoples you have created.... Give to the leaders of all nations the wisdom to know what is good. Where people are poor and hungry provide justice and daily bread.

We pray for the loved ones you have given us.... Bless our families, friends, and neighbors; keep them safe from trouble and danger. Where there is sorrow, sickness, or suffering send your Spirit of comfort and healing.

All this we pray in the name of the Lord Jesus, whose voice is our strength and salvation, whose breath is the Spirit of peace, and now, with confidence as children of God, let us pray:

Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in Heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the Kingdom, and the Power, and the Glory forever.
Amen.

***Hymn** PH 383 My Faith Looks Up to Thee

1 My faith looks up to Thee,
Thou Lamb of Calvary, Savior divine:
Now hear me while I pray,
Take all my guilt away,
O let me from this day
Be wholly Thine!

2 May Thy rich grace impart
Strength to my fainting heart,
My zeal inspire;
As Thou hast died for me,
O may my love to Thee
Pure warm, and changeless be,
A living fire!

3 While life's dark maze I tread,
And griefs around me spread,
Be Thou my guide;
Bid darkness turn to day,
Wipe sorrow's tears away,
Nor let me ever stray
From Thee aside.

4 When ends life's transient dream,
When death's cold sullen stream
Shall o'er me roll.
Blest Savior, then, in love,
Fear and distrust remove;
O bear me safe above,
A ransomed soul!

***Benediction**

The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you; the LORD lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace both now and evermore.

***Organ Postlude** (please be seated for the postlude)