

Monday, March 2nd *Read Mark 1:14-15*

This is all about The Good News of the Gospel and it includes three emphatic points.

1. Jesus preached the gospel (v.14).
2. The time is fulfilled (v.15).
3. The Kingdom of God is at hand (v.15).
4. Repent and believe (v.15).

In verse 14 Jesus preached the gospel. Mark says Jesus began to preach the gospel throughout Galilee when John was put in prison. This statement serves as a date to fix the approximate time that Jesus began to minister in Galilee. One year had passed between Mark 1:13 and Mark 1:14. Mark does not cover the events that took place between the temptation of Jesus and the imprisonment of John the Baptist. They are covered by John 1:19-4:54. Apparently, the order of events was this:

1. Two of John's disciples, Andrew and Peter, became followers of Jesus right after Jesus' baptism (John 1:35-42).
2. The very next day, Jesus, accompanied by Andrew and Peter, left Judea and went into Galilee. It was there that Philip and Nathaniel became followers of Jesus (John 1:43-51), and that the first miracle took place at Cana (John 2:1-11).
3. Jesus then took His family and His followers and moved to Capernaum, which was to become His headquarters (see note—' Matthew 4:12-13). But He stayed there only a few days, probably just long enough to move His family's belongings.
4. The Passover was at hand, so Jesus went to Jerusalem to celebrate it (John 2:13). It was while there that the first cleansing of the temple and the conversation with Nicodemus about the new birth took place (John 2:14-3:1f).
5. Jesus then began to move about Judea and to openly preach and baptize (John 3:22). But His ministry posed a problem for John and aroused the opposition of the religious leaders. Consequently, He left Judea and returned to Galilee (John 3:23-4:3).
6. It was at this point that Mark (and also Matthew) picked up the story of Jesus' ministry. The reasons why Jesus chose Galilee to be the center for most of His ministry should be closely . So, why Galilee as the headquarter? Nazareth was His hometown. Why did He not make His *hometown* His headquarters? The reason is clear: the city had rejected Christ: "No prophet is accepted in His own country" (Luke 4:24). They had thrown Him out and had attempted to kill Him (Luke 4:29). Therefore, Christ set up headquarters in the city of Capernaum. Capernaum lay in the northernmost point of Palestine. It was deliberately chosen by Christ as "His own city" (Matthew 9:1; Isaiah 9:1-7).

The choice is really about **God's work**. *God* had prepared Galilee down through history for the coming of His Son's ministry. Several facts show this (see Galatians 4:4).

1. Throughout history Galilee had been invaded and repopulated again and again with different people and cultures from all over the world. Over the years such an influx of differing people had created an atmosphere susceptible to new personalities and ideas.

2. Galilee was strategically located. The world's leading roads passed right through its borders. Merchants from all over the world passed through and boarded in its cities.

3. Galilee was heavily populated. It was also surrounded by the Samaritans, Phoenicians, and Syrians making it an open door for world evangelization. It was one of the most fertile lands in that part of the world. This fact, plus the travelling trade, led numbers to settle within its borders. There were within the district over two hundred cities with a population of fifteen thousand or more (Josephus. Quoted by William Barclay. *The Gospel of Matthew*, Vol.1, p.66). There were multitudes for Jesus to reach.

4. Galilee was open to new and fresh ideas. Its people, having come from all over the world, were open minded, always looking for new and fresh ideas to stimulate and challenge their thinking. Are you?

It was for these reasons that Christ chose Galilee to begin His ministry. The area was an open door for people to spread the news that the Messiah had come and the Kingdom of Heaven was being ushered in.

Tuesday, March 3rd *Read Mark 1:14-15; 1 Cor. 15*

Jesus preaches the Good News or Gospel. What's the Gospel? Well, it's not what you do. It's something that's done for you--actually by someone on a cross. Gospel is good news. In 1 Cor. 15, and, by the way this is the chapter that will be read at my funeral because it sums up the Christian Gospel SO perfectly. I love it. Read it more than once.

In 1 Cor. 15:3 we see the Old Testament Scriptures bore strong predictions concerning the death of God's Messiah.

- Christ rebuked his disciples for not believing all the prophets had spoken about His death (Luke 24:25-26).
- Paul's very method of preaching was to convince people that Jesus Christ was the Messiah who had been predicted in Scripture (the Old Testament).

Acts 17:2-3 ² As his custom was, Paul went into the synagogue, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures, ³ explaining and proving that the Christ had to suffer and rise from the dead. "This Jesus I am proclaiming to you is the Christ," he said.

Acts 26:22-23 ²² But I have had God's help to this very day, and so I stand here and testify to small and great alike. I am saying nothing beyond what the prophets and Moses said would happen--

²³ that the Christ would suffer and, as the first to rise from the dead, would proclaim light to his own people and to the Gentiles."

Paul clearly said that he was determined to preach nothing save Jesus Christ and Him crucified, and that the gospel had been promised before by the prophets in Holy Scripture.

1 Corinthians 2:2 ² For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.

- Much of the book of Hebrews is an exposition on how the death of Christ fulfills the Old Testament.

Wednesday, March 4th Read *Mark 1: 15; Gal. 4:4-6*

The gospel declares that time is fulfilled. The time is fulfilled for what? For the coming of Christ, God's Messiah. It was time for the salvation of man to come upon the world scene. Two things were meant by "the time is fulfilled" or "the fulness of time" (*Galatians 4:4*).

1. World and religious events were ready for the coming of Christ.

- a. The law had done its educational work.** It had shown through the Jewish nation that men are terrible transgressors. Despite all of God's favor and blessings, man still failed to worship God in love. The world now had a picture of the depraved heart of man. (Cp. *Romans 3:10-18* for a clear description of man's sinfulness.)
- b. The world was full of people spiritually starved.** The worship of self, of pleasure, of gods, of philosophical ethics left many empty and barren. The soul was now ready to have its hunger met.
- c. The world was at peace under Roman rule.** The world was an open door for the spread of the gospel—without any restraint.
- d. The world spoke Greek as a basic language.** This made communication possible with many from all over the world.
- e. The world had a system of roads for mass travel.** This allowed Christian missionaries to reach the farthest parts of the earth. It also brought commercial travellers to metropolitan centers where Christian believers were concentrated.

2. Prophetic events were ready for the coming of Christ. God had foretold that Elijah must *first* come and prepare the way (*Isaiah 40:3; Malachi 3:1*). Elijah came in the person of John the Baptist (*Matthew 11:10*). But now John was passing from the scene. His ministry of preparing the way for the Messiah was completed. It was now time for the Messiah to appear in force, proclaiming the glorious gospel of God's kingdom.

Matthew and Peter, as well as Mark, stress that "the time is fulfilled" for the Messiah to appear. The fact that the time was stressed so much points to Jesus as the true Messiah and gives additional proof to His Messiahship.

Note two significant applications.

1) God prepared the way for His Son by moving world events. He controlled history and events, and He controls all events and circumstances for the sake of His people.

Romans 8:28 And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

2) God fulfilled His promise to prepare the way for His Son. He will fulfill His promises to believers. He prepares the way for every genuine believer, running ahead of the believer to take care of him.

Romans 4:20-21 Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, ²¹ being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised.

Thursday, March 5th Read *Mark 1: 15; Gal. 4:4-6*

The gospel declares that the Kingdom of God is at hand

The gospel declares that a person must repent and believe the gospel. Both repentance and belief are essential.

1. Repentance by itself does not satisfy the law which was formerly broken. A person may repent and change from his former life, but repentance is not enough. Payment and satisfaction must be made for the laws he has already broken. This is why a person must believe in the *good news* about Jesus Christ. Jesus kept the law perfectly. He lived a sinless life (*2 Cor. 5:21; Hebrews 4:15; Hebrews 7:26; 1 Peter 1:19; 1 Peter 2:22*). He was perfectly righteous. As such, He satisfied God perfectly. He stood as the Perfect Man, the Ideal Man, the Pattern of what everyone should be. And as the *Ideal Man* He could stand for everyone and offer Himself to God as the *Ideal Payment*, the *Ideal Satisfaction* for all who had broken the law of God. This is the great gospel, the *good news* preached by Jesus Christ throughout Galilee. The person who becomes acceptable to God is the person who repents and believes in the gospel, who believes that Jesus is God's Son

(Mark 1:1), that Jesus is the *Ideal Man* who has made the perfect payment, the perfect satisfaction for our sins. Jesus is the propitiation for sins

2. Faith by itself does not satisfy the law. Faith without repentance, without a true change of life, is insincere. It is profession only. It presumes upon God, thinking He will excuse a self-centered life just like a grandfather who unwisely pampers and indulges a spoiled grandchild. Faith in Christ, in His satisfaction for sin, and repentance are both essential to enter the Kingdom of God.

Matthew 3:2 "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near."

Luke 13:3 I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish.

John 3:16 "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

Romans 10:9-10 That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰ For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.

Friday, March 6th Read Gal. 3:13-14

Scripture says that "Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law." The word "redeemed" (exograsen) means to buy back or to buy from or to ransom. Christ has bought us back and ransomed us from the curse of the law. That we have broken the law of God is unquestionable; every honest person knows this. Therefore, every person stands guilty before God and must be judged and condemned to bear the curse and punishment of the law. But this is the glorious news: Jesus Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law. How?

- **Jesus Christ was made a curse for us.** That sounds weird! What does it mean? Simply stated, Jesus Christ took our condemnation, doom, death, and punishment upon Himself and bore them all for us. Jesus Christ took our place as the lawbreaker and guilty party before God, and He bore the punishment of the lawbreaker for us. How was this possible? Because Jesus Christ had obeyed and kept the law of God perfectly. He had never broken the law, not even once. He was sinless and perfect. He had secured the Ideal Righteousness and Perfection before God. Therefore, He bore no guilt and no penalty and no mark of death. He had the right to stand before God and claim eternal life, the right to be accepted by God and to never experience death. He was perfect; He had secured incorruptible righteousness.
- **Because God is love.** The glorious gospel is that instead of claiming the right to live in God's presence, Christ determined to give His perfection and righteousness to the people of the earth, and to take their sin upon Himself. He was determined to swap His ideal righteousness for man's unrighteousness, to swap His ideal life for humankind's sinful life. He did this for you. It's a gift. That's why it's good news. If it were stuff for you to do it would be BAD NEWS! More stuff to do that you'll fail in.

Stated as simply as possible, Jesus Christ substituted Himself, His perfect life, for humankind's sinful life. He substituted His obedience to God for our disobedience. He bore our sin and punishment so that we might stand righteous and perfect before God. Jesus Christ bore the curse of the law for us.

Note the Old Testament quotation: "Cursed is everyone that hangs on a tree" (Deut. 21:23). This does not mean that a man is cursed because he is executed upon a tree, but rather that a man who is executed upon a tree is there because he is cursed, having been judged as a lawbreaker. Jesus Christ was the lawbreaker, taking the place of the transgressor; therefore, He was cursed (condemned) to die as the unlawful and disobedient sinner.

The purpose for Jesus Christ bearing the curse of the law was to open the door of blessing to all of us. Christ bearing the curse of the law was the way God fulfilled His promise to Abraham: that all nations would be blessed in him. Christ bearing the curse of the law is also the way that God gives the promises made to Abraham to the world. Any one who believes in Jesus Christ—that Christ bore the curse of the law for them—is accepted by God and given the blessings of the promised land eternally. It's good news--it's done for you. It's a gift.

In summary, the one who believes in Christ receives the promise of God's Holy Spirit, that is, the promise...

- **of the divine nature.**

2 Peter 1:4 Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.

- **of the new birth.**

John 3:3-6 In reply Jesus declared, "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again." ⁴ "How can a man be born when he is old?" Nicodemus asked. "Surely he cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb to be born!" ⁵ Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. ⁶ Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit.

1 Peter 1:23 For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God.

- **of being made a new creature.**

2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!