

The Beginning of the Good News (Mark 1:1-20)

15-June-25

Isaiah 40:1-5

Comfort for God's People

40 Comfort, comfort my people,
says your God.

² Speak tenderly to Jerusalem,
and proclaim to her
that her hard service has been completed,
that her sin has been paid for,
that she has received from the Lord's hand
double for all her sins.

³ A voice of one calling:
"In the wilderness prepare
the way for the Lord;
make straight in the desert
a highway for our God.

⁴ Every valley shall be raised up,
every mountain and hill made low;
the rough ground shall become level,
the rugged places a plain.

⁵ And the glory of the Lord will be revealed,
and all people will see it together.

For the mouth of the Lord has spoken."

Mark 1:1-20

John the Baptist Prepares the Way

1 The beginning of the good news about Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God, ² as it is written in Isaiah the prophet:

“I will send my messenger ahead of you,
who will prepare your way” —

³ “a voice of one calling in the wilderness,
‘Prepare the way for the Lord,
make straight paths for him.’”

⁴ And so John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. ⁵ The whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem went out to him. Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River. ⁶ John wore clothing made of camel’s hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. ⁷ And this was his message: “After me comes the one more powerful than I, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. ⁸ I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”

The Baptism and Testing of Jesus

⁹ At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. ¹⁰ Just as Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. ¹¹ And a voice came from heaven: “You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased.”

¹² At once the Spirit sent him out into the wilderness, ¹³ and he was in the wilderness forty days, being tempted by Satan. He was with the wild animals, and angels attended him.

Jesus Announces the Good News

¹⁴ After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. ¹⁵ “The time has come,” he said. “The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!”

Jesus Calls His First Disciples

¹⁶ As Jesus walked beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. ¹⁷ “Come, follow me,” Jesus said, “and I will send you out to fish for people.” ¹⁸ At once they left their nets and followed him.

¹⁹ When he had gone a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John in a boat, preparing their nets. ²⁰ Without delay he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men and followed him.

Please have your **Bibles opened** to **Mark 1** – from verse 1 to 20.

There’s an **outline** for you to take **notes**. Let me **pray** first. Let’s pray...

Intro/The Good News (Gospel)/Bad News (Mark 1:1)

This morning we are starting a **new series** looking at the **NT book** of **Mark**.

As the title of the book suggests – it was **written by** a man called **Mark**

His full name is **John Mark** (mentioned a few times in the Book of Acts: Acts 12:12, 25; 15:37)

Mark was a **close friend** of the **Apostle Peter** – and it's very likely that Mark got many of the **eye-witness accounts** he recorded in his book, from Peter.

The Book was **written** between **60 and 70AD**, and most likely before **Peter's death** in **64AD**.

The first verse says:

*The beginning of the **good news** about Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God*

In some versions of the Bible – it will say the beginning of the **"Gospel"** about *Jesus, the Messiah, the Son of God.*

And that's because **Gospel** means **"Good News"**

[Slide-Gospel]

The Greek Word for Gospel is - εὐαγγέλιον (euangelion).

- *εὖ (eu) = "good"*
- *ἀγγέλιον (angelion) = "message" or "news"*

So, εὐαγγέλιον literally means "good news" or "glad tidings."

What is this **Gospel Good News**?

In the context of the Bible, it specifically refers to the **Good News about Jesus** — His life, His death, and His resurrection to save sinners.

A simple way to explain the Gospel Good News is:

[Slide-Good News]

The Gospel is the good news that God loves us and sent His Son, Jesus, to die for our sins and rise again, so that all who trust in Him can be forgiven and have eternal life. [John 3:16 is a good definition of the Gospel]

[Slide-Evangelism]

The Greek word for Good News - εὐαγγέλιον - is where we get our English word Evangelism from which means sharing the Good News (Gospel) with others.

So when someone is evangelizing — they are basically **sharing this good news about Jesus!**

And that's pretty much **what Mark's book is about.**

It starts off by saying — Jesus **IS** the Good News — and then the rest of the **book unpacks** and **explains** **WHY** Jesus is Good News!

Now if the coming of Jesus to Earth, 2000 years, is Good News — it kinda of suggests that there was some **Bad News** — that **Jesus the Good News** - came to fix...

The **Bad News** is — the **Bible says we are ALL sinners** - We are **spiritually broken, morally guilty, and alienated from God** — because **we can't fully obey God's rules.**

For example

[Slide-Bad News]

Isaiah 53:6 says – *we are all like sheep who have gone astray* – that is we've wandered away from God

And

Romans 3:23 says – *For all have sinned a fall short of the glory of God*

[Slide-Bad News]

The Bible also says – that our sin puts us under God's just wrath (or anger) and under God's judgment

Romans 6:23 says – *The wages of sin is death* – we all must die one day

And

Hebrews 9:27 says - *People are destined to die once, and after that to face judgment...* we all must come before God's judgment!

God knew that humankind could not fix this problem of sin and death – by themselves – so He sent His Son Jesus – on a **rescue mission**

And that is the **Good News** that Mark wants to share with us.

And this morning – we will look at 3 things

1. 1st - **The Good News – was Promised and Prepared** (vv2-8)
2. 2nd – **The Good News – is Revealed in Jesus** (v1, v3, vv9-13)
3. And 3rd – **The Good News – Demands a Response** (vv14-20)

The Good News – Promised and Prepared (Mark 1:2-8)

[Slide-Promised and Prepared]

1st then - **The Good News – was Promised and Prepared** – that’s verses 2 to 8

If we look at verse 2 – Mark quotes a **promise** from God from the OT – from **Malachi 3:1 [450BC]** – God promised “*I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way*”

And from verse 3 – Mark quotes another **promise** from God from the OT – from **Isaiah 40:3 [700BC]** – that there will be “*a voice of one calling in the wilderness, ‘Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him’*”

What Mark wants us to know – is that **God planned to send someone to fix sin and death and bring the Good News** – namely **Jesus** – and Mark also wants us to know that God promised to send someone just before Jesus arrived to prepare people to meet Jesus.

This **promised messenger** and **promised voice of one calling in the wilderness** – is none other than – **John the Baptist** – whom we are **introduced** to, in **verse 4** **John** appears in the **wilderness** and he **fulfils** the **prophecies** by **preparing people** to meet Jesus

He does this by **preaching a baptism of repentance** for the **forgiveness of sins**
The **purpose of John’s baptism** was a **sign/symbol** that a **person** was - **turning away from their sin – turning back to God** - and **getting ready** for the **coming of Jesus**; that is, **preparing to meet and receive Jesus.**

It helped people:

- **Acknowledge their sin** against God
- **Show they wanted to change** and go God's way
- And to **prepare their hearts to receive** the Messiah (Jesus)

We are also given a **description of John who sounds a bit like the Old Testament prophet Elijah**

John dresses like Elijah – verse 6 – he wore clothing made from **camel hair** and wore a **leather belt** – and lived off **locusts** and **wild honey**!

John also has the same message as Elijah – that people should repent of their sins and **turn back to God** – and that people should **be baptized in water** – to **symbolize their sin being washed away by Jesus**

But there's more...

John's baptism is only the start

John says – verse 7 – there's **someone more powerful to come** – and verse 8 says – this **more powerful one** – **will baptize people with the Holy Spirit**

Of course this one who is **more powerful than John** is – **Jesus!**

When people believe in Jesus – they **receive the Holy Spirit** – which enables them to be **transformed and renewed** – the **Holy Spirit changes people's hearts**.

Baptism of water is an outward sign – whereas Baptism of the Holy Spirit is internal!

Application – how can we **be like John the Baptist?**

There are a **number of ways** we can be like John the Baptist today

- We can be like John - **Pointing people to Jesus** – John’s mission was to prepare people to meet Jesus. We can **help others to be prepared to meet Jesus** by sharing the Gospel (evangelism)
- We can be like John - **Living humbly and putting Jesus first** – John says in John 3:30 – “*He [JESUS] must become greater; I [JOHN] must become less*”. We can **put Jesus first in our words, our actions and our choices!**
- We can be like John - **Calling people to repentance** - John didn’t water down the truth — **he lovingly told people to turn back to God. We can speak the truth in love, encouraging people to follow God’s way**
- We can be like John - **Staying faithful to God’s call** – John stayed faithful to **his mission from God** – even though it got hard and he faced opposition. We can keep trusting God and keep doing good, even if it costs us!

The Good News – Revealed in Jesus (Mark 1:1, 3, 9-13)

[Slide-Revealed in Jesus]

2nd thing - Mark wants us to know is - **The Good News – is Revealed in Jesus** – that’s in **v1, v3, vv9-13**

Look back at verse 1 – Mark describes Jesus as the **Messiah** and as the **Son of God**
Messiah means – **God’s Anointed / Chosen One** -

God promised a **Messiah saviour figure** in the Old Testament [Psalm 2:2; Daniel 9:25-26) – Mark is saying – here He is – and His name is Jesus!

Mark also says **Jesus is the Son of God!**

Not only that but in verse 3

Mark says this **promised messenger** [John] is **preparing the way for the Lord** – and **this Lord is Jesus** – **which means Jesus is also God** – as well as a human being!

And if Jesus is God – It means Jesus is perfect and sinless!

And we get further clarity on Jesus' identity in verses 9 to 11 – when **Jesus turns up at the River Jordan to be baptized.**

Now we **should point out** here

Jesus doesn't need to be baptized – because He doesn't have any sins to be washed away! He's **sinless!**

So why did Jesus let John baptize Him?

Jesus was baptized **to demonstrate His mission on earth is: to do the will of the Father and to identify with sinful humankind.**

Jesus didn't have to be baptized. He also didn't have to die on a cross in our place. He did both things to express His solidarity with fallen sinful humankind.

Jesus was baptized to be **identified WITH sinful humankind**, but He was also baptized to be **identified TO sinful humankind**.

At Jesus' baptism – **God the Father's voice spoke** and the **Holy Spirit descended like a dove** – it was **confirmation by the Holy Trinity** – Father, Son and Holy Spirit - to **signify the start of Jesus' ministry**

And it's significant that God the **Father** says to Jesus - ***You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased***

Here we have **God the Father** giving His complete seal of approval on His Son's **ministry!**

Also, by allowing Himself to be baptized – Jesus was **setting an example for His followers** – to say – **all my followers must repent of their sin and be baptized!**

And to prove that Jesus is indeed the perfect one - *to be called the Good News* – straight after His baptism – verse 14 – the **Holy Spirit sent Jesus into the wilderness...**

Why?

- So that **Jesus was tested**; just like the Israelites were tested in the wilderness when God brought them out of Egypt. **Jesus was tested to show His obedience and trust in God; and **to model what we must do.****
- Jesus was also tested to **show that He would succeed where Israel failed**. Israel gave into the temptations to sin in the wilderness. **Whereas Jesus resisted**

Satan and remained faithful to God [In the other Gospels – we are told that Jesus used God’s word to resist Satan]

Application

How can we apply this to ourselves this morning?

- Jesus is the centre of the Good News – **without Him there is no good news** – so we should let Jesus shape the way we think, the way we speak and the way we behave!
- We can also reveal the identity of Jesus to others – Jesus - is the Promised Messiah, the Saviour and the Son of God
- We can encourage people - to repent and be baptized
- And like Jesus – we will be tested in our lives – not maybe – but definitely!
Jesus Himself said – ‘***in this world you will have trouble***’ (John 16:33)
- And when we are tested and tempted - the Apostle Paul reminds us - ***God will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure*** (1 Corinthians 10:13)
- Jesus can also identify with our weakness and sufferings – because He is the Savior we need. Jesus tells us “***Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.***”

- And Jesus promises to be with us “to the end of the age” (Matt 28:20)

The Good News – Demands a Response (Mark 1:14-20)

[Slide-Demands a Response]

3rd thing - Mark wants us to know is - **The Good News – Demands a Response**

that's in verses 14 to 20

When John is put in prison

Jesus' ministry springs into action – verse 14 – Jesus goes to Galilee proclaiming the Good News

His Good News message is both **simple and profound** - verse 15:

- **The Good News is - The time has come.** God's promise of a saviour and salvation is here now! Not in the distant future.
- **The Good News is - The Kingdom of God is near.** With the coming of Jesus, God's Son, **God's invitation to be part of His Kingdom has come.** And **God's kingdom** is not like **Earthly Kingdoms** that fade away and disappear (like the Babylonian, Assyrian, Persian, Greek, Roman empires) – **God's Kingdom is a forever Kingdom** (Daniel 2:44 and Isaiah 9:6-7)
- **The Good News of Jesus also means people must Repent and Believe this Good News.** The message is simple: People are to **repent** (turn away from sin and **stop going their own way** – do a U-turn – and **follow God's way**) and they

are to **believe** the Gospel (Good News) that Jesus **IS** the **ONLY** way to be forgiven and the **ONLY** way to Heaven and eternal life.

We can make the Gospel complicated, when really it's very simple – Repent and Believe in Jesus!

And to show what response is required to this Good News

In verses 16 to 20

Jesus recruits people who will share in this Good News and share this Good News with others...

Jesus comes across Simon (Peter) and his brother Andrew and simply says “Come, follow me”

Jesus’ call to “follow” **must be obeyed** – “they left their nets and followed Him”

And in verses 19-20 – James and John - they “left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men and followed Jesus”

Jesus’ call to “follow” also **requires a change of priorities** – instead of fishing for fish – they will now “fish for people”

Application

For us then

What **action** do we need to take in our response to the Good News of Jesus?

- We are to **repent** – this is not just a one-time repentance when we first become Christians – the **Greek tense** of the verb – suggests a **continuous or repeated**

action – an ongoing way of life! We are to let go of anything that hinders us from following Jesus – we are to drop our nets – and come back to God

- We are to believe – again the Greek means a continuous or repeated action.

We are to believe and keep on believing.

What are we believing? That Jesus died for MY SINS to be forgiven and that Jesus rose so - I - CAN HAVE ETERNAL LIFE

- We are to follow Jesus – follow His teaching – follow His example – WWJT, WWJS and WWJD. We are not to fall into the trap of following religious leaders and ministers – we are to follow JESUS.

So often I hear of ministers moving churches and some of the congregation follow the minister to his new church. This is not what Jesus says – He says “follow me!”

- And we are to help others to follow Jesus?
 - By setting an example of Christ-like behaviour
 - By reading the Bible with them
 - By praying with and praying for them
 - By gossiping about Jesus
 - By inviting them to our services and events here at Church

- By **discipling them** - walking with them - through doubt, through joy, through failure, and through spiritual growth. Let them know we are in it with them for the long haul
- By **evangelism – Bible deliveries**
- By **teaching Scripture** in Schools

Challenge

A **challenge** to finish with..

Who is one person you know who needs to hear the good news of Jesus?

A **family member**, a **friend**, a **workmate**, a **neighbour**, or someone you're already praying for?

📌 Before the day is done, **write down one name.**

📌 This week, **take one step toward sharing the Good News with them** — a conversation, a coffee, a message, a prayer.

You don't have to say everything — but take one step.

The beginning of the good news can begin again — through you

Let's pray...

Heavenly Father thank you for Jesus – the Good News – that came down from Heaven to fix the bad news of sin and death.

Help us to repent and keep on repenting

Help us to believe that Jesus is the way to be forgiven and to eternal life in Heaven – and help us to keep believing

Help us to follow Jesus – and keep on following Him
And help us to share the Good News of Jesus with others...
In Jesus Name, Amen.