

Week of Meetings 01 Gospel According to Mark

by David Clifford

The Gospel of Mark portrays the Lord Jesus in his servanthood, highlighting his obedience and ministry on earth.

Duration: 38:50

Scripture: Matthew 20:28, Mark 1:1, Mark 8:22-26, Mark 10:45, Luke 19:10, John 1:1, Hebrews 2:1-3

Topics: "Servanthood", "The Gospel"

Description

The video is a sermon on the Gospel according to Mark. The speaker highlights three main sections of the Gospel: the coming of the Son of God, his ministry, and his sacrifice as a ransom for many. He emphasizes the importance of reading Mark's Gospel in a modern translation to understand its message. The speaker also discusses the key themes of servanthood and obedience in Mark's Gospel, and emphasizes the concept of the gospel of the second chance for believers.

Transcript

Jolly nice to be able to pop over and see you again. And to have this fellowship around the world for a whole week. You know, there's something I've been looking forward to for weeks now, very, very much indeed.

Do you know what it is? No, it's tomorrow when there's no meeting and I have a day off. I've really been looking forward to that for weeks now, so I'm not coming to your meeting tomorrow afternoon. But of course, all you in fellowship will come, I know.

However, although we perhaps are a little tired, it's always very refreshing to come back to the Park of the Palms and see you all and preach the word. You know, who was it who said, General MacArthur, who said, old soldiers never die, simply fade away. And old mailmen never die, they simply lose their zip.

Oh no, he didn't say that, somebody else did that. And I say that old college presidents never die, they simply use their faculties, lose their faculties. That's what happened to me at the moment.

However, we trust we shall be very much refreshed. We're sure we shall be while we are with you this time. Some of you have been coming along so regularly now for three months that you must be very tired yourselves.

I think you either deserve a diploma, or a medal, or a blessing. And let's hope that you haven't had a blessing while you get one this last week. We're not giving diplomas out, but I understand that the ministry here during the last three months has been exceptionally good.

And as I look through the list of speakers and their subjects, I thought to myself, this is tremendous ministry. And all these brethren and sisters at Park of the Palms must now be real theology students. And I thought of giving you all a diploma in systematic theology.

But we haven't quite got that far yet, maybe the directors will arrange something like that a little later on. But I'm very glad you're still with us for the last week. Somebody told me all the people that went yesterday when they heard that I was coming.

But you are here, and the Lord's here. That's the main thing, the Lord is here to bless us. Now in turning to Mark's gospel, and most of you have a duplicated sheet which gives you a little idea of what we're going to do this week with the Lord's help.

Sorry we're not able to give a duplicated sheet for each meeting. We have done that on many an occasion, but we haven't had time to get round to that. But I thought it was good for us to get back again to the life and teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ, one of the gospels.

You know, the writer of the Hebrew says, we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard spoken by Christ. Spoken by Christ. For if the words spoken by angels were steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward, how shall we Christians escape if we neglect so great salvation spoken to us by the Lord, and confirmed unto us by those that heard the Lord.

May we during these days in Mark's gospel listen to the voice of Jesus. A member of my board in England years ago used to read, he's in the glory now, used to read a portion of the gospels and of what Jesus himself said every day of his life. There was a Roman Catholic in Ireland who picked up a piece of paper in the gutter, he was part of a tract, part of a gospel tract.

And he read it through as far as he could. And he kept coming to the phrase, Jesus said. And Jesus answered and said unto them.

And Jesus again said unto them. And he said to himself, perhaps, has the blessed Jesus said so many things, and you've never heard them, and you don't know what he said. So he went and bought a new testament and found out for himself what Jesus said by reading the gospels.

We ought to give the more earnest heed to the things that Jesus said. And I trust that you'll be able to read Mark's gospel. If I was lecturing now and you were in my class, I would say now before the next lecture, I want you to read through Mark's gospel in a modern translation.

You'll know it pretty well in the King James Version. Read it in Phillips Version or Living Letters or a modern translation all the way through at one sitting before the next lecture and get the idea again, the general idea again in your mind. However, I know that you will be looking into the word because you're very good students here as we look into it together.

Now this gospel by Mark, the second in order here but the first to be written, is about the Lord Jesus in his servanthood. It is portraying the Saviour as he came to serve. If in Matthew the idea is, Behold your King,

and in Luke, Behold the Man, and in John the main idea is, Behold your God, then in this gospel the idea is, Behold my servant.

That's what some of us were talking about together a few minutes ago at our earlier meeting, if you remember. God wants us to behold his Son in his special ministry on earth, the things he said, the things that he did, and the death that he died for us and rose again. So if the portrait in Matthew is Christ as Sovereign and the portrait in Luke is Christ as Saviour and the portrait in John is Christ as the Son of God, the portrait in Mark is Christ as the Servant.

Now you know very well that Matthew was written primarily for the Jews and that Luke was written primarily for the Greeks because Dr. Luke was a Greek himself, a Gentile. And John was written for the world that the world might know of Jesus the Son of God. So this beautiful little gospel was written from Rome, we believe, for the Romans in particular, but not exclusively, for you and for me.

God has preserved this through the years for us. Now the key word in Matthew is Kingdom. The key word in Luke is the Son of Man.

And the key word in John is Believe, as you all know, that they might believe. These things are written that you might believe. But the key word in Mark is Straightway or Immediately.

And this of course is very interesting because they were written especially for the Romans and they were very go-ahead people in those days, probably still are today. And this kind of language appealed to them very much indeed. If the principle in Matthew is the Lordship of Christ, and the principle in Luke is the Love of Christ, and the principle in John is the Worship of Christ, the principle in Mark is the Obedience of Christ.

The key verse in Mark's gospel is in chapter 10. And it says in verse 45 that the Son of God came to minister and to give his life a ransom for many. I've abbreviated it.

The Son of God came, that's the first section of Mark's gospel. To minister, that's the main body of the gospel. And to give his life a ransom for many, that is the concluding section.

Let us read a few verses from God's holy word, from the gospel according to Mark. The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. As it is written in the prophet, that's in Isaiah, Behold I send my messenger before thy face, who shall prepare thy way before thee.

The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his path straight. And John did baptise in the wilderness. Verse 7, And he preached and said, There cometh one mightier than I after me, the lachitu whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose.

I indeed have baptised you with water, but ye shall be baptised with the Holy Ghost. Came to pass in those days, he shall baptise you with the Holy Ghost. Came to pass in those days that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, was baptised of John in Jordan.

Straight away coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens opened and the Spirit like a dove descending upon him. There came a voice from heaven saying, Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. May the Lord bless to us the reading from his precious word.

Now you probably noticed that I said, and as it says here, the gospel according to Mark and not Mark's gospel. You see there is only one gospel, one good news about the Saviour and his coming and ministry and death for us and resurrection. But it has four facets, we have four views of that glorious ministry and message and work of the Saviour.

So this is the gospel according to Mark. There are four aspects of the one gospel. Now John Mark who wrote this one is mentioned eight times in the New Testament.

He was the cousin of Barnabas and was converted through the Apostle Peter. This we gather from 1 Peter 5 and Peter refers to him as my son, my son in the faith we take him. His Jewish name was John which means the grace of God.

There is no doubt at all about it that the grace of God, God's unmerited kindness is seen in the life and the writing of Mark. He went on part of the first missionary journey with the Apostle Paul did John Mark and then left before the journey was completed. From Pamphylia he returned.

He probably got a little homesickness, he was only a young man. Left his mother at home and he was away from his mother's apron strings and felt it much or perhaps it was girlfriend trouble. But he gave up half way through and Paul was very concerned about this and when Barnabas wanted to take Mark on the next missionary journey Paul said no, I'm sure because of his failure.

But brethren listen, failure with God is not final. There is always the gospel of the second chance to the believer. There is no second chance to the unbeliever who dies in his sin of course.

If you die in your sin whether I go you cannot come and that is that. But there is the gospel of the second chance to the believer. The voice of the Lord called again to Samuel.

The word of the Lord came again to Jonah. The potter made the vessel again. This is the gospel of the second chance.

Failure is not final. This young man Mark failed in his service for Christ as you have and I had some time to time but at these conference meetings God calls us again to himself to hear again the call of the Lord Jesus and to follow him and be used again in his service. And thank God with the apostle Paul the grace of Christ triumphed and he invited Mark to come and join him in the ministry because thank God in the life of Mark the grace of God triumphed too.

Because he recovered his backsliding if backsliding it was and he got back into the work and Paul says he's profitable to hear to me for the ministry Timothy just pick him up and bring him along with you in your car. Oh no they hadn't got cars in those days. But thank God he recovered and was used by God in various ways.

I was going to say one more word in that connection. In Colossians 4 Mark greets the church at Colossae through the apostle Paul who is writing there. And in 1 Peter, Peter says to the saints scattered abroad Mark my son salutes you.

And this is what Harold St. John has to say about Mark. A great man Mark. Peter is a father to him.

Paul longs after him and leans on him. And his cousin Barnabas is prepared to forfeit the friendship of Paul for Mark. A great young man was Mark.

Now this is the earliest of the four Gospels and probably the earliest of the writings of the New Testament. I'm not quite sure this was written between 50 and 60 A.D. I say 50 advisably may have been written between 50 and 55 even. Note Peter's authority in and behind this Gospel.

Note Peter's preaching. Note Peter's experiences here. And Mark is advisably called the interpreter of Peter.

It seems that most of his information about the Saviour he got first hand from Peter who of course walked with the Saviour day by day for three years. Now one of the early fathers, Tapias A.D. 120 and that's pretty early on after the life of Christ and the death of Christ, Tapias said that Mark was the interpreter of Peter and he probably meant that Mark translated into Greek the Aramaic that Peter used in his preaching. But he is the interpreter of Peter in many ways as we shall see as we look through.

Written for Gentiles and Romans in particular and written from the city of Rome we believe. And because it was written to the Romans the Aramaic expressions here used were interpreted in the context so that the Romans would understand the full Gospel message here. For instance he inserts the helpful explanatory notes such as the Mount of Olives he says is near Jerusalem.

Well the Romans wouldn't know that unless he said so. He said that the Jews washed their hands after visiting the Gentile public markets. In chapter 13 and verse 3 see also chapter 7 in the first few verses.

Not only so he gives the meaning does Mark of obscure words such as Beelzebub translate Aramaic words into Greek so that the Romans would understand. Such as Talitha Kumai made I say unto thee arise or as Harold St. John puts it little lamb arise. It's a tender phrase to a young girl.

He also explains the meaning of the word Ephartha which he says means be opened when the Lord Jesus opened the eyes of the blind man. He uses a number of Latin words also which goes to show that he is writing especially for the Romans. When I said that we ought to note the emphasis about Peter and his life and preaching and ministry in this book.

Even in the first chapter we have a good example of what I'm trying to say. For here we find the Lord Jesus in Peter's business life in verse 17 and in Peter's church life we may say verse 21. And then in Peter's home life verse 30 onwards.

And the Lord Jesus is given preeminence and he is obeyed in every department of Peter's life and of course there is great blessing in every case. The Lord Jesus came into his business life and said come ye after me and I will make you to become fishers of men. And this was his first test.

And he responded beautifully straight away, straight away they forsook their nets and followed him. It's very often the case in the life of a Christian businessman in America that Christ comes into his life in a very noticeable way and sometimes a very forceful way and says to him come ye after me and I will bring you into a better business. And thank God for those who have heard a very definite call of the Saviour and have obeyed his call in the business world.

God doesn't call us all to leave our business and go out in faith or go out in full time ministry or go out to the mission field, but he does expect preeminence in our business life as well as in our ordinary personal experiences. And I heard the call, come follow, that was all. Earth's joys grew dim, my soul went after him, I rose and followed, that was all.

Will you not follow if you hear his call? So the Lord Jesus comes into Peter's church life and he reveals his authority in his teaching and in his exorcism of evil spirits and it's good to see how Christ is given liberty and the evil in Peter's church life is eradicated by his power. Notice that the demon knew more than the people, that he was the Holy One of God and yielded to the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ. Then he comes into Peter's home life.

If the Lord Jesus is Lord of our lives, then he is Lord of our homes. Peter opens the door for the Saviour to come in, to bring blessing to his mother-in-law. Now there are some of our friends who say that Peter was never married, well if he had a mother-in-law without being married he was a very lucky person, don't you think? And he is invited into Peter's home and he brought great blessing into Peter's home.

Not only to Peter's mother-in-law, the fever left her at the touch of the hand of the Saviour, but of course to Peter and his brother. They sat at the table, had fellowship with Christ and the old lady now was only too willing to minister unto them. And then, we shall see later on in chapter 2, the whole city was gathered together at the door, this little city crowded now around the door because not many more could get inside.

And many people were blessed because Peter gave the Lord Jesus the pre-eminence, not only in his business life, not only in his church life, but in his home life too. Let us look very briefly as we begin to close, in Mark chapter 1, the first verse, the beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Notice this is just, according to Mark, the beginning of the gospel.

I am sure he was inspired by God the Holy Spirit to say that especially as well as everything he did say about the Lord Jesus and his ministry and his death for us. Thank God the gospel is eternal. This is only the beginning when Jesus came and this continues for all eternity.

We shall enjoy if our faith is in Christ, the blessings of Christ's coming. Notice it is the beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Jesus, the name of his humanity, Christ, the name of his servanthood.

Jesus the servant here, or Jehovah the servant in Mark's gospel. And the Son of God, the designation of his nature. In this Mark chapter 1 you have three comings.

The coming of John, the coming of Jesus, and the coming of Satan. John came to prepare his way before him, so that even his own disciples should lead him and follow Jesus as Peter and Andrew and no doubt others did. Make his path straight, said John, prepare ye the way of the Lord.

John had three things to say about the Lord Jesus in particular, not only his path of the straightest, but his might is the greatest. That's verse 7. There cometh one mightier than I after me, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose. This was of course the omnipotent Son of God whose way John was preparing.

And his baptism is the weightiest. I baptise you with water, but he shall baptise you with the Holy Ghost. Now nobody is baptised into the Holy Ghost, but it is the Lord Jesus by his Spirit who baptises us by the Spirit into his own body, into the body of Christ, which of course is the Church of God and this is at regeneration.

Notice that the baptism of our Lord in verse 10, coming out of the water, he saw the heavens open and the Spirit like a dove descending upon him. And you have the Trinity here. You have in verse 11 a voice from heaven and you have the beloved Son.

And in verse 10 the Spirit like a dove descending. And there are other illustrations of the Trinity in this book. In the book of Mark there are three baptisms.

Three baptisms of Jesus. The one we just mentioned in the sphere of water and then in the sphere of the Spirit which we mentioned too. And later on in chapter 10 he speaks of another baptism in the sphere of suffering.

He said to them who wanted some position in his kingdom, the sons of Zebedee, are you able to be baptised with the baptism that I am baptised with? And they said, perhaps glibly without thinking, we are able. And certainly they entered into his suffering. It was a baptism of suffering that he was speaking of there.

And it is the way the Master went, you know. Shall not the servant tread it still? For you it is given in the behalf of Christ not only to believe on him, but to suffer for his sake. It is part of the bargain, you know.

The entrance fee into God's kingdom is nothing, but the annual subscription is everything, you know. And it is very costly sometimes. It is the way the Master went.

Should not the servant tread it still? You notice here the three voices. There is the voice of John, prepare ye the way of the Lord. And that is the Jehovah title, the Lord for the Saviour.

And in verse 3 there is the voice of God, this is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. He is not only the Beloved One here, he is the Mighty One and he is the Holy One in this chapter. There is the voice of the unclean spirit who spake of him as the Holy One of God.

So John, the voice of John said he is the Mighty One, the voice of God said he is the Beloved One, and the voice of the unclean spirit said he is the Holy One, the Holy One of God. In this chapter there are three parties interested in our Lord. There is the three worlds interested rather than parties I should say.

There is the infernal world, Satan was interested in him, seeking to hinder him from his course in the redemption of mankind. The infernal world, Satan, the terrestrial world, the beasts came in verse 13 and ministered unto him, or rather the beasts were with him and the angels ministered unto him. So the celestial world, the angels, were interested in him too.

And I trust that as we go on looking into this Gospel, of which I am giving just a brief introduction this morning, we shall find more and more interest in the Lord Jesus, the Son of God. John said, I am not worthy, and he said I must decrease, but he also said he must increase. And may our study of John's Gospel mean to us that the Lord Jesus shall increase in our lives, he shall fill our vision, and we shall be taken up with him.

For your interest I am going to say that most of my talks will not be theological studies. I want to get away from those for a week if I may, because I have just come from the Bible College in Nassau, and I am going to another one in a week's time in Bermuda to start a new one there. And we do quite a fair amount of systematic theology, but I am going to be very simple, and I trust give some heart messages, talks if you like, to our hearts about sections of this beautiful Gospel, and the details you will see on your sheet.

In case there are those of you who are leaving today, and maybe one or two I heard were leaving today, I don't want you to get the wrong idea, in one of those sheets says something about the, I mean on one of those chapters, says something about verse 8, a second touch and a second blessing. I didn't quite know

whether to put that in there or not, but I don't want you to think that we are going to preach a second work of grace, or the eradication of the old nature, or the baptism of the Spirit after conversion, or any extreme doctrine, but we shall speak about what we have already hinted at this morning, that when there is a second touch from the Saviour, which is very often needed, then very often we see clearly, and the first one we see, as he did, is the Saviour himself, and what a blessing, maybe second or third or fourth blessing, but what a tremendous blessing that is, when the Lord Jesus himself fills our vision. May God bless to us his word this morning, and give to us a great interest in Mark's Gospel.

You remember that Peter's wife's mother lay sick of a fever, this is in this first chapter, and they, Andrew and Peter, tell the Lord Jesus about her, and he came in the home and laid his hand upon her. The fever left her. A friend of my father's in Birmingham, England, some years ago in one of the assemblies there, was Professor Morrison.

He was a professor in medicine, and he was working in connection with the police department of the city. On one occasion he went away for a weekend, and in this small town there was no assembly, so he went to a certain denominational church in the morning, and heard a local preacher, who gave a very good message on Peter's wife's mother lay sick of a fever. And this was right up his street, and he was very interested.

So he said, well now I haven't been to a PSA, present Sunday afternoon, a kind of Sunday afternoon brotherhood, for a long time he said, I'll go to the brotherhood this afternoon. Lo and behold it was the same local preacher, and lo and behold it was the same sermon. And he wasn't quite so interested the second time he heard it, because it was the same local preacher.

And lo and behold he went along to the Baptist in the evening, and there he was again. The same man, and it was the same message. So he went up to him and asked him, he said, now I'm a medical man.

He said, Professor Morrison am I? And he said, I'm very interested in your message, I've heard it three times. He said, I'm so interested about Peter's wife's mother, when is the old dear going to die? And I trust that in our ministry during this week, there will be no vain repetition, but that eyes shall be opened to see the Lord in His beauty, to hear His voice and respond to His call, and follow Him all the way. Let us pray.

We praise Thee our Father this morning, that Thy word is a living word. Because it is living, it is life-giving and life-sustaining. Thankful all those before Thee who have been born again through the incorruptible seed of the word of God.

And we thank Thee for all the sustenance, the spiritual strength we have received during the past weeks and months, through the ministry of Thy word. Let this week be no exception we pray, but make the book live to us, show us Thyself within Thy word, show us ourselves and show us our Saviour, and make the book live to us. And as we turn our eyes upon Jesus, as we behold Thy servant, give us grace to become more like Him by the working of the Spirit in us.

Give us the grace to obey His every call. Bring us to definite rededication to the Saviour and His service in the light of that day which we believe is soon, when He shall receive us and all His own to be forever with Himself. So at this noonday we bring to Thee our worship for Thy Son and all that we have in Him for this life and all that is promised us in Christ for the life that is to come.

Pray for any here present before me this morning who know not the Saviour, who have never been saved, do not know in their experiences the regenerating power of the Spirit of God. Bring them in their sin and need to the cross this morning. Bring them to this living Saviour for salvation today.

And now, Lord, we commend ourselves to Thee and to the word of Thy grace. Fill us all with joy and peace in believing in Christ to meet our every need. For His name's sake.

Amen.

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