

“The Gospel of Christ”
Mark 1:1; 12-13
(Preached at Trinity, March 11, 2009)

I’m supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord’s Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I’ll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. It is sometimes said that youth breeds irresponsibility. There might be some truth to this. There are some sins that we are more vulnerable to in our youth. Paul wrote:
2 Timothy 2:22 – “Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.”
2. Many have succumbed to the sins of immaturity. One such young man was John Mark.
 - A. He had been brought up in a Godly home. His mother was Mary. It was at her house that the saints had gathered for prayer when Peter was imprisoned.
 - B. Most believe it is likely that Mark was speaking of himself when he refers to the “young man” in **Chapter 14**
Mark 14:50-52 – “And they all forsook him, and fled. ⁵¹ And there followed him a certain young man, having a linen cloth cast about *his naked body*; and the young men laid hold on him: ⁵² And he left the linen cloth, and fled from them naked.”
This means he was an eyewitness of the life of Christ.
 - C. When Paul and Barnabas were sent by the church of Antioch on Paul’s first missionary journey they took along Barnabas’ cousin, Mark.
 1. For some reason, when Paul and Barnabas left Cyprus for Perga Mark left them and returned home to Jerusalem. We don’t know why. Perhaps it was his immaturity.
Matthew Henry suggests that he was either lazy or cowardly
 2. For Paul this was totally unacceptable. When it came time to leave on the Second Missionary Journey Paul refused to take Mark along.
 - D. Barnabas wanted to bring along his cousin. The disagreement between Paul and Barnabas so severe that they parted company.
Acts 15:37-40 – “And Barnabas determined to take with them John, whose surname was Mark. ³⁸ But Paul thought not good to take him with them, who departed from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work. ³⁹ And the contention was so sharp between them, that they departed asunder one from the other: and so Barnabas took Mark, and sailed unto Cyprus; ⁴⁰ And Paul chose Silas, and departed, being recommended by the brethren unto the grace of God.”
3. The issue isn’t so much that we have sinned. It is of far greater importance how we deal with our sin. For Mark he repented and changed. Unlike Demas who out of a love for the world departed the demands of discipleship, Mark became a faithful servant of Christ. Paul would later speak of Mark’s great value in the ministry:

2 Timothy 4:10-11 – “For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia. ¹¹ Only Luke is with me. Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry.”

4. Mark became of great value in the Kingdom of Christ. Of great importance for our immediate study, John Mark became the author of one of the Gospels of Christ – this one which bears his name.
5. Mark’s Gospel is one of the three Synoptic Gospels, yet it stands distinct from Matthew and Luke.
 - A. Mark is the oldest of the Gospels. Mark wrote this Gospel sometime between A.D. 50 and 65. It is one of the three synoptic Gospels which stand apart from the Gospel of John. The term “synoptic” comes from two Greek words: συν (syn = together) and οψις (opsis = seeing) to indicate that the contents of these three Gospels can be viewed side-by-side
All but a few verses in Mark are found in Matthew and Luke.
 - B. Mark wasn’t an apostle, yet he probably received much instruction from Peter who referred to Mark as his son. In all likelihood, Mark’s Gospel is Peter’s account of the life and ministry of Christ.
 - C. Mark is different from Matthew and Luke in length. It is the shortest of the Gospels and so everything is fast paced, compact, and vivid. It has no genealogy of Jesus and no birth narrative. It opens with Jesus as an adult beginning His ministry. Although Mark is the shortest Gospel, there are far more miracles recorded in Mark.
 - D. Mark most likely wrote his Gospel from Rome. He portrays Jesus in His power and authority, which would have been of interest to the Romans who had a lust for power.
William Hendriksen wrote of this Gospel: “To them Mark pictures a King who excels any earthly conqueror. His kingdom is far more extensive, his armor far more effective, and his rule far more enduring than anything originating here below.”
6. Each of the four Gospels begin differently
 - A. Matthew begins with the genealogy and conception of Jesus.
 - B. Luke begins with a dedicatory introduction and then the birth of John.
 - C. John begins with Christ as the eternal Word who existed from the beginning.
 - D. Mark finds Jesus as an adult beginning His earthly ministry. Remember, Mark is brief and fast paced. It opens with His baptism and by the time we get to **Verse 16** He’s calling His disciples.
7. We need to begin with **Verse 1**.
Mark 1:1 – “The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God;”
Verse 1 sets the tone for the remainder of the Book. Some refer to it as the title of the Gospel.
8. Mark announces he is writing about the Gospel of Jesus Christ. What did he mean by the word Gospel? There are four books in the Bible called Gospels. In fact they have taken on a particular genre of Biblical literature – the Gospels.
In **Verse 1**, however, Mark is not talking about a book. He’s means something much greater. It will be a favorite expression for Mark. He uses it seven times as compared with four for Matthew and none for Luke.

9. But what does he mean? We can gain much meaning from the Greek word: **εὐαγγέλιον** – It means “Good News.” Originally it meant the reward offered for bringing good news. Later it came to mean the good news itself.
- A. Before the death of Christ it spoke of the kingdom of God being established
Mark 1:14 – “Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God,”
 By Kingdom of God we are to understand God’s reign recognized in the hearts of men and realized in their lives. It describes His complete kingship or sovereignty over His people through His church.
- B. This Kingdom finds its full expression and fulfillment in Christ.
1. This is what Jesus preached
Mark 1:15 – “And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.”
 2. This is what Mark is making clear in **Verse 1**
 “The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God;”
 3. Mark isn’t talking about a book. He is talking about Christ coming to redeem His people. It is the announcement of this good news of Christ.
- C. It is tied very closely to preaching – preaching is the proclamation of the Gospel
 This “Good New” is a message that must be proclaimed.
εὐαγγελίζω – “to bring good news, to announce glad tidings
Romans 1:15 – “So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also.”
10. This Gospel was foretold in the Old Testament
Isaiah 61:1-2 – “The Spirit of the Lord GOD *is* upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to *them that are* bound; ² To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn”
11. When Philip told the Ethiopian Eunuch the Good News of Jesus Christ he quoted from Isaiah 53.
12. This Gospel is prominent throughout the New Testament – used 101 times
 Paul said: **Romans 1:16** – “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.”
13. As I bring before you this introduction into the Gospel of Mark there is no greater question we can ask. What then is this good news? What is the Gospel?
- I. The Gospel concerns God’s Son – the Gospel *is* Christ – The name Jesus means Savior or Salvation.
 “The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God”
Romans 1:1-4 – “Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called *to be* an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God, ² (Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures,) ³ Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; ⁴ And declared *to be* the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead:”
- A. The Gospel is a message that finds its embodiment in Christ
1. Jesus is the focus of the four Gospels

2. Jesus is the focus of Paul's message
1 Corinthians 2:2 – “For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.”
 3. Jesus, the Son of God, is God's plan for the redemption of His people.
 4. The Gospel states several realities about Christ
- B. Christ was born – He came
1. God sent forth His Son
Galatians 4:4-5 – “But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, ⁵ To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.”
 2. Mark's Gospel will be a record of the life of Christ as a man
 3. The humanity of Jesus was essential for Him to be our Savior. He had to become like us in order to become our sin-bearer.
 4. Jesus was placed under the Law like every human being
 - a. Every one of us have broken the law and are condemned
 - b. Jesus Christ kept the law perfectly.
Hebrews 7:26 – “For such an high priest became us, *who is* holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens;”
 - c. The Gospels present Jesus as a man as man was meant to be
- C. The second element of the Gospel is that Jesus died
1. All of humanity is condemned before God
 2. Jesus went to the cross in the place of sinners – He became our substitute
 - a. We are justified by His death – His righteousness is imputed to us
This will be one of the overarching themes of this book
 - b. Jesus is the head of His people just as Adam was our head
Romans 5:14-15 – “Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come. ¹⁵ But not as the offence, so also *is* the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, *which is* by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many.”
- D. The third element of the Gospel is the Resurrection
1. The Resurrection is one of the great pillars of the Gospel – Turn to 1 Cor. 15 - Listen carefully to Paul's words
1 Corinthians 15:1-4 – “Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; ² By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. ³ For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; ⁴ And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:”
 - a. The Gospel is the source of life to sinners – it must be preached “wherein ye stand; ² By which also ye are saved”
 - b. The Gospel is the message of Christ's death and His resurrection. These are the two great pillars of the Gospel

2. The Gospel does not end with our Lord's humiliation – He has been raised in glory – He has ascended to the right hand of majesty.
 - a. Just as He descended in lowliness and humility He has now ascended in omnipotence and glory.
 - b. He was “declared *to be the Son of God with power*”
- D. So what is the Gospel? In its most basic definition it is the Birth, life, death, burial, and resurrection of Christ
1. His birth as the consummation of God's redemptive purpose
 2. His life as the fulfillment of God's holy Law obeyed.
We are saved not only by His death but by His life
 3. His death as the accomplishment of our atonement and propitiation
 4. His burial, as He was taken out of the realm of sin.
Romans 6:4 – “Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”
 5. His resurrection – Jesus is the first-fruit. As He was raised so we too shall be raised.
His resurrection also means He is sitting upon His throne – His kingdom is marching forth victoriously.
- II. This Gospel message must be faithfully proclaimed
- A. Jesus came to die for sinners
- a. Sin and guilt cannot be removed from the Gospel
 - b. Jesus came because men are under the wrath and curse of God
 - c. The Law of God must be carefully applied
The Law is the standard by which all men will be judged?
Romans 7:7 – “I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.”
Galatians 3:24 – “Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster *to bring us* unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.”
 - d. We must preach the Law. We must preach sin. This is essential to the Gospel. Until a person comes to an understanding of his sin he will never seek Christ.
- B. Only after the holiness of God and His Law is applied can we get to the heart of the Gospel. Only then can we preach Christ
1. A man will have no need for Christ unless he knows his true need
1 Corinthians 1:18 – “For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.”
 2. Only when we see ourselves as condemned, only when we feel the fires of hell lapping at our feet will Christ appear precious and the Gospel good news.
 3. Only when we see our true need will we be willing to forsake all to follow Christ.

Conclusion:

1. The Gospel demands repentance.
Mark 1:14-15 – “Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, ¹⁵ And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.”
2. Jesus came to deal with our sin. He died that our sins might be forgiven – that they might be blotted out through justification.
But it is folly to think we can continue in our wickedness.
3. Second, the Gospel demand that we believe – “repent ye, and believe the gospel”
We must trust entirely in the Christ of the Gospel. We must rest upon what He has done to accomplish our redemption.
For all who repent and believe He will save.
4. The Gospel is good news. Have you seen Christ in His supremacy, in His majesty and glory?