***EYES ON JESUS - Mark 1 (pt.2) NOTES***

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In the most uncertain times of life, when things get chaotic, or unstable or even devastating and tragic, we have one sure way of keeping ourselves steady and secure, regardless of what we are facing…keep your eyes on Jesus.

**Heb 12:1-2**

**1** Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us,

**2** **fixing our eyes on Jesus**, the pioneer and perfecter (author and finisher) of faith.

Introduction to Mark:

* Believed to have been written by “John Mark” [Mark], a cousin of Barnabas, an assistant to Paul and one who walked closely with Peter (who referred to him as a “son”). It is believed that while he was not one of the Twelve Apostles, he was present with Jesus and the apostles in the later part of Jesus’ ministry, particularly in Jerusalem where his mother had a house church. Mark’s accounts of Jesus’ life are believed to have been told to him directly by Peter.
* This gospel is unique because it emphasizes Jesus’ actions more than His teaching. It is not just a collection of stories, but a narrative written to reveal that Jesus is the Messiah, not only for the Jews, but for the Gentiles as well
* Many believe it is the first gospel written, although that is heavily debated by those who favor Matthew as first. *(No original autographs for any books of the Bible so it’s all speculation. A Bible professor of mine believed that the other synoptics used Mark as a framework for their gospels)*
* The shortest of all the gospels (16 chapters as opposed to 21-28 in the others). Some consider it an epitome, or summary of Jesus’ life.
* Mark does not begin with a long genealogy nor does it start with Jesus being born and the Word becoming flesh like the other gospels. It begins with the statement: *“This is the Good News about Jesus the Messiah*” then starts with John the Baptist.

**FROM LAST WEEK:**

* John the Baptist – His entire life was poured out to prepare the way for Jesus.
* Jesus’ Baptism – Not for repentance of sin, but to be obedient to His father.
* Jesus’ temptation – 40 days tempted by the Devil in three ways.

***Mark 1:1-15***

***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 withwater, but he will baptize you withthe Holy Spirit.”*

***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 temptedby Satan. He was with the wild animals, and angels attended him.*

### **THIS WEEK – The Power of Truth and Peaceful Places**

### **Jesus Calls His First Disciples.**

**Mark 1:16-45**

***16****As Jesus walked beside the Sea of Galilee,* ~~~~~~~~ <pause>

*He had moved from Nazareth, to the shore area and spent time walking along the beach ~~~~*

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.

*These men left their families and their livelihood to follow Jesus, and become His disciples. It is now “Jesus and Four Apostles”, eight more will join them.*

**21**They went to Capernaum, and when the Sabbath came, Jesus went into the synagogue and began to teach. **22**The people were *amazed* at his teaching, because he taught them as one who had *authority*, not as the teachers of the law.

*Jesus is teaching in the local synagogue in Capernaum [the ruins are still there]. Just like when He taught in his hometown Synagogue in Nazareth, the people were amazed. He was teaching differently than their usual Rabbis and Teachers; He was teaching with “authority”.*

*He was able to teach the Word because he IS the Word who became flesh.*

*He taught with “Authority”, because He is the “Author” and finisher of our faith”- (Heb 12:2)*

**23**Just then a man in their synagogue who was possessed by an impure spirit cried out, **24**“What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God!”

**25**“Be quiet!” said Jesus sternly. “Come out of him!” **26**The impure spirit shook the man violently and came out of him with a shriek.

**27**The people were all so amazed that they asked each other, “What is this? A new teaching—and with authority! He even gives orders to impure spirits and they obey him.” **28**News about him spread quickly over the whole region of Galilee.

*Jesus begins His ministry in Mark driving out an evil spirit. He would go on to drive out many demons during the course of his ministry. When he did this news about him spread throughout the region. Jesus tried to contain his notoriety. He told some of those he healed to “tell no one about this” but they didn’t listen. Once word was out that He was healing people and doing miracles, the Pharisees would be after him to have him arrested. Jesus did not want that to happen until Passover of his final year of ministry.*

**29**As soon as they left the synagogue, they went with James and John to the home of Simon and Andrew. **30**Simon’s mother-in-law was in bed with a fever, and they immediately told Jesus about her. **31**So he went to her, took her hand and helped her up. The fever left her and she began to wait on them.

**32**That evening after sunset the people brought to Jesus all the sick and demon-possessed. **33**The whole town gathered at the door, **34**and Jesus healed many who had various diseases. He also drove out many demons, but he would not let the demons speak because they knew who he was.

*A view of a body of water

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*The family home of Simon and Andrew is just a few hundred feet from the synagogue Jesus spoke at, which is just a few hundred feet from the shore in the old fishing village of Capernaum. The stone foundations are all still there. Archeologists have found the remains of the actual house which had graffiti etched all throughout its walls with messages to Jesus, presumably from those he knew while he was here. Jesus spent much of his adult life operating out of this house. Jesus’ first healing in Mark took place here when Jesus healed Peter’s Mother-in-law who was sick with a fever.*

*(Joke: Why did Peter deny Jesus three times? …)*

### ***Jesus Prays in a Solitary Place***

***35****Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.****36****Simon and his companions went to look for him,****37****and when they found him, they exclaimed: “Everyone is looking for you!”*

**38**Jesus replied, “Let us go somewhere else—to the nearby villages—so I can preach there also. That is why I have come.” **39**So he traveled throughout Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and driving out demons.

Jesus went from being an unknown person who John had introduced, to moving with incredible power and authority known throughout the entire region in one chapter.

Here’s what we’ve just read:

**CALLING THE APOSTLES:**

*The first six disciples, then, were Peter & Andrew, James & John. Then Philip, and Bartholomew. There is a difference in John’s Gospel about the order that these appear. John relates the first, introductory meeting of Jesus with Andrew, John, Peter, Philip, and Nathanael. The Synoptics describe the actual “calling” of these men to follow Jesus. When Jesus told Peter in the fishing boat to “follow Me,” and Peter immediately left his nets and obeyed, Peter was not following a total stranger. He had met Jesus previously and had spent time with Him. The same is true for Andrew, James, and John.*

**DRIVING OUT DEMONS**

There was a lot of demon possession then because of several things;

#1. Before Jesus was born the world was very dark. It wasn’t until Jesus was born that the true light entered the world;

**John 1:9 “**The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world.”

#2. There was a severe lack of Truth about God being taught. The High Priests and Teachers of God’s law were deceiving people and misrepresenting the truth. Where ever there is Deception, demonic power is strong. Where ever there is Truth their power diminishes. Why? Satan is called the “Deceiver” and Jesus is the Way the TRUTH and the Life.

Jesus prayed;

**John 17:17** “Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.”

When there is false teaching, or people are kept from the truth of Word of God, evil prevails. This is exactly what happened during the Dark Ages, when the Word of God was taken away from common people and translated into the Latin Vulgate only made available to Catholic clergy. All manner of evil was rampant upon the earth, including the rise of Islam. It’s what happens today in places where the Bible is banned and in some cults as well.

#3. The Holy Spirit had not been “poured out on all flesh”

This fulfilment of Joel 2 happened on Pentecost after Jesus ascended. Evil Spirits are no match for the Holy Spirit.

Note: There are still incidents of demonic *possession* today, but by far Satan’s biggest weapon is to deceive, even “the elect” (God’s people) if it is possible.*[Matt 24:24]*

***Key Focus of today’s passage:***

**JESUS WENT TO A SOLITARY PLACE AND PRAYED**

**Verse 35 *“Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.”***

This simple little verse shows us so much about Jesus private life.

It’s not the only time he did this, there were many times in Jesus life where he went to a private place, just to pray (including the garden of Gethsemane the night before he died).

Jesus prioritized prayer, not because he was obligated to, but because he needed it. He knew that during His time on Earth, having deep communication with the Father was of vital importance.

In fact it seems that if there was one person who was so powerful and spiritually connected that he didn’t need to pray, it was Jesus, yet he prayed more than anyone!

Why?, he understood that his relationship and communication with the Father was the source of His power, wisdom, encouragement and inspiration.

It’s the same with us.

Sadly, so many of us are starving ourselves of these things. We go through life mal-nourished and grossly out of shape, because we don’t connect with our heavenly father, instead we constantly cram our minds with content.

These days we have a never-ending flow of content and information pounding away at us every waking second. Some of it is important to our jobs and families, much of it is meaningless filler and fodder that occupies our thoughts and attention.

Some of it is toxic content and information that has a detrimental effect on our souls.

Because of our phones, screens and other electronic stimuli, now more than ever before in history we desperately NEED to do what Jesus did in Verse 35.

**Verse 35** ***“****Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.”*

*[Story of Pastors retreat in OG….all I remember was the time of solitude and prayer,*

*…In fact, Last Thursday we went into this quiet empty auditorium, and prayed.]*

We live in a beautiful part of the state, as crowded as NJ is, Monmouth County has so many secluded and pristine natural areas, especially the beaches and bays that are not far away.

I urge you to take time regularly to get away to a place of solitude and pray. Listen in prayer, cry out to God in prayer, shut off the endless flow of content pounding away at you and just connect with God.

I’m not talking about *contemplative meditation or mysticism*; I’m talking about going to a place regularly where you can shut out the distractions that bombard you regularly enough to simply focus on God.

Cry out to Him, Think about Him, Talk to him, hear from Him,

It’s vital and refreshing and will enhance and empower every other part of your life. Jesus did it because he needed it, …we do too.

**Psalms 46:10 “Be still and know that I Am God!”**