



Sermon Notes

Term – Autumn 2018

Series – Mark

Gathering & Date – 10 & 5, 21 October

Title – The hopes and dreams of all the years ...

Preacher – Paul Langham

Reading – Malachi 3:1-2; Malachi 4:5-6; Mark 1:1-28

Main message of this talk in one sentence –

Jesus is the fulfilment of every human longing and comes to restore our relationship with God

Main points –

1. Jesus is the fulfilment of the entire promise of the Old Testament and of every human longing

Mark opens his gospel with the words:

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

... but then goes on to quote Malachi and Isaiah: in other words, the good news has its origins long before it was incarnated (made flesh) in the person of Jesus.

Jesus means 'saviour' and Messiah (Hebrew) and Christ (Greek) both mean 'anointed one'. This is deeply significant, for who was 'anointed' in the Old Testament? Prophets, priests and kings ... and Jesus is the perfect embodiment of each. In fact, Jesus embodies all that was significant to the people of the Old Testament – not just prophet, priest and king, but also land, temple, sacrifice

2. The ministry of Jesus and the work of the gospel is essentially one of restored relationship:

⁵ 'See, I will send the prophet Elijah to you before that great and dreadful day of the Lord comes. ⁶ He will turn the hearts of the parents to their children, and the hearts of the children to their parents (Malachi 4)

The apostle John writes:

... to all who did receive him [Jesus], to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God ... (John 1:12)

See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! (1 John 3:1)

3. The ministry of Jesus is one of power

⁴ *And so John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.*

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 baptise you with water, but he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit.'*

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!'*

The power is that of the Holy Spirit which is completely transformative – Matthew & Luke add emphasis to this by recording John the Baptist's words

he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and with fire

As Jesus is Messiah or Christ (anointed one) he comes as King to announce the Kingdom of God. We also do well to note the radical call to change contained within the word 'repent', which in Greek is *metanoéo* = I repent, change my mind, change the inner reality (particularly with reference to acceptance of the will of God).

Towards the end of his life, St Paul recalls the voice of God commissioning him in these words:

*"I am sending you to them [Gentiles]¹⁸ to open their eyes and turn them **from darkness to light**, and **from the power of Satan to God**, so that they may **receive forgiveness of sins** and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me."*

We do not serve those who do not share our faith if we play down the reality of what conversion entails.

Throughout Mark's gospel, we see Jesus both proclaiming and demonstrating that this Kingdom has indeed come:

he travelled throughout Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and driving out demons (Mark 1:39)

In the remainder of Mark 1, we see Jesus

- Driving 'an impure spirit' out of a man in the synagogue (24-28)
- Healing Simon's mother-in-law and many others (29-34)
- Healing a man with leprosy (40-45)

The crowds can't miss the significance:

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.

4. Jesus ministered from affirmation, not for affirmation

Mark records that as Jesus was baptised, heaven was torn open – the Greek for 'torn' is 'schizo' = to cleave, to split, to divide, to rend asunder. This is deeply significant, recalling rare episodes in the Old Testament such as Jacob's Ladder (Genesis 28)

The voice of his Father assured Jesus of his unconditional love and delight – words which now echo over all who follow him.

5. Jesus was tested (12-13)

Mark gives no detail of the temptation of Jesus, but Matthew and Luke tell us that his temptation had at its root the same root as all temptation – the suggestion that we cannot take God at his word:

*Now the snake was more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, **'Did God really say,** "You must not eat from any tree in the garden"?' (Genesis 3:1)*

*The tempter came to him and said, **'If** you are the Son of God ... (Matthew 4:3)*

For further thought and prayer –

1. In what ways is Jesus the fulfilment of every human longing?
2. In what ways has he fulfilled your own longing?
3. How do you experience your restored relationship with God because of Jesus?
4. If a friend asked you to explain that, what would you say?
5. Where is the power of Jesus evident in your daily life? How could it become more evident? In what areas do you need to see his power at work for breakthrough?
6. Do you serve Jesus and others from a place of affirmation? Have you truly heard the words of God over you: 'You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased.'
7. How are you being tested at the moment? In what areas is the Enemy telling you that you cannot take God at his word?