

## A SENSE OF URGENCY

### Key Text: **Mark 1: 1-8 The Message**

<sup>1-3</sup> The good news of Jesus Christ—the Message!—begins here, following to the letter the scroll of the prophet Isaiah.

Watch closely: I'm sending my preacher ahead of you;  
He'll make the road smooth for you.  
Thunder in the desert!  
Prepare for God's arrival!  
Make the road smooth and straight!

<sup>4-6</sup> John the Baptizer appeared in the wild, preaching a baptism of life-change that leads to forgiveness of sins. People thronged to him from Judea and Jerusalem and, as they confessed their sins, were baptized by him in the Jordan River into a changed life. John wore a camel-hair habit, tied at the waist with a leather belt. He ate locusts and wild field honey.

<sup>7-8</sup> As he preached he said, "The real action comes next: The star in this drama, to whom I'm a mere stagehand, will change your life. I'm baptizing you here in the river, turning your old life in for a kingdom life. His baptism—a holy baptism by the Holy Spirit—will change you from the inside out."

There are times when you can't see the forest because of the trees - Sometimes you just have to step back and take a look at things from a distance – like the Pre-Columbian art work in Nazca Peru you can only see the whole image from the sky.



That's how it is with getting the full impact from Mark's book ... Mark's Gospel

Mark's message is short and to the point – God is here and He's on our side

At the time Mark World was not unlike our times – get it done fast – now we need it yesterday!

Its Why were so preoccupied with technology

Mark uses words like **immediately and quickly** almost 50 times to describe **the urgency of Jesus mission and ministry**

Mark wasn't one of Jesus' 12 disciples; **he was a teenager** in Jerusalem during Jesus' ministry - caught up in the events of our Lord's death and resurrection

It's believed that his mother's home was the location of the Upper Room where 120 praying people were filled with the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost

It's almost a sure thing that Mark was there on the day of Pentecost with the other 119 ... being Baptized by the Spirit and became passionate to share the risen Jesus with others

☆ Teenagers and young adults are the wide eyed optimists of every generation

What they lack in life experience they make up for in energy and dedication

When convinced a cause is right or just they will stand up for it

**One Unfortunate example:** Isis

That's why there's been such a campaign push to capture the attention of Generation Y and Z and will only intensify in the 100 days leading up to this election

But if the 20 – 30 something generation can be penetrated with the truth of Jesus and the freedom he brings to every person -They will turn the world upside down again for Him

**What was the message the Mark so urgently wanted to convey?**

Take one example: **Mark 10: 13- 16** MSG

<sup>13-16</sup> The people brought children to Jesus, hoping he might touch them. The disciples shooed them off. But Jesus was irate and let them know it: “Don't push these children away. Don't ever get between them and me. These children are at the very center of life in the kingdom. Mark this: Unless you accept God's kingdom in the simplicity of a child, you'll never get in.” Then, gathering the children up in his arms, he laid his hands of blessing on them.

- Children drop the pretenses
- Drop the skepticism
- Believe and rely on the promises of God
- And Jesus took them up in his arms in bunches hugging and blessing them
- We need that simplicity of faith with God

Mark wanted his readers to show the Jesus who was a defender of the helpless and vulnerable

The hero who:

- healed the paralyzed man let down through the roof of a house
- touched and restored the man with leprosy
- healed the man with the withered hand even though it was the Sabbath
- cared for the emotionally crushed

Personal story of the Hispanic girl in the class room being picked on ...

**Mark's beginning is a documented failure**

He was invited to join Paul the Apostle on his first missionary journey but things didn't go well he became discouraged; didn't realize what he had gotten himself into.

But God didn't give up on Mark, He went on to write the Gospel that bears his name

Article in *Daily Bread* "Never Give Up"

Joop Zoetemelk is considered Netherlands's most successful cyclist.

He started and finished the Tour de France 16 times - placing second five times before winning in 1980.

His fame as the most successful Netherlands cyclist wasn't because he won the most ...it was because he never gave up!

That's Persistence

Calvin Coolidge our 30<sup>th</sup> President said this about persistence:

*"Nothing ... can take the place of persistence. Talent will not ... Genius will not... Education will not... Persistence and determination ... are omnipotent."*

**Difficult Times?** – In 2016 has been a year of catastrophe after catastrophe and were only  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the way through it. Attacks from outside and inside our nation, governmental actions that circumvent the Constitution, unrest and riots, and each new ambush or standoff seems to sponsor a copy cat follow up

**Things were even tougher for Mark** - He penned his book while his people and nation was being swept away by invading Roman armies – mindless persecution, injustice and death

Perhaps Mark's urgency impacted his direct approach

- Nothing about Jesus' birth –
- No genealogy
- Begins with Jesus showing up to baptized by John the Baptist into the wilderness for 40 days of temptation
- The arrest of John –
- Jesus his disciples –
- Right into Jesus' public ministry

Short and sweet!

He wanted people know and experience Jesus

We want the same thing – to make this world a better place

How do we do that? By assisting people who are in need – People in poverty need a different kind of help than middle class or wealthy – but the needs are there

Mark illustrates how Jesus ministered to rich tax collectors like Zacchaeus and homeless lepers

It doesn't always begin by preaching to people – but it always begins by caring for people

**Our problem:** we're too wrapped up in our own affairs to see or hear the cry of people around us.

⇒ I acted a little too late this week ... grocery store counter – woman with a limit \$ 27.00

Jen and I were away this past week Visiting friends

In conversation my friend stated emphatically – People don't change – they will never change!

He was speaking from the vantage point of a person who doesn't know Jesus ... He's right without God things and people will never change

But that's not true from God's vantage point:

[2 Corinthians 5:17 \(NKJV\)](#)

<sup>17</sup> Therefore, if anyone *is* in Christ, *he is* a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

[Proverbs 2:3-11 \(NLT\)](#)

<sup>3</sup> Cry out for insight,

and ask for understanding.

<sup>4</sup> Search for them as you would for silver;

seek them like hidden treasures.

<sup>5</sup> Then you will understand what it means to fear the LORD,

and you will gain knowledge of God.

<sup>6</sup> For the LORD grants wisdom!

From his mouth come knowledge and understanding.

<sup>7</sup> He grants a treasure of common sense to the honest.

He is a shield to those who walk with integrity.

<sup>8</sup> He guards the paths of the just

and protects those who are faithful to him.

<sup>9</sup> Then you will understand what is right, just, and fair,

and you will find the right way to go.

<sup>10</sup> For wisdom will enter your heart,

and knowledge will fill you with joy.

<sup>11</sup> Wise choices will watch over you.

Understanding will keep you safe.

God instructs us – implores us to seek His direction on this walk of life.

Our daughter Heather who has getting close to a year in her recovery from cancer is now ministering to other women (many mothers) who are going through the same thing

Some of these people are believers some are not but all get the ideas that if she got through it with a family there is hope for them.

God knows what He's doing!

We must be careful to **NEVER** measure **God's unlimited power** by our limited expectations.

Just imagine if you had been give the task that Mark had been given – to capsule Jesus ' life and portray to the world His Story ... History

Whether you realize it or not God is asking us to do the same thing ... show people who Jesus is, by the lives we live and the words we speak

I could be something as simple as:

- holding a door for someone or having a heart that is willing to listen to the pain of another
- It could be paying a bill for another person or shoveling a walkway

Jonathan H Liu suggested the five best toys of all time are: A stick, a box, string, a cardboard tube and dirt. All are readily available, versatile and appropriate for all ages, fit every budget and are powered by imagination. Not batteries required.

Just imagine what God could accomplish with our lives if we surrender to Him what we already have at our disposal -

**Let's Pray**