

Sermon 1-8, 2012

Our Savior is Here! Mark 1:4-11

Dear Servants of the Savior:

Over the history of the world there have been times when great announcements have been made for people to hear.

- The British are coming! This was an announcement of readiness by Paul Revere in April of 1775 as he wanted his fellow Americans in New England to be ready for the British troops.
- President Lincoln is dead! This was an announcement of sorrow by Edward Stanton in April of 1865 as he announced to our nation the fate of our 16th president.
- W.W. II is over! This was an announcement of joy by radio news reporter Lowell Thomas in August of 1945.

Some 2000 years ago John the Baptist had an announcement of readiness and joy when he said: Our Savior is Here! What was John the Baptist saying to the world with this announcement?

- Our Savior is here who will meet our every need.
- Our world is filled with hurting people who need help.
- What people need is found in our Savior who is here.

The Gospel is neither a discussion nor a debate. It is an announcement.

Our Savior is here!

I. Jesus is identified by the Gospel writer Mark and the prophets v1

A. Mark was an eyewitness of Jesus' ministry

1. Eyewitness – Mark lived in Jerusalem with his mother. Their home was often used by Jesus and the apostles for their ministry and meeting place.

2. Mark's home most likely was the house where Jesus celebrated the Last Supper with his disciples the night of his betrayal.

3. Mark's home most likely was the place where the disciples met after Jesus' ascension into heaven 40 days after the resurrection.

Who was Mark? He was the Apostle Peter's secretary. Mark's Gospel is Peter's eyewitness account of Jesus' life and ministry. Mark's Gospel has often been called the Gospel of Peter.

B. Jesus Christ the Gospel v1 "The beginning of the gospel about Jesus Christ, the Son of God."

Good News

1. Gospel means "good news"
2. Good news is not about giving information is it about transforming people.
3. What makes news...good news? The Gospel is "good news" because it does not say...

You have to try harder...You need to do more good works...Pull yourself together and get with it.

The Gospel is "good news" because God says: I love you and through Christ you are forgiven...Salvation is a gift I give to you...I have made you a new person in Christ.

This good news of Jesus was foretold by the prophets of the Old Testament. One of those prophets was John the Baptist who some would say was the last of the O.T. prophets and the first of the N.T. prophets.

Our Savior is Here!

II. He is identified by John the Baptist vv4-8

A. Called the greatest of the prophets

1. Who had a message of repentance vv4-5

God sent John the Baptist as the forerunner of Christ

- John's work was to announce Jesus as the Messiah
- John began his work in the wilderness where no one lived because the heat was unbearable and the terrain was undesirable
- People came out to John away from their homes and daily routines for a spiritual retreat.
- God wanted people to fix their minds and hearts on their spiritual condition and forget for a bit about their day to day routine of earthly existence

v6 John the Baptist is described as an outdoors wilderness type

- He was clothed with camel's hair – no one could fail to recognize him
- His robe had a rough texture and was what the very poor would have worn with a leather girdle
- Nothing was fancy or inviting about John's appearance – He wasn't clean shaven
- He lived in the wilderness and ate the food of the wild
- His appearance was a sermon in and of itself
- it was a call to those who made food, drink, house and clothes their main concern
- it was a call to turn from such things and fix their minds and hearts on spiritual things
- people left their homes and workplaces and daily routines to consider the destiny of their soul

2. John's work - to make the Savior's coming known

- He called people to repentance - Repentance opens the way to the Lordthink of a road prepared for a King to travel to a town to meet the people...true repentance prepares the way for our heart to meet the Lord.

Repentance = Change

Our repentance is brought upon our heart's by the Law and the Gospel.

- the Law shows our sins - it shows where we have failed God and fallen short
- the Gospel shows our Savior - Jesus did it all for us...It is finished...our salvation

Repentance means "to turn back or to change"

- to repent means to turn around...change direction
- to repent means to have sorrow over sin
- not the type of sorrow that says "I am sorry I got caught."
- not the type of sorrow that says "I am sorry for the consequences of my sin."
- but the type of sorrow that says "I am sorry that I have sinned against God's will."

3. God has forgiven our sins

- Now is the time to repent of them
- Now is the time to change our direction...to follow God's will

4. John magnified Jesus NOT himself vv6-8

A. The Baptist said: "Jesus must become greater; I must become less."

B. John would baptize with water, Jesus would baptize with the Spirit

What John did, however, was very important. Streams of people came out to be baptized by John. Biblical scholars estimate that John baptized as many as half a million people over his one year plus of ministry. In my 25 years of pastoral ministry I have baptized about _____people.

John could have very easily promoted himself. He could have said: “People are coming out to me...to me in the wilderness...to see me...to be baptized by me...me...me.

Rather, John promoted Jesus not himself....Look what John says in Mark 1:7.

- Sandals – to take someone’s sandals off and wash them was the lowliest of lowly actions
- John says he is nothing compared to Jesus
- John knew he was only the messenger and he, too, needed a Savior

C. John called people to “prepare”

1. Our Savior is here....Repent of sins

2. Luther: “Such preparation is spiritual; it consists in the deep conviction and confession that you and I are unfit, you and I are sinners, poor and damned...where this conviction is wrought, the heart will be open for the Lord’s entrance with his forgiveness and gifts.”

Look back and acknowledge your sin....Look forward and receive God’s forgiveness.

In the Old Testament the Israelites once a year celebrated the Day of Atonement.

- the priest would bring a goat out before the people and lay his hands upon it
- symbolically the priest would transfer the sins of the people upon the goat
- the goat would then be chased away from the people - ie scapegoat
- God has sent our sins away. He will not bring them back to accuse us

Our Savior is Here!

III. He is identified by the Father and the Spirit vv9-11

A. As the Only One Acts 4:12 “Salvation is found in no one else...”

1. The Father and the Spirit testify about the Son

- He is the Messiah

- 300 prophecies in the OT foretold his coming at this time in this way

- The Father says: "This is my son" meaning Jesus is the "only one who can bring salvation."

- He is Prophet, Priest and King

B. As the Savior He is the Servant Son of God

1. Jesus is not just "any Jewish Servant"

2. The time for Christ's coming was the most opportune moment in history

- one government - one language - overall peace

Futhermore...

- idolatry was rampant – a Savior was needed
- sanctity of marriage was no longer recognized – a Savior was needed
- judgment was perverted and justice was wanting – a Savior was needed
- spiritual darkness covered people's hearts – a Savior was needed
- God's will had been set aside - a Savior was needed
- Worship of God had become a mere "going through the motions" – a Savior was needed

John the Baptist says: Your Savior is Here!