

March 24

Scriptures: Read Mark 1

Key Verse: “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the Gospel.” (Mark 1:15)

Overview

After Mark tells us about John the Baptist and his ministry of repentance in preparing for the coming of Messiah, he immediately gets into the ministry of Jesus. Jesus’ ministry is characterized by the message, “the kingdom of God is near, repent and believe the good news”. (Repentance is fundamental in Jesus’ ministry. It is seen in terms of turning around and walking away from one’s sin.) We see Him calling the disciples in verses 14-20, then, as He gets to Capernaum, a fascinating incident occurs. An unclean spirit cries out and says, “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!”

Notice that the evil spirit knows Jesus’ identity. In the spirit dimension it’s no secret who Jesus is. If there is any secret at all, it’s in the realm of men. Ironically, it’s the evil spirit who makes a sort of confession of faith. This is not necessarily faith to believe, but at least faith to accept that Jesus is who He says He is. Jesus dealt with the evil spirit directly and cast it out. The people, predictably, were astonished. In their amazement, they saw Him as a teacher with a new teaching, with an authority that was absolutely remarkable. A little later on in the chapter, as Jesus was healing and delivering people from demon possession, he commands the demons not to speak, because they knew who He was. Tie this in with the several instances where Jesus tells people He has healed not to talk about their healing, and you see a fascinating picture of a Savior, Deliverer and Messiah who, on one hand is exposing His ministry in history, and even at the same time is trying somehow to hide it.

Perhaps one observation which can be made here relates to our desire to follow Jesus’ example. We should be careful that we don’t sensationalize the spirit ministries of healing and deliverance. Jesus saw healing and deliverance as a private thing between the person and the Spirit of God. We certainly shouldn’t attempt to make if this supernatural ministry more than Jesus Himself made of it.

Prayer

We pray, oh Lord, that as we read the book of Mark, we will receive a fresh glimpse of Your example of servant hood that we can follow in loving our neighbors as ourselves.