

SERIES: **The Jesus Journey** (it is my desire that through this series, you would fall MORE in love with Jesus and His Word)

TITLE: **War in the Wilderness**

(PRAY)

HOOK- Mona Lisa Show 1st pic - BIG reputation; most people are disappointed at the size Show 2 pics
Cousin- *"I guess I was expecting more"*

The Gospels of Matthew, Luke, and John paint a grand entrance for Jesus;
But Mark's arrival account of the Son of God is not loud and explosive, but inconspicuous

TEXT: **Mark 1:9-13** (you'll notice Jesus just kinda walks into the story)

It may not seem like much on the surface, but within these verses a battle has begun
We will dissect the passage in some detail, but this will be our launching pad:

**Foundational Observation- The baptism of Jesus is the beginning of a battle
that will spill over into the rest of the book of Mark.**

Let's dissect the text, and then I have some spiritual implications I want to point out

V.9 In those days Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee

Note the *CONTRAST*- back in v.5 people came from the **Judean** countryside, from **Zion** itself;

Now here comes this *man* over the horizon, no background given, no birth story,
coming from *Galilee* (commonly called 'Galilea of the gentiles' in those days---Oakland)
from a town (*Nazareth*) that's not even mentioned in the OT!

Marks' introduction of Jesus at first glance: *"I guess I was expecting more?"*

and was baptized in the Jordan by John.

John's baptism= Repentance.....soooooo why did Jesus get baptized????

I'll tell you why NOT: he was not repenting of sins he had committed

Then what? He was identifying with those who were baptized in John's baptism of repentance.
IOW: Jesus humbles himself, entering the ranks of sinners taking his stand **with** them

His baptism launches him on the servant road of obedience

German theologian, Adolph Schlatter-

"He associates himself with sinners and ranges himself in the ranks of the guilty, not to find salvation for himself, not on account of his own guilt in his flight from the approaching wrath, but because he is at one with the Church and the bearer of divine mercy."

When we are baptized, **we are identifying with Jesus** ("buried in the likeness of his death, raised to newness of life"); but before we could identify with Him, **He had to identify with us as sinners**

V.10 As soon as he came up out of the water, he saw the heavens being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove.

In the OT Joshua, Elijah and Elisha all stood on the banks of the Jordan river and parted its waters as a demonstration of the power on them (Joshua 3, 4; 2 Kings 2)

Jesus stands IN the Jordan and the heavens themselves are parted

Matthew and Luke use the word ‘*anoigo*’=**open** ; but Mark chooses a peculiar word ‘*schizo*’= **torn** (where we get our word schizophrenia) The idea is it being *split*

It’s the same verb used again in **15:38** to describe the temple curtain being torn

Why? I believe Mark is making this point:

What is opened may be closed once again, but what is torn stays open(...God is here)

Donald Juel (A Master of Surprise: Mark Interpreted)-

*“More accurate than referring to our access to God would be to speak of God's access to us. God comes whether we choose or not... Viewed from another perspective, the image may suggest that the protecting barriers are gone and that God, **unwilling to be confined to sacred spaces, is on the loose in our own realm**”*

Isaiah 64:1 If only you would tear the heavens open and come down... (the whole chapter is great)

“...and the Spirit descending on him like a dove”- 3 things to point out:

1- This confirms that the man who came from Galilee is indeed the *Mesiah*

Isaiah 11:1-2 Then a shoot will grow from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots will bear fruit. (*referring to family line of David leading to Jesus*)

²The Spirit of the Lord will rest on him— a Spirit of wisdom and understanding, a Spirit of counsel and strength, a Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord.

2- This offers us insight into *HOW* God intends to carry out His mission

Important 2 distinguish: LIKE a dove not AS a dove- The descend is dovelike, not the Spirit

David E Garland- *“The descent of power from heaven that inaugurates God's reign does not swoop down like an eagle or a falcon but comes quietly and gently like a hovering dove.”* (He came in gentleness)

3- This points to the beginning of a new creation

Genesis 1:2 Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness covered the surface of the watery depths, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the surface of the waters.

The first time God hovered over the waters intending to transform the world
this time God hovers over a human intending to transform humanity

V.11 And a voice came from heaven: “You are my beloved Son; with you I am well-pleased.”

It's important to understand that to the original Roman readers, this was a bold claim against what their society believed; that the Emperor (Nero) is the son of god – Mark accredits that title to Nazarene Jesus

Why is God the Father pleased with Him?

Mark doesn't give any reason other than *who He is*- The beloved Son of God

Jesus's baptism did not change his divine status; he didn't become the son of God at his point.

He has always been the divine second person of the trinity.

What his baptism did, is, show that **Jesus is approved as Messiah and as suffering servant precisely because He is the divine Son of God**

Jesus is the Son of God from Psalm 2 and the servant from Isaiah 42

Psalm 2:7 I will declare the Lord's decree. He said to me, “You are my Son; today I have become your Father.

Isaiah 42:1 “This is my servant; I strengthen him, this is my chosen one; I delight in him. I have put my Spirit on him; he will bring justice to the nations..”

Notice: all 3 members of the “Godhead” are present in these verses (v9-Son; v10-Spirit; v11-Father)

That passage was the high point of Marks introduction and provides the background for everything that is to follow in the book, starting even with the next two verses-

V.12-13 Immediately the Spirit drove him into the wilderness. ¹³He was in the wilderness forty days, being tempted by Satan. He was with the wild animals, and the angels were serving him.

You'd think that the descending of the Holy Spirit would result in a calm nirvana, but instead the Spirit “drove” (strong verb=thrust) Jesus into what would be considered satan's battlefield;

Jesus is led Jesus to take an offensive against evil and temptation, instead of avoiding them

How is it possible that Jesus could be tempted? (**James 1:13** ...God is not tempted by evil....)

How did Jesus walk on water; stop a storm; perform miracles? -----**Jesus is truly God**

How was Jesus tempted? -----**Jesus is truly human**

John 1:14 The Word became flesh and dwelt among us. We observed his glory, the glory as the one and only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Hebrews 4:15 For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has been tempted in every way as we are, yet without sin.

Interestingly enough, Mark doesn't give us the outcome of the war in the wilderness.

From Matthew and Luke we know more details and what the outcome is

But Mark leaves us with a cliffhanger; as if he wants to create a tension because the battle is not yet over and the decisive victory is still yet to come.

Mark's intention is to show us that the appearance of the Son of God is a direct onslaught against the realm of the devil. His concern is to show that an ongoing conflict has now begun.

We see here the archdemon himself show up, as well as angels, telling us that in the unseen realm, both the forces of light and darkness acknowledge, that this Jesus of Nazareth is God's Son and that the battle to destroy the work of satan has begun

Every time Jesus comes across an unclean spirit, they recognize him and cower before him and the outcome of those little battles is never in doubt; every time Jesus wins, moving ever so closer to the ultimate victory over the demonic realm

1 John 3:8 The one who commits sin is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God was revealed for this purpose: to destroy the devil's works.

3 Encouraging Implications:

- **It is in the wilderness of weakness, and through the trials of temptation, that we discover Jesus walked this path before and invites us to follow in His steps.**

- At his baptism, at his temptation he identifies with us- the sinners and the weary
 - *Will we identify with Him even in our lowest points?*
- He visits the spaces that we feel drive us away from Him and says *"there too, you can know me"* –in our realization of sin, in our wrestling with temptation *"Here I'll meet you"*

- **Spiritual warfare in your life is real, but it is the work of Christ, not yours, that defeats the work of satan**

- You will not prevail by your own efforts to be the man/woman God created you to be
 - Wife; husband; friend; joyful; self-controlled, not giving in to the easier way/ sin...
 - Christ came to declare war against the grip of the enemy over your life
 - The path to victory is not to flee from your issues, but to follow Jesus
- James 4:7** Therefore, submit to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

- **If you are in Christ, even when you fall short of God's standard, you are accepted and loved**

- You are hidden in Christ, and what does the Father say of Christ? *"this is my beloved son with whom I am well-pleased"*
- Satan is an accuser but the Spirit is a comforter

*******CALL UP WORSHIP TEAM**

What is your next step in following Jesus?

- Start your journey with Jesus
- Be baptized
- Join a wayGROUP
- Follow Jesus wherever He might lead you

David E Garland-

The narrator gives us access to this divine dimension in the prologue so that we know in advance the answers to the questions raised by a variety of baffled characters in the story.

A stunned synagogue crowd asks, “What is this? A new teaching- and with authority!” (Mark 1:27).

Livid theological experts ask themselves, “Why does this fellow talk like that? He's blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?” (2:7).

Spooked disciples ask, “Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!” (4:41). A resentful hometown crowd asks, “Where did this man get these things?... What's this wisdom that has been given him, that he even does miracles!” (6:2).

Vexed priests ask, “By what authority are you doing these things?... And who gave you authority to do this?” (11:28).

The truth suddenly hits a centurion in the execution squad when he sees how Jesus died: “Surely this man was the son of God!” (15:39).

The Pharisees think he's in league with Satan.

Herod's best guess is that he is John the baptizer come back to life to haunt him for his sins.

Some think he's Elijah, others, one of the prophets (6:14-16; 8:27-28).

The disciples are captivated by his powers but are baffled as to who he is for much of the opening chapters....

We readers and listeners of this Gospel know far more than the characters in the story... But knowing what we know about Jesus, are we anymore faithful, anymore discerning, any more willing to give our lives?”

How has what you know about Jesus changed YOU?

BULPEN-

Verse 9-

Matthew explains that John did not feel worthy to baptize Jesus, but Mark is interested more in telling us what happened

William Barclay says that for Jesus, the baptism was 4 things:

*It was the moment of **decision**; it was the moment of **identification**;
it was the moment of **approval**; it was a moment of **equipment***

V.11

Mark tells us that only Jesus saw and heard this- the veil of heaven may be torn, but the revelation is still veiled at this time.

In the OT when Israel was obedient, God delighted in them; what the OT scriptures ascribe to Israel, Mark transfers to Jesus

V12-13

40= number of testing

Tempted= “put to the test, make trial of”; it could be used in a good sense or a negative one

Angels- **Hebrews 1:14** Are they not all ministering spirits sent out to serve those who are going to inherit salvation?

Matthew and Luke describe the threefold succession of temptation against Jesus, but Mark approaches the entire trip as one major clash between Jesus, the son of God and satan

Mark is conjuring imagery from the Genesi story- as Adam was with the wild animals so is Jesus, but if Adam was safe around them and lived with them, with Jesus we are left with an uneasy knowledge that the presence of wild animals is dangerous, and instead of a garden, it is the barrenness that is the backdrop for Jesus

Wild beast= satans battlefield

satan= a title not a name; accuser, adversary

The entrance of the son of God has caused an irreparable breach between our two previously separated worlds.

Ultimately, it is Jesus who prepares the way- He blazes ahead at the front of the charge against the powers of darkness

DEG- *“The power of God appears in the desert, in weakness, in ones who come out of nowhere and will be handed over. God's activity has been hidden from human beings, and even when it is revealed through Jesus, many will be unable to see. **Those who do see will take comfort when they pass through the desert. They will know that Jesus has already been there and knows the way. All they have to do is follow.**”*

Because of Jesus Christ, when God the father looks at us, He is well pleased

Satan also tempts us, to go the easier path

To give in to temptation; to yell louder than our spouse; to be meaner than our enemies; to let the flesh take control instead of exercising self-denial; to judge other with bitter hearts; to do what's easy instead of what's right

Jesus took the fight on our behalf because we have so much failure in our history

William Barclay- *“...temptations are not sent to us to make us fall; they are sent to strengthen the nerve and the sinew of our minds and hearts and souls. They are not meant for our ruin, but for our good. They are meant to be tests from which we emerge better warriors and athletes of God.”*