

## Mark 1:1-13 “A Voice Crying in the Wilderness”

Read V. 1-8

**Imagine what life would be like here in the America if Preaching suddenly stopped –**

A) No Kwave, no media – no more churches like this one

B) All that was left was a **dead institutionalized Church.**

C) Picture that being the case for 400 yrs –

**What do you think would be the spiritual condition in America after 400 yrs of that?**

A) Dark – hopeless – carnal – sterile – lifeless

B) That is sort of what life was like in Israel as the gospel of Mark opens

C) 400 yrs of silence – { **Between testaments – No prophetic voice -**

**The religious climate in Israel was made up of two distinct groups –**

A) On the one hand you **had the legalist** – those who were given to **keeping the Law of Moses** –

B) But they had sooo added to it – made it a burden and not at all what God had intended it to be.

**Bb) That group was the Pharisees – who were really hypocrites –**

1) Because the religious code they forced on others – they didn’t keep

C) Then you had those who were **carnal to the core** – **used religion to profit**

1) They were the ones who turned the temple courts into a swap meet – taking advantage of the people of God

**The over all climate of the people fell in between those two groups**

A) Those who **lived constantly in condemnation** for not living up to the standard laid down by the Pharisees

B) And those **who gave up a long time ago** even trying – living like it didn’t matter – in their mind – **the religious system was a joke**

1) And God if anything was distant and uninterested in this land and this people – after all it had been 400 years since there was a real religious voice.

**Then we read – that there came “A voice of one Crying in the Wilderness!”**

A) That is the way that Mark – begins his gospel – A voice crying in THE WILDERNESS

## Background on the gospels

Matthew Mark and Luke are synoptic gospels

**Syn = together – optic = to view – the ideas is these three are viewing together the life of Christ –**

A) Simply from a different perspective and to a different audience!

B) Chronological approach

**John's gospel is different:** John writes topically and not chronologically

**John's goal is to portray Jesus as "Divine"**

**None other than - God in Human flesh !**

C) **Key Phrase:** Most assuredly I say to you –

1) Focus on the Declarations that Jesus made –  
**SEVEN I am Statements**

D) **Genealogy:** In the beginning – Takes us back before Genesis – Focus on the Deity of Christ

E) **Ends:** The Promise of the return of Jesus

**But the Synoptic gospels – Chronological approach – for a specific audience**

**Matthew is a Jew writing to Jews** – Matthew uses the word hypocrisy more than the rest of the gospel writers.

A) Matthew is called by Jesus while sitting at a tax booth – Levi is his real name – he is from the Levitical tribe

**B) He evidently is frustrated with the way things are going in Israel – He has seen the hypocrisy of the religious system –**

1) He has seen the carnality & the hopelessness of the nation

**C) Matthew decides to get as much as he can – join the Romans – become a tax collector – his ticket to a wealthy life**

1) Even if it means that he is going to be rejected by his own people and **considered a traitor**

D) The other gospel writers depict that sentiment as they record the calling of Matthew by Jesus –

1) They say that Jesus saw a publican named Levi sitting at his tax booth.

**Matthew puts it this way: Jesus saw a man**

A) He knew that when Jesus saw him – he saw a man – he didn't see a traitor – **he saw a man lost** – a man frustrated with the religious system

B) All Jesus had to say to Matthew was follow me –

C) **Matthew is a historian** – He is well acquainted with Jewish history and OT scripture

1) He quotes from the OT more than 99 times and uses the phrase *fulfilled* over 38 times

D) His genealogy traces Jesus ancestry back to David – Jesus is from the tribe of Judah and the line of David.

### Luke on the other hand is a physician

A) A doctor – he is amazed at the **humanity of Jesus**

B) His genealogy goes all the way **back to Adam** –

C) His gospel ends with a Promise of the Holy Spirit – 1) He is amazed at the idea that a human being can be filled with the spirit of God.

D) Jesus is the ultimate picture of that

### Luke is a Chronicler – His catch phrase is “it came to pass – used close to 42 times.”

A) He is writing to a Greek audience – His writings are intelligent –

B) He wants people to know that Jesus is the Messiah that God promised long ago that would come.

C) Because He is a physician he takes note of things the other gospel writers don’t –

### For example – in the garden of Gethsemane.

A) When Jesus is arrested and Peter half asleep tries swinging his sword trying to cut off the head of Malchus the servant of the high Priest – strikes his ear –

B) Luke is the one that tells us that Jesus picked up the ear and put it back on the head of Malchus – healed him on the spot –

1) **Luke being a physician is interested in that.**

### C) YOU KNOW - Peter was aiming for the head.

In fact I often wonder – how amazed Luke would have been had Peter actually cut off the head of Malchus and Jesus would have picked his head up and reattached that.

D) That is Luke – He is into Detail

### Mark is the briefest of the gospels

A) Mark is the fastest moving of the gospels

B) Mark’s use of the words “**immediately**” eight times in his first chapter and 36 times in his Gospel which illustrates the speed with which he moves through his account. }

C) Mark is not a lecturer he is a photographer –

1) He gives us snapshot after snapshot after snapshot – image after image of the life of Christ.

Mark is writing from Rome – to a Roman audience and presents Jesus as the servant – “Key verse is

Mark 10:45

45 For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”

**Mark gives us the doing of Jesus more than the saying of Jesus.**

A) He doesn't give us **as many parables**; there is no sermon on the mount - He gives us the doing

B) His focus is on **Jesus' interaction with people.**

C) **One of the reasons I enjoy the gospel of Mark so much it is full of Divine appointments –**

1) Jesus interacting with people.

D) **What people need so desperately today are Divine appointments with Jesus –**

1) Divine interaction with the Savior

**Author is Mark the nephew of Barnabas.**

A) Mark who bailed on Barnabas and Paul – later given 2<sup>nd</sup> chance by Barnabas –

B) Great grace story – God picks him to pen a gospel

C) Many historians and early church fathers believe that Mark is Peter's account – of the life of Jesus – Peter disciplined Mark – 2<sup>nd</sup> chances

**So with that as our background -**

**Today we are going to spend the majority of our time considering John the Baptist**

**And briefly look at two events in the life of Jesus.**

**Mark 1:1 The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.**

A) The **gospel = Good News**. And Mark wastes no time in getting to its heart.

B) Mark doesn't start with a Genealogy or even the birth of Christ –

1) He begins where the public ministry of Jesus begins - **Forerunner** – the voice of one crying in the wilderness

C) The front man for the Messiah – **PR guy – unlike any other**

D) v.5 Everyone came from all Judea and some from Jerusalem – **Scholars estimate 300,000 to half million people came to hear John**

**There was an air of expectation –**

A) People were tired of the **whole religious scene** – tired of the **legalism, tired of the hypocrisy** –

B) **John shows up and the hunger in the hearts of the people is ignited – they asked, “Is this Elijah”?**

1) Elijah was to precede the Messiah.

C) **John is anything but PC** – he is farthest thing from Mainstream

1) **John is bold** – Called Pharisees a bunch of snakes and wasn't afraid to call King Herod an Adulterer to his face.

2) Peter Cartwright and President Andrew Jackson

## **HIS DRESS & DIET**

A) Wore a tunic made of camel hair – wasn't – fur coat – wasn't a skinned camel – they would take camel hair and braid it and make a garment out of it

B) The garment of poor people -Camel hair is itchy – uncomfortable

1) Leather belt to hold up when needed to move more freely – let out at night when sleep.

## **Diet - Eating locust and wild honey – Talking bugs**

A) There have been some in the name of scholarship that have tried to say the locust was really a carob pod –

**B) Nonsense – no Carob trees growing in the area around the Jordan – never has been**

1) Some health food chocolate lover trying to find a way to indulge his appetite for Carob

2) TALK BUGS

C) Locust – Leviticus 11 tells us the type of Locust the Jews were permitted to eat. Leviticus 11:21-23

**21 Yet these may you eat of every flying creeping thing that goes upon all four, which have legs above their feet, to leap withal upon the earth;**

**22 Even these of them you may eat; the locust after his kind, and the bald locust {look for Hair} after his kind, and the beetle {Hebrew name for the cricket} - after his kind, and the grasshopper after his kind.**

**23 But all other flying creeping things, which have four feet, shall be an abomination unto you.**

## **They still eat these today! –**

A) Pull off the legs – roast – salt – crunchy –

B) Sometimes grind up and make a paste – like peanut butter

**Better than Oysters** – people pay good money to eat those – Slide right down - -slide right back up again

**Or Snail – give it a fancy French name – Escargot – feel civilized - - Still talking snails –**

I think I would rather eat – Roasted salted Locust –

**I am coming out with a new Book –**

**“The John the Baptist diet plan for 2013”**

Hit - follow it up with the clothing line and hair stile

**Imagine John with Honey in his beard and locust wings and legs stuck in there – Pointing at Herod – *You need to repent you adulterer* – {No wonder Herod was scarred**

**Listen this is not the PR man that any of us would have chosen to lead the way for the greatest ministry the world had ever seen. – No way**

**But John was such a contrast to the religious community of the day**

A) Tired of the legalism, tired of the hypocrisy – the establishment

B) Anything that **looked like religion or sounded like the status quo** – they were not interested in

C) John comes on the scene – **with a dose of reality and authenticity** – and people are drawn by the 10's of thousands

**Three things I want us to consider today about John – Make some application for us.  
#1 HIS MESSAGE –**

A) Mark quotes only two prophecies in his entire Gospel: right here in the beginning from Malachi 3:1; and Isaiah 40:3, which refers, of course, to John the Baptist.

**The figure of speech, “prepare the way for the Lord,” make straight paths for him,” refers to the custom of sending an officer before a monarch who was to make a royal journey.**

A) This person was to level and smooth out any ruts in the road so the monarch's journey would be smoother. – Prepare the towns people.

B) The messenger being sent to prepare the way was John the Baptist.”

**Prepare the way of the Lord and make His paths Straight.**

A) Prepare their hearts for the coming of the Messiah. 1<sup>st</sup> coming

B) **John's message is our message** – We are to call the world around us to get ready for the coming of Messiah – 2<sup>ND</sup> COMING.

C) Jason Prophecy update – everything is in place.

D) The stage is set for Jesus to come **FOR HIS CHURCH – RAPTURE.**

E) Are you ready – are those around you ready!

**There was an urgency to John's message – It was time = Passion –**

A) There should be an urgency to our sharing – Burden for lost souls.

B) Personal application here as well – Prepare our hearts – Make our paths straight.

C) Beginning 2013 – Are our hearts – ready to receive Jesus – TODAY?

1) Or are they cluttered with so much other stuff – there is no room for Him?

**D) Are we overly distracted by the cares and responsibilities of this life?**

**Notice at the heart of John's Message was the idea of repentance.**

**A) Repentance means having a change of mind and turning away from something and turning in a new direction. U-turn**

**B) Israel was being asked to turn away from its disobedience and rebellion and to start anew by turning toward the coming Messiah.**

**C) For the sinner – Repentance means – being willing to admit.**

- a. I am wrong - sinner
- b. Sex doesn't satisfy
- c. Money doesn't satisfy
- d. The things of this world don't satisfy
- e. I am actually emptier now than when I started to indulge myself in all of these things

**This is sin! This is empty! It is taking me farther away from where I want to be.**

**A) I am tired of the struggle**

**B) I am tired of feeling this way – emptiness**

**1) I need to turn back to God**

**C) But perhaps you are a believer today and you realize – got off track – priorities are out of whack**

**D) Your walk with God has been stifled by compromised.**

**1) Love has grown cold – the fire grown faint**

**E) What is the answer? REPENT –**

**Turn away from the sin – turn away from that thing or person that has taken priority.**

**A) Turn back to following Jesus with your whole heart.**

**B) Make him your passion and your pursuit**

**C) Make straight paths for Jesus to rule and reign in your heart today. – DO IT!**

**We live in a society that doesn't want to hear the word repent.**

**A) We live in a society – built on their own morality - Living for their own pleasure**

**B) For a Christian to say – you are a sinner and you need to repent – they protest –**

**1) Canada – file lawsuits**

C) We are undermining people's self esteem by telling them they are sinners – stupid

Cc) Can't imagine anything better for someone's self esteem than to hear

1) Although they are a miserable sinner- God still loves them - Loved them enough to send his Son

D) **Die for their sins so** they could believe and be saved and be called the sons and daughters of the most High God –

1) That is good for your self-esteem! Not bad!

E) John the Baptist came preaching repentance and people came flooding out to hear him.

1) And to be baptized by Him – **God was moving**

## #2 His Baptism

A) Water is a symbol of cleansing

B) The Baptism of John—was not for salvation, but for preparation.

1) For Jesus had not yet died for their sins.

**Interesting: The Jew was familiar w/ ritual washings.**

A) Leviticus 11–15 details them. “The Jew,” said Tertullian, “washes himself every day because every day he is defiled.”

B) Symbolic washing and purifying was woven into the very fabric of Jewish ritual.

1) A Gentile was considered unclean for he had never kept any part of the Jewish law.

Therefore, when a Gentile became a *proselyte*, that is a convert to the Jewish faith, he had to undergo three things.

A) First, he had to undergo *circumcision*, for that was the mark of the covenant people;

B) Second, *sacrifice* had to be made for him, for he stood in need of atonement and only blood could atone for sin;

C) Third, he had to undergo *baptism*, which symbolized his cleansing from all the pollution of his past life.

D) Naturally, therefore, the baptism was not a mere sprinkling with water, but a bath in which his whole body was bathed. **Full Immersion**

**That is the amazing thing about John's baptism is that he, a Jew, was asking Jews to submit to that which only a Gentile was supposed to need.**

A) John had made a tremendous discovery that to be a Jew **in the racial sense** was not to be a member of God's chosen people;

B) Like a Gentile they still needed to be born again – Born of the Spirit – **John was preparing the way for what Jesus was going to do.**

C) Great reminder – Can't be saved by religious pedigree – doesn't matter that parents are saved – 1) you have a personal encounter with Christ –

**D) Religious Ritual – Church attendance – tithing – none of that saves a person.**

1) What saves us is being born again – Having a personal relationship with Christ.

E) Perhaps you are here today – beginning of the new year – get back to Church – religious thing

1) NOT RELIGION IT IS RELATIONSHIP THAT MATTERS!

2) Only comes through faith in the work of Christ

**#3 Who John Pointed to! = JESUS**

A) For John it was never about John –

**John 3:30 “I must decrease that He might increase.”**

B) He was the messenger – the Best Man – Jesus was the Bridegroom.

C) John's heart and attitude should be ours

"The biggest obstacle in making Christ magnificent is the refusal to make yourself small."

James MacDonald - Vertical Church.

**D) John understood – Jesus is the one who saves!**

1) Not Him. –

E) Listen the world doesn't revolve around you –

1) Our goal – glorify magnify Jesus

**John told the people he had drenched them with water which was only *external & symbolic*,**

A) But One would come who would **drench** them in the Holy Spirit, which was intrinsically *internal*.

Aa) What a beautiful metaphor for the work of the Holy Spirit!

B) When we are baptized with the Holy Spirit, he permeates every part of us.

C) **Huge message** for those who had labored long under the banner of legalism and religiosity trying and failing endlessly to keep the law – to be perfect –

D) John was declaring – there is one coming – with an answer – Baptism of the HS

E) When the Holy Spirit drenches your life with his, you are changed! **Transformed by the Spirit's power**

**John understood that Jesus is the one who transform lives!**

A) **Jesus is the one who provides the power to live for God.**

B) John wanted to get out of the way and simply call people to get their hearts –ready for Jesus.

C) Came announcing a Baptism of Repentance.

### Which makes what we read next really intriguing

9 It came to pass in those days that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized by John in the Jordan. 10 And immediately, coming up from the water, He saw the heavens parting and the Spirit descending upon Him like a dove. 11 Then a voice came from heaven, "You are My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

### Note Jesus' baptism, affirmation, anointing, and temptation are all squeezed into a few verses

A) As John called people to repent, suddenly Jesus shows up, requesting to be baptized.

B) Why? Jesus had no sin. What did He need to confess?

1) Why would He ask to be baptized by John?

C) I want to quickly give you five reasons {Done

### #1 It had to do with timing!

A) For thirty years Jesus lived in obscurity in Nazareth.

Living a normal life- working – involved with family.

B) But He knew that a day was coming when that was going to change. – Waiting for a sign.

1) The emergence of John was that sign.

C) This, he saw, was the moment when he had to launch out upon his Mission.

### #2 It was about Identification.

A) Although baptism is indeed a symbol of death, burial, and resurrection (Romans 6), the word *baptizo* was initially used with regard to dying cloth.

B) Material that was “baptized” in colored dye would assume the color of the dye.

C) Therefore, baptism is not only a symbol of dying, but of dyeing.

### What is Jesus doing here?

A) He’s identifying with us. Dipped in the same water we are, not ashamed of us, but identifying with us.

B) He meets us. We take on the same color in the water of baptism.

C) Regardless of the fact that two thousand years separate us from this event chronologically and six thousand miles geographically,

1) We identify with Jesus and He with us through baptism.

Not only does Jesus’ baptism illustrate His identification with us, it shows us #3 It was an illustration of His submission to the Father,

A) For thru baptism, Jesus said, **“I have come to die.”**

B) Every other teacher, philosopher, or guru came to live—and yet, their so-called “ministries” were **interrupted by their deaths.**

C) Not so with Jesus. **He came to die.** Death didn’t interrupt His ministry. It fulfilled it.

**#4 His Fathers approval – well pleased – language – already well pleased.**

A) Affirmation – well pleased – mission follow thru!

B) Jesus hadn’t done anything yet

1) **30 years obscurity** – poor village – carpenter  
Well pleased – growing up

C) Luke - 12 years old – lost

1) God gave his only Son- Mary and Joseph lost him

**D) Found Him and after that it says that He submitted Himself to them –**

1) Submitted Himself to imperfect parents! Imagine that

E) When Joseph died Jesus is left to console Mary

1) Help raise brothers and sisters

F) Take over family business

Well pleased – honest business man – didn’t cut corners

**Take away for us**

A) Positionally – the Father sees you in Christ  
Holy, righteous, finished, well pleased

**Practically – live to glorify and please Him in everything you do**

A) Janitor – be a Holy Janitor –

**B) Computer Programmer be a holy computer programmer**

**Business; honest – hardworking**

Carpenter – be God’s carpenter

Ministry – Faithful

Home – Authentic

**#5 It was for His Anointing:**

**Jesus was already filled with the Holy Spirit – He was conceived by the Holy Spirit –**

A) Anointing for ministry – He was being empowered for the ministry that God put before Him.

**B) Speaks of our need to be empowered – our need to be daily filled – Ephesians 5:18**

1) Yea I was filled with the spirit -10 yrs ago –

C) He will baptize you with the Spirit

**Yes I want to be filled with the Spirit – I want to serve in the ministry – Really?**

A) Notice what happens next

12 Immediately the Spirit drove Him into the wilderness  
13 And He was there in the wilderness forty days,  
tempted by Satan, and was with the wild beasts; and the  
angels ministered to Him.

**B) Directly following the glorious experience of hearing the voice of His Father, the Spirit Drove Jesus into the wilderness. Why?**

**C) Not to do Him in, but to show Him off....**

*Suppose you go to the local Jeep dealer and say, "I'm thinking about buying a Jeep." After opening the door of his latest model, a salesman would say, "Hop in"—and proceed to drive you to some rough terrain, where he would shift into four-wheel drive and take you off-road—flying over hills, splashing through rivers. Why?*

**Not to damage the car, but to show you what it can do.**

**So, too, in driving Jesus to the wilderness, the Father was saying, "Watch My Son. No matter what Satan throws at Him, He will come through beautifully."**

**A) This is what the temptation of Jesus teaches us – illustrates for us.**

**B) With each temptation – Jesus said it is written. 1<sup>st</sup> temptation is key - **Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.****

**Jesus is saying: I don't need to be Divine to defeat you Lucifer - I am standing here today as a man –**

**The key to defeating you – is THE WORD and THE HOLY SPIRIT!**

**What was true for Jesus then is equally true for us today!**

**A) Want Victory? Word and the Power of the Holy Spirit.**

**B) Jesus came identifying with our sin**

**C) Died to pay the price –**

**D) Open hearts – Cleansed - Forgiven – Empowered**

**Pray**

**Communion – remember His sacrifice –**

**A) His love**

**B) His grace**

**C) His power**