Series: 40 Days with Jesus

Message: 01 It Feels Like God Is On the Move Mark 1\_9-15

Text: Mark 1:9-15

Theme:

Date: March 5, 2017

Location: Christ Community EFC

This morning is the first Sunday of Lent. Traditionally the season of Lent covers the six weeks that lead up to Easter. Not counting Sundays, there are a total of 40 days to Lent.

The season of Lent is a time to prepare ourselves to celebrate Easter.

In the early church, even as early as the 4th century, baptisms were done on Easter. Before a new believer was allowed to be baptized they had to go through six weeks of catechism training.

Catechism is a form of religious training that often takes on the form of a question/response format.

For example: The officiant would ask, “What is the chief end of man?” In other words, what is the primary purpose of human life?

The response would be, “The chief end of man is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever.”

This time of preparation was also used to insure that the new believer had:

* Time to confess and repent of their sin;
* Time to grasp what a wonderful gift of God’s love and grace is that is offered to them through Christ’ death, burial, and resurrection;
* And time to fully commit themselves to live out this new life offered to them thought the power of the Holy Spirit.

Often during this time of preparation the new believes would fast as part of their preparation and in solidarity with them, other members of the community would fast along with them.

This tradition of fasting has taken on various forms over the centuries.

Today people might “fast” by giving up a particular vice or pleasure like chocolate or eating out. Many will then use the money saved and give it to the needy.

I saw a thing in the news yesterday about a woman in Texas who gave up beer for Lent. The reason she made the news though, was because she had just won a contest and on Friday the Budweiser Clydesdales pulled up in front of her house to deliver her prize, a case of beer.

I should note that the article didn’t mention what she did with the beer.

Others might fast by giving up something that takes time, like Facebook, so they can use that time to focus on prayer and God’s word.

For most Protestant denomination, Lent started this past Wednesday, Ash Wednesday, and will end Saturday evening before Easter Sunday.

That’s six weeks or 40 days not counting Sunday.

This morning is also the first Sunday in our new sermon series, “40 Days with Jesus.”

Each week leading up to Easter, as with the video we just watched of John the Baptist, we will retell a major event in Christ’s life and ministry through various “eyewitness” accounts.

As we prepare ourselves to celebrate Easter and live in the power of the resurrection I hope to highlight how the lessons we learn from these events impact our lives today.

**If you would please turn in your Bibles to Mark chapter 1.**

Each of the gospel writers include information about John the Baptist and the role he played in the life of Jesus.

The video we just watched was quoting from the gospel of Matthew.

The apostle John writes in his gospel that “**There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.** [That is John the Baptist] **7 He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light** [Jesus, the light of the world]**, that all might believe through him. 8 He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light**. (John 1:6-8)

In Luke’s gospel we are given details about John’s parents, Elizabeth and Zechariah. They were an older couple who had no children.

Zechariah was a priest who served in the temple. One day he was in the temple burning incense when an angle of the Lord appeared to him and told him that he would have a son and he should call him John.

When Zechariah question the angle and asked how he would know for sure what he has said was true: “…**the angel answered him, “I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I was sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news. 20 And behold, you will be silent and unable to speak until the day that these things take place, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their time**.” (Luke 1:19-20)

Zechariah would lose his voice until the time came to give his newborn son a name. Then he regains his voice and declares his son’s name John.

**Let’s read now what Mark writes here in Mark 1 starting in verse 1:**

Mark 1:1-8 “**The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.**

**2 As it is written in Isaiah the prophet, “Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way, 3 the voice of one crying in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight,’”**

**4 John appeared, baptizing in the wilderness and proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. 5 And all the country of Judea and all Jerusalem were going out to him and were being baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins.**

John is sent, in fulfillment of Old Testament prophesies, found in Psalms, “**the voice of one crying in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight**…”

**6 Now John was clothed with camel’s hair and wore a leather belt around his waist and ate locusts and wild honey.**

Many call John the last of the Old Testament prophets whose calling is to proclaim the word God to the people of God.

**7 And he preached, saying, “After me comes he who is mightier than I, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. 8 I have baptized you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit**.”

John has a twofold message. First is a message of repentance and forgiveness. Repent, acknowledge and turn from your sins and turn toward God and receive His forgiveness.

And the second part of his message is be ready because there is One coming who will change everything!

John’s baptism, and in this case I believe this by submersion, was a public and outward symbol of a broken and humble heart turning from one’s sin to God and the promised deliverer.

Look at Mark 1:9. “**In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan.**

**10 And when he came up out of the water, immediately he saw the heavens being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove.**

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

Note here you have all three of the triune God mentioned here. Jesus comes up out of the water, the Spirit descends on Him, and the Father says, **“You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased.”**

There is one God, who consist of three person, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, three in one.

Jesus is God and therefore sinless. At the same time, through the virgin birth Jesus emptied himself of his devein attributes and became fully human.

He didn’t cease to be God nor did he become some kind of God/man.

Jesus was fully God and fully man, one person, two natures.

Many have asked and much has been written about why Jesus was baptized.

Because Jesus remain God, and therefore sinless, he did not need to repent and be baptized like all the others who came to John.

There are three main suggestion as to why Jesus came to be baptized by John.

**First** it was an act of obedience. This was a part of the Father’s plan for Him. So Jesus, in obedience and in full agreement with the plan of God, received John’s baptism.

**Secondly**, it was an act of identifying with us and our sin that one day, at the cross Jesus will take upon Himself.

**Finally**, it was an act of self-dedication to His messianic mission, signifying His official acceptance and entrance into it.

Keep in mind, there is no record, in any of the gospels, of Jesus doing any miracles, teaching, or any other thing associated with His calling as the messiah before His baptism.

Up until now the people who knew Jesus, knew him has Joseph’s. The son of a carpenter. He lived and worked in their village. They knew his brothers and sisters and they had watched him grow up.

The Bible doesn’t tell us when Jesus realized who He really was. Was a 12 year-old Jesus reading Scriptures studying for His bar mitzvah when he looks down realizes, “Hey, this is talking about me!”

What we do know is that here, at His baptism, Jesus accepts His mission, His calling as Israel’s chosen one.

For us today, our baptism symbolizes not just our new life in Christ but also our calling and mission to live out this new life in such a way that we are His witnesses to the world around us.

But look at this. Once he comes up out of the water, verse 12:

**12 The Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. 13 And he was in the wilderness forty days, being tempted by Satan.**

By-the-way, this 40 days that Jesus fasted in the wilderness is where the idea of fasting for the 40 days of Lent comes from.

After Jesus’ baptism the Spirit of God comes on Him and immediately drove him out into the wilderness. The NASB says that the Spirit impelled him to go out. This is a strong word implying compelling intent.

Ok, let’s talk about what’s going on here. One God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirt. They are one in essence, eternal, and co-existing.

Yet, at the same time God is three persons. They are not three God who make up the one God, they are not each 1/3 God. They are each fully God and are inadvisable.

At this point I can only say this is what the Bible teaches. We will never, in our finite minds fully comprehend an infinite God.

But we can understand what the Bibles tells us about how God interacts within the Trinity on our behalf and with us.

The Father sent the Son. The Son, in his human person lives in full obedience to the Father, as seen by his willingness to be baptized.

The Spirt comes upon the Son to guide and lead Him through his earthly ministry as the messiah. Much like the Spirit comes and live in us the moment we accept Christ as our savior.

Jesus’ ministry as the anointed one, the messiah, was pronounced at His baptism when the Father declared: **“You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased.”**

Jesus was given the power to fulfill his ministry when the **Spirit descending on him like a dove.**

And His faith was deepen when he was sent to the wilderness where he was “**being tempted by Satan**”.

The idea here of being tempted is “put to the test, make trial of” in order to discover the kind of person someone is.

Jesus is on the cusps of launching his public ministry. The demands and pressures that were going to come upon Jesus during his three years of public ministry were going to be enormous.

And that’s not even taking into consideration what He will have to face at the cross.

So the Spirt leads Him to the wilderness where everything is taken from Him and he learns to trust the Father for his needs.

He learns to trust in who He is.

Read at the end of verse 13: “**And he** [that is Jesus] **was with the wild animals, and the angels were ministering to him.**

Lead by the Spirit Jesus finds himself in a place of desolation, loneliness, and danger where frightening, ravenous animals lived.

He had no water or food. Satan himself would mount an attack on Jesus in an attempt to get him to fall.

But God’s **angels were ministering to him.**

Jesus faith in the Father, in His own calling were confirmed.

Then in verse 14 we read, “**Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, 15 and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel**.”

Jesus steps out of the wilderness and the first thing he hears is that John had been arrested. He knew the dangers of going public with his mission.

Immediately Jesus begins “**proclaiming the gospel of God, 15 and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel**.”

Now the question, so what?

You too are a beloved son, or daughter, of the Father. Because of your faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ you have been adopted into the family of God.

The same Spirit that came upon Jesus Christ at His baptism has not just come upon you. At the moment you put your faith in Christ the Spirit of God moved into your heart where He has taken up permeant residence.

And the same Spirit who direct Jesus into the wilderness seeks to lead and guide you. But you have to be willing to be led.

You have to learn to listen to the Spirit and you must learn to be obedient to the Spirit’s leading.

And finally when you find yourself in the wilderness. In that place of lonely desolation. Don’t despair.

Don’t let the lies of Satan overwhelm you and get you off course.

Look for God’s provision and protection and let your faith be deepen. You will discover who you really are in Christ.

This Lenten season take time

 Search your heart – confess and repent of your sin

 Remember God’s wonderful gist of love and grace through Christ

And recommit your life to live through the power of the Holy Spirit.

**[Move to communion]**

**Benediction**

**“The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace.” (Num. 6:24-26)**