

The Baptism and Temptation of Jesus

Mark 1:9-13

Pastor Jeremy Cagle, January 28, 2024

Let me pray for us, and then we're going to dive right into our sermon this morning. Heavenly Father, Lord, as we come before you today to study the light of the Lord Jesus Christ and the first time we see Him in this marvelous gospel. We are humbled. And the reason Father is because this is not how we would save the world. If it were up to us, we would have chosen something else. We would have chosen something more glamorous, more glitzy, more pride inducing. You're a God who calls the humble and You've shown it by sending Jesus the way You do. So Lord, I pray that this would penetrate our hearts this morning. I pray that our souls would be enraptured by the Saviour, the man that He was, the God man that He was, the perfect Son of David. We pray this in Jesus' name, amen.

Well, if you're joining us, for the first time this morning, you've come at an interesting time, not only because we're in the gym, but also because we're in our third sermon in the Gospel of Mark. So if you would, please open your Bibles there with me, and turn to the Gospel of Mark. And we are in the part of the book where Mark is making his introductions, the first chapter. And so as he's in the first chapter, he's introducing the characters in the story. He has told us about John the Baptist in verse four. And he's going to introduce us to the devil in verse 13. Gonna talk about that. Right in the midst of this, he will show you the main character of the whole book, and that is Jesus Christ. His baptism, no less. That's where you're going to see Him show up in the story.

And just to introduce that and say a few words about it, like many of you, I was baptized at a young age, eight years old. And not for a good reason. I'm ashamed to say it now, but I did because all my friends had been baptized at a revival in Tennessee, and I didn't want to be left out. So the next Sunday, this is a true story, I went forward at an altar call. And they baptized me that night; it took less than a day. But it wasn't until 10 years later than I realized that ceremony really didn't mean anything to me because I was lost. My Christian life was a sham. I was a hypocrite. So right before entering my last year of high school, I cried out to God for the first time in my life and repented. I can even remember the prayer that I prayed on my knees, weeping. I begged Him for mercy. I said I was sorry, that He had a life I was supposed to live as a Christian and I wasn't living it, and then went running to the cross where the Saviour died. And like that, everything changed in my life. I was never the same again. My world got turned upside down to the point people in my town tried to figure out what just happened to me. They didn't have a category for that in the church I grew up in. So they said I rededicated my life to the Lord, I was called to the ministry, no friends, I was born again. I was a new creature; the old had gone, the new had come. So the question was, what do I do? Do I do it again? Or should I revisit that ceremony? Should I let it go? And I wish I could tell you that was an easy thing. It was not. It took me another 10 years in a trip to the Master's Seminary until I realized, the Bible says, "Repent and be baptized." It does not say, "Be baptized." There's an order there that I got wrong. And so I visited Israel in the summer of

2010, and I asked one of the pastors there to baptize me in the Jordan River, and he did and that sealed the deal for me. At that point, I never was baptized again.

But I tell you that story because I think many of you can identify with that. Many of you grew up in church and you have the experience of getting baptized before you were saved and wondering what I do with that? I met with six people last Sunday after the service about the issue of baptism. That was the most common question that came up; it always is in a religious town.

But I also mentioned this because if you look at your Bibles and mark 1:9, you read something very interesting, let me read it to you. It says this in Mark 1:9. "In those days, Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee, and was" what? "baptized." Now, in case you didn't catch up, let me say it again. In those days, Jesus, the Son of God, the Lord of all creation, was baptized. Now, you have to ask the question, why? What on earth? You know why I was baptized? I was a sinner. I know why you were baptized. You were a sinner. But He never sinned. What's going on here?

Well, I believe the answer is found in this little phrase in verse nine. When it says, "In those days, Jesus came from Nazareth." And what that means is that before this time Jesus was in Nazareth. And prior to what you're reading here in the Gospel of Mark, our Lord was in obscurity, far from the public spotlight, away from the attention of others, working with his hands, serving as a carpenter, honouring the Lord. Now it's time for Him to set that aside and launch His public ministry. And He does it with this event. You can look at this as the inauguration day of His work.

As these poor, we talked about this last time, as these poor and humble Jews are going out into the wilderness, Jesus goes with them. And as these lost and broken sinners traveling to the desert to see John the Baptist to be baptized, He does it too to identify with them and say, "that's exactly the sort of person I'm going to die for." I'm not going to die for those who were in Jerusalem who are right in their own eyes. And I'm not going to go to the cross and save those religious people who have it all together, I'm going to save those who don't. Friends, has anyone ever told you that before? Have they ever mentioned to you that Jesus came to save those who don't have it all together? Does that encourage you? It should because you don't have it all together. Do you? You sin. You've fallen short of the glory of God.

It's important to remember because I told you before, Chilliwack is a religious town, lots of churches, and so many of them believe they're saved because they have it all together. And so many of them think they're going to heaven because their right in their own eyes, because they're Dutch, or Mennonite, whatever. That's not how you go to heaven. That's how you go to hell. Heaven is for those who are falling in the eye, and they know it. Which means Grace Fellowship Church, if you want to go to heaven this morning, you need to know you're wrong. I'm not talking to the people out there. I'm talking to the people in here. The elders, deacons, ministers, as I said it to you before, you need to know you're wrong. Sound team worship team, young lady sitting in the chair, old man on the corner, teenagers who have been in this church all your life, you're wrong. The same thing goes for everybody. You don't read in

this passage that Jesus was baptized twice. Once you go to people; once for the bad. When you go through the book of Mark, you're not going to read there that He's crucified twice, once for the sinners, once for the saints. It only happened for sinners, which means that you have to see yourself. If you want to be a Christian, you are rotten to the core. Otherwise, the story is not going to make sense. The baptism doesn't make sense. The temptation doesn't make sense. The cross doesn't make sense until you see yourself as an evil person. And God has come to save you from it.

This is what we're talking about this morning. It's quite a story. There's no room for pride where we're going to be. Jesus' baptism should humble us to the ground. And we're going to talk about this by looking at four stages to the baptism. So if you're taking notes, this is our outline for this morning. But in Mark 1:9-13 we're going to look at four stages to the baptism of Christ. And we'll tie this into the temptation; we're going to put both of those events together.

The first one is His appearing. The first stage to Jesus' baptism is His appearing, which refers to the manner in which He sets foot upon the scene. This is the first time you're gonna read about Jesus in the Gospel of Mark. His name is mentioned in verse one, but the story about Him doesn't really kick off until this point, so we need to talk about this.

If you look in verse nine, it says, "In those days." That phrase "in those days," refers to the days of John the Baptist. If you were with us last Sunday, we learned that in verse four it says, right above this, it says, "John was in the wilderness, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins." And now verse nine says at that time, in those days, Jesus Christ appears. Mark is putting both of these events together.

He says Jesus appeared in the desert where John was. That's where scholars believed the wilderness was located. It was in an area 20 miles east of Jerusalem, in the desert, close to a body of water called the Dead Sea. It's called dead because nothing grows in it; you can't fish in the water. It's 34% salt, saltier than the ocean. If you've seen pictures of the Dead Sea, you'll see people floating, it's just so dense with salt. The air surrounding it is 95 [F] degrees annually. It's hotter than the Sahara, making it just a miserable place to be. It looks like the surface of the moon; there's nothing out there, but dirt are rocks. So what Mark is telling you is that Jesus does not go into the Holiday Inn here, He's going into the middle of nowhere. And not only that, verse nine tells you where He's coming from, that's where you're gonna come to look at where He's coming from. This is important. He's coming from where? You can say it aloud, Nazareth. In those days, Jesus came from Nazareth.

Now, when you see that in your Bible, it doesn't really shock us anymore. If you grew up in church, you know Jesus came from Nazareth. You've heard that ever since you were about this tall, but to the original audience that would have had a different impact. It would have been a shocking thing to read in the Bible because Nazareth was located in a small village located in Galilee. You see that right here in verse nine. Galilee is the northernmost province in the land of Israel. The way it worked is that the

country was divided up into three provinces. You had Judea in the south, where provinces in Canada are lined up horizontally, right? In Israel, they were lined up vertically. Judea was in the south, Samaria within the middle where the Samaritans were, and Galilee was way up north close to the Gentiles. It was about as far away from Jerusalem as you could possibly go, and still be considered Jewish. It's why it was frowned upon by most of the people at the time because it was looked at as a land of rednecks and hillbillies, who drove a pickup truck and spoke with a funny accent. Some of you would love it. I would too. I'd fit right in. Fishermen were there. Farmers were there. Harvesters were there, but others were not. Politicians weren't normally there. Rich people kind of despised it. And of all the places that were the most obscure, Nazareth was at the top of the list in Galilee because it was so tiny. It had a few hundred people in it and sat on a plot of ground that archaeologists believe was probably about 60 acres. It was tucked away in the central part of the province far away from landmarks and surrounded by mountains on both sides, which blocked it from view adding to the obscurity of it.

And when you see that and look back in verse nine, it makes you wonder, Mark doesn't go to all those details, I just give you that background so you can understand what he's saying. When you look back at verse nine, it makes you ask the question: of all the places why did the Lord put Jesus there? Born in Bethlehem and raised in Nazareth? Why? And the answer is so He could fit in with people there. The reason the Lord put Him in a little town like that is so He wouldn't stick out. That's why verse nine doesn't say that as Jesus approached these poor Jews in the wilderness, the crowds part and they said "This is the Messiah" because He looked just like them. They couldn't tell. That's why the passage doesn't tell you as He's drawing near, they fall down and worship Him because He blends in with the sea of faces. Friends, that's not the way we normally look at Jesus, is it? We normally think of Him sticking out all the time because He just walks on water, feeds the 5,000, it's not true. The picture here is of a normal, approachable person.

Just to show you how approachable He was, let me give you some other verses. In John one, do you remember what Nathaniel said when his brother Philip told him the Messiah came from Nazareth? He said "Nazareth! Can anything good come from Nazareth?" That's how he looked at it. Nazareth was a place to sneer at. The falling losers were there, and the Lord put Him there so He could save losers, amen. Put Him in the town of Nazareth, so He can help those who are sneered at. In Luke 18, when a blind man heard that Jesus was passing by, he asked the crowd who it was passing by because he couldn't really see Him, and they said, "Jesus of Nazareth," and the blind man calls out to Him. Why? He believed that Jesus came from a place like that, He can save me. And he's right. He healed him, a blind beggar on the side of the road. Jesus healed him. In Matthew 21 when Christ enters Jerusalem riding on a donkey, the crowd says, "Who is this?" And the response is "That's Jesus of Nazareth, because He's the king and He's from Nazareth. We've never seen that. He's the Son of David; He's on a donkey!" That's weird. Kings don't ride on donkeys. He's doing that so He can help people who do the same.

I think we get this wrong in our church. We think Jesus can't help me because I'm writing on a donkey. And He can't do anything for my life because I come from a little place. That's not true. He came from one too. He's Jesus from Nazareth, amen? Let me stop for a moment and say just like the story of John the Baptist, Jesus' cousin is from the boondocks, Jesus is from the same type of world. This is unbelievable. You're just a few verses into the gospel of Mark. If you were in the first century, you'd be pulling your hair out. What kind of story is this, Mark? What are you going to say next? If it were up to us, we wouldn't send the Messiah to Jerusalem, right? He would have been raised in the temple with the glamour and the glory. God put Him in the middle of nowhere to remind you, He is not interested in things that we are. He just wants to find those who are broken. The people in Nazareth, just like those in the wilderness, didn't have a lot going for them, but they were a broken people. As you find other parts of the Bible, they're just simple folks who work with their hands, which is why God wanted the Messiah to come from there to send the message that He's going to save simple folks.

Some of you need to hear that today. You've always been told your whole life salvation is not for simple people. You've been told it's hard. You can't come to Jesus unless you get your act together first, and you can be saved unless you clean up your life by getting rid of your earrings, makeup, jewelry, tattoos, movies and games. That's not true. If that were the case, Jesus would have showed up a different way. But He came in the form of a humble man so you can say that's what it takes to be saved, not to be humbled. Never mind the bad news for a moment. You have to be broken. It goes back to a matter of the heart.

Last time we were talking about this, and I told you that we all have a tendency to divide the world into two categories? Us and them. And we say that God has a message for the good people, us. And He says, "Good job, you can come to Christ." And He has a message for the bad people. That is "Bad job, you can't come to Him unless you get rid of your movies." The Bible doesn't say that. It says we're all bad and the road to Christ is open. How many lies have you told? How many times have you lost your temper? You have to be humble in your eyes to be saved. Don't buy the lie you're better than someone else just because you went to church. By the way, my wife and I have been to Nazareth before, just like the Dead Sea, we went on a trip to Israel years ago, and got to see all these places. And I'll say, Nazareth is so much nicer than the Dead Sea. There's a breeze blowing into the mountains, it's very comfortable weather wise, but it is small. It's locked in by these mountains, and it reminds you that Jesus grew up in a small place, preparing to die for small men, before Great and Holy God. Aren't you glad that He did? How many of you could be saved if you had to be a big man? Anybody want to raise your hand. Thankfully, we don't.

And bring it to another stage of His baptism in the Gospel of Mark and that is His anointing. So we've looked at His appearance or His appearing. He came from Nazareth in Galilee but let's look at the anointing of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is what happens as the baptism occurs, and that is that the Holy Spirit comes upon Him to anoint Him for ministry.

If you look in verse 10, and it says, “immediately.” Now, whenever you read that word in your Bibles in the Gospel of Mark, you should have alarm bells going off in your head because it's one of the most popular words in the book. It's used forty-two times in here to say that this is what Jesus' life was like to say after spending 30 years of security in a sleepy little town of Nazareth, when He stepped on the scene to ministry, it was immediate, and His life was like a whirlwind.

As this passage goes on to tell us it says, “In those days Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And immediately coming up out of the water, He saw the heavens opening.” You want to write this verse down, the word “opening” is the same word used in Mark 15:38 to describe the tearing of the curtain in the temple when Christ was crucified. And that's a good mental picture of what's taking place. Because Mark said it was like God put His hands and did this to the heavens and He grabbed them and tore them back, so there would be nothing standing between Him and His Son. As He did, the Spirit or the third member of the Trinity, like the dove descended upon Him. Now, if you look closely in your Bibles here, I want to point out that it does not say that the Spirit was a dove. The Spirit is the Spirit. The Holy Spirit is in a spiritual form. It says He was like a dove. The Bible is making a comparison to say that the Spirit descends upon Jesus with dovelike qualities, maybe even a dovelike shape, so that He and the Son could do this.

The reason He came upon Him is so they could be one. This is a little confusing to think about because the Spirit and the Son were always one. There was never a time when they were not like this in eternity past. But obviously something's happening here, and what is it? And I think the answer is that Jesus is being anointed. A lot of scholars have that view and that is that the Spirit rested upon Christ, to give Him supernatural strength of the ministry. Jesus was fully God, but in order to become fully man, He voluntarily laid aside the use of some of His divine attributes. And now in order to help Him with that empower Him for the work He wanted to do. The Spirit entered into His mortal body in a special way.

If you think about what's going to happen after this, over the next several years Jesus will preach, will teach you to call the disciples, train them, do miracles. And it will just be miracle after miracles in the Gospel of Mark. He's going to cast out demons, heal people, walk on water, stop the storm, feed the 5,000, call the blind to see, and the deaf to hear, and the lam to walk again at which point He will go to the cross, die for the sins of the world, be resurrected three days later; but the point is that all of this kicks off this moment when the Spirit comes upon Him. I've heard it described as Him almost being shot out of a cannon.

By the way, this is the stuff the Old Testament prophets talked about. They said over and over again that when the Messiah came, the Spirit of the Lord would rest upon Him, and He would anoint Him, Isaiah 61. And He would bring good news to the afflicted and bind up the brokenhearted, and set the captives free because they understood, there's no way for the Messiah to do that in His own strength if God were not with Him. And that's what this is referring to. This is when that prophecy is coming to fulfillment.

John MacArthur said about this birth, He said, Jesus was fully God and yet in humanity, He temporarily gave up some of the benefits, which is why the Spirit helped Him at every stage of His ministry. If you do a survey, you find the Spirit was with Jesus at His baptism, temptation, ministry, miracles, death, and even at the resurrection. And in every single instance of this, Jesus never resisted Him, but always operated under His sole control.

Just to give you an application point to this, to think through it a little bit, can I just say that if Jesus needed the Spirit to help that much to carry out His ministry, how much more do we? If Christ needed His power, what does that say about me? What can you do without Spirit? Nothing. Can't save anybody. Can't change them. Can't reach into their heart of stone and turn it into a heart of flesh, but the Spirit can and that's why we have to make Him a priority. In fact, I would say this might be the number one problem with the church in Canada right now. And that is that it's so weak because we don't make the Spirit of our talk to the average person and ask them where did your time go? It goes to work, work 60-70 hours a week. What do you do when the work is over? I go on trips. What do you do when the trips are over? I ride my bike, go hiking, I exercise, I camp. But as the conversation continues, you realize they never pray, they never worship, they never go to church. Is it any wonder why their Christian life is such a wreck? They're doing it in their own power. The Spirit of God has nothing to do with their life. You want to live your life differently as a Christian. You can't do whatever you want and expect God to bless it. You have to do God's work in God's way, if you want His power.

When I first came to Grace Fellowship Church in January 2017, I just celebrated my seven-year anniversary with you guys by the way, happy anniversary by the way. I made myself a cake and ate it by myself. When I first came out, I told the church I want this ministry to be done in such a way that there's only one person who can take credit for it. And that's God. I don't want anyone to look at you and give glory to you. I don't want the glory to go to me. You want to go to one thing and that is the power of the Holy Spirit. You want there to be an anointing on the ministry. That's what Jesus' life was like.

After this event, He lived in such a way that there was only one explanation for the things that was heaven. People would hear him preach and say no man ever spoke like this. When He did miracles, they would say this is unbelievable. It all goes back to the hand of God working on Him.

This brings me to another stage is baptism and that is the approval of the Father. We see the appearing. The anointing, but a third thing is the baptism of Christ, as presented in this gospel, is the approval of the Father. And this is where the first member of the Trinity gets involved. You saw how the third member of the Trinity comes upon the second member Christ. This is where the Father shows up.

Verse 11 says, "and a voice came out of the heavens. "The idea is that God took His hand and did this to the sky, His voice spoke out for all to hear. And said, "You are my beloved Son." Who is Jesus? He's God's Son. Who's the voice? It's the Father.

This doesn't come across in English, but the word “you” is at the front of the sentence in Greek to put it in the empathic position. Because what the Father is saying is that You are My beloved Son, and there is no other. You are the Yne I love more than any other person on the earth. It's all about you, Jesus.

The word “beloved,” it also comes from a Greek word that means favorite. The Father is saying here, “You’re my favorite Son, Jesus. The Father has other sons with a lowercase s. God has children that are saved, but not like this. Jesus is in a league of His own. If you think about it, God saying this because at this time, Jesus is surrounded by people going into the wilderness, becoming sons of God. The Jews are going out there to hear John the Baptist, to repent, their heart is changing from a child of the devil into a child of God; but they all look the same. If you're looking at the crowd, you’d think Jesus, what He's doing seems to be the same as anybody else when He's walking up to the river. So the Lord is saying, “Let Me help you with that.” Out of all those standing by the waters in the Jordan, this is the most important one. You can see this is God's taking His finger and pointing it at Him.

And here's why. It says in verse 11, because “in You I'm well pleased.” Or I’m delighted. Depending on how that's translated it could be rendered to say, “I'm satisfied in Jesus because He kept My commandments.” Which means as He's growing up for the past 30 years at Nazareth, in his little humble town, the time is not wasted because Christ spent it keeping the law. You can keep the law in a small town, Amen, you can honour God in a modem village. Doesn't matter where you live. So when it comes time for Him to begin in ministry, the Father looks at Him and says that Man is perfect; pay attention to Him.

When I was studying this, I tried to put myself mentally in the shoes of those who would have been watching it, and I don't think everybody understood what's happening here, obviously they didn't. But later on in John 1, John the Baptist would say as He looked at Jesus, “Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.” It seems like he got it. “Behold,” that actually means “the sacrifice of God that would take away the sins of the world because He’s without sin.” The only way to take away the world’s sin is to have no sin. That’s what Christ did.

I tell you about this because anytime you talk about Jesus’ life in the Bible, people always want to know what was He like as a child? Ever wondered that? Of course you have. And what was He like as a perfect teenager or even a young man? This verse gives you some insight into that because it tells you that we don't have all the details of His life, but His life was holy. It was righteous, spotless, blameless, flawless, virtuous, clean, pure, impeccable, uncontaminated, unstained. If you could think of the most perfect person in the world times infinity that was Him.

The Father said He is *eudokeō*, satisfactory to Me. By the way, you're not that way, are you? You’re not satisfactory to God. You’ve sinned. If you don't believe me, I mean, how many lies have you told? We could go through the whole 10 commandments, which is why you need someone to come and be satisfactory in your place. That's what Christ has done. He lived a life you could not live, so He could

give you a reward you do not deserve. You say, “Well that's not fair Pastor Jeremy.” You're right. It's not fair. It's about grace. You say, “Why would He do that?” Because He loves you, no other reason. He didn't do it because you're worthy. Theologians refer to this as the great exchange, God exchanging His life for yours. Or the Divine Substitution, where He substituted His perfection for your imperfection, and did this. And the point is that the baptism is a foretaste of that. As Jesus goes down into the water, it foretold of how he would die on the cross, and as He comes up, it foretells that He will rise three days later, but all that possible, because He's faultless.

Again, the setting for this is very interesting because the Jews are going out in the wilderness to do what? They want to please God. They want to be saved. The Lord is telling them this is the one who will do that for you. Look to Him.

One more stage for the baptism of Christ. We're kind of all building up to this this morning. Just to review these other ones, we looked at His appearance. Second, we've seen the anointing and the approval of the Father. And let me just pause here for a second and say, you can really end the sermon there if you wanted to. You've not gotten to the last part of it, and you've learned so much, you've seen the three members of the Trinity reveal themselves. Not too many times in the Bible where that happens. Which makes this a very special event, one of the greatest moments in Scripture, which makes the next story seem so strange.

If you've read ahead, the gospel of Mark, you know you're about to go from the height of the mountain to the bottom of a pit. Because in the next part of it, Jesus is going to be assaulted by the devil. I'll tell you why in a moment, but the final stage of the baptism is the aftermath of it. The final stage of the baptism and temptation is the aftermath. Because the gospel of Mark tells you as soon as Christ was baptized, something unusual happens and that is the devil shows up. We need to look at these two things together, so you can see what's going on here.

If you look in your Bibles, first, we'll start off with that familiar word “immediately.” It's used intentionally here because Mark as soon as the baptism is over, at the very second immediately, the Spirit compelled Him to go into the wilderness. The Spirit comes upon Him and that's the first thing He does.

And the word “out” in verse 12 is helpful because it means Jesus was in the wilderness; now He goes further out. He's already in the desert; now He's going further in. I told you the Dead Sea is hot, but I didn't tell you that the area around it is big; it goes on for miles. You wouldn't have to go very far in that part of Israel to be left alone. So the idea is that as soon as the Spirit comes upon Jesus, it pushes Him deeper into the desert far away from human habitation. Verse 13, to skip ahead a little bit, says that He was with the wild beasts. That doesn't mean He's doing something with wild beasts. It just means He's closer to the animals than people now. Verse 13 says it happens so He can be tempted by Satan or

repeatedly tempted is the meaning of that verb, constantly tempted for a period of 40 days. The word is in the continuous tense in Greek, implying this happens over and over again.

The other gospels tell us the devil told Him that if you are the Son of God, command these stones to become bread. And the devil said things like if You're the Son of God throw yourself down from the temple and let the angels rescue You, among a few other things. But apparently that's not all. If you use your imagination, it doesn't take a lot to stretch to think that while He was there, the devil would have tried to get Him to lie, swear, slander, blaspheme, covet, lose His temper, curse God, deny God, reject God, question God, doubt Him say, "why did He put me in the wilderness, God? What are You thinking? The devil throws the whole kitchen sink at Him. There's only few times in the Bible that I could find where the devil talks to someone individually like this in the Bible. Eve was the other example. He's personally interested in Job in the book of Job. Peter, he asks to sift Peter like wheat, but this is a face-to-face interaction.

Robert mentioned earlier, the Lord quoted Scripture to the devil, rejected the devil, and the end of the verse here says, "The angels are ministering to Him," which means that Jesus remained sinless, because He had a good relationship with the angels before the temptation, and He had a good relationship after.

And if you notice in the Gospel of Mark, that's it. That's all Mark says about this. After he goes through that, Mark goes on to talk about something else because this book is just a quick book. Which is curious. As you hear that, I don't know about you, but I was saying to myself all week, "Well that sounds nice, but what does that have to do with the baptism? I don't see a connection here. I've learned about all this wonderful stuff of the Trinity, the Father speaking, and the Spirit anointing, and then we're reading this. Jesus does this, in order to show you what the baptism is conveying you, and that He will destroy the work of the devil. This is what the devil does. He wants to get people to sin. This is his mission. He's trying to get you to turn your back on God. Jesus came to put a stop to it That's why He's baptized. That's why He was anointed. That's why the Father looked at Him and said, "This is My beloved Son." And that's why He would go to the cross.

In fact, this is something that takes you back to the very first book in the Bible. In Genesis 3, it says that after the dawn of creation, after the devil tempted Eve to sin, God cursed the serpent saying, "I will put in, enmity between you and a woman. And He Christ will bruise you on the head." Which means sin came in and God promised to send a Saviour. Mankind fell as a result of Satan's temptation. The Lord told us He can send someone to stop him. So it's only fitting here in the Gospel of Mark, the first thing the Saviour does when He shows up is to take us back to that as soon as He begins the work of redemption.

By the way, starting from this point, there is going to be more Satanic activity over the next three and a half years than any other time in history. It seems like every time you turn around in the gospels, Jesus is encountering a demon. He does it in Mark 1:25. He does it in Mark 1:34, does it in Mark 5:8, Mark 9:25

because the devil just keeps coming at Him; won't leave Him alone. And every time it occurs, Jesus casts the demons out to show that He is greater than all the forces the devil put together.

And I would say that's a good way to wrap it up this morning because I feel like again, I started off being hard on you. Went around the room and told you that you're wrong. Elders, deacons, and ushers, you're wrong. Worship team, sound team, young people, old people, you're wicked in the eyes of God. That's true. I'm not going to deny that. But the fact is that's part of the story. The other part of the story is that even though you're wrong, Jesus is the one who came to help you overcome it. And He did it by defeating the devil show you that you can defeat the devil too if you put Your faith in His Name. You can't beat the devil on your own and what are you going to do? You can't be victorious over sin by yourself, that's impossible. If you don't believe me, just go home after church today and try to stop sinning. You'll last five minutes. But pray to Christ, put your faith in Christ, give your life to Christ, that changes everything. That's what He's come here to do.

D.L. Moody once said, "I believe that the devil exists for two reasons. One is because the Bible says that he does. The other one is because I've had to face his handiwork, but whenever I have, I know there's someone standing with me, and that is the Lord Jesus Christ. And I have nothing to fear."

Friends, do you believe that this morning? You have nothing to fear when the devil you have Christ. I tell you that because I promise you, you will go home today and be tempted by his work. Something's gonna happen to me. But when it does, the solution is to look at Him. Don't say, "Woe is me." And when you fail, don't have a pity part and say I can't believe I did that. Repent and go to the One that helps you prevail.

And we talked about the Holy Spirit quite a bit this morning and last week. And I had several people tell me that was encouraging to them. They grew up in a church that didn't talk about Him. I think a lot of churches today don't talk about the devil. It's hard to not want to talk about the devil in 2024, isn't it? It makes you feel uncomfortable because some of the charismatic talk about rebuking him, but friends, the truth is you don't have to rebuke the devil. He's already been rebuked. You believe in the One who rebukes Him.

On the wall in my living room, I have an American flag hanging there that was presented to my grandfather when he died. He was a soldier in World War Two. I keep it there as a reminder of all the benefits I've received on behalf of what he did. I didn't fight in World War Two. I didn't bleed and put my life on the line, and yet I'm free. I have a victory over the evil forces that were there at the time. The same way here. We didn't defeat the devil. You didn't put your life on the line. Did you sacrifice anything? Christ did. But because He did, you're free. Amen? Let's close in a word of prayer.

Heavenly Father, we thank you for what we've studied this morning. And I feel like we just scratched the surface on some amazing things. Yet we wanted to put them all together to remind ourselves of the

hope we have in the Lord Jesus Christ. We all struggle with the flesh, and we all struggle with temptation. And we all see the evil things that are out there in the world around us, and yet there is no reason as a Christian when we should be worried about any of them when we have Christ.

Lord, thank you for the Saviour. Thank you that You put these two events together so we can see what He has come to do. Lord, we look forward to studying the gospel of Mark. We're just now beginning of it, but we think of all the amazing things we're going to learn about Christ in the weeks ahead, and it really just humbles us to the core.

Lord. I pray for my brothers and sisters in the Lord this morning that they would go up here overjoyed for the victory they have. Father, would we learned to be Christians that are not pessimists and negative. Father, we have hope. We have hope that the world cannot even imagine because of our Saviour. Lord, would You be glorified as we live in light of the cross? May our hearts and our minds be continually focused on Him as we continue to study this book. Would you bless us in the months ahead. We pray in Christ's name, amen.