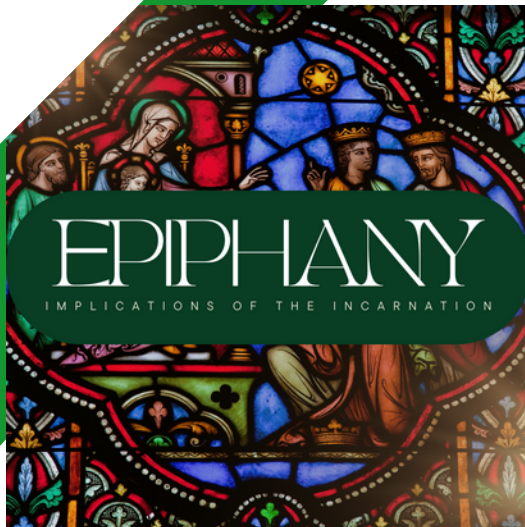
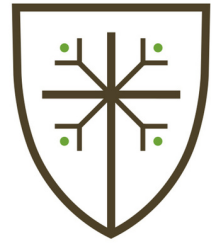


# SERMON NOTES



January 7, 2024

## SERMON INFO

### TITLE

"Epiphany Change"

### PREACHER

Rev. Tim Frickenschmidt

### TEXTS

Genesis 1:1-5

Romans 6:3-7, 8:12-16

Mark 1:1-11

## DISCUSSION QUESTION

1. Think of a wilderness time in your life. What did it look like for God to meet you there?
2. How is the kind of change Tim talked about different from the typical "new year's resolution?"

## SERMON IN SUMMARY

This week, we began the season of Epiphany. And our sermon series for that season seeks to answer the question "What's the importance of the incarnation?" This week's sermon focused on change – real, significant change and where we can find that change.

### The Claim

The gospel of Mark begins abruptly, with a brief, one-line introduction in which he referenced Jesus as "the Christ, the Son of God." The first name – the Christ, is a title meaning set apart as king. If you celebrated Christmas, you celebrated the birth of a king, THE king. Do you want the change that a king brings?

The second name, "the Son of God," holds even more significance. This was an extremely daring and weighty claim for anyone to make but particularly for a Jew such as Mark. Mark is claiming that Jesus is God. The Israelites considered God's name so holy that they couldn't even say it or write it. And here, Mark claims this is who Jesus is. That God who they would not speak his name is now here, come in the flesh. Theologian and author, John Stott, wrote that there are only three responses to God coming close as he does in the incarnation – people run from him, try to kill him, or love and worship him. God has come near to you as a person in Jesus Christ.

### The Place

Historically, the wilderness is the place where people meet God. Moses, the Israelites, David running from Saul. But the wilderness is not what we tend to think of as wilderness. It isn't the forest but rather, the desert. The wilderness is a place where there is no life, no water. A place where you can't stay alive unless God intervenes. Our world is spiritually what the desert is like physically. Any sort of wilderness experience will rock the foundations of your life. It's the kind of place where you know this thing is going to take your life unless God intervenes. And God can and does intervene in those places. He is a God mighty to save and worthy of your life. He can baptize you with true change.

### The Power

In the first chapter of Mark the phrase "the way" is used twice. It refers to Jesus' way to the cross. His way lay through the wilderness, the place of lifelessness, of thirst, and, ultimately, the absence of his Father's presence. The lack of that presence is what killed him for you and for me. But Christ didn't simply die to forgive us our sins but to change us. We were buried with Christ in his death so that, just as he was raised to a new life, we might also be raised with a new life. We are called to treat our old life as dead. Because through Jesus we have the power to change that life. And he is there for us no matter what the wilderness looks like.