

Jesus, Wow! (Part 3)

The Message of Jesus

Mark 1: 14-15

Pastor Andrew Neville 3/5/20

Sermon Summary

In the time of Jesus' ministry, many people never saw him nor took any notice of his sayings. We don't necessarily know this from fact, but from the very nature of human beings, we can state that with a fair degree of certainty. However, for those who did see, meet, and hear Jesus, they were the WOW people.

The opening of Mark's historical account of Jesus begins with John the Baptist as the one who "prepared the way" for Jesus. Verse 14 mentions John's imprisonment – his work is finished; Jesus' work now begins. Jesus moves around the Galilee area (mountainous northern region of Israel), and Mark declares three important summaries of Jesus' work to come:

1. The time **has come**.
2. The Kingdom of God **is near**.
3. **Repent and believe** the good news.

"The time has come" is indicative of a decisive moment in history.

That it is "near" indicates its proximity to a human being, here specifically to a King. King Jesus is near. He is walking **among** his people; he is walking **with** his people. Was there a throne on Earth prepared for him? No. For his kingdom and throne are everywhere.

This is good news, and there is only one response sufficient to accept it: "Repent and believe." If you do so, you are allowed to enter this kingdom.

What does it mean to "repent"? Simply, we are to turn from a destructive path into God's plan for our lives. We are to hate the things we formerly believed and acted upon.

When we truly repent, we will know the change within ourselves as will our friends and acquaintances. But we will also recognize an ongoing struggle with sin – and do something about it. (It will be the Holy Spirit working within us.) Repentance will result in a new form of worship for us; it will show a changing lifestyle.

Pastor Andrew narrated a portion of Huckleberry Finn (minus the American accent) about an incident with Huck's father who was simply called 'Pap' – a scoundrel and hypocrite – who frequently stood before Judge Thatcher for drunken and disorderly behavior. The Judge was a Christian and took pity on Pap standing before him and took him home for a decent meal. "And after supper [the Judge] talked to [Pap] about temperance and such things until the old man cried and said he had been a fool, and fooled away his life; but now he was

going to turn over a new leaf and be a man nobody would be ashamed of, and he hoped the judge would help him and not look down on him. The judge said he could hug him for them words; so he cried, and his wife she cried again; pap said he'd been a man that had always been misunderstood before, and the judge said he believed it..... The old man rose up and held out his hand and says, 'Look at it gentlemen, and ladies all; take ahold of it; shake it. There's a hand that was the hand of a hog; but it ain't so no more; it's the hand of a man that's started in on a new life, and I'll die before he'll go back. You mark them words – don't forget I said them. It's a clean hand now; shake it – don't be afeard'.....then the old man he signed the pledge. Later that night he got stuck into the booze again, became as drunk as a fiddler, and rolled off the porch and broke his left arm in two places.”

[I just couldn't resist putting in that extract from the book. P.]

Pap Finn gives a false confession resulting in a fake conversion. **Repent** means to turn around and change. Pap did nothing of the sort. When a genuine repentant turns from sin, he or she is looking into the face of Jesus. And then, by faith in Jesus, we enter the Kingdom of heaven.

In Mark 8:31 we read that Jesus began to teach them of the suffering to come. And in Mark 10:45, Jesus tells them he has come to show servanthood and that he will become our ransom or substitute for our sinfulness.

In 1982, Pastor Andrew became born again. He remembers becoming a new person with a fresh start on life. He knew from that moment Jesus would never leave him or allow him to be alone. He wakes each morning knowing that he is a part of a great kingdom of believers. With the knowledge of God, there is so much purpose in life. And one day, believers will enter into the eternal state.

We have been entrusted with the good news. This is the message of missions – to pass on this good news.

John Harper was a missionary and a passenger on the inaugural voyage of the Titanic. It was said of him that his prayer life was so fervent that he shook like a leaf in the wind. Even when he was floating in the sea, he was encouraging folk to put their trust in Jesus, that it wasn't too late. Years later, one of the surviving passengers recorded John Harper's prayers for him, before Harper succumbed to the cold, and the passenger's grateful confession and repentance as he went on to survive.

Discussion Questions

1. Many of us struggle to proclaim the gospel. What do you think might be stopping us and how can we overcome these obstacles?
2. How can we ensure that we are regularly and earnestly praying for unbelievers to be saved?