



[First Words--Mark 1:9-10 & 16-20]

Words are important. More so, first impressions and **first words can be pivotal in establishing a foundation** for any relationship.

I learned the importance of initial words first hand many years ago. I will never forget meeting a stunning young woman from Baton Rouge. This was the first time that I would meet my friend's friend. Her name was Casey. I remember looking out the window of my grandfather's tricked out travel-van, white with maroon/velvet interior. As I worked up the courage to speak words of elegance to this stranger she spoke first. I will never forget that night she said: ya ya yay a go Tiguhs. This is the power of first words. 14 years later, 12 of marriage, and 2 kids, I am still smitten.

Today we begin a new series in the Gospel of Mark entitled "**Quotation Marks.**" The Gospel of Mark is the shortest of the Gospels and is categorized as an ancient bios, or ancient biography. The importance of this genre in the ancient world is striking: they centered on a **particular person and seek to present an adequate and accurate characterization** of the person.

In other words, the Gospel of Mark centers on the person of Christ to give an adequate and accurate characterization his nature: **humanity and deity.**

We begin where Mark begins: with a look into the first deeds and dialogue of the Savior. You can learn a lot about a many by what they do and say first. **First Words**

Read [Mark 1:9-10 & 16-20]

Jesus has complete authority from Heaven (1:9-10)

Here we find the **first action of the Messiah** in the Gospel of Mark. Jesus Christ enters the scene and was baptized by John. John, a salty prophetic individual proclaimed a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. Surely, the Beloved Son of God **did not need** this baptism!

First we must ask **why** he was baptized and then we will examine **what**. The baptismal event is the **keystone in the life and ministry of Jesus**. It was His first action. First in **chronology** in Mark and primary in **importance**. The empowerment of the Spirit and the declaration of God not only enable Jesus to speak and act for **divine**, but is a heavenly declaration that the Messiah is the Holy One! **The baptism is a line drawn: He is God.**

As a man he was baptized, but he absolved sins as God. He needed no purifying rites himself—his purpose was to hallow water. —Gregory Nazianzen.

Why was Jesus baptized? **To present the King of Kings.** What happened? **Three significant results.** The heavens-the Spirit-the Voice.

He saw the heavens opened- not slowly cracked but “torn asunder”. The opening of heaven was highly significant because **Second Temple Judaism commonly believed that with the cessation of the great OT prophets the HS has ceased speaking directly to God’s people.**

Maybe you feel like this. Maybe you feel as though God has ceased speaking to you. As if He turned His back, had enough, or you wondered so far away you can’t hear. Look at the heavens that opened.

In Christ, God speaks. In Christ, we have heavenly holy access. God has not shut you out- you shut Him out. But the Lord wants no man to perish but all to have eternal life. Life that is flourishing with open communion because of the King of Kings. **Don’t look to the heavens—look at the heavens torn apart because of Beloved Son. This is the power of Jesus Christ.**

Spirit descended. Surely not meant as a **description** of the form of the Spirit but rather the descent, like a dove gently coming down for a landing. Above all, the **community of faith was longing for the Messiah who would be endowed with God’s Spirit.** Here is a clear echo **of Isa. 64:1. If only you would tear the heavens open and come down, so that mountains would quake at your presence.** Not only does Jesus provide heavenly access, He is empowered with the Spirit and has the power to freely give the Spirit of God to all who believe.

Mark is suggesting what is happening to Jesus is an earthshaking event. **John 14:15** “If you love me, you will keep my commands. **16** And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever. **17** He is the Spirit of truth. The world is unable to receive him because it doesn’t see him or know him. But you do know him, because he remains with you and will be in you. When you accept the good news of Christ, and He gives you in that moment of regeneration the Holy Spirit, it is an earthshaking event in your life. **Who is this man that has the power to give the HS? His name is Jesus**

And a voice. I have always wondered what the voice of God sounded like. But oh what a voice. I believe its like the squeaky 3 year old meeting you at the front door, or hearing your aging grandmother, or a long lost friend, or the wind, earthquake. **This is no ordinary voice-over.**

This scripture is a composite citation of **Psa. 2:7 - I will declare the LORD's decree. He said to me, "You are my Son; today I have become your Father. And Is. 42:1 - "This is my servant; I strengthen him, this is my chosen one; I delight in him. I have put my Spirit on him; he will bring justice to the nations.** **The voice of God, the word the voice declared is covenantal, denoting a special relationship between God and His son.**

Who is this man who tears open the heavens, who has and gives the Spirit of God, and has a special covenantal relationship with the Father? Are you prepared to listen to the voice of the Lord? You will never hear mighty sound of The Father without the Son. **He is the beloved son who has complete authority from heaven.**

Jesus has complete authority on earth (1:16-20)

The authority of Christ does not stop from the point of inception. If the first activity of Christ displays His **comprehensive authority from heaven**, His first dialogue exhibits his **complete authority upon the earth.**

The first recorded words of Jesus' ministry in mark is **not something sensational, but a simple summons** of common laborers into fellowship with Himself.

We find four men fishing, **Simon and Andrew casting.** With practice and dexterity, casting nets could be handled by a single fisherman who standing in a boat or wading into the water would gather his net on his arm and heave it forcefully in a circular motion so that it would like a parachute on the water trapping the fish. Fish were then retrieved by the fishermen diving to the bottom, gathering the weighted ends and dragging the net to shore. Jesus, seeing this common activity along the shore of Galilee offers as simple greeting: follow me.

Follow me- "Here, Behind Me! (Greek)" what a profound statement, which was unheard of in the ANE.

No supporting evidence accompanies his call—no miracles or moral persuasion. They were not required to **pass an entrance exam** consisting of Torah knowledge or church tradition. What they need to learn and do **can only be learned and done as they follow** Jesus. **It's easy to wait for the miraculous and miss the call to follow.** Don't miss the call!

As He Passed/Search- What a beautiful picture of good news. The fishermen did not search for him, but Jesus searches for them. **There are no rabbinical stories analogous to the calling of the disciples for rabbis did not search for followers.** Entry into a rabbinical school depended on the **initiative of**

the aspiring student. Your world says search for a religious school, you seek contentment, you become moral, but the reality is that Jesus is already searching for you! **The call to follow does not take place on *holy ground but in the world of boats and nets and labor from dawn to dusk.***

Cost- The call to follow is to come and fall in line behind the Messiah. Simon and the boys are called to **break ties with the past.** This is a call for total dedication to the mission. Jesus invitation is an expectation of radical renunciation of even family ties. **What is the cost to follow?** Deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow (Matt. 16:24). **What authority is this? Complete.**

I will make- men fishers. Make no mistake these were not poor simple minded fishermen. **In the 1st century fishing was a thriving industry on the Sea of Galilee, which counted no fewer than sixteen bustling ports. In order to survive in this flourishing industry, fishermen needed to be shrewd and successful businessmen. The fact that the Zebedee's had both a boat and hired hand shows their success.**

Jesus takes these fishermen and makes them men fishers. **It is no accident that Jesus choose fishermen because we have no accidental Savior. A survey of all OT passages used with fishing (Jer 16:16; Ezek 29:4-6; Amos 4:2; Hab. 1:14-17) shows that fishermen were used in the context of judgment**

Jesus gives these men a new mission: to rescue others in the face of impending eschatological judgment. There is no doubt that fishing divides the caught from the uncaught, a division that Christ himself and the disciples make vividly clear. **For everyone accepts the invitation to follow: your mission is clear- rescued people rescue others.**

Make- a second characteristic of following is the call to service. The Greek wording: “I shall make you become fishers of men.” The life to which Jesus calls his disciples – around the Sea and in St. Clair- requires a fundamental change of perspective, to have in mind the things of God rather than self. **Many can learn how to fish, only Jesus can teach you how to fish for the kingdom.**

Conclusion

Matt. 28:17 17 When they saw him, they worshiped, but some doubted. **18** Jesus came near and said to them, “All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth.”

You will never worship the Beloved Son the one who has complete authority from Heaven until you submit and acknowledge His absolute authority in your life on earth. **The Jesus on the shore of the Jordan river is the same Son of Man on the sea of Galilee.** You will never find true freedom until you put down your nets.

This is not the end of the Story. We know that some stayed in the boat: father and the hired men. Did not hear the call of Jesus? Were they too busy? Were they not convinced? Did they have too many obligations.

Who is this man? [Romans 10:13](#) For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

The call to follow is a universal call. **Everyone**. Today will you follow or will you stay in the boat?

Notes

Mark 1:9 In those days Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized in the Jordan by John. **10** As soon as he came up out of the water, 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.”

“You are my Son, the Beloved, on whom I rest my favor.” (BWIII)

At v.10 we have the first occurrence of one of Mark’s favorite words, immediately which will occur some forty more times in this Gospel. The repetition of the term gives the reader a sense of things happening at a breakneck or breathless pace (BWIII).

When Jesus comes up from the water he experiences three things that in Jewish tradition signified the inauguration of God’s eschatological kingdom: the heavens were opened, the Spirit descended into him, and the heavenly voice spoke to him (Edwards, 34).

The baptism is the keystone in the life and ministry of Jesus. The empowerment of the Spirit and declaration of God not only enable Jesus to speak and act for God but as God (Edwards, 38).

As man he was baptized, but he absolved sins as God. He needed no purifying rites himself—his purpose was to hallow water. –Gregory Nazianzen

He saw

This is a private experience and revelation (Contrast Matt. 3:16-17). It is only Jesus who is said to see the Spirit coming down.

The opening of heaven is highly significant because Second Temple Judaism commonly believed that with the cessation of the great OT prophets the Holy Spirit had ceased speaking directly to God’s people (Edwards, 35).

Spirit-Dove

The analogy is surely not meant as a description of the form the Spirit took when coming down, but rather the manner of the descent, like a dove coming gently down for a landing (BWIII, 74).

Here is a clear echo of Isa 64:1. Mark is suggesting that what is happening to Jesus is an earthshaking event (BWIII, 75).

Above all, it was believed that in the eschatological age the Messiah would be endowed with God's Spirit (Edwards, 36).

The emphasis on seeing and hearing attests to the empirical objectivity of the event (Edwards, 37).

Voice

v. 11 is a composite Scripture citation combining Psalm 2:7 with Isa 42:1. The language is covenantal, denoting a special relationship between God and his Son (BWIII, 75).

Mark 1:16 As he passed alongside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew, Simon's brother, casting a net into the sea for they were fishermen. **17** "Follow me," Jesus told them, "and I will make you fish for people." **18** Immediately they left their nets and followed him. **19** Going on a little farther, he saw James the son of Zebedee and his brother John in a boat putting their nets in order. **20** Immediately he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men and followed him.

The first recorded act of Jesus' ministry in Mark is not something sensational—a spectacular miracle or a mighty sermon—but a simple summons of four common laborers into fellowship with himself (Edwards, 48).

Casting

With practice and dexterity, the casting net could be handled by a single fisherman who, either standing in a boat or, as is the case here, wading out into the water, gathered the net on his arm and heaved it forcefully outward in a circular motion so that it would land like a parachute on the water trapping fish as it sank to the bottom (Edwards, 49). Fish were retrieved by the fishermen diving to the bottom, gathering the weights of the net together, and dragging the net and its catch to shore (Edwards, 49).

Follow Me- δευτε οπισω μου,

In essence it is to come and fall in line behind him. They are called to break ties with the past, but also to take up a new trade in some way would be analogous with the old one. This is a call for total dedication to the mission (BWIII)

The point here is that following Jesus requires not just assent of the heart, but a fundamental reordering of socio-economic relationship... this is not a call 'out of the world' but into an alternative practice (BWIII).

There are no rabbinical stories analogous to the calling of the disciples, for rabbis did not consummate the teacher-student relationship by the summons, "follow me." Unlike the decisive call that comes from Jesus, entry into a rabbinical school depended on the initiative of the aspiring student, not the call of a rabbi (Edwards, 49).

No supporting evidence accompanies his call—no miracles or debate or moral persuasion. They need not exhibit knowledge of the Torah or pass a qualifying examination in theology. What they need to learn and do can only be learned and done as they follow Jesus (Edwards, 50).

They do not search for him, but Jesus searches for them. It is in their world that discipleship begins (Edwards, 50). The call to follow does not take place on holy ground but on their ground in the working world of boats and nets and labor from dawn to dusk (Edwards, 50).

"Here, Behind Me!" would produce the idiom (NIGTC)

Jesus' peremptory summons, with its expectation of radical renunciation of even family ties, goes far beyond anything they would be familiar with in normal society. It marks him as a prophet rather than a rabbi (NIGTC, 96).

Fishermen

Though we are accustomed to thinking to these men as poor, the social indicators in the text may suggest otherwise (BWIII, 84). The Zebedees could afford both a boat and a hired man. We know fishermen were indeed the regular

In the 1st century fishing was a thriving industry on the Sea of Galilee, which counted no fewer than sixteen bustling ports. In order to survive in their market league, they needed to be—and doubtlessly were—shrewd and successful businessmen (Edwards, 49).

Fishers of men

A survey of all OT passages which use the analogy with fishing (Jer 16:16; Ezek 29:4-6; Amos 4:2; Hab. 1:14-17) shows this metaphor is used in the context of a discussion about

judgement. What Jesus seems to be asking these disciples is to rescue some in the face of the coming eschatological judgement (BWIII, 86).

A second characteristic of the call to follow is the call to service. The Greek wording is more nuanced reading "I shall make you become fishers of men." The life to which Jesus calls disciples requires a fundamental change of perspective, to have in mind the things of God rather than self (Edwards, 50).

There is no doubt an element of judgment involved in the observation that fishing divides the caught from the uncaught, a division which the ministry of Jesus and of his disciples will make clear (NIGTC, 97).

Immediately

Mark gives no explanation for the ready response of these four men to the call of a total stranger (NIGTC).

Illustrations

In his book about famous sports team captains titled *The Captain Class*, Sam Walker examines the hidden forces that create the world's greatest sports teams. Here's one of his surprising findings about one of the

Application

90% of

