

## **TAPE # 9**

# **WALKING WITH JESUS SERIES MARK 1:14-15 "THE MESSAGE OF JESUS"**

As believers this evening, one of the greatest privileges we have is knowing and sharing the message of Jesus. What is the message of Jesus? In a moment we will examine it word by word from Mark 1. But before that, think of the wonderful change that the message of Jesus has brought.

What a wonderful change in my life has been wrought, since Jesus came into my heart.

I have light in my soul for which long I had sought, since Jesus came into my heart!

Have you ever thought about what a wonderful change the sweet message of Jesus has brought? Think with me about two dramatically different lives, one accepting and touched by the message of Jesus, the other rejecting the message of Jesus.

## **TWO LIVES, ONE MESSAGE, TWO RESPONSES**

Ancient sources give a remarkably clear picture of the destruction of Ninevah, the city Jonah preached to. The year was 612 B.C. the doom of the city arrived. Combined armies of Babylonians and Scythians marched up the left bank of the Tigris River and surrounded the city. It happened in early spring at the time of the annual rainfalls. Since the rains were especially hard that year, the Tigris and other rivers flooded and apparently washed away a portion of the walls, leaving a breach for the armies to enter the city.

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The Greek historian Diodorus Siculus (c. 20 B.C.) says that the river not only broke down the walls of the city, it also inundated part of it. At this point, the king, SARDANAPALUS, remembering an oracle to the effect that Nineveh would only fall when the river itself declared war against it, believed that the oracle was fulfilled and abandoned any hope of saving himself. He built a gigantic funeral pyre in the royal precincts, heaped up large quantities of gold and costly clothes, shut his concubines and eunuchs in a chamber he had made in the midst of the pyre, and then burned himself, his family, his concubines and eunuchs, and the palace.

Whatever had not been burned in this conflagration was destroyed by the entering armies. There was a terrible slaughter. Diodorus said, "So great was the multitude of the slain that the flowing stream, mingled with their blood, changed its color for a considerable distance<sup>1</sup>." What a wasted life without the Goodness of God's Message.

Then remember with me the passing of CT Studd. A former lean and fit athlete, now gaunt and emaciated. All his formerly gleaming white teeth now brown or long gone. Stooped, halting with each step he is surrounded by thousands of glistening black bodies. They have come to hear their beloved Bwana for the last time. He speaks after over two hours of singing. There in front of him sit 5,000 former headhunters. Now their oiled bodies, clothed in banana leaves sit in an immense sea of white toothed smiles. With faces turned heavenward they sing of the sweet by and by and that beautiful shore they will someday see.

Passed now are the years of darkness and savagery. The former enemies sit shoulder to shoulder. No weapons of war are left, only the bond of love. This would be the last sight of his dear saintly convert Studd would see. After his message uttered between gasps for air, with every era strained to catch each word, he is carried back to his hut. Exhausted, he rests, though only his Savior knew it was his last. In the night the Faithful Shepherd who had led him to China, then India and finally to the very heart of Africa - took CT home. In the morning only the shriveled earthly tent was left. But around that hut and to the furthest reaches of the jungles and on mission stations around the world, the footprints of this giant can be found today.

CT Studd responded to the message of Jesus, gave every thing to Christ. And in return he lost nothing. SARDANAPALUS kept everything to the end,

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<sup>1</sup> Maier, *The Book of Nahum*, p. 127. Diodorus's work is called the *Chronicles*. The material on the fall in turn from *Persica*, a chronicle of Assyria and Persia in twenty-three books by a Greek physician named Cresias, of which only fragments survive.

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rejected the message God had sent his city, and dies as it was destroyed. Jim Elliot summed it up the best, "He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose." This morning let's find what we can give up that will last forever!

What is this life changing message? Stand with me before God and listen, follow along with me because, the message of Jesus is where we pick up this evening in Mark 1:14-15.

In our passage this evening we will only cover two verses in Mark's Gospel, but these verses span over 8 months of Christ's life and ministry. Mark has an agenda as the Spirit led him. The purpose? To show the message of Jesus. What is that message? Let me first sketch where we are going: So what is the message of Jesus? It is what He said, and what He did. In these 8 events over 8 months here is His message. Each of these events teach us wonderful lessons:

1. Lamb of God? Jesus is all we need to get to Heaven.
2. Water to wine? Jesus enjoyed life's pleasures.
3. Cleansing the Temple? Jesus wants undistracted worship.
4. Nicodemus? Jesus meets us where we are, and meets us there.
5. John the Baptist imprisoned? Jesus gives us hope to the end that to die is gain!
6. Woman at Well? Jesus loves us no matter what we have done, He knows it all and still loves us.
7. Galilean Sermon? Jesus says salvation is so simple, that it is impossible.

Look down at your Bibles with me. Look at v. 12-13 and then v. 14-15. In that tiny space in your Bibles is over 8 months of the life and ministry of Jesus. In those 8 months are some of the best known scenes from Christ's life: the Wedding at Cana, the Woman at the Well, and Nicodemus and John 3:16. Yet in the time from between the Temptation of Jesus, which we saw last time and the start of Christ's Galilean Ministry we see before us tonight, Mark skips over 8 months of Christ's life.

The other Gospel writers cover these events, mainly John. The events of those 8 months really frame the ministry and message of Jesus. What do I mean? Watch as I sketch the events in chronological order, of Christ's life and ministry.

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John baptizes Jesus (#2)	3:13-17	1:9-11	3:21, 22	
Satan tempts Jesus in the wilderness (#3)	4:1-11	1:12, 13	4:1-13	
John the Baptist declares his mission				1:19-28
John the Baptist proclaims Jesus as the Messiah				1:29-34
The first disciples follow Jesus				1:35-51
Jesus turns water into wine				2:1-12
<b>MESSAGE AND MINISTRY OF JESUS CHRIST</b>				
Jesus clears the temple				2:12-25
Nicodemus visits Jesus at night				3:1-21
John the Baptist tells more about Jesus				3:22-36
Herod puts John in prison			3:18-20	
Jesus talks to a woman at the well				4:1-26
Jesus tells about the spiritual harvest				4:27-38
Many Samaritans believe in Jesus				4:39-42
Jesus preaches in Galilee (ALL FOUR MENTION!)	4:12-17	1:14, 15	4:14, 15	4:43-45

What do the lessons of the 7 events in Christ's life teach us? Literally volumes of some of the dearest moments we cherish in the life of Jesus.

1. John the Baptist points at Jesus and says "Behold the Lamb of God" is the first event after Christ's temptation and the first four disciples follow Him. John 1:29-51

An incomparable identification: "the Lamb of God"

1. Specific – "the" – John saw Christ Jesus as the fulfillment of all the lambs. Especially ties to Isaiah 53:7
  - He was a man of the hills and of the Old Testament. He was the son of a priest. He was the last and greatest of the old prophets and the first of the new age. He could see ... (Robertson, p. 47).
    - a. Christ was the Passover lamb – Exodus 12 – As important as that lamb whose blood covered the door posts and protected those inside, Christ was that to the world. He caused God's

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- wrath to pass over those who hide beneath the shadow of the cross.
- b. Christ was the daily Lamb – Exodus 29 – All the way through its history, Israel had been reminded of God’s presence, made open by the daily offering up for satisfaction the sin offering. Christ made the way ever open to the Father.
  - c. Christ was the suffering Lamb – Isaiah 53 – step by step, the Messiah fulfilled even as spoken of by the prophets the position of “the lamb before its shearers is dumb.” Yes, Christ suffered and bled and died for us.
  - d. Christ will be the Lamb in the midst of the throne – Revelation 1 – As through John could see through time to the risen and ministering Jesus Christ in the heavenly places, even so is He even this day ever living for us.
2. Sacrificial – “Lamb” – Even though Christ had not yet even told of His work to come: God reveals through His herald the sacrificial nature of this One He sent.
  3. Sinless – “of God” – Who but God could take away sins? – and even so, who but God’s own Lamb sent usward could be the sacrifice?

But you and I do not have to go and find a lamb: God has provided a lamb already .. and is it not a wonderful thing, that He against Whom all sin was leveled, Himself provided the sacrifice for sin? Behold the sin of man and the Lamb of God. Jesus is the Father’s best beloved, His choice one, His only one, and yet He delivered Him up for us all. (Spurgeon, p. 571). Can you refuse so great a love that gave so much?

2. Jesus joins His family at a wedding and performs His 1<sup>st</sup> miracle turning Water to wine in Cana next. John 2:1-12

You know the story. A wedding (on Wednesday for virgins, Thursdays for widows was their custom) , a feast, the wine runs out., 6 pots of stone each holding about 20 gallons are transformed to the brim with the best wine they ever had tasted.

What was Jesus doing? He was saying the world's joys fade away and always run dry, but Jesus never fails!

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The world's joys and attractions always look good at first but in the end are not. But Jesus looks great at first and is better by far in the end!

3. He continues south heading up to Jerusalem and takes charge of His Father's House as He Cleanses the Temple. John 2: 12-25

Jesus revealed His zeal for God first of all by *cleansing the temple* (John 2: 13–17). The priests had established a lucrative business of exchanging foreign money for Jewish currency, and also selling the animals needed for the sacrifices. No doubt, this “religious market” began as a convenience for the Jews who came long distances to worship in the temple; but in due time the “convenience” became a business, not a ministry. The tragedy is that this business was carried on in the court of the Gentiles in the temple, the place where the Jews should have been meeting the Gentiles and telling them about the one true God. Any Gentile searching for truth would not likely find it among the religious merchants in the temple.

Our Lord suddenly appeared in the temple and cleaned house! He was careful not to destroy anyone's property (He did not release the doves, for example); but He made it clear that He was in command. The temple was His Father's house, and He would not have the religious leaders pollute it with their money-making enterprises.

The condition of the temple was a vivid indication of the spiritual condition of the nation. Their religion was a dull routine, presided over by worldly minded men whose main desire was to exercise authority and get rich. Not only had the wine run out at the wedding feast but the glory had departed from the temple. 2

4. He stays in the Jerusalem area and receives an inquirer by night, Nicodemus. John 3: 1-21

Jesus guide Nicodemus through four illustrations of God's supernatural power:

- ✓ v. 1-7 **BIRTH**. We can observe and be amazed by it but only God grants and creates life.

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- ✓ v. 8-13 **WIND**. We can study and try to harness it, but the wind only obeys God's commands, never ours.
  - ✓ v. 14-18 **BRAZEN SERPENT IN THE WILDERNESS**. We can read and we can study but snakes don't obey us, move where we send, strike when we say and depart. Also only God can make a brass serpent on a pole save a person dying of snake toxins.
  - ✓ V. 19-21 **LIGHT AND DARKNESS**. We see it, live around it all our lives but we don't even understand the fullness of all that light is and only now are becoming aware of the dark areas of the universe.

What was Jesus saying? He was showing Nicodemus some divine truths!

As we review John 3, you can see that the Apostle John is emphasizing a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

- ✓ It is a *living relationship* that begins with the new birth, the birth from above. When we receive Jesus Christ into our lives, we share His very life and become children in the family of God.
- ✓ It is also a *loving relationship*, for He is the Bridegroom and we are a part of the bride. Like John the Baptist, we desire that Jesus Christ increase as we decrease. He must receive all the honor and glory.
- ✓ It is a *learning relationship*, for He is the faithful Witness who shares God's truth with us. What a delight it is to receive His Word, meditate on it, and make it part of our very lives. 3

5. Next He hears of John the Baptist's imprisonment as He heads north.

The castle<sup>4</sup> of Machaerus was known as "the diadem," or "the black tower." It lay on the east side of the Dead Sea, almost on a line with Bethlehem. The ruins of the castle are still to be seen, in great masses of squared stone, on the top of a lofty hill, surrounded on three sides by unscaleable precipices, descending to such depths that Josephus says the eye could not reach their bottom. The fourth side is described as only a little less terrible. Wild desolation reigned far and near. A German traveler mentions the masses of lava, brown, red, and black, varied with pumice-stone, distributed in huge broken masses, or rising in perpendicular cliffs; whilst the rushing stream, far below, is

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<sup>3</sup>Wiersbe, Warren W., *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books) 1997.

<sup>4</sup> Meyer, F.B. John the Baptist. Harrisburg, Fort Washington, Pennsylvania: Christian Literature Crusade, 1993, p. 105.

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overgrown with oleanders and date-palms, willows, poplars, and tall reeds. Here and there, thick mists of steam arise, where the hot sulphur springs gush from the clefts of the rocks.

On this impregnable site, Dr. Geikie tells us that Herod had erected a great wall, enclosing the summit of the hill, with towers two hundred feet high at the corners, and in the space thus gained had built a grand palace, with rows of columns of a single stone apiece, halls lined with many-coloured marbles, magnificent baths, and all the details of Roman luxury, not omitting huge cisterns, barracks, and storehouses, with everything needed in case of a siege. From the windows there was a magnificent view of the Dead Sea, the whole course of the Jordan, Jerusalem, Hebron, the frowning fortress of Marsaba, and away to the north, the wild heights of Pisgah and Abarim. Detached from the palace was a visible, hewn down into the solid rock. This was the scene of John's imprisonment, and ultimately his death.

6. On the way to Galilee Jesus stops by Divine appointment in Samaria at the Well and meets the Woman at the well revealing to her His Deity. John 4:1-26

Because He was on a divinely appointed schedule, it was necessary that Jesus go through Samaria. Why? Because He would meet a woman there and lead her into saving faith, the kind of true faith that would affect an entire village. Our Lord was no respecter of persons. Earlier, He counseled a moral Jewish man (John 3), and now He would witness to an immoral Samaritan woman! He arrived at Jacob's well at 6 o'clock in the evening, the usual time for women to come for water. The disciples went to the nearby town for food while Jesus deliberately waited at the well. He was weary, hungry, and thirsty. John not only presents Jesus as the Son of God but also as true man. Our Lord entered into all the normal experiences of our lives and is able to identify with us in each of them. 5

7. Then He returns to His home base in Galilee and starts preaching in Galilee. Mark 1:14-15

Preaching was a central part of Jesus' ministry and remains a central part of the ministry of His church. **From that time**, when He went to Galilee,

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5Wiersbe, Warren W., *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books) 1997.



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**Jesus began to preach.** *Kērussō (to preach)* means “to proclaim” or “to publish,” that is, to publicly make a message known. R. C. H. Lenski comments, “The point to be noted is that to preach is not to argue, reason, dispute, or convince by intellectual proof, against all of which a keen intellect may bring counterargument. We simply state in public or testify to all men the truth which God bids us state. No argument can assail the truth presented in this announcement or testimony. Men either believe the truth, as all sane men should, or refuse to believe it, as only fools venture to do” (*The Interpretation of St. Matthew’s Gospel* [Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1964], p. 168).<sup>6</sup>

To turn from sin is to **repent**, to change one’s orientation, to turn around and seek a new way. *Metanoeō* literally means a change of perception, a change in the way we see something. To **repent**, therefore, is to change the way a person looks at sin and the way he looks at righteousness. It involves a change of opinion, of direction, of life itself. To repent is to have a radical change of heart and will-and, consequently, of behavior (cf. Matt. 3:8).

That was, and has always continued to be, the first demand of the gospel, the first requirement of salvation, and the first element of the saving work of the Spirit in the soul. The conclusion of Peter’s Pentecost sermon was a call to repentance: “Repent, and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins” (Acts 2:38). Many years later Paul reminded Timothy that repentance leads “to the knowledge of the truth” (2 Tim. 2:25).<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>MacArthur, John F., *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary*, (Chicago: Moody Press) 1983.

<sup>7</sup>MacArthur, John F., *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary*, (Chicago: Moody Press) 1983.

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14. Galilean Sermon? Jesus says salvation is so simple, that it is impossible.

Jesus says salvation is so simple, but it is impossible. How is it simple? Think of the Biblical pictures of salvation.

- ✓ Salvation is as simple as going up the ramp and into the door of the Ark.
- ✓ Salvation is as simple as entering through a blood stained door and staying inside while the death angel passes over.
- ✓ Salvation is as simple as following the pillar of fire through the Red Sea.
- ✓ Salvation is as simple as looking up at the Brazen Serpent for rescue from death.
- ✓ Salvation is as simple as being born into God's Family, following Jesus into His sheepfold, eating Him as the Bread of Life, drinking Him as the water of Life, believing in Him as the Way, Truth and Life.
- ✓ Salvation is as simple as saying with the Publican "God be merciful to me the sinner". (Luke 18:13)
- ✓ Salvation is as simple as saying with the Thief on the Cross, "Lord remember me". (Luke 23:42)
- ✓ Salvation is as simple as saying with Peter, "Lord save me". (Matthew 14:30)
- ✓ Salvation is as simple as saying with the leper, "Lord if you are willing you can make me clean". (Mark 1:40)
- ✓ Salvation is as simple as saying with Thomas, "My Lord and my God" (John 20:28).

Jesus says salvation is so simple, but it is impossible. How is it impossible? Think of the Biblical pictures of those who were damned.

The rich Young Ruler sought out Jesus, ran to Him, and sliding in at His feet ask how to get to Heaven. He was bright, focused, energetic and sincere. When he heard the absolute level of Christ's Lordship, he declined and stomped away to the blackness of Darkness.

Judas walked, talked, slept, ate and watched Jesus for His entire public ministry. Yet Judas was on the three and a half year Road to Hell. So close and yet so far. Salvation is humanly impossible. Judas never let Jesus save him even though he was right next to Him for all that time.

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If you reject God's Final Call of Grace,  
You'll have no chance your footsteps to retrace,  
All hope will then be gone, and Doom you'll face;  
Oh hear it now, God's Final Call.  
-J. W. Peterson

Salvation is so simple, and yet it is impossible apart from a work of God in a person's heart. While you hear His voice, say yes, and do not harden your heart and turn away. If you do, chances are you will never come back, and Doom you'll face!