

We are back to chapter by chapter, verse by verse, study through the Bible, and we are taking the Gospel of Mark. We are underway. Two teachings underway, in fact. We did a very long standalone intro to the Gospel of Mark.

And then two weeks ago, no three weeks ago, prior to Passion Week, we took verses one through 6 of chapter 1. So that puts us at verse 7 today, Mark chapter 1 verse 7. You will need your Bibles today if you want to follow along with the verses that I will be reading as subtext for our Mark verses. I was not able to get those references to the AV crew back there soon enough to get them up on the screens for you so you will need your own Bible if you didn't bring one.

You can use a Bible app on your phone if that's what you do or there are still some Bibles back there on the back table. You're always welcome to go grab one of those. Use that for the course of the service and then even keep it if you want as our gift to you, completely up to you. Those are ESV's back there so you'll be word for word with me up front if you're going to do that.

But let's pick up Mark chapter one beginning at verse seven in verses one through six. We got introduced to John the Baptist's person. And today we're going to get introduced to John the Baptist's message. Now we did talk a little bit about his message in the first six verses.

We learned that his message was about repentance for the forgiveness of sins. But now we're going to get a little bit more about the overall message of John the Baptist and just keep this in mind that unless I'm talking about the Apostle John here until we're done with John the Baptist, if I say John, I'm speaking about John the Baptist. That just prevents me from having to say John the Baptist every time or J to B or something like that. So it's just quicker, John is John the Baptist unless otherwise stated.

going to begin reading in verse 7, we read, and he, John the Baptist, preached, saying, after me comes he who is mightier than I, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. Verse 7 establishes a primary fact about John's ministry push from start to finish was always this. He was always pushing people away from himself and toward Jesus. That's it's, you know, it's not something that everyone has to do.

You only have to do that when people tend to glom on to you and make you out to be something greater than what you are. This is like for people who get famous in some way, people who get a lot of attention and that would explain John, John is not making this statement. prior to becoming very popular. He's making this statement in the midst of being a very popular religious figure for his time period.

His ministry at this point was in very great demand. We read in quite a few different places that people were flocking to John by the scores out there in the middle of nowhere to hear him preach and then to be baptized by him. And so people kept looking up to him, people kept glamorizing him and he had to keep stabilizing the expectations of the people. They were trying to elevate him and he would lower himself.

They were constantly looking up to him and he was trying to get them to look up even higher to the one who deserves all of the credit. And that is something that every representative of Christ will have to do, whether you're a Christian representing the Lord in the capacity of a church member, just being a Christian, living out a Christian life, or whether you are a ministry worker, this is still something that we always need to be able to do, and that's just simply understanding the pecking order. If you're wondering what that is, you can go to 1 Corinthians chapter 11. We're given the order there, the spiritual order, it's God the Father, it's God the Son, it's the man, it's the woman, but this is what John is coming to the conclusion of.

It's an understanding of himself in a much, much lower capacity than Christ. And if I had to put this in one word, I would put it in the term of John understands that he is a servant, and the better word there, the more accurate word would be slave. I know we read servant in our translations, but it's really do-loss, a bond slave of Jesus Christ. That means you're not a slave against your will.

You are a willing slave, but you are a slave nonetheless. And that is the imagery that John is trying to conjure up in the minds of the first century Jews by making this statement about untying the shoes, the sandals of Jesus. This is in first century Jewish culture thought to be the absolute lowest task that a slave could perform. You know, this was your master came home, the end of working out in the field all day and you were the slave that took off his shoes for him and even washed his feet if that's what he needed.

And that was such a demeaning and degrading responsibility that at this time period in history, the Jews would not allow even a Jewish slave to do that. They just thought that, you know, that's something we're not gonna relegate a Jewish person to. This can only be the responsibility of a non-Jewish slave. And yet here's John now saying, Okay, look, the lowest task that I could be doing as a real-life slave would be unstrapping his shoes, taking his shoes off, and if he needs his feet washed, washing his feet, and it's John saying, I'm not even worthy to do that.

Like, I'm below that even. That's too good for me, considering who he is. That is too high of a privilege because of who he is. Now that is humility, of course.

Pretty obvious. But it's more than humility, it's just clarity, it's just understanding who you are in relation to who the Lord is. That is knowing full well where we stand in life, that we are not the ones that walk on water. Our only claim to fame, if you want to put it that way, which is very poor terminology considering what I'm teaching right now, but if you want to put it that way, our only claim to fame is not that we can walk on water but that we know the one who who does walk on water and who can walk on water.

In fact, he's the same one that created the water that he walked on there in first century Judea, or Galilee I guess I should say. So humility, clarity. Reading on, verse eight, John says, I have baptized you with water, but he, the Messiah, will baptize you with the Holy Spirit. the Holy Spirit.

Okay, so after contrasting himself with Jesus, what he now does is he contrasts his ministry with the ministry of Jesus, and that would be baptism in water in contrast to baptism with the Holy Spirit. Let's take John's first. Baptism with water. What was that all about?

What did that accomplish? Well, we all know that after the crucifixion of Jesus in the New Testament era that baptism is a symbol of the death, burial, and resurrection. But do you remember what I told you a handful of weeks ago about John's message? John's message was before the times.

So John's not that far yet in the message that he's establishing and the pictures that he's presenting in his baptism. In fact, John's baptism would be before that, so a little bit different in the sense that it's not that full picture of Messiah rising from the dead and then us as our proxy, using Christ as our proxy, experiencing that same spiritual transformation. John's before that, and this is a baptism for the Jews, it is a baptism of preparation. So here's all that John the Baptist is seeking to do with his baptism.

When you came to John the Baptist and you said, John, I want to be baptized by you. You were saying this, you were saying, I recognize my sins. Understand that I am a sinner. Understand that he is holy and that I am not.

I recognize that I need washed and I recognize that I need to come away from this washing as something that I have never been before and that is a holy person. So it's communicating first, a confession. I know this to be true about myself. I'm a sinner.

And then secondly, it is communicating a wish, if you will. It is communicating a desire that coming out of this, I want to be rid of my sins and I want to be holy as the Lord desires. What about Christ's baptism? How was it different?

What did it look like? What was it about? What did it accomplish? It would take everything that believers were communicating through John's baptism, But then it would actually accomplish what they were picturing, what they were confessing, and what they were hoping for.

So John could baptize you in water, but Jesus could do the power work behind that. He could cleanse. He could separate you from your sins as far as the east is from the west, and He could bring you up from that, a holy person. He could bring you up from that, a new creature in Him.

So John could symbolically baptize you in water, but Jesus could truly wash you, make you personally and positionally holy, positionally holy right away, but then personally holy through the process of sanctification. And we're really in that same spot as John. We preach a whole bunch of things that the Lord told us to preach. They're things that He promised us, and He said to preach these things.

So we preach these things. We preach lofty things like deliverance from bondages and addictions. We preach lofty things like be prayed for and be healed of your bodily sicknesses. We preach lofty things like an unsound mind, a harassed and troubled mind, something that And the psychological world would put some kind of diagnosis upon.

You can bring that to Christ and He can give you a sound mind. We preach things like salvation. We preach things like sanctification of a lifestyle. But when it comes down to it, the stuff we can't do.

We really can't help anyone here at Anchorage Fellowship. encouraging to find out this morning, isn't it? All that we can do is preach the promises that he told us to preach, and then after that it is the utter dependence on him doing what he promised, what we can't do, but only what we're preaching about. It is him fulfilling all of that stuff.

So just as John was doing, that's essentially what we're doing, even And though we come at it from a different side in history and from a slightly different angle. Verse 9, in those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan River. Did you ever stop to consider the distance of the travel right there? I bet you didn't.

I bet you've read that a thousand times and never stopped to think about how far did Jesus travel to get baptized? It just told us where he came from and where he went to. Told us that he came from Nazareth of Galilee, and then he traveled all the way down to where John was baptizing. It doesn't tell us where that was here in Mark.

Mark is sometimes scant on details, but John chapter one tells us where Jesus was baptizing. he was baptizing in Bethany beyond the Jordan, that actually means near Bethany on the other side of the Jordan, which would be Bethabara. That is right on the other side of the Jordan, you know, down further toward the Dead Sea, on the outskirts sort of, the far outskirts of Jerusalem, Judea, that area there. So if you track this down on a map, this was 60 to 70 miles of travel and keep in mind he was hoofing it.

He was doing this on foot so this was three to five days of travel depending on how hard they were hoofing it and you know they might have done that with breaks and stops but nonetheless 60 to 70 miles for Jesus to come down and say hey John I want you to baptize me but as far as John baptizing Jesus goes it wasn't quite as straightforward as what Mark would make it sound like. Matthew and John tell us that there was more to this event, the baptism of Jesus by John. You know, like, for example,

John's initial protest and near refusal to baptize Jesus. That's in Matthew chapter 3, verse 14.

It says Because this, that when Jesus came to be baptized by John, John would have prevented him saying, I need to be baptized by you. And do you come to me? I'm the one that needs baptized here between you and me, and yet you're coming to me and asking me to baptize you. What exactly did John mean by that?

Why did he say that? This gets a little complicated. It actually does. It gets a little complicated.

Is he saying that because he already believes that Jesus is the Messiah? He is absolutely not saying that because he believes that Jesus is the Messiah. He does not believe, or I should say he does not know at this point that Jesus is the Messiah. Might he suspect it?

Maybe. He might think that guy is the Primo candidate, but he does not know that Jesus is the Messiah. So he's saying this for another reason. Look real quickly at John chapter 1, verse 33.

This is John speaking, and here's what he says, he says, I myself did not know him, but he who sent me to baptize with water said to me, he on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain. This is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit. Did you catch it? John just said, I didn't know him.

I didn't know him. But listen, he did not mean that he didn't know Jesus at all. He's not claiming, hey, I never saw Jesus until he showed up that day to be baptized by me. No, it's just that God had given John a sign to be looking for.

We just read it. He gave him a sign. God spoke to John in some manner and told John, look, here's how I am going to identify the Messiah to you. It is going to be the person upon whom you see the Spirit descend and then remain.

And until you see that, you have no confirmation of who the Messiah is. I'll make sure that I let you know. Here Jesus is showing up for baptism. He has not been baptized yet.

John has not seen the spirit descend upon him or remain upon him and yet John makes this statement. And we come back to it now in Matthew chapter three, verse 14. I need to be baptized by you. Why are you asking me to baptize you?

Why is he saying that? not because he believes that Jesus is the Messiah, or certainly not because he knows that Jesus is the Messiah. He's saying that because he knows Jesus personally. John and Jesus were cousins.

I'm always confused by how the cousin thing works out. So bear with me. Mary and Elizabeth, we believe to be cousins. At least that's how it's usually translated in versions.

And I don't know, does that make John and Jesus second or third cousins? I don't really know how it works, confused by it, but they are related. They are cousins in some sense, second, third, fourth, 25th cousins. I don't know what they are, but they're cousins and these were close families.

We get that from situations like Mary, the announcement of her virgin birth, the announcement of Elizabeth's birth, you know, her conception, I should say of John the Baptist and what does Mary do right away? She goes out to meet her. She goes out to see her. So they have these family connections.

We have every reason to believe that they grew up knowing each other. And here's the strongest reason right here. We read it twice now. I need to be baptized by you and yet you're coming to me and asking me to baptize you.

He said that because he knew about the life of Jesus. He knew the life from a personal standpoint. He knew the life that Jesus lived. He knew the level of knowledge that Jesus had about the Scriptures.

I'm sure he at least heard this story that, are you kidding me? By the time Jesus was 12 years old, he was teaching and questioning circles around the Jewish rabbis. He knew about the knowledge of the Word of God within Jesus, and he could see the life of Jesus. And he's able to say, look, I know your life, and I know my life, and I really think we need to switch places here.

That is a personal, personal word of reference from John the Baptist about the purity, the holiness, and the godly life of Jesus. And it's only the second best reference to the life of Jesus in this chapter. We're going to get to the other one, Lord willing, before the study is over. Of course, we know how this went.

Jesus was able to compel John the Baptist to go ahead and baptize him anyway. the reason he gave is it's fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness. What does that mean? Well, what's one of the steps of righteousness?

Water baptism. Not as much the ritual part of it, but for sure the symbolic aspect of it. And what water baptism symbolizes, what would that be? A picture of the confession of sin?

A picture of repentance from sin? a picture of being washed spiritually, and a picture of being given a new life in the Lord. So your next question here should be, well then why would Jesus get baptized at all? If the Bible teaches us, doesn't the Bible teach us that Jesus lived a spotless, sinless life?

Wasn't that the whole point of his offering for us, that he was the Lamb of God that took away the sins of the world, and he was a spotless Lamb without blemish? And if that's true, and if that is what the Bible emphatically and consistently teaches, then why would Jesus do a baptism that is reflecting symbolically His sin, His repentance, His washing, and His renewal? And the answer would be because in doing that, He was identifying with the sinners that he came to save, and that is us. He was identifying with us in his baptism, which by the way, not coincidentally, is what the word baptism means.

It means to be identified with. Does that sit uneasy? Is that tough to accept that in his water baptism, he was identifying with us sinners? It shouldn't.

I mean, well, I guess intellectually that should sit uneasy with you to know that he was sinless, but he was identifying in a baptism that spoke about personal sin, and yet, biblically, it shouldn't trouble you at all, and I'll give you a couple of verses that show us this. The importance of Jesus identifying with the sinners that he came to save, the very popular one. read it many times in our studies, 2 Corinthians chapter 5 verse 21, for our sake, God made Jesus to be sin who knew no sin. Jesus who was sinless, who didn't even know what it was like to sin, God made him sin on our behalf.

And you can even go back to the Old Testament scriptures to establish that truth. How about Isaiah chapter 53 verse 6, the verse we read almost every time we do communion here in this fellowship. This was predicted hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of years before the coming of Jesus, Isaiah, under the inspiration of the Lord writing on behalf of the Lord says this, and the Lord has laid on him, the Messiah, the iniquity of us all. So even though he committed no sin, even though he lived a perfect life in the flesh, our sins were still laid upon him, and he took those sins to his cross.

He died for them in order to pay the full price. This is what Jesus was indicating in his baptism. He traveled 60 to 70 miles on foot to do that, to identify with you and I, a bunch centers that needed washed and renewed and given new life. His water baptism was also symbolic of being baptized with the Holy Spirit, which is where Mark takes us next.

This is verse 10. And when he, when Jesus came up out of the water immediately, and that is one of Mark's go-to words, you're going to read that word a lot because as I've shared with you Mark is all about action so it's always hard hitting fast action he's jumping from one thing to the next so immediately and immediately and immediately I heard someone say this week I just thought man this is the best way to look at Mark's writing they said reading Mark's gospel is like flipping through a photo album with someone when you're not too sure of their interest level in your photos. So you just go from like important photo to important photo and you give sort of like a quick and exciting explanation of it just because you don't know their interest level. You know, so it's like, okay, you know, here's this picture of when they finally talked me into writing the Black Widow at Kenney Wood.

This next picture, that's me thrown up. You know, it's hopping from the highlights in that case the lowlights. Just from one thing that's marked. So it's immediately immediately taking us from one high point to the next.

And we were continuing on in verse 10. When it came up out of the water immediately, he saw the heavens being torn open. And that is the only time that we see that phrase used in this situation. None of the other Gospel writers tell us that.

The other Gospel writers just say that the heavens were opened, but Mark says, when he came up out of the water, he saw the heavens being torn open, which is a much stronger term. It means to be violently separated. The next time you're going to see this phrase in the Bible is going to be after Christ's death on the cross and the veil of the temple is torn in two. It's the same word that's being used here.

It's a violent tearing open. That was God, we of course know, communicating to us that this section, the deep inner presence of God that was once off limits, out of boundaries for human beings to pass through, indicated by this hanging of this big thick veil that what was once off limits to mankind through Through the death of Jesus for sin, now it was ripped open, torn apart, and it was open house for the believers in Jesus who would come in and be in His inner presence and be saved by Him. Open house in the spirit realm. But here we are, before God tore open the veil of the temple, He first tore open the heavens or as we would say, you know, the sky abruptly parted and reading on the Spirit descending on him like a dove.

So a visible manifestation of the Holy Spirit in the appearance of a dove. And I'm only making an educated guess here, but if I were to try to tell you the kind of mental image to get in your mind about this, I would say don't think of this as just an actual dove that could be confused with oh check that out that's really cool Jesus just got baptized and here comes this white dove and he's fluttering a bow right over his head that's kind of cool very coincidental pretty neat I don't think I don't think what John was seeing was just an actual dove but this is the form of a dove or the fashion of a dove so I think it It was kind of like this mix between the ethereal aspect of it and the form or the fashion of a dove. I think we probably struck a nice balance of what this might look like with our title screen. If you could throw that title screen back up real quick, it would be something similar to that, right?

Something that looks like a dove in fashion, but is very clearly not just a dove. was something spiritual. This was something supernatural. It was bigger than earthly life.

It was heavenly in its origin. Verse 11, And a voice came from heaven. You are my beloved Son, which makes this God the Father. That's who's speaking.

It's got to be right. It It makes this God the Father, it makes Jesus God the Son, doesn't it? Just the statement alone. That's what it demands.

You are my beloved Son. With you I am well pleased. And right there you have Father, Son, and Holy Spirit all present and accounted for at the baptism of Jesus. You have Jesus the Son of God in the flesh.

You have the Holy Spirit descending upon Jesus in the fashion of a dove, and then we hear or we read about hearing the voice of God, the Father speaking from heaven. So that is the trinity in one snapshot, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. So the only thing you can't do here is say, it's only Jesus. There's only Jesus.

There is no father and there is no son or some variant of law of that like, well, there's only Jesus, but he is the father and he is the son. There's no distinction there. You cannot make that statement at all. This isn't ventriloquism, it is not a light show, it is not some kind of ruse.

This is not Jesus projecting himself in three different ways at the same time, although Of course God could do that if you want to do that is not what is happening here. These are three separate and distinct beings And then from that point if you want to be Theologically accurate in your viewpoint of the composition of God all you have to do at this point after you've read that Is read the Shema from Deuteronomy chapter 6 verse 4 which says here Israel The Lord our God the Lord is one We just read that he's three. Now we have read the Shema and now we know that he's one. He's one God.

He's three distinct beings. You're already accurate. If you want to dig even further and get even more accurate, look at that word one in the Shema there. The Hebrew word that is used is echad, and it means united as one.

I kid you not. Go look it up for yourself. If you don't believe me, grab yourself a Greek and Hebrew concordance, dictionary concordance. Look it up.

You're going to see the same thing I see. That word echad, which we translate as one, the Lord our God is one, it literally means united in one. If we were writing Deuteronomy 6.4 in a very literal way, here's how we would write it. Hero Israel, the Lord our God is united in one.

That's how it reads. He could have used the Hebrew word, yachid, which means solidarily one or singularly one, but he doesn't use yachid under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit as Moses writes this. speaks to his heart and he pens the word Echad. The Lord, our God is united in one and right there you have a proper, proper balanced theology about the composition of God.

God is three in one. You cannot get around that if you're going to be true to the Scriptures. And so now maybe you're wondering, well, how is that possible? What does that look like?

How can we fully explain that? Well, shut up and stop asking difficult questions. Okay, I apologize for telling you to shut up. But this is the dilemma, isn't it?

Finite beings trying to explain something or in this case, someone infinite. How can you do that? You can't really do that. I've given you my best explanation before.

My best explanation for the one God in three beings is just that if I could take my brain, my mind, let's say it properly, if I could take my mind, which is connected to my brain through electrical impulses, if I could take my mind and I could also hook it up to two other brains from two other people and I would need my mind to be strong enough to monitor all three different persons, my person and the two other people that my mind is connected to their brains and controlling, I'd need to be able to fully monitor them and control them. And if I could do that, then the real me could stay at home, sit in the backyard, get in some sun, enjoying some relaxation, while one of the other me's is studying for Sunday, studying for the message, and the other me is out on a stool run to get some ribeye steaks for dinner. I could do

that because I'm controlling all three distinct beings. Now here's the question well, are they me and the answer is yes, they're me Somehow in this hypothetical my mind has taken over not just my brain, but their brains too So they're me and I'm them.

We're all in one, but we are three definite distinct Beings and that is how God exists and that is the best I can do in Explaining it. There's a bunch of different ways to try to do that But that's the best that I have found to be able to do and in the modern day Yeah, I really don't think it should be too much of a stretch to understand that. But just we always come back to that simple confession that he's infinite, we are finite. So we may struggle in understanding, but I promise you, and I think I've shown you pretty well over the years, that is the consistent teaching of all of the Word of God.

You go back to the first title that's given for God, it's Elohim. And that is a plural word, Elohim. It means not God's. There's this distinct character about that Hebrew word that means unity among God.

And it's a plurality. It's at least a duality of beings. It's interesting. But we won't go there.

I've given you the best I can give you on that. But let's go back to this. In verse 10, the passage told us that he saw, not all saw, but he saw, so who saw? That's the question.

Did Jesus saw? If he saw, was it Jesus who saw? It might have been Jesus who saw, probably, but here's for sure something that we know. It wasn't just Jesus who saw, it was John who saw.

John saw this, John saw the Spirit descending upon Jesus in the form of a dove. John saw this manifestation of the Holy Spirit. That brings us back to John 1.33, doesn't it? This was the sign that the Lord told John to be looking for.

John, you're going to see the Spirit descend upon the Messiah. When you see that, you're going to know that's the Messiah. So that's John 1.33. I myself did not know him.

I'll throw this in. I may have expected that it was my cousin Jesus because he's awesome. But I didn't know that for sure, but he who sent me to baptize with water said to me, he on whom you see the spirit descend and remain, this is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit. This is the Messiah.

This is the Savior. So John has witnessed the dissension of the Holy Spirit. What about the next part of that? the remaining of the spirit on the life of the Messiah.

What about that part? Well, that part takes time. You gotta let some things play out. You gotta let, once you identify Messiah, you have to let Him continue to prove that the Holy Spirit didn't just come upon Him, but that the Holy Spirit came upon Him to stay.

And that is why later on, while John is in prison, he sends disciples, which is odd. Jesus has been on the scene for a long time at that point and John still has disciples. Followers just hanging out with John. No, we love John.

It's awesome. We believe what he's saying about the Messiah. We just still really love John's ministry. So we're staying here.

And I love that the Lord let that happen. I just love that. Isn't that awesome? But regardless, that's a sidebar.

That's a big path for another day. But John sends disciples of his to go to Jesus and ask what? Are you still the guy or should we be looking for another? Isn't that what he said?

Are you here or should we be looking for another? Look I believe you're the Messiah, I saw the Spirit descend upon you, just checking in to see how things are going. Is that still the case? Are you still definitely the Messiah?

Has the Spirit remained on your life? And Jesus knew what John was asking, he was asking is the Spirit still upon your life because that's how Jesus answered. This is in Luke chapter 7 verse 22. Jesus said, Go and tell John what you have seen and heard.

The blind receive their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have good news, preach to them. So that's the answer to the second part late in the life of John the Baptist before his beheading, his spirits remained upon the Christ, yes, the spirit has remained upon the Christ. The miracles are taking place. The spirit is working through him in a powerful way.

So in other words, John now knows for sure in the text, cousin Jesus is the Messiah. Cousin Jesus is the Christ. Cousin Jesus is going to be the Savior. And we can't spend too much time on this, but it is worth noting that Christ being baptized here with the Holy Spirit works the same way that it does for us.

I should say past tense. It worked the same way for him in his fleshly body as it does for us. In fact, it is the exact same Greek word. When we read about the Holy Spirit descending on or upon him, that is the Greek word, epi, epi, transliterated into English.

is the same exact thing that Jesus told his disciples to wait for before his ascension in fact right before he ascended he said to his disciples Terry here in Jerusalem stay right here stay put don't leave the city until the Holy Spirit has come upon you you've been and you've been endowed with power to be witnesses to me same exact experience which causes us to conclude that when When Jesus was conceived, the Holy Spirit was in him, and at his baptism the Holy Spirit now comes upon him for the same reason that the Lord wants the Holy Spirit to come upon you and baptize you, and that would be to empower you for Christian living and to empower you for Christian ministry. That is my strong counsel to every single one of you. do not launch into Christian ministry without the assurance, the absolute assurance that you have been empowered by the Holy Spirit to work for the Lord. And I would say this, to take it even further, I don't even think you really want to be a Christian without knowing for sure that you've been empowered by the Holy Spirit, that you've been baptized in His power.

I think you need the Holy Spirit just to go to the store and back without murdering someone these days. If you don't know what I'm talking about, God bless your soul. We should switch places here. You've come to hear me, but I should be hearing you.

Verse 12, the Spirit immediately, and there's that word again, one of John's favorites, the Spirit immediately right away, flip the photograph. The Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. Don't worry, Jesus paid for the gas, though. Jesus paid it all.

That was a bad joke, I know. I had to, though. I have to do what the Lord tells me to do. He wanted that joke.

Now, only Mark gives us this detail about the Holy Spirit driving Jesus into the wilderness. And Mark doesn't mention the fact that Jesus is in this time period fasting for 40 days. He'll tell us in the next verse that this was 40 days in the wilderness, but he won't mention fasting. So you have to look at the other Gospels to uncover that.

He was fasting for 40 days and Mark alone tells us that this was the plan of God for Jesus. This was the Holy Spirit driving Jesus to this. This was God led and not chanced upon by Jesus. This was something that God wanted for Jesus to go through.

He wanted this 40-day fast before he began his ministry. You know, awesome. Great plan. Absolutely.

I would suggest an extended fast for anyone that is considering ministry. It's a good place to start. Just start right there, fasting, finding the heart and the will of God. So he wanted the fasting for Jesus, but he also spirit led Jesus into this time period of testing.

He wanted Jesus to face the toughest stuff that Satan could throw at him right from the beginning, right before he even started his ministry. This was God the Father saying, come and get him. You know, just like he did with Job, have you considered my servant Jesus? Have at him.

Test him. Cruel of God? Is that Cruel of God? Is it Cruel of God that God allowed that to happen to Job?

Is it Cruel of God that the Spirit led Jesus to be tested by the devil in the wilderness? At a time of weakness too, 40 days of fasting, how do you have the strength to resist the The evil one in a situation like that, is it cruel of God to let you go through the temptations and the testings that you go through? None of that's cruel. I might feel that way, but it's the same for Job, the same for Jesus, I suspect, unless you're like some kind of isolated case, it's the same for you that when Jesus, the Spirit leads us into times of temptation and testing, it is not for the purpose of breaking us down, but rather for the purpose of showing us off.

Or if you don't like that terminology, it's for the purpose of establishing us and revealing what we are and what our progress is like in that time. A good example of this would be a car salesman. How does a car salesman give out free test rides of a vehicle? Is he doing it to be cruel?

Yes! Let's see if we can break this Chevy. Is that why he's doing it? Is he doing it because, you know, kind of uncertain, a little bit nervous about if it's going to hold up.

Man, I don't know if this Ford's going to make it back. But the guy wants to test drive it, I guess. I guess he's got to let him, boy, I hope, bite in the fingernails. We made it back.

That's not why a car salesman lets a prospective buyer take a car for a test drive. They let you take the car for a test drive because what's going to happen when you test drive that car? I don't care what it takes to buy this thing, I have got to have this thing. A thousand a month, that payment is just fine with me, it doesn't matter, I got to have this thing.

That's what they want to happen. They're not doing that out of nervousness, out of uncertainty, they're certainly not doing it to break it down, they're doing it to show it off. And so is the case when the Lord allows us to go through testing and temptation. Verse 13, and he was in the wilderness 40 days being tempted by Satan.

All right, the construct of that sentence, you should be able to tell it just from in English, but the construct of that sentence in the Greek is very obvious that what Mark is telling us is that Jesus wasn't just tempted at the end of his fasting. That's what Matthew tells us, Matthew chapter 3. Matthew tells us that at the end of his 40 days of fasting, when Jesus was hungry or and hungry, if you're reading in the King Jane version, when Jesus was hungry that But that's when Satan came to him with those three major temptations. That's true.

But that aside, Mark has just told us it wasn't just those three end temptations after Jesus became hungry, which means what? If you go an extended fast after about three, five, seven days somewhere in there, you lose the sensation of hunger. You remember that from the Jesus fast teaching? You don't get the sensation of hunger back until your body's trying to tell you if you don't get food soon, you're

going to die.

That was the point that Jesus was in. His body was telling him, look, I'm hungry again, so if you don't get food soon, you're going to die. And at that time, Satan used to come at him with those three major temptations. But if Mark just tell us, the construct of the sentence would say, Mark's telling us Jesus was tested and tempted by the devil the entire 40 days.

Not just at the end, but the entire 40 days, Satan was really walloping him the whole time. Read in verse 13 and he was with the wild animals. Don't picture Jesus laying by the fire and all the animals snuggled up next to him. The bear and the lion and the wolves.

Don't picture the kingdom piece that's coming in the millennium kingdom yet. That's not what this is meaning. It's just an expression to tell us he was in the wild. He was living in the wild.

So you can picture Jesus at the campfire but that's it. There's no Marriott. There was no KOA even. He was out in the wild, and that's where he was fasting and being tested by the devil.

And then reading on in verse 13, and the angels were ministering to him. Ministering, that is the Greek word, diaka, diakaneto. Okay, that is a variant of diakanos from where we get our English word deacon ministering to him, serving him. And the word can also mean serving food, right?

So I always like to make a joke, something similar to basically, Satan was trying to feed him devil's food cake, but the angels were feeding him angels' food cake, so he was just fine. But there's some truth in that. Jesus got his sustenance from ministry. He got his sustenance from doing the Father's will.

You remember what he said when he was hungry at the well, Jacob's well, in Sychar, And he sent the disciples to go and get food. And in the meantime, Jesus was talking to the Samaritan woman at the well. And by the time they came back, Jesus was in Hungary. And they were perplexed.

Who brought him food? Did he eat? What happened? He was hungry.

That's why we went into the city to get food. And now he's not hungry. And Jesus said, my food is to do the will of him who sent me. So he was strengthened in a spiritual way during that testing and during that temptation period that stabilized him and secured him and made him healthy and continued him on.

It was not physical food, but it was spiritual food. We're going to stop right here for this morning. So I'm going to have the worship team come forward.