

FISHERS OF MEN

Malachi 3:1-5; Mark 1:1-20 / Psalm 40:1-17

By Dr. Edwin P. Elliott

I. The Savior Came in God's Way, Not Man's Way

A. The good news is that God does things His own way. "The beginning of the *gospel* of Jesus Christ, the Son of God; ***As it is written in the prophets, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee. The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.***" (MARK 1:1-3)

B. John the Baptist put the coming kingdom in theological rather than political terms. "And ***John was clothed with camel's hair***, and with a girdle of a skin about his loins; and ***he did eat locusts and wild honey***; And preached, saying, ***There cometh one mightier than I after me, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose.***" (MARK 1:6-7)

C. Jesus began His ministry with baptism and the affirmation of Heaven, establishing His identity with Biblical history. "And it came to pass in those days, that ***Jesus*** came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was ***baptized of John*** in Jordan. And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens opened, and ***the Spirit like a dove descending upon him: And there came a voice from heaven, saying, Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.***" (MARK 1:9-11)

D. Jesus did not rely on the tools and methods of the world to protect Himself or to advance His mission. "And immediately ***the Spirit driveth him into the wilderness.*** And he was there ***in the wilderness forty days, tempted of Satan***; and was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered unto him." (MARK 1:12-13)

E. All of these things Jesus endured placed Him in the context of the human dilemma. "Wherefore ***in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.***" (HEBREWS 2:17-18)

II. The Savior Recruited Fishermen, Not Religious Leaders

A. Jesus announced the coming of God's kingdom. "Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, And saying, ***The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.***" (MARK 1:14-5)

B. Jesus then called on ordinary people to share in His gospel work. "And Jesus said unto them, ***Come*** ye after me, and ***I will make you to become fishers of men.*** And straightway ***they forsook their nets, and followed him.***" (MARK 1:17-18)

C. Jesus was calling ordinary people to present an extraordinary message. "***The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me***; because the LORD hath anointed me ***to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to [them that are] bound; To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the***

garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified.” (ISAIAH 61:1-3)

III. Then the Savior Sought People Only God Could Love

A. Around Jesus people understood old truths in their spiritual rather than their academic character. “And they went into Capernaum; and straightway *on the sabbath day he entered into the synagogue, and taught.* And they were astonished at his doctrine: for *he taught them as one that had authority, and not as the scribes.*” (MARK 1:21-22)

B. Jesus taught with supernatural force. “And *they were astonished* at his doctrine: for *he taught them as one that had authority, and not as the scribes.* And there was in their synagogue a man with *an unclean spirit,* and he *cried out,*” (MARK 1:22-23)

C. The forces of evil did not like what Jesus was doing. “Saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? *art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God.*” (MARK 1:24)

D. Evil understands the problem Jesus presents for the status quo. “*Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble.*” (JAMES 2:19)

E. Jesus took charge and life changed for the sufferer. “And *Jesus rebuked* him, saying, *Hold thy peace, and come out of him.* And *when the unclean spirit had torn him, and cried with a loud voice, he came out of him.*” (MARK 1:25-26)

F. The gospel advertises itself inherently as it changes lives. “And immediately *his fame spread abroad throughout all the region* round about Galilee.” (MARK 1:28)

G. Nothing can stop the Savior. “And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; *These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth;*” (REVELATION 3:7)