

Dec 6, 2020

Christmas Story According to Mark
Christ's Nativity Reflects Our Own

Pastor Jeremy writes in Advent DDs, “*If Matthew’s goal was to explain why Jesus came, then Mark wants to explain what Jesus did!*” Not only were their goals for gospel writing different, but Mark’s style, arrangement, audience, & features were as well!

- Style – frenetic pace – subliminally creates urgency!
- Audience – Romans who haven’t heard much @ Jesus; maybe God uses Mark’s urgency to stimulate interest!)
- Arrangement – chronological sequence; time orientation
- Features – Christ’s humanity, miracles, & servanthood

But the greatest difference between Matthew & Mark has to do with the Nativity story...Mark doesn’t include one...@ Jesus! His gospel opens with the fulfillment of Isaiah’s prophecy as John baptized a 30 yr old Jesus, officially beginning His earthly ministry as God’s Messiah! This clues us in to Mark’s greater purpose & perspective: **For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve others & to give His life as a ransom for many.” (Mk 10:45)** Here in lies Mark’s Nativity: Christ’s human nativity creates our own spiritual nativity! Mark wants us to know that Jesus’ mission is to make possible our own *spiritual rebirth (nativity) by His Spirit into His kingdom as His children!*

By definition, nativity means, “*the occasion of a person’s birth!*” Clearly, when we talk about a second, spiritual birth for those who put faith their in Christ we’re talking about a nativity. This is the Good News Mark wants to share: **a Christmas story about our own rebirth & new lives b/c Jesus was born human!**

PRAY

Mark’s gospel concentrates on the acts, works, & miracles of Jesus. In this way, Mark “introduces” Jesus to the common Roman citizen who, for the most part, was ignorant of anything happening in Israel (*just like you and I don’t know what’s happening in Carmel, CA!*) Mark doesn’t even know whether the Romans would have interest in Jesus. But what Mark does know is that he cannot keep to himself the Good News of Christ and the new, eternal life He offers everyone thru faith! Mark is

compelled to write an account of what Jesus did and, in deference to his “*entertainment-savvy audience,*” Mark’s fast-paced gospel is short, action-packed, & most engrossing!

Mark moves us thru his version of the Christmas story by reporting 3 action-packed events that are fundamental to our own nativity or rebirth into God’s Divinity, Kingdom, & Eternal Life:

1) Christ Enters into Humanity (Mark 1:1-4, 7-11)

Jesus’ baptism by John identified Him as the Messiah God had promised (*specifically thru OT prophet Isaiah*). But for us, His baptism in water symbolizes our baptism in Spirit – & the new life that results! Jesus’ earthly mission to save those who believe presents us with our own potential nativity – *if we will believe*: a rebirth by being baptized into Christ by the Holy Spirit, reconciled as friends of God, & restored to an eternal, relational blessing!

****Have you been born-again by the Spirit thru faith in Christ?***

2) Christ’s Enters into a Kingdom (Mark 11:1-10)

Just as Jesus entered Jerusalem (*city of peace*) as King of God’s kingdom on earth, we recognize that by faith in Him we become citizens of this spiritual, unseen kingdom. With Jesus as our King, we are called to operate as His regents on earth, doing His will, His way, by His power thru His Spirit dwelling in us! Our lives are to be & look decidedly different than the citizens of the world – in part to show the character of our Savior-King Jesus, & to demonstrate the reality of His unseen kingdom here & now!

****Do your life & choices reveal the reality of Christ’s kingdom?***

3) Christ Enters into Eternal Life (Mark 16:9-13)

Christ’s resurrection is difficult for them to believe even though they have some experience of those He’s already raised back to life. Maybe they think it’s just too much to hope for – too much riding on a resurrection! But for us, Christ’s resurrection has always been part of the story as we know it! Perhaps this diminishes the shocking display of power represented when Jesus took back the fullness of His divinity, reclaiming all the prerogatives He relinquished to be born a man! (Phil 2:5-7)

-It wasn't Christ's birth that secured our salvation – though, His nativity was essential with it's unparalleled Holy Spirit immaculate conception in the womb of a virgin; for the Savior must not be born “of” man, but of God into human flesh.

-It wasn't Christ's death on the cross that secured our salvation – though His substitution in our place & sacrifice to pay the full price for all sin was mandatory to secure our forgiveness.

-But it would **all have been for nothing without Christ's resurrection to Eternal Life!** By His choice & power, Jesus took back the fullness of His life as God – never to die again – impervious to death – death's Master once again!

Forever the Author & Giver of Eternal Life!

1Cor 15:17-20 – *And if Christ has not been raised, then your faith is useless and you are still guilty of your sins. In that case, all who have died believing in Christ are lost! And if our hope in Christ is only for this life, we are more to be pitied than anyone in the world. But in fact, Christ has been raised from the dead. He is the first of a great harvest of all who have died.*

Christ's own resurrection completes the promise of new life eternally with God. He was the first to be raised to eternal life so that He might lead a host of brethren from death into never ending life. And because the life He gives thru faith is eternal, so is our reconciliation with God as His friends, STARTING NOW! We will never face judgment or condemnation; we have been utterly forgiven and sin's penalty removed from us as far as east is from west. Even more critically, we have been released from Sin's power over us – now free to think and act with Jesus in His righteousness by which we have been brought into union with God, a oneness with Him that can never to be separated – not here, nor after!

**Are you entrusting yourself to God for good every moment?*

PRAY:

Mark 1:1-4,7-11 (NLT)

1) *This is the Good News about Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God. It began **2)** just as the prophet Isaiah had written: “Look, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, and he will prepare your way. **3)** He is a voice shouting in the wilderness, ‘Prepare the way for the*

LORD's coming! Clear the road for him!’”

4) *This messenger was John the Baptist. He was in the wilderness and preached that people should be baptized to show that they had repented of their sins and turned to God to be forgiven.*

7) *John announced: “Someone is coming soon who is greater than I am—so much greater that I'm not even worthy to stoop down like a slave and untie the straps of his sandals. **8)** I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit!” **9)** One day Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee, and John baptized him in the Jordan River. **10)** As Jesus came up out of the water, he saw the heavens splitting apart and the Holy Spirit descending on him like a dove. **11)** And a voice from heaven said, “You are my dearly loved Son, and you bring me great joy.”*

Mark 11:1-10 (NLT)

1) *As Jesus and his disciples approached Jerusalem, they came to the towns of Bethphage and Bethany on the Mount of Olives. Jesus sent two of them on ahead. **2)** “Go into that village over there,” he told them. “As soon as you enter it, you will see a young donkey tied there that no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here. **3)** If anyone asks, ‘What are you doing?’ just say, ‘The Lord needs it and will return it soon.’”*

4) *The two disciples left and found the colt standing in the street, tied outside the front door. **5)** As they were untying it, some bystanders demanded, “What are you doing, untying that colt?” **6)** They said what Jesus had told them to say, and they were permitted to take it. **7)** Then they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their garments over it, and he sat on it.*

8) *Many in the crowd spread their garments on the road ahead of him, and others spread leafy branches they had cut in the fields. **9)** Jesus was in the center of the procession, and the people all around him were shouting, “Praise God! Blessings*

on the one who comes in the name of the LORD! [10](#)) Blessings on the coming Kingdom of our ancestor David! Praise God in highest heaven!”

Mark 16:9-13 (NLT)

[9](#)After Jesus rose from the dead early on Sunday morning, the first person who saw him was Mary Magdalene, the woman from whom he had cast out seven demons. [10](#)She went to the disciples, who were grieving and weeping, and told them what had happened. [11](#)But when she told them that Jesus was alive and she had seen him, they didn't believe her.

[12](#)Afterward he appeared in a different form to two of his followers who were walking from Jerusalem into the country. [13](#)They rushed back to tell the others, but no one believed them