

“New Beginnings”

Mark 1:1-11

According to chapter one, verse one, Jesus is the “Son of God”.

In Verse eleven we hear the voice of God Almighty declare Jesus to be his beloved son.

Throughout Mark’s account we read how the Son of God reveals his authority as the humble servant.

One who gives his life that we might live.

He acts with authority as he heals the sick, forgives sin, casts out demons, and preaches that the Kingdom is near.

Mark’s gospel account finds a powerful climax at Calvary where we hear the Roman Centurion reaffirm Mark’s thesis; “This man truly was the Son of God” (Mark 15:39)

According to Mark what did Jesus, the “Son of God” come to do?

Well, simply put he came to establish a “new beginning”; a beginning where all things are made new; including you and me.

Cast your thoughts back to Genesis One.

What were the four opening words?

“In the Beginning, God.”

Think back to the opening verse in the gospel according to John. “In the beginning was the Word...and the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.”

That’s how Mark starts his account of the life of Jesus. The first word in verse one in Greek is the word “Arch” translated “The beginning”.

It wouldn’t surprise me at all if both John and Mark had Genesis one in mind when they began their respective stories with these words.

“In the beginning, God...The Word...The Son of God”.

God begins his creating and it is good, very good.

That’s what we need.

We need a new beginning each and every day.

A new beginning blessed by the Son of God.

New beginnings are wonderful. Don't you think?

Think of a new born animal or a just birthed son or daughter to nervous parents.

Think of the beauty and freshness of a new day with the dew of heaven still on the grass. The first rays of the sun splashing colour across the sky.

In our fallen world We need new beginnings like that. We need it often.

That's the new beginning John foreshadowed as he called the people to repent and confess their sins: A preparation for the Messiah whom God would identify as his Son at his baptism.

We need a new beginning like that, don't we?

It is the new beginning Peter promised in Acts 2:38 (ESV) when he concluded his Pentecost sermon.

"Repent and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit".

We need a beginning like that!

That's the glory and the wonder of the Good News of Jesus Christ. He is our new beginning.

In our own baptism we get just such a new beginning.

We need a new beginning like that because like a broken toy at Christmas our lives have become broken.

Sin clings to us is like an annoying mosquito buzzing around our heads in the middle of the night.

No matter how hard we try to swat at it we cannot seem to kill it.

Our world and our lives are broken. The burden of an imperfect life brings us pain and wearies us.

Jesus steps into the waters of our personal Jordon's which are polluted by sin. There he offers us a new beginning.

He invites us to bring all our hopes and dreams to him.

He comes to wipe our slate clean and give us a fresh start.

Brothers and Sisters, Jesus wants to give you a new beginning. In fact, Jesus is your new beginning, as many times as you need a new beginning.

And that's good news for people who have come to the end of themselves.

When Dietrich Bonhoeffer was preparing for his execution by the Nazis in 1945 he declared,

"For some this is the end, but for me it is a new beginning".

That's the new beginning Jesus promised and gave to each of us in our baptism.

Bonhoeffer was referring to the new beginning over which death has no power.

I love the baptism analogy of putting off the old and putting on the new in our baptism.

It makes me think of how nice it feels to have new clothes to wear on some special occasion.

That's the kind of newness Jesus gives us in our baptism.

It is a new beginning everyday as the soiled rags of our past failure are removed and we get a new beginning.

That's what Paul wanted us to understand when he wrote Romans 6:3-5 and Colossians 2:12

Romans 6:3-5 New Living Translation (NLT)

3 Or have you forgotten that when we were joined with Christ Jesus in baptism, we joined him in his death? 4 For we died and were buried with Christ by baptism. And just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glorious power of the Father, now we also may live new lives. 5 Since we have been united with him in his death, we will also be raised to life as he was.

Colossians 2:12 New Living Translation (NLT)

12 For you were buried with Christ when you were baptized. And with him you were raised to new life because you trusted the mighty power of God, who raised Christ from the dead.

Paul was writing about the new beginning we get in Jesus through baptism.

At your baptism and every day since, Father God has been declaring over you - as He renews you with the gift of the Holy Spirit – you are my son, you are my daughter, I find great joy in you.

The first “in the beginning “ of Genesis one was packed with so much potential, but that potential was undone when we turned from God.

The second “in the beginning” inaugurated with the coming of Jesus, has restored that which was lost in the garden.

In Jesus, God invites you into that new beginning.

It is interesting to note that The ancients understood creation as a bringing of order into the chaos.

As scripture says, “The earth was formless and empty, darkness covered the waters.”

The Spirit hovers there. Heaven is opened. God speaks, “Let there be light”...a glorious beginning.

Do you see the similarity in Mark's account of Jesus baptism?

Jesus steps into the waters of the Jordon, into the chaos of the world poisoned by sin.

The heavens open. The Spirit descends. God speaks, "This is my son. In him let there be a new beginning where all things, will be made new.

That's the promise and assurance God gives to us, that He can still create a new beginning out of our chaos.

It is the story of our baptism. There is water, Spirit, Son and Father and a declaration that this is a new beginning.

Living daily in the promises of our baptism is that new beginning where God declares, "It is good. I am pleased."

Friends try to imagine your life as it unfolds over the next 12 months.

What might it look like to step into each new day in the promise of a new beginning?

Ask yourself this, "today, how will that new beginning change what I do, how I think, how I serve and give?

Will it change what you have been and perhaps are now, into something new and better?

How will it transform you? Will knowing that you are his beloved child in whom he finds pleasure and joy, bring about a new way of living?

"In the beginning, God"..... fill in the blank space.