

Pay Attention!

More than anything, God wants to get your attention. He wants to be the focus and the center of our lives precisely because He knows that there is nothing greater He could give us than Himself (Ps. 37:4; 73:25; Phil. 4:4). God's ultimate means of arresting our attention is the sending of Jesus Christ. In our busy and distracted lives, how we need to pay attention to Him! Consider Mark chapter one; almost everyone in the chapter is crying out for us to pay attention to Christ.

The prophets said, "Pay attention to Christ!" (Mark 1:1-3) – Mark begins with quotes from Isaiah and Malachi, who lived 750 and 400 years before Christ respectively. Both of these passages point to John as the forerunner of God's Servant Jesus, and thus there is an unbroken chain pointing from the preaching of the prophets to the life and ministry of Jesus.

John the Baptist said, "Pay attention!" (Mark 1:4, 7) – John went into the wilderness and people were so curious about him that they went out of the cities to pay attention to his message. Those who were convinced that John spoke God's word were baptized, and John pointed the people to the coming of the One whose sandal strap John considered himself unworthy to loosen (Mark 1:7-8).

God Himself demands our attention (Mark 1:9-11) – At the baptism of Jesus, the heavens parted and the Spirit descended upon Jesus like a dove. God's voice spoke saying, "You are My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Mark 1:11). If God is well-pleased with Jesus, shouldn't we be as well?

Jesus Christ went about preaching (Mark 1:12-15) – His message was straightforward: "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel" (Mark 1:15). Jesus taught this in the synagogues (Mark 1:21, 39) and in every town He visited (Mark 1:38; 2:2). He said His purpose was to preach everywhere He went (Mark 1:38).

The apostles were trained to call attention to Christ (Mark 1:16-20) – Jesus challenged Peter and Andrew: "Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men" (Mark 1:17). How stirring to see Peter and the other apostles boldly and consistently preaching Christ in the book of Acts and beyond (Acts 2:23-36; Acts 4:1-2; 1 Cor. 2:2; 2 Cor. 4:5).

Even the demons "paid attention" Christ (Mark 1:24, 34) – The demons who encountered Jesus said, "Let us alone! What have we to do with You, Jesus of Nazareth? Did You come to destroy us? I know who You are – the Holy One of God!" (Mark 1:24). Though they are evil, the demons demonstrate a deep understanding of spiritual things, and we are wise to heed their words about the identity of our Lord (cf. James 2:19).

Those who were healed called attention to Christ (Mark 1:45) – After healing the leper, Jesus commanded him not to tell anyone, but the Bible says, “He went out and began to proclaim it freely and to spread the matter, so that Jesus could no longer openly enter the city... and they came to Him from every direction” (Mark 1:45).

Upon reading Mark chapter one, perhaps we need to ask ourselves whether we are ***really*** paying attention to Jesus Christ.

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