



THE GOSPEL OF

MARK



## Sermon Series Notes

### “The Victorious Christian Life” (Mark 1:7-13)

Danny Hodges - NT3657

Intro: Hebrews 12:1-4; Verse four simply means you have not had to endure to the point of dying. The message is clear, even if you do have to endure to the point of dying, Jesus has already paved the way to victory. And if we will follow His lead, and “fix” our eyes on Him, we will be victorious, no matter what our struggles in this life. The word for “fix” is only used here in all the NT, and it means to turn away from other things and concentrate your gaze, your attention upon.

In our next section of Mark’s gospel, Jesus shows us the path to victory. Read Mark 1:9-13.

Why does verse 13 tell us Jesus was with the wild animals? One commentator writes: “Why does Mark say that He was with the wild beasts? Were these animals energized by Satan to seek to destroy the Lord? Or were they docile in the presence of their Creator? We can only ask the questions.” (Believers Bible Commentary, p.136).

Mark is the only gospel account that tells us this bit of detail, and Mark’s gospel is the most succinct of any of the gospels, so the fact that he tells us Jesus was with the wild animals is significant. And if God told us, and it is significant, he must want us to know what it means. We need to do more than ask the question. So I’m gonna take a stab at it and share my opinions with you.

The types of animals in the wilderness of Israel in those days included bears, lions, jackals, & dogs. And I cannot stress enough that these were not tame animals. The word wild means “brutal, savage, and ferocious.”

Linked with the detail that Jesus was with the wild animals is also the fact that angels attended him. The word attended means “ministered to.” If we fully understand the conditions Jesus experienced here, we are not at all surprised that the Father sent angels to minister to him. He fasted the entire time he was in the wilderness, and by the end of that time he was close to starving to death. It was under these conditions that he was tempted by Satan (lust of the flesh, eyes, and pride of life). Mark does not record the details of the temptation, so I think it would be good to take a brief look at it from another gospel. See Luke 4:1-13. This temptation was not Jesus’ only temptation by the enemy, but it was one of the most difficult.

“The presence of wild animals stresses the hostile character of the desert region as Satan’s domain.” (The Bible Knowledge Commentary, p.106). Could it be that these wild animals were on Satan’s side, or at least under his power? I know of at least one animal that collaborated with Lucifer in the Garden of Eden, and that was the serpent. And now, one of the references to Lucifer is that “Ancient Serpent,” or the “Dragon.” This was like Jesus in Jurassic Park!

Adam & Eve failed in an idyllic environment. Not only were they in paradise, but it was paradise completely unspoiled. There was no curse, no sweat for Adam as he cared for the garden, no thorns on the roses, etc. There were no issues between he and Eve. They had no kids. It was just them and all their pets,

and none of them were wild. Adam had named all the animals. They had regular fellowship with God. What an environment! And in that environment, they failed.

Jesus was in the worst environment possible, in the middle of Satan's domain, among wild animals, in a humanly weakened state, and He conquered.

Has anybody noticed that we are not in paradise anymore?! Even Hawaii in our world is not perfect. In Adam's paradise there were no other women to be attracted to, in Hawaii there are! And people get sick in Hawaii, people die in Hawaii, marriages struggle in Hawaii, people are addicted to drugs in Hawaii, there is crime and conflict of all kinds in Hawaii. Christians suffer persecution in Hawaii.

David faced wild beasts because he loved his father's sheep; Daniel faced wild beasts because of his faithfulness to God and his righteous work ethic. Paul the apostle faced wild beasts in Ephesus (I Cor.15:32).

I Cor.15:32 If I have fought wild beasts in Ephesus for merely human reasons, what have I gained?

What's your situation in life?

We may never have to literally face wild beasts like Paul, or David, or Daniel, or Jesus. We may never have to endure the exact conditions Jesus did during His temptation in the wilderness. But please do not miss the very practical implications of what His victory in the wilderness means for us. He went into Satan's domain, in the most weakened condition any human being could be in, and was completely victorious. And through His victory, He shows us the path to victory, in **any** condition of life.

So what is the path to victory?

A LIFE PLEASING TO THE FATHER

- Up to this point in His life, what had Jesus done that pleased the Father?
  - He was obedient to Joseph and Mary
  - He was obedient in taking on human flesh
    - Heb.10:5-7 Therefore, when Christ came into the world, he said: "Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but a body you prepared for me; with burnt offerings and sin offerings you were not pleased. Then I said, 'Here I am – it is written about me in the scroll – I have come to do your will, O God.'"
    - See Jer.1:5; Psalm 131:13-16
- Jesus baptism by John was His identification with death, burial, & resurrection. He came to this world for one purpose, to fulfill the Father's will by offering Himself as a sacrifice for the sins of the world. Throughout His earthly life He repeatedly said that He had come to do the Father's will, and that He only did that which pleased His Father.
- John 4:34 My food...is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work.
- John 5:30...I seek not to please myself but him who sent me.
- John 6:38...I have come down from heaven not to do my own will but to do the will of him who sent me.
- John 8:29...I always do what pleases him.
- Romans 12:1 Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to **offer your bodies as living sacrifices**, holy and **pleasing to God** – this is your spiritual act of worship.
- See Romans 6:1-13
- There will be no resisting temptation (in any situation) if one's life is not surrendered to God.

THE EMPOWERING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

- It is essential in living a victorious Christian life that we never depend on human strength or any other means for victory. We need the power of the Holy Spirit.
- Zech. 4:6...Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit...
- See I Sam.13:15...and Saul counted the men who were with him. Saul's son Jonathan did just the opposite in the following chapter. See I Sam.14:6. Any of us can come to place in life where we stop depending on the power of the Holy Spirit. Even King David failed in the same way King Saul did (see II Samuel 24:3-4, 10). David went from dependence upon the power of the Spirit to dependence upon the size of his army.
- Psalm 20:7 Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the Lord our God.
- See Isaiah 31:1 Woe to those who go down to Egypt for help, who rely on horses, who trust in the multitude of their chariots and in the great strength of their horsemen, but do not look to the Holy One of Israel, or seek help from the Lord.
- This is why Jesus told the early disciples to tarry in Jerusalem until the Holy Spirit empowered them (Acts 1).
- Humility is required to keep the power of the Spirit upon my life (See II Cor.12:7-10; II Cor.1:8-9).
- Jesus, in the humanly weak state he was in, returned to Jerusalem after His experience in the wilderness empowered by the Spirit (Luke 4:14).

#### SUBMISSION TO THE WILL OF GOD

- Jesus was led by the Spirit; strong word, "drove"
- Peter Lord, "If we are going to live the Christian life we must write an obituary to the self-life."
- Yet not my will...
- James 4:7 Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.
- Grieving (Eph.4:30) & quenching (I Thess.5:19) the Holy Spirit
- To be filled with the Spirit is to be controlled by the Spirit, and to be controlled by the Spirit means often doing things I may not want to do (Gal.5:16-17).

#### Some Victorious Examples

- Joseph in Egypt, 17 years old, hated by his brothers, sold as a slave. And all this is after God had revealed to him a glorious future where he would be exalted beyond his wildest dreams. And here he is, a slave in Egypt. Add to that, his owner's wife is throwing herself at him day after day. How many guys in Joseph's situation would resist that kind of temptation? But he resists, repeatedly. And his righteous act of resistance gets him thrown in prison. But even there he remains faithful. What was it about his life that enabled him to live such a victorious life for the Lord? The answer is found in his response to the woman seeking to seduce him, Gen.39:9...How then could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God? After King David repented of his sin with Bathsheeba, here's what he said, Psalm 51:4...against you, you only, have I sinned, and done what is wicked in your sight. These are men who understand that after all is said and done, the life I live and the choices I make are

all dependent on my commitment to and love for my heavenly Father, wo I desire to please in every way.

- Shadrach, Meshech & Abednego, deported into Babylon, castrated in order to become eunuchs for the King of Babylon. A law is made that forces everyone to bow before this huge statue of Nebuchadnezzar. But they refuse to bow. Read Daniel 3:16-18.
- Daniel, also a eunuch in Babylon along with his three friends. But Daniel has been exalted to a high government position, so things are going pretty well. But jealousy by his work associates puts him a precarious situation. If he continues praying to his God, he will be thrown into a den of lions. And that is exactly what happens.
- Job, lost everything except a nagging wife in one day. Read Job 1:20-22; Job 13:15 Though he slay me, yet will I hope in him...
- The apostles facing persecution & even death, Acts 5:29...We must obey God rather than men!
- Heb.11:35...others were tortured and refused to be released, so that they might gain a better resurrection.
- See Romans 8:35-39.

Whether it is resisting sexual temptation, standing up for God when everyone else is bowing to idols, remaining faithful even if you lose your job and are thrown to the lions, or even experiencing Job-like conditions in life, the path to victory is the same.

The above are dramatic examples of victorious believers, but before I close let me remind us all that the victorious Christian life is most often seen in the daily routines of life. Daily offering my body as a living sacrifice, followed the leading of the Holy Spirit, being submissive to God's will for my life, means being faithful to my wife and family, being responsible and honest in the work God has given me, not always doing what I want to do, but what I know the Lord wants me to do. It means submitting to your parents, the principal, the pastor. It means looking to serve and not be served. It means a daily denial of self and allowing the Holy Spirit to fill and empower my life.

#### CONCLUSION

- Gal.5:25 Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.
- When OT King Saul was struggling in life regarding the will of God and the ministry of the Holy Spirit in his life, David would come and play his harp, and the Bible says the evil spirit that was tormenting Saul would leave. That's very interesting. Of course we all know what kind of music David would have played – worship music.
- Eph.5:17-19 Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is. Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit. Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord.