

Forty Days with Jesus
John The Baptist: It Feels Like God Is on The Move!
Mark 1:9-15

Are you feeling stuck? You have the opportunity these next 47 days of Lent to have a fresh start—to be unstuck. Imagine what a celebration Easter will be when you are “unstuck.”

John the Baptist is stuck in jail; his public ministry and life are coming to an end. At the same time, Jesus public ministry is starting

Mark 1:9-15 – Our passage begins with John baptizing Jesus in the Jordan River. Matthew’s account (Matthew 3:13-17) is more detailed. In vs. 14-15, Matthew shows that John is not sure about baptizing Jesus.

Why would Jesus desire to be baptized? He doesn’t need to confess his sin nor repent of sin. By being baptized, Jesus is identifying Himself with the people He came to save. His walk to the cross first passed through the waters of baptism not only as an example to those he came to save from their sins, but also because of a foreshadowing of what Jesus would become on the cross. 2 Corinthians 5:21 – Jesus became “stuck” in our sin so that we might become “unstuck” in our sin by His work on the cross. (By faith, He takes our sin and unrighteousness upon Himself and gives us His righteousness -Imputation.)

God’s perfect plan for Jesus was to be baptized and thus “*fulfill all righteousness.*” This refers to God’s plan and purpose for Jesus in our salvation. It was the right thing to do.

Now, those who were present by the waters of the Jordan on that day experienced something unique and magnificent: a blessing from the Father to the Son coupled with the presence of the Holy Spirit. – Mark1:10-11

The words that God the Father spoke over Jesus the Son are echoes from both the writer of Psalm 2:7 and the prophet Isaiah from Isaiah 42:1.

These words of Psalm 2:7 are words a reigning King would use at the coronation of a new King. Here, in Mark 1, Psalm 2:7 is the context for God the Father who is the reigning King crowning his Son, Jesus Christ, as the new King to rule and reign with justice. With this, the words “*with you I am well pleased*” echo Isaiah 42:1 as Isaiah foreshadows the Lord’s Chosen Servant and imparts the Spirit upon him.

This passage from Isaiah denotes the servant of the Lord who not only is being addressed, but who is also the divine promise of a better and new day of justice with peace that is on the way. All this will come through suffering that will take place in the life of the chosen servant. Jesus would be that chosen one who would be identified as the suffering servant that would give his life for all nations on the cross.

Following His baptism, the Holy Spirit went to prepare Jesus for the walk to the cross that he would make over the next three years. Mark 1:12-13

Numbers are significant and symbolic when mentioned in the Bible. Jesus was out in the wilderness preparing for his public ministry as he fasted and was tempted for 40 days. The number forty generally symbolized a period of testing, trial, and probation, which often leads to spiritual growth and preparation for upcoming ministry. It often symbolized a multifaceted situation.

You are invited and encouraged to prepare yourself for the resurrection this Lent. No matter if you are stuck in your proverbial wilderness, God desires for you to know He is with you and is willing to lead you out of your wilderness and into a place of new beginnings. His mercy and grace is new and in abundance for all who will call upon His name. The beginning of Lent is the perfect time to get unstuck by the power of Jesus and the truth of his word.

Verse 13 notes that Jesus was “*with the wild animals*” during his period of 40 days out in the wilderness. In the OT, blessing is associated with inhabit and cultivated land; the wilderness is the place of the curse. In the wilderness there is neither seed nor fruit, water nor growth. Humans cannot live there. Only frightening and unwanted beasts live there, like hyenas, jackals, panthers, and lions.

In the wilderness, Jesus confronts the horror, the loneliness and the danger that is the wilderness. This is the realm of Satan. For Jesus, this was a tense time of focused preparation. There was a kind of fierceness to Jesus’ entire temptation period in the wilderness.

Perhaps you can relate in your own wilderness forms. For you, you may not face wild animals of the same sort as you prepare your heart and live for celebrating Jesus’ resurrection. Nonetheless, you may have other temptations surrounding you in your wilderness that are inhabited not by hyenas, jackals, panthers and lions. Instead, you may be feeling the presence of abusers, regrets, painful words spoken, reminders of past transgressions, wild addictions, or simple scars that remind you of complicated stories you have been a part of in days gone by. Regardless of what surrounds you in the wilderness, Jesus empowers you by his Holy Spirit and gives you direction by his Holy Word found in the pages of Scripture if you choose to heed such strengthening agents.

Mark 1:14-15 remind us of where we started and where John the Baptist was located. Here, in Galilee, Jesus starts His public ministry.

Christ’s first order of business that is recorded in Mark’s gospel is a proclamation that he makes. “*Repent and believe.*” The word for “*repent*” in the original language is *metanoia*. It means to rethink the way you think about things. It means to move forward in a new direction while leaving behind an old course. The reason Jesus calls all who would hear his voice to a new way to think and a different direction to walk is because according to him, “*the time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand.*”

The timing is right and the decisive hour of God’s saving action in history has now come. It is the point where leadership from the Messiah and action from all who would call him “Lord” must be taken. The “*time is at hand*” means the triumph of God is now so close that the powers of evil are being opposed in successful ways. This means that evil no longer has the power to keep people stuck in their ways and trapped in their lives. Jesus has come to set people free and invite a new direction and a new season of hope and life to be experienced.

The beginning of Lent is an opportunity that feels like starting over. This is a hope that needs to swarm every person who needs to move from being stuck to being free. This is the beginning of Lent that leads to the cross and ends in victory.