



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

BELOVED

Mark 1:1-11

1. What one thing did you take home from this week's message?

2. Read Mark 1:1 **"The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.[a]**2 As it is written in Isaiah the prophet, **"Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way,** 3 **the voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare[c] the way of the Lord, make his paths straight,'"**4 John appeared, baptizing in the wilderness and proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. 5 And all the country of Judea and all Jerusalem were going out to him and were being baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. 6 Now John was clothed with camel's hair and wore a leather belt around his waist and ate locusts and wild honey.7 And he preached, saying, **"After me comes he who is mightier than I, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. 8 I have baptized you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."** What stands out to you from this scripture?

John's role is to prepare the way and proclaim the truth. I believe that role is given to all who are in Christ. We prepare the way by praying, building relationships, and showing the love of Christ. As we prepare the way, people become more receptive to hear the truth about Christ and his love for them. Are you now or have you ever intentionally prepared the way for someone to hear about Christ? If so, please tell that story.

We cannot forget that we are also called to proclaim the truth, to share the gospel. Are you comfortable sharing about Christ? Have you ever (with the Holy Spirit's help) led anyone to accept Christ? If so, share that story please. How could you be more intentional about preparing the way and proclaiming the truth?

3. John the Baptist had an incredibly successful ministry, some estimate between 30,000 and 300,000 came to him in the wilderness to be baptized. But he continually kept the focus on Jesus. We see his heart in John 3:30 **“He must increase, but I must decrease.”** What is your reaction to this verse? Be specific, in your life how might you decrease and Jesus increase?

4. Please read Mark 1: 9 **At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan.**10 **Just as Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove.**11 **And a voice came from heaven: “You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased.”** What stands out to you from this scripture?

These powerful verses contain such imagery, verse ten says, **the heavens were torn open.** Moses saw the red sea part, Joshua saw the Jordan river part, Jesus saw the heavens' torn open and part before him as he was coming up out of the water. What is the significance of the heavens being torn open?

Imaging how Jesus felt hearing the voice of God say **“You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased.”** With these words God bestowed on Jesus belonging, **“you are my Son”** you belong to me. He also declares Jesus is beloved. Do you fully accept what the text is presenting, that Jesus is the Son of God? Have you accepted him as your Savior and Lord? Do you have doubts? If so, share them.

5. The teaching of the New Testament would suggest that God would say the same thing to you that the Spirit spoke over Jesus. You belong to him; you are his son or daughter. Romans 8:15 **So you have not received a spirit that makes you fearful slaves. Instead, you received God’s Spirit when he adopted you as his own children. Now we call him, “Abba, Father.”** Many verses point to the truth that God deeply loves you.
1 John 4:10 **This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.** Do you struggle to fully accept that in Christ you have belonging and are beloved?

What about this last phrase God says of Jesus, **with you I am well pleased.** As God looks down on your life, is he well pleased?