

The Messianic Secret

January 21, 2024

Welcome to the Beamsville Church of Christ online ministry. This week's message is titled "The Messianic Secret." Thank you to Dave, Paul, Heather, and Don for being part of the video. The scripture reading is Mark 1, 40-45.

Welcome, Announcements, Prayer

Welcome. Good morning. We are glad you were with us this morning and a reassurance that our students will be returning next week. In fact, the chorus will be singing and leading us in worship next Sunday, and Don Rose will bring us a message. Birthdays: Marie and Donna have birthdays, and happy birthday to them. Everyone is welcome to celebrate Alice's 90th birthday together on January the 27th from 3.30 to 5.30. No gifts, please. Brad Boland will be performing in the second hour. Dianne is updating the church directory, so please speak to her if you have any changes in your contact information or if you would like to be included in that list. I already mentioned the chorus. We have a card from Justin and Alicia, a Christmas card, just expressing their thanks for our love and support during their transition from Germany to their work in France. And I'll post that on the bulletin board. You may read the total of it.

Mark McDonnell has passed away on January the 2nd. Marie's grandson was in the hospital in Hamilton due to difficulty swallowing, so we want to pray for his healing and Marie and the family as they care for him. We have ongoing concerns and prayers for Pam and Care and Jo, who is with us, so feeling better. Let's go to God in prayer.

Father, we thank you for the opportunities you continue to give us to serve. We give you praise for who you are, for your grace and your goodness. We ask that you direct our minds and our spirits to realize your presence here and to help us. We pray for those we have mentioned, for families in the death of a loved one for the McDonnell family, for Marie's family, her grandson especially, for Pam and Care. We're thankful for Jo to be here with us this morning. There are many people who are struggling. We ask that we may be your servants in realizing need and serving them as best we can in our prayer in Christ's name.

Short reading from Psalms 147. Praise the Lord how good it is to sing praises to God, how pleasant and fitting to praise him.

Communion

There are many different ways to approach the Lord's table. We can experience grace, sacrifice, the victory, motivation for action, attempts to fathom the vastness of God's love. Of course all of these are interconnected and quite valid, but today I want to approach the Lord's table and experience its comfort, encouragement, confidence not in self but in God. In Hebrews 13 the author talks about despite the foot of the cross being the traditional place of pain, sacrifice and death, it is exactly this place at Jesus' cross where we experience the hope and confidence of the enduring city that is to come using the author's language. The contrast here being the comparison of our lives as currently in shanty

towns, tents, temporary, subject to weather, hard work and life, danger, insecurity and the enduring city which is to come is permanent, protected, comfort, secure.

May I invite you to this Lord's table if you are feeling like life is difficult, insecure, in danger, hard, temporary. May we meet at Jesus' cross, experience the hope and confidence of the enduring city that is to come. Not to ignore our current troubles, but rather to recenter our lives around what actually gives us comfort, Jesus as opposed to myself. Looking at the foot of Jesus' cross is the very place where his sacrifice and victory has secured all the comfort that we need in this life and the one to come. It is here where sin was neutralized, death was conquered, grace and mercy flows. Because of this our troubles, whether self-made or not, can be endured, comforted and ultimately if not in this life, conquered. So I invite you to this table if you seek this comfort. For those who are perhaps in a different place in life or as we all do to have a certain degree, have a capacity to minister, to share our lives with each other, I invite you to live out 2 Corinthians chapter 1 verse 3. If you have received discomfort from God, I encourage you to share it here at the foot of the cross with those around you.

If you know me a little bit, I am contrary. I like the weird things. And this also applies to the Bible. Popular verses I tend to shy away from. I don't know why. It's just my nature. If everyone goes down that road, I want to go down the other road. And so because of that, I did not often come to Psalm 23 because it's very popular. And I just figure, well, everybody else does that. Now, Psalm 27, that's the good--So lately I've been thinking about Psalm 23 and I think it applies here. "The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing. He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside quiet waters. He refreshes my soul. He guides me along the right paths for His namesake. Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil, for you are with me. Your rod and your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil. My cup overflows. Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever." Come, God has prepared a table for us today. Let's go to God in prayer.

Dear Lord, thank You for all You've given us and all You've blessed us with. Thank You for today. Thank You for Your sacrifice on that cross, the victory that it gave us. Lord help us to be a people who have remembered that sacrifice and victory, who have gathered there, who seek Your comfort and share it with others. Lord may we partake of Your body and Your blood in a worthy manner and may we live like a people who have partaked. In Jesus' name, amen.

Reading

Mark 1:40-45 (NIV)

All right, we're reading from Mark 1, verses 40 through 45.

"A man with leprosy came to him and begged him on his knees. If you are willing, you can make me clean. Jesus was indignant. He reached out his hand and touched the man. I am willing, he said, be clean. Immediately the leprosy left him and he was cleansed. Jesus sent him away at once with a strong warning. See that you don't tell this to anyone, but go. Show yourself to the priest and offer the sacrifices that Moses commanded for your cleansing as a testimony to them. Instead, he went out and began to talk freely, spreading the news. As a result, Jesus could no longer enter a town openly, but stayed outside in lonely places. Yet the people still came to him from everywhere."

Sermon

The Messianic Secret

Good morning, everyone. Thank you very much for being with us. I want to share a sermon today, but please don't tell anyone about this. For many reasons in the first century, Jesus was a mystery. When Jesus was about 30 years old and started preaching, it was remarkable what he said and what he did. And often people would go back to the Old Testament referring to these are the things that we prophesy that Jesus would be saying and doing. So it's true that Jesus said, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel." However, it's also true that he says, "But don't tell anyone." So what does it mean? Go into all the world and preach the gospel, but don't tell anyone. Jesus never wanted to be a political figure. He never wanted to be made that way. He wanted to demonstrate God's love, God's compassion, God's forgiveness, and that the welcome mat is open for all. He wanted to demonstrate love, compassion, and forgiveness. But because Jesus was able to do miracles, he did not want people to come and make him king by force. He wanted to emphasize his tender nature, to love your neighbor as yourself, to love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength, and to serve.

Mark writes these words, "Jesus healed many who had various diseases. He also drove out many demons." But listen, Jesus would not allow the demons to speak because Jesus would not allow the demons to speak because they knew who he was. The demons knew Jesus and they scattered when he came. Very early in the morning, while it was still quite dark, Jesus got up. He left the house where he was staying. He went off to a solitary place, which he did often, to pray. And Simon Peter and his companions went to look for Jesus. And when they found him, they explained these words, "Everyone is looking for you. And Jesus replied, "Let us go somewhere else, to the nearby villages, so I can preach there. That's why I've come." Jesus didn't come to the mass populace. He wanted to go from village to village. People who are often outcast. And Jesus come and heal them and share with them the word of God. That's why I've come, Jesus said. Going throughout Galilee, preaching in their synagogues, driving out demons.

And then this story, "A man with leprosy came to Jesus and begged him on his knees, "If you are willing, you can make me clean." Jesus, filled with compassion, reached out his hand and touched the man. "I am willing," Jesus said. And then two words, "Be clean." Immediately, immediately, the leprosy left him and the man was cured. Now something also very interesting. Jesus sent the man away with a very strong warning. Guess what he says? Make sure that you don't tell anyone about this. Don't tell anyone about this. How are you going to keep that a secret? It was remarkable. Don't tell anyone about this. Again, it was the understanding of, "I don't want to be king by force. "I don't want to sit on a throne inside of some building, "administrating and sending forth." No, no, that's not who Jesus was. He was meek. He was powerful in his uniqueness, his wonderful love. So the more Jesus healed and the more Jesus said, "Don't tell anyone," the more they told.

So it's very interesting in Mark's account that Jesus was emphasizing more than what Jesus was saying but doing. So Jesus never wanted to be this political figure. His emphasis was and still is today, "Love your neighbor as yourself." And then in Mark, it says these words, very interesting, I think. "Jesus withdrew his disciples to the lake "and a large crowd from Galilee followed. "When they heard all Jesus was doing, "many people came from Judea, Jerusalem, and Edomia, "and the regions across the Jordan and around Tyre, "inside of all those places. "And because of the crowd, he told his disciples "to have a

small boat ready for him, "to keep the people from crowding him. "For he had healed many so that those with diseases "were pushing forward to touch him. "Whenever the evil spirits saw Jesus, "they fell down before him and cried out, "You are the Son of God." "Which is fascinating to me. "These people who are the opposite of Jesus, "these evil spirits come out. "They no longer existed. "One day, they will no longer exist. "They cried out, "You are the Son of God." And then the significant point that even the evil spirits knew their outcome, just as Satan will no longer exist one day, praise the Lord for that, Jesus will come again, there'll be no more hurt, no more pain, no more confusion, all will be welled. So just a significant point, that the evil spirits know their outcome.

So then in Mark, in chapter five, it says, "While Jesus was still speaking, "some men came from the house of Jarius, "the synagogue ruler." Still grabs my heart. When I read this, because I've read it so many times, but it still grabs me. When your children are ill and hurting, it just breaks your heart. So while Jesus was still speaking, "some men came from the house of Jarius, "the synagogue ruler, "your daughter is dead." And then they said these horrible words, "Why bother Jesus anymore?" Can you imagine? Why bother the teacher anymore? What a horrible thing to say. But Jesus was past that. Jesus ignored what they said. "Don't be afraid," he said, "just believe." Jesus did not let anyone follow him, except Peter, James, John, the brother of James. And when they came to the home of the synagogue ruler, Jesus saw this commotion with people crying and wailing loudly. And Jesus went in and said to them, "Why are you doing this? "What's the commotion about? "What's the wailing about? "The child is not dead," Jesus said, "but asleep." And they listened to what they said, but they laughed at him. It's never a good idea to laugh at Jesus. To laugh with Jesus is wonderful, but never laugh at Jesus. And then it says, "After Jesus put them all out." (chuckles) It doesn't say how. (audience chuckles) I think it's just, it was just his look. Sometimes you know nothing has to be said. When you look at someone's face, you know what that person wants. Jesus just looked at them. He put them all out, took the child's father and mother and the disciples who were with him, went in where the child was. Jesus took her by the hand and said to her, "Little girl, I say to you, get up." And then this next word, immediately, immediately, the girl stood up and walked around. She was 12 years old. (chuckles) And then somewhat humorous, I think. Jesus gave them strict orders not to let anyone know about this. And Jesus said to the child's parents, "Give the girl something to eat." In other words, the girl was completely healed. Amazing. And one day, one day, all will be healed. One day, when Jesus comes, there'll be no more sorrow, no more pain, no more hurting. All things will be well. We will be well. We won't be haunted by anything. What God intended right from the beginning will be a reality, a new heaven and a new earth.

So then in Mark 7, Jesus left the vicinity of Tyre, went through Sidon, down the Sea of Galilee, and into the region of the Decapolis. And there are some people brought Jesus a man who was deaf and could hardly speak, and they begged him to place his hand on the man. And then it says, "After he took the man aside, away from the crowd," picture this, "Jesus put his fingers into the man's ear. Then Jesus spit and touched the man's tongue." Yuck. "He looked up to heaven and with a deep sigh, said to him, "Be open." Now when Jesus says, "Be open," what do you think is going to be happening? It's going to be opened. At this, the man's ears were opened, his tongue was loosened, he began to speak plainly. Once again, Jesus commanded them, "Don't tell anyone. I don't want to be a political figure. I want nothing to do with that. I want to show who God is and who we can be serving one another." People were overwhelmed with amazement, and they said, "Jesus has done everything well, and I wish we could always remember that." He even makes the deaf hear in the mute speak. But it wasn't Jesus' time. He was on the way to this most important appointment, which no one could believe. He was on his way to

the cross to shed his blood for our forgiveness, each one of us. Sometimes we read the Bible and we think what it was like back then, but the forgiveness of sins for each one of us. Two thousand years ago? Yeah. Today? Absolutely. He's done everything well. He was on the way to the cross to shed his blood for our forgiveness, Jesus demonstrating his lordship.

Some say when Jesus was... Who do people say that I am? Some say you're John the Baptist, others say that you're Elijah, or one of the other prophets. But Jesus asked each one, "Who do you say I am?" And Peter, of course Peter, Peter replied, "You are the Christ," meaning Savior, Lord, no one higher than this. It wasn't a political figure. He is the Christ, he is the sire, he is the Son of God.

And the most remarkable thing occurs that when Jesus took Peter, and picture this in your mind, I think this is a fascinating aspect of Scripture. Jesus took Peter, so Jesus, Peter, James and John, and they all went up to a mountain and they were there all alone. Now watch this. Jesus was transfigured before them. Was he still there? Yeah. Was he in the body? Yeah. But he was transfigured. There's something special here. He's transfigured before them, meaning his clothes become dazzling bright. The Bible says this, I didn't make this up. The Bible said this. "Whiter than anyone in the world could bleach them, and there appeared before them Elijah, one of the great prophets from the Old Testament, Moses, who wrote the Ten Commandments, and Jesus, our Savior." They were talking with Jesus. Wouldn't you love to hear that conversation? Just immaculately. Moses, Elijah, Jesus, just chatting. I wonder someday when all things are concluded if we'll get that opportunity to just chat with Jesus, to just share a couple of words with Peter or John or whoever. So Peter says to Jesus, "Rabbi, it's good for us to be here. Let's put three shelters together." I don't know why he said that. One for you, one for Moses, one for Elijah. "Then a cloud appeared and enveloped them." This appeared into this cloud. "And a voice came from the cloud." Here is the voice of voices. God's voice is breaking through. God's voice says in a loud voice, "This is my son whom I love." Listen to him. I think for the rest of their lives, they're going to say, "I'm listening." And I think through the Scriptures, we need to say the same thing. I'm listening, God. Speak. Listen to him. Suddenly, they no longer saw anyone with them except Jesus. And as they were coming down the mountain, Jesus said it again, "Don't tell anyone. Don't tell anyone. I'm not a political figure. I'm not running for government. I want nothing to do with that. Don't tell anyone what they had seen until Jesus is raised from the dead." I think that's a Scripture that we sometimes forget. This remarkable experience after Jesus goes to the cross, died, buried, is raised again. He says, "Don't you remember what happened? Don't you remember what I said was going to happen? It's all happening the way God has done this." Jesus knew from the very beginning that he would be the sacrificial lamb for each one of us.

So no wonder John 3.16 is so powerful. God so loved the world, each one. He loved the whole world that he gave his son. And if we believe in him, we're not going to perish. But it will be life eternal, a life that will always be new. No more sorrow, no more pain, no more death, but newness will come. And then these final words, in this wonderful book of Mark, profound book, "Then the disciples went out and preached everywhere, and the Lord worked with them." Please remember, you're not alone. I'll never leave you. I'll never reject you. I'm always with you, and I will work with you. Sometimes that's just so hard to believe, but I am working with you. You're never alone, even for five seconds. I'm always with you. That's something we need to remember.

And then Peter says these words, something that I think is significant for all of us, but grow, grow, grow in the grace and the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Why? For to him be the glory both

now and forever. Amen. And John reminds us, we know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding so that we may know him who is true, and we are in him who is true, even as Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God, and he is eternal life. Amen.

[Music]

Closing

Thank you, thank you, Don, for your message, for Adam and Heather and Paul for their participation, and thank you for your attendance and participation. Go back to Paul, contrary thinking, I like it. It's corollary or corollary thinking, like, "If this, then this." Oblique. What's on the other side? It's not always from my perspective. It's tangential. I like it. I do that myself. And this expression may be a little tangential. Hopefully it relates. Don has mentioned on previous occasions that he prepares sermons that are directed introspectively. These thoughts are directed introspectively. And I struggle with whether to use the third person, "we" or "I." I'm going to go with "I," and I'll let you put yourself in the "I."

The mystery. Mysteries are difficult, almost impossible to explain or understand. A challenging puzzle, an enigma. Our interests are piqued, though, by a mystery. By trying to figure it out, we're intrigued by what we don't know. There must be an explanation. There must be an answer. We're almost compelled to discover what it is. Do I struggle with incomprehension about the mystery of Christ? Am I like the crowds attracted by the wonder-working Jesus, but ignore his call to suffer? Or am I like the disciples and want a Christ of my own design, but not the dying one on the cross? Am I too feeling that I should say nothing to anyone? Be assured the secret is out. The mystery is solved. We stand in a fully resurrected Jesus. Nothing is hidden and concealed.

To read a verse from Colossians 2, and that will be our closing. Chapter 2, verse 2, Paul's writing to the church Colossae. My purpose is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ.

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