



Mark 1:9-15

In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in



the Jordan. And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. And a voice came from heaven, “You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.”

And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. He was in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him.

Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news.”



So much is happening all at once in this passage! And Mark handles it all in just seven verses. Slow down, I want to say, as I turn back to Matthew or forward to Luke, to get the full story – or at least a few more juicy details. But when I come back and spend time with this passage, I begin to see that maybe Mark’s not the one who’s in too much of a hurry. I’m the one who doesn’t have time to notice the details. And the irony is, the details are all about time – or at least, timing.

From one line to the next, Mark whiplashes us between slow timing (“In those days ... in the wilderness forty days ... the time is fulfilled”) and fast timing (“just as he was coming up ... immediately drove him out”). The message becomes clear that it all happened exactly according to God’s timing. And it seems to be no mistake that Mark’s rapid-fire delivery places Jesus’s baptism virtually on top of his temptation – because in God’s perfect timing, he can be divine and human in the same instant.

Of course, my timing is generally pretty bad. I'm fast when I should be slow (sometimes), and slow when I should be fast (often). During this season, I'm going to ask God to help me to be more in tune with divine timing.



- Beau Stephens



Dear Lord, help me to know when - when to be immediately driven by your Spirit, when to spend forty days, when to wait for the time to be fulfilled, and when to humbly accept not knowing when. In Christ's name, Amen.