



Today, we are starting a new series that will take us through a series of sermons about Jesus from the gospel of Mark. We won't cover the entire book, but we will talk about Jesus and the life He calls us to live. We are calling this series "Unreasonable God" because we have an unreasonable God who did the extraordinary and sent Jesus to rescue us. This "unreasonable" God calls us to an "unreasonable" mission of personal sacrifice to follow Him in obedience as we take the gospel to the world. There are some steps Jesus calls us to as we choose to follow Him. As you grow in your faith, it is not abnormal to feel like some of his commands are "unreasonable." We might ask, "Why would God ask me to do this?" This is the Christian life – one "unreasonable" step after another. However, when we follow in obedience – we discover abundant life.

Key Passage: Mark 1:9-11

Discussion Questions:

1. What does the term "unreasonable God" mean in the context of the gospel of Jesus Christ?

Reflect on how God's actions in sending Jesus could be seen as "unreasonable" from a human perspective. The term "unreasonable God" refers to God going beyond what is expected, particularly in His decision to send Jesus to the world for salvation. It reflects the extraordinary and sacrificial nature of God's actions, which seem beyond reason by our standards. The gospel of Jesus is the ultimate example of this "unreasonableness," as it demonstrates God's willingness to go to extreme lengths for our redemption.

2. How does the concept of "unreasonable" relate to faith and obedience in the Christian life?

Discuss times when following God felt unreasonable or beyond the norm and the outcomes of those decisions. In the Christian life, following God often requires steps of faith that seem unreasonable or beyond the norm. God frequently calls us to obedience in ways that challenge our understanding. Still, through these seemingly unreasonable steps, we experience the abundant life Jesus offers. Faith and obedience go hand in hand, even when the path appears difficult or beyond comprehension.

3. Why is baptism by immersion important?

Baptism is by immersion because the Greek word in Mark 1 for baptism means "to plunge, immerse, or dip." This mode of baptism is biblically accurate, as it mirrors the description of Jesus coming up out of the water. Immersion reflects the symbolism in baptism, which represents being buried with Christ and rising to new life.

4. In what ways does Jesus' baptism serve as an example for believers today, even though He did not need to be saved? Consider the role of Jesus' obedience and how it applies to Christian life and practices.

Jesus' baptism serves as an example of obedience to God. Although He didn't need salvation, His baptism symbolized His identification with humanity. It set an example for believers to follow in their own lives. Jesus' submission to baptism also demonstrated His alignment with God's will, modeling the importance of obedience for His followers.

5. Why is public baptism so significant? What does it symbolize about a person's relationship with God?

Public baptism is significant because it is a declaration of faith in Jesus before others. It symbolizes a person's commitment to follow Christ. It demonstrates their willingness to publicly identify with His death, burial, and resurrection. Baptism is more than a private decision—it is an outward expression of an inward transformation and a testimony to the believer's faith journey.

6. What does the imagery of the Trinity (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) during Jesus' baptism reveal about God's nature?

The presence of the Trinity at Jesus' baptism—God the Father speaking from heaven, the Holy Spirit descending like a dove, and Jesus being baptized—illustrates God's distinct yet unified nature as three persons in one.

7. How does the analogy of a wedding ring explain the symbolism of baptism?

A wedding ring symbolizes commitment in marriage, and baptism symbolizes a believer's commitment to Jesus. While wearing a wedding ring doesn't make someone married, it outwardly signifies that commitment. Similarly, baptism does not save a person but publicly signifies their decision to follow Christ.

8. Why is it important that baptism follows salvation? What theological implications arise if the order is reversed?

Baptism must follow salvation because it is a public declaration of one's faith after they have accepted Jesus. Baptizing someone before they've genuinely believed undermines the purpose of baptism, which is to reflect a personal decision to follow Christ. Baptism is an act of obedience that follows a person's faith decision, not a prerequisite for salvation.

9. In what ways might Jesus' act of being baptized seem "unreasonable," and how does this challenge us to think about our own faith?

Jesus' baptism seems unreasonable because, as the sinless Son of God, He did not need to repent or be baptized for salvation. Yet, He was baptized to fulfill all righteousness and set an example of obedience. This challenges us to reconsider what we view as unreasonable in our faith journey and follow God's call, even when it doesn't make sense.

10. What about this study has challenged you most? What's your biggest takeaway?