**Sermon Notes**

**“Tearing Open the Heavens”**

Mark 1:9–11 (NIV)

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.”

**The Baptism**

***9 At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan.***

John 1:29
The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!

**The Vision**

***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.***

“being torn open” = “*schizomenous*”

Isaiah 64:1
Oh, that you would rend the heavens and come down, that the mountains would tremble before you!

**The Voice**

***11 And a voice came from heaven: “You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased.”***

**Questions for Discussion**

1. How would you summarize this message in one minute?

2. Jesus was baptized in order to be identified with us. What does Romans 6:4 say about why Christians should get baptized.

3. When were you baptized and what do you remember most from your baptism? If you haven’t been baptized yet as a believer, what has caused you to hesitate?

4. Even though Mark tells us the heavens were “torn open,” these scenes are often depicted as soft and gentle in biblical movies. Why do you think this is the case? What are the consequences of softening these accounts?

5. Was the affirmation “you are my son/daughter, whom I love; with you I am well pleased” a regular part of your childhood years? How do you think this shaped you as a person? How would it shape you to hear that affirmation from your heavenly Father on a daily basis now?

6. Humans tend to build their identity and self-worth on what they can achieve. What are you most tempted base your identity on? In what ways have you experienced Soren Kierkegaard’s warning that such an identity is like a king “whose subjects could desert him at any time”?

7. What is your biggest takeaway from this message?

**Prayer Prompters**

-Pray for those who struggle to ground their identity in God’s love.

-Pray that we would increasingly build our identities and self-worth on God’s affirming love and extravagant grace.

-Pray for those who believe Christianity is a system of earning God’s love and blessing.

-Pray for those who will be attending our men’s retreat next weekend.

-Pray for Gordon Malcolm as he prepares to preach next Sunday

**Take Action**

Spend time this week memorizing and meditating on Mark 1:9-11.