

### Mark 1

Mark's story is (verse 1) – '*The beginning of the gospel about Jesus Christ.*'

What does the word "gospel" mean?

It means 'news that brings joy.' King's Cross, p.14

In the time when Jesus and Mark lived there was no end of bad news.

The world was in a mess, just like ours is.

Life was tough.

Tragedies happened.

It seemed the corrupt and the ruthless were free to do whatever they wanted.

And to all appearances, there was no one who wanted to or who could stop them; there was no one to make things right.

But Mark doesn't write about bad news.

The subject of his book is the good news about Jesus.

As we go to our coffee/question time – would you talk with another person about this question – **why is the story of Jesus good news?**

Our culture rarely uses the word 'gospel' unless you are a follower of Jesus.

But that was not the case in Mark's time.

Whenever a significant event happened, with the potential to change life, it would be announced as a gospel – news of great joy.

Example: when Augustus ascended to the throne of Rome – this news was announced throughout the Roman empire as 'the gospel of Caesar Augustus.'

Mark boldly announces the coming of Jesus.... as a gospel.

The story he is about to tell is good news.

## **Who is Jesus?**

Verses 1-3.

Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, the Lord.

The word **Christ**, means "chosen one."

The title, **Son of God**, speaks for itself.

And '**the Lord**' is a Hebrew name for God - Adonai.

Jesus is no ordinary man.

John the Baptist confirms this fact.

### **Who was John the Baptist? Verses 2-6.**

Isaiah the prophet, 700 years earlier wrote in advance about John.

John was the “messenger.”

His task was to make people ready to receive the Christ. How?

John urged people to repent; to confess their sins and to be baptized in the Jordan River as a demonstration that they had turned away from self and sin and towards God.

### **How was John and his message received?**

Verse 5 – *the WHOLE Judean countryside...ALL the people of Jerusalem went out to him.*

They listened to John’s message.

They responded by being baptized.

### **What does this tell us about the spiritual condition of those people?**

Not only did they know they needed God, they were desperate for him.

This is why they responded as they did; confessing their sin and being baptized.

John too was no ordinary man.

But he was different than Jesus.

John himself explained how Jesus is unique.

Verse 7.

In what way was Jesus greater and more powerful than John?

Verse 8.

*“He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”*

We will come back to this shortly.

But this is something we want to watch for as we read through Mark - how did Jesus do this – how did he immerse people’s lives with God’s life?

Mark announced Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God, Adonai.

John the Baptist announced Jesus as being powerful and worthy; and the One who would baptize people with the Holy Spirit.

Two more significant things happened in this first chapter that speak to the identity of Jesus. Look at verses 9-11.

As Jesus came up out of the water of the Jordan River, he was baptized with... the Holy Spirit. How?

The Spirit descended on Jesus...like a dove.

What does that mean?

Watch this video clip.

Slow motion Dove Landing.mp4

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kn0hfV0ucmU>

What do we learn about how the Spirit immerses a person with his presence, realizing he comes as a dove?

The Spirit of God didn't come upon Jesus like a hawk; nor did he come as a steamroller. He came upon him... gently.

What happened to Jesus when he did?

This is what we want to watch for as we read through Mark.

But know this: Jesus baptizes people with the Spirit just like he was baptized with the Spirit. I'm not saying that a dove will land on us; but he will come upon us gently.

This is extremely important to recognize and to know.

If you are already a follower of Jesus you know there is much said about the baptism of the Spirit – what it is; when it happens; what happens when it does happen, etc.

Jesus' own example needs to inform us what it is, and what happens to us when Jesus immerses us with God's life, as he was immersed.

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**Look at Isaiah 42:1-9.**

**How did the Spirit express himself through Jesus?**

**What does this say to us about why Jesus baptizes us with the Spirit, and the results that happen because he does?**

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As Jesus came up out of the water of the Jordan River, God the Father spoke to him – *“you are my Son; I love you; I am pleased with you.”*

What does this say to us about the relationship between the Father and Jesus the Son? It is a relationship of love.

Love is at the core of who they are and how they relate to one another.  
This is important.  
It explains why Jesus came and why he did what he did.  
It was because of love and for love.

The Father told Jesus, “I love you.”

And John the apostle writes in his gospel, 3:16, “*God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Jesus...*”

The good news of Jesus is a story of love – how the Father, Son and Spirit who love one another, invite us into their circle of love.

Verses 12-13.

Why did Jesus go into the wilderness, the desert?

Because the Spirit sent him.

Jesus didn’t question or fight with the Spirit, asking, “Why are we doing this???”

Jesus trusted God the Spirit, just as he trusted God the Father.

And his example says to us, “You too can trust them.”

To have one’s life willingly immersed in the Spirit, is to also willingly be directed by the Spirit as to where one goes and what one does, because... we trust he is good; we trust he knows best.

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**While the answer may seem obvious, still talk about it: will the Spirit always lead us to places we want to go? How does Jesus’ example and response help us?**

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Mark tells us that Jesus went into the desert to be tempted by Satan.

Mark, unlike the other gospel writers, doesn’t include specific details of what happened in that conflict. Instead, as his story unfolds, Mark focuses on the things Jesus did, and this tells us who won that showdown.

There is something else here of great importance.

And it involves the issue of identity.

Before he was tempted by Satan the Father affirmed to Jesus who he was – “you are my son.” He assured Jesus, “I love you.” He told Jesus, “I am pleased with you.”

We know from the other gospels that Satan pressed hard on this point; tempting Jesus on the issue of identity – “if” you are the Son of God....

If it was important for Jesus to be affirmed by the Father regarding his identity, does this not tell us that we too need to hear the Father’s affirmation?

If Satan went after Jesus on the issue of his identity, does this not tell us that he will do the same with us?

Western culture is facing a great crisis of identity – and the current debate around ‘gender issues’ tells us just how lost our culture is; how uncertain we are of who we are.

We’ve been told in the past that pursuing after wealth, educational degrees, fame, power, possessions, relationships, influence – would fill the void which is within all of us (that these things would give us purpose and significance).

But none of these things have. What makes us think that the latest, changing one’s gender, will be any different?

I believe it too will be proven as another dead end street.

Augustine had it right – our hearts are restless until God is found.

Only he can fill the great void within all of us.

Look at what God said to the Corinthian church in Paul’s first letter, [6:13-20](#):

*The body...is for the Lord, and the Lord for the body...*

*Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ himself?*

*Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God?*

*You are not your own, you were bought at a price.*

*Therefore, honor God with your body.*

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## **How does this passage in 1 Corinthians 6 speak to our identity?**

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Having given these important preliminary details of who Jesus is - the Christ, the Son of God, God in the flesh (Adonai), the One immersed with the Holy Spirit and dearly loved by the Father, and the One who confronted and will be proven as having not only resisted, but defeated Satan - Mark now begins to tell Jesus’ story.

## How did Jesus begin?

Look at verses 14-15.

Many living in Israel had asked with a deep sigh, when will help come?

Many had wondered, when will this nightmare end?

Many had questioned- will God ever intervene?

This is the backdrop in which Jesus made the incredible announcement - *It is happening now!*

Jesus' good news was about a kingdom - the Kingdom of God.

Every kingdom has a king.

And in God's kingdom, the king is...God.

How had God's kingdom come near?

It had come near because... *Christ the King* had come.

Jesus, the Christ, the Son of God, Adonai, is the King who would make right all that was wrong in the world, and in the human heart.

And he would do so, not in the sweet by and by, but right now.

If you are a follower of Jesus, we are meant to pay attention here.

Without question we do have a future hope.

But this life is not like a bus stop or a waiting room, where we just put in time, waiting for that future moment when Jesus will initiate the time of the new heaven and the earth.

His kingdom, his rule... is for the here and now.

He intends to make a difference... right now.

He is changing the world...now, through his church and we are invited to be a part of it.

The good news announced by Jesus required the same response as John the Baptist's good news – repent and believe.

Look at verses 16-20.

In the culture of that day, a spiritual leader was known as a rabbi.

But did you know that in that time, rabbis didn't choose students?

Rather, those who wanted to learn would choose a rabbi.

What Jesus did was highly unusual.

But it shows us an important truth about God.

He is the God who goes in search of people – parable of the lost sheep, the lost coin, the lost son.

If God would search for us; to bring us back into relationship with him, what does that tell us about who we are???

We are valued; we are loved; we matter...to him.

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## How does Jesus come to people today?

**\* Remember the parable of the lost sheep, the lost coin, the lost son.**

**\*\* Quote by E. Stanly Jones:**

***Jesus can come to a person via their emotions, their mind, their will. By whatever door Jesus enters a person's life, it is so that the entire person may be possessed by him.***

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When Jesus announced his news that it was time; that the kingdom of God had come near because he had come, we see in the response of Simon and Andrew, James and John what it means to repent and to believe.

They heard the good news spoken by Jesus and said yes. They believed him.

They made a choice to give Jesus first place in their life – including vocation, family, personal plans. They followed Jesus.

They committed themselves to go with Jesus, not knowing exactly where he would take them. They committed themselves to “fish for people,” trusting he would show them how.

It is no different today.

Jesus searches for people and when they hear his voice, he gives the same invitation.

Come.

Follow me.

I will send you out.

The news of Jesus is so good, so world changing, that the moment anyone “gets it,” Jesus involves them in passing it on, just like it was passed on to them.

There are three emphases I want to stress as we wrap things up.

**1.** The story of Jesus is not a philosophy. It is not a fable. It is not a new religion. It is news about an historical event that radically changed the story of humanity. As we study this book, working our way through it, chapter by chapter, we need to keep reminding ourselves - **this is not only good news,** it is the best news the world has ever heard.

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**See the Desiring God article on the church's Facebook page or on the website.**

**How does this article stretch our understanding of the "good news" about Jesus?**

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**2.** This good news of Jesus requires a response.

What kind of response?

Not just a response of believing certain facts.

But a response of **repentance and belief.**

To repent is to make a complete 180 turn around, from a life focused on one's self, to a life intentionally focused on Jesus.

The story of Jesus is so profound that having heard it, one either rejects it, or changes the direction of their life to be a part of it.

**3.** To all who come to Jesus, and put their trust in him, he supernaturally recreates, making them a new person as he **immerses** their life in God's.

This is an act unseen, but the evidence that it has happened is observable.

It spills out like light or like a fragrance.

While a follower of Jesus looks like any other human being, they are profoundly different because God's Spirit now lives within them.

Because they've been immersed in God's life, they now have **a new identity.**

This new identity evidences itself in new ways of thinking; feeling; making choices; priorities; interests; habits.



You may want to talk further about these three emphases in your life groups. As well, there is still other emphases in the remainder of chapter 1 that you may choose to delve into.

The Life Group Notes are on the webpage with some questions to help in your discussion.

As the worship team comes our first song of response expresses our commitment to Jesus that we want him to have first place in our life.

### **Keep Making me**

To follow Jesus is a response of love to his love for us.

We love him because he first loved us.

This last response song expresses the profound gratitude that we have for Jesus because he has rescued us from sin and death.

### **I Will Always Love Your Name**

## **The Blessing**

### **1 Corinthians 6:19-20**

You are not your own; you were bought at a price.

## How did Jesus the King demonstrate his authority? In what ways did he show he was in charge?

1. verses 18-20.

2. verses 21-22.

The word “authority” means “out of the original stuff.” *King’s Cross*, p.21.

Jesus explained truth as no one ever had.

And people were rocked by his simplicity and profundity.

Does he impact us the same?

3. verses 23-27, 34b.

Just as he had resisted and defeated Satan in the desert – so he drove out Satan’s associates when oppressed and possessed people were brought to him.

Jesus was the greater One.

Did any evil/dark spirit ever successfully resist Jesus?

They always had to do what he said.

What does this tell us about his showdown with Satan in verses 12-13?

4. verses 29-31, 40-42.

Jesus is “The King” who immediately began to make things right.

Remember while the kingdom is “not yet,” it is nonetheless “now.”