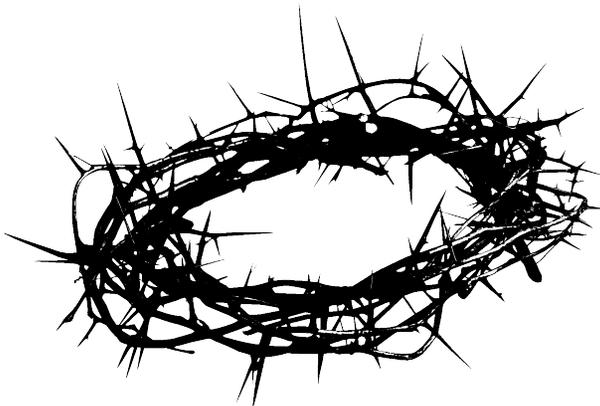


Monday, March Second

Read through the Bible



Mark
Week 1



Welcome to our six-week journey through Mark! This booklet is laid out to help you walk through a portion of the events in Mark every day. Whether you start off your day with this, find some time during your lunch break, or sit down with it before you go to bed, the hope would be for you to engage with the Bible on a consistent basis as God engages you and calls you into His story. May your journey be filled with newfound perspective as you dive into this account of the life and ministry of Jesus! – Pastor Chris

Read: Mark 1:1-20

Reflect: Use the passage to work through these questions

Each day this week, we will take some time to learn a little bit about the background of Mark and his Gospel account. The first question: who exactly is Mark? While the author does not directly mention his own name, strong evidence suggests that this account was written by John Mark, the cousin of Barnabas (see Colossians 4:10) and the son of a woman named Mary who provided a meeting space for the early Christians (see Acts 12:12). Mark also accompanied Barnabas and Saul on their first missionary journey.

- How does Mark create a bridge between the Old Testament and his own account? (see verses 1-4)
- What was the difference between John's nature of baptism and Jesus' nature of baptism? (see verse 8)

John's baptism demonstrated repentance, but Jesus' baptism cleansed people of their sin and promised them the Holy Spirit.

- As He went around proclaiming the good news, how did Jesus want the people to respond? (see verse 15)

Respond: Apply what you've learned in prayer and action

As you begin this journey through Mark, think about what is going on in your life right now. What are you thankful for? What are you concerned about? In what ways are you looking to grow? Take some time to pray through these things with your heavenly Father.

Tuesday, March Third

One of the amazing things that God created our bodies to do is to heal. Let's say you're walking down the Pinellas Trail and you trip over a branch and scrape your knee. Initially, you may start to bleed, but after a few seconds, your body begins to produce platelets, which stick together and form a clot. That clot eventually turns into a scab, and beneath that scab, your body begins to form new skin. Within a week or two, it's hard to tell that you even fell at all! In today's passage, Jesus demonstrates His ability to heal those who are sick and suffering.

Read: Mark 1:21-34

Reflect: Use the passage to work through these questions

As you've probably noticed already, Mark provides a very fast-paced account of Jesus' ministry! There is plenty of action and very little dialogue. Many scholars have noted that Mark simply focuses on the story, whereas someone like John focuses on both the story and the theology of what Jesus' life and ministry means. As a result, Mark is the shortest Gospel account of the four.

- What were the people in the synagogue most amazed by? (see verses 22 and 27)
- How did Jesus remove the evil spirit from the man? (see verses 24-26)
- How do verses 21 and 32 demonstrate a major change in the interaction between Jesus and the people in one day?

At the beginning of the day, Jesus came to the people (v. 21), but by the end of the day, people were coming to Him (v. 32). It didn't take long for people to realize that this Jesus fellow was unlike anybody they had ever met before...

Respond: Apply what you've learned in prayer and action

In today's passage, the people of Capernaum witnessed Jesus as one who heals people. Take some time to pray for healing for those in your life (including yourself) who may be sick or suffering.

Wednesday, March Fourth

Does the early bird truly get the worm? Research suggests that the answer is yes! For example, studies have found that people who start their day earlier are more successful in terms of planning, implementing, and achieving their personal and career goals. In today's passage, Jesus demonstrates an important early morning practice.

Read: Mark 1:35-45

Reflect: Use the passage to work through these questions

Based on contextual clues in the book of Acts and in Paul's letters, there is considerable agreement that Mark wrote his Gospel account while in Rome. There is also consensus that Mark likely wrote his account for the church in Rome so that they could come to know more about Jesus' life and ministry.

- What was Jesus doing while everyone was looking for Him? (see verses 35-37)

Sometimes, when life gets busy and we have a lot on our plate, spending time in prayer can get placed on the back burner. In this particular passage, Jesus prioritized prayer by getting up early while everyone was asleep. The fact that people were looking for Him indicates that Jesus wasn't just in prayer for a few minutes. He had been praying for quite some time!

- What did the leper's statement demonstrate? (see verse 40)

Notice that the leper didn't necessarily ask Jesus to heal him. Instead, he made a statement of faith ("You can make me clean"). Jesus noticed this faith and healed him of his disease.

- What instructions did Jesus give to the leper? (see verse 44)
How did he respond and what was the result? (see verse 45)

Respond: Apply what you've learned in prayer and action

Tomorrow, consider getting up early like Jesus and spending time in prayer. Observe how this practice affects the rest of your day.

Thursday, March Fifth

During a visit to the United Kingdom, Latin singer Ricky Martin was in his hotel room when he heard a strange noise. Sensing that somebody was in his room, he went and got security to check out the situation. Turns out that one of his fans had found a way into the ventilation system and had been spying on him! Martin was cool about the whole thing, but he could not believe that someone would go to such great lengths to meet him. In today's passage, a group of men go to great lengths to bring a paralytic to Jesus.

Read: Mark 2:1-17

Reflect: Use the passage to work through these questions

Mark's Gospel account is very much written to a Gentile (non-Jewish) audience. For example, he does not include a genealogy, he uses Roman time (see 6:48 and 13:35) and he explains Hebrew and Aramaic terms.

- How was Jesus received upon entering Capernaum again? (see verses 1-2) How did this affect the men who were trying to bring a paralytic to Him? (see verse 3)
- What made the teachers of the law so upset? (see verses 5-7) How did Jesus respond to them? (see verses 8-12)

The teachers of the law were right to point out that only God could forgive sins. The problem, though, was that they did not understand that Jesus was God in the flesh. This is why Jesus referred to Himself as the Son of Man in verse 10. He wanted them to understand that He was the Messiah they had been waiting for.

- How did the Pharisees react to Jesus spending time with tax collectors and sinners? (see verse 16) How did Jesus respond to them? (see verse 17)

Respond: Apply what you've learned in prayer and action

In today's passage, Jesus showed that He was not afraid to sit with people who had been rejected by society. How does His example encourage you to consider who you are willing to interact with?

Friday, March Sixth

If you've followed Buccaneers football over the past few years, you know that the starting quarterback, Jameis Winston, has become a rather polarizing figure. Some people love him, and some people can't stand him. This past season, Winston faced mounting criticism after becoming the first quarterback in NFL history to have 30 touchdowns *and* 30 interceptions in a season. Analysts and experts have pointed out that how Winston responds to the criticism he's receiving will prove to be an important factor in determining whether or not he returns next year. In today's passage, Jesus responds to mounting criticism.

Read: Mark 2:18-3:6

Reflect: Use the passage to work through these questions

Because Mark was a traveling companion of Peter, it is likely that Peter shared stories of Jesus' life with him. As a result, many scholars have concluded that Mark's account of Jesus' life is primarily sourced from Peter's eyewitness accounts.

- How did Jesus respond to the question of fasting? (see 2:18-20)
- How did Jesus respond to the charge that He and His disciples were doing what was unlawful on the Sabbath? (see 2:25-27)

In this passage, Jesus demonstrates that providing for a human need is more important than observing a religious ritual. In this sense, the Sabbath wasn't given by God to control people, but rather to serve as a benefit to them.

- How did the Pharisees react after Jesus healed the man with the shriveled hand? (see 3:6)

Respond: Apply what you've learned in prayer and action

Jesus faced a lot of criticism for decisions He made. Think about criticism that you've received recently. How did you respond? How might you respond to criticism differently in the future?

Saturday, March Seventh

Remember the ice bucket challenge from a few years ago? In an attempt to raise money and bring awareness to ALS (Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis), a rare and debilitating disease, people on social media were challenged to dump a bucket of ice water over their heads. It started off with just a handful of people, but its popularity quickly spread to millions of people participating. In today's passage, Jesus' popularity continues to spread rapidly.

Read: Mark 3:7-19

Reflect: Use the passage to work through these questions

Mark uses the Greek word *euthys* (meaning "immediately") 41 times in his Gospel account. In Mark chapter 1, for example, he uses the word 11 times (see 1:10, 12, 19, 20, 21, 20, 31, and 43). Clearly, Mark liked to keep the story moving!

- What do verses 7-8 indicate about Jesus' popularity?
- What instruction did Jesus give to the evil spirits? (see verses 11-12)

Wait...why did Jesus keep telling the demons and evil spirits to keep quiet about the fact that He is the Son of God (also look back at 1:25 and 1:34)? While Jesus had called on people to repent and believe the good news (1:15), He hadn't fully revealed who He was yet and what He had come to do. On top of that, Jesus was already facing scrutiny from the religious leaders for His healings. The last thing He needed was people running to the Pharisees and (wrongly) reporting that Jesus was in cahoots with demons!

- What were to be the main tasks of Jesus' twelve apostles? (see verses 14-15)

Respond: Apply what you've learned in prayer and action

Years before He sent out the twelve apostles to preach the Gospel, Jesus had already determined how He would use them to accomplish His purposes (vv. 14-15). Take some time today to pray that God would continue to use you to accomplish His purposes.

Sunday, March Eighth

Whenever a young couple starts dating, a conversation about meeting the family usually comes up. "Hey, my parents have invited us to dinner this weekend." "Wait, why?" "Well...uh...they want to meet you." "Is this some sort of test or something? What if they don't like me?" "Are you kidding?! You're the most likeable person I know! Listen, don't worry about it. We'll go over there Sunday afternoon, I'll introduce you all, we'll have dinner, and it will go just fine." "Um...ok, if you're sure." "I'm sure!" In today's passage, Jesus introduces us to His family.

Read: Mark 3:20-35

Reflect: Use the passage to work through these questions

Have you ever wondered how we came to know that Jesus had a background as a carpenter? You can thank Mark for that because he is the only one of the Gospel writers who records this detail!

- How did the Pharisees describe Jesus' relationship with demons? (see verse 22)
- How did Jesus answer this charge? (see verses 23-30)
- How did Jesus define a family member? (see verses 34-35)

The crowd alerted Jesus that his biological family had come to see Him. But instead of ushering them in, He took the time to define His *spiritual* family as those who do God's will (in this instance, His disciples). This example is one of the reasons why we often refer to fellow Christians in this familial way – brothers and sisters in Christ.

Respond: Apply what you've learned in prayer and action

Consider a brother or sister in Christ who is currently going through a difficult situation. Spend some time praying for her/him and asking that God would give her/him His comfort and peace.

Questions? Comments? Contact Pastor Chris at chris.futch@oursaviorfl.org or (727) 344-2684.