



3: Why Follow Jesus? (Mark 1:12-34)

Why should anyone follow Jesus? Come discover how Mark begins answering that question by revealing the unmatched authority of Jesus through His words, His works, and His power over Satan, demons, and sickness - and why He is still worth following today.

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* All Scripture is from the Christian Standard Bible (CSB)

Mark can be divided into 2 main sections:

- › The first half of Mark builds toward the question: *WHO IS JESUS?* (Mk 1:1–8:30).
- › The second half turns toward another question: *WHAT DID JESUS COME TO DO?* (Mk 8:31–16:8).
- › And the turning point is Peter's confession that Jesus is the Messiah.

Mark 1:10-12

As soon as **He** came up out of the water, he saw the heavens being torn open and **the Spirit** descending on him like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: "**You are My beloved Son**; with you I am well-pleased." Immediately **the Spirit drove him into the wilderness**.

Here, we see the *tri-unity* (Trinity) of the ONE TRUE GOD revealed - **Father** speaking from heaven, **Son** being baptized, & **Spirit** empowering the Son.

Immediately. This is a term that is used by Mark over 41 times. Depending on the English translation you use, it isn't always translated "immediately." In fact, we have already encountered it in Mark 1:10, where the CSB says, "As soon as he came up out of the water..." That phrase "**as soon as**" translates the same Greek word.

Notice what it does right here: Mark gives us no pause in the story. Jesus comes up from the water, the Father declares Him to be His beloved Son, and **immediately...The Spirit drove Jesus into the wilderness**. Jesus moves from baptism at the water to battle in the wilderness - a time of testing.

Mark 1:13

He was in the wilderness **forty days, being tempted by Satan**. He was with the wild animals and the angels were serving him.

40 is a significant number in the Scriptures. God flooded the earth with 40 days & nights of rain. Moses spent 40 days and 40 nights on Mount Sinai with Yahweh, without eating bread or drinking water, as God renewed His covenant with Israel (Ex 34:28). After Israel refused to trust Yahweh and enter the Promised Land, God sentenced that generation to 40 years in the wilderness—one year for each day the spies had explored the land (Num 14:33–34). Elijah fasted for 40 days as he traveled into the wilderness to the mountain of God (1 Kgs. 19:8).

Israel was called God's "**son**" (Ex 4:22). Israel entered the **wilderness** and was tested for **forty years**—and failed repeatedly. Jesus, God's beloved Son, enters the wilderness for forty days—and remains faithful. Jesus wasn't alone. He was specifically there to be tempted by the devil. We aren't told much about this 40 day encounter from Mark's Gospel. Mark summarizes the entire 40 days in only two brief verses! Throughout those 40 days, **Satan**—the adversary—tempted Jesus. Matthew and Luke give us some of the details that Mark leaves out. And after 40 days without food, Jesus was physically depleted. Yet where others had fallen, Jesus remained faithful.

Think of the **similarities and differences between Jesus & the first humans** - when Adam & Eve were approached by 'the serpent' in the garden. Adam and Eve faced the tempter together, in a garden filled with God's provision. Jesus faced the tempter in the wilderness, hungry and surrounded by wild animals. Adam & Eve fell. Jesus stood.

Mark 1:14-15

After John was arrested, Jesus went to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God: "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near. **Repent and believe the good news!**"

Mark gives NO DETAILS about John's arrest. The spotlight is NOT on John, but on Jesus. And Jesus is now in the region of **Galilee**, with towns surrounding the fresh water lake. And that's where the ministry of Jesus begins! Jesus comes **proclaiming the good news** - and here it is... "**The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near.**" The people have been waiting for hundreds of years, but now it's time!

The great hope of Israel wasn't merely about people going to heaven—**it was about God's reign coming to them!** And now, in some way, it has. **The kingdom of God has come near!** And as that is the case, Jesus continues the message of John for people to **repent** - turn from their sin, and **believe the good news**, that **the kingdom is near!**

Mark 1:16-20

As he passed alongside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew, Simon's brother, casting a net into the sea—for they were fishermen. "**Follow me,**" Jesus told them, "and **I will make you fish for people.**" Immediately **they** left their nets and **followed him**. Going on a little farther, he saw James the son of Zebedee and his brother John in a boat putting their nets in order. Immediately **he called them**, and **they** left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men and **followed him**.

Mark moves so quickly that we could easily get the impression that Jesus simply walks up to two complete strangers, says, "Follow Me," and they drop everything and go. But this was NOT their first encounter with Jesus. John's Gospel fills in some of the backstory. Andrew had already spent time with Jesus. Andrew was the one who went and found Simon and told him, "**We have found the Messiah**" (John 1:41). Then Andrew brought Simon to Jesus.

So when Jesus walks along the Sea of Galilee and says, "**Follow Me,**" He is not a stranger asking them to blindly abandon their lives. **Andrew already believes Jesus is the Messiah.** Now Jesus is calling them to be His disciples, telling them, "**Follow me.**" These fishermen will now **fish for men and women!**

While they are **the sons of Zebedee**, their mother was Salome, who seems to have been the sister of Jesus' mother, Mary. If so, that means James and John were actually first cousins of Jesus.

So far Mark hasn't shown us any incredible miracles or even given us the content of Jesus' teaching, yet these four men respond to His call by leaving their jobs behind and following Him.

Mark 1:21-28

They went into Capernaum, and right away he entered the synagogue on the Sabbath and began to teach. They were **astonished at his teaching** because he was teaching them as one who had authority, and not like the scribes. Just then a man with an unclean spirit was in their synagogue. He cried out, "What do you have to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the **Holy One of God!**" **Jesus rebuked him** saying, "**Be silent, and come out of him!**" And the unclean spirit threw him into convulsions, shouted with a loud voice, and came out of him. **They were all amazed**, and so they began to ask each other, "What is this? A new teaching with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him." At once **the news about him spread** throughout the entire vicinity of Galilee.

The people in that synagogue had heard about the great prophets of Israel. Moses performed signs. Elijah called down fire. Elisha raised the dead. But they had never seen anything quite like this. Jesus simply spoke to an unclean spirit—and it obeyed Him!

✗ Nowhere in the Old Testament do we see a prophet commanding a demon to come out of someone like this.

Mark 1:29-31

As soon as they left the synagogue, they went into Simon and Andrew's house with James and John. Simon's mother-in-law was lying in bed with a fever, and they told him about her at once. So **he went to her**, took her by the hand, and raised her up. **The fever left her**, and she began to serve them.

God had performed extraordinary miracles through His prophets before. But what we are about to see is on another scale.

Mark 1:34

When evening came, after the sun had set, they brought to him all those who were sick and demon-possessed. The whole town was assembled at the door, and **he healed many** who were sick with various diseases and **drove out many demons**. And he would not permit the demons to speak, because they knew him.

The prophets of old had performed incredible miracles through the power of God. But **nowhere in the Old Testament do we see a prophet doing what Jesus does here**—moving from person to person, disease to disease, demon to demon, displaying authority over them all. And everything Mark has just described from the synagogue to the crowds at the door happens in ONE DAY!

Mark isn't merely showing us what Jesus can **DO**. Mark is showing us who Jesus **IS**.

And once we begin to understand **WHO JESUS IS**, we begin to understand **WHY JESUS IS WORTH FOLLOWING**.

WHY FOLLOW JESUS?

Because there has never been anyone like Him. He speaks—and people recognize **AUTHORITY**. He commands—and demons submit to His **AUTHORITY**. He reaches out His hand—and sickness yields to His **AUTHORITY**.

DO YOU FOLLOW HIM?

And if you do—when was the last time you stood in awe of the One you are following? This week, don't allow familiarity with Jesus to rob you of your wonder at Jesus.



► **Listen to His words.** Get in the Scriptures and HEAR what Jesus SAYS.

► **Look at His works.** Stand in awe by the things Jesus DOES.

► **Follow Jesus.** Live for Jesus!

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Have questions and need some help? ...real soon...how about now? Please **call** or **text** us soon!

- * Contact **Jackie** (850-673-1582), **Christy** (850-673-9764), **Caleb** (864-315-8015), **Gary** (850-673-2507), **Betty** (850-973-3266), or another follower of Jesus soon!
- * Or call our **deacons & wives: Alan & Christy Androski** (850-464-1428), **Noel & Patricia Barnes** (813-767-2881), **Derek & Emily Beaty** (813-763-4421), or **Chris & Caitlin Day** (850-673-7920), **Glen & Margie Peacock** (850-464-1484).

Discussionquestions

These questions are designed to help you LIVE what you LEARN with your family, friends, or small group.

1. What stood out to you most from this week's teaching, and why?
2. **Read Mark 1:12-13.** What contrasts do you see between Jesus' temptation in the wilderness and Adam and Eve's temptation in the garden? What does Jesus' faithfulness reveal about Him?
3. Israel was called God's "son" and was tested in the wilderness for 40 years; Jesus is declared God's beloved Son and is tested for 40 days. Why do you think Mark places Jesus' wilderness testing immediately after the Father declares Him to be His Son?
4. **Read Mark 1:14-15.** Jesus says, "The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!" What does it mean to repent and believe? What should that look like in everyday life?
5. **Read Mark 1:16-20.** What did Simon, Andrew, James, and John have to leave in order to follow Jesus? What can make following Jesus costly for us today?
6. **Read Mark 1:21-28.** What was different about Jesus' teaching and His authority? What do you learn about Jesus from the way the unclean spirit responds to Him?
7. In **Mark 1:29-34**, Jesus demonstrates authority over sickness as well as demons. What do Jesus' words and works in this passage reveal about who He is?
8. The sermon emphasized: "Mark isn't merely showing us what Jesus can DO. Mark is showing us who Jesus IS." Why is that distinction important?
9. The sermon asked, "Don't allow familiarity with Jesus to rob you of your wonder at Jesus." In what ways can familiarity with Jesus cause us to lose our sense of awe? What can help restore it?
10. **WHY FOLLOW JESUS?** After studying Mark 1:12-34, how would you answer that question in your own words?
11. **DO YOU FOLLOW HIM?** What is one area of your life where Jesus may be calling you to trust Him, obey Him, or follow Him more fully this week?