

# Scripture Memorization

Fairview Missionary Church | Angola, IN

Scripture: Mark 1

Speaker: Donny Riley

January 15, 2023

I want to introduce our speaker to you this morning. Many of you know Donny Reilly. He is our missionary to Liberia, Africa, and many of you support sponsored children there as they've started a school and he is here and some of you know most of you know, hopefully I'm not ruining part of your message, but he had a stroke three months ago. And he is here and he's going to stand on the stage and give the message. And so God's amazing miraculous power, certainly there as well.

And so we are encouraged by that, continue to pray for him, his wife, and some of his children are still over in Liberia. And so pray that all of the visas and paperwork and everything works out so that the family can be reunited. But even in the midst of all of that, Donnie remains faithful and he has a word from God that he would like to share with us. And so if you would give a warm fairview welcome to Donny Reilly. Thank you.

Let's pray. Lord, I pray that the words of my mouth would be very pleasing to you. As we open your word. Let the living word of God touch our hearts.

Speak lord, for your servants or listening, and Jesus name, amen. Listen to the gospel of Mark, just receive it in. The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the son of God.

As it is written in Isaiah the prophet behold, I send a messenger before your face who will prepare your way, the voice of one crying in the wilderness, prepare the way of the lord, make his path straight, John appeared, baptizing in the wilderness and proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And all the country of Judea and all Jerusalem were going out to him and were being baptized by him in the river Jordan confessing their sins.

Now, John was clothed with camel's hair, and he wore a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey, and he preached saying after me comes he who is mightier than I, the straps of whose sandals, I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. I have baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit. In those days, Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan.

And when he came up out of the water, immediately 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, and with you, I am well pleased. The spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness, and he was in the wilderness 40 days being tempted by Satan, and he was with the wild animals, and the angels were ministering to him.

Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God. And saying, the time is fulfilled. The kingdom of God is at hand. Repent and believe in the gospel. Passing alongside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew, the brother of Simon, casting the net into the sea for they were fishermen.

And Jesus said to them, follow me, and I will make you become fishers of men. Going on a little farther, he saw James the son of Zebedee and John his brother who were in their boat mending the nets. And Jesus immediately, Jesus called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with a hired servants and followed him. Jesus went into the synagogue and was teaching on the Sabbath.

And they were astonished at his teaching for he taught them as one who had authority. Jesus had authority. And there was an immediately in their synagogue, a man with an unclean spirit, and he cried out, what have you to do with us? Jesus of Nazareth, have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the holy one of God, but Jesus rebuked him, saying, be silent and come out of him.

And the unclean spirit convulsing and crying out with a loud voice came out of him. And they were all amazed, they were all amazed and said, what is this a new teaching with authority? He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him. At once, his fame spread throughout all the surrounding regions of Galilee. Immediately, he left the synagogue and entered the House of Simon and Andrew with James and John.

Now, Simon's mother in law lay ill with a fever and immediately they told him about her. And he came and he took her by the hand. He lifted her up, the fever left her, and she began to serve them. That evening, as sundown, they brought to him all who were sick or oppressed by demons. The whole city was gathered together at the door. And he healed many who were sick with various diseases and he cast out many demons.

But he would not permit the demons to speak because they knew him. When rising very early in the morning, while it was still dark, he departed and went out to a desolate place and there he prayed. And Simon and those who were with him searched for him, and they found him, and they said to him, everyone is looking for you. And he said to them, let us go on to the next towns that I may preach there also for that is why I came out and he went through all Galilee.

Preaching in their synagogues and casting out demons. A leper came to him, imploring him, and kneeling said to him, if you are willing, you can make me clean. Moved with pity, he stretched out his hands and touched him. And he said, I will be clean. And immediately, the leprosy left him and he was made clean.

And Jesus sternly charged him and sent him away at once and said to him, see that you say nothing to anyone, but go show yourself to the priest and offer for your cleansing. What Moses commanded for a proof to them. But he went out and began to talk freely about it and spread the news so that Jesus could no longer openly enter a town but was out in desolate places and people were coming to him from every quarter. That's the gospel of Mark chapter one.

There's a lot we read in there. A lot. To think about in there, I want to tell you a story. This story is about a man by the name of Abu. We live in Africa as some of you, some of you already know. Abu is a Muslim man, and he owns a very large compound in our home city. We run a ministry to special needs children, and we needed a place to put them.

This is before the time we built the village for the special needs children. And so we rented this compound from Abu because it was the largest compound that we could find in banga. We would pay our rent as the custom and Liberia. Every 6 months, we pay our rent. And by the way, I've had a stroke, and so I stumble over my words, but that's okay, isn't it? Okay.

So I might stumble over my words, but we have to hear the word of God, right? He a boo. It was a Muslim man. We pay our rent every 6 months in Liberia. He said something to me at the time of my last rent payment, we had built the village and we were getting ready to move in. He said something that changed my life and I pray it challenges you as well.

He said he said this. The Muslims are going to take over Liberia. That's what he told me. And I said, not if I can have anything to do with it. We had kind of this fun relationship where we could talk back and forth. It wasn't confronting or anything. He said, no, I'm serious. He understands. He looks at the church in Liberia in the church in Liberia for the most part is dead.

And he says, we're going to take over Liberia. That's what we're going to do. They have a mission. They're sitting Muslim missionaries, and they have a vision of a mosque in every town and village of Liberia. He says, we're going to do it. Here's how we're going to do it. Every one of our businessmen to be a good Muslim businessman, every businessman helps another businessman start a business, eventually we're going to own all the businesses, and then he looked at me, he said, and what is the church doing?

And I just listened. He said, we have schools, Muslim schools, and it's free education for every child that wants to come. And it's quality education. What are the churches doing? And I know just as well as he knows, the church is not doing much of anything. The church is sleeping, the church is dead in Liberia.

And he said, to me, one more thing, and I pray this challenge is you to look at scripture differently. He says, before a child can graduate out of our school, they're required to memorize the Quran. From beginning to end, tell me, what is the church doing? I went home in my heart broke.

How can someone be dedicated to memorizing a false teaching, but we have the word of God, the living, breathing word of God, and we don't take it seriously enough, and we don't commit it to memory. That is what began in me, the journey for scripture memory. And I believe one of the very best gifts I could leave behind is for some of you to begin to memorize this scripture.

You know the Bible says faith comes from hearing and hearing by um. Tell me, where else does faith come from? Faith comes from serving, right? No, that's not what the Bible says. Faith comes from worshiping, right? The Bible doesn't say that. The Bible says faith comes from hearing and hearing by the word of God, every one of us has a testimony.

And at some time in our past, someone shared the word of God with us. And as we memorize the word of God, we committed to memory, we feel, I feel myself being transformed, being renewed by the word of God. If a Muslim man were to walk in here, if a boo were to walk in here, would he say, you're serious? Or would he say the Christians are not serious?

I have given you a document. Everyone can pull that out and look at it real quick. This is all just an introduction. In Liberia, I started memorizing the Bible. And then I started asking myself, is there a way we can have our children memorize the Bible in our school?

And so we started having our Liberian artists draw pictures of every verse in the Bible. And I took it in, and I was kind of curious. Are the kids capable of memorizing a verse a day? That was the goal of verse a day. And they memorize a verse a day, scripture memory can be done. I want to encourage you to do it. And so I said, okay, we're memorizing a verse a day.

In our school, that's really cool. By the time our kids graduate from high school, they will have memorized the entire New Testament. I believe there's no better way to train ministers of the gospel than to have them memorize the Bible. And so I thought to myself, well, let's take it from the school. Let's put it out in a different area. And now we have it in our medical department, and every one of our medical staff is memorizing the verse a day.

And we have it also in our special needs village for handicapped children. They're memorizing. The only thing that's standing between you and memorizing a large portion of scripture is a decision to do it. Is a decision to do it. Are we serious? This is the only thing that produces faith in people.

Do we take it seriously? Let me tell you where we're going to go for the rest of the service. I'm going to introduce to you the gospel of Mark. By the way, I had to finish explaining this. On one side of the page, this is what we're using in Liberia to help people memorize the scripture. On one side, it has the verses next to the picture. You can see every picture, every verse has a picture, and the verses there. On the other side, we call this the wordless Bible.

And it's where every word of the Bible is written on our hearts. That's our goal. Writing the word of God on our hearts. I challenge you to memorize a verse a day, and if you want to talk to me about systems and ways to do that, I can talk to you afterwards about that. I want to talk to us. I want to introduce the gospel of Mark to you today. The challenge is to memorize Mark, but let me give you something a direction to go with the gospel of Mark.

And so I'm going to introduce the gospel of Mark, and then we're just going to study the first, the very first verse, and that's it for today. The gospel of Mark was written by this man named John Mark. Everyone say John Mark. I say everyone say John Mark because it gives me a chance to think. John Mark wrote the gospel of Mark. Some interesting things about him. He was with Paul and Barnabas on this first missionary journey.

And he deserted them on the journey. Some of you maybe are here today and you feel like a deserter. You left something important. Well, John Mark did that. And yet God used him to write a gospel. When Paul was about ready to start his second missionary journey, Barnabas wanted to take Mark with him and Paul said no way.

And he caused such a sharp disagreement that he caused what was really the first division in the church to ever be recorded. John Mark was the cause of it. And 5 years, roughly after he caused this division between Paul and Barnabas, about 5 years after that, wouldn't you know it, he sat down with a pen and a piece of paper, and he wrote Peter's testimony about Jesus, the gospel of Mark was written very closely to the time he deserted Paul.

God is a God of second chances. As John Mark is writing, he's writing Peter's testimony. Well, we don't have to think too hard to know something about Peter, he denied Christ. God is a God of second chances for some here today. You

need to hear that God is a God of second chances. If you're still breathing today, you have a mission. You have a purpose, right?

He's a God of second chances. It was written by Mark and was written to the Romans. I'm introducing the gospel Mark, trying to make you want to memorize it, right? It was written to romance, kind of interesting. How do you convince someone to put their faith, how do you convince a Roman who made crucifixion popular to put their faith in a crucified man? That's pretty challenging.

And so the gospel of Mark, the first half is about trying to get people to identify Jesus Christ. Chapters one to 8, and then the second half is explaining the cross. Immediately after Peter confessed that Jesus is the son of God, is he immediately began to teach them why he had to die on the cross. So it's written to the Romans, and it presents Jesus as a servant, it presents Jesus as his servant.

We chose to memorize the gospel of Mark in our ministry because we have young kids, and I wanted them memorizing scriptures. So we have kindergarten kids like 6, 7, 8, and you know what? If they were all here, there would be hundreds of kids standing right here, and they would all say the beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ the son of God, as it is written in Isaiah, the prophet, and they can all do it.

I lost my thought. It presents Jesus as a servant. In the gospel of Mark, is more testimonies of Jesus miracles than any other gospel. In Liberia, we have politicians that come around once a year, and they promise to do all kinds of wonderful things.

Their words are many, many, many. I mean, you would think they were just going to hand everyone a blank check or something. The gospel mark is different. Gospel Marx says this, put your faith in Jesus, because don't look at what he says. Look at what he did. The gospel mark is different. It portrays Jesus as a servant.

Okay, let's begin in the first verse here. The whole rest of the time together, I'm going to dissect this first verse, okay? The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ the son of God, everyone say that. Every morning I do devotions with our team. And we begin by reciting the scriptures will begin in chapter one and currently we're on about chapter 5.

And that's what we do. I say, in the beginning, with the beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the son of God oh. You guys aren't quite reactive like my staff is. The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ the son of God. Let's say that again. The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the son of God.

How many of you think you can memorize that? You think you can do it? I challenge you just, that's it. Go home. You accomplish today's goal. It's not hard. Okay? You don't feel like you did anything at first, but it adds up, and you understand the word of God. It adds up.

The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ the son of God, you don't have to say it. The first sentence in Mark is making a declaration. The purpose of Mark is to the whole rest of the gospel lives out this declaration and tries to prove by what Jesus did, not by what he said, that that statement right there that you have just said is true.

The beginning of the gospel, beginning of the good news, everyone say good news. Of Jesus Christ, Jesus is the Christ. And Jesus is the son of God. In the beginning of the gospel of Mark from chapter one to chapter 8, you're going to hear a story after story. You're going to learn who Jesus is, not by what he said, but by his actions.

And you're going to hear story after story that tells you and shows you proof that he is indeed good news. In fact, he was good news for all people. And then at chapter 8, you get this confession of Peter, remember, the beginning of the gospel, the first goal is to show us that that Jesus is good news, of Jesus Christ, the show us that he is a Christ in chapter 8 is the first time he's confessed his Christ.

And the son of God, it isn't until chapter 8 or 15 that you hear of Jesus being the son of God and so in this very first verse, the reason why I want to spend time on this first is because the whole gospel of Mark is summarized in this one verse. Jesus is the good news. Jesus is the Christ, and Jesus is the son of God. And so let's take these one at a time in dissect it.

Jesus is the good news. Everyone say, Jesus is the good news. My neighbor, when I lived in piqua, won the mega millions, I think he won 20 7 \$28 million was his share of the pot. That was good news for him. But it didn't do much of anything for me, right?

It's a big statement here that Jesus is the gospel. The gospel of Mark presents Jesus as the gospel for all mankind for all humanity. For me to come and do something good for you, that's something anyone can do that. I can be good news for you. But Mark is presenting Jesus as the good news for everyone.

For all mankind, for every man, woman and child, he is the good news. And by the way, he is still the good news today. We looked at chapter one here, and we read this story about Jesus casting out a demon in the synagogue. You remember this? That was good news for that man, right? What about everyone else in the synagogue?

Well, we go from there to Simon Peter's house. And he heals Simon's mother in law. Well, that's good news for Simon's mother in law, but is it good news for us? But it doesn't stop there. It says, and then they brought the whole city to him. One Jesus against a whole city of sickness. One Jesus against a whole city of demons.

Surely he's not good news for everyone, is he? It would be interesting to be a doctor during that time. You have your patients that I don't know how they did it and they had hospitals, probably not. Probably went around and visited people, but all of a sudden, every person in the town healed of their sickness, he is good news. He is good news. And then he goes on from there, he goes out and prays.

I love the fact that Jesus prays, he's modeling for us, the life that we need to live, rising very early in the morning while it's still dark. He went to a desolate place in prayer. And the town is wanting him to come back into the town, but guess what? He's not just the good news for Capernaum. He is good news for everyone. And he went, the Bible says he went through all Galilee proclaiming the gospel of God and casting out demons.

Jesus is presented as a good news for everyone. And you and I are not excluded. He is good news for you. He is good news for me. October 16th, 13th, I don't remember. The beauty of stroke. You can say, I don't remember and get out of trouble often.

I prayed. I was helicopter flown out of Liberia. Medevac. It's the worst case scenario. It's the thing every missionary dreads and wonders about and worries about, I'm still separated from my family. Jesus is the good news.

I couldn't put socks on my feet. I couldn't talk. I would try to speak to you. Jesus is good news. You can take your problem to him. He is listening. He's good news for sickness. He is our healer. I'm testimony of his healing.

You have a question you don't understand. Take it to Jesus. He is the good news. He is the good news for all mankind. Take your concerns to Jesus. He is the good news. The beginning of the gospel. Wow, I'm going overtime. I'll speed up a little bit here. The beginning of the gospel, beginning of the good news, first point, Jesus is the good news. Second point of Jesus Christ, everyone say Christ.

I ask people in Liberia, what's Jesus's last name? And they all say Christ. The word Christ means the word Christ is a title. Titles tell a person's job. In our medical hospital, we have doctor Mikey. The word his first name isn't doctor and his last name Mikey. It's a title.

And the title tells what he's qualified to do, what is Jesus qualified to do? He is the Christ, the anointed one, the word Christ means anointed one, the word Jesus means Salvation. He is the anointed one to bring Salvation. And this is good news. Just in the same way that the good news wasn't just for one person or two person or three people, he is the Christ for all mankind.

He is the Salvation for all mankind. You can put your faith in your trust in him. He is Salvation. He is the gospel. The Christ. Quickly here. Jesus was with, he called Simon, or not Simon, but Matthew to follow him.

And that evening, he was hanging out with tax collectors and sinners. Hanging out with tax collectors and sinners, let me say it again. I'm hanging out with tax collectors and sinners. And all the church folk, the Pharisees, went to his disciples and they said, why is he hanging out with tax collectors and sinners? Some of you here today feel like that center that certainly Jesus wouldn't want to hang out with. Why is he hanging out with tax collectors and sinners?

And when Jesus heard them, he went to them and said, it is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I came not to call the righteous, but the sinner. You know, when Jesus comes to earth, he's going to tell us what he's going to do, right? He came for people just like you and just like me. He came for the center. We don't see him hanging out with their righteous people.

He came for sinners just like you and just like me. There was a time where he was in his house and plenty of people were there. And this paralyzed man couldn't get near him. And his friends were carrying him by a mat. And the only way they could get him to Jesus was to dig a hole in the roof and after they had dug a hole in a roof, they lured the mattress down in front of Jesus.

He wanted to be healed, but Jesus knew his real need. He said, son, your sins are forgiven. The Pharisees immediately said, that's blasphemy. Only God can forgive sins. In the gospel of Mark, we learn who Jesus is by what he says.

No, we learn who Jesus is by what he does. But that you may know that the son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins. He said to the man, pick up your mat and go home. And the Bible says he picked up his Matt, walked out in front of them all. We are learning who Jesus is by his actions in the gospel of Mark. He came for sinners.

He is Salvation. Well, that's pretty good, but maybe you would say, but you have no idea what I've done. If you knew what I'd done, I'm too far. God wouldn't want me. One day, Jesus was in a boat and he reached the country of the gear scenes.

And he stepped out of the boat, and there met him out of the tombs. A man with an unclean spirit. In fact, he had a legion of demons. We don't know exactly how many that legion is, but we do know that when Jesus casts the demons out, they went into pigs in 2000 pigs were drowned in the ocean. How bad are you? This man had 2000 demons inside him.

Jesus is a Christ. There's no, there's no sin, too large for Jesus. There's no, you have hope here this morning. There's no sin too big. Jesus, the Bible says, the man lived among the tombs. He lived among the tombs. Some of you here today might say, I feel like I'm living among the tombs.

Is there hope for you? Yes, Jesus Christ is Salvation for the world. Back to the verse, last point. The beginning of the gospel, the gospel means what? And I want you to understand the whole rest of the gospel of Mark is going to live out this first verse. The gospel, the beginning of the gospel of Jesus, Christ, the son of God.

God the Father knew who Jesus was, he said it is baptism behold my son in whom I'm well pleased. Later at the transfiguration, he said, this is my son. I'm well pleased with him. Listen to him. God declared who Jesus was, but it's interesting, man never did in the gospel of Mark.

At least not at first. The demons knew who Jesus was, they would come before Jesus, and they'd fall down before him, and they'd say, I know who you are. You are the son of God. And Jesus would order them to be quiet. Why did he do that? He wants people to come to know him for themselves, that he is the son of God.

God the Father recognizes that Jesus is a Christ, the demons, all around the world, know who he is, but my question is this morning, do you know who Jesus is? He is the son of God. It's not until the chapter 15. That the first person declared, surely this is the son of God.

And you know who that person was? It was a Roman terrarium. Who's the gospel of Mark ridden to? It's written to the Romans. The first person declare that Jesus is the son of God was a Roman. But it wasn't just a Roman. It just happened to be the man who was putting Jesus to death. Don't say I'm too far from God. Don't say God can't do anything for me.

If you have the breadth of life in you, God has a purpose for you this morning. To bring it to an end, there's one other word I just want to draw our attention to. It says the beginning. Everyone say beginning. The beginning is really, it means the start.

Obviously, wait, the start of Jesus being the gospel is what we read in the gospel of Mark. The start of him being the Christ. We read that here. The start of people recognizing him as the son of God. It's just the beginning, the book of John says, if everything, all the deeds of Jesus life were to be written down, the world could not contain the books.

And this, as you memorize this gospel of Mark, you're reading the start of what Jesus did. I want to challenge you the whole premise of the book of Mark is you're going to come to know Jesus by what he did, not by what he said. And I want to challenge you to come to know Jesus in your own life.

You can trust in him, not just because of what he said. But because of the things he's still doing in our lives today. Jesus, people came to know Jesus as the gospel, the good news. But here's a sad thing. Most of the people only saw him as good news. They never saw him as the Christ, and they never saw him as the son of God.

He healed the sick. He raised the dead, oh, jeez. He gives you the breath of life. When you're in need, when you're scared, you help me, Jesus. When you're in need, my dad, lord, please help him. It's Jesus more than good news to you.

He is the Christ. He will prove it to you by what he does today. He is the son of God. He will prove it to you by what he does today. Let us pray. Lord Jesus, I believe you have spoken to your people.

Now is the time to respond.