

Gospel of Mark Week 1 The Kingdom of a God is at hand

- **Read Mark 1:1-15.** John the Baptist was Jesus' cousin on his mother's side, born a few months before Jesus. His ministry was to get people ready for the greatest moment in Jewish history, in world history: Jesus' ministry and then death and resurrection.

How does John seek to prepare the people for Jesus' coming (vv. 1-8)?

- To begin his public ministry, Jesus goes to John to be baptized in the Jordan River. **What is significant about what happens after his baptism (vv. 9-15)?**
- The whole Christian gospel could be summed up in this point: that when the living God looks at every believing Christian, he says to us what he said to Jesus on that day. He sees us, not as we are in ourselves, but as we are in Jesus Christ. It sometimes seems impossible, especially to people who have never had this kind of support from their earthly parents, but it's true: God looks at us and says, "You are my dear, dear child; I'm delighted with you."

What would it mean to you to hear God say that to you?

Mark's Gospel is about "the gospel of the kingdom" which consists of these principles: The healing, all-renewing presence of the kingdom of God that has come back into the world and history because Christ is that true King. However, this King comes in a way that reverses the values of the world — in weakness and service, not strength and force — to die as a ransom for us. Therefore we enter this kingdom through the "upside-down" pattern of the King who went to the cross.

We are accepted not because of our ability or merit, but through sheer grace and repentance. We "live out" this kingdom by following the "upside-down" pattern of the King who went to the cross. We live lives of sacrifice and service.

1. **Read Isaiah 40:3-5** and then cf. with **Mark 1:1-4**. What is Mark telling us about the identity of Jesus?
2. How, specifically, does John 'pave the way' for the Lord? i.e. What do verses **4-8** tell us about how the Messiah, the king, is to be received?
3. What do verses **14-15** tell us about the essential message of the King? a) What is explained? b) What is left "mysterious" and unexplained in Jesus proclamation?
4. Everyone notices the abruptness and breathless speed of Mark's narrative style. Everything happens so quickly, all the statements and descriptions are extremely terse and direct. What do you think Mark is trying to get across?

Remembering the big picture

Who Jesus is: He's the Christ (1:1 and 8:29). He's the "good news" that God promised would come. He's the "good news" of victory (1 Samuel 31:9). **Mark's Gospel is about Jesus.**

Why Jesus came: To solve the problem of sin introduced by the Fall (1:4, 1:13, 1:15, 15:38).

How should I respond? Not by opposition (1:14, 3:6), but by repentance and faith (1:15,

Choose one verse or phrase from **Mark 1:1-15** that stands out to you. This could be something you're intrigued by, something that makes you uncomfortable, something that puzzles you, something that resonates with you, or just something you want to examine further. Write that here.

Whether you've been following Jesus for a long time or are still in process of making that decision, we can all point to at least a general time when we first heard the story of Jesus. **Share as much as you can remember about who, when and where you first heard the Jesus story.**

Three Life Lessons

2 Timothy 3:16-17

1. It's not a sin to be **TEMPTED**. It's a sin to **SIN**.

Mark 1:13/ Hebrews 4:15

2. Sometimes the **CENTER** of God's will is in the **MIDDLE** of the **STORM**

Mark 1:12 / Mark 4:35-41 / Exodus 14:1-31 / Psalm 23:1-4 / 1 Peter 4:12 / Hebrews 5:8

3. A **BLESSED** life is not necessarily an **EASY** life.

Luke 1:28/ Luke 2:4-7/ Luke 2:22-24/ Mathew 2:13-15/ Luke 3:23/ John 19:25

Which of the three "**Life Lessons**" would be most surprising to the average person?

Wouldn't it be great if we could just snap our fingers and have temptation disappear? Unfortunately, it doesn't work that way. **Look over the following verses** and identify some strategies that help us avoid and overcome temptation.

Psalm 119: 9-11

1 Corinthians 10:12

James 4:7-8

Philippians 4:8

Hebrews 10:24-25

Can you think of any examples of how one the verses above has helped you avoid falling into temptation in your own life?

Looking back on this week's sermon and study, what's most important for you to remember?

RESOURCES

[Where Do You Start the Jesus Story? - Chris Brown](#)

[Don't Blink or You Will Miss It - Larry Osborne](#)

[YOU'RE NOT FAR - Andy Stanley Part 1 of 2](#)

[Overview: MARK - The Bible Project](#)

BONUS MATERIAL

Jesus came and announced that the coming kingdom was at hand with his ministry (Mark 1:14-15).

PRACTICAL STEPS – To treat Jesus as a King means:

- A. **Obeying.** (Not like Jonah. He thought that if he did what God had said that it would ruin things.) The evaluation question: “Am I willing to obey whatever God says about this life-area?” Symptom: guilt and “covering up”.
- B. **Accepting.** (Not like Job. He thought God was unfair, and that he knew how to run history better.) The evaluation question: “Am I willing to thank God for whatever happens in this area?” Symptom: worry, self-pity, or bitterness.
- C. **Relying.** (Not like Abraham. He made Isaac an idol, something he had to have along with God to be happy.) The evaluation question: “Is there something instead of God I am relying on for self-worth?” Symptom: insecurity (people-approval as an idol), “driveness” (success or achievement as an idol), self-indulgence (comfort as an idol).
- D. **Expecting.** (Not like Moses. When called to do a great deed, he was sure he was not competent.) The evaluation question: “Are there problems or limitations in my life I think are too big for God to remove?” Symptom: boredom and discouragement

[WEEK 1: Write this Down - Study Guide](#) (Click link 4 Sermon)

Many times we read the Bible for application, inspiration, or direction. However, there are times when the author wants to simply point the reader to a big idea—an idea that fits together with God's grand story. In the gospel of Mark, he documents Peter's experience with Jesus that led Peter to believe in one big idea: the kingdom of God is near, and everyone is invited to participate.

Discussion Questions

1. How does the version of Christianity you embrace now compare to the version you were taught when you were younger?
2. Did the version of Christianity you first were exposed to emphasize membership in an invisible kingdom? If not, what did it emphasize?
3. Have you ever felt far from God? Why?
4. Read Mark 12:28–34.
 - What stands out to you?
 - What is the connection between the teacher's response to Jesus and Jesus's assurance that he was “not far from the kingdom of God”?

Changing Your Mind

After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. “The time has come,” he said. “The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!” —Mark 1:14–15

The kingdom of God is near, and everyone is invited to participate.

[BOOK OF MARK: INTRODUCTION- Spoken Word](#) [Bonus Introduction \(Click link\)](#)