

**THE GOOD NEWS  
OF JESUS CHRIST  
THE SON OF GOD  
ACCORDING TO MARK**

**Bible Reading Plan for the Gospel according to Mark (Part 2)**

*Given that these are longer readings, you might want to spread them over two days, which you are welcome to do. Mark though has a unique way of telling the story of Jesus: sometimes, he'll juxtapose two stories side by side so that their meaning together is greater than their individual significance. I've tried to preserve those juxtapositions so that you can get both 'the forest and the trees' as you're reading.*

**March 22 – Mark 8:27-39**

1. 'Who do YOU say I am?' Jesus' question to the disciples is a good question for us too. Does your idea of who Jesus is fit with the Bible's description of Jesus as the Son of God, glorious in holiness, powerful in compassion and worthy of obedience? Or is your version of Jesus a comfortable saviour you've made in your own image?
2. Pay close attention to verse 31. Jesus is going to say the same thing three times in three chapters, which must mean that this is pretty central to Jesus' understanding of who He is and what He is doing.
3. If you read verse 34 closely, you'll notice that Jesus' words form a 'double-stuff OREO.' He says literally:

A If you want to follow Me,  
    B Deny yourself  
    B1 Take up your cross and  
A1 Follow Me.

The two outer parts (A & A1) are the same, which means the central ideas (B & B1) must be parallel ideas too. Jesus is using a standard rhetorical technique from His age to emphasize that following Him involves 'dying (as in on a cross) to self.' Take time in prayer to ask Jesus to highlight areas in your life where you need to die to self to live for Him.

**March 24 – Mark 9:1-29**

1. Imagine being Peter, James and John on the mountain hearing God's voice saying: 'This is my beloved Son. Listen to Him!' I'll bet their reaction was 'YES SIR!' They would listen to Jesus and do what He said because of that divine endorsement. Hear God saying this to you too – 'This is His beloved Son. Listen to Him!' Are there areas in your life where you need to listen to Him and do what He says?

2. On a scale from unbelief to belief, where do you fall? How can we as a church help you to move deeper into belief?

### **March 27 – Mark 9:30-50**

1. Verse 31 marks the second time that Jesus predicts His coming death and resurrection. "The Son of Man is going to be betrayed into the hands of men. They will kill him, and after three days he will rise" (Mark 9:31 NIV). Why does He say it again so soon after Mark 8?

2. How do verses 34-48 challenge the world's perspectives on status and prestige (34-37), in-group favoritism (38-41) and sin (43-48)? Is your view of these things more in line with Jesus' view or the world's?

### **March 29 – Mark 10:1-16**

1. How does the Genesis account reflect God's vision for marriage? What keeps us from living up to that vision? How can we as a church help people in all stages of marriage?

2. 'The Kingdom of God belongs to such as these' (verse 14). What is it about little children that makes them well-suited for the Kingdom? How do we approach God that way?

### **March 31 – Mark 10:17-31**

1. Does Jesus' call to sell everything and give to the poor apply to everyone? To you? What does 1 Timothy 6:17-19 add to the conversation?

2. Verses 29-30 seem to promote the idea of 'delayed gratification' – those who lose for the sake of the Gospel gain in the end. Are you more motivated by immediate concerns or eternal ones?

### **April 3 – Mark 10:32-45**

1. This is now the third time that Jesus has predicted His passion. (And the disciples still don't seem to get it!) How would you have phrased it so that the disciples got it? How can you phrase it so that your own heart gets the implications of Jesus' death and resurrection as the ransom for sin?

### **April 5 – Mark 10:46-11:11**

1. It seems strange that the crowd would shush Bartimaeus and keep him from meeting Jesus. Is there anything that we do as a church that keeps others from meeting Jesus?

2. It's often said that the people who cheered Jesus on Palm Sunday were the ones who crucified Him a week later. That's probably not true. The people who came in on Palm Sunday were probably mostly pilgrims with an authentic desire to meet with God. The people who crucified Him were religious elite, jealous of Jesus' influence, and jaded city people who were bothered by the crowds! Are you burnt out on religion or eager to see Jesus in all His glory?

#### **April 7 – Mark 11:12-33**

1. It's commonly thought that the cursing of the fig tree is meant to be an object lesson or 'enacted parable' on the importance of fruitfulness. Given that the Temple cleansing follows hot on its heels, what do you think Mark is trying to tell us about the fruitfulness of Hebrew religion at this time?
2. It's easy to misapply verse 24: 'Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.' What did Jesus mean here and how are prayer and faith related?

#### **April 10 – Mark 12:1-12**

1. If you want to appreciate the vineyard parable, you need to read the first part of Isaiah 5. Isaiah 5 describes God planting Israel as a vineyard and giving it everything it needs to thrive and receiving only bad fruit in return. Mark 12 extends the parable, explaining why the vineyard went so wrong. How does Jesus fit into this vineyard parable?
2. How can we be fruitful for the Lord?

#### **April 12 – Mark 12:13-37**

1. If Caesar is owed a coin bearing his image, what is God owed that bears His likeness?
2. What are the two greatest commandments according to Jesus? Are they the greatest goal of your life too?

#### **April 14 – Mark 12:38-13:37**

1. Why was the widow's offering so much more valuable than the rich peoples'? What can we do to give our offerings the same value?
2. Mark 13 deals with 'the end times,' a subject of great interest and speculation in a lot of churches. What detail here do you think is most important? I would argue that the most important thing that Jesus says here is in verse 33 – 'Be on guard! Be alert!' Regardless of

how Jesus' return happens, it's GOING to happen – it will do no good to understand the details of His coming with our heads if our hearts are not ready for Him. How can we cultivate expectant hearts? (2 Peter 3:11-14 is helpful here).

### **April 17 – Mark 14:1-25**

1. Jesus was right – the woman who anointed Him with perfume *has* been remembered for generations. What will your legacy be when we talk about 'what we've done for Jesus'?
2. How does Jesus' commitment to the Passover reflect His continuity with the Old Testament? What does Jesus do during the Passover meal to demonstrate that He is launching something entirely new?

### **April 19 – Mark 14:26-52**

1. What kept Jesus praying 'not My will but Yours be done' even when that meant death for Him?
2. Do you think that when Judas agreed to betray Jesus (14:10), he ever conceived that they would send an unruly mob of citizens and soldiers armed with swords and clubs to arrest Him? How does evil hide the seriousness of sin until it's too late?

### **April 21 – Mark 14:53-72**

1. Verses 56-59 demonstrate what a kangaroo court this was. It was all a show and everyone knew it. Why do you think they treated Jesus as if He was guilty when they all knew He was innocent? How can we keep from putting 'what we want' ahead of 'what is right'?
2. Oh Peter. How do you think he ever forgave himself? Could the events of John 21 have anything to do with it? Given that Jesus forgave *him*, and *he* became a pillar of the church, realize that Jesus can forgive and work through you!

### **April 24 – Mark 15:1-20**

1. Why does Jesus stay silent before His accusers? What does 1 Peter 2:21-25 add to the conversation? In what way does Peter see Jesus as an example for us?
2. Just like King Herod did with John the Baptist, Pilate puts 'what's expedient' before 'what's right' in dealing with Jesus (verse 9 – 'he knew that the chief priests were opposing Jesus out of envy' and yet he still dealt with Him as if He was guilty). Yet again, how can we keep from putting what is right ahead of what is easy?

## **April 26 – Mark 15:21-47**

1. How would you feel if you were Simon of Cyrene, press-ganged into carrying Jesus' cross? The fact that he is named 'father of Alexander and Rufus' suggests that 'Alexander and Rufus' were later well known to the Christian community. How does coming face-to-face with Jesus change lives?
2. The chief priests and teachers of the law mocked Jesus saying: "He saved others... but he can't save himself! Let this Christ, this King of Israel, come down now from the cross, that we may see and believe" (Mark 15:31-32 NIV). Can you think of at least three ways in which these statements reveal how little the chief priests knew about Jesus and His God-given purpose? ('Tell me you don't understand Jesus without telling me you don't understand Jesus.')
3. Notice how many women Mark names as witnesses to Jesus' death (and compare that with the lack of men!) What does this say about 1. the significance of women in Christianity and 2. the reliability of these accounts?

## **April 28 – Mark 16**

1. We've seen that Jesus predicted His death three times. And all three times He also predicted His resurrection. He had died, just as He had said; why did they not think that He would rise again? Why did the women go to the tomb expecting to find Him dead? Does this say anything about how reluctant we can be to take Jesus at His word and trust Him?
2. There is scholarly debate over what the original ending of Mark was like. The earliest manuscripts of the Bible end at verse 8 which suggests that either that's where Mark stopped writing or the final ending of Mark was somehow ripped off and lost to history. Verses 9-20 appear later in the manuscript evidence which suggests that the church accepted these verses as a more fitting conclusion, perhaps reflecting oral tradition that went back to Mark's time. In God's sovereignty, the Bible has come to us like this and so we accept these words as Scripture. Just as a fun exercise though, revisit the beginning of Mark's Gospel and reread the first little bit. How would you have written the ending of Mark's Gospel in order to give it a fitting conclusion?