

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK

Week 1: Voices in the Wilderness

The Gospel of Mark is primarily about the gospel of Jesus Christ

- Read Mark 1:1

Since the Gospel of Mark was written in the first century, it discounts any of the theories that Christ's divinity was only first thought of at the time of Constantine at the Council of Nicaea in the 4th century. Mark focuses on the good news of Jesus Christ: the awaited Jewish Messiah, the 'Son of God' and God in human flesh, living a humble human existence (Isaiah 7:14 & Matthew 1:23).

- ❖ Q: How does Mark's Gospel show that the idea of Christ's divinity was not a construct of the 4th century Roman Empire? (If you would like to revisit this topic see the "Reason" series from 2013 on the website).

1. All of scripture is primarily about the gospel of Jesus Christ

- Read Mark 1:2-3, Exodus 23:20, Isaiah 40:1-3 & Malachi 3:1

The Bible is one continuing story which all points to Jesus. Mark connects Jesus with the rest of the Jewish Scriptures. Jesus is the fulfillment of all that the prophets had foretold, but also of every promise that God had initiated about the coming one, right from the Garden of Eden (see Genesis 3:15b). In Exodus there is a fore shadow of Jesus who would deliver his people from their captivity and slavery to sin. Isaiah prophesied that God would send a messenger ahead of Jesus to prepare the people for his coming, which we see in the arrival of John the Baptist, and in Malachi we read that after this messenger prepared the way, the Lord himself would appear.

- ❖ Q: Why do you think it is helpful to know that the whole Bible is one continuing story that all points to and centres on Jesus Christ?
- ❖ Q: How do you think this might change one's approach to reading and understanding the Old Testament?

2. John serves as a great example of what a sold-out follower of Jesus looks like

- Read Mark 1:4-8
 - John is passionate and resolute.
 - John doesn't allow his circumstances to determine his view of God.
 - John knows that sin is our biggest problem. (Also see Matthew 3:2, 7, 8)
 - John knows that Jesus is the answer to the problem. (Also see John 1:29)
 - John knows where he fits relative to Jesus. (Also see Luke 3:15-17)

- ❖ Q: Why is our version of Christianity so often not passionate and resolute like John's?
- ❖ Q: Does your view of God change according to your circumstances? How do you think we get to the point where like John, we can believe and remain steadfast in our faith regardless of the circumstances we face?

3. We are "greater" than John

- Read Luke 7:28

John was passionate and resolute before he knew for certain who Jesus was. He was beheaded before he even saw Jesus die and rise from the dead. We have the advantage of the truth found in the scriptures and attested by the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:16). Therefore our faith and passion should be that much greater than John's.

- ❖ Q: Do you ever feel as though your faith would be greater than it is now if you were able to see Jesus in the flesh? Why is this not actually true? (Idea: Did this help the Pharisees and teachers of the law at all?)

4. The King comes to serve and to save

- Read Mark 15:39

Jesus was the Son of God, the promised king, but he came in the form of a servant in order to suffer and die in our place.

- ❖ Q: If we are to model our lives on the way Jesus lived his life on earth, what should our lives look like?
- ❖ Q: What one area of your life needs radical change if it is to reflect Jesus' servant hood?

