



THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK

Last week we saw how Jesus announced the kingdom of God and now it was not what the Israelites were expecting. The followers he chose were not who we would have expected either. In the next 7 chapters Mark shows us how Jesus has the **authority** to be the king.

1. Jesus Has Authority Over Truth

- Read Mark 1:21-22

The crowd recognized that Jesus taught the scriptures as though he had authored them. This was in stark contrast to the way their regular teachers taught. Throughout Jesus' ministry he confronted the scribes about their teaching. This causes us to consider what "truths" we believe and teach. Even though God's truth never changes, cultures' moral standards and truths do and we tend to believe what the culture presents to us as truth.

- ❖ Q: What moral "truths" have you seen change in culture over the past few decades? (Examples might be things such as the view on abortion, homosexuality, divorce, soft-pornography, child-discipline etc.)
- ❖ Q: Are there any "truths" in our present culture that you initially saw as wrong but now see no problem with? Consider the following examples and think about how our culture determines our truth in many ways.
Some particularly South African examples of this might be... I initially believed that:
 - Driving in the emergency lane to get ahead was wrong, but now because taxi's do it, we can too. *Therefore unlawful driving is no longer wrong.*
 - Speeding was wrong, but now because others do it, we can too. *Therefore speeding is no longer wrong.*
 - Bribery was wrong but because some cops are unjust/corrupt, I should use bribery now as a means of protecting myself. *Therefore bribery is no longer wrong.*
 - Not declaring my earnings to SARS is wrong, but since our government sometimes misuses our tax money I should not declare all my earnings. *Therefore tax evasion is no longer wrong.*
- ❖ **Personal Reflection Q:** Are there any truths that you see in the Bible that you will not bow to because you prefer your own version of truth on the matter?

2. Jesus Has Authority Over Evil

Throughout the gospels we see Jesus encountering and having authority over demons. He is never afraid of them but they are always terrified of him.

- Read Mark 1:23-28
 - Demons are created beings, but they were not created evil. (See Genesis 1:31, 2 Peter 2:4, Jude 1:6)
 - Demons oppose and seek to destroy the good work of God. (See John 8:44, Revelation 12:9, Galatians 4:8, 2 Cor. 4:4)
 - Demons are still active and at work in the world today. (See Matthew 12:27-29)
 - Demons have to submit to the final authority of Christ. (See James 2:19)
 - Christians must be vigilant and careful, but confident and peaceful. (See James 4:7)
- ❖ Q: In what ways have you personally witnessed the good work of God been destroyed or opposed (that we attribute to demonic activity)?
- ❖ Q: On what side of the spectrum do you find yourself: are you over-focused or fearful or indifferent/unaware of demonic activity?
- ❖ Q: Why should we be vigilant and yet not afraid of demonic powers?
- ❖ Q: James 4:7 says that we should submit ourselves to God AND to resist the devil. What do you think "submitting to God" means and how would one resist the devil when tempted?
- ❖ **Personal Reflection Q:** Think through an example of when you were able to submit to God and resist the devil, and then think through areas in your life right now where you need to submit to God and to resist the schemes/temptations of the devil.

3. Jesus Has Authority Over the Curse of Sin

When Jesus announced that the kingdom of God was at hand, he demonstrated it by healing people of various illnesses. Peter's mom was healed and immediately she began to serve them because the point of the healing was not about her, and she realised that. Re-creation had begun in their midst. When Jesus had ascended into heaven, there was still evidence of his kingdom having begun through healings that took place at the hands of the apostles (Acts 3:1-5, 5:12-16, 20:7-12). Even though we are in the "now-not-yet" time period as we wait for Jesus to return, we do still see evidence of his kingdom on earth when people are miraculously healed from illnesses. This may not happen all the time but it does happen and the scripture instructs us to ask for healing (James 5:14). Whether we receive healing in this life or not, it is wonderful to know that in the fullness of the kingdom, there will be no sickness.

- Read Mark 1:29-31
- ❖ Q: What is healing primarily about according to the scriptures?
- ❖ Q: Have you ever experienced healing in your own life or witnessed it in the life of another person? Did it have a long term effect on your faith?
- ❖ Q: When we desire to be healed, is it just so we that can get on with our own lives or is it in order to reveal that the kingdom of God is at hand and so that we can serve God and others more?