

Mark 1

Hey good morning RCM. So good to be here with each of you today as we continue to worship through the word this morning. Today we are kicking off a series through the book of Mark. We have scripture journals in the back if you didn't get one on your way in. I encourage each of you to grab one of those. Just a helpful tool to use for the next few months as we work through this book together. And each week, my challenge to you is to spend time throughout the week reading two chapters in Mark and taking down some notes. Read the chapter we've just worked through, and the chapter for the upcoming Sunday. So this week we'll read together Mark 1-2, then the next week we'll read together Mark 2 (again) and 3.

Some questions to consider as you read through:

- What does this teach me about God
- What does this teach me about myself
- Is there a sin to avoid or a command to obey
- How does this chapter or passage point to my need for God's grace in the Gospel
- What promises of God are shown in these verses

So that's how we will spend the next few months working through the Gospel of Mark.

BACKGROUND

So with that said – today we'll look at Mark 1. There are lots of theories about the 4 Gospels, and specifically Matthew, Mark and Luke because they have a lot of similarities to each other. For some, maybe you've thought, "man Luke's chapters are way too long, so I don't want to focus on that one." For others, maybe you look at the book of Mark and think – man it's like reading cliff's notes. You remember those little booklets you could buy, they were yellow with black writing on the front, that would summarize books you were supposed to read in high school.

But we have to remember – that every word in the book of Mark is there because the Holy Spirit wanted it there. The Holy Spirit directed the writing of this book in a specific way, for a specific purpose. And each of the 4 Gospels, were written in a way for a specific purpose. Matthew was written from a specifically Jewish perspective – focusing on the Kingdom of God, and Jesus as the long awaited Messiah. Luke was written from a uniquely Gentile perspective. John was written to specifically point us to Jesus as GOD, highlighting the truth that Jesus is God in the flesh. And all throughout John we see these major I AM statements of Jesus, declaring His own deity.

And Mark, while yes it is shorter than the other 4 Gospels, it's no less impactful because of its length. Because every word the Holy Spirit wanted to be written was written.

And Marks purpose – really 2 purposes for his writing – (1) Show us who Jesus is and (2) Show us how we MUST respond. And Mark's purpose for writing gives us a couple of necessary reminders:

- The Gospels contain actual historical events. Not myths but actual events that occurred in history. BUT, they don't tell us everything.
 - They tell us enough for us to know who Jesus is and how we must respond

- Jesus is the main idea of the Gospels (and really the entire Bible). Not you or me. The Gospels are written about Jesus.

We see this in the very beginning of Mark's account – Mark 1:1
The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

Mark tells us right off the bat – that this story is about Jesus. And he uses the word Gospel. Which can be translated as good news. But the picture here – is a royal announcement or proclamation – SOMETHING BIG HAS HAPPENED AND I'VE GOTTA TELL YOU ABOUT IT.

It's as if the Holy Spirit is screaming to people through Mark's pen – MESSIAH is here. And you've gotta believe in Him. Everything you've been waiting for and SO MUCH MORE has finally arrived. And every word that follows, is built in this foundation that Jesus Christ, the Son of God is here. The promised One from the Old Testament has come, to offer life to all who believe.

Mark 1 continues with the story of John the Baptist coming to prepare the way for the Lord, baptizing people, calling them to turn from sin. We see the baptism of Jesus, and then the temptation of Jesus in the wilderness. Well, John gets arrested, and Jesus preaches this powerful yet simple message – The Kingdom of God is here. Repent and believe the good news. Powerfully simple message. Salvation is here in Jesus. Turn from your sin and believe in Him.

Most people though, as we see in Mark's Gospel, most people don't. The 2 groups that seem to respond as expected – the desperate and the demon possessed. What I've seen in my own life – desperate people are far more open to the Gospel than those that are just fine...

Mark 1 continues, and this is where we will focus the rest of our time this morning, Mark 1 continues with Jesus calling Simon (Peter), Andrew, James and John. And what we see in these verses is (1) Jesus' call (2) Jesus' commitment and (3) their response. And all of this, is rooted in WHO JESUS is.

If you have your Bible, or one of those Scripture journals, go ahead and turn with me to Mark 1

READ Mark 1:16-20

¹⁶ As he passed alongside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew, Simon's brother, casting a net into the sea—for they were fishermen. ¹⁷ "Follow me," Jesus told them, "and I will make you fish for people." ¹⁸ Immediately they left their nets and followed him. ¹⁹ Going on a little farther, he saw James the son of Zebedee and his brother John in a boat putting their nets in order. ²⁰ Immediately he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men and followed him.

PRAY.

Scripture says they were fishermen. Not the day laborer types. This would have been a successful business for them. Not just day laborers, but running a successful fishing business.

I. Jesus' Call

And Jesus sees them, and gives them a 2-word command. Follow Me. Now, this was unusual. Culturally, you would see students seeking out a teacher. When I was playing music growing up, I went (or my parents) went out looking for a music teacher for me. First there was this science teacher that played a little trombone. I would take lessons with him. Then there was a semi-pro trombonist and teacher that I switched to. Then when I hit high school I found a professional trombonist and studied with him until I left for college. See, I was always looking for the next teacher to get better.

But unlike when I was looking for a music teacher, here, Jesus (THE teacher) goes looking for a small group of men to lead. Totally backward from the culture. And His call to them, is simply follow me.

And what I would tell you, is this only makes sense if Jesus is who he claims to be. Who Mark positions him as. The Christ, the Son of God. Because IF Jesus is who he says he is, then following him is the only response that makes any sense. If this guy named Jesus healed the sick, fed the 5,000, raised the dead back to life, died and was buried, but was raised back to life on the 3rd day – if this really did happen (and it did by the way), then the only acceptable response is to follow him with trust-filled obedience.

We see in these verses, right after the call, we see Jesus' commitment to them.

II. Jesus' Commitment

And I will make you fish for people...

Jesus didn't call these dudes because of how great they were. It doesn't say follow me because I think you're neat and awesome. No. He says Follow Me, and I will make you into something (fishers of men). I will change you. I will create something new in you.

Some dudes will say something like "Jesus called fishermen because he knew they were hard workers. Or this or that." They'll try and give Simon, Andrew, James and John some sort of credit for being called by Jesus. Well I just don't buy that. I see in these verses Jesus calling these 4 dudes, businessmen, arrogant (which we see later in the Gospels), rough around the edges. Great highs throughout the Gospels, but very great lows too. Lots of ways we could describe these guys.

And here's the thing – when Jesus called them, he also made a commitment to them – purely rooted in His grace. It was a call of grace to them – and if you're a Christian, if you have heard the Lord's call and responded – His call to you is a call of grace. He's not calling you because of what you bring, just like he wasn't calling Simon (Peter), Andrew, James and John because he needed them to be on the team. He called them, as a call of grace, and He made a commitment to them – to make them into something different.

To take who they were and radically change them. Some changes, happen in a moment. Other changes take the long work of ongoing obedience and sanctification by the Spirit. But hear me

– when Jesus calls you, he also makes a commitment to you – to change you. And just like these guys, some changes are instant – but others are slow progress in godliness – slowly becoming the person that Jesus intends for you to be. Because He doesn't say "follow me and go figure it out for yourself". He says "Follow me, and I will make you..." And thankfully – He is true to His word.

What an incredible gift of grace – that Jesus calls us – and that He makes us more like him day by day by day. Let that encourage you today, that if you are a Christian, to moment you believed in Jesus you have the Spirit of God in you that is shaping you, changing you, to be more like Jesus. Not instant perfection but sustained progress.

And with this type of offer – we see the only acceptable response – to immediately leave it all behind and follow him.

III. Their Response

V18 – Immediately they left their nets and followed him.

V20 – James and John didn't even bring in the boat – they left their father in the boat with the hired men and followed him.

They didn't know where they were going, they didn't have a 3-year ministry plan. They knew something was different and compelling about Jesus and they left their work and followed him. And their lives would never be the same.

If you're anything like me – we want the 3, 5, 7 year plan. We want to know how things will play out. We want the roadmap for whatever we're trying to do. And sometimes, maybe we get the plan. But most of the time, it's simple ordinary obedience – trust-filled obedience – that Jesus is calling us to. Even when we don't have the answers (because most of the time we won't have the answers).

Jesus' call to them was urgent – and their response was immediate.

CLOSING...

As we think through this story – Jesus' call, Jesus' commitment and their response – I thought I'd simply end with a couple of questions.

Who are you following?

What are you fishing for?