

Mark is one of the three Synoptic gospels along with Matthew and Luke. It is also the shortest of the gospels. Focusing much on the works of Jesus.

The word gospel means - good news or good message.

Mark derived his information mainly from Peter - relationship with Peter and Paul in ministry.

Makes no reference to the Jewish law, and that the writer takes care to interpret words which a Gentile would be likely to misunderstand.

The absence of genealogy.

V. 1 - The beginning, contextually Mark begins with what is considered the Beginning of Christ's ministry by introducing John the Baptist - the forerunner/herald of Christ.

Prophetically, we understand that the gospel accounts of Christ are truly just the beginning. The good message and ministry of Jesus Christ continues today and people are still hearing and receiving salvation through Christ.

V.2-8 John the Baptist - was a promise from God, fulfilled bodily and historically in the person of a man named John. (More info on John's birth and parentage found in Luke 1)

Through the ministry of John the Baptist, God was preparing people for Jesus. This is important because it underscores the concept that God is not trying to play a game of “gotcha” with his creation.

He speaks to us loud and clear. We have His holy Word - the scriptures. He even sends people to speak for Him as with John; and as we see with John the Baptist it was not some covert operation.

He was publicly declaring God’s message - and He lived in such a state that made him nearly unmissable!

We see that John’s message included preaching, and action. Proclaiming a message and baptizing people.

The message that he preached was a message of repentance - to turn away from one’s sins and turn towards God. In this way people’s hearts would be prepared to see and recognize the God-man among them - Jesus Christ, whom John also preached.

John preached clearly that another man was coming who was far superior than himself, and while John baptized them with water the messiah would baptize those who turned toward God with the Holy Spirit.

Jesus Christ baptizes, washes us, immerses us with the third person of God - the Holy Spirit.

V.9-11 Sure enough Jesus comes on the scene and actually pays a visit to John as John continues to preach and baptize people.

Jesus is baptized by John in the Jordan river - Jesus is probably around 30 years old at this time.

The baptism of Jesus is quite layered in meaning.

1. We see the Son submitting to the will of the Father - to fulfill all righteousness.
2. This is a demonstration of God's power. He is communicating clearly to all present his own pleasure in the Son - here we see God present in three forms. Father, Son, and Spirit.
3. We also see it as a sort of validation of John's ministry as Christ participates in this water baptism - not a baptism of repentance - but a validation of John's work to preach repentance,
4. Experiencing freeing fellowship with sinful man, knowing the conditions of men,
5. And beginning His greater redemptive ministry. Almost communicating to those who stood by, who participated in this baptism, "What John has started, I will finish, and I will finish it in your place."

Verse 10 we see the word “immediately” - this word will continue to characterize Mark’s account of the work of Christ - keep an ear out for it.

V.12-13 Rather than sounding the trumpets of victory Christ is driven by the Spirit into....suffering.

This is counter to the health and wealth movement.

At the outset of Jesus’ ministry he is put through the ringer and shares fully, maybe even more fully than many of us, with the temptations that humans endure.

AND where we fall short, and often capitulate to our desires - driven by hunger, desire for power, even a desire for hyper-spirituality - Christ remains steadfast.

V.14-15 John’s ministry reaches an end - Jesus continues to preach: “the time is fulfilled - the kingdom of God is near - Repent - believe.”

Jesus was a preacher - he shared this good message along with the physical work of his ministry, his service to others. The two are complementary not contradictory - they go together. Any lopsided version of this denies the fullness of Christ’s ministry.

He has so commissioned us likewise - there comes a time where we all (regardless of our “calling”) must say something, as we are doing.

This was the nature of our Lord - it is to be ours too.

V.16-20 Jesus calls disciples - he calls them still. A disciple is a student, a follower, someone who has committed themselves to learning from another.

No matter what our role is, where we came from, what it cost us (and it will cost us) we are at our core disciples - before we are pastors, teachers, evangelists, etc. There is a humility in that.

Peter, James, John - eventually become Jesus' inner group.

Notably, Andrew is not included in Jesus' inner group - John tells us that Andrew was a follower of John the Baptist who initially told Peter about Jesus, saying “we have found the messiah.”

The two, Peter and Andrew, were brothers.

This call to discipleship cost them their livelihood in a very real sense - but God's grace is vast enough to help them stay the course.

“...grace is costly because it calls us to follow, and it is grace because it calls us to follow Jesus Christ. It is costly because it costs a man his life, and it is grace because it gives a man the only true life...” (Bonhoeffer)

“...where today we hear the call of Jesus to discipleship, there is no other answer than this: Hear the word...; in it hear him himself, and you will hear his call.” (Bonhoeffer)

v.21 -22 Jesus the teacher - not only a preacher

Preaching is declaring, proclaiming, -- listen up everybody I am telling you something. Much NT preaching was done in a public sense to unbelievers.

Teaching is more didactic, more instructive in nature. Building upon foundational information, precept upon precept, connecting the dots, adding more knowledge and wisdom in discourse between a student (disciple) and a teacher/instructor.

“Teaching” in the Calvary Chapel movement -- the “whoa” moment for me.

Jesus’ teaching was authoritative and moving, shocking even - people were so used to hearing humdrum, dubious teaching that when they heard Jesus teach it was a big moment.

Not all were bowed in reverential awe - some gnashed their teeth and plotted to kill him for his teaching, but some were saved.

So the same is true today.

V.23-28 Jesus casts out an unclean spirit - what we might call a demonic spirit

He does so with authority that these people have never seen before.

They have seen religion, beautiful but rigid tradition, buildings, and ceremonies. They have seen all of the good, bad, and ugly that goes along with that.

But this is so new for them they say, "what new doctrine is this?" And Jesus' doctrine - demonstrated in preaching, teaching, and healing is all glowing with divine authority.

Now, unique to Mark's gospel is how soon we see the works of Christ - in the first chapter, in the first 28 verses! No other gospel does so. John is next beginning in chapter 2 - taking about 52 verses before demonstrating any of Jesus' miraculous works.

It's as if Mark wants to get straight to the point - and that's what is so cool about the different gospel writers - their own voices.

We will not endeavor to harmonize the gospels during this study but to allow the gospel of Mark to teach us as inspired by the Holy Spirit.

V.23-34 Jesus heals Peter's mother in law

So, Peter was married - we don't know anything about his wife from the Bible.

What I love so much about this account is the demonstration of Jesus' compassion - a term that Matthew uses quite a bit. But Jesus truly demonstrates his care for people in their weakness - fevers, uncleanness, disabilities, vices, etc.

We also see that Jesus' divine authority is over all creation. He is the master over those things in our world that tend to rock us.

Nothing is outside of his authority.

We also see in these verses Jesus' willingness to meet with and serve the masses as they all pile up at the door to Peter and Andrew's house to be healed.

Why didn't Jesus let the demonic speak? Jesus is the peace bringer - perhaps that's why he didn't allow them to speak. Almost like, "we're not

doing this here,” He wouldn’t let them cause a scene, or to besmirch the holiness of His ministry. AND, they had no choice in the matter. They are but subjects of the Lord of all creation. With no power to resist.

V.35-39

Jesus has some quiet time - so necessary to get alone and be with God. There are many things competing for our attention - have we made time, like Jesus, for this?

After all, he has purchased that privilege for us by His blood - we should make good use of it - this goes back to what we said about being disciples - we are disciples of Jesus Christ before anything else. Or are we?

Rather than staying put, reveling in his popularity, Jesus moves on - others must hear this and see this.

Jesus continues to introduce the region to this new authority, this new preaching, new teaching, and an unparalleled compassion and service toward broken humans.

V.40-45 A leper is cleansed, the law must be fulfilled

Jesus demonstrates compassion toward this leper - their lives were all but ruined, they just waited to die, alone, socially distant, unable to experience human touch, or any real depth of relationship.

BUT Jesus - with authority over the vilest diseases - will having fellowship with the diseased. He sees that their sickness too is more than just skin deep but all the way to the bone.

And he heals. This man has found literally a new lease on life.

We are sometimes perplexed by Jesus' instructions to him - why go to the priest? Why offer the sacrifice for cleansing? Etc.

Well remember Jesus' words from Matt 5: [Mat 5:17 NKJV] 17 "Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill.

Remember all of those things are supposed to point us to Christ!

That leprous man, understandably overjoyed, disobeyed Jesus. How do we reconcile that?

Consider....what was Jesus trying to do by having that man show his healed body to the priests?

Who was Jesus trying to reach by sending that man purposefully to them?
What was Jesus trying to teach the next audience?

Nevertheless, the deed is done - we also see too, hints of freewill. Jesus commanded this man, whom he had healed, whom he loved, whom believed in Jesus Christ deeply, to go and do something specifically. And...it appears that he did not do that thing. He exercised his own freewill.

This disobedience actually hinders Jesus' freedom of movement. It's on now! The masses are coming! For various reasons - a spectacle, a meal, healing, freedom, fellowship, love, compassion. And all the other shades of human motivation - all coming to see the Lord. One thing is for sure - he will not leave them as they are.

Takeaway - authority and compassion/service are not mutually exclusive. They go together as wrapped up in our Lord Jesus Christ.