

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

MAY 10TH–11TH, 2025 // THE GOSPEL OF MARK

THE AUTHOR

The gospel of Mark is anonymous, though most scholars agree it was written by John Mark, the son of a wealthy widow in Jerusalem.

- Mark's family owned a large house where the church in Jerusalem would often meet.
- Mark is a cousin of Barnabas and traveled with him and Paul on their first missionary trip.
- Mark was very close to the Apostle Peter, who probably led Mark to Christ.
- He had a brief falling out with Paul because he had deserted Paul and Barnabas right before their second missionary trip. He was later restored to Paul.

SETTING OF MARK

Mark was written around 70 A.D. in Rome, right before the martyrdom of Peter. Many believe Mark is the record of Peter's recollections from Jesus' life.

- Mark is the shortest and earliest gospel.
- Mark records more of what Jesus did than what He had to say.

PURPOSE

Mark was written to a predominantly gentile audience, so there is a lot of explanation of Jewish culture.

- Mark quickly establishes **the deity of Jesus** (1:1), presents Him as **the ultimate servant**, and urges those who hear His message to **repent and turn to Him**.

PROCLAMATION (MARK 1:1–8)

JUMPING RIGHT IN

Mark wastes no time telling us the theme of this book. This is the "Gospel [good news] of Jesus Christ, the Son of God."

- This book was written to Romans. Romans wanted to see evidence and action. So, this book will focus on events more than Jesus' teachings.

TITLES AND NAMES ARE IMPORTANT

Mark presents Jesus as a servant and "slave" for His people. There is no genealogy in Mark because Romans believed slaves had no genealogies.

- Mark calls Jesus the Christ. *Jesus* is personal, *Christ* is an official title for Savior. He also claims His divinity in the title "Son of God."

THE PROPHECIES HAVE COME TRUE

From Malachi to this gospel, there had been over 300 years since a word had come from God. Mark quotes Isaiah and Malachi, not only to confirm that the prophecies had come true, but also to say that **God was going to speak to mankind again and in person!**

A MESSENGER TO PREPARE THE PATH

John the Baptist was the most important person in 300 years. God chose Him to be the one to prepare the path for Jesus, similar to how an officer prepares a king's royal journey.

- The fact that John was in the wilderness was no coincidence. **The wilderness is symbolic of Israel's rebellion against God.**

WAIT, I'M THE PROBLEM?

Jews thought only gentile converts to Judaism needed baptism, so John's call to Jews to repent and be baptized exposed that everyone needed to be spiritually cleansed.

- **Salvation begins at the realization that we are evil apart from God and are in desperate need of help and guidance!**

A "DOWN TO EARTH" LEADER

We often think of John as being some wild-looking, bug-eating anomaly. Locusts could mean the insect, but they could also be a reference to a wild nut that poor people ate.

- The point of John's appearance is that he was a humble man who walked in power and could relate to almost anyone.

A SERVANT OF THE SERVANT

John had the power of the Holy Spirit, but he humbly proclaimed that One more powerful was "coming after [him]" and he wasn't even worthy to "untie the strap of His sandals."

- **The attributes of the Spirit flourish in us when we humble ourselves and realize we are nothing in comparison to Jesus.**

WATER AND THE HOLY SPIRIT

John's work was just prep for Jesus'. John's baptism symbolized moral cleansing, but Jesus would **"baptize [us] with the Holy Spirit" and change us from the inside out.**

- We perform symbolic acts of spiritual realities of being in relationship with Jesus. Baptism is one of the most important ones!

SACRIFICE & TEMPTATION (MARK 1:9–13)

TO SET THE EXAMPLE

Jesus came from Nazareth. This implies He came without much attention at first. **He also came as a humble servant who wanted to set an important example for us.**

- Jesus was without sin. He was baptized to **demonstrate obedience to God and to identify Himself with sinful humanity.**

THE COMPLEXITY OF GOD

Three things happened at Jesus' baptism; He saw "the heavens being torn open," "the Spirit descending on Him like a dove," and God said, "You are my beloved Son...I am well-pleased."

- In Jesus' baptism, we witness the mystery of the Holy Trinity of God; the Father, Son, and Spirit are three persons but one God.

OBEDIENCE YIELDS ACTION

The three events after Jesus' baptism model inevitable events in the life of an obedient Christian: **1) Post**

baptism, the **things of heaven become more obvious.** 2) **The Spirit will continue to fill us and empower us.** 3) **We learn to listen and respond to the voice of God.**

OBEDIENCE ALSO YIELDS OPPOSITION

Mark mentions the wilderness period of sacrifice and temptation immediately after Jesus' baptism. This shows that following the will of God draws opposition from Satan.

- **Spiritual disobedience or apathy yields little tension because we are no threat to evil, but when we follow God, hell takes note.**

100% GOD, 100% HUMAN

In His 33 years on Earth, Jesus was both fully God and fully man, and in His humanity, He was tempted in every way we are (Hebrews 4:15).

- Most theological debate of Jesus has not centered around if He is God, but if He was also a man.

Understanding Jesus went through our struggles is very important.

THERE IS MUCH SYMBOLISM

Jesus was in the wilderness for 40 days, symbolizing the Jews during the 40-year exodus. Both were protected from the "wild" and delivered by the grace of God.

- Mark is the only gospel to mention that angels aided Jesus in the wilderness. There is no mention that they ever withdrew.

GETTING TO WORK (MARK 1:14–20)

OBEDIENCE, TESTING, THEN GETTING TO WORK

After modeling obedience to God and perseverance through temptation, Jesus was ready to begin His earthly ministry.

- Galilee was a province of the region of Palestine (formerly Philistia). This area was beautiful and was the region in which most of Jesus' ministry was conducted.

"AFTER JOHN WAS ARRESTED..."

John was imprisoned and eventually killed for his teachings about Jesus (Chapter 6). John was a dynamic man who showed passion and his humanity.

- Jesus said in Matthew 11 that "...among those born of women no one greater than John the Baptist has appeared."

SIMPLE AND STRAIGHTFORWARD

Jesus came to proclaim that **"The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!"**

- The "time" was the critical moment **God came in flesh to help us.** Jesus urges us to **turn from evil and destruction and live in the good news that God loves us.**

A SENSE OF URGENCY

Imagine being the Creator and knowing how terrible the road of destruction is for those who reject the truth. **Jesus strongly urged people to recognize their depravity and accept the salvation He was to give freely.**

- **Life is difficult, and we are not promised tomorrow. Are we paying attention?**

THE FIRST DISCIPLES

Jesus' plan to spread the gospel was to gather a community around Himself to take the message out to the world.

- Most of Jesus' teachings and miracles were along the Sea of Galilee. This is where He asked Simon Peter, Andrew, James, and John to follow Him.

ACCEPTING THIS INVITATION WAS A BIG DEAL

The price of discipleship is high, and these men **left everything comfortable to them in pursuit of God, truth, and purpose.**

- The word "immediately" shows us that the Spirit must have illuminated **the enormity of Who was calling them and how important this decision would be.**

MARK'S MESSAGE

- The gospels not only proclaim that Jesus is God in the flesh, but also that He is a personal, loving Savior (He has experienced our struggles), who has brought the message, blessings, and power of the Kingdom of heaven to us if we choose to accept it.

THE MODEL AND THE PROCESS

- Jesus is not just our Savior. He is the model of the process of restoration through His obedience and sacrifice.
- **Only through obedience and sacrifice can we truly experience God.** In obedience, we **recognize heavenly things, are filled with the Spirit, and learn to hear God's voice.**

THE CALL

- **True Christianity comes at a price.** Discipleship is the call to leave what is comfortable and to live as He lived.
- **Nothing of value comes without sacrifice.** To live in the eternal Kingdom comes at a temporary expense, but the present and future rewards outweigh the cost.

IT BOILS DOWN TO DEPTH

- We must ask ourselves how important our lifestyles are and what we truly want out of life. Ease, pleasure, and consumption give momentary blasts of happiness but eventually leave us shallow and empty.

- **Do the things we value so much give us the fulfillment we as humans need?**
- Do we long for something deeper? Are we willing to be humble, sacrificial, and obedient in exchange for eternal purpose? Or **have we settled for a shallow existence?**
- Salvation is free, but following Jesus may cost us everything. **Are we fully convinced that He is the way, the truth, and the life?**
- Matthew 13:45–46 (CSB)