

MAN ON A MISSION

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GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK

PART 2

“What shall we say the kingdom of God is like, or what parable shall we use to describe it? It is like a mustard seed, which is the smallest of all seeds on earth. Yet when planted, it grows and becomes the largest of all garden plants, with such big branches that the birds can perch in its shade.”

- Mark 4:30-32 -

MARK: MAN ON A MISSION

In Chapters 3-6 of Mark's Gospel, Jesus is a man on a mission. In three short chapters we're presented with four healing stories, five parables, and six accounts of how Jesus' popularity was beginning to grow and threaten his enemies. This section of Mark is a hold-onto-your hats ride on the coattails of Jesus – a man on a mission.

And yet as you journey through this wonderful book, notice how Jesus' mission never changes. He's progressively revealing his true identity to those with ears to listen and faith to follow. He's patiently biding his time, not letting his fame get to his head or setbacks derail his work. While the world around Jesus seems to be swirling out of control, Jesus stays focussed on the work he has come to do through all the ups and downs of life.

Jesus' example has so much to teach distracted disciples like us ... did I just hear my phone ping? Our world is chock full of attractions and distractions. If Satan can't kill our faith, he's happy to distract us using any means possible. Studies show that the average Aussie checks their phone 85 times per day. Imagine what would happen if we prayed 85 times a day? The average Aussie spends over five hours per day in front of a screen. Image what would happen if we spent just one hour per day studying the Bible? This is why it's so good that you're committing to spending time over the next six weeks working through Mark's Gospel and learning the Way of Jesus.

As we work through this series, I hope we'll learn more about who Jesus is and what he came to do. Ultimately Jesus is on mission to save the world from Satan, sin, and death by restoring our relationship with God. The good news is that Jesus is calling us to follow in his footsteps and be part of his mission today.

God bless you,

Rev'd David Browne
Dalby Anglican



Warming up:

Do you follow Jesus? why or why not?

Read Mark 3:1-6

1. In vv.1-5, Jesus heals a man with a withered hand on the Sabbath. What does this miracle reveal about Jesus' attitude towards human suffering and religious laws?
2. Reflect on a time when you experienced or witnessed healing - either physical, emotional, or spiritual. How did it impact your faith?

Read Mark 3:7-12

1. Despite the opposition from religious leaders, large crowds still followed Jesus. What might have attracted people to Jesus despite the risks involved?
2. In what ways did Jesus adapt his preaching to address the needs of different audiences?
3. How can we apply Jesus' example of preaching to our own lives and ministries today?

Read Mark 3:13-19

1. Why do you think Jesus chose to gather a group of disciples around him? What significance does community and fellowship have in the ministry of Jesus?
2. Reflect on the diversity among the twelve disciples. What does this diversity teach us about Jesus' message?

Rubber hits the road:

How can we emulate Jesus' ministry of healing, preaching, and gathering in our daily lives and within our communities?

Consider the importance of community in your spiritual journey. How has being part of a Christian community had an impact on your relationship with God and others?

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Gracious God, just as Jesus healed the man with the withered hand, may Your healing power flow through our lives. Grant us strength to overcome our limitations and the courage to step forward in faith. Guide us in our journey, like the twelve disciples chosen by Jesus, to spread Your message of hope and redemption. Let our lives reflect Your grace and mercy, and may we bring hope to those around us.

Amen.



Warming up:

Have you ever felt misunderstood? How do you deal with those situations?

Read: Mark 3:20-35

1. What is the setting for this reading? Why was Jesus' family saying "He is out of his mind"?
2. What were the teachers of the law saying about Jesus?
3. What is the logic of Jesus' response in vv.23-26?
4. What do you think Jesus is trying to convey in v.27? What is Jesus trying to say about his ministry of tying up the strong man and plundering his house?
5. In v.30 we see that the teachers of the law had blasphemed (said evil and untrue things) about the Holy Spirit - namely that the Holy Spirit is "impure" and "satanic". These same people had seen Jesus do miracles and preach with power and authority through the Holy Spirit. With this in mind, why do you think Jesus says that speaking this way about the Holy Spirit is unforgivable?
6. At the same time, in vv.28-29 Jesus says that "people can be forgiven all their sins and every slander they utter." What does this tell us about God's generosity and kindness in desiring to forgive?
7. What do vv.31-35 tell us about the bond and unity Jesus sees in the Body of Christ?

Rubber hits the road:

Psalm 27:10 comforts us with the words, "Even if my father and mother abandon me, the LORD will hold me close." Take some time to reflect on God's love for you, even when you feel misunderstood by others.

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Loving God, you understand what it's like to be misunderstood and mistreated. Yet you are full of grace and compassion. When I feel misunderstood, please help me to know your love and to grasp the beauty of being in your family. Please help me to show grace and compassion to others. In your precious name, Jesus, we pray.

Amen.



Warming up:

Can you remember any teachers from your time at school? What did they teach you and what made them so memorable?

Read: Mark 4:26-29

1. What is this parable about? What comparison is being made here?
2. What is the man's role in this parable? What is God's role?
3. What does this parable tell us about judgement and God's timing?
4. What does this parable tell us about the Kingdom of God and our role in seeing it grow?

Read: Mark 4:30-34

1. What are the similarities between this parable and vv.26-29?
2. What is special about the mustard seed and what happens to it?
3. While our faith might seem small, what does this tell us about God's Kingdom?
4. What does the Kingdom of God give to those who find shelter there?
5. Why did Jesus use so many parables? Who did he explain them to and why do you think he didn't explain them to everyone?

Rubber hits the road:

If you were put in jail for your faith, and all you had was Mark 4:26-34, how could you use this passage to encourage yourself and those around you?

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Gracious God, thank you that your Kingdom is growing and bringing resurrection life everywhere it grows. Thank you that when I feel weak and my efforts seem insignificant, you see me, know me, and love me.

Thank you, Jesus, for the salvation you offer to all.

Amen.



Warming up:

What do you fear the most and why?

Read: Mark 4:35-41

1. Who is the first person to sleep through a storm in a boat?
2. Why was he in the boat? What happened to him?
3. What are the disciples doing now in Mark?
4. What are the initially frightened by?
5. How does Jesus respond to the storm?
6. Read Psalm 65:1-8. Who alone can command the sea and the wind?
What does this tell us about Jesus?
7. How do the disciples respond to what Jesus does? Why?
8. What does it mean to fear the Lord (Psalm 111:10)?
9. Read Psalm 107:23-32. What does this say about Jesus?

Rubber hits the road:

What am I fearful of? Should I really be afraid of those things? Jesus really does have all authority and power in the world. This is one of our greatest comforts. The almighty creator, who with words controls the sea and wind, loves us, and cares for us deeply. How can you use this knowledge to continue to put your trust in Jesus?

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Almighty God, we thank and praise you that you have all authority and power in your creation. We thank you that you also deeply love and care for us. Please help us to put our trust in you, whatever we face in this life.

Amen.



Warming up:

Have you ever felt afraid and that you can't do anything or that all hope was lost? Why?

Read: Mark 5:21-43

1. Why was Jairus, the synagogue leader, seeking Jesus?
2. What does Jairus' actions reveal about his faith in Jesus' ability to heal his daughter?
3. How does Jairus' persistence in seeking Jesus encourage us in our own prayers and requests to God?
4. Jesus experiences a delay in reaching Jairus' daughter due to the interaction with the woman. How does Jairus respond to this delay, and what does his reaction teach us about trust and patience in God's timing?
5. How does Jesus' response to the news of the girl's death challenge our perceptions of hopelessness and impossibility?
6. Consider the woman who had been suffering from bleeding for twelve years. What does her faith demonstrate about the power of belief in Jesus?
7. How does her story illustrate the importance of reaching out to Jesus in our times of need, even when circumstances seem bleak?
8. How can this passage impact our understanding of compassion and care for those who are suffering in our communities?

Rubber hits the road:

How can we emulate Jesus' example of bringing hope and restoration to those around us who are in need of healing, both physically and spiritually?

In what areas of your life do you need to exercise faith, trust, and patience in God's power to bring healing and restoration?

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Lord, just as the woman touched your garment and was healed, may we find healing in your presence. In our moments of fear and doubt, reassure us of your power and love. Grant us the courage to reach out to you, trusting in your mercy and compassion. Like the little girl whom you raised from death, breathe new life into our souls. May our faith be strengthened, our hearts be filled with gratitude, and our lives be a testimony to your glory.

Amen.



Warming up:

Where is your hometown? What is it like?

Read: Mark 6:1-6

1. Where does Jesus travel to in this passage?
2. How do the people respond to him in v.2? How is this different to v.3?
3. Why was Jesus only able to heal some people in his hometown?
4. In what ways does familiarity breed contempt in our communities today?

Read: Mark 6:7-13

1. How does Jesus respond to his rejection in v.6 and then in vv.7-12?
2. How does Jesus equip his disciples for ministry? How does Jesus equip us?
3. What can Jesus' words to his disciples in vv.8-11 say to the church today?
4. Why is the outcome of the disciples' teaching and prayer ministry in the wider towns so different to the outcome in Jesus' hometown?
5. What does this passage show us about how we are to share the gospel with the people around us today?

Rubber hits the road:

How do people in Australia often respond to preaching and prayer?
How can we best respond to rejection?

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Jesus, thank you that you sent your disciples out to pray for people and tell them the good news. And thank you that you sent people to tell us the good news. Thank you Holy Spirit, that you give us everything we need for ministry. We ask that this week, you would grant us opportunities to pray for others and tell them about you.

Amen.

‘Overhearing what they said,
Jesus told him, “Don’t be afraid;
just believe.”’

- Mark 5:36 -



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