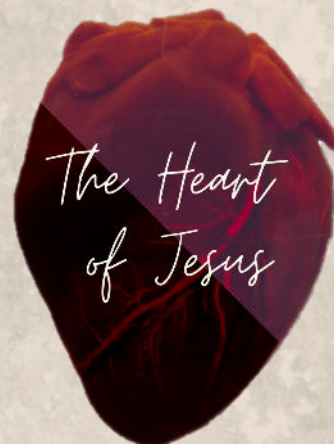




Mark's Gospel Bible Studies Part 1 May 2022



As we begin term 2 with the Heart of Jesus outreach series, small groups are encouraged to invest good time in praying for the Heart of Jesus series and the seekers' course to follow. See a prayer guide on the next page.

After the Heart of Jesus series, we will be studying Mark's gospel on Sundays. This initial set of studies gives groups a head start on Mark, and the sermons will catch up with the small group studies as the term progresses.

The Heart of Jesus Prayer time

In your Small Groups spend some dedicated time praying through these three areas.

May the Lord be at work in changing **hearts** to be more like the heart of Jesus.

Part III

Prayer for the services and the course

Ask God to be at work through his word and transform **hearts** to Jesus.

Pray that the services will be welcoming, accessible and inspiring for our guests.

Pray for the preachers, service leaders and everyone involved, that in all they do, God's word will be presented clearly.

Pray that many may come to the course and ask for wisdom for those who will lead it.

Part I

Prayer for ourselves and others from church

Ask God to give us a **heart** for the lost, and a desire to see them come to know the saving love of Jesus.

Pray that God may give us opportunities to speak to and interact with friends, neighbours and family.

Pray for courage to invite them along to church for this series.

Part II

Prayer for potential guests

Ask God to open people's **hearts** so that they may be willing to accept an invitation to this series.

Pray that many will be curious about Jesus and keen to see Jesus' heart.

Pray that God will be preparing them to take a step towards faith in Jesus.



Study 1: Mark 1:1-8

Today as we get started with Mark's gospel, we're going to dive straight in and let Mark himself tell us what this document is all about.

Read Mark 1:1-3

1. Mark labels his document as "the good news". From these verses, what do we learn about the kind of "good news" this document contains?

As Mark writes his gospel, he is not starting from a blank slate. He's picking up a story that has already been unfolding for centuries – the story of God's dealings with his chosen people Israel. Through Israel, God planned to bless the whole world (Gen 12:3) but the project had gone awry when Israel's persistent sinfulness led to their exile from the promised land (see 2 Kings 25). As Mark begins telling the good news about Jesus the Messiah (ie. king), he highlights some **Old Testament expectations** that were already in place.

Mark 1:3 is a quote from **Isaiah 40**, which was a prophetic word directed to the people of Judah when they were in exile in Babylon, about 587-539BC.

Read Isaiah 40:1-5 and 9-11 (Mark quotes v3)

2. According to this prophetic word, what events are going to occur?
3. What does the "voice of one calling" urge people to do?

Although Mark only names the major prophet Isaiah, Mark 1:2b is actually a quote from the minor prophet **Malachi**, who prophesied to the people of Jerusalem around 450BC. The people had returned from exile, the temple had been rebuilt, but disappointment reigned. The new temple showed no signs of God's glorious presence, Israel/Judah was no longer an independent nation, they no longer had a Davidic king, and were experiencing economic and spiritual decline.

Notes & Prayer Points

Read Malachi 2:17-3:4 (Mark quotes 3:1)

4. What sequence of events does Malachi predict?

Mark points out these Old Testament expectations because they will be fulfilled in the story he's about to tell about Jesus the Messiah.

Read Mark 1:4-8

5. In what ways does John the Baptist fulfill the expectations raised by Malachi and Isaiah?

Consider all that we've read today.

6. So far in Mark's gospel, Jesus himself has not appeared at all. What expectations are raised in this section about who Jesus will be, what he will do, and the reaction he will receive?
7. Think about the understanding of Jesus you had before reading this passage. Does it match the expectations raised in this passage? What aspects are new for you?
8. Think about your growth area for 2022. Does anything we've read today help inspire you to grow, or give you fuel for growth?



Study 2: Mark 1:9-20

1. If someone asked you “what is the ‘good news’ of Christianity”, how would you answer in one sentence?
2. From last week’s study, what expectations does Mark raise before Jesus appears on the scene?

Read Mark 1:9-13

3. Given the high expectations raised earlier, does Jesus’ first action surprise you? Why?
4. The words from heaven “You are my son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased” (v11) are packed with significance. Look up the following Old Testament verses and note any connections to Mark 1:11

Exodus 4:22	
Psalms 2:7-9	
Isaiah 42:1-4	

Jesus’ baptism in the Jordan, the sending of the Holy Spirit, and the words from heaven, point to him being not only God’s representative on earth, but also the royal representative of God’s people.

5. Why would Mark then mention Jesus’ temptation in the wilderness?

Read Mark 1:14-20

John’s arrest (see Mark 6:17ff) means the end of his public ministry, and is a sign that it’s time for Jesus’ preaching ministry to begin.

6. Jesus goes around proclaiming “the good news of God” (v14). How is Jesus’ message similar/different to John’s message?
7. When Jesus speaks to the fishermen, is it an invitation, an offer, a suggestion, or something else?
8. How would you describe the way Simon (Peter), Andrew, James and John respond to Jesus?
9. Does this section teach us anything about being ‘followers’ of Jesus today? What?

Consider the whole section we’ve read today.

10. What overall impression of Jesus do we get from these episodes?
11. Is there anything in this picture of Jesus that can help you with your growth area for 2022?



Notes & Prayer Points

Study 3: Mark 1:21-39

Jesus has begun his work of proclaiming God's kingdom (verses 14-15) and called his first disciples to travel with him (verses 16-20). We now see Jesus' proclamation of God's kingdom in full swing.

Read Mark 1:21-28

1. What did people find distinctive about Jesus' verbal teaching?
2. As Jesus teaches, an impure spirit calls out. What is the impure spirit worried about? Is this worry justified? (Consider Jesus' main message from verse 15)
3. The impure spirit can recognise who Jesus is. How does Jesus respond? Why would he do this??
4. What technique does Jesus use to heal the afflicted man of this demon possession? What does this show about Jesus?
5. In this scene, what is the connection between Jesus' teaching and his actions?

Read Mark 1:29-31

In New Testament times, before antibiotics and Panadol, a "fever" (v30) was a life-threatening illness.

6. What do Simon and Andrew do in this scene? What does this reveal about their growing understanding of Jesus?

7. What technique does Jesus use to heal Simon's mother in law? What does this show about him?

Notes & Prayer Points

Read Mark 1:32-34

8. What impression do we get here of Jesus' mission?

Reflect on the passage so far

9. Think about your growth area for 2022. Do these passages reveal something about Jesus that relates to your growth area?

Read Mark 1:35-39

10. Jesus escapes to a quiet place for prayer. Why would it be important for Jesus to pray at this point?

11. What do we learn in these verses about Jesus' mission?

12. As Jesus' people who join him on his mission, how should we think about the relationship between acts of mercy and the preaching of the gospel? What mistakes should we avoid?