

THE KINGDOM COMES NEAR

Mark 1-8

Study Guide Part 2

Study 4: Mark 1:40 – 2:12

Jesus was determined to preach about the arrival of God's kingdom all around the region of Galilee (Mark 1:38-39). In this study we see two examples of this ministry, provoking growing popularity with the people as well as the beginning of opposition from the scribes and Pharisees. The healings recorded here were examples amongst many others not recorded (see John 21:25).

Read Mark 1:40-45

1. Diseases like leprosy had very serious social and religious impacts in Biblical times. Read Leviticus 13:45-46 to see the Old Testament regulations for people with such a disease. Imagine you were living with leprosy back then. How would you be treated? How would you feel?
2. What did the man with leprosy know about Jesus, and what was he unsure about? Do you ever find yourself with this kind of perspective?
3. Why would Jesus' act of touching the man cause a sensation among the onlookers? Why would he do this?
4. Jesus sent the healed man to the priests to be certified as 'clean' so he could re-enter society (see Leviticus 14:1-4). But he told the man not to tell anyone else what had happened. Why would Jesus give such a command? Consider what happens afterwards, and 1:37-38.

Read Mark 2:1-12

Jesus had returned to Capernaum after a long teaching and healing mission in the villages of Galilee (1:39). Four men came to the house where Jesus was staying, bringing a paralysed man in the hope that Jesus could heal him. The man thought his deepest need was to walk again, but Jesus saw otherwise.


5. How did the four men show that they had faith that Jesus could heal their friend?

 6. Jesus' first words to the man were "Son, your sins are forgiven" (verse 5). Why is this surprising?

 7. What did the teachers of the law think about this? How does Jesus explain his actions to them?

 8. In verse 9 Jesus asks a question "which is easier...?". How would you answer? What point do you think he is making?

 9. What does this story reveal about the purpose of Jesus' healings?

 10. What do these two incidents reveal about the character of Jesus? How could we follow his example? Does this connect to your 2020 growth area in any way?
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11. What does this story teach us about faith?

Notes & Prayer Points

Study 5: Mark 2:13 – 3:6

In this section we start to see how vast the differences are between Jesus and the Pharisees and teachers of the law. The conflict between them begins to escalate.

Read Mark 2:13-17

1. Levi was a tax collector. What would it have cost him to give up his job to follow Jesus?
2. Levi invited a large number of his friends to dinner with Jesus and his disciples, perhaps to announce his decision to become one of Jesus' disciples. Try to imagine how the other disciples would feel in that company. Would you be comfortable there?
3. What lies behind the Pharisees' question in verse 16? What is their real concern?
4. Jesus responds to the Pharisees in verse 17. What does he reveal about his identity and his mission? Do you find it easy or hard to share this mindset?

Read Mark 2:18-22

The debate in this section is prompted by the question of fasting. Alan Cole explains: "Although regular weekly fasting was not part of the law of Moses, by the first century such fasting had become an important part of the practice of Judaism. [...] Fasting is, in the Bible, a sign of disaster, or penitence or mourning, or voluntary abasement of spirit."

5. Jesus was asked why his disciples weren't fasting like others. What reason did Jesus give and what did he mean?

6. Jesus introduces two illustrations - the unshrunk cloth and the old wineskins.
 - a. What general principle do these illustrations convey?

 - b. How does this principle relate to the debate about fasting?

Read Mark 2:23-27

Doing "work" on the Sabbath was prohibited in the Old Testament law (Ex 20:8-11). The Pharisees had developed a detailed definition of exactly what counted as "work", which included walking more than a certain distance, and plucking and husking corn even just for personal consumption. The disciples were breaking these detailed regulations of the Pharisees, perhaps out of simple ignorance.

7. Look at how Jesus responds to the Pharisees' accusing question. Can you spot two principles he articulates?

Read Mark 3:1-12

8. Sabbath controversy continues. The Pharisees usually had a lot to say about what was lawful on the Sabbath. Why would they have declined to answer Jesus' question in verse 4?
9. What is Jesus' diagnosis of the Pharisees? What is his emotional state?

Think about the whole section we've covered in this study

10. How does the Pharisees' attitude to Jesus develop?
11. How does our impression of Jesus develop?
12. Does anything in this passage address your growth area for 2022? Is there a way in which Jesus' authority needs to become more real in this area of your life?



Notes & Prayer Points

Study 6: Mark 3:7-35

In this section we see the wide variety of relationships people have with Jesus – the close, the very close, and the very distant.

Read Mark 3:7-12

1. How would you summarise the mood of this scene? If you were Jesus, how would you be feeling? Is there a problem developing?

Read Mark 3:13-18

2. Withdrawing to a quiet mountainside, Jesus appointed twelve who would later be known as apostles. What did he give them?
3. Can you think of any reasons from the Old Testament for there to be 12 apostles? (Consider Genesis 28:13-15, 32:28 & Exodus 28:9-11)
4. How do you think the apostles might have felt about Jesus' words to them here?
5. Does Jesus' commissioning of the twelve give you any encouragement in your growth area?



Read Mark 3:20-35

Both his family and the teachers of the Law find themselves at odds with Jesus.

6. How do the illustrations Jesus uses in verses 23-27 answer the charge made by the Teachers of the Law in verse 22?

7. Looking at the words of Jesus in verses 28-29, consider
 - a. What is the work of the Holy Spirit? (See John 15:26)

 - b. What is the Spirit testifying about Jesus through these miracles? (See Isaiah 35:4-6, Matt. 11:4-5 & 15:31)

 - c. Review the conclusions of the teachers of the Law about Jesus. Were these conclusions reasonable?

 - d. Why would people who think like this never be forgiven?

8. Jesus' mother and brothers are mentioned in verses 21 and 31-35. How does their opinion of Jesus (in this chapter) compare with the opinion of the teachers of the law?

9. In verse 31, the arrival of Jesus' mother and brothers is announced. What do you make of Jesus' response? What kinds of relationship are being compared here?

10. When we are opposed or rejected by those closest to us, what comfort can we receive from verses 33-35?

Notes & Prayer Points

Study 7: Mark 4:1-34

This is the third time Jesus teaches a crowd by the lakeside (also in 2:13 & 3:7-8). This third occasion is the only one in which we hear the content of the teaching. Again, the crowd was so large that Jesus had to teach from a boat on the lake.

Read Mark 4:1-20

This parable is taught to all, but only explained to the disciples

1. In the table below, identify what Jesus said to the crowd and then the explanation he gave to his disciples.

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|-----------------|-------------------|
| Mk.4:4 | Mk.4:15 |
| Mk.4:5-6 | Mk.4:16-17 |
| Mk.4:7 | Mk.4:18-19 |
| Mk.4:8 | Mk.4:20 |

2.a. What added responsibility does this explanation bring to the disciples?

b. What can we learn from this parable about our own walk with Christ?

c. Is there anything in this parable that could challenge or encourage you in your growth area?



Read Mark 4:21-25 - An illustration from the home

3. Explain in your own words what Jesus is telling his disciples in verses 21-22.

4. What is the challenge to us in verses 24-25?

Read Mark 4:26-34 - More illustrations from outdoors:

5. What insights into Kingdom growth do the parables of the growing seed and the mustard seed give us?

6. Reflect on the teaching of Jesus in these passages. What lessons can we learn about evangelism from these parables and the teaching of Jesus?

Notes & Prayer Points

Study 8: Mark 4:35 – 5:20

** = suggested optional questions as time permits.*

1. **Sharing:** What kind of things can make you feel anxious or afraid?

Read Mark 4:35-41

2. As the disciples travelled with Jesus across the lake in a boat, they were caught in a storm. How serious was the situation?

3. What was Jesus doing during this event? How does the disciples' question in verse 38 reveal their thoughts about Jesus?

4. How did Jesus respond to fix the situation? What does this reveal about Jesus and his relationship with his disciples?

5. * **Deep Dive:** To what does Jesus attribute the disciples' fear? How are fear and faith connected (consider 1 John 4:18, Rom 8:38-39)?

6. **Reflection:** God doesn't promise that we won't experience trouble in life. How does being with Jesus help you to weather the storms of life?



7. Think about your growth area for 2022. Is there an interplay of fear and faith for you in this area?

Read Mark 5:1-20

8. * When Jesus arrives at the other side of the lake he is confronted by a man. What was the man's history and condition?
9. How did the possessed man respond to meeting Jesus?
10. What did Jesus do for the man? What does this reveal about Jesus?
11. Contrast the response of the people who heard about what Jesus did with that of the man that was rescued.
12. **Reflection:** How has Jesus rescued you? How does this motivate you to tell people about Jesus?

Pray Together:

- Bring to Jesus the things in life that can cause you to fear. Ask him to increase our faith in him and his love and power.
- If you have been rescued by Jesus, thank him and ask him to enable you to proclaim him.

Notes & Prayer Points

Study 9: Mark 5:21 – 6:6a

** = suggested optional questions as time permits.*

1. **Sharing:** Describe a situation when you needed someone to help you. How did receiving or not receiving that help make you feel?

Jairus - Read Mark 5:21-24a and 35-43

2. Who was Jairus and what was his terrible situation?
3. What do Jairus' actions reveal about his beliefs concerning Jesus?
4. * What was surprising about Jesus' response to the news that Jairus' daughter had died?
5. What did Jesus ask Jairus to do? Do you think this would have been difficult?
6. What miracle did Jesus perform? What does this reveal about Jesus?

The Woman - Read Mark 5:24b-34

7. On the way to Jairus' house, Jesus met a woman. What was the woman's situation?

8. What did the woman know and believe about Jesus?

9. What happened to the woman when she touched Jesus' cloak? What does this reveal about Jesus?

10. **In Depth:** What is the connection between the woman's healing and her faith? Why is faith important?

The People of Nazareth - Read Mark 6:1-6

11. How did the various people in Nazareth respond to Jesus' teaching and miracles?

12. * **Discussion:** What is the role of faith in these stories? Why is faith important?

13. **Reflection:** If your faith is in Jesus, share why you have believed in him. If you've experienced doubt, what has been the source of this?

Pray Together:

- Pray that God will continue to grow your faith in Jesus. Thank God for his incredible gifts received through faith in Jesus.