

SMALL GROUP NOTES

Meet Jesus: The Gospel of Mark



MEET
JESUS

THE GOSPEL OF MARK



ST MARY'S AND SALE WEST

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INTRODUCTION

If you've ever wanted to get closer to Jesus, not just to know things about Him, but to actually meet Him then Mark's Gospel is a brilliant place to be. Mark doesn't warm us up slowly. He opens the door wide and says, "Come on, you need to see this." His writing is fast, vivid, and full of movement. It feels like someone who can't wait to tell you what Jesus did and why it matters, because that's exactly what it is.

The early church tells us that the author, John Mark, was a close companion of both Peter and Paul. Papias, one of the earliest Christian writers after the New Testament, said that Mark wrote down Peter's memories of Jesus "accurately, though not in order" which explains the breathless pace and eyewitness feel of the book. When you read Mark, you're hearing the voice of someone who was actually there: the fisherman-turned-apostle who walked with Jesus, failed Jesus, was restored by Jesus, and spent the rest of his life telling anyone who would listen about Him. Someone who saw the healings, heard the teaching, felt the spray of the storm on the lake and watched Jesus walk to the cross. Mark captures that honesty and urgency, that sense of "you had to be there."

Mark most likely wrote his Gospel for Christians in Rome in the late 50s or early 60s AD, believers facing pressure, uncertainty, and even persecution. They needed to know who Jesus really was, why following Him was worth it, and how to stay faithful when life felt chaotic. Mark doesn't give long speeches or detailed arguments. He simply shows us Jesus in action: healing, teaching, confronting evil, calling disciples, and moving steadily toward the cross. His favourite word is "immediately." This Gospel moves because Jesus moves.

As we journey through this Gospel together, expect to be encouraged, stretched, unsettled, and renewed. Expect Jesus to surprise you, expect Him to confront you, expect Him to comfort you, expect Him to call you again, not just to believe in Him but to follow Him. Whether you've been walking with Jesus for decades or you're still exploring faith, Mark invites you to see Jesus with fresh eyes and an open heart. So come ready. Come curious. Come expectant. Mark's Gospel isn't just a story to study, it's an invitation to encounter the living Jesus, and He is worth meeting. As always, if you want a good overview of the Gospel of Mark then search 'Mark's Gospel Bible Project' in YouTube.

Lastly, I would like nothing more than for you to completely ignore the questions I

have prepared each week, despite the preparation that goes into them. I would much prefer it if you read the scripture set and spent time as a group discussing it together, what does this show us about Jesus, us, the world? What in this passage do I find encouraging or challenging? How do we respond to this? What are our next steps in the light of this passage?..... See if you can take the plunge and just go for it, it might feel awkward at first but you will get into it and your conversations will be richer as a result and you may well find that after a while you will need to set a timer because you will have so much to discuss. However, do feel free to use the questions as a guide to get conversation flowing or follow them through like you normally would.

WEEK 1

THIS CHANGES EVERYTHING

Mark opens his Gospel with urgency and clarity. Jesus has arrived and nothing will ever be the same. There's no slow build-up, just the announcement of good news, the revelation of Jesus' identity and the call to turn towards Him. These verses show us a Jesus who steps into history with purpose, authority and compassion. For those who have followed Him for years, this passage invites us to rediscover the wonder of His arrival and the transforming power of His kingdom breaking into ordinary life.

Share a moment when you realised, "Life won't be the same after this."

READ Mark 1:1–15

- DISCUSS**
1. What strikes you about the way Mark introduces Jesus and the "beginning of the good news"?
 2. What is happening in Jesus' baptism and wilderness testing and what do these moments reveal about His identity?
 3. How does Jesus' proclamation of the kingdom shape your understanding of who He is?
 4. What do you see about Jesus here that moves you, surprises you or stirs worship in you?
 5. Where might Jesus be inviting you into a fresh beginning or renewed obedience?
 6. How does the nearness of God's kingdom challenge the way you see your daily routines, relationships, or priorities?
 7. What does repentance look like for a mature disciple — not just turning from sin, but turning toward Jesus?
 8. What is one step you sense Jesus calling you to take in response to His arrival?

- PRAY**
- Pray for renewed awe at who Jesus is and what His kingdom brings.
 - Pray for courage to respond to Jesus' call with openness and trust.

WEEK 2

DROP THE NETS, JOIN THE MISSION

Jesus' call to the first disciples is simple and disruptive: "Follow me." These early scenes show a Jesus who interrupts ordinary lives, carries unmatched authority, confronts darkness and restores the broken. This passage invites us to step into the sandals of the disciples and ask ourselves if we will say "Yes" to Jesus or to revisit our first "yes" to Jesus and to ask whether we are still following Him with the same surrender and expectancy. Jesus is still calling, still cleansing, still leading and He invites us to keep dropping whatever holds us back.

If Jesus said "Come with me" today, what's the first thing you'd instinctively want to grab?

READ

Mark 1:14–45

DISCUSS

1. What do you notice about the disciples' response to Jesus' call?
2. How does Jesus' authority show itself in His teaching, healing and deliverance?
3. What do these scenes reveal about Jesus' compassion and mission?
4. What do you see about Jesus here that moves you, surprises you or stirs worship in you?
5. Where might Jesus be asking you to "drop the nets" again to release something familiar so He can lead you further?
6. How does Jesus' authority challenge or comfort you at this stage of your discipleship?
7. Where do you see Jesus confronting darkness or restoring brokenness today and how might He be inviting you to join Him?
8. What is one concrete step of obedience or surrender you want to take this week?

PRAY

- Pray for renewed willingness to follow Jesus wherever He leads.
- Pray for confidence in Jesus' authority over every part of life.

WEEK 3

JESUS DOESN'T PLAY BY YOUR RULES

In these stories, Jesus disrupts expectations, challenges religious assumptions and reveals a kingdom shaped by mercy rather than rule-keeping. He forgives, heals, eats with outsiders, and confronts hardened hearts. For mature believers, this passage invites us to examine where our faith may have become rigid, comfortable, or self-protective. Jesus is still the One who breaks open our assumptions and leads us into deeper grace.

What's a rule you secretly enjoy bending?

READ Mark 2:1–3:6

- DISCUSS**
1. What do these stories reveal about the tension between Jesus and the religious leaders?
 2. How does Jesus demonstrate His authority to forgive, heal, and redefine holiness?
 3. What do you learn about Jesus' priorities from the people He spends time with?
 4. What do you see about Jesus here that moves you, surprises you or stirs worship in you?
 5. Where might Jesus be challenging assumptions or habits you've held for a long time?
 6. How can mature disciples guard against drifting into rule-keeping rather than relationship?
 7. What does choosing mercy over judgement look like in your current relationships?
 8. What step can you take this week to align your heart more closely with Jesus' heart?

- PRAY**
- Pray for soft hearts that welcome Jesus' correction.
 - Pray for grace to embody Jesus' mercy in difficult places.

WEEK 4

THE KINGDOM IS CLOSER THAN YOU THINK

Jesus teaches in parables that reveal the hidden, surprising and often slow-growing nature of God's kingdom. These stories invite us to listen deeply, to pay attention to the condition of our hearts, and to trust that God is at work even when we cannot see it. For long-time believers, this passage challenges us to remain receptive, humble and hopeful, trusting Jesus to grow His kingdom in us and through us.

What's something small that ended up making a big difference in your life?

READ

Mark 3:7–4:34

DISCUSS

1. What stands out to you in Jesus' parables about seeds, soil and growth?
2. How does Jesus describe the way God's kingdom works?
3. What do these parables reveal about Jesus as a teacher and revealer of truth?
4. What do you see about Jesus here that moves you, surprises you or stirs worship in you?
5. What kind of "soil" do you feel like right now?
6. Where might Jesus be inviting you to slow down and listen more deeply?
7. How can you cultivate habits that help God's word take root and grow?
8. What small act of faithfulness could you plant this week, trusting Jesus with the growth?

PRAY

- Pray for hearts that are soft, receptive and ready for Jesus' word.
- Pray for patience and trust in the slow, hidden work of God's kingdom.

WEEK 5

STORM-BREAKER, CHAIN-BREAKER, DEATH-BREAKER

These four stories reveal Jesus' authority over nature, demons, sickness and death. They show a Jesus who steps into chaos, fear, shame and grief and brings restoration. This passage invites us to trust Jesus not only in theory but in the storms, battles and heartbreaks of real life. He is still the One who brings peace, freedom and hope.

What's the most memorable storm you've ever experienced?

READ

Mark 4:35–5:43

DISCUSS

1. What do these stories collectively reveal about Jesus' authority and compassion?
2. How does Jesus respond to fear, desperation and suffering in these encounters?
3. What strikes you about the faith (or lack of faith) of the people involved?
4. What do you see about Jesus here that moves you, surprises you or stirs worship in you?
5. Where do you need Jesus' peace or freedom in your life right now?
6. How do you usually respond when you feel overwhelmed and how might Jesus be inviting you to respond differently?
7. Where might Jesus be calling you to trust Him in a deeper or riskier way?
8. How can you bring Jesus' hope into someone else's storm this week?

PRAY

- Pray for Jesus' peace in the storms you face.
- Pray for freedom and healing where there is fear, shame, or struggle.

WEEK 6

REJECTED HERE, NEEDED EVERYWHERE

Jesus experiences rejection in His hometown, yet continues His mission and sends His disciples out with authority and simplicity. This chapter reminds us that following Jesus often involves disappointment, misunderstanding and dependence on God's provision. For mature believers, it's a call to persevere, to trust Jesus' sending and to step into mission even when it feels costly.

Share a time you felt underestimated and what it taught you.

READ

Mark 6

DISCUSS

1. Why do you think Jesus was rejected in Nazareth?
2. What stands out to you about the way Jesus sends the disciples?
3. What does this chapter reveal about Jesus' expectations for His followers?
4. What do you see about Jesus here that moves you, surprises you or stirs worship in you?
5. How do you respond to rejection or discouragement in your faith journey?
6. Where might Jesus be calling you to step out in faith despite fear or inadequacy?
7. How can you cultivate deeper dependence on Jesus rather than your own resources?
8. Who might Jesus be sending you to this week?

PRAY

- Pray for courage to follow Jesus even when it's costly.
- Pray for openness to wherever Jesus is sending you.

WEEK 7

JESUS GOES FOR THE HEART

Jesus confronts the gap between outward religion and inward reality. He exposes the ways traditions can overshadow God's heart and He welcomes those considered outsiders. This passage invites honest reflection: where has faith become routine and where is Jesus calling us back to the heart of things?

What's a tradition you love and one you could easily let go of?

READ

Mark 7

DISCUSS

1. What does Jesus challenge about the Pharisees' approach to purity and tradition?
2. What do you learn from the Syrophenician woman's boldness and faith?
3. How does Jesus reveal God's heart for outsiders and the overlooked?
4. What do you see about Jesus here that moves you, surprises you or stirs worship in you?
5. Where might Jesus be exposing areas where your faith has become more about habit than heart?
6. How can you cultivate a deeper, more honest relationship with Jesus?
7. Who are the "outsiders" Jesus might be calling you to welcome or listen to?
8. What heart-level change is Jesus inviting you to pursue this week?

PRAY

- Pray for a heart that is soft, humble and responsive to Jesus.
- Pray for grace to welcome those Jesus welcomes.

WEEK 8

WHO DO YOU SAY HE IS?

This chapter centres on the question that defines discipleship: “Who do you say I am?” Jesus reveals Himself as the Messiah, but also as the suffering Son who calls His followers to take up their cross. For mature believers, this passage invites us to examine how we truly see Jesus and whether our lives reflect that vision.

Who’s someone you misjudged at first and what changed your perspective?

READ

Mark 8

DISCUSS

1. Why do you think the disciples struggled to understand Jesus’ identity?
2. What does Peter’s confession reveal — and what does his rebuke reveal?
3. What does Jesus teach about the cost of following Him?
4. What do you see about Jesus here that moves you, surprises you or stirs worship in you?
5. How clearly do you feel you’re seeing Jesus right now?
6. What does “taking up your cross” look like in your current season?
7. Where might Jesus be calling you to surrender something deeply held?
8. What step can you take this week to align your life more closely with who Jesus truly is?

PRAY

- Pray for clearer vision of Jesus as He truly is.
- Pray for courage to embrace costly discipleship.

WEEK 9

GLORY ON THE MOUNTAIN, GRIT IN THE VALLEY

Jesus is revealed in glory on the mountain, yet immediately descends into the valley of human need. This chapter shows both His majesty and His humility. It's a reminder that following Jesus means holding together worship and service, revelation and obedience, glory and grit.

Share a “mountaintop moment” you’ve experienced, spiritual or otherwise.

READ

Mark 9

DISCUSS

1. What does the Transfiguration reveal about Jesus' identity?
2. How does Jesus respond to the disciples' confusion and the crowd's desperation?
3. What does Jesus teach about true greatness?
4. What do you see about Jesus here that moves you, surprises you or stirs worship in you?
5. Where do you sense Jesus inviting you to come down from the mountain and serve?
6. How can you cultivate humility in places where pride or comparison creep in?
7. What does childlike faith look like for you right now?
8. Who might Jesus be calling you to serve quietly and sacrificially this week?

PRAY

- Pray for a heart that worships Jesus in glory and follows Him into the valley.
- Pray for humility and childlike trust.

WEEK 10

OPEN HANDS, OPEN EYES

Jesus meets people with very different needs, children, a wealthy seeker, ambitious disciples and a blind beggar. Each encounter reveals something about His heart and about what it means to follow Him with open hands. This chapter invites us to examine what we're holding onto and where Jesus is opening our eyes.

What's something you find surprisingly hard to let go of?

READ

Mark 10

DISCUSS

1. What do these encounters reveal about Jesus' priorities and compassion?
2. How does the rich man's story challenge your understanding of discipleship?
3. What stands out to you about Bartimaeus' faith and persistence?
4. What do you see about Jesus here that moves you, surprises you or stirs worship in you?
5. Where do you sense Jesus opening your eyes to something new?
6. How can you cultivate a posture of openness and surrender?
7. What step of faith is Jesus inviting you to take this week?

PRAY

- Pray for open hands and open eyes to follow Jesus wholeheartedly.
- Pray for freedom from anything that competes with Jesus' call.

WEEK 11

JESUS TURNS THE TABLES

Jesus enters Jerusalem with authority, confronts empty religion, teaches about love and justice and calls His followers to stay awake. These chapters reveal a Jesus who refuses to be domesticated, they challenge us to examine our own hearts, our worship and our readiness for His kingdom.

If you could “turn the tables” on one thing in society, what would it be? Why?

READ

Mark 11-13

DISCUSS

1. What does Jesus' temple action reveal about His heart and priorities?
2. How does Jesus challenge the religious leaders and why?
3. What does Jesus teach about watchfulness and faithfulness?
4. What do you see about Jesus here that moves you, surprises you or stirs worship in you?
5. Where might Jesus be wanting to clear space in your life?
6. How can you cultivate integrity and authenticity in your worship?
7. What does living “awake” look like in your everyday life?
8. Where is Jesus calling you to courage or conviction?

PRAY

- Pray for purity of heart and authenticity in worship.
- Pray for readiness and faithfulness as you follow Jesus.

WEEK 12

THE CROWN, THE CROSS, THE EMPTY TOMB

Mark brings us to the climax of his Gospel with intensity and honesty. We walk with Jesus through betrayal, abandonment, suffering and crucifixion and then we arrive at the empty tomb, only to find fear, astonishment and silence. Mark's original ending (16:8) doesn't give us resurrection appearances or a neat conclusion. Instead, it leaves us standing with the women, trembling at the reality that Jesus is alive and the world has changed forever.

This ending is deliberate. Mark wants us to feel the shock, the awe, the holy fear of encountering a risen Jesus who cannot be controlled or contained. He wants us to sense the weight of the angel's words: "He has risen... He is going ahead of you." He wants us to wrestle with the question the women faced: What will you do with this news?

This passage invites us to return to the heart of our faith, the suffering love of Jesus, the power of His resurrection and the call to respond. Mark leaves the story open because we are meant to step into it.*

What's a story (book, film) that always moves you deeply? Why?

*If you want to explore what is happening with and how to handle the 'alternative' ending of Mark's Gospel then here is some teaching from NIV and ESV Bible translators:

<https://bridgetown.church/teachings-gospel-of-mark/the-extra-ending-of-mark>

READ

Mark 14-16:8

DISCUSS

1. What part of the passion narrative impacts you most, and why?
2. How does Jesus' suffering reveal the heart of God?
3. What does the resurrection show us about Jesus' power and purpose?
4. What do you see about Jesus here that moves you, surprises you or stirs worship in you?
5. How does the cross shape your understanding of your identity and

worth?

6. How does the angel's announcement, 'He has risen', speak hope into your life today?
7. How might Jesus be calling you to embody His sacrificial love?
8. What does "going and telling" look like in your real relationships?

PRAY

- Pray for deeper gratitude for Jesus' sacrifice and victory.
- Pray for boldness to live and speak as resurrection people.