



Series Overview and Guides

2020-2021 ANNUAL THEME | SERIES 2

OCTOBER-NOVEMBER 2020

Objective

what we hope to see God accomplish in us through this study

That we see Jesus anew and are drawn to follow Him.

STATEMENTS OF THE OBJECTIVE

"'Follow me,' Jesus told them, 'and I will make you fish for people.' Immediately they left their nets and followed him."

—Mark 1:17-18

"In Mark 1:17, two words are used in Mark's rendering of Jesus' words. 'Come' is the translation of *deute*, the word our Lord [later] uses when He says, 'Lazarus, come forth.' It means 'come here, come!' 'After' is *opiso*. When used with *deute* it includes the idea of a long slow process of becoming. 'Followed' in verse 20 is *akoloutheo*, from a word meaning 'to walk the same road.' ...It implies fellowship, joint-participation, a side-by-side walking with another. Thus, over time the word came to mean to [Christians] 'to join as a disciple, to cleave steadfastly, to conform wholly to his example in living, and, if need be, dying.'"

—Kenneth Wuest
Mark in the Greek New Testament

Premise

why we are studying this

We exist in a cynical season, among people who think we are all very knowledgeable, beset by anxieties real and imagined. Distress and persecution continue to increase for people, including Christians in America. It is no accident that those who burn US flags in protest have taken to burning Bibles as well.

In such an environment, appropriate excitement about Jesus can become choked out by the weeds of concerns. Instead of trusting the Messiah who is Lord of all, our hearts harden as we fight the wrong battles in the wrong ways. Conversely, if we look with wonder at the breathless presentation of Jesus in *Mark*, we will be drawn to follow Him in faith – a choice that makes all the difference.

STATEMENTS OF THE PREMISE

"[Christians, we] ought to say to ourselves every morning, 'This is what my Father is saying to me in Jesus: "Thou art my beloved son or daughter in whom I am well-pleased.'" That is what gives us a sense of security and identity, a place to stand, which means we can be calm and unthreatened when everything goes to pieces around us. This is where it comes from – no other source."

—Ray Steadman
The Servant Who Rules

Theme

what the study is about

Jesus is revealed as the Glorious One. Along with His apostles, we marvel as Mark introduces us to Jesus as:

- Son of Man [Ch. 1]
- Lord of the Sabbath [Ch. 1-2]
- Apostle-sender [Ch. 3, 6]
- Giver of kingdom secrets [Ch. 4]
- Commander of weather [Ch. 4]
- Miraculous healer [Ch. 5]
- Shepherd/provider [Ch. 6]
- Lord of everything – all traditions, foods, peoples, and actions [Ch. 7]
- Messiah [Ch. 8].

STATEMENTS OF THE THEME

"And they were terrified and asked one another, 'Who then is this? Even the wind and the sea obey him!'"

—Mark 4:41

"Following Jesus is like falling up through an elevator shaft."

—Stephen Baldwin
Spoken to Dan Southern and Wayne Braudrick, later in *The Usual Suspect*



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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SERIES 2 | SESSION 1

GROUP DISCUSSION



ANNUAL THEME 2020-2021

WONDER

SCRIPTURE READING

Mark 1:1-20

KEY IDEAS

THEME

To follow Jesus is the calling of life. It is indeed a whirlwind of change and action, removal of sin and injection of righteousness from God the Spirit. Mark breathlessly and powerfully introduces us to Jesus, spreading to us the invitation to become disciples.

OBJECTIVE

We know the time, repent, and believe Jesus.

THE GOOD NEWS

"A 'Gospel' was a unique literary form in the first century. It was not simply a biography of Jesus' life, a chronicle of His 'mighty deeds,' or a set of reminiscences by His followers, though it contains elements of all these. Rather it is a theological proclamation to a particular audience of God's 'good news' centered in the historical events of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection."

—J.D. Grassmick
Mark, Bible Knowledge Commentary

PRAYER

Pray for each other this week, that we devote ourselves to following Jesus wholeheartedly.

Use the back of this page to write prayer requests.

Session 1: A Steroid Shot of Jesus

1. Read the Objective and Premise of this series from page 1 of this study guide.
 - What anxieties, real and imagined, are prevalent around you?
 - How easy or difficult is it for you to trust the Messiah who is Lord over all?
2. Read Mark 1:1-8.
 - What were the major points of John's message in preparing the way for the coming of the Messiah?
 - How did you respond the first time you were told to repent of your sins?
 - How did John avoid remaining the focus of attention?
3. Read verses 9-13.
 - Why did Jesus submit to being baptized? Compare Matthew 3:13-15.
 - Why was Jesus tempted, and how does His temptation benefit us? See Hebrews 2:17-18 and 4:15.
4. Read Mark 1:14-15.
 - What does Jesus say is "the good news"?
 - Why would it have been difficult for a first century Jew to believe what He said?
 - What makes it difficult today for people to believe the good news?
 - John and Jesus both called people to repent. How common is that in gospel presentations now?
5. Read Mark 1:16-20.
 - What did the call to follow Jesus entail for these men?
 - What does it require from us today?
6. Read the Theme in the sidebar.
 - What is the biggest challenge in your discipleship?
 - Why is it important that we choose to live out our faith?
 - How can we better understand what God is doing in our time?



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SERIES 2 | SESSION 2

GROUP DISCUSSION



ANNUAL THEME 2020-2021

WONDER

SCRIPTURE READING

Mark 1:21-2:13

KEY IDEAS

THEME

Jesus is the boss. Period. He has all authority, sets the best agenda, and fights the right battles. Wise people imitate Him, especially in doing everything for God's glory.

OBJECTIVE

We follow Jesus in caring for all to God's glory.

AUTHORITY

"Jesus' authoritative teaching, as the spoken Word of God, contrasts sharply with that of the scribes (experts in the OT scriptures), who based their authority largely on that of other rabbis. Jesus' direct, personal, and forceful teaching was so foreign to their experience that those who heard him were 'astonished.'"

—John MacArthur
The MacArthur Bible Commentary

"Then Jesus came near and said to them, 'All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.'"

—Matthew 28:18

PRAYER

Pray for each other this week, that we have eyes to see and hearts to care for those around us.

Use the back of this page to write prayer requests.

Session 2: The No-Longer-Undercover Boss

1. Before you became a Christian, whom did you consider the highest authority in life? Why?
2. In Mark 1:21-34, Jesus begins to demonstrate His authority over both the spiritual and physical realms.
 - In 21-28, the people in Capernaum recognize that Jesus has authority over what two things?
 - Why would they be "astonished at his teaching" (v. 22)? When was the last time you were astonished at God's Word?
 - In verses 29-34, what authority does Jesus demonstrate?
 - Why is it significant that the demons knew Jesus (v. 34)?
3. Read verses 35-37. Spending time alone in prayer is an important spiritual discipline.
 - How well are you following Jesus' example?
 - What are some things that help you maintain a daily prayer time?
 - Discuss how you can regularly encourage each other in this discipline.
4. Read the rest of Mark's first chapter, along with 2:1-5 and 13-17.
 - Discuss the different kinds and status of people Jesus cares for, and in what ways.
 - How easy it for you to have compassion and then act to care for those around you?
5. Read the entire account of the paralytic in Mark 2:1-12.
 - Jesus claims yet another authority. What is it?
 - Who did the scribes rightly acknowledge exclusively to have this authority?
 - Back in 1:40-42, Jesus healed a leper. Who alone in the Old Testament healed leprosy? See Exodus 4:5-8 and 2 Kings 5:6-17.
 - Why does Jesus have so much authority? Discuss, and then read Colossians 1:12-20.



SERIES 2 | SESSION 3

GROUP DISCUSSION



ANNUAL THEME 2020-2021

WONDER

SCRIPTURE READING

Mark 2:23-3:35

KEY IDEAS

OBJECTIVE

We relate to Jesus as Lord.

KNOWING WHAT GOD IS LIKE

"Left to ourselves we tend immediately to reduce God to manageable terms. We want to get Him where we can use Him, or at least know where He is when we need Him. We want a God we can in some measure control. We need the feeling of security that comes from knowing what God is like, and what he is like is of course a composite of all the religious pictures we have seen, all the best people we have known or heard about, and all the sublime ideas we have entertained."

—A.W. Tozer
The Knowledge of the Holy

PRAYER

Pray for each other this week, that we live in submission to Jesus as Lord.

Use the back of this page to write prayer requests.

Session 3: Jesus is Lord

1. Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath: Mark 2:23 - 3:6
 - In Mark 2:27, what does it mean that God instituted the Sabbath for man's benefit?
 - Was Jesus guilty of breaking the law regarding the Sabbath? Why, or why not?
 - In Mark 3:4, why didn't the religious leaders or the people have an answer for this question?
 - What does "keeping the Sabbath" mean for you today?
2. Read Mark 3:9-10.
 - How does knowing Jesus is Lord over illness and disease impact your prayers?
 - Has this fact brought you peace during the current pandemic? Discuss why, or why not.
3. Jesus is Lord over demons and Satan: Mark 3:11-12, 20-30
 - In Mark 3:11-12, why does Jesus command the demons not to reveal His identity?
 - How does Jesus refute the claim that He is working on Satan's behalf? How does Jesus show He is more powerful than Satan?
 - Read Matthew 4:10-11. When Jesus resisted Satan's temptations, what did Satan do?
 - Read James 4:7. What are we exhorted to do? What will be the result?
4. In what ways do you struggle to "submit yourself to God" (James 4:7) and acknowledge that Jesus is your Lord? How can this group pray for you?



SERIES 2 | SESSION 4

GROUP DISCUSSION



ANNUAL THEME 2020-2021

WONDER

SCRIPTURE READING

Mark 4:1-34

KEY IDEAS

THEME

Jesus changes everything. Even those who reject Him must react to Him. This parable, and its explanation, reveals the ways all people of all time respond to the Lord. The best response brings light and fruitfulness.

OBJECTIVE

We bear fruit by faith.

LISTEN!

“The present imperative verb *Listen!* and the particle *Behold* were designed to draw the attention of the crowd. The Greek word for listen and hear is *akouō* (used twelve times in the discourse) and is a key theme of the chapter. How one hears is crucial in his relationship to Jesus and his fruitfulness.

The OT quotation from Isaiah 6:9-10 is pivotal in understanding the passage. Isaiah was called to pronounce judgment on Israel because of their unwillingness to hear and repent. Like their ancestors, the present nation has also failed to hear and repent.”

—Barry Mershon, Jr.

The Grace New Testament Commentary

PRAYER

Pray for each other this week, that we remain faithful in our spiritual growth disciplines.

Session 4: No Getting Around Him

1. Of all of Jesus’ parables, which is your favorite and why?
2. When studying Jesus’ parables, what is the danger of over-analyzing every word?
3. Read Mark 4:1-20.
 - Why did Jesus use parables when describing the kingdom of God?
 - What is the one main idea of this parable of the sower?
 - What is the significance of the fact that the word is sown on all soil types?
4. How do verses 21-25 further relate to the understanding of the kingdom of God mentioned in verse 11?
5. Read the rest of this section, verses 26-34.
 - In verses 26-29, does the man in the parable cause the seed’s growth? What is the man’s part?
 - What is your part in growing as a Christian? What is your part in the spiritual growth of others?
 - Without using size words like *small* and *large*, describe how the end result in the parable of the mustard seed compares with the beginning.
6. What do all these parables in Mark 4 say about God’s purpose for our growth?



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SERIES 2 | SESSION 5

GROUP DISCUSSION



ANNUAL THEME 2020-2021

WONDER

SCRIPTURE READING

Mark 4:35-5:43

KEY IDEAS

THEME

Through a connected series of four true stories, Mark shows that Jesus cannot be thwarted. To an audience in Rome just beginning to taste the peril of persecution, this becomes a very pertinent message. Jesus has a plan and power over everything they and we fear. Even death does not stop Him, so we should trust and obey.

OBJECTIVE

We know fear of God only and know no fear of anything else.

TWO REBUKES

"Jesus rebuked the wind and said to the waves, 'Be silent! Be muzzled and remain so!' The verb, be muzzled (*pephimōsa*), was somewhat of a technical term for dispossessing a demon of his power and may suggest that Jesus recognized demonic powers behind the ferocious storm."

"Jesus rebuked his disciples for being afraid in a crisis. Despite Jesus' tutoring, it still had not dawned on them that God's authority and power were present in Jesus."

—John D. Grassmick
The Bible Knowledge Commentary

PRAYER

Pray for each other this week, that earthly terrors disappear before our fear of God Almighty.

Session 5: No Fear

1. What current storm or seemingly hopeless situation has you fearful?
 2. Read Mark 4:35-41.
 - What were these experienced fishermen afraid of during the storm?
 - What did they fear after the storm? Why?
 - What do you find is greater most often in your life: your awe of God's power, or your fear of circumstances? Discuss why.
 3. Review the episode in Mark 5:1-20.
 - In verse 15, why were the people so afraid that they begged Jesus to leave?
 - In contrast, how did the healed man respond?
 - Have you ever experienced the awesome power of God? If so, describe what happened.
 4. Review Mark 5:21-43.
 - Over what two things does Jesus demonstrate complete power?
 - In verse 36, Jesus mentions two possible responses to the seemingly hopeless situation. Which is your default response?
 5. Revisit your answers to question 1. Can you believe that God's awesome power is greater than those things? Why, or why not?



SERIES 2 | SESSION 6

GROUP DISCUSSION



ANNUAL THEME 2020-2021

WONDER

SCRIPTURE READING

Mark 6:1-56

KEY IDEAS

THEME

This passage represents a brilliant interplay of rejection and acceptance. The scenes in chapter 6 are revisited in our lives today. We face rejection. We get unhorsed by the unsettling Person of Messiah. We have opportunity to go to work knowing Jesus is more than enough; yet are scared of doing so. We have sickness. But Jesus meets us there. He prepares us. He sends us. He feeds us. He gets in our boat with us. And He heals us.

OBJECTIVE

We work even in the face of rejection.

SEEK GOD'S FAVOR

"Rejection is dangerous, it can make you feel as if you are all alone. But when or if it happens, the choice is ours; we can either shrink Christ down to our own human understanding and thereby reject Him or we can surrender to Him and allow Him to be our Lord and Savior. When you're dealing with rejection you should seek God's favor as opposed to the favor of men."

—Spencer Miller
How Jesus Dealt With Rejection

PRAYER

Pray for each other this week, that we faithfully serve the Lord even when rejected by others.

Use the back of this page to write prayer requests.

Session 6: Rejection and Acceptance

1. Jesus is rejected: Read Mark 6:1-6.

- Have you experienced rejection from family or friends since becoming a Christian?
- How can the fear of rejection sometimes reveal our own unbelief?
- What did Jesus do after being rejected?

2. The apostles are sent: Read Mark 6:7-13.

- Did Jesus prepare them for acceptance or rejection? Which should we expect?
- Was rejection a reason for them to quit working? Is it for us?
- How do you find the courage to continue sharing the gospel after being rejected?

3. Jesus offers acceptance: Review Mark 6:30-56.

- Discuss the ways in which Jesus responded to the needs of the multitudes (vv. 34, 42, 45, 56).
- Discuss the ways in which He responded to the needs of His disciples (vv. 31, 42-51).

4. Discuss a situation in which you need to offer acceptance and minister to someone's needs. How can this group pray for you?



SERIES 2 | SESSION 7

GROUP DISCUSSION



ANNUAL THEME 2020-2021

WONDER

SCRIPTURE READING

Mark 7:1-37

KEY IDEAS

OBJECTIVE

We are made clean from the inside out by faith in Jesus.

TRADITIONS

"History reveals that the Jewish religious leaders came to honor their traditions far above the Word of God. Rabbi Eleazer said, 'He who expounds the Scriptures in opposition to the tradition has no share in the world to come.' The *Mishna*, a collection of Jewish traditions in the *Talmud*, records, 'It is a greater offense to teach anything contrary to the voice of the Rabbis than to contradict Scripture itself.' But before we criticize our Jewish friends, perhaps we should examine what influence 'the church fathers' are having in our own Christian churches. We also may be guilty of replacing God's truth with man's traditions."

—Warren W. Wiersbe
The Bible Exposition Commentary

"In contrast to the tradition of the elders Jesus [authoritatively] embraces the alienated of the Mosaic and rabbinic tradition: a leper, tax collectors and sinners, and even unclean Gentiles, including a Syrophenician woman."

—James R. Edwards
The Authority of Jesus in the Gospel of Mark, Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society

PRAYER

Pray for each other this week, that we live and proclaim a confident faith in Christ.

Session 7: Clean from the Inside Out

1. Review or summarize Mark 7:1-23.

- Why did Jesus object to the Pharisees' traditions?
- What is Jesus more concerned about than human traditions?
- How does Jesus clarify real defilement and real cleanliness?

2. Read Mark 7:24-30.

- How does the woman's reply show her faith in Jesus?
- Which attitude toward Jesus is more common for you: a lack of faith because of your unworthiness, or a confident faith despite your unworthiness? Why?

3. Read Mark 7:31-37.

- How did the people of this region react to Jesus before? (See Mark 5:14-17.)
- What might have changed their attitude? (See Mark 5:18-20.)
- How did the people respond to the miracle?
- When Christ changes us from the inside out, does proclaiming that help others to a confident faith?



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SERIES 2 | SESSION 8

GROUP DISCUSSION



ANNUAL THEME 2020-2021

WONDER

SCRIPTURE READING

Mark 8:1-30

KEY IDEAS

THEME

In a masterful arrangement, the Spirit guides Mark to reveal the way humans do and do not progress in truth. Jesus is the Messiah, but some reject that and choose blindness. Others go through a process of eye-opening and life changing understanding where they respond to Jesus the Savior and Lord.

OBJECTIVE

We have our eyes opened.

A SHORT MEMORY

"When the disciples were discussing their lack of food, it reveals how human they were. How could they have forgotten when Jesus twice multiplied the loaves for thousands of men, women, and children? Furthermore, Jesus met their own needs when he delivered them from the storm. And now they were worried about food. How quickly we forget God's blessings in our lives!"

—Gene Getz
Life Essentials Study Bible

PRAYER

Pray for each other this week, that we live as people who see Jesus clearly.

Use the back of this page to write prayer requests.

Session 8: Do You See?

1. Describe a time when God provided for you against all odds. How did that experience change how you see God?
 - What was Jesus' main concern and focus?
 - What was the only thing His disciples could see?
 - What are some ways in which we use a lack of resources as an excuse, instead of trusting God's provision?
3. Review Mark 8:11-21.
 - To what was Jesus referring by "the leaven of the Pharisees" and by "the leaven of Herod"?
 - How are these leavens evident in the surrounding culture today?
 - How do these leavens work their way into our own lives if we don't constantly "Watch out!"?
4. Read Mark 8:22-26.
 - Why did Jesus first take the blind man out of the village?
 - How does the placement of this episode in Mark's narrative highlight the disciples' growth?
5. Read Mark 8:27-30.
 - What do the responses to Jesus' question indicate? Compare the responses from His hometown in Mark 6:3.
 - Who finally has eyes that are completely open? How did this happen? Compare Matthew 16:13-17.
6. When did God open your eyes to who Jesus really is? Share your story.

