

I. Introduction

A. Elevator story\Ridley's Believe It or Not (Jack Palance)

1. Crazy stuff, some believable, some fake (busier than a one-armed paper hanger)
2. The advent of fake news and "fact" checkers, generated from all sides targeting all people
3. We distrust what we don't like and we are open to what agrees with us— environment for tainted information to flourish!

B. "Kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the Gospel."

1. Believe this news. Not fake. Fact checked.
2. Do you believe the news that Jesus came to proclaim?
 - a. Disciples mostly did
 - b. Religious leaders called it fake news or just outright denied it.
 - c. Crowds? No different than the crowds today
3. If you believe the news, how then do you live in light of what the story says? Various levels of belief

II. Kingdom of God

A. The essential message of the Bible (Mark 1:14-15)

1. John's arrest, don't get much attention until later—simply removed from the stage because he is not the focus of the Gospel.
2. From wilderness to Galilee
 - a. People had to come to John for baptism.
 - b. Jesus goes from the wilderness to where the people are.
3. "The Kingdom of God"
 - a. Expectation vs how God actually does things
 - 1) Not past, present, future like the Day of the Lord
 - 2) God's Kingship is both eternal and eschatological; both fulfilled and awaited; both present and anticipated.
 - 3) However, beginning with Jesus' ministry, a new era of fulfillment has begun, and it calls for a response from all people (age of salvation).

*Jesus, as Mark has presented to us, is in Himself both the subject and the object of this Good News (Gospel)

b. What is the response?

- 1) Repentance: reorientation to the paradoxical values of the kingdom of God
- 2) Belief: not only intellectual acceptance that this news is true, but an internal response of welcome acceptance and an external behavioral change

*Mark fleshes out what that looks like throughout the rest of this book.

*Repentance and belief are the basis for discipleship. "... repentance toward God and faith in Christ Jesus." (Acts 20:21)

And when they came to him, he said to them: "You yourselves know how I lived among you the whole time from the first day that I set foot in Asia, serving the Lord with all humility and with tears and with trials that happened to me through the plots of the Jews; how I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you in public and from house to house, testifying both to Jews and to Greeks of repentance toward God and of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ." (Acts 20:18-21)

B. Calling the team together (Mark 1:16-20)

1. High expectations following the "Kingdom is here" proclamation
 - a. They/we would expect something of national, even cosmic importance.
 - b. Instead, Jesus wanders down to the sea and calls some common laborers (Home Depot?) to join Him on a mission. (As an aside: our recruiting methods are very different from those Jesus used. Something to think about.)

*The coming of God's Kingship does not conform to our perceived or preferred expectation or vision

c. Jesus' followers will have to learn a set of values that differ from that of the world. "The Kingdom of God comes not with fanfare but through the gradual gathering of a group of socially insignificant people in an unnoticed corner of Galilee." -RT France

*Be careful where you look to see evidence of God's blessing and direction. Historically, God does not use the impressive but the humble and hidden.

- d. Beginning now, these individuals will accompany Jesus all the way to the garden of Gethsemane.
 - 1) They will be developed and trained.
 - 2) They will often fail and disappoint.
 - 3) But it is through this flawed and vulnerable group that God's Kingship will be established

C. Identifying the signs of the Kingdom (Mark 1:21-34)

*A day in the life ... (see Mark 1:35)

1. Verbal power/authority (Mark 1:21-22)
 - a. Jesus demonstrated command over words unlike anyone had ever experienced before.
 - b. Preaching and proclaiming the Kingdom of God
2. Spiritual power/authority (23-28)
 - a. Jesus demonstrated command over the spiritual/supernatural realm.
 - b. The demon knew Jesus and obeyed Him.
(As an aside: interesting how boldly demons identify Jesus and obey Him. Makes me think I don't want my obedience to Jesus compared to a demon's.)
3. Physical power/authority (29-31)
 - a. Jesus demonstrated command over the physical realm of sickness.
 - b. With the effort of an outstretched arm, Jesus heals Peter's mother-in-law.

*Jesus didn't do these things just once, He did them all day and into the night (mark 1:32-34)

*At the end of that day, the disciples, religious leaders, and crowds were left with pieces to a puzzle. Who else is characterized by this kind of power and authority?

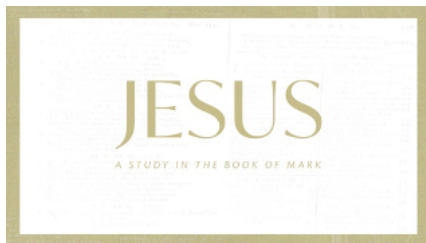
III. What does it mean that the Kingdom of God is at hand for us?

- A. Era of the kingdom
 1. This kingdom is proclaimed and found in Jesus Christ
 2. This kingdom is being filled with people characterized by repentance and belief.
 - a. These people are often socially insignificant people who have surrounded to an extraordinary God.
 - b. Where these people are, there you will find the kingdom of God
 - c. Have you ever thought, "I'm bringing the Kingdom of God with me into this place?"
 3. Kingdom activity
 - a. Conventional protection and prosperity
 - b. God's Kingdom ... salvation even at the expense of the present with a secured future
 - c. Explain. I don't understand the behavior of shepherds.
- B. Whose kingdom am I expanding?
 1. My own, making various alliances through marriage or God's, walking daily in repentance and belief in Jesus?
 2. Sign of Kingdom expansion

My Kingdom	God's Kingdom
Easily offended, holding grudge (My opinion defines.)	Merciful, pure in heart, peacemakers
People benefit me.	People are pursued because of God's love.
Success results in pride.	Success comes from grace.
I minimize failure.	Failure is an opportunity for growth.
Temporal focus (grasping at what I have)	Eternal focus (grateful for what has been secured)
Power is what I can do and accomplish.	Power is from the subject of prayer.

*I cannot expand both kingdoms. I will live for one or the other.

3. Which kingdom are you expanding ...
 - a. With your words?
 - b. With your influence?
 - c. With your action/behavior?



THE KINGDOM OF GOD

MARK 1:14-34

OCTOBER 4, 2020 | PASTOR MATT WHITEFORD



GET TO KNOW EACH OTHER (USE JUST ONE OR ALL OF THESE QUESTIONS TO CONNECT AS YOU START YOUR CONVERSATION)

1 Who is the best teacher you've ever had? What was compelling about their teaching style?

Last week we looked at the prologue of Jesus' ministry. We learned how God used John the Baptist to prepare the way for Jesus to begin His ministry on Earth. This week we will see how Jesus began His teaching ministry and how others responded to His teaching.

QUICK REVIEW (OPPORTUNITY FOR PEOPLE TO SHARE WHAT MOST STOOD OUT FROM SUNDAY'S MESSAGE)

Looking back at your notes from this week's message, was there anything you heard that caught your attention, encouraged, challenged, or confused you?

DIG DEEPER (OBSERVATIONS FROM THE SCRIPTURE OR COMPLEMENTARY SCRIPTURES FROM SUNDAY'S MESSAGE)

1 Someone read **Mark 1:14-28**.

¹⁴ Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, ¹⁵ and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel."

Jesus Calls the First Disciples

¹⁶ Passing alongside the Sea of Galilee, He saw Simon and Andrew the brother of Simon casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen. ¹⁷ And Jesus said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men." ¹⁸ And immediately they left their nets and followed Him. ¹⁹ And going on a little farther, He saw James the son of Zebedee and John his brother, who were in their boat mending the nets. ²⁰ And immediately He called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants and followed Him.

Jesus Heals a Man with an Unclean Spirit

²¹ And they went into Capernaum, and immediately on the Sabbath He entered the synagogue and was teaching. ²² And they were astonished at His teaching, for He taught them as one who had authority, and not as the scribes. ²³ And immediately there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit. And he cried out, ²⁴ "What have You to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have You come to destroy us? I know who You are - the Holy One of God." ²⁵ But Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Be silent, and come out of him!" ²⁶ And the unclean spirit, convulsing him and crying out with a loud voice, came out of him. ²⁷ And they were all amazed, so that they questioned among themselves, saying, "What is this? A new teaching with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey Him." ²⁸ And at once His fame spread everywhere throughout all the surrounding region of Galilee.

Jesus says that repentance and belief in Him should be our response to the Gospel (v. 15). How are repentance and belief the basis of discipleship?

What caused Simon, Andrew, and the sons of Zebedee to so readily quit their jobs to follow Jesus? Would you have done the same?

What amazed the people in the synagogue about Jesus? What would you have been most impressed with if you were there?

Mark presented a series of stories that showed Jesus primarily in His role as a teacher. At this point, this is the category by which the people - including His disciples - understood who He was. This passage also records the various responses Jesus encountered toward His teaching. The crowds in general were amazed and flocked to Him (1:21-45), but He soon encountered the opposition of the religious leaders (2:1-3:6).

2 Someone read **Mark 1:29-34**.

Jesus Heals Many

²⁹ And immediately He left the synagogue and entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John.

³⁰ Now Simon's mother-in-law lay ill with a fever, and immediately they told Him about her. ³¹ And He came and took her by the hand and lifted her up, and the fever left her, and she began to serve them. ³² That evening at sundown they brought to Him all who were sick or oppressed by demons. ³³ And the whole city was gathered together at the door. ³⁴ And He healed many who were sick with various diseases, and cast out many demons. And He would not permit the demons to speak, because they knew Him.

**How did Jesus' healing (vs. 30–31) compare with driving the demon out of the man?
What kind of authority do we see when Jesus healed the man?**

**The man with a skin disease said to Jesus, "If You are willing, You can make me clean."
Why do you think the man said to Him, "If You are willing"? Is there any significance of this statement?**

LIVE IT OUT (DISCUSS HOW YOU CAN LIVE OUT THE TRUTHS YOU JUST OBSERVED IN SCRIPTURE)

1 If God were to bring healing to your life today, what would you ask Him to heal?

Look at the chart below. Why is it impossible to expand both kingdoms? Take an honest assessment & respond to this question: Whose kingdom are you expanding in these three areas?

2

- **With your words?**
- **With your influence?**
- **With your actions and behaviors?**

My Kingdom	God's Kingdom
Easily offended, holding grudge (my opinion defines)	Merciful, pure in heart, peacemakers
People benefit me	People are pursued because of God's love
Success results in pride	Success comes from grace
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Power is what I can do and accomplish	Power is from the subject of prayer

3 In what ways can we ensure that Christ's compassionate heart is the motivation for our good deeds?

CLOSING PRAYER

Close your time in prayer with your group.

NEXT WEEK: "Jesus" week 3

Read **MARK 1:35-2:12** before Sunday and your home group. Remember to take good notes so you are ready to add to the discussion your home group will have!

PRAISE/PRAYER REQUESTS (TRY TO HAVE ONE OR A FEW PEOPLE PRAY FOR ONE TOPIC AT A TIME)

Use this space or the back of this paper to write the requests and find a way to share those with the group so you can be praying for each other during the week.

TIPS ON GROUP PRAYER

Prayer is an important part of being in a Home Group. Here are some tips to help make group prayer be a life-giving aspect of your group.

PRAY FOR ONE TOPIC AT A TIME: Anyone in the group is free to introduce a prayer request or praise during the prayer time. Once a topic is introduced, the group focuses on that request alone. Once it's covered, the group moves on to the next request or praise.

PRAY MORE THAN ONCE: If your group is focusing on one topic at a time, each person is encouraged to pray several times during the prayer time for those topics they feel most led to pray about. No one should be required to pray.

KEEP PRAYERS SHORT AND SIMPLE: Group prayer goes better when members keep their prayers short and to the point. When someone prays for a long time, it's hard for the other members to stay focused and long prayers tend to intimidate those who are just learning to pray out loud in a group. No one should be required to pray out loud.

How to Use this Discussion Guide

The guide is meant to serve you and your group as you intentionally create a healthy environment for Gospel community, growing in friendship, and living like Jesus together. Use the guide as a tool to help your unique group.

With that in mind, please review the guide before your group meets to see if some content or questions might resonate more or less with your group. Don't feel pressure to read all the content during your group discussion or to hit on all the questions. The guide is not meant to be something you power through for the sake of completing. Pick the content from the guide you feel will help your group grow in Gospel community.

In addition, spend some time praying for your group each week, preparing your heart, and asking God for wisdom and guidance as you lead. We are praying for you too!

Visit cpmodesto.org/groupleaders to download the sermon discussion guide every week. Not in a Home Group, but want to be in one? Visit cpmodesto.org/homegroups and use the Home Group Finder!

MARK 1:14-34

1:14-15 The words after John was arrested indicate an interval between verses 13 and 14, possibly as long as a year if this parallels Jn 4:3,43. Mark did not include Jesus' early Judean ministry (Jn 3:22-36). Further details about John's arrest and execution appear in Mk 6:17-29. In the person of Jesus, the Kingdom of God was so near that announcement of its arrival demanded immediate response—repent and believe.

1:16-20 Mark included two accounts of Jesus calling fishermen, two pairs of brothers, to become His disciples. These four formed the core of the group (v. 29; 3:16-18; 13:3). Mark emphasized Jesus' authority to call people to leave all and follow Him. According to Lk 5:7-10, the two pair of brothers were partners in the fishing business.

1:16-18 The Sea of Galilee was a freshwater lake about 12 miles long and 7 miles wide that lay 700 feet below sea level. Also known as the Sea of Gennesaret (Lk 5:1) and the Sea of Tiberias (Jn 21:1), it hosted a thriving fishing industry. Brothers Simon and Andrew hailed from Bethsaida, across the northern end of the lake (Jn 1:44), but they now lived in Capernaum (Mk 1:29). "Follow Me" is the heart of New Testament discipleship. It involves adopting Jesus' values and lifestyle. "I will make you fish for people" expands on their former profession. The words also point to a second aspect of discipleship—the call to serve the Lord and people through ministry.

1:19-20 The phrase "going on a little farther" links the call of the second pair of brothers—James and John—in time and place to the first pair. The fact that hired men were present implies their fishing business was prosperous. Leaving this to follow Jesus meant leaving a nice living. Like the first pair of brothers in verse 18, these followed Jesus. Mark's words in the Greek directly link their response in verse 20 to Jesus' command in verse 17.

1:21-22 Capernaum, on the northwestern shore of the Sea of Galilee, became Jesus' home (2:1) and headquarters (Mt 4:13). Mark did not record what Jesus began to teach in the synagogue, but he did say that the people were astonished. This was a regular reaction to Jesus' teachings (6:2; 7:37; 10:26; 11:18). What impressed listeners was the authority with which Jesus taught. His authority contrasted with that of the scribes who mastered the Torah and treasured traditional interpretations (oral traditions). In Mark, the scribes were Jesus' fiercest opponents (2:6,16; 11:27) and were among the main instigators leading to His death (8:31; 10:33; 11:18; 14:1,43,53; 15:1,31).

1:23-24 "Just then" links this event to verses 21-22. Mark used unclean spirit to denote a demonic spirit. "Unclean spirit" contrasts with the demons' identification of Jesus as the Holy One of God. The man's shout "What do You have to do with us" echoes Jephthah's words to the Ammonite king (Jdg 11:12) and those of the widow of Zarephath to Elijah (1Ki 17:18).

1:25-26 On the basis of the authority of His word, Jesus rebuked and expelled the spirit, commanding it to be quiet, (lit "be muzzled") and come out of him. The spirit convulsed the man and shouted its desperate but futile resistance to Jesus.

1:27-28 The people were amazed to see an exorcism, especially given the authoritative manner in which Jesus accomplished it. Their statement that the unclean spirits obey Him indicates their belief that what He did to one spirit, He could do to all. The word "then" (Greek *euthus*, "immediately") indicates how quickly the story of these events traveled throughout Galilee.

1:29-31 As soon as they left the synagogue connects verses 29-34 to the same Sabbath day as verses 21-28. Simon and Andrew's house was large enough to host Jesus and His followers. Archaeologists have identified such a house near the synagogue in Capernaum. Simon's mother-in-law indicates that Peter was married. First Corinthians 9:5 suggests Peter's wife was supportive of his ministry. Jesus did not speak any words to heal Peter's mother-in-law, He simply took her by the hand. The phrase "raised her up" is a common expression for Jesus' healings in Mark (Mark 2:9,11; 3:3; 5:41; 9:27; 10:49).

1:32-34 The expressions "when evening came" and "after the sun had set" emphasize that the Sabbath prohibitions against work were over since the Sabbath ended at sunset. The phrases "those who were sick" and "those who were demon-possessed" recall the two types of healings Jesus performed earlier that day (vv. 23-26 and 30-31). That there is a difference between disease and demon possession is affirmed by Mark's description of Jesus' actions: He healed the sick but drove out the demons (3:10-11; 6:13). That Jesus healed various diseases points to the comprehensive nature of His healing powers.