

## Family Bible readings on Mark - part 1

For the past several months I have been reading and studying the Gospel of Mark in preparation for the upcoming sermon series. I often read during the morning after Heidi and the girls head off to school. During that time I have about a half hour alone with my six-year old son Josiah as we wait for his school bus. I started using this time reading through stories and sections of Mark's Gospel with him, and have found it to be very fun and a great teaching tool. While we still use the *Jesus Storybook Bible* with him in the evenings, reading through bite size sections of Mark on a daily basis has given me a way to share bits and pieces about the person, work, teaching, and mission of Jesus. So I thought that as we begin our series on Mark I would put the thoughts we are discovering down on paper for you.

These family Bible readings are designed to do with children of any age. If your kids are young (preschool age-early elementary) focus on the key idea. I even have Josiah memorize these, say them with me, repeat several of them every day to make sure he remembers. I start off each reading with a question like, "What have we learned about Jesus?" He'll answer with several of the short little key points you will find in these readings. With older kids you can share the key point, but then ask them to explain what that means on a deeper level. My goal here is not to write in depth devotions, but to give you a framework to read through the Gospel of Mark together with your family as we study the Gospels together. If a story needs a little explanation, I will give that primarily to help you as parents know the issues found in the story. But in every reading I will point out a key idea that you and your kids can remember so you can teach them who Jesus was (and is) and what that means.

I have not put dates on these, because I figured families will read at the rhythm that will work for them. If you want to stay in tune with the sermon series on Mark, reading the passages during the week of the sermon, you can check the Genesis Member's Newsletter or our weekly podcast on the [genesiseureka.com](http://genesiseureka.com) to stay up with the texts. Or you may just choose to do them as a family reading a couple each week, whether you stay in line with our sermons or not. Either way, we hope you find these to be good for you and your family, and that this tool will help you keep Jesus at the center of your home. I will also be publishing these in chunks, getting through a few chapters at a time as we do them in my home. God bless!

### Reading 1 - Mark 1:1

\*Key thought about Jesus - Jesus is our King

Mark introduces his story. He says the story is the Gospel, which means "good news" about the coming of a king. Mark is telling us that Jesus is the true King of our lives, of the world, of God's Kingdom, and He has come to rule our lives and serve us as our King.

\*Ask your kids what a king does. If Jesus is the king of our lives, what would that mean?

### **Reading 2 - Mark 1:2-3**

\*Key thought about Jesus - Jesus was prophesied.

Mark quotes verses written by the prophet Isaiah over 800 years before Jesus was born. Explain that the prophets were looking forward to Jesus, because they knew that God would one day send His Son to be our Savior. This is one of hundreds of predictions in the Old Testament about the coming of Jesus.

\*Ask your kids if they can think of any other things about Jesus life that were prophesied in the Old Testament. These things may include that Jesus would be born in Bethlehem, that he would be born of a virgin, that he would die on the cross for our sins, that he would rise again.

### **Reading 3 - Mark 1:4-11**

\*Key thought about Jesus - Jesus was baptized.

The story tells us that Jesus' cousin John was baptizing people telling them that Jesus, the true King, was coming. When Jesus shows up he asks John to baptize him, but John does not like the idea, because He knows that Jesus is the Son of God. But Jesus did this to obey God. This reading may also be a good time to explain baptism to your children and share with them why following Jesus in baptism is important.

\*Ask your kids if they remember seeing anyone being baptized. What do they remember. If any of your kids have been baptized themselves, ask them what they remember and how it was meaningful for them.

### **Reading 5 - Mark 1:12-13**

\*Key thought about Jesus - Jesus never sinned

Jesus went into the wilderness where he was tempted to sin and do evil. Jesus never gave in to temptation, and he never sinned.

\*Ask your kids to define sin. Ask if they sin.

### **Reading 6 - Mark 1:14-15**

\*Key thought about Jesus - Jesus preached good news

Jesus preaches the Gospel of the Kingdom, which is the announcement that he has come. The response is that people need to repent and believe the good news. They need to trust in Jesus and follow Him.

\*Ask your kids to imagine what it might have been like to listen to Jesus preach. Why would he preach to the crowds?

### **Reading 7 - Mark 1:16-20**

\*Key thought about Jesus - Jesus told people to follow him.

Jesus meets two sets of brothers, all of them fishermen. He tells them to leave their jobs and families to follow him and learn from him.

\*Ask your kids what they Jesus meant when he said that they would be fishers of men.

### **Reading 8 - Mark 1:21-28**

\*Key thought about Jesus - Jesus has power (show your muscles).

This is the first of several stories demonstrating Jesus power and authority over parts of the creation. Here he has power over demons. You may need to explain that demons were angels who rebelled against God and became his enemies and are evil. But they have to obey Jesus.

\*Ask your kids why demons had to obey Jesus. What does this teach us about who Jesus really is?

### **Reading 9 - Mark 1:29-34**

\*Key thought about Jesus - Jesus healed sick people

Mark has multiple stories of Jesus healing the sick. We learn from these stories that he cares for people and has power over sickness.

\*Ask your kids how it would make them feel if they were sick and Jesus healed them.

### **Reading 10 - Mark 1:35-39**

\*Key thought about Jesus - Jesus prayed

Even though Jesus is God, he was also human, and deeply needed time alone to talk to His Father. You may want to give a brief explanation of the Trinity here to help your kids understand how Jesus can talk to God the Father. When the disciples are looking for him, they are a little shocked to find him off by himself praying.

\*Ask your kids, if Jesus was the Son of God and needed to pray, what does that show us about the importance of prayer in our lives?

### **Reading 11 - Mark 1:40-45**

\*Key thought about Jesus - Jesus loves people

Leprosy has always been a horrible disease for a couple reasons. First, what is called leprosy is actually a number of skin diseases that can cause horrible sores, loss of feeling in extremities like hands and feet, and eventually the rotting of skin. But the stigma of the disease was often worse than the disease itself because many of these diseases were contagious and as a result, those with them had to leave the ones they love and live far away from any people. They could not spend time with their kids or be touched by anyone. When this man comes to Jesus, he is so moved with compassion that he reaches out and touches him, something that nobody had done for a long, long time. This man literally felt the love of Jesus as he was healed.

### **Reading 12 - Mark 2:1-12**

\*Key thought about Jesus - Jesus forgives our sin

This is such a cool story about some men who did everything they could to bring their paralyzed friend to Jesus. After being dropped through the roof, Jesus looks at him and says something peculiar. Rather than saying, "You are healed," he tells the man that his sins are forgiven. Healing is wonderful, but our greater need is to have the rotten

core of our sin removed and have God forgive. The scribes are actually correct here, only God can forgive sin. Which gives us a clue into who Jesus really was and is.

### **Reading 13 - Mark 2:13-17**

\*Key thought about Jesus - Jesus cares for people even when no one else likes them. Matthew was a dreaded tax collector. He sold his people out for riches, and turned his back on them in favor of the Roman government. And his friends were the low lifes of the culture. But Jesus befriends Matthew and hangs out with his pals, an act the religious people don't understand.

### **Reading 14 - Mark 2:18-22**

\*Key thought about Jesus - We pray to Jesus

Religious people of the day believed that fasting (abstaining from food) would make God love you more, because God likes people who keep the rules and who deprive themselves of things that are fun, they thought. But Jesus reminds people that fasting is a good thing if it leads people to Jesus. But for his disciples, they have Jesus with them, so they should enjoy his presence. Later there will be a day when he is not with them. The whole point here is that fasting is a way to pray, to build our relationship with God, and to get closer to Jesus. Jesus does not like us more when we are fasting, but when we miss a meal or two and replace that time with prayer, we can feel God's presence more. Jesus is our God, and therefore, our desire is to know him. One way we do that is by talking to Jesus in prayer.

\*A note about Jesus parable of wineskins here. The old wineskins is Jesus way of pointing out the religious effort of the Jews. They thought they could experience God and be accepted by Him by doing religion, by keeping strict laws, doing a lot of religious activity, and by being an all-around good person. But they had the whole thing upside down. Religion says if we obey God, then he will love us. But Jesus message is that God loves and accepts us, and it is his love that makes us good. The new wine is Jesus, but for the Gospel to really change people's lives, they had to have a new way of seeing religion and looking at the works that are part of faith.

### **Reading 15 - Mark 2:23-27**

\*Key thought about Jesus - We come to church on Sunday to worship Jesus  
Jesus has a lot of encounters with the religious people of the day. God's desire is for people to love him and as a result for them to do things that please him. Religious people completely lost their relationship with God, but they kept keeping the rules. They even made up a whole bunch of other rules designed to keep people from breaking the real laws of God. Many of these rules dictated what people could and could not do on the Sabbath. One of the 10 Commandments told people to "Remember the Sabbath and keep it holy." The day of worship and rest was important because it helped people reorient their lives to God. But now the people had made a whole bunch of rules making the Sabbath a burden. In this story, Jesus intentionally breaks one of those rules, and ends up in a discussion with the religious people. He

tells them that they have missed the whole purpose of the Sabbath. God gave the Sabbath for the good of the people, so that they would remember to worship Him.

### **Reading 16 - Mark 3:1-6**

\*Key thought about Jesus - Our religion should lead us to Jesus as our Lord.

Another story about conflict between Jesus and religious people of his day. In this story people are gathered in the synagogue on the Sabbath. Jesus heals the man, which it seems should have made everyone happy and joyous. They came to church and saw a miracle. But the religious people had rules against working on the Sabbath, and healing a person was considered work. So even though Jesus never broke God's rules, he did break their religious rules. Sadly, they had the Messiah God had promised in their midst and they missed him because they were more concerned about their religious system than Jesus.

### **Reading 17 - Mark 3:7-12**

\*Key thought about Jesus - Big crowds came to see Jesus.

In this short passage Mark shows us what is happening around Jesus on a daily basis. As Jesus heals people, delivers others from demons, and teaches them all, the crowds keep getting bigger and bigger. Thousands of people are coming from all over the place (some of these locations are as much as 100 miles away) to see Jesus. Sadly though, Mark wants us to realize that although people will come from a long way away to see Jesus, very few of these people actually follow Jesus. The same is true today. Lots of people go to church, and attend meetings where Jesus is the focus. But very few truly follow Jesus and give Him their lives.

### **Reading 18 - Mark 3:13-19**

\*Key thought about Jesus - Jesus had twelve disciples that he taught.

In contrast to the crowds, twelve men left everything and followed Jesus. Jesus called them, taught them, appointed them, sent them, and empowered them. These twelve men would eventually take Jesus message to the world. His investment in these men's lives was a very important part of His plan and is a model we can follow. This is why we have Community Groups at Genesis, where smaller groups of people can live in community, study together, learn, grow, and live their faith together.

### **Reading 19 - Mark 3:20-21, 31-35**

\*Key thought about Jesus - Jesus true family are those who follow Him

These two sets of verses show us that Jesus family did not understand who Jesus truly was and what he was doing. They tried to get him to come home because they thought he had gone crazy. It is sad to think that Jesus own mother and brothers wanted him to stop what he was doing. But Jesus told his disciples that he had a spiritual family, and his real brothers and sisters were those who loved him and followed him. Same is true for us today. When we follow Jesus it means we are now part of his family. God is our

Father, Jesus is our big brother, and other Christians are our brothers and sisters.

### **Reading 20 - Mark 3:22-30**

\*Key thought about Jesus - Some people do not like Jesus

You would think that everyone would like God's Son. Sadly, there were lots of people who rejected Him and disliked him. These religious people make an incredible claim, that the miracles Jesus performed he did by the power of Satan. Jesus refutes the claim, but then makes a statement that is downright scary. He says these people have committed a sin that will not be forgiven. They have blasphemed against the Holy Spirit by claiming that Jesus was from Satan. In the end, every person must deal with the question, "Who is Jesus?" Will we trust him, or will we find ways to ignore him?

### **Reading 21 - Mark 4:1-20**

\*Key thought about Jesus - Jesus taught by telling stories.

One of the main ways Jesus taught people was through the use of parables. Parables are short stories using things people understood and then connecting those things to spiritual truths and ideas. Everyone like the stories, but not everyone sought to understand the deeper meaning. As we read these parables, our goal is to listen to what Jesus said but then to understand the meaning and what it says to us about our lives and the Gospel. This story is about a farmer who plants seeds. There are four types of soil that end up with four types of plants. But only the good soil actually produces fruit. The meaning is that we are like the soil. We hear the Gospel about Jesus, but how we listen to the message and respond will determine if the plant grows and produces fruit. Only the people represented by the good soil are actually followers of Jesus.

### **Reading 22 - Mark 4:21-25**

\*Key thought about Jesus - Jesus wants our light to shine

In another parable, Jesus uses the image of a lamp. You could demonstrate this to your kids using a flashlight and a cup or your hand. Shine the light, then put the cup over it. We don't put a lamp under a basket, or a flashlight in a cup. Why? Because the light needs to shine in a way for us to see it if it will be useful. In the same way, our faith in Jesus should shine for others to see. God has given us talents, gifts, passions, and dreams. He gave those to us so we could use them in a way that will point others to the true light, Jesus. What are some ways we could shine our lights for Christ this week?

### **Reading 23 - Mark 4:26-34**

\*Key thought about Jesus - The message about Jesus is powerful.

Two more stories, this time about seeds. In each story a very small seed is planted and the farmer walks away. But the seed becomes something huge and fruitful. In both stories the seed is the message of God's Kingdom, which is the word that Jesus is the

true King. When that message is planted in the lives of people it may seem small, but God uses those seeds to grow something amazing in their lives. This is why we preach the Gospel and share the Gospel with people who don't know Jesus.

### **Reading 25 - Mark 4:35-41**

\*Key thought about Jesus - Jesus controlled the wind and the waves because He made them.

Seemed like a normal night and a calm boat ride. But a storm blows from the north into the Sea of Galilee valley and the fishermen who had been in storms numerous times find themselves in a situation that left them in total fear for their lives. Meanwhile, Jesus is taking a nap. These twelve guys can't believe it. Jesus healed everyone else, but when they are in trouble He is sleeping. They wake him, hoping he will grab a bucket or man the sail. But he does something they are not expecting. Jesus begins to talk to the storm. Not a sane reaction, but the next thing that happens really leaves them freaked out, the storm listens to him and stops at his command. Why did the wind and sea obey him? Because He made the wind and the sea, his voice is the voice in Genesis 1 that called these things into existence. After the wind stopped the disciples had a new fear. They were now more afraid of the one in the boat with them than they ever were of the storm.

### **Reading 26 - Mark 5:1-20**

\*Key thought about Jesus - Jesus has power over demons and Satan

The Bible teaches us that there is a spiritual world, with real beings that we cannot see. Some of those beings are angels, who worship God and help us. Others rebelled against God and became demons. Satan or the devil is the leader of the evil spiritual beings. In this story a man has been possessed by demons. His life is full of evil, and that evil actually comes from a source that is outside of him. Now he cannot overcome the evil that resides in him. But Jesus showed up and this all changed. The demons know who Jesus is, that he is the Son of the Most High God, and that Jesus can do whatever He wants. They must obey Jesus because He is God. This story is a little weird in that they ask to be sent into pigs rather than being cast into the abyss. The point of this story though is that even a legion of demons are not more powerful than Jesus and He has ultimate control over them.

### **Reading 27 - Mark 5:21-24a, 35-43**

\*Key thought about Jesus - Jesus has power over death.

Imagine what it would feel like to have a daughter who is so sick that you know she is close to dying. How would you feel? What would you do to save her. This man Jairus knew his daughter was in trouble, but instead of staying with her, he went to see Jesus. He knew no one else could help. While he was getting close to Jesus though, some of his servants arrived with horrible news, the girl had died. Jairus felt a lump in his throat as he thought, I'm too late. But Jesus told him, "Do not fear, only believe." Then Jesus went with him to his house. Already crowds of people gathered in Jairus's house and

they were weeping and mourning. But no tears from Jesus. He cleared the room, took only the girl's parents and his disciples into the room where the little girl's body lay. He then took her by the hand and brought her back to life. She jumped up and started walking around the house. What a day! What a story!

**Reading 28 - Mark 5:24b-30**

\*Key thought about Jesus - Jesus is a great Savior!

Another great healing story. Jesus is in crowds, all kinds of people pressing against him when a woman who had a bleeding issue for over a decade comes up and touches him. She just touched him, and his power healed her. But Jesus knew that his power had gone out to someone, and he wanted to do so much more than heal her body. He called out to her, and she fell at Jesus' feet. Because of her faith in Jesus she had found an incredible Savior! We will also find that Jesus is a wonderful Savior if we trust in Him and turn to Him in our times of trouble and need.