

STUDY GUIDE:

Extraordinary Life - 3 years in 3 months | Mark 1:1-15

Welcome to the adventure. On Christmas we celebrated the birth of Christ, and now we embark on a deep look into what Jesus said, how he lived, and who he truly is through the Gospel of Mark. These guides are based off of our sermons which can always be found at www.rbcpc.org/media/sermons.

The gospels are intended to introduce you to Jesus, and the rest of the New Testament (NT) letters assume this knowledge — the NT writers gave you Jesus' life and words before their extrapolations.

However, it's amazing how we lose Jesus in the bible, and even more so in all the Christian books we produce. Jesus is the model and the way for an extraordinary life, but we let dust build *on* him to learn *around* him all the time. Paul never intended Jesus to be in his shadow.

1. Can you relate to dusty Jesus?
2. When was your last time deeply focused in one of the gospels?
3. Have you ever been surprised or puzzled by Jesus' life and words? What was it?

The Gospel of Mark

There are four gospels named according to their authors. Mark is the shortest gospel, starting right with Jesus' ministry. No birth accounts or genealogy to slow anything down. It's fast paced. Mark is writing down the words, stories, and teachings about Jesus as told through Peter... you could call him Peter's scribe or interpreter. This complete biography of Jesus was written and distributed about 30 years after the life of Jesus - a time of massive Jewish and Christian persecution.

Read Mark 1:1

The introduction line is the whole purpose of the book. This statement is what Mark wants you understand after all 16 chapters... None of the characters know verse 1 yet, so we are going to see a population slowly figure out who Jesus is as they encounter him. "Who do you say that Jesus is?" is what this gospel asks along the way.

What is *the* messiah? (we purposefully used *the* here and not *a*)

Now, in a conversation with someone that had no connection to the Old Testament or prophecy, what would *a* messiah offer today?

What hits you in these statements?

"Jesus is the Messiah. What is the messiah? He is the promised one from God that will save us. The one that will make things right. He is God's action of restoring us. He is the fix for our world, our nation and our lives. He is the one who makes things right... but right is not what you think it is."

Read Mark 1:2-8

John the baptist. The eccentric desert hippy figure who was all a part of God's creative, out of the box plan. Jerusalem was emptying out to the desert country to have their hearts pre-

pared by John the Baptist. His whole message was this, "It's not about me, it's about the one to come from God, the fix, the one Messiah".

In both John the Baptist and in Jesus himself, they both operated outside of the refined urban civilization, outside of the mainstream, and they weren't palatable to many of the devout and proper religious folk. How would they do in our church and community today? Would you have listened to the unusual? Would we have had time in our schedules to get out to the country? Where do you see or hear God in the unusual and unrefined today?

Read Mark 1:9-15

At Jesus baptism the official start of Jesus' mission and ministry begins. God tears through the heavens to earth (see sermon for more on this), God's Spirit is on him, and God declares him audibly as his Son. Jesus way is God's way.

Just as God tore through the heavens at Jesus' baptism, He tore through the curtain that separated men and women from his presence and closeness (Mark 15). Mark reveals Jesus between these two tears. God tearing through to get to you (not the other way around)... all out of love.

Read this excerpt and discuss.... what hits you:

"What does the tearing mean? In one sense it means, as interpreted in Hebrews, that we now have access to God: We can "have confidence to enter the sanctuary by the blood of Jesus" (Heb. 10:19). Viewed from another perspective, the tearing suggests that the protecting barriers are gone and that God, unwilling to be confined to sacred spaces, is on the loose in our own realm. If characters in the story find Jesus' ministry uncomfortable and threatening, then they may have good reason. Mark's narrative is about the intrusion of God into a world that has become alien territory -- An intrusion that means both life and death." (Donald Juel, *A Master of Surprise*)

Jesus says, "The time has come." God is on the loose in Jesus

Close

We're at a new year. It's a blank canvas. Jesus says the time has come, and I know this has a different meaning for each one of your hearts. The time has come to leave things behind, to be someone new...

*"Forget the former things;
do not dwell on the past.*

See, I am doing a new thing!

Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?" Isaiah 43:18-19

"If anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!"
2 Corinthians 5:17

This journey drawing close to Jesus and to one another will change your life.

His extraordinary life will open your eyes to the extraordinary life God made you for.

Be awake. Read Mark. Meet Jesus anew. May you see what God is doing, how he's speaking and acting through Jesus. Pray for eyes and ears as you go.

Close in Prayer for One Another