

## **STUDY GUIDE:**

### **Extraordinary Life - 3 years in 3 months | Mark 1:1-15 - 2:12**

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.rbpc.org/media/sermons](http://www.rbpc.org/media/sermons).

#### **For Starters**

For some of you this may be a review but many of our CORE's were canceled last week so....if you met last week, you can skip this bit:

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.

#### **Discuss:**

What would you say was the purpose of Jesus' ministry? If you can encapsulate it in one sentence or thought, what would it be?

#### **Read Mark 1:15**

This is where Ryan finished last week and where Dawn began this week. This verse is the purpose statement of Jesus ministry. The rest of chapter one and two is spent illustrating what Jesus meant when he said this.

#### **Read Mark 1:21-28**

- What are some elements of God's Kingdom that this passage might reveal to us?
- What is Mark challenging us to examine about what we believe about Jesus here?

In this passage we see Jesus cast out an evil spirit. In some translations this spirit is described as "unclean." This week Dawn taught about the concept of being "unclean" She explained that in those days being unclean, on the surface, had to do with the brokenness of an individual. However, that individual brokenness always resulted in

broken community (since unclean people were outcast for fear of spreading their unclean-ness). So whenever we see Jesus heal someone who was once unclean, He is also restoring them to their community. How might this be an important concept for us to explore today...even if we haven't encountered any evil spirits or lepers lately?

- Are there places or relationships in your life that Jesus could restore?

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

- What are some elements of God's Kingdom that this passage might reveal to us?

The part of this story that we are going to focus on today is the beginning of the relationship between Jesus and the religious leaders. We are often quick to judge the religious leaders but before you do, read this passage from the Narrative Lectionary Commentary on Mark:

"The Pharisees (religious leaders), especially the more conservative ones believed that God had given the law as a means of carving out a sphere of holiness and righteousness on earth - - the very presence of God on earth depended on it, they believed. The boundaries the law prescribed between sin and righteousness, clean and unclean, the sacred and profane, Jew and Gentile, and between physical imperfection and wholeness - - these could not be breached without profound damage to the social and religious order."

The religious leaders were operating under a lot of obviously's and they carried the heavy burden of trying to maintain these boundaries! This passage in Mark is the beginning signal that Jesus' words and actions threaten the religious system's "obviously's." What's an "obviously" you might ask? Great question. An obviously is an assumption or belief that you hold to so firmly that you can't even fathom that there are people out there who don't see your "obviously" as obvious.

- Have you ever found your self in a situation where your "obviously's" got you in to trouble? When you couldn't understand that someone could possibly think differently?

### **Read Amos 5:21-24 and Hosea 6:6**

- What do these passages reveal to us about God's kingdom?

The thing that was obvious to Jesus, the truth that He spent His ministry illustrating to everyone is that God values the needs of people over religious observance of the law. This created all sort of difficulty for the religious leaders tasked with maintaining their boundaries but why is this Good News for us?

How does this passage from Mark force us to examine some of our obviously's about Jesus and God's Kingdom?

### **Close in Prayer**