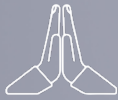


Term 1 2025

The gospel of  
**MARK**



This study owes several helpful insights to *Mark For You* by Jason Meyer, *The Gospel of Mark* by William L. Lane, and *The Message of Mark* by Donald English, as well as the studies *Mark: Follow Me* (James Hoover: Life Guide) and *News of the Hour* (Tony Payne: Matthias Media).

All scriptural references are taken from the New International Version (NIV) 2011.

# CONTENTS

SERIES OVERVIEW.....	4
1. SIGNS OF THE END.....	6
Mark 13:1–37	
2. DEMONSTRATING DEVOTION.....	9
Mark 14:1–11	
3. THE LAST SUPPER.....	12
Mark 14:12–31	
4. GRIEF IN THE GARDEN.....	15
Mark 14:32–52	
5. MISTRIAL AND DENIAL.....	18
Mark 14:53–72	
6. VICTORY SNATCHED FROM DEFEAT.....	21
Mark 15:1–16:8	



# SERIES OVERVIEW

The Gospel of Mark is probably the earliest of the four Gospels, written between thirty and forty years after Jesus' crucifixion. It was written while many of those who were involved in the events (as participants or eyewitnesses) were still alive.

Mark's portrayal of Jesus is characterised by three factors: his divine *authority*, his *mission* as the suffering Servant of God, and his divine *Sonship*.

## AUTHOR

By the early 2nd century A.D. it was widely accepted that John Mark, who accompanied Barnabas and Saul on the first missionary journey (Acts 12:25; 13:4), was the author of this Gospel. The last we know of, Mark was working with Peter in Rome (1 Peter 5:13). Although Mark himself was not an apostle, he was a faithful interpreter of the apostle Peter's testimony.

## THEMES

There are two distinctive themes that stand out in Mark: *discipleship* and *faith*.

### *Discipleship*

As the Son of Man serves in humility without regard to self and even in suffering, so too must his disciples (8:34). Ironically, however, when one loses one's life *for* Christ, one finds it *in* Christ (8:35). The simple act of hearing and following Jesus is more important than the disciples' complete understanding of him (8:22- 26), which can only come from the vantage point of the cross.

### *Faith*

For Mark, faith isn't a magical formula; it depends on repeated hearing of Jesus' word and participation in his mission. Mark shows two different faith responses to Jesus. A number of individuals display insights and acts of faith that are remarkable for their accuracy. Ironically, many of these individuals are 'outsiders' (e.g. women or Gentiles). But those who would seem to have a faith advantage – Jesus' family (3:31-35), his hometown (6:1- 6) or the religious experts (3:22-30) – are often the least understanding and more



resistant. Even for the Twelve, faith comes slowly – by repeatedly hearing, receiving and finally bearing fruit (4:10-20).

## STRUCTURE

The first half of Mark shows us glimpses of Jesus' true identity, climaxing in Jesus' revelation of what it means for him to be the Messiah (i.e. glory and hope through suffering, death and resurrection) and the wonder of the transfiguration (8–9).

Our hope is that you will hear Jesus' call to follow him in every aspect of your life, and that you will join Jesus in His mission to see the kingdom of God proclaimed and repentance and the forgiveness of sins preached to the very ends of the earth.

## How to Use These Studies

Like all of our studies, these follow a general pattern of observing what's in the passage, discussing the meaning of that content, then relating / applying that truth to our lives. Some things to remember (whether leaders or not!):

- *Bullets are (mostly) application questions.* From a formatting standpoint, generally a bulleted question will be an application question flowing from the previous 'meaning' question. The final questions are also often application questions.
- *You do not have to do every question.* Indeed, you don't have to do any of the questions! This is designed as a *guide*, and since every group is different, what works in one group may not work in another.
- *Read the Passage.* Study-wise, most passages are broken into sections. However, it can be helpful to read the entire passage first, in order to get a sense of the whole and the flow, then look closely at the sections (this is especially helpful in a narrative like *Mark* which contains clearly delineated scenes or episodes within the one passage).



# SIGNS OF THE END

Mark 13:1–37

1. Why do you think so many of us have such a fascination with the future?

READ Mark 13:1–4

2. As they are leaving the temple, one of Jesus' disciples remarks on its magnificence. He seems to be wanting to encourage Jesus (the Messiah) about the enduring hope of the Jewish worship and national identity.

What is Jesus' response? And what does this lead the disciples to ask for?

READ Mark 13:5–13

3. What danger does Jesus warn his disciples about?

- What examples do you see today of people looking for signs to confirm God's promises? What is tempting about them?

4. What is Jesus' metaphor in v.8? How might it be hopeful?



5. What specific difficulties will the disciples face? Why might these difficulties make Jesus' warning about being led astray all the more important?

6. What will keep the disciples going?

### READ Mark 13:14–31

7. What sorts of phenomena are described? To what do you think this is referring?

Christians have sometimes disagreed about how to interpret Jesus' words here. Some think Jesus is talking about the destruction of the temple in AD 70 (and the events leading up to that). Others think these events are still future. Both could be in view – as well as a third.

8. Look back over all Jesus' words in vv.5–37. In what way might Jesus also be referring to the cross/his death (and resurrection)? What evidence is there for this?

9. The dominant picture here in Mark 13 is one of judgement and the cross is at the heart of it (or even the "sign" of it).



Read Mark 13:32-37. What does Jesus ask his disciple to do in response. What should we do?

## FINAL THOUGHTS AND APPLICATION

- 10.** How have you responded to the cross and the resurrection of Jesus?
- How do you show that you are awake to these realities?
  - In what practical ways can we be alert for Jesus' return?
- 11.** Many people throughout the ages have tried to make precise prediction about the return of Jesus. How does watching as Jesus urges differ from making such predictions?
- 12.** If you live as a Christian, what difficulties will you face waiting for the future that God promises? What makes it worth enduring such difficulties?





# DEMONSTRATING DEVOTION

Mark 14:1–11

1. How do people tend to show whether they value something or someone? How do you?

READ Mark 14:1–2

2. What do the Jewish authorities want to do? What are they concerned about?

READ Mark 14:3–11

Mark changes focus. We are given a specific setting: Jesus is in Bethany, the village not far from Jerusalem (see 11:11), where he (and, presumably, his disciples) are guests at the house of a man named Simon the leper.

3. Consider the description of Simon and the introduction of the woman. What does this communicate?



4. What are we told about the woman's actions (what she brings and what she does)?
  
5. What is the reaction to her act?
  
6. How does Jesus' response differ from the others?
  
7. How do you understand Jesus' comment in v.7? Is he expressing a lack of concern for the poor? Why/why not?
  - What do you do with your money? What might it say about your worship?

Jesus' comment that 'wherever the gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told' (v.9) has significance beyond this event. It suggests that Jesus did not, as some have suggested, expect the final consummation of everything to occur shortly after his death. Rather, it anticipates (like 13:10 does) a telling of the good news throughout the world (and, thus, throughout time).

8. Lastly, Mark tells us of Judas' decision to betray Jesus. What is the effect of including that information here?



## FINAL THOUGHTS AND APPLICATION

9. What threatens to get in the way of making Christ your highest treasure?
10. Consider how, in contrast to the woman, Jesus' disciples and the others present failed to give Jesus his due honour and worth.
- How might we (who also know Jesus) be prone to that ourselves?
  - What might we say to those who don't think Jesus is worthy of such devotion?



# THE LAST SUPPER

Mark 14:12–31

1. A buzz phrase of our time is 'back yourself'. That is, have confidence in yourself. What are some of the ways this can backfire?

READ Mark 14:12–25

2. The disciples ask Jesus where they may prepare a place for Passover because they are visitors to Jerusalem (v.12). Consider Jesus' response: what is it reminiscent of? And what does it communicate?
3. How do the disciples react to Jesus' announcement that one of them will betray him?
4. How does Jesus reappropriate the Passover meal?



5. Jesus describes the wine as 'my blood of the covenant' (v.24). What is Jesus saying? What significance is there in this language of 'covenant'?

- As a church we celebrate the Lord's Supper regularly (appx. once a month). Is this how you've understood it? What aspects of it speak most powerfully to you?

READ Mark 14:27–31

6. What prediction does Jesus make? What do you notice about the language of the prophecy he quotes – and what is significant about this?

There is a note of hope in Jesus' prediction: *yes, you will be struck and will scatter. But I will be raised from the dead, then will go ahead of you into Galilee* (v.28). In other words: this won't be the end. Jesus will *defeat death and regather* his disciples.

7. What is Peter's response to Jesus' prediction of being deserted?



8. How does Jesus respond to this? What does this show us?

Peter's subsequent response is super strong: He 'insists emphatically' that he would rather die than deny Jesus – and so do all the disciples respond with the same bravado (v.31). They think nothing could ever destroy their commitment and resolve.

## FINAL THOUGHTS AND APPLICATION

9. *The Lord's Supper is a meal for sinners, not achievers* (Jason Meyer, *Mark For You*). In what way does this challenge you as someone partaking in it? In what way does it encourage you?

10. What do you make of the disciples' assertions (never to abandon Jesus)? Do you empathise with them? Why/why not?



# GRIEF IN THE GARDEN

Mark 14:32–52

1. Sometimes people go through things that really weigh them down. Maybe you yourself have some experience with this. What are some ways people try to cope with that experience?

READ Mark 14:32–41

2. What are we told about Jesus' emotional/spiritual state (vv.33–34)?
3. Jesus instructs Peter, James and John to stay where they are and 'keep watch' while he goes a little farther to pray alone. Consider what we're told about Jesus' prayer (vv.35–36):

How is it described?

How does Jesus address God, and what does he pray?

- Why do you think Jesus was so deeply troubled as he approached his death?
- What is *confronting* about Jesus' prayer? What is *comforting* about it?



4. What is the struggle facing Peter, James and John? Why does this matter?

- What in the disciples' prayer struggles, and Jesus' rebuke of them, resonates with you and your prayer life?

READ Mark 14:43–52

5. How does Judas arrive in the garden? What does his arrival indicate?

6. Look over the events of vv.44–52. What stands out?

7. The post-script involving the unnamed young man is at once oddly comical and at the same time entirely fitting: he seems symbolic of all Jesus' followers.

How does his predicament reflect Jesus' warnings about the cost of discipleship (cf. 8:34–38)?

## FINAL THOUGHTS AND APPLICATION

8. Jesus' call to his disciples to 'stay awake' was both literal and spiritual.

- What are some ways we're prone to 'drifting off' spiritually?





- What are some circumstances in which we as Jesus' followers today really need to 'stay awake'?

9. The pressure to abandon Jesus remains for his disciples throughout time.

- What are some ways we 'fall away' (even if it's not in the complete sense of abandoning faith)?
  
- What is the hope and encouragement we can find when we do stumble in these ways?



# MISTRIAL AND DENIAL

Mark 14:53–72

1. Think of an instance when you let someone down. Without giving details, describe how that made you feel. Did it have a positive resolution?

READ Mark 14:53–65

2. Who is still following Jesus? Is this a surprise to you? Why/why not?
3. At Jesus' trial, the prosecution has a problem: No evidence to warrant death and competing false statements. What is one of the charges brought against Jesus (vv.57–58)? Why might this one be mentioned?
4. Jesus remains silent in the face of this false testimony. Finally, he gives an answer. What is the question – and why do you think Jesus chooses to answer it?



5. How is the charge against Jesus (v.64) both justifiable and unjustifiable?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
6. Consider the condemnation of the high priest and the Sanhedrin: what is tragically ironic about it?
  - In what ways can we end up acting as the judge of Jesus instead of recognising that Jesus is the judge of us?

READ Mark 14:66–72

7. What does Peter's denial indicate:
  - About him?
  
  
  
  
  
  - About Jesus?
  
  
  
  
  
  - About Jesus' other promises?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
8. How is Peter's betrayal here different to Judas's?



## FINAL THOUGHTS AND APPLICATION

9. In what circumstances are you most tempted to be ashamed of Jesus or deny him?
10. What warnings can you draw from Peter's experience – and what encouragement?



# VICTORY SNATCHED FROM DEFEAT

Mark 15:1–16:8

1. What does the world consider true greatness to be?
  - What contributes to it? What detracts from it?
  - In the eyes of the world, was Jesus truly a great man? Why/why not?

READ Mark 15:1–15

2. What stands out to you from the interaction between Pilate and Jesus?
3. What evidence is there that Pilate wants to do right? What keeps him from doing right?
4. Consider the setting free of Barabbas (over Jesus):  
What is shocking about it? What does it reveal?  
  
How is it a picture of the gospel?



- How might we keep from succumbing to Pilate's temptation of wanting to do right but not doing it?
- What are some of the 'mistaken Messiah figures' people (and churches) in our time are prone to think of and embrace?

## READ Mark 15:16–32

The Roman soldiers lead Jesus away, and they seem to take special pains to ensure that he is humiliated to the maximum degree. En route to the site of crucifixion we see a man, Simon of Cyrene, being forced to carry Jesus' cross (that is, the crossbeam). This indicates that Jesus had been beaten so mercilessly he was probably unable to do carry it himself (as was standard practice). Also: Simon is named (and his sons, too). This suggests he was known to Mark's readers. More to the point for Mark's thematic focus, as Jason Meyer observes:

*The language Mark uses here is the language of discipleship: to take up one's cross and follow Jesus (cf. 8:34). Simon becomes the first to obey Jesus' command – in a hauntingly literal sense. The cost of discipleship stands out. This verse will not permit us to maintain a shallow, sentimental view of what it means to 'carry our cross' to follow Jesus.*

5. The humiliation and mocking of Jesus continue to the crucifixion itself. What ironies are present in the charges and jeers directed toward Jesus on the cross (vv.25–32)?



## READ Mark 15:33–41

In v.24 Mark included an oblique reference to Psalm 22 when he described the soldiers casting lots for Jesus' clothes. In the psalm (ascribed to David) the author tells the gruesome story of being encircled by evildoers who pierce his hands and feet, and gloat over him as they divide his garments and cast lots for them. There is fulfilment in the mistreatment of God's anointed King.

Then in v.34 Jesus quotes the first verse of Psalm 22. The cry of deep pain and dereliction expressed by the psalmist is given its most awful and profound fulfilment on the lips of the incarnate Son experiencing for the first time a break in his eternal perfect relationship with the Father.

**N.B.** *If you have time, it can be instructive to read the whole of Psalm 22 looking for all its points ahead to in Jesus' experience on the cross.*

6. What is the centurion's confession? In what ways might we view this as the climax to the whole of Mark's Gospel? (compare v.39 with 1:1,10–11; 8:28–30).

- What is the right response to Jesus' death? How do we receive the benefits of Jesus' death?
- Are you ever discouraged by all the ways people continue to slander and slight Jesus' worth today? In the midst of that mockery, what hope does this text give you personally?



- Jesus cried, 'Why have you forsaken me?' so that we don't have to. How does that truth that in Christ you are never forsaken by God impact your daily life?

## READ Mark 15:42–16:8

7. Who asks for Jesus' body for burial? What is unexpected about this?

- Do you identify with Joseph? Explain your response.

8. What is the significance of what the women find? (cf. 9:31; 10:33–34; Mark 13:24–26)

9. If these expectations have now been fulfilled, what should happen next? Look back over 9:9; 13:26–27; 14:9; 14:28.

10. Why is it significant that Peter is mentioned by name in 16:7?

- What reassurance can we draw from this?





## FINAL THOUGHTS AND APPLICATION

**11.** The earliest and best manuscripts of Mark's Gospel end at 16:8. Nearly all scholars agree that if Mark did not end his work here, we have lost what he wrote (vv.9–20 were clearly written by someone else).

What is the effect of this last verse in Mark?

**12.** Many scholars believe that Mark intended to end with v.8 as it is. If this is so, how might v.8 be an appropriate ending to the gospel story?

**13.** If all that Mark says is true, how does it change:

- Our dreams for the future of the world?
- Our hopes and ambitions for our own future?
- Our whole view of the world and what life is about?





