

# Women's Bible Study

A TWO-YEAR JOURNEY THROUGH  
THE STORY OF GOD

## Week 3 | Jesus is the Suffering Servant | The Gospel of Mark

The book of Mark was the first written account of the life of Jesus. It is the earliest of the gospels. It was written by a man named John Mark, who had been a close companion of Peter. Whereas the gospel of Matthew was written for a Jewish readership, the gospel of Mark was written to a primarily Gentile (non-Jewish) audience. Mark was written to Christians from a Gentile background who were living in Rome.

The gospel of Mark has two primary purposes—it proclaims the divine authority that Jesus has, and it also emphasizes that Jesus is the ultimate Servant of God's people. It teaches us about Jesus' life, death, and resurrection; and it teaches that Jesus came to suffer and die as a ransom to bring forgiveness of sin.

### *Who is Jesus?*

#### 1. Read Mark 1:1-15

- a. How does Mark describe Jesus? (1:1) (Note: the term *Christ* means *Anointed King*)
- b. In the Old Testament, in Isaiah 40:3-5 and in Malachi 3:1, the prophets wrote about a *messenger*, or a herald, who would prepare the way for the promised King. According to Mark 1:4, John the Baptist is this messenger. How does John the Baptist describe the coming King? (1:7-8)
- c. When Jesus was baptized by John, how did God affirm Jesus' identity? (1:10-11)
- d. What announcement did Jesus bring as He traveled through Galilee? (1:14-15)

### *Jesus demonstrates the authority of the King*

#### 2. Read Mark 1:21-32.

In what ways did Jesus demonstrate His authority:

- a. In the synagogue? (1:22)
- b. Over evil spirits? (1:23-26)
- c. On behalf of all the people? (1:33-34)

#### 3. Read Mark 2:1-12.

- a. What stunning authority does Jesus declare in this encounter with a paralyzed man? (2:5-7)
- b. How does Jesus prove that He has the authority that He claims? (2:10-12)

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4. **Read Mark 4:35-41.** What power and authority does Jesus display in the midst of storm?
5. **Read Mark 5:21-43.** What authority does Jesus show in these encounters:
  - a. With the suffering woman in the crowd?
  - b. With Jairus' daughter?
6. **Read Mark 6:32-44.** How does Jesus demonstrate both the compassion of God and also the power of God on behalf of a spiritually and physically hungry crowd?

## *To follow Jesus is to give up the self-exalting life*

7. **Read Mark 8:27-36.** Just as the disciples were beginning to understand that Jesus is the promised Messiah, Jesus gave them a startling announcement that shattered their expectations.
  - a. What did Jesus reveal about His destiny? (8:31)

The disciples did not expect that the Messiah would have to *suffer*; they expected Him to be a victorious *King*. Jesus is indeed the One who will rule, but this Ruler has come to serve. Jesus is the perfect Servant of God who lives in complete and perfect obedience to God. Jesus explains what it means for Him to be the Messiah, and also what it requires of them (and us) to be His followers.

- b. In what way are Jesus' followers challenged to imitate His way of life? (Mark 8:34-35)
  - c. *Personal reflection:* To "*deny oneself*" is to cease making *self-advantage* the ultimate object of your life. *God* must become the center of your life, not *self*. As you consider your life and your goals, are you willing to place God and His Kingdom at the center of your life? In what ways would your priorities change? How would that be reflected in your daily life?
8. **Read Mark 10:42-45.** It is our natural tendency to set our hearts on success, wealth, fame, and power. Jesus came to live a different way, and Jesus calls us to a different kind of life.

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- a. How does Jesus describe the life of a Jesus-follower in Mark 10:42-44?
  - b. The most astonishing statement in the book of Mark is Mark 10:45. What does this passage teach you about Jesus?
  - c. Use a dictionary to look up the term *ransom*, and write the definition here.
  - d. *For deeper thought:* In what way is Jesus' life given as a ransom for many? How would you explain that? (Consider also Isaiah 53:4-6)
9. **Read Philippians 2:5-11.** How does this passage add to your understanding of who Jesus is?

## *Jesus enters Jerusalem as the Servant-King*

### **10. Read Mark 11:1-10.**

Jesus and His disciples traveled into Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover feast. His strange manner of entrance, His public acclamation, and His subsequent actions were a direct challenge to the Jewish leaders. The chief priests began to plan how they could kill Him. Judas Iscariot, one of Jesus' disciples, came to the chief priests and offered to betray Jesus to them. The Jewish leaders were delighted, and the plot to kill Jesus was set in motion.

## *Jesus prepares for His suffering and death*

The Passover meal was a celebration of God's deliverance of His people from slavery in Egypt through the death of the Passover lamb. At this final Passover meal in Jerusalem with His disciples, Jesus re-interpreted the symbols of the meal, announcing that God provides deliverance from slavery to sin and death through the death of the Suffering Servant—the Lamb of God.

### **11. Read Mark 14:12-16 and Mark 14:22-25.      *The Last Passover***

- a. How did Jesus re-interpret the bread of the Passover meal? (14:22)
- b. How did Jesus re-interpret the wine of the Passover meal? (14:24) [Note: Recall Mark 10:45]

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## 12. Read Mark 14:32-42

### *Jesus prays in the Garden of Gethsemane*

- a. What was Jesus' experience as He contemplated His suffering and death? (14:33-34)
- b. How did Jesus pray? What did Jesus pray? (14:35-36)
- c. *Personal reflection:* What do you learn about prayer from Jesus' example?

### *Jesus is condemned by the Jews*

## 13. Read Mark 14:53-65. That night, Jesus was betrayed by Judas, arrested, and taken to be tried before the Jewish ruling council, the Sanhedrin.

- a. When the high priest asked Jesus, "*Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One?*" how did Jesus answer? (14:62)

Jesus' answer would have brought to mind this prophecy from the book of Daniel:

Daniel 7:13-14 (NASB-U)

*"I kept looking in the night visions,  
And behold, with the clouds of heaven  
One like a Son of Man was coming,  
And He came up to the Ancient of Days  
And was presented before Him.*

*And to Him was given dominion,  
Glory and a kingdom,  
That all the peoples, nations and men of every language  
Might serve Him.  
His dominion is an everlasting dominion  
Which will not pass away;  
And His kingdom is one  
Which will not be destroyed."*

Jesus proclaims to the high priest that He is the majestic figure in Daniel's vision.

- b. What do you learn about Jesus from this Old Testament prophecy in Daniel?

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*Jesus is crucified by the Romans*

## 14. Read Mark 15:25-39

- a. How did the Jewish officials mock Jesus as He suffered on the cross? (15:31-32)
- b. Jesus did not deliver Himself from this agony. Why not?
- c. *For personal reflection and deeper thought:* Why did Jesus die? What is your understanding of the purpose of Jesus' death on the cross? How would you explain it to someone who didn't understand?

*Jesus is risen! Satan is defeated; the power of sin and death is destroyed.*

## 15. Read Mark 16:1-8

- a. When the women came to the tomb, what did they see? (16:4-5)
- b. What did the angel tell them? (16:6-7)

The first witnesses of the empty tomb were faithful women who had come to anoint Jesus' body. The angel at the tomb affirmed that Jesus was risen and had gone ahead of them to Galilee. The book of Mark ends abruptly; the suffering Servant has given His life as a ransom for many, just as He said He would. The fact that He is risen affirms that His suffering and death accomplished the salvation we so desperately need.

*Even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve,  
and to give His life a ransom for many.*

*Mark 10:45*

*Jesus is the Servant Who Suffered for Us*

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