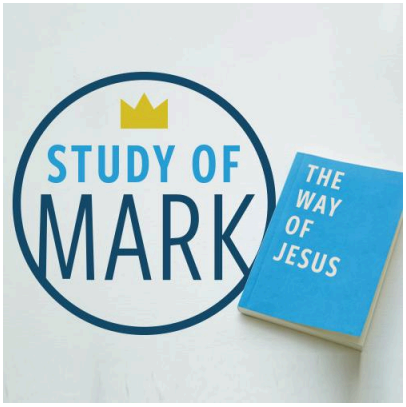

WEEKLY STUDY

Study of Mark - Week 1

Welcome to the Study of Mark! Settle in because we are going to walk through this important little book that so much of the New Testament is built upon. I hope you love what Mark brings to us, but even more, I hope it helps you to love Jesus even more! Coming out of Baptism Sunday, we remember that Jesus was baptized by John in the Jordan River. Immediately after that, he entered the wilderness for 40 days only to return and launch into his ministry that changed the world forever. Consider what you can learn about the Way of Jesus this week.

Please note our prayer focus for the week in the box below. Join us in seeing what God will do as we unite in prayer.

Peace of Christ,
Pastor Mark Youngman

If you are studying with your Providence Small Group or Discipleship Group, you can share from your own daily reflections and consider the Group Discussion questions below. If you would like to get connected visit prov.church/smallgroups.

Prayer Focus:

- Pray for someone who feels far away from Jesus. Pray that the truth about Jesus' love for them infiltrates their heart and helps them to receive him as their Savior.

DAILY STUDY

MONDAY: MARK 1.1 (NIV)

The beginning of the good news about Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God,

- Sometimes we forget how ground-breaking these statements about Jesus Christ are. Mark's account is truly the evangelium (good news) that the world has been waiting for. Jesus is the Messiah, the one that all of Israel had been hoping and waiting for. God had sent the Rescuer that we needed all along. And he didn't just send an angel or a good man, he sent his Son. How do you talk about Jesus with your family and friends? What words do you use to describe him to people you meet?

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- **Prayer Prompt:And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. (1 John 4.14)**
- *Heavenly Father, thank you for sending your Son to rescue us from our sin and death. As amazing as we are, we see the impact of sin all around us, we need your Messiah. Come Lord Jesus! Amen.*

TUESDAY: MARK 1.2-3(NIV)

as it is written in Isaiah the prophet:

"I will send my messenger ahead of you,
who will prepare your way"—
3 "a voice of one calling in the wilderness,
'Prepare the way for the Lord,
make straight paths for him.'"

- John was preparing the way for others to experience the Messiah, the Son of God, Jesus. What does it mean to "make straight the path" for Jesus? Is there anything "crooked" in your life that is keeping you from a full encounter and full engagement as a disciple of Jesus?

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- **Prayer Prompt: They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, with a request. "Sir," they said, "we would like to see Jesus." (John 12.21)**

- *Loving and Merciful God, you made a plan of preparation for you people. Prepare my heart for a fresh encounter with your Son. Amen.*

WEDNESDAY: MARK 1.4-5 (NIV)

And so John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. [5] The whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem went out to him. Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River.

- The word "repent" indicates a need to turn around. Do a 180 away from sin and towards God. You might relate to that sense at various points in your life, your year, or even your day. This repentance didn't just offer a better path, it offers forgiveness. When was the last time you had something forgiven without any strings attached? This forgiveness requires us to live into the new opportunity for which we've been forgiven. And all of it is for our good. When was your last 180?

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- **Prayer Prompt: If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1.9)**
- *God, I repent of all that keeps me farther from you. Forgive me for my tendencies to get distracted with and enamored by less significant things. Amen.*

THURSDAY: MARK 1.6-8 (NIV)

John wore clothing made of camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. [7] And this was his message: "After me comes the one more powerful than I, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. [8] I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

- John the Baptist was quite a character. He stood out. Others wondered about him. But he was driven by the bigger story that God was sending a baptism of fire (Holy Spirit) that had not yet been experienced. It is one thing to be cleansed, it is another thing to be made clean and equipped for a life of impact. That's what Jesus experienced. His baptism involved the Holy Spirit resting upon him (something he would require in the wilderness). Our baptism involves both. How amazing is it that we get to experience something that Jesus experienced? If you have been baptised, reflect on that experience below.

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- **Prayer Prompt: For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. (1 Corinthians 12.13)**
- *God, thank you for calling me to the waters of baptism…not just for a moment but for a lifetime lived for you. Amen.*

FRIDAY: MATTHEW 15.16-17 (NIV)

"But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?"
16 Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God."
17 Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven.

- What we say about Jesus really matters. It doesn't impact who Jesus is, but it can seem to slow down his Kingdom's advancement. If you know that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of the living God, say so! How does your day to day life testify to this truth?

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- **Prayer Prompt: "When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father—the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father—he will testify about me. 27 And you also must testify, for you have been with me from the beginning. (John 15.26-27)**
- O God, I want my life to testify to the fact that Jesus Christ is indeed the Son of the living God—the Messiah. Reveal this truth to me over and over again in my moments of weakness. Amen.

SATURDAY: PHILIPPIANS 2.5-7) (NIV)

In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:
6 Who, being in very nature God,
did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;
7 rather, he made himself nothing
by taking the very nature of a servant,
being made in human likeness.

- Jesus was one of a kind. There was never nor will ever be anyone exactly like him. Yet we are called to become more and more like him. To be like him we have to lower ourselves. He have to make ourselves nothing at times. We have to take the nature of a servant. We can not lift up our salvation as something to earn us favor in this life. It is all so counter-cultural that many find it offensive. But The Way of Christ as it is spelled out in Mark and in Philippians, reveals a new way. Are you ready to the follow more deeply the Way of Jesus?

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- **Prayer Prompt: “When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father—the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father—he will testify about me. [27] And you also must testify, for you have been with me from the beginning. (John 14.26-27)**
- *Almighty and everlasting God, Help me to take even just one step in the direction of Christ-likeness today. Reveal to me what it looks like, and show me the way. Amen.*

GROUP DISCUSSION

Use the questions below to guide your conversation.

1. Mark opens by identifying Jesus as "the Messiah, the Son of God" (Mark 1:1). Why does it matter that we begin with who Jesus is before considering what he teaches or asks of us?

2. John the Baptist called people to repentance and pointed beyond himself to someone greater (Mark 1:4–8). What can John's example teach us about preparing our hearts to receive Jesus and making him the focus rather than ourselves?

3. There is a difference between knowing about Jesus and following in his way. Who do you know that seems to be following in his way? What stands out about them?

4. We often want to understand everything before taking a step. When have you learned something important about Jesus "along the way" of following him, especially in a difficult or unexpected season?

5. Mark reveals three important movements in the Way of Jesus. We recognize Jesus as the Way, we pattern our lives after him, and we learn more about the way while we are on the way with Jesus. Where do you see your own discipleship to Jesus represented in these three movements? How can we pray for you?