

SLOW FOOD BIBLE STUDIES

MARK 1:1-4:34 (25 studies)

Mark's Gospel appears to have been composed during the sixties AD/CE, and to have been the first of the four Gospels to be published – though much other oral and written material was circulating from the earliest days (Lk 1:1-4). Thus references to similar passages in other Gospels have been kept to a minimum, as though Mark's were the only account of Jesus' life and ministry available. According to Papias, Mark's chief source and informant was Simon Peter (see 1 Pet 5:13), though Paul too may have had a hand in encouraging him (2 Tim 4:11). The early chapters of the Gospel omit the birth and childhood of Jesus, and focus on (a) the initial impact he makes in his local region of Galilee (b) the first steps in discipleship he offers to his closest followers.

1:1 Is Jesus 'good news' to me? *Isa 61:1; Gal 2:20.*

1:2-8 If I had heard John the Baptist's preaching, how might it have 'prepared the way' for me to follow Christ? *Isa 53:6; Jn 1:35-39a; Rev 3:20.*

1:9-13 Is Jesus' baptism unique? In what sense can I share it? *Rom 6:1-4; Col 2:12; Eph 1:13-14.*

1:14-15 What happens when I 'repent and believe' (a) on the human side (b) on the Divine side? *Jn 3:3-8, 6:35-37; Acts 2:38; Jas 4:8.*

1:16-20 What risks are the four fishermen taking in answering Jesus' call? What risks am I taking? *Lk 9:23-26; Phil 3:7-8; 2 Tim 2:10; Rev 2:10.*

1:21-28 What 'authority' is Jesus exercising here? Is he still exercising it where I am concerned? *Mt 12:27-29; Jn 14:12-14; Acts 8:4-13.*

1:29-34 To what extent do these stories about Jesus challenge my unconcern for other people? *2 Cor 12:15a; Acts 10:38; Phil 2:20-21; 1 Jn 4:17b.*

1:35-39 What are Jesus' priorities? What are mine? *Ezek 34:11; Jn 5:30; Phil 1:20.*

1:40-45 Jesus wants to heal, but he doesn't want publicity. What can I learn from this? *Mt 6:1-4; Mk 7:31-36; Mk 8:22-26.*

2:1-12 What difference did Jesus make to the paralysed man's life? What difference has he made to mine? *Ps 107:10-22; Rom 8:1-4.*

2:13-17 Am I more of a Pharisee than a Levi? *Ps 32:1-6a; Jn 8:3-11.*

2:18-22 If I have become a new person through Christ, need I keep the old rules? *Mt 5:17-20; Mk 7:6-7; 2 Cor 5:17; 2 Tim 1:8-11.*

2:23-28 Is Jesus Lord of my weekend just as much as he is of the rest of my week? *Isa 28:12; Isa 40:30-31; Isa 58:13-14.*

3:1-6 Am I championing a Jesus-centred gospel, or am I for some reason opposed to it? *Mt 16:21-23; Gal 2:4-5, 11-16.*

3:7-12 'We can help Jesus in practical ways that may not seem directly spiritual, but that are essential for his work to go on' (on v9). How can I put my practical skills and experience at his disposal? *Mk 4:1; Acts 9:36-39; 1 Cor 12:27-30.*

3:13-19 Considering the job description Jesus had for his 'apostles' (vv14-15), if he had 'called' me, would I have responded wholeheartedly? *Lk 5:8-11; Phil 3:7-11.*

3:20-21, 31-35 Is my idea of who belongs to Jesus' 'family' exclusive or inclusive? *Jn 1:12-13; Jn 11:51-52; Rom 8:14-17; Gal 3:26-29.*

3:22-30 What central point is Jesus making in his parable about the 'strong man'? How does it apply to my prayer life? *Isa 49:24-25; Rom 15:30-31; Eph 6:12; Col 4:12; 1 Jn 4:4; Rev 12:10-11.*

4:1-9 Do I use stories and imagery in my teaching? What special power does this have? *Eccl 12:9-12; 2 Cor 4:1-6; 2 Tim 2:1-7.*

4:10-13 Do I let Jesus' parables (and the rest of the Bible) challenge me at the level of my self-will? *Isa 48:16-18; Jn 5:39-40; Jn 7:16-17.*

4:14-20 Why don't people respond to God's word? Why do they? *Isa 55:6-11; Acts 28:23-28; 2 Tim 4:3-4.*

4:21-25 'How much you get out of [Jesus' teaching] depends on how much you bring to it' (R T France). When attending services or reading the Bible by myself, how hard am I really listening? *Gen 3:8; Lk 10:39; Phil 2:12-13, 3:15-16.*

4:26-29 'This story is a warning against looking down on the small beginnings of some great new initiative that God has in mind' (Tom Wright). Am I overapprehensive about the kingdom work I am involved in? *Isa 60:21-22; Hab 2:3; Lk 12:32; 1 Cor 3:6.*

4:30-34 'Mustard-seeds' may not strike much of a chord either with me or with those I live among. How can I explain what the kingdom of God is like in terms that will make sense today? *Mt 13:51-52; 1 Cor 14:6-12; Col 4:3-4.*

Review Is 'the kingdom of God' (Mk 1:15) 'good news' or stale news for me? What actions or teachings of Jesus have made a fresh impact on me during this set of studies?