

# Gospel of Mark

## Session 1: The Beginning and Some Bowling Buddies

First Congregational Church Salt Lake City

27 October 2023 • Rev. Doug Gray

### I. Welcome and Introductions

Other introductions as necessary

Teaser: Have you ever had the chance to tell someone something surprising? What was that like?

Prayer

### II. The Gospel of Mark

A. Who is Mark?

1. With Jesus? (Mark 14:51–52)
2. Part of the early church as “John also known as Mark” (Acts 12:12)
3. Early missionary (Acts 15:25) to Cyprus (15:37) and later, Egypt
4. Becomes protégé of Peter

B. When is Mark written?

Earliest gospel (late 50s, early 60s)

Connection to other gospels (Documentary Hypothesis)

C. Things to look for

Punchy, journalistic, action-packed — “immediately”

Simple language

Occasionally confused about geography & Jewish practices

Not chronological, geographical

What’s important to Mark seems different than for other gospels  
(example: no birth stories, fewer parables, etc.)

The key for him is Jesus and how people (we!) see Him

What is Mark’s idea of what following Jesus means?

D. To whom is this gospel addressed?

Probably Gentiles

Probably to people persecuted (focus on enduring suffering)

### III. Unpacking Chapter 1

- A. The Introduction (ref. Malachi 3:1, Isaiah 40:3)
- B. John the Baptist
- C. Jesus’ baptism and wilderness experience
- D. Jesus’ ministry begins and disciples
- E. The Kingdom’s Presence (exorcism and healing)
- F. Jesus’ return to the wilderness
- G. Jesus heals the leper (Shh! It’s a secret!)

#### **IV. Unpacking Chapter 2**

##### **A. Jesus Heals the Paralytic**

What is the “trigger” that leads Jesus to do the healing?

Why are the teachers of the Law so upset about Jesus’ forgiving of the man?

What is more important — healing or forgiveness? Which is harder? How are they tied together?

##### **B. The Calling of Levi**

Would you have Levi on your short list for being a disciple? For a dinner party? Why or why not?

Do you think Jesus should have gone to this party? Why or why not?

What are the Jewish Laws that might impact Jesus (and others) who attend the party?

What does Jesus’ pronouncement mean to you?

If you invited one of your “sinner” friends to our church, how do you think they would be received? How do you think they would feel while they were there?

##### **C. Jesus Questioned About Fasting**

Why do people fast? What do they hope to get out of it? (Hint: What does Jesus say after 40 days of fasting in the desert? See Matthew 4 or Luke 4.)

Can you party while you fast?

What do you think Jesus means about the bridegroom?

What is Jesus trying to say with the comment about the old garment? Is it the same point He is trying to make with the new wine in a new wineskin comment? Why do you think that?

##### **D. Jesus Questioned About the Sabbath**

Can you talk about the importance of the idea of Sabbath for the people of God? Where does the practice come from? (Hint: Genesis 1, Exodus 20)

Why is what the disciples are doing breaking the Law in the eyes of the Pharisees?

What story does Jesus draw on? Check it out in 1 Samuel 21. Why does David do what he does? What restrictions are laid on him? What do you think God thinks about it?

#### **V. The Surprise of Jesus as Good News**