

THE WORD WITH YOUR PASTORS ~ THE GOSPEL OF MARK  
*The Gospel as the Evening News* Study Guide  
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First of Four Presentations ~ Winter 2022

### Overview

Mark is the second Gospel in the New Testament, but it is most likely the earliest written of the four biblical Gospels. The author likely wanted to make sure the story was taken down and able to be preserved before all of the eyewitnesses of Jesus' life, ministry, death, and resurrection had died. In that sense, there may be a certain urgency to Mark's composition, and it shows in how the narrative unfolds. Jesus enters abruptly and does not fuss around. Mark tells the story with unrelenting speed and suddenness; that is, until Jesus is arrested and faces death on a cross. Then Mark slows down and allows us to focus on the event which astounds even a Roman centurion. Mark tells of Jesus' death in the love of God for all the world, so that we might proclaim and, so too, believe in the soldier's proclamation, "Truly, this man was God's son."

### Questions

1. What did you learn from the presentation about how the message of Christ was passed on to early Christians? How does it inform your understanding of Jesus?
2. Notice that there is no birth story or poetic introduction to Mark's Gospel. What effect does this abrupt, fast-paced, hit-the-ground-running telling have on you as a reader? What effect might Mark wished it to have?
3. The earliest and likely original text of Mark ends with a cliff-hanger. "[the women] went out and fled from the tomb, for terror and amazement had seized them; and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid." (16:8) Is Mark's last sentence even true? For instance, if the women said nothing, how would Mark even know about this scene? If this *is* the way Mark intended the composition to conclude, what may have been the intention? If the first verse of Mark's work is the title, "The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ..." when and where is the middle and end? Could it be in those who believe?
4. Much in Mark points to Jesus' death as the culminating and ultimate event of Jesus' ministry, mission, purpose, and power. What does it communicate about God's love, Jesus' example and work, and our witness and direction as believers? How does it influence our faith and life?

### Closing Prayer

*God of power and might, your love breaks through every boundary to get to us. It may be astounding, frightening, abrupt, and/or surprising, and while we may not always understand it at first, help us to continue to see how much you love us, and give us boldness to live in that hope and share that good news, through Jesus Christ, our crucified Savior and Lord. Amen.*