

A person wearing a white robe and a patterned shawl is walking barefoot on a rocky, gravelly path. The person's feet are visible in the foreground, and their legs and lower torso are visible above. The background is a blurred natural setting with some water and vegetation.

"Pathway Series"  
DISCUSSION GUIDE

**BOOK 1**

# discovering Jesus

7 Week Discussion Guide  
based on the book of Mark

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# Welcome!

Thanks for your desire to discover Jesus. You probably have heard His name before, maybe you know a lot about who He is, or maybe you don't... No previous knowledge or experience is necessary! The goal is for each of us to read & discuss together about what the book of Mark says so that we can discover the truth about who Jesus actually is, not who others say He is.

All of us will need to read through the same portion of the book between each meeting. When we come together, the facilitator will introduce the discussion. Then we'll take the time to hear what everyone thinks about what they have read. There are discussion questions included in this guide that can be used to help move the discussion along.

We learn best when we learn together. No matter who you are, or what your observations are, you should share them. We can only have an honest & intellectual conversation about the issues if we are all willing to share our observations, concerns or questions. We all have a unique perspective that may bring things to light in a way that others might not have thought of.

What to expect:

- Expect to meet some new friends and have fun!
- Expect to gain some insight into the book of Mark
- Expect to discover more for yourself about who Jesus claimed to be.

\*NOTE: This discussion guide can go with accompanying videos from 'Christianity Explored'



discovering  
Jesus

# discovering Jesus

## Outline

**\*Facilitator's Page:** Check out pg. 25 before jumping into this discussion Group together. The first gathering will be shaped by that. Following weeks can then, be guided by this following outline.

Week 1: **Mark 1:1 – 3:6**  
"Good News"

Week 2: **Mark 1:1 – 3:6**  
"Who is Jesus?"

Week 3: **Mark 3:7-5:43**  
"Humanity's Greatest Problem"

Week 4: **Mark 6:1-8:29**  
"God's Solution to this Problem"

Week 5: **Mark 8:30-10:52**  
"A Mind-Blowing" Claim

Week 6: **Mark 11:1-13:37**  
"Humanity's Response to God's Solution"

Week 7: **Mark 14:1-16:8**  
"My Response to God's Solution"

# Week 1: GOOD NEWS

## Opening Discussion Questions

• **Has anyone here ever read the book of Mark before?**

If so, share your general impression of the book. Easy to read? Exciting? Strange?

• **What do you think God is like?**

What has given you those impressions?

• **What is your current perception of Christianity?**

What has given you these impressions?

• **At this point in time, who do you think Jesus is, (or) what have you heard about Him?**

The book of Mark makes some astonishing claims about Jesus.

## THE BOOK OF MARK MAKES MANY CLAIMS ABOUT CHRISTIANITY...

### Claim #1: Christianity is the good news about Jesus

**MARK 1:1** "The beginning of the gospel (lit. 'good news') of Jesus Christ, the Son of God".

1. Have you ever thought about Christianity in this way?
2. What do you think are some of the implications of this claim?
3. How does thinking about these claims make you feel?  
Nervous, skeptical, excited to hear more, intrigued? Why?



**NOTE:**

"Christ" is a title meaning God's chosen King or chosen Representative. Mark is claiming that Jesus is God's chosen King, God's representative, God's Son, and he is claiming that the story of Jesus is good news.



## Claim #2: Mark claims that Jesus' coming was predicted by prophets beforehand.

### Let's Look at Mark 1:2-8

**verses 2-3** Prophets from long ago predicted that Jesus would come and that someone would prepare the way for His coming. (The quote is from the book of Isaiah, written around 740 BC)

**verse 7** John the Baptist (the one preparing the way) said that someone was coming who was more powerful than him (Jesus).

1. What do the words and actions of John the Baptist say about who he believed Jesus was?
2. What is your reaction to the prediction made in Isaiah (written over 700 years prior)?

## Claim #3: Mark records many strange, supernatural things. The claim seems to be that Jesus is no ordinary man.

Let's discuss some of the miracles that Jesus performed to show His power of nature.

What stands out to you from each of these?

**Mark 1:9-11** Extraordinary things happened at Jesus' baptism.

**Mark 1:16-20** Jesus calls people and they drop everything and follow Him.

**Mark 1:21-22** People seem extraordinarily amazed at His teaching and claim that He is different than the other religious teachers of the day.

**Mark 1:23-28** Jesus casts out demons.

**Mark 1:29-34 and 40-42** Jesus heals sick people.

**Mark 2:8-9** Jesus claims to forgive sin (ultimately this is a claim to be God which raises some angry reactions)

**Mark 2:1-12** Jesus knows what people are thinking.



### NOTE:

If you think these things are weird, the people 2000 years ago probably did too! The experiences that we are about to read are not ordinary experiences. But if Mark's claims are true, then Jesus is much more than an ordinary man and it makes sense that extraordinary things would happen.

### What is your reaction to these extraordinary happenings?

- How would you feel if you were a witness to these things? Curious? Scared?
- Does anything strike you as particularly interesting in these accounts?
- Do you have any questions about any of these accounts?

Is there anything that doesn't make sense to you or anything that you would like to explore further?

# Week 1

## **WRAP UP:**

Even at the earliest stages, Jesus divided opinions. Some people were angry at His claims, and other people were completely amazed by Him and drawn to Him.

1. **What are your impressions of Mark's writings so far?**
2. **What are your impressions of Jesus so far?**
3. **Any closing comments on anything we discussed or read today?**

### **Next Week's Reading: Mark 1:1 – 3:6**

This passage includes today's readings along with some verses that we did not read today.

Feel free to write down any thoughts, comments, questions...

Also write down things that interest you, concern you, or just seem crazy!

We'll start off discussing these things next time!



## Week 2: WHO IS JESUS?

### Opening Discussion Questions

- Does anyone have any questions, comments, or thoughts that they would like to share after reading Mark 1:1 – 3:6 at home?
- Is there anything we discussed last week that you would like to re-visit after thinking about it further?

There is a story about a man in England who stood in the stairwell of a restaurant waiting for a table. There was another man waiting in the same stairwell. The two men did not know each other. They exchanged nods and then continued to wait in complete silence for over 5 minutes until they were seated at their tables. The second man happened to be Prince William, but the first man did not recognize his identity. He did not look close enough or pay attention and therefore, he missed out on a conversation and a "once in a life time experience" with his future king!

It is important to get someone's identity right so that we relate to them in the right way.

Mark makes some extraordinary claims about Jesus' identity, and if these claims are true then it is imperative that we get His identity right or we will relate to Him in the wrong way or ignore him completely.

1. **Do you agree that it is important to get someone's identity right?**  
Have you ever been in a situation where you would have acted differently or spoke differently if you had realized the identity of the person with whom you were keeping company?
2. **Based on Mark's claims from our last session, how important do you think it is that we get Jesus' identity right? Why?**



#### NOTE:

Mark gives historical evidence and eye witness accounts, many of which spent years in Jesus' company, so that we can recognize Jesus for who He is and get His identity right. Today we will revisit some portions of Mark from last week. In addition, we will read further into the book of Mark to consider five accounts that point to Jesus having an extraordinary identity.

**Let's discuss some ways in which Mark points to Jesus having an extraordinary identity.**

**Mark 1:21-22** Jesus has unusual power and authority to teach

Jesus was different. The teachers of the day relied on the material written in the past. Jesus didn't need to use anyone else's material. He stood on His own authority. People asked themselves...."what is this? A new teaching....and with authority!"

**What do you think this says about Jesus' identity or what do you think it eludes to?**

**Mark 1:23-34 and 40-42** Jesus has power & authority over sickness (both physical and spiritual)

In this account, Mark says that Jesus healed a fever with just a touch, healed whole crowds of sick people, healed leprosy, and healed demonic oppression. Mark records that the people were saying they had never seen anything like this! Even Jesus' enemies could not deny His power or prove Him a "fake" though they argued about where the power came from. There were many eye-witnesses to these extraordinary deeds including Jesus' followers, skeptics, and enemies.

- 1. What do you think your reaction would have been as an eye witness to these things?**  
Put yourself in the crowd and imagine being there when these things were happening.  
What do you do? What do you think? What do you say?
- 2. What is your reaction now, as a reader of Mark's records regarding these supernatural deeds?**

**Mark 4: 35-41** Jesus has power and authority over nature

- 1. If someone you knew successfully commanded the sea and waves to stop,**  
what would your initial reaction be? Fear? Questions? Want to see more? Curiosity?
- 2. Why do you think the disciples were still terrified after the storm stopped?**
- 3. Do Mark's claims cause you to ask the same question the disciples asked in verses 41?**  
"Who is this guy?!?"

**Mark 5:21-24 and 5:35-36.** Jesus has power and authority over death (a very serious claim)

Here it is recorded that Jesus tells a grieving father "don't worry, just believe". This is a cruel thing to say if Jesus isn't 100 percent sure. Either Jesus is someone who is completely crazy and misguided, or Jesus is a cruel liar giving false hope, or Jesus is someone who is completely confident in His own power, and it is real.

- 1. Can anyone here identify with this man's grief and anguish in the moment of losing someone?**  
How do you think this man felt when he heard these words from Jesus?
- 2. What do you think about this line of reasoning?**  
(crazy, liar giving false hope, or confident and powerful)  
Are there any other possibilities?



### Let's look at Mark 5:37-42 to continue the story.

Here Mark claims that Jesus raised the man's 12 year old daughter from the dead. The message in this passage is that it is as easy for Jesus to raise someone from the dead as it is for us to wake someone up from sleep!

1. **If it is true that Jesus is a man who has power and authority over death, do you agree that it would be crazy to ignore Him?**
2. **If Jesus has power over death and resurrection, then we are all at His mercy. Is this scary or comforting?**
3. **If Jesus has power over death and resurrection, what does this say about His identity?**
4. **What else might this mean for mankind? What might this have to do with you personally?**  
Come up with some other "if...then" implications.

### Mark 2:1-12 Jesus has power & Authority to forgive Sin

This passage is an amazing account of Jesus not only healing paralysis, but claiming to forgive sin. In this account, Jesus acts as if forgiveness of sin is more pressing than healing the man's paralysis. Let's consider what sin is, so that we can get the larger context of why Jesus views forgiveness of sin as the more pressing matter.

1. **What do you think sin is?**  
How would you define the word?
2. **Do you think that sin is a problem?** Why/ Why not?

Within this context, Jesus sees the need for forgiveness as greater than the need for physical healing, (something that we all deem extremely important!) and this is why Mark records it in this manner.

1. **What do the religious leaders understand Jesus to be saying when He claimed to have the power to forgive sin, (verse 7)?**
2. **How did they react inwardly? What is your reaction?**



#### NOTE:

Many in our culture view sin as something to be taken lightly. The Bible takes a very different view however. The Bible states that sin is actually HUMANITY'S BIGGEST PROBLEM. According to the Bible, sin is ignoring our Creator and living without any reference to Him. The Bible also says that there are consequences for sin, ultimately leading to spiritual death. Just as Physical death is separation between our bodies & our souls, spiritual death in separation too. This separation is between us & God. Ultimately this separation leads us to a place called Hell. In the Bible, sin is taken very seriously.

## Week 2

# WRAP UP:

Mark records that Jesus knows what the religious leaders are thinking – He reads their minds! Then Jesus does something to prove that He is the real deal. He gives a visual by telling the paralytic to get up and walk! Again, the people say they have never seen anything like this before.

It is clear from Mark's five accounts that Jesus is not doing these amazing deeds to put on a show or to do magic tricks, but to reveal His identity. Jesus claims an extraordinary identity, and the recurring theme is that He is unlike anything people had ever seen before.

1. Which of these five accounts stands out to you the most and why?
2. If Jesus really is God in the flesh, then He came here for a purpose and it has to do with us. What do you think that purpose is?
3. If sin is as serious as the Bible claims, and if Jesus came to show us that He has the power to forgive, what does that tell us about His character?
4. What do you think about all of the evidence Mark gives concerning Jesus' identity?
5. Do you have any further thoughts, comments, or questions about today's reading in Mark?

### Next Week's Reading: Mark 3:7-5:43

Feel free to write down any thoughts, comments, questions...

Also write down things that interest you, concern you, or just seem crazy!

We'll start off discussing these things next time!



## Week 3: HUMANITY'S GREATEST PROBLEM

### Opening Discussion Questions

- Does anyone have any questions, comments, or thoughts that they would like to share after reading Mark 3:7 – 5:43 at home?
- Is there anything from last week's discussion that you would like to re-visit after thinking about it further?

So far we have discussed many claims about Jesus, and we have explored His identity in the Book of Mark. Today we will see what Mark says about why Jesus came.

#### **Why do you think Jesus came? What do you think His purpose was?**

According to Mark, although there is an element of truth in most of these options, none of them are the main reason Jesus came. According to Mark's book, the primary reason that Jesus came was to provide a cure for a problem that plagues the entire human race. He calls that problem "sin".

Let's look at Mark 2:15-17.

#### **According to these verses, what was the primary reason that Jesus came?**

Let's look at Mark 9:43-48.

1. **What is your initial reaction to this passage?**
2. **Why do you think Jesus uses such extreme language here?**



#### **NOTE:**

IT IS IMPORTANT TO NOTE that Jesus is not talking about the solution for sin when He says cut off a hand or a foot. He is pointing to the seriousness of sin, not the solution. He wants us to understand that we need a cure, and we can't cure ourselves. The problem is in our hearts and the knife would never go deep enough. Jesus is exposing our sin problem so that we can respond to Him while there's still time.

1. **From Mark's account, we can clearly see that Jesus believes in Hell. Should we believe in Hell?** Do you? Why or why not?
2. **Do you think we have to at least consider Jesus' warning and decide how to respond?**

**Something to consider:** If there is a "No swimming – SHARKS" sign, we have to decide if that sign is there as a real warning or if it's there just to ruin our fun. We can heed it, ignore it, or decide it's not true. We have to ask ourselves the same question regarding Jesus. Why does Jesus talk like this and why does Mark record it like this? Is Jesus trying to manipulate us? Is he trying to spoil our fun? Is he trying to scare us? Is he trying to control us? Or is he giving us a loving warning about something that is very real? Something we desperately need to hear?

1. **What do you think about Jesus' warning to humanity about sin?**
2. **When we look at Jesus' life in the book of Mark and the way He treated people, do you think it's reasonable to conclude that He is trying to manipulate or control us?**
3. **Do you think this "sin" problem applies to ALL people?**  
What about "good and moral" people? Is Jesus warning them too? What do you think?
4. **When you watch the news and consider history, would you say the world / people are mostly "good"?**

### **Let's look at Mark 7:20-23**

In this section, Mark describes many relational issues that come from the heart of a person.

### **Have you ever wondered any of the following?**

- Why is it so hard to keep relationships going?
- Why do we hurt those we love most?
- Why can't we automatically do the right thing?
- Why are we so often tempted to do what we know is wrong?

### **What other things confuse you about the way human beings treat each other?**

Mark's book says the problem goes even further, because we not only mistreat each other, but we treat God that way too. Let's look at Mark 12:30.

In the passage that we just read, Mark quotes Jesus as saying we should love God with all of our heart, soul, mind, and strength. He says this is how we are supposed to relate to God. "ALL" means no part of our life should be withheld from God.

1. **What do you think it means to love God with ALL of your heart, soul, mind, and strength?**
2. **What do you think prevents us from doing so?**
3. **If we are honest, would you say that most people barely know who He is or what He has said?**  
And that people tend to live for themselves without any reference to Him.



## Week 3

### WRAP UP:

The Bible says that sin is a problem for every single human being, and that it separates us from having a relationship with God, even those who are “good and moral people”.

#### Consider and discuss the following illustration,

Imagine a huge public gallery, like a museum. Here, the entire story of your life is on display for everyone to see. It is a completely honest account of everything you've ever said, done, and thought. It also displays everything you should have done or should have said, but did not. Nothing is edited out! Not one thing. In this museum, there would be so much to be proud of – kindness, loving relationships, achievements, generosity, love, helping people, and many good, moral deeds. But there would also be thousands of things you would want to cover up – perhaps things nobody knows. There would be so much to be ashamed of if we're honest with ourselves. And no matter how many good things are on the wall, the shameful things would still be there.

1. **Does this illustration make sense to you?** Does it give a window into the Bible's stance that every person has a sin problem even if they are a “moral” person?
2. **What do you think of this?** Is it uncomfortable? Eye-opening? Confusing? Discouraging?
3. **Do you find it easy or difficult to consider that all people might have a sin problem?** Yourself?
4. **Is the concept of sin in the Book of Mark something that humbles you? Makes you think?** Or is it something you immediately dismiss? Why?
5. **For you, what is the most thought provoking part of today's reading? Why?**

#### Next Week's Reading: Mark 6:1 – 8:29

Feel free to write down any thoughts, comments, questions...

We'll start off discussing these things next time!

# Week 4: GOD'S SOLUTION TO HUMANITY'S GREATEST PROBLEM

## Opening Discussion Questions

- Does anyone have any questions, comments, or thoughts that they would like to share after reading Mark 6:1-8:29 at home?
- Is there anything from last week's discussion that you would like to re-visit after thinking about it further?

When the titanic went down, people on the deck felt a few bumps and thought nothing of it while beneath the surface, the ship was buckling. The people on the deck were in grave danger, but they were unaware because they did not see what was happening beneath the surface.

1. **Do you think that you see yourself as you really are deep down inside?** Or do you think you only see yourself as you are on the surface? Why did you answer the way that you did?
2. **Is it easy / comfortable / difficult / uncomfortable for you to look deep inside and consider the "real you" that nobody else sees?** Why or why not?
3. **When you look deep inside at the "real you", do you see the need for any type of help, forgiveness, rescuing, or saving as is indicated in the book of Mark and in last week's discussion?**

Today's discussion in the Book of Mark is going to focus on the cross, which is a symbol of Christianity. Mark indicates that the cross is the answer to the need of the human heart.

**Why do you think the cross is the symbol of Christianity?** Why would followers of Jesus want to be constantly reminded of His death (and the gruesome instrument of His death)?

Let's look at Jesus' words that Mark recorded in Mark 8:31 and 10:45.  
(Note: "Son of Man" is Jesus' way of referring to Himself).

**What is Jesus saying in these verses?**

What is the implication of His words?

## Let's look at Mark's account of Jesus' death in Mark 15:22-34.



### NOTE:

- Mark is counting time according to the Jewish time table. The 6th hour would have been the middle of the day.
- Jewish Passover was always during a full moon, so the event he describes is not an eclipse.
- Something supernatural is happening when the darkness occurs. Mark's record of this supernatural darkness and Jesus' cry implies that God was acting in righteous anger to punish sin (in the Bible darkness usually implies judgment and sin), but according to the book of Mark, Jesus led a perfect, sinless life – not even His enemies could find fault with Him.

### What are your initial impressions of this account?

What strikes you as unusual or interesting?

1. **Why do you think God would punish Jesus?**
2. **Why do you think Jesus would deliberately allow Himself to go through this?**
3. **What reason does Mark 10:45 give?**  
What do you think He means when He says His life is a "ransom"?
4. **What do you think the separation had to do with Jesus taking our place?**  
(indicated in Jesus' cry, "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me")



### NOTE:

Mark 15:37-38 talks about a curtain being torn. This curtain was 30 feet high and as thick as a man's hand. This thick, heavy curtain hung in the temple dividing the people from the place of God's presence. People could not pass through the curtain and enter the presence of God because of His holiness and the sin of mankind.

5. Read Mark 15:37-38  
**what significance do you think there is in the temple curtain being torn?**



# Week 4

## WRAP UP:

**Read Mark 15:15, 24, 31-32, and 39 one at a time and discuss the different reactions of people who witnessed Jesus death. How does each of the following people respond?**

### **1. Mark 15:15 – Pontius Pilot**

- How did Pontius Pilot react to Jesus?
- How important to you is the approval of others? Do you think you would tend to ignore or dismiss Jesus and the cross in order to go along with the crowd or in order to avoid disapproval from people in your life? How do you think people would react if you started following Jesus?

### **2. Mark 15:24 – The Soldiers**

- How do the soldiers react to Jesus?
- Do you think that "busy-ness", working, life, etc, can blind us to the real significance of Jesus and the cross as laid out in Mark's book?
- Is it difficult to make the time to really study and consider these significant events?
- Do you think it's worth making time to consider it? Why or why not?

### **3. Mark 15:31-32 – the Religious Leaders**

- How do the religious leaders react to Jesus?
- Do you consider yourself a righteous or religious person that doesn't need the cross to get to God?
- Do you think moral people need Jesus?
- If you say yes to the previous question, do you think it's difficult for a moral person to see their need for Jesus?

### **4. Mark 15:39 – the Roman Centurion**

- How does the Roman Centurion react to Jesus?
- Who do you say Jesus is?
- What do you think of His claims so far, and the events that Mark has recorded in his book?
- Which of these witnesses do you most identify with?
- Do you have any other comments, thoughts, or questions about today's reading?

### **Next Week's Reading: Mark 8:30 – 10:52**

Feel free to write down any thoughts, comments, questions...  
We'll start off discussing these things next time!

## Week 5: A MIND-BLOWING CLAIM

### Opening Discussion Questions

- Does anyone have any questions, comments, or thoughts that they would like to share after reading Mark 8:30 – 10:52 at home?
- Is there anything from last week's discussion that you would like to re-visit after thinking about it further?

Let's look at Mark 14:27-31

1. What three predictions does Jesus make?
2. What is Peter's response to these predictions?

It is important to note that Mark does not present the resurrection as something that people would just readily accept. It is presented as something truly mind blowing! According to Mark, Jesus talked of His death and resurrection on numerous occasions, but the disciples found it difficult to grasp these concepts and they did not understand. Even in Peter's response in Mark 14, he never responds to the death and resurrection that Jesus just spoke of – only of the denial. See the following verses: Mark 8:31; Mark 9:30-31; Mark 10:32-34

1. What do you think it would have been like to hear someone predict their own death and resurrection? How would you respond to this type of claim?
2. What are your thoughts on the idea of resurrection from the dead? Do you think it's true or possible for this to happen? Why or why not?
3. If Jesus' claims are true, would it change the way you view life and death? How so?
4. Do you believe that Jesus rose from the dead? Why or why not?

Let's look at Mark 12:18-27

1. What did Jesus say was the reason for their unbelief?
2. What is your response to Jesus' words to these leaders?

**In reality, Christianity hinges on these claims of Jesus' death and resurrection being absolutely true.** Discuss the following logical conclusions.

- If Jesus was correct, then He is trustworthy and He's not a liar, and He's not crazy.
- If Jesus was correct, then we can trust His claims and this account.
- If Jesus was correct, then it proves there is hope in the face of death.
- If Jesus was resurrected in His human body, then we can be too.
- If Jesus was wrong, then Christianity is founded on a complete lie.

1. **Do all of these of these conclusions seem reasonable to you?**
2. **Do any of these conclusions stand out to you more than the others?**  
Which one? Why?

Mark's writings indicate that he is confident that Jesus did die, and that He did rise from the dead. Let's discuss the following eye-witnesses of Jesus' death & resurrection according to Mark.

**Mark 15:42-45:** The centurion was an expert at death. This was his job. The centurion's word is an expert witness.

**Mark 15:46:** Joseph of Aramathea buries the body in a tomb and the text suggests that there is nothing to indicate that the body was anything but a corpse.

**Mark 15:47-16:3:** Three women witnessed His death and burial, and it is clear from their intent to anoint the body that they were sure He was dead.

**Mark 16:4-8:** The women saw the large stone was rolled away from the tomb and they were alarmed to find a man in white inside the tomb telling them that Jesus had risen from the dead.

**Other detailed accounts in the Bible give us more information to consider.** Discuss the following:

- Jesus appeared to His disciples at least 10 times after His death.
- It is recorded that over 500 people saw Him alive at the same time.
- The different accounts tell us that He was not a ghost, but that after He was resurrected, he had a physical body that could eat and drink, and they could talk to Him and touch Him.
- As the years progressed, many of the disciples willingly died for their faith without any doubt that Jesus was who He said He was. They knew He was raised, they saw it with their own eyes, and they knew that death had no power over them.



## Week 5

### WRAP UP:

As we noted earlier, Mark does not gloss over the struggle to believe in the resurrection. In Mark 16:8 it tells us that the women ran and didn't say anything because they were scared. Even though Jesus had told them this was part of the plan, it was still a struggle for them to understand or accept. This is the case for many of us today as well. We may choose to dismiss the evidence, run from it, ignore it, or really take the time to consider it.

1. **What is your tendency? Do you feel there is enough evidence and logic to really consider the possibility that these things are true?**
2. **If you were to contemplate these claims and accept them as true, how might it affect you or change you forever?**
3. **Has anyone here already been affected by these claims by completely accepting them as true or considering the possibility of that they are true?**

How does this all fit together? What does Jesus' resurrection have to do with me?

Mark's claim is that we are all sinners separated from God, but that Jesus died for sin and was raised from the dead. Mark claims that because of this truth, we can know for certain what awaits us after death, a real physical resurrection in a body that is very real but will never again suffer, if we believe and trust in what Jesus has done.

**Does this make sense to you?** Discuss.

### **Next Week's Reading: Mark 11:1 – 13:37**

Feel free to write down any thoughts, comments, questions...

We'll start off discussing these things next time!

## Week 6: HUMANITY'S RESPONSE TO GOD'S SOLUTION

### Opening Discussion Questions

- Does anyone have any questions, comments, or thoughts that they would like to share after reading Mark 11:1 – 13:37 at home?
- Is there anything from last week's discussion that you would like to re-visit after thinking about it further?
- If God were to ask you why He should give you eternal life in heaven, what would you say?

Let's look at Mark 10:13-16

1. Why do you think people were bringing their children to Jesus?
2. What do you think was the reason for the disciple's intolerance of the children being brought to Jesus?
3. Are you surprised by Jesus reaction in verse 14? Why or why not?  
Does it surprise you that Jesus would be indignant at all? Why or why not?
4. How do we know that Jesus is not only talking about children belonging to the kingdom of God in verses 14-15?  
  
In verse 16 the children did absolutely nothing to earn acceptance from Jesus. All they did was come to Him and He loved them and picked them up in His arms.
5. Do you think there is the significance to this in relation to Jesus' teaching about entry into the Kingdom of God?

## Let's look at Mark 10:17-27

The man in this passage was considered a "good person". Other writers tell us more about this man. Between Mark's account and the other writers, we can get an idea of what this man was like. Other writers of this time describe the man as young (Matthew), a ruler of some sort (Luke). In Mark, he's described as rich, moral, spiritually minded, and religious. He is, humanly speaking, a good person, well respected, and the kind of person many of us would aspire to be.

"NOTE: Inherit eternal life" is another way of saying "go to heaven", be saved, or be part of God's family forever.

1. **What do you think that Jesus' answer in verse 18 to man's vulnerable question in verse 17 means?**
2. **How do we usually "measure" our "goodness"?**
3. **How does Jesus measure our goodness?**
4. **In verses 19-20, the man claims to have kept all of the commandments since childhood. But according to Jesus, has he really kept all the commands? Has he kept the first and most important command according to Jesus, which is to love God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength?**
5. **What do you think of Jesus' answer?**
6. **Do you think "Money or eternal life with God" is a "no brainer", or something to think about?**
7. **Is there anything in your life that takes first place? Is there something that would be difficult to give up if given the same choice?**

In verse 22 the man went away sad, choosing his money. Even though he considers himself a good person, money was more important to him than God. There was something standing in the way of this man's love and devotion to God, and Mark claims this is the case for all of us. No matter how good we are, our hearts are separated from God because of sin. Jesus says it is hard to enter the kingdom of God.

Take a quick look back at Mark 7:20-23. Do you remember that Mark quotes Jesus saying we all have a "heart" problem that separates us from God.

**Is this hard to hear? Hard to grasp?** Our culture tells us that we are basically good, and the book of Mark says the opposite. What do you think about this now that we have read and discussed more information? Has your view changed at all? How so?



### NOTE:

Imagine that there was a man who told about about a time when he got a horrible skin disease that looked hideous. He tried covering the sores with band aids in order to look better. The band aids covered up the fact that something was wrong with him so that people couldn't see, but the band aids did not cure anything. The things we do to make ourselves 'good enough' are like band aids. They can make us look good and feel good, but they can not cure the problem of our sin that lies beneath. According to Jesus in the book of Mark, these things will do us no good at all when it comes to inheriting eternal life in heaven. They are good things, and we should do them, but we can't trust in them to get us to heaven. Good will never be good enough for God.



# Week 6

## WRAP UP:

Let's look at verses 26-27

1. **How does Jesus answer this question?**
2. **How do you think the disciples felt after hearing this answer?**  
Hopeful? Confused? Wanting more of an explanation? How about you?

Just prior to this, we saw the exact opposite happening with the children. Children have nothing to offer, no riches, no prestige – and Jesus accepted them and blessed them and answered the exact same question that the rich man asked. Children cannot do anything for themselves. Children don't try and pay for their meals or their beds because they can't – they have no way of paying – it doesn't even occur to them. They simply receive it as a gift.

1. **Do you see a correlation between these two stories and what Jesus is trying to convey?**
2. **Do you see any obvious distinctions between Christianity and other religions after reading Mark's claims about Christianity and Jesus' words in this passage? What are they?**

As we have looked at Mark's account we've seen emphasis on the sinful condition of mankind as well as the amazing love and grace of God. Mark basically tells us that "We are more sinful than we ever realized, but more loved than we ever dreamed".

1. **How do you respond to this?**
2. **"GRACE" means God treats us the opposite of what we actually deserve – an undeserved gift. Has seeing God's grace in the book of Mark made a difference in the way you view God? How so?**

### Next Week's Reading: Mark 14:1-16:8

Feel free to write down any thoughts, comments, questions...  
We'll start off discussing these things next time!

# Week 7: MY RESPONSE TO GOD'S SOLUTION

## Opening Discussion Questions

- Does anyone have any questions, comments, or thoughts that they would like to share after reading Mark 14:1-16:8 at home?
- Is there anything from last week's discussion that you would like to re-visit after thinking about it further?

Has anyone ever seen an "illusion photo"? At first glance you may only see partially, but then, after you stare long enough, you see more fully. You may see more in the picture, or a variant of the photo that wasn't visible until you stared long enough. Sometimes it is possible to see or understand things "partially" while gaining fuller understanding over time.

1. **According to the book of Mark, Jesus has the human side and the divine side.**  
Do you think you see both? Or is one more apparent than the other?
2. **Read Mark 8:22-25. What do you think Jesus is trying to convey by healing in this manner?**
3. **How does this idea of "seeing partially" relate to you and your understanding of Mark's writings and Jesus' teachings?**

## Let's look at Mark 8:27-32

Jesus asks who do people say I am? Who do you say I am?

1. **How would you answer these questions if Jesus posed them to you?**  
Who do people say Jesus is? Who do you say Jesus is?
2. **Peter recognizes that Jesus is the Christ in verse 29, but in verse 32 it seems that he did not understand why Jesus came.** At this point in time, do you understand why Jesus came or are you unsure?

## Let's look at Mark 8:34 – 38

Jesus asks who do people say I am? Who do you say I am?

1. According to Mark, what two things are necessary in following Jesus?
2. What do you think it means to take up your cross? What do you think it means to deny yourself?
3. After reading this, do you think there is a cost to following Jesus?
4. People who follow Jesus may, experience shame or rejection from friends and family when they discover they are a "Christian". Do you think it's worth the risk? Why or why not?
5. Mark 8:36 says "What good is it to gain the whole world but lose your soul?" What do you think about this question? How does this question resonate with you?
6. What do you think Jesus means by the statement he makes in in Mark 8:38? Discuss and expound on this.

## Let's look at Mark 9:2-4 and 7-8

In this passage, Jesus demonstrates to a few disciples that He is exactly who He says He is and can be trusted. Mark records that God the Father also speaks, and tells us exactly who Jesus is. God also tells us how to respond – listen to Him! What is your reaction to this account?

If you are comfortable, score the following statements that derive from Jesus' teachings that we have seen in the Book of Mark and share with the group. If you are uncomfortable sharing out loud, score in your head and simply say "pass". "0" is completely unconvinced and a "10" is "very sure".

•Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God

•I am a sinner

•Jesus came to rescue sinners

•Following Jesus means denying myself and putting Jesus first whatever the cost



## Week 7

# WRAP UP:

As we bring this Book Discussion to a close, the natural question is "What do we do now?" Mark's teachings and Jesus' words definitely call for an individual response to the things written here. So the answer to the question "What now" is up to each individual person.

### NEXT STEPS:

Most likely everyone in the group will be at a different place concerning Jesus and His claims. Take some time to consider where you are. If you are comfortable sharing with the group, please do so.

- 1. With the understanding I have at this time, I do not want to follow Jesus and I am not interested in discussing it further, but I really value some of the friendships I've formed in this group and would love to grab coffee sometime or join another group in the future!**
- 2. I am not ready to follow Jesus, but I would like to talk about it further and learn more.**
- 3. I am ready to begin following Jesus and would like to talk with someone about how to begin my journey.**
- 4. I have already begun following Jesus.** (If this is your answer, perhaps you would like to share something with the group – your journey to faith or some of your experiences as a follower of Jesus and what it has meant to you)
- 5. I am not ready to answer** - still taking it all in and thinking it through.
- 6. Another response**







# Facilitator's Page:

Notice we didn't use the word Leader, or Teacher? This resource is designed to facilitate open, honest conversation in which everyone feels free to contribute their honest thoughts and questions. It's important that everyone in the group knows that the goal is for everyone to discover as much as they can about Jesus, and to share their thoughts openly so that everyone can learn and be challenged by one another's observations.

The first gathering should set the tone, and make it known that this is a safe space to discover Jesus, and work through honest questions and struggles. Participants and Facilitators should be encouraged to not 'Fix' one another or put themselves in the place of the teacher. Jesus is the Teacher in this Group, and the Bible is His means of communication. As unchurched people discover biblical claims, they may have surprising comments. These should be considered, and explored, but **not shut down**. It is crucial that all honest questions are allowed, encouraged, and wrestled with together.

## First Gathering:

First, please read through the above paragraphs, and then work through the following Discussion Questions.

- 1. We all have learned to view the world in a certain way. This can also be referred to as a 'faith structure' (even if you didn't consider yourself religious). A faith structure is a certain set of principles, or mindsets that you perceive as 'truths'. What did your 'faith structure' look like growing up?**
- 2. Do you think that your view of God growing up has influenced, or shaped the way in which you viewed the world? How so?**
- 3. Would you say that you are currently at a starting, turning, returning, or other point regarding Jesus? Why?**



