

# READ THIS FIRST

---

## The Gospel of Mark: The King and His Kingdom

### Note from Pastor Luke Simmons

The mission of Second Mile Church is to “embody Jesus’ mission and message in every place that God sends us.” The Bible refers to the followers of Jesus as his “ambassadors” (2 Cor 5:20) and expects us to faithfully represent him to the world. In order to faithfully live out this mission we must grow intimately familiar with who Jesus is and what he has done. Thus, it makes sense to have our first weekly study focus on the life, ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus, as described in the Gospel of Mark.

Though this series, “The King and His Kingdom,” will not be an exhaustive study of the person of Jesus, we will become thoroughly acquainted with his message, mission, attitude and actions. Not only will we see Jesus in action, but we’ll also get a glimpse of what life looks like in Jesus’ Kingdom. Mark is a fast-paced, hard-hitting, action-packed book and we will spend fourteen weeks examining the highlights of his account.

This study guide, designed for individual study or for use in Community Groups, is intended to help us dive deeper into the Scripture and apply the things we learn. The Bible calls us to “be doers of the word, and not hearers only” (James 1:22). These study guides are designed to help us not just hear the word on Sunday, but put it into practice Monday through Saturday.

My prayer for this series is that God will use it to deepen your love for Jesus. Whether you are just beginning to explore what it would be like to follow Christ or you’ve trusted him for a long time, my hope is that your heart would be delighted by his majesty, power, humility, trustworthiness, sacrifice and victory. Only as we grow satisfied in Jesus will we be able to bring his love and grace to our hurting world.

Because the Tomb is Empty,

Luke Simmons  
Lead Pastor

### The Format

Each study begins with a **key verse** that summarizes the truth found in the entire section. These key verses, if memorized, would allow you to learn the big ideas found in Mark’s Gospel. Then there is an **introduction** to the passage that you can use for review or, if you miss a Sunday, you can track with us wherever we are. Next are some questions for **investigation** (getting into the text) and **implication** (applying these truths to daily life). Each study concludes with a section on **other issues**, which expand on any other issues or questions raised by the passage that we may not take time to cover during the sermon.

### Suggestions for Individuals

- Before you begin, pray that God would open your eyes to see what he is saying in the Bible and give you the spiritual strength to do something about it.
- Work through the study and write out answers to the questions.
- Resist any temptation to skip over the **implication** section. It is important to ponder how the truths apply to your life. Though these questions are sometimes penetrating and difficult, they are designed to help you think seriously about your life.
- Take what opportunities you can to share with others about what you’ve learned and how you’d like your life to change as a result.

### Suggestions for Community Groups

- It is recommended that you study the passage *after* it has been preached. This way you can discuss the issues raised by the sermon as well as the study itself.
- In your time together as a community, focus on the **implications** for your lives individually and as a group. Share with one another how you sense God calling you to change, pray for one another about these things, and invite one another to encourage you and hold you accountable to apply the truth.
- In your time together as a community, use this guide as a launching point for discussion and care for one another. Resist the urge to try to discuss every question or “get through the material.”

### Questions or Comments?

If you have feedback or questions about the series or studies, please feel free to email them to [info@secondmilechurch.com](mailto:info@secondmilechurch.com).

Week 2

# KINGDOM DEMONSTRATIONS

---

Mark 1:21-45

.....  
*And they were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as one who had authority, and not as the scribes.*

(Mark 1:22, ESV)  
.....

## Introduction

This section of Mark records Jesus' teaching with authority as well as doing a variety of miracles: casting out a demon (1:25), healing Peter's mother-in-law from a fever (1:31), healing many people in Capernaum (1:34), and cleansing a man with leprosy (1:41). Are these simply demonstrations of power that Jesus was using to attract a crowd and build a big following? Well, if we consider that Jesus doesn't stay long in one place and that he tells the cleansed leper to keep quiet (1:44), it seems that the answer is "no." Then why does Jesus do all these things?

In the previous section (1:1-20), Jesus declared that "the kingdom of God is at hand," indicating that the time of God's rule had broken in. The Jews understood the kingdom of God to be a time of righteousness (Isaiah 11:4-5), peace (Isaiah 2:2-4), and fullness of the Spirit (Joel 2:28-30), when sin and sickness would be done away with (Zechariah 13:1) and even the material creation would feel the joyful effects of this new age (Isaiah 11:6-9).<sup>6</sup>

Jesus' ministry was the beginning of this new age. Therefore, we expect Jesus' ministry to contain many "signs" of God's reign. We are not surprised to discover that Jesus is making people clean, healthy, and whole, as they will be in the kingdom of God when all things are made new (Revelation 21:4-5). Sadly, we will not experience the fullness of God's kingdom until Jesus returns again, and our world remains plagued by demonic oppression, sickness, and all kinds of physical and spiritual uncleanness. Nonetheless, we have the opportunity to join Jesus in his mission of bringing the kingdom of God near to people who are broken, lost, and beat up by sin and the fallen world we live in. Empowered by prayer (1:35) and moved by love (1:41), may we serve people with tangible demonstrations that "the kingdom of God is at hand."

---

<sup>6</sup> Timothy J. Keller, *The Gospel of Mark Study Guide*, 6.

## Investigation

Read Mark 1:21-45.

1. Mark 1:22 records that people were astonished by Jesus' teaching because "he taught them as one who had authority, and not as the scribes." What's the difference?
2. Based on this passage, what were the priorities of Jesus' ministry? What did he devote his time to?
3. The text specifically mentions that Jesus physically touched the man with leprosy (1:41). What does this teach us about Jesus?
4. This passage describes a variety of different healings and miracles that Jesus performed. What point do you think Mark is trying to get across by recording these particular experiences?

## Implication

5. Many people today acknowledge that Jesus was a *good* teacher, but most people don't view his teaching as *authoritative* over their lives. Why do we have such a hard time submitting to the authority of Jesus?
  
6. While Jesus' ministry focused on both preaching the gospel and meeting people's physical needs (through healing, exorcism, etc.), most churches seem to focus on one at the expense of the other. For example, many liberal churches work hard to meet people's physical needs (feeding the hungry, social services, etc.) but don't stay faithful to the unchanging truth of Scripture. On the other hand, many conservative, evangelical churches are strong at preaching the truth but indifferent towards the poor and needy. Why is it so important that believers care about both? Why do you think we struggle to do both?
  
7. Jesus chose to get involved in the lives of hurting people. What hurting people are you currently involved with? How are you seeing God work in those situations?
  
8. In what ways are you struggling to submit to the authority of Jesus? What can you do to change? How can your community help?

## Other Issues

### Can Christians be possessed by demons?

In answering this question, it is important to clarify what is meant by the word *possess*. If what is meant by *possess* is that Satan "owns" or "dominates" a Christian, then the answer is "No" (See Colossians 1:13; Romans 6:4; Luke 11:17). Nonetheless, Satan can influence Christians. Gerry Breshears writes,

We are in warfare against the Enemy who seeks to steal and kill and destroy (John 10:10) ... Christians may be deceived, accused, or tempted by Satan and may yield to those attacks (though they do not have to). If believers begin to respond wrongly to such things, they may give demons influence in their lives. Apparently an evil spirit can empower, energize, encourage, and exploit a believer's own sinful desires. Examples would include Peter (Matthew 16:22-23) and Ananias (Acts 5:3). As children of God, regenerated and indwelt by the Spirit, we are responsible to and empowered by God to resist Satan, and if we do resist, we need not suffer from his influence (Ephesians 6:10-18; James 4:7; 1 Peter 5:7-9; 1 John 4:1-4, 5:1-5).<sup>7</sup>

### If Jesus was God, why did he still pray?

In a mystery that is too deep to fully understand, Jesus is fully God and fully human. As a human being, he grew in wisdom (Luke 2:52), became tired and weary (John 4:6), became thirsty (John 19:28) and hungered for food (Matthew 4:2). He also experienced the full range of human emotions like stress (John 12:27), sorrow (Matthew 26:38), amazement (Matthew 8:10), and sadness at the loss of a friend (John 11:35). Like us, Jesus needed strength from his father to faithfully obey God and to complete his ministry. Jesus especially needed strength from the Father as his ministry was on the frontlines of demonic opposition. Additionally, Jesus loved his Father and longed to spend time with him. For Jesus, prayer wasn't merely about requesting things but being with his Father (see John 17 for an example).

### How could Jesus touch the leper without becoming "unclean" himself?

The touch is a declaration that Jesus himself cannot become unclean. He does not need to be made or kept fit for the presence of God. There is no indication that he now went to do the washings and the ritual purifications that someone did at that time who had become ritually unclean. This at least is Jesus' declaration that he has come to make the ceremonial laws and even the sacrificial system obsolete. But even more, he seems to be claiming that he is the source of cleanness, of fitness for the presence of God.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Mark Driscoll and Gerry Breshears, *Death by Love: Letters from the Cross* (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books, 2008). 53-54.

<sup>8</sup> Timothy J. Keller, *The Gospel of Mark Study Guide*, 18.