

# READ THIS FIRST

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## 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 3

# KINGDOM FORGIVENESS

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## Mark 2:1-12

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*“But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins”—he said to the paralytic— “I say to you, rise, pick up your bed, and go, home.”*

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(Mark 2:10-11, ESV)  
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## Introduction

The previous section of Mark described Jesus as “one who had authority” (1:22), and Jesus’ authority is demonstrated over demons, sickness, and even leprosy. These “signs” of the kingdom are supernatural examples of Jesus’ power and cause the crowds to be “amazed” (1:27). As wonderful as these miraculous works are, we might ask, “What good is physical healing if the spiritual sickness remains?”

In this passage, Jesus demonstrates that he also has ultimate spiritual authority: the power to forgive sins. It was well known that only God has the authority to forgive sins (2:7). Therefore, Jesus’ authority over sin demonstrates that he is not just an ordinary man—he is the Son of God.

We live in a world plagued by sin. The hurt, pain, strife, anguish, loneliness, anxiety, sadness, corruption, and selfishness we see and experience are all caused by sin.

Despite the overwhelming evidence of our sinfulness, many of us still want to minimize our sin. We call sin by other names (mistakes, goof-ups, psychological problems, etc.). We blame our sin on things other than ourselves (our parents, the way we were raised, medical conditions, etc.). We look for ways to make our sin not look so bad (“Everyone lives this way,” “I couldn’t help it,” “At least I’m not as bad as \_\_\_\_” etc.).

What’s so sad about our minimizing of sin is that it often keeps us from the only source of forgiveness and healing—Jesus. Many people never experience the spiritual healing they need because they are unwilling to acknowledge their true spiritual sickness. If we had a severe illness or disability—like the paralytic—we would do whatever was necessary to get to Jesus (even if it meant tearing through the roof). May we people who have the same tenacity when it comes to dealing with the most dangerous sickness we have—sin.

## Investigation

Read Mark 2:1-12

1. This passage describes the early days of Jesus’ ministry, when he is wildly popular among the people of Capernaum. However, Matthew 11:20-24 records Jesus speaking “woes” (curses) against Capernaum because they didn’t ultimately repent. What lesson can we learn from this?
2. Jesus’ treatment of the paralytic is surprising (2:5). What do you think Jesus is trying to teach through this?
3. Why do both Jesus (2:10) and the scribes (2:7) say that it takes authority to forgive sins?
4. What is the answer to Jesus’ question in verse 9? What is his point in asking it?

## Implication

5. The people of Jesus' day, being immersed in Judaism with daily sacrifices, had a constant awareness of their sin and need for forgiveness (even if they didn't always deal with it the right way). Do you think most people today acknowledge their own sinfulness and feel a need for forgiveness? Why or why not?
  
6. The surprising way that Jesus deals with the paralytic is a reminder that there is something more radical and important than physical health: *being right with God*. Why do you think it's so easy for Christians to forget that trusting God is more important than anything else?
  
7. Does *your* need for forgiveness lessen the longer *you* follow Jesus? Why or why not?
  
8. Jesus makes the paralytic whole—physically and spiritually healthy. What are some areas of your life right now (spiritual, physical, emotional, etc.) that need God's healing touch?

## Other Issues

### Why does Jesus refer to himself as the “Son of Man”?

The phrase “Son of Man” occurs fourteen times in the Gospel of Mark (Mk 2:10, 28; 8:31, 38; 9:9, 12, 31; 10:33, 45; 13:26; 14:21a, b, 41, 62). It does not refer merely to his human nature or humanity, as some church fathers or contemporary scholars believe. Rather, it reflects on the heavenly origin and divine dignity of Jesus, on the mystery of his manifestation in human form, and on his earthly mission that took him to the cross and then into glory.

The background of the term “Son of Man” is to be found in the OT. The book of Ezekiel is the general source, since this prophet was referred to as “son of man” 90 times. The specific source of the term is Daniel 7:13–14, with its vision of one “like a son of man” who “comes with the clouds” into the presence of “the Ancient of Days,” who gives him the universal and eternal kingdom of God. Jesus repeatedly quoted parts of this text in teaching about his second coming (Mt 16:27; 19:28; 24:30; 25:31; 26:64). Clearly, Jesus understood this passage as a prophetic portrayal of his own person: his incarnation, ascension, and inheritance of the kingdom of God.

In the Gospels, the term is always used by Jesus himself, and no one ever addressed him as “Son of Man.” The conclusion generally drawn is that Jesus used the term as a messianic title for himself, so that he could speak modestly about his person and mission yet convey the exalted content he wished to reveal about himself.<sup>9</sup>

### How could Jesus read the minds of the scribes?

Jesus' ability to “perceive in his spirit” is clearly an example of the supernatural insight and knowledge that Jesus possessed. This kind of supernatural knowledge was common among prophets (2 Kings 6:12) and is noted of Jesus in a number of places in the Gospels (Matthew 9:4; Luke 5:22, 6:8; John 2:24–25, 6:64). In Jesus' day, any legitimate prophet would have been expected to have this kind of spiritual insight. Two examples demonstrate this expectation. First, when Jesus gets his feet anointed by an immoral woman, “the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, ‘If this man were a prophet, he would have known who and what sort of woman this is who is touching him, for she is a sinner’” (Luke 7:39). Also, when Jesus is being mocked by the soldiers prior to his death they “blindfolded him and kept asking him, ‘Prophecy! Who is it that struck you?’” (Luke 6:64). As Mark 2:1–12 demonstrates, Jesus was not just a prophet, but God himself.

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<sup>9</sup> Walter A. Elwell and Philip Wesley Comfort, *Tyndale Bible Dictionary*, Tyndale reference library (Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers, 2001). 1214.