

THE
GOSPEL
OF
MARK

2017 STUDY NOTES

Part 4

Study Seven – Mark 4:35-5:20

Who is this?

Getting Started

Why do we love stories of gaining understanding and transformation so much?

So far in the gospel of Mark we've seen Jesus interacting with various people and performing various miracles in their midst. He has scolded religious leaders and eaten with tax collectors and sinners. He has demonstrated that he has the authority to teach like no other, to heal like no other, to cast out demons like no other, to make people clean like no other and to forgive sins like no other. We also heard a voice from heaven proclaim him to be the 'Son of God', a title that belonged to the messiah who would come from David's family to restore the kingdom of God. Jesus has on top of this also referred to himself as the 'Son of Man' a divine and cosmic figure from the Old Testament connected to the last days.

Now, Jesus is going to give another clue that he is something else entirely from what people were expecting when they imagined the Messiah who had come to save God's people.

Read Mark 4:35-41

35 That day when evening came, he said to his disciples, "Let us go over to the other side." 36 Leaving the crowd behind, they took him along, just as he was, in the boat. There were also other boats with him. 37 A furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped. 38 Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him and said to him, "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?"

39 He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, "Quiet! Be still!" Then the wind died down and it was completely calm.

40 He said to his disciples, "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?"

41 They were terrified and asked each other, "Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!"

1) When the storm blows, what is the response of the disciples?

2) What is Jesus response? What does his response tell you about him?

3) Based on what Jesus says to his disciples, what should their response have been?

4) Why are the disciples terrified?

5) Why are they wondering about who Jesus is?

Following on from the calming of the storm, Jesus is again confronted by the demonic. This is a stronger showing of how much authority he has, both in the way the demoniac relates to him and how he treats the demons.

Read Mark 5:1-20

5 They went across the lake to the region of the Gerasenes. 2 When Jesus got out of the boat, a man with an evil spirit came from the tombs to meet him. 3 This man lived in the tombs, and no-one could bind him any more, not even with a chain. 4 For he had often been chained hand and foot, but he tore the chains apart and broke the irons on his feet. No-one was strong enough to subdue him. 5 Night and day among the tombs and in the hills he would cry out and cut himself with stones.

6 When he saw Jesus from a distance, he ran and fell on his knees in front of him. 7 He shouted at the top of his voice, "What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? Swear to God that you won't torture me!" 8 For Jesus had said to him, "Come out of this man, you evil spirit!"

9 Then Jesus asked him, "What is your name?"

"My name is Legion," he replied, "for we are many." 10 And he begged Jesus again and again not to send them out of the area.

11 A large herd of pigs was feeding on the nearby hillside. 12 The demons begged Jesus, "Send us among the pigs; allow us to go into them." 13 He gave them permission, and the evil spirits came out and went into the pigs. The herd, about two thousand in number, rushed down the steep bank into the lake and were drowned.

14 Those tending the pigs ran off and reported this in the town and countryside, and the people went out to see what had happened. 15 When they came to Jesus, they saw the man who had been possessed by the legion of demons, sitting there, dressed and in his right mind; and they were afraid. 16 Those who had seen it told the people what had happened to the demon-possessed man—and told about the pigs as well. 17 Then the people began to plead with Jesus to leave their region.

18 As Jesus was getting into the boat, the man who had been demon-possessed begged to go with him. 19 Jesus did not let him, but said, "Go home to your family and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you." 20 So the man went away and

began to tell in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him. And all the people were amazed.

6) Where is the demoniac living? What is his condition? How does he relate to others? What is he doing to himself?

7) How could his physical condition be a metaphor for those who do not have Christ?

8) What is the demon's posture before Jesus? What does he say to him? Is there any doubt as to who is in authority?

9) What does the fate of the pigs reveal about what would have eventually happened to the man had the demons remained in him?

10) What change did the townspeople see in the man once the demons were cast out? What does this tell us about the transforming power of Christ's Word and his Spirit?

11) What does it say about the town's people's hearts that they were more concerned about the pigs than the man who had been saved from the demons?

There are several differences between Jesus forbidding others to speak of their healing and the former demoniac here. He was a gentile and given permission to speak in a gentile area. He was also given permission to speak of what Jesus had done, not who Jesus was.

12) How do these facts fit with Jesus forbidding others to speak of him, and what does it further reveal about why Jesus was waiting to reveal himself more fully?

Think it through

13) What do the dark forces of this world want to do with us?

14) What sort of transformation does a genuine encounter with Jesus lead to? (Think about the disciples and the demoniac)

15) What are the right two responses that the man has towards Jesus after his deliverance? What does that look like for us today?

Pray ... for the link missionary and church ministry your growth group has adopted for this term.

Study 8 – Mark 5:21-43

Getting Started

Here is a bright and chipper question to get some discussion started...
How is exclusion and isolation like death?

Read Mark 5:21-24a

21 When Jesus had again crossed over by boat to the other side of the lake, a large crowd gathered round him while he was by the lake. 22 Then one of the synagogue rulers, named Jairus, came there. Seeing Jesus, he fell at his feet 23 and pleaded earnestly with him, "My little daughter is dying. Please come and put your hands on her so that she will be healed and live." 24 So Jesus went with him.

1) Who comes to see Jesus? Who is he described as being? What is the significance of this, given what we've seen from religious leaders so far?

2) What does Jairus believe Jesus has the power to do?

Read Mark 5:24b-34

A large crowd followed and pressed around him. 25 And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years. 26 She had suffered a great deal under the care of many doctors and had spent all she had, yet instead of getting better she grew worse. 27 When she heard about Jesus, she came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, 28 because she thought, "If I just touch his clothes, I will be

healed.” 29 Immediately her bleeding stopped and she felt in her body that she was freed from her suffering.

30 At once Jesus realised that power had gone out from him. He turned around in the crowd and asked, “Who touched my clothes?”

31 “You see the people crowding against you,” his disciples answered, “and yet you can ask, ‘Who touched me?’ ”

32 But Jesus kept looking around to see who had done it. 33 Then the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell at his feet and, trembling with fear, told him the whole truth. 34 He said to her, “Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering.”

3) What is the condition of the woman who comes to Jesus?

Read Leviticus 15:25-27

25 “ ‘When a woman has a discharge of blood for many days at a time other than her monthly period or has a discharge that continues beyond her period, she will be unclean as long as she has the discharge, just as in the days of her period. 26 Any bed she lies on while her discharge continues will be unclean, as is her bed during her monthly period, and anything she sits on will be unclean, as during her period. 27 Whoever touches them will be unclean; he must wash his clothes and bathe with water, and he will be unclean till evening.

It's worth noting that uncleanness is not the same thing as immorality. It was not immoral for a woman to have a flow of blood nor did breaking the other ceremonial laws mean that a person was necessarily in error. The cleanliness laws were there to convey the idea of the holiness of God and the necessity of the holiness of his people. Their unclean status did not mean they were beyond salvation even if they could not be part of the community.

4) What would have the woman's uncleanness meant for her life and relationships beyond the physical pain?

5) What was the woman coming to Jesus for? What would her healing mean for her life?

6) Why do you think Jesus asked for the woman to identify herself?

7) What is the woman's emotional state when she reveals herself to Jesus? How does he address her? How would that have felt considering her previous isolation?

Read Mark 5:35-43

35 While Jesus was still speaking, some men came from the house of Jairus, the synagogue ruler. "Your daughter is dead," they said. "Why bother the teacher any more?"

36 Ignoring what they said, Jesus told the synagogue ruler, "Don't be afraid; just believe."

37 He did not let anyone follow him except Peter, James and John the brother of James. 38 When they came to the home of the synagogue ruler, Jesus saw a commotion, with people crying and wailing loudly. 39 He went in and said to them, "Why all this commotion and wailing? The child is not dead but asleep." 40 But they laughed at him.

After he put them all out, he took the child's father and mother and the disciples who were with him, and went in where the child was. 41 He took her by the hand and said to her, "Talitha koum!" (which means, "Little girl, I say to you, get up!"). 42 Immediately the girl stood up and

walked around (she was twelve years old). At this they were completely astonished. 43 He gave strict orders not to let anyone know about this, and told them to give her something to eat.

8) What should Jairus' response be to Jesus' command to not be afraid and believe after seeing what had just happened with the woman with the flow of blood?

9) Why did Jesus only allow Peter, James and John into the room with the girl's parents? Note there is no mention of their faith, so the answer most likely refers to what they see.

10) What does the phrase 'Little girl, I say to you, get up!' point towards?

11) Why are the people in the room astonished? What authority has Jesus demonstrated in this interaction?

12) Why does he again give strict orders not to tell of what has happened. How does this compare to the demoniac from last week's passage?

13) What is the connection between the healing of Jairus' daughter and the woman with the flow of blood? What are the common themes or ideas in both stories?

Think it through...

14) If Jesus can bring the woman with the flow of blood back into community, and Jairus' daughter back from the dead, what hope do we have in Christ?

15) What does it look like to live in the hope that Christ can do these things for us also? What encouragement to they provide to us when we are isolated and discouraged?

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Study Nine - Mark 6:1-56

You still haven't figured it out?

Read Mark 6:1-6

6 Jesus left there and went to his home town, accompanied by his disciples. 2 When the Sabbath came, he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were amazed.

“Where did this man get these things?” they asked. “What’s this wisdom that has been given him, that he even does miracles! 3 Isn’t this the carpenter? Isn’t this Mary’s son and the brother of James, Joseph, Judas and Simon? Aren’t his sisters here with us?” And they took offence at him.

4 Jesus said to them, “Only in his home town, among his relatives and in his own house is a prophet without honour.” 5 He could not do any miracles there, except lay his hands on a few sick people and heal them. 6 And he was amazed at their lack of faith.

1) What does it mean for a prophet to be without honour in his own home? Can you think of similar experiences today?

2) Why do you think Jesus could only do a few miracles in his hometown? If we accept it was not his inability to perform miracles that was the problem, but a lack of freedom to exercise his powers in this situation, why might that be?

Read Mark 6:7-11

Then Jesus went round teaching from village to village. 7 Calling the Twelve to him, he sent them out two by two and gave them authority over evil spirits.

8 These were his instructions: "Take nothing for the journey except a staff—no bread, no bag, no money in your belts. 9 Wear sandals but not an extra tunic. 10 Whenever you enter a house, stay there until you leave that town. 11 And if any place will not welcome you or listen to you, shake the dust off your feet when you leave, as a testimony against them."

12 They went out and preached that people should repent. 13 They drove out many demons and anointed many sick people with oil and healed them.

3) What is the significance of verse 13 considering 3:14?

4) What was the importance of shaking the dust off their feet as a testimony against those who would not listen?

Read 6:14-29

14 King Herod heard about this, for Jesus' name had become well known. Some were saying, "John the Baptist has been raised from the dead, and that is why miraculous powers are at work in him."

15 Others said, "He is Elijah."

And still others claimed, "He is a prophet, like one of the prophets of long ago."

16 But when Herod heard this, he said, "John, the man I beheaded, has been raised from the dead!"

17 For Herod himself had given orders to have John arrested, and he had him bound and put in prison. He did this because of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, whom he had married. 18 For John had been saying to Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife." 19 So Herodias nursed a grudge against John and wanted to kill him. But she was not able to, 20 because Herod feared John and protected him, knowing him to be a righteous and holy man. When Herod heard John, he was greatly puzzled; yet he liked to listen to him.

21 Finally the opportune time came. On his birthday Herod gave a banquet for his high officials and military commanders and the leading men of Galilee. 22 When the daughter of Herodias came in and danced, she pleased Herod and his dinner guests.

The king said to the girl, "Ask me for anything you want, and I'll give it to you." 23 And he promised her with an oath, "Whatever you ask I will give you, up to half my kingdom."

24 She went out and said to her mother, "What shall I ask for?"

"The head of John the Baptist," she answered.

25 At once the girl hurried in to the king with the request: "I want you to give me right now the head of John the Baptist on a platter."

26 The king was greatly distressed, but because of his oaths and his dinner guests, he did not want to refuse her. 27 So he immediately sent an executioner with orders to bring John's head. The man went, beheaded John in the prison, 28 and brought back his head on a platter. He presented it to the girl, and she gave it to her mother. 29 On hearing of this, John's disciples came and took his body and laid it in a tomb.

5) What mistake do the people in verse 14-16 make that is similar to mistakes made earlier by Jesus' family and the religious leaders? (cf 3:20-22)

6) This brief flashback, explaining to the readers of Mark the fate of John the Baptist, is sandwiched between the sending out of the twelve and their return. What point do you think Mark is making by framing the story in this way? What might the disciples need to anticipate as they serve Jesus?

7) What does Herod's confusion about John and his teaching lead to? What is the lesson for us?

Read Mark 6:30-44

30 The apostles gathered round Jesus and reported to him all they had done and taught. 31 Then, because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, he said to them, "Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest."

32 So they went away by themselves in a boat to a solitary place. 33 But many who saw them leaving recognised them and ran on foot from all the towns and got there ahead of them. 34 When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So he began teaching them many things.

35 By this time it was late in the day, so his disciples came to him. "This is a remote place," they said, "and it's already very late. 36 Send the people away so that they can go to the surrounding countryside and villages and buy themselves something to eat."

37 But he answered, "You give them something to eat."

They said to him, "That would take eight months of a man's wages! Are we to go and spend that much on bread and give it to them to eat?"

38 "How many loaves do you have?" he asked. "Go and see."

When they found out, they said, "Five—and two fish."

39 Then Jesus directed them to have all the people sit down in groups on the green grass. 40 So they sat down in groups of hundreds and fifties. 41 Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to his disciples to set before the people. He also divided the two fish among them all. 42 They all ate and were satisfied, 43 and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces of bread and fish. 44 The number of the men who had eaten was five thousand.

8) What is Jesus' emotional response to the crowd when he sees them as sheep without a shepherd? What is his practical response? What is a good response for us to have when we see people who are without a Good Shepherd's care?

9) Jesus seems to set up the impossibility of the situation for the disciples. He tells *them* to feed the crowd, and then draws their attention to how little they have to accomplish the task. What is the point of this?

10) What miracles have the Twelve seen Jesus perform so far in the gospel of Mark? What should have the disciples' response been to the impossible situation? What does their response reveal about their understanding of who Jesus is?

11) The number 12 appears again in the number of baskets left over after the food is distributed. What is the possible significance of this?

Read Mark 6:45-56

45 Immediately Jesus made his disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to Bethsaida, while he dismissed the crowd. 46 After leaving them, he went up on a mountainside to pray.

47 When evening came, the boat was in the middle of the lake, and he was alone on land. 48 He saw the disciples straining at the oars, because the wind was against them. About the fourth watch of the night he went out to them, walking on the lake. He was about to pass by them, 49 but when they saw him walking on the lake, they thought he was a ghost. They cried out, 50 because they all saw him and were terrified.

Immediately he spoke to them and said, "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid." 51 Then he climbed into the boat with them, and the wind died down. They were completely amazed, 52 for they had not understood about the loaves; their hearts were hardened.

53 When they had crossed over, they landed at Gennesaret and anchored there. 54 As soon as they got out of the boat, people recognised Jesus. 55 They ran throughout that whole region and carried the sick on mats to wherever they heard he was. 56 And wherever he went—into villages, towns or countryside—they placed the sick in the market-places. They begged him to let them touch even the edge of his cloak, and all who touched him were healed.

12) Why does Jesus go up the mountain? What does this tell us about his priorities versus the needs of the crowd?

13) Why do you think Mark points out that Jesus had seen the disciples straining on the water and went out to them, but also that Jesus was about to pass them by? What do the disciples do?

14) How does Jesus comfort his disciples? How can the same thing comfort us?

15) The gospel is building towards a decisive statement about who Jesus is that we will get to at our Christmas Service(!). How can you live as one who knows Jesus in the lead up to Christmas? How can you do that specifically as a member of GPC?

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