



CHRISTIANITY WITHOUT THE RELIGION

BIBLE SURVEY

THE UN-DEVOTIONAL

MARK

Week 1

Copyright © 2016 by Plain Truth Ministries Worldwide

All rights reserved. Written permission must be secured from the publisher to use or reproduce any part of this book, except for brief quotations in critical reviews or articles.

Unless noted otherwise, scriptures are quoted from the *Holy Bible, New International Version*. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan Bible Publishers.

Printed in the United States of America.

Before You Begin Your Journey...

Think about Mark as a boy. He grew up in Jerusalem, the city of the holy Temple, central to Jewish history and religious practice. He probably followed Jesus, Peter and the other disciples through the streets of Jerusalem during the week of the events leading to the crucifixion. He may well have been the young man who escaped the Temple soldiers that fateful day (Mk 14:51-52).

Youthful experiences of Mark would have included knowledge of the early growth of the church, the gift of land by his cousin Barnabas to the church, the sermon and martyrdom of Stephen, and the conversion of the adversary Saul. He traveled with Paul and Barnabas to Cyprus and Asia Minor, but left to go home to Jerusalem, greatly upsetting Paul (Ac 13:13;15:37-38).

Why did he leave? The Bible doesn't say. Perhaps he had family responsibilities, or a fiancée waiting for him. Perhaps he was homesick, traveling through unfamiliar lands far from home.

Whatever the case, Mark eventually decided to record the most important story ever written. In fact, many scholars believe that he was the first to give a written account, later canonized as one of the four Gospels, of the life and teachings of Jesus Christ.

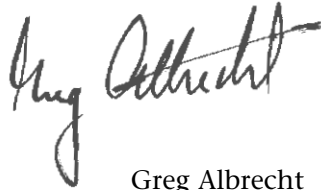
Mark's story focuses on the power of God over Satan. It is a story of conflict—the hero conquers evil, and his followers enter the kingdom of God.

Mark's Gospel moves quickly. Mark jumps right into his story with the baptism of Jesus. Immediately, Jesus calls fishermen to follow him, for he will make them fishers of men. As they travel through Judea and Galilee, over land and sea, these young men witnessed amazing miracles.

Jesus provided the bread of life in the wilderness, an echo of the provisions of manna for Israel, bread that comes from God. Jesus walked on troubled waters to rescue the anxious, and gave hearing to deaf mutes who then spoke of him. Jesus, healer of Jew and gentile, spread his bread of life beyond Israel to the gentiles.

Jesus is the lawgiver, and therefore the fulfillment of old covenant law. He is the object of faith. He declares all common things as clean, granting humans of all races reconciliation with God. Jesus cleans from the inside out.

Read this amazing Gospel carefully. It tells of “Christ, the Son of the Blessed One” (Mark 14:61)—Jesus, God in the flesh who Mark records speaking of himself as “The Son of Man”—who conquered disease and death in his ministry for us. It reflects the joy and awe of the followers of Jesus.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Greg Albrecht". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Greg Albrecht
President, Plain Truth Ministries

How to Use the CWR Bible Survey...

1—Read and study at your own pace. This is a devotional. It is designed to help you consider and ponder the great truths of God’s written revelation. It is designed to help you worship and come to know God. We plan to cover the entire Bible in 43 volumes, and while that sounds like a long time, don’t be in a hurry. Take your time! Even though each volume is divided into bite-size daily lessons, you may want to take two days on each “daily” lesson.

2—We suggest you set aside a special time for the *CWR Bible Survey* every day. We recommend allowing 30-45 minutes, but even if you can only spare 15 minutes, try to make it part of your regular schedule. You will find that the *CWR Bible Survey* will be an invaluable resource for facing your daily challenges.

3—You will need a good Bible. This might be an excellent time for you to consider purchasing a study Bible. Plain Truth Ministries has reviewed many of the study Bibles that are available, and in cooperation with Thomas Nelson and Zondervan, we are pleased to be able to offer two superb study Bibles that will be an excellent resource and help to you. Please see the back pages of this book for more details.

4—Always read the assigned passage of the daily lesson in your Bible first. Each daily lesson builds upon the portion of the Bible being covered that day. You may want to begin by praying about what God has in store for you as you read, and then look at the questions and background information.

5—Consider the format of each daily lesson. Almost every daily lesson will include:

- **Opening Up to the Word** —a section designed to help you open your mind to the teaching God has inspired.
- **Digging Into the Word**—this section will encourage you to get your nose into the Bible and think deeply about what it says.
- **Living Out the Word**—here you will be challenged to consider the practical implications for your life. How does this passage help you live?

• **Window On the Word**—will offer key insights to help you more clearly understand the daily Bible passage.

6—After you finish the daily lesson, take some quiet time. You may simply think, look out the window, take a walk, or even get down on your knees. But use this time to let this daily lesson sink in. Ask God to show you what he wants you to understand from your reading and study.

7—Consider the *CWR Bible Survey* for small groups in which you may be involved. Tell your friends about it. If you are involved in a small group that meets for prayer and Bible study, introduce your group to it. Many are seeking an easy-to-read guide to help them understand the Bible and to help them know God. The *CWR Bible Survey* can do that!

• **Abbreviations Used in the *CWR Bible Survey***—

Genesis	Ge	Nahum	Na
Exodus	Ex	Habakkuk	Hab
Leviticus	Lev	Zephaniah	Zep
Numbers	Nu	Haggai	Hag
Deuteronomy	Dt	Zechariah	Zec
Joshua	Jos	Malachi	Mal
Judges	Jdg	Matthew	Mt
Ruth	Ru	Mark	Mk
1 Samuel	1Sa	Luke	Lk
2 Samuel	2Sa	John	Jn
1 Kings	1Ki	Acts	Ac
2 Kings	2Ki	Romans	Ro
1 Chronicles	1Ch	1 Corinthians	1Co
2 Chronicles	2Ch	2 Corinthians	2Co
Ezra	Ezr	Galatians	Gal
Nehemiah	Ne	Ephesians	Eph
Esther	Est	Philippians	Php
Job	Job	Colossians	Col
Psalms	Ps	1 Thessalonians	1Th
Proverbs	Pr	2 Thessalonians	2Th
Ecclesiastes	Ecc	1 Timothy	1Ti
Song of Songs	SS	2 Timothy	2Ti
Isaiah	Isa	Titus	Tit
Jeremiah	Jer	Philemon	Phm
Lamentations	La	Hebrews	Heb
Ezekiel	Eze	James	Jas
Daniel	Da	1 Peter	1Pe
Hosea	Hos	2 Peter	2Pe
Joel	Joel	1 John	1Jn
Amos	Am	2 John	2Jn
Obadiah	Ob	3 John	3Jn
Jonah	Jnh	Jude	Jude
Micah	Mic	Revelation	Rev

MARK

The
Action-Packed
Gospel

Introduction to Mark

Authorship: This Gospel was written by John Mark, the cousin of Barnabas. He is probably the young man who fled from the soldiers in Gethsemane (Mk 14:51-52). Mark accompanied the apostles Paul and Barnabas on the start of their first missionary journey to Cyprus and Asia Minor, but for an unstated reason he abandoned his role of assistant in Perga to return to his home in Jerusalem (Ac 13:5, 13). Later Paul and Barnabas split over this issue, so Barnabas took Mark with him to Cyprus while Paul took Silas with him to Asia Minor and Greece (15:36-40). Later there was a reconciliation, for Paul concludes that John Mark was indeed an asset to his ministry (2Ti 4:11).

Date: Mark may have been the first of the four Gospels to be written—between A.D. 50 and 65.

Setting and purpose: Though he appears to draw on an unnamed source, Mark apparently does not make use of the Gospels of Matthew or Luke. Instead, they seem to incorporate Mark's Gospel within theirs. Mark's readership seems to be Greek speaking gentiles, especially Romans.

Mark is the shortest of the Gospels, with 661 verses. Intended for gentile readers, Mark's gospel is an action-packed, fast-moving story of the miracles and message of Jesus Christ. The active ministry of Jesus the Messiah dominates the text, whereas in Matthew and Luke lengthy sermons and teaching are included.

While Matthew addressed Jewish Christians who struggled with their cultural past while moving into the new covenant, Mark's purpose was to help gentiles know and believe Jesus, within the context of their culture.

Writing long after Christ's earthly ministry, Mark tells his readers what the disciples did not comprehend about Jesus until after the resurrection, especially the knowledge that Jesus was both divine and human. A view of the divine Christ is present throughout the book of Mark.

Physical touching occurs throughout Mark, as Jesus reaches out

in compassion to help the needy, and the sick touch him to partake of his healing powers. Interwoven in the narrative is the reality that Jesus does not stress ritual purity in his personal ministry. Jesus taught that the old focus on ceremonial and ritual law was fulfilled in the new covenant in his blood (2:21-22).

Outline: Each capital letter represents a daily lesson.

I. MINISTRY IN AND AROUND GALILEE, 1:1-8:26

- A. The Time Has Come, 1:1-20
- B. What Is This? 1:21-45
- C. Power Over the Paralytic and the Publican, 2:1-20
- D. Power to Reform Religion, 2:21-3:12
- E. Calling All Disciples, 3:13-35
- F. A Sower of Seed Sows Seeds, 4:1-20
- G. The Lamp and the Mustard Seed, 4:21-34
- H. The Exorcist Visits the Tombs, 4:35-5:20
- I. The Healer Visits the Sick and the Dead, 5:21-43
- J. The Rejected Prophet and the Beheaded Prophet, 6:1-29
- K. Power Over Hunger, Wind and Disease, 6:30-56
- L. Tradition, Tradition! 7:1-23
- M. Power to the Marginalized, 7:24-37
- N. Passion of Compassion, 8:1-26

II. JOURNEY TO JERUSALEM, 8:27-10:52

- A. Discipleship: To Be or Not to Be, 8:27-9:1
- B. And the Glory of the Lord, 9:2-29
- C. Death, Heaven and Hell, 9:30-50
- D. Marriage, Divorce and Eternal Life, 10:1-31
- E. Jesus Lights the Way, 10:32-52

III. CONFRONTATION IN JERUSALEM, 11:1-13:37

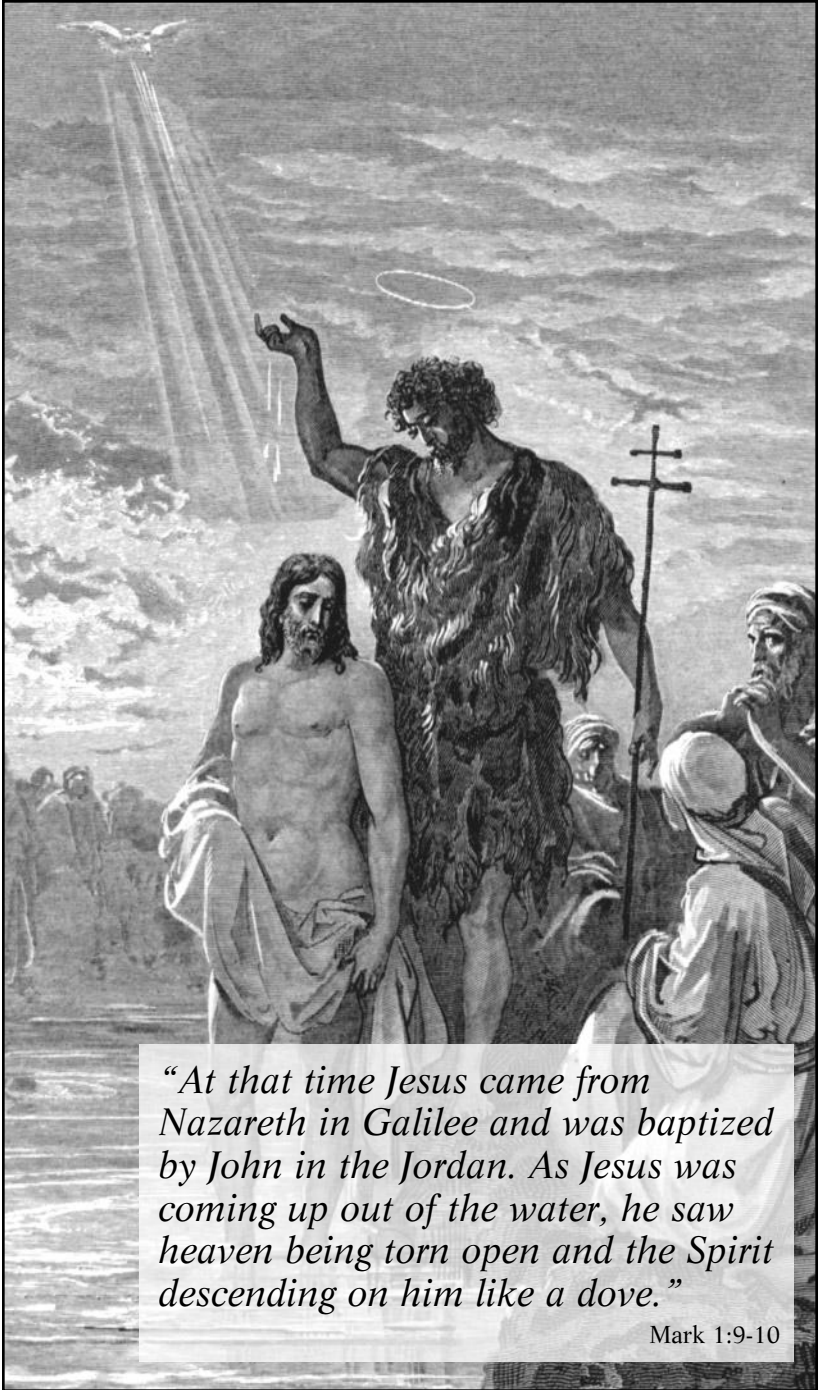
- A. Entry Into His Father's House, 11:1-19
- B. Lessons on Authority, 11:20-33
- C. Upstaged by Jesus, 12:1-27
- D. Priorities: Law and Finances, 12:28-44
- E. Signs of the Times, 13:1-37

IV. JESUS' DEATH AS THE MESSIAH, 14:1-15:47

- A. The Lord's Supper, 14:1-25
- B. In the Garden: Betrayal and Arrest, 14:26-52
- C. Trial and Denial, 14:53-72
- D. Pilate and His Soldiers Crown the King, 15:1-20
- E. Crucified and Entombed, 15:21-47

VI. FACING THE EMPTY TOMB, 16:1-8

- A. At the Empty Tomb: Fear or Faith, 16:1-8



“At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. As Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove.”

Mark 1:9-10

The Time Has Come

DAY 1

Mark 1:1-20

What is your favorite wilderness activity?

(a) hiking, (b) fishing, (c) camping, (d) hunting,
(e) surviving.

-
1. How did John the Baptist fulfill Isaiah's prophecy (vs. 1-8; see Isa 40:3 and Mal 3:1)? How would his strange clothing, habits and diet be viewed today?
 2. How does the story explain, teach and proclaim the triune God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit (vs. 9-11)? The Greek word for the action in heaven can be translated "ripped open," to emphasize the importance of this event.
 3. Compare the brief temptation story in Mark (vs. 12-13) with Matthew 4:1-11. Contrast the power of the Spirit with the temptations of Satan.
 4. What four phrases summarize the gospel preached by Jesus (vs. 14-15)?
 5. Who followed Jesus to become fishers of men (vs. 16-20)?

1. Have you undergone Jesus' baptism with the Holy Spirit (v. 8)? Is it physically discerned and felt, or is it an invisible, spiritual reality?

Mark's **action-packed** Gospel races forward. He starts with the message of John the Baptist, based on prophecies in the Old Testament, to connect his story to past expectations. Mark moves immediately to the baptism of Jesus, briefly refers to the forty days of temptation in the desert, and then to the call by Jesus of fishermen to follow him. One of Mark's favorite phrases is "immediately" or "at once."

OPENING

up to the Word

DIGGING

into the Word

LIVING

out the Word

WINDOW

on the Word

What Is This?

Mark 1:21-45

OPENING
up to the Word

Who was your favorite comic superhero?
(a) Wonder Woman, (b) Batman, (c) Cat Woman,
(d) Superman, (e) Spiderman.

DIGGING
into the Word

1. How does Mark express the power and authority of Jesus when he recounts a day at the synagogue in Capernaum (vs. 22-28)? Compare with Luke 4:31-37. Why did Jesus silence the demon (v. 34)?

2. In Jesus' words, why had he come (v. 38)?

3. How did the healing of the leper change the leper's life (vs. 40-45)? Why did the leper ask Jesus if he were willing to heal him? Why did Jesus ask him to be quiet?

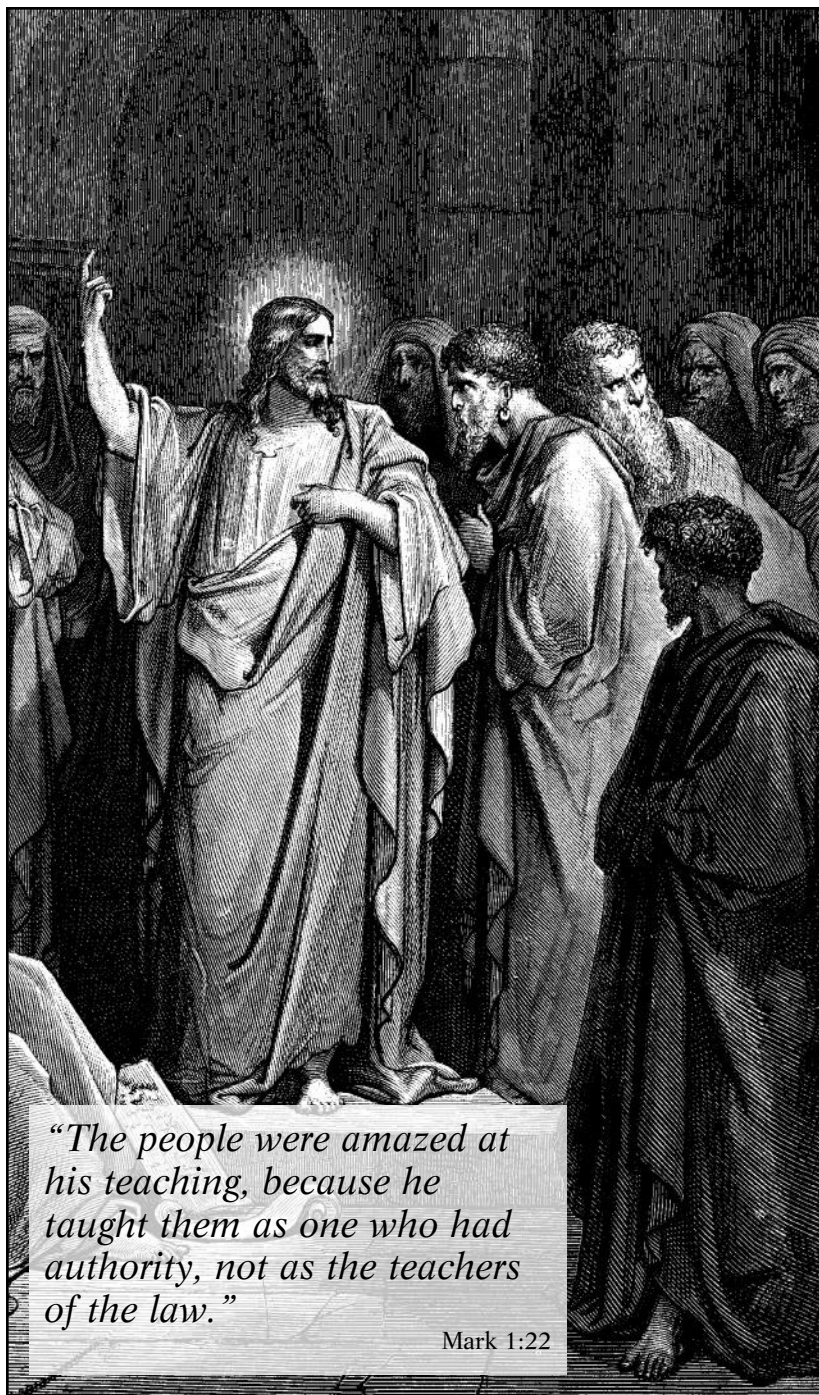
LIVING
out the Word

1. Do you attest that Jesus is the "Holy One of God" (v. 24)?

2. Do you look to God to cleanse you? Does he?

WINDOW
on the Word

Jesus cleansed the leper (vs. 40-45), thus healing him. In keeping with the requirements of the old covenant in Leviticus 13 and 14, Jesus sent the leper to the priest for confirmation of the cleansing and to offer sacrifices in keeping with the commands of Moses. It was Jesus who healed, not the purification rites.



“The people were amazed at his teaching, because he taught them as one who had authority, not as the teachers of the law.”

Mark 1:22

DAY 3

Power Over the Paralytic and the Publican

Mark 2:1-20

OPENING
up to the Word

Heroes are often depicted with super powers. If you could have one super power, what would it be? (a) ability to leap tall buildings, (b) ability to see through walls, (c) ability to fly faster than a speeding bullet, (d) ability to read minds.

DIGGING
into the Word

1. What do you suppose everyone was thinking as the roof was being taken apart to lower the paralytic into the room (vs. 1-6)? What was Jesus' response?
2. How did Jesus' reference to himself as the Son of Man relate to his role as Savior and Healer (vs. 7-12)? Compare Mark 1:9-11 with Paul's statement in 2 Corinthians 8:9.
3. What did Jesus tell the Pharisees in verse 17? In what category were the publicans (tax-collectors)? The Pharisees?
4. Why were the Pharisees so upset that Jesus' disciples did not fast (vs. 18-20)? Why didn't they fast?

LIVING
out the Word

1. Have you been healed? In what ways?
2. It is a huge mistake to merely think of Jesus as a hero—explain why.

WINDOW
on the Word

Jesus' favorite expression for himself in the book of Mark was "the Son of Man" (v. 10). This phrase could refer to an ordinary human being, or to the person mentioned in Daniel 7:13. For other references by Jesus to himself as the Son of Man, see Mark 2:28; 8:31, 38; 9:9, 12, 31; 10:33, 45; 13:26; 14:21, 41, 62.

Power to Reform Religion

DAY 4

Mark 2:21-3:12

How would you reform legalistic religion? (a) more rules, (b) a focus on Jesus, (c) a consistent emphasis on God's grace (d) less hypocrisy.

1. This section ends Mark's introduction of Jesus as God in the flesh with authority over the universe (1:21-3:12). In these confrontations, over whom did Jesus exert absolute control? Who was allowed freedom to choose whether to follow his directions?

2. How was the ministry of Jesus like new wine (2:21-22)? What would wine later symbolize (Lk 22:20)?

3. Why did God institute the Sabbath for the Israelites (Mk 2:23-28)? Was it to create a strict legal code or to serve a human need? The Law of Moses allowed eating to satisfy hunger—as long the work of harvesting was not conducted (see Dt 23:25 and Ex 20:10).

4. How strict were the opponents of Jesus in the synagogue (Mk 3:1-6)?

5. Why was Jesus in need of some solitude and time alone with the disciples (vs. 7-12)?

1. How open are you to the growth in understanding and outlook provided by Jesus (2:21-22)? How do you know what to believe?

2. How do you view the Sabbath? (a) 24 hours of no work, (b) the only day to go to church, (c) a symbol of our rest in Christ, (d) as your new life in Christ.

3. Have you had the opportunity to do good, but did evil (3:4)? How have you changed that?

***The Sabbath** was given to Moses and the Israelites after their exodus from Egypt (Ex 16:23-26; 20:8-11; 31:12-17; Ne 9:13-14). The seventh day of the week was a day for the Israelites to rest from their work and to worship God. By the first century many oral laws had been passed down that restricted Sabbath activities far beyond what God had commanded.*

OPENING

up to the Word

DIGGING

into the Word

LIVING

out the Word

WINDOW

on the Word

Calling All Disciples

Mark 3:13-35

OPENING
up to the Word

With whom do you have the best relationship?
(a) parents, (b) spouse, (c) brothers or sisters,
(d) children, (e) Christian friends, (f) non-Christian
friends, (g) coworkers or business associates?

DIGGING
into the Word

1. What was the mission Jesus gave these disciples (vs. 13-19)?
 2. Why did the teachers of the law question Jesus' sanity (vs. 22, 30)? Were they jealous of his power?
 3. How did Jesus' response to the legalists assert his authority (vs. 23-29)? To what degree does evil create its own internal chaos?
 4. What confused Jesus' own family (vs. 20-21)? How did Jesus define his family (vs. 31-35)?
-

LIVING
out the Word

1. What is your mission in life? Write it down. Keep it simple, clear and memorable. What results do you strive for in your life?
 2. Is Jesus your brother (v. 35)?
-

WINDOW
on the Word

Here we see **Jesus in authority over the kingdom of Satan**. Evil exists due to Satan, who continues to inflict his destructive attitudes of greed, lust and hate on the world. The Jewish people understood demons to be Satan's henchmen, but many felt that exorcism of demons could be done only by the Jewish leaders, and only after much ritual.



“Jesus went up on a mountainside and called to him those he wanted, and they came to him. He appointed twelve—designating them apostles—that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach and to have authority to drive out demons.

Mark 3:13-15

DAY 6

A Sower of Seed Sows Seeds

Mark 4:1-20

OPENING
up to the Word

Remember this one? *Mary, Mary, quite contrary, how does your garden grow? With silver bells, cockleshells and pretty maids all in a row?* What is growing in your garden?

DIGGING
into the Word

1. Why did Jesus choose a boat as his platform for teaching (vs. 1-2)? Have you ever noticed how voices carry over the water?

2. List the four types of ground that the seed falls on (vs. 3-8). What happened to the seed in each type of soil?

3. Why did Jesus use parables for his teaching (vs. 9-13)? Why wouldn't "those on the outside" understand the spiritual significance? Are parables easy or simple to grasp—or do they have many layers of meaning?

LIVING
out the Word

1. Consider the soil. When life gets rocky, what forces seek to defeat you? How do you take firm root?

2. When life gets so busy you feel you are being strangled, how do you identify the causes? How do you offset them?

3. How does it feel to be an *insider* (vs. 11), a partner in the kingdom?

WINDOW
on the Word

*Jesus often used **parables** in his teaching. A parable is a short story that provides comparison for teaching deeper spiritual or moral truth. It usually uses common events, often with an unusual twist or two, to capture the attention of the audience. Parables remain a captivating and intriguing part of Jesus' teaching.*

*“He taught them many things by parables,
and in his teaching said: ‘Listen! A farmer
went out to sow his seed.’”*

Mark 4:2-3



Artwork by Jody Eastman

The Lamp and the Mustard Seed

Mark 4:21-34

OPENING
up to the Word

Most of us remember the song, *You Light Up My Life*. How does your life light up?

DIGGING
into the Word

1. What is the simple intent in using a lamp (vs. 21-25)? How does this apply to the kingdom of God?
 2. How does the kingdom of God grow (vs. 26-29)? (a) deep in one's heart, (b) persistently, (c) gradually maturing, (d) eternally.
 3. How does the mustard seed's growth compare to the growth of the kingdom? (a) it starts small, (b) it is persistent, (c) it eventually grows huge, (d) the benefits increase as it matures.
-

LIVING
out the Word

1. How has Jesus enlightened you? How much have you heard (vs. 24)?
 2. How mature is the kingdom in your life? (a) unsprouted seed, (b) a rooted seed, (c) a growing stalk, (d) full kernels.
 3. How large is the mustard tree of God's kingdom in our world today?
-

WINDOW
on the Word

*Note the **humor** in these parables. Who would consider putting an oil burning lamp under a flammable bed? Who is concerned about how a seed grows while in the ground? Why compare the growth of a little seed to the most significant body in all history?*

“He said to them, ‘Do you bring in a lamp to put it under a bowl or a bed? Instead, don’t you put it on its stand?’”

Mark 4:21

