

Mark 1

1. Icebreaker

What is the strangest thing you have ever eaten?

2. Opening Prayer

Ask if someone wants to volunteer before leading the prayer

3. Tell the Story

4. Read the Story (Mark 1)

Read out loud as a group, 4-5 verses per person, let everyone know they can opt out if they want to

5. Breaking it Down

Questions to be used (as appropriate based upon meeting dynamics) to facilitate discussion and understanding

5.1 How well did John the Baptist fulfill Isaiah's prophecy? (1---5)

When a king or royal figure was planning to visit a town, a messenger was sent ahead of the royal entourage so that the towns along the way could get things ready for his coming. Literally straightening and smoothing roads. In this context, making straight paths for the Lord implies repentance from sin. John was very effective in leading others toward repentance and baptism.

5.2 How does the Bible describe John the Baptist's appearance and dietary choices? (6--8)

- He wore clothing with camel's hair, with a leather belt.

The description of John's clothes and food parallel to that found in 2 Kings 1:8 which describes what the prophet Elijah wore, is meant to identify John as the prophet who came in the spirit and power of Elijah.

- He ate locusts and wild honey.

The locusts he ate could be either an insect or a kind of bean from the locust tree. Honey could refer either to what bees produce or to the sap of a certain tree. In either case, this was the food eaten by the poorest of people.

5.3 What role does the Spirit have in this section of scripture? (9---13)

- The Spirit descended upon Jesus like a dove.

This is the divine confirmation of Jesus' ministry as the bearer of the Spirit sent by God.

- The Spirit sent him out into the desert.

The same Spirit who had come to Jesus in such affirming power now sends him to this time of testing.

5.4 Where did Jesus go after John the Baptist was put into prison? (14---20)

- He went into Galilee

Those living in Jerusalem considered Galilee a cultural backwater populated by unsophisticated, uneducated country folk who spoke with an accent.

Why did the disciples decide to follow Jesus?

According to verse 14 Jesus had been preaching in Galilee. These fishermen probably had the chance to hear his message prior to their call. Still, what they did was an act of great faith and courage.

What is the “good news”? (vs. 15)

While repentance is a turning away from sin to pursue God, to believe means to entrust oneself to God, counting on God to be true to his promises. The object of belief is the “good news” that in Jesus the kingdom of God has arrived.

5.5 Why would Jesus tell the evil spirit to “Be quiet!” in verse 25? (21---28)

At the beginning of the ministry, Jesus did not want his identity or power spoken about probably because people would have misunderstood the meaning of his ministry. Before Jesus could allow himself to be identified, he had to make sure people know he was not the militaristic, nationalistic Messiah people imagined was coming. In contrast, his messiahship would be marked by service, suffering and ultimately, death on behalf of his people.

In what two ways in this story did Jesus’ authority amaze the people?

The quality of his teaching and the power of his actions. Amazed is a word used repeatedly in Mark to describe the response of the people to Jesus.

5.6 After powerful teaching and an exorcism, what new realm of Jesus’ authority is revealed here? (29---34)

Jesus heals Simon Peter’s mother-in-law.

How do we know that the healing was immediate?

She began to wait on him. Simon Peter’s mother-in-law would have been anxious to have everything in order, since her son-in-law was bringing home such an important guest. Her ability to do so illustrates the dramatic power of her healing.

5.7 What does Jesus do in the early morning? (35---39)

- Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place.

If you, like Jesus, were having a private prayer time and someone came looking for you, how would you feel?

- a. Angry I couldn’t have time alone.
- b. Grateful that I was so needed.
- c. Guilty that I wasn’t around when I was needed.
- d. Torn between my need to be alone and my desire to help others.

e. Other

5.8 How did Jesus respond to the man with leprosy? (40---45)

He was filled with compassion, touched the man and healed the man of his leprosy.

What is significant about Jesus touching the leper prior to healing him?

Actually touching a leper was unimaginable to most first-century people. Not only did one risk contracting the disease, but such contact made the well person ritually impure and thus unable to participate in the religious life of the community. From the leper's perspective, the effect of Jesus' touch must have been overwhelming. He had come to think of himself as untouchable and unlovable.

How did the leper respond to Jesus' request to not tell anyone about the healing?

The leper's joy could not be contained. He told everyone how he was healed. He was not supposed to say anything, but he does serve as an example of a Christian's witness who proclaims the good news of Jesus Christ to all. Jesus is immensely popular with the common people.

6. Application

Sample questions (as appropriate) to tie to life application

- 1) What does this passage teach us about God?
- 2) What does this passage teach us about mankind?
- 3) What is a command to obey in this passage? What has God revealed in your life that needs changing? What truth can be applied to your life about the gospel?

Personal Reflection/Application:

1. When has repentance been especially important in your life?
2. When were you baptized? What was it like? Take a moment and have people share their story of being baptized.
3. What is it about Jesus that makes you follow him?
4. Jesus withdrew and prayed. What do you do to connect with your heavenly father in solitude? How crucial is it for us to withdraw and spend quiet time with God?
5. Has Jesus touched you in a season when you felt unworthy?
6. How can we "touch lepers" in our community?
7. Where do you need his special touch this week?

7. Prayer Requests

Have a designated person to capture and share (as appropriate) within the LifeGroup. What happens in LifeGroup, Stays in LifeGroup

8. Closing & Prayer

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