

From the Garden to Glory

Mark

Author: Mark, also known as John Mark, a nephew of Barnabas

Written to: primarily the Roman or Gentile Christians

Timeline: c. 27 - 30 A.D.

Theme: Christ the Servant

Purpose of writing: to present Jesus as a Servant, constantly obedient to the will of His Father

Introduction:

The book of Mark is the shortest of the four Gospels. Mark portrayed Jesus as a Servant who responded to the will of the Father by ministering to the needs of others, even to the point of death. The object of Mark's Gospel is stated clearly in 10:45: *For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.* The word *eutheos* means *immediately* or *straightaway* in the Greek. This word, which describes the actions of an obedient, loyal servant, is found about forty times in the book of Mark. Mark portrayed the life of Jesus to his readers by recounting more of the Lord's deeds than His words, more of His miracles than His discourses.

As we begin our study of the book of Mark consider the following questions and write your responses:

1. Look up the following verses and note the things you learn about the author of this gospel.
 - Acts 12:25, 13:5 and 13:13
 - Colossians 4:10-11

- 2 Timothy 4:11

- 1 Peter 5:13

2. Consider the things you learned about Mark in question number one. Although Mark seemed to vacillate spiritually as a young man, he appeared to become a strong and mature Christian as he grew older. Think about an area of spiritual weakness in your own life. How has the Lord matured and strengthened you in this area as you have grown older?

3. Matthew wrote to a Jewish audience; Mark, in contrast, seems to have written his gospel to Roman believers, mostly Gentiles. How would *you* share Christ differently with someone who had been raised in a religious system versus someone who had been raised in an agnostic or atheistic home?

The Servant's Messenger

Read Mark 1:1-20

1. In the quote from Isaiah found in verses 2-3, John is referred to as *My messenger*. John was divinely called to be a messenger and to prepare the way for Jesus, the Messiah. To what divine position or purpose has the Lord called you? In what way(s) are you being obedient to this call? In what way(s) are you holding back?

2. Read verse 4. John's baptism was a *baptism of repentance*. A baptism of repentance is much more than merely feeling sorry or changing your mind. True repentance results from a work of the Lord in the heart of the believer and involves turning *from* sin and *to* God. Repentance is not just a one-time event for the Christian; it is a

continual process. Think about your life over the last week and answer the following questions:

- List one way in which you have turned *away from* sin.

 - List one way in which you have turned *toward* the Lord.
- 3.** Look at verse 14. What happened to John? John was punished for being obedient to the Lord's call on his life. Share a time when obedience to God caused you to suffer.

The Servant Healer

Read Mark 2:1-3:25-35

- 1.** Read about the healing of the paralytic in 2:1-12. Who was the friend who *carried you* to meet with Jesus? Thank the Lord for sending this friend into your life. If possible, write or call your friend today and thank her/him for being a faithful friend.

- 2.** Look at verses 2:5-11. When did you first hear Jesus say to you that your sins were forgiven? What was your response?

- 3.** Verse 3:5 says that Jesus was angry and grieved by *the hardness of their hearts*. Define *hardness of heart*. Read Psalm 139:23-24 and ask the Lord to reveal any areas of hardness of heart in your own life. Confess anything that He reveals (1 John 1:9), repent and walk in the freedom of His forgiveness.

The Servant Speaking

Read Mark 4:1-6:13

1. Look at 4:40. How is fearfulness an indication of a lack of faith? How do you remain courageous (faithful) in frightening situations?
2. As you read 5:19 imagine that Jesus is saying this to *you*. What great things has the Lord done for *you*? How has he shown compassion on *you*? Who could *you* tell about these things?
3. Read about the woman with the flow of blood in 5:26-34. Think about your own life. What is one area of *your* life (physical, spiritual, emotional, intellectual or relational) where you need a touch from Jesus? Take this need to Him in prayer.

The Servant's Miracles

Read Mark 6:30-8:26

1. Read 6:30-44. Ask the Lord to give you the ability to read this familiar section of Scripture as though it were the first time. Imagine that you were one of the disciples. What would you have thought? What would you have felt? What would this have done for your faith in Jesus?
2. Meditate on 7:6-13. Ask the Lord to show you if there is any area of *your* life in which you are honoring Him with your lips but your heart is far from Him. If so, repent and honor Him with your whole heart.

3. As you consider the miracles described in Mark 6:30-8:26 which one has the greatest impact on your life? Why?

The Servant's Revelation

Read Mark 8:27-10:34

1. Read 8:27-30. The question that Jesus asked in verse 29 is the most important question in life. The answer determines each man or woman's eternal destiny. Write out your own answer to that question.
2. Meditate on 8:34-38 and answer the following questions (be specific):
 - What does it mean to *deny yourself*?
 - How do you *take up your cross*?
 - How do you *follow* Jesus?
3. As you read about the Transfiguration in 9:1-13 concentrate on verse 7. What did the Father say about Jesus in this verse? What other *voices* attempt to vie for your attention? How do you make sure that *you* "Hear Him!" in the midst of these other voices? How do you make His words a priority in your life?

The Servant's Rejection

Read Mark 11:1-12:44

1. Look at 11:12-14. Jesus condemned the fig tree because it did not provide what its appearance indicated that it would provide. The leaves of a fig tree appear simultaneously with the fruit. Since the

leaves were on the tree, it could be assumed that it would have figs as well but it did not; the tree was fruitless. Describe a Christian life that appears fruitful but is not. How do you make sure that your own life is fruitful?

2. Read 11:15-19. What do you learn about the heart of our Lord from this section of Scripture? What do you learn about the hearts of the scribes and chief priests?

3. How did Jesus answer the scribe who asked Him about the first (greatest) commandment (see 12:28-34)? How do you obey this on a daily basis? Be specific.

The Servant's Death and Triumph

Read Mark 14:1-16:20

1. Read the beautiful story of Mary in 14:3-9. In what *extravagant* way have you shown your love for the Lord?

2. In 14:32-42 Jesus prays in the Garden of Gethsemane. Meditate on verse 36. How can you be a woman who says to the Lord, "Not what I will, but what You will"?

3. Mark 16:15-16 refers to The Great Commission (see also Matthew 28:19-20). The focus of these verses is not on *where* we are to go, but on *what* we are to do. Wherever we go, we are to be women who share the gospel, the Good News of Jesus Christ. Where is the Lord calling you to *go*? To whom is He calling you to *preach the gospel*? How are you responding to His call?

Summary

As you conclude your study of the book of Mark consider the following questions and write your answer:

- 1.** What is the most significant thing that you have learned from your study about the Lord, His character, or His attributes? How does this encourage you? Take a few moments to thank and praise the Lord for the things that you learned about Him.

- 2.** What is the most important lesson or new insight that you have learned from your study of this books? How can you apply this lesson in your life this week?