



Series: Mark Part One - October 22, 2023

Scripture: Mark 1:1, Mark 1:14-15 (NIV11)

*Community is shaped by the conversations we share.
These questions are just a tool to help you meaningfully engage with the
themes of this week's teaching.*

Message Summary: This week, we begin our new series on the gospel of Mark. In his message on Sunday, Scott invited us to see how the synoptic gospels help us to “see together” without demanding that we all see the same. Scott talked about how Mark frames his gospel as a new beginning, how the term “good news” was heard as a political statement, and how Mark’s use of “time” encourages us also to step into time.

- **Seeing together.** Mark, Matthew and Luke are called synoptic gospels, from Greek “syn” - together with, and “opteo” - see. Mark is believed to be the oldest account, Luke and Matthew use a lot of Mark’s material (77% and 88% respectively).
- **Beginning again.** The first verse of Mark, “The beginning of the good news about Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God” takes us back to the creation story, where in Genesis we read “In the beginning...” Marks sees Jesus’s story as the story of beginnings, which invites us to see our own story as such too.

- **Good news as Alternative.** “Good news” or “gospel” maybe be loaded terms for us today, depending on our own story with faith, but in the ancient world this language had an overt social and political meaning. In the Roman Empire, “good news” was a carefully constructed project, “where history and myth and the media of coins, inscriptions, and images were used to deify the emperor. And to celebrate the glory of Rome — glory that was always secured via battlefield and slavery and occupation.” The good news of Jesus comes with “revisioning of power” and is still relevant for us today.
- **Telling Time.** In Mark 1:14-15, Jesus says “Time has come.” Two ways to talk about time include: *chronos* (regular time, as in how much time left in this sermon) and *kairos* (qualitative aspect of time, as in “it is the right time” or crucial and important time of one’s life). In Jesus, God enters into time, and perhaps we, the followers of Jesus, can enter time too. Maybe in some areas of our lives or social responsibility, we are called to realize that the time has come and we need to act.

Connect: Two options for you to kick off this conversation :)

1. Talk about one thing (or event, or place) that happened this week that drew you closer to God or felt like a gentle divine tap on your shoulder.
2. Alternatively, what is one thing that you’re curious about or want to take away from this series?

Share: Scott talked about how the synoptic gospels of Mark, Matthew, and Luke shape our imagination in different ways, and how they help us see together, without demanding that we all see the same.

What do you think could be a danger of having a singular view of Jesus? Or, more positively, how does diversity in understanding contribute to a deeper faith, and how was it relevant for your faith journey in particular?

How important has it been for you to have four different gospels to show the story of Jesus? Which of the gospels has shaped your imagination the most (or which one would you like to dig deeper in or maybe re-read)?

Reflect: When talking about Mark 1:1, Scott quoted scholar Ched Myers, “who argues that the Markan author, by invoking the story of divine creation in Genesis, is suggesting “a fundamental regeneration of salvation history” is about to take place. Which means, that this gospel isn’t just the start of Jesus’ story. And Jesus’ story isn’t just episode two in a continuing series. No, the Markan author imagines that you’re about to see God’s creative redemptive work begin again.” And Scott invited us to read Mark as a story of beginnings.

How does the idea of the gospel being a story of 'beginnings' and 'beginning again' resonate with your personal story or faith journey? When did you have to “begin again” or what are some of the new beginnings that are on your mind right now?

Engage: How do you feel about the language of “good news” or the term “gospel”?

The the language of 'good news' was a challenge to the power structures of the imperial cult in the ancient world. What do you think about when you take that perspective on “good news” as an alternative story, and apply it to our current socio-political climate? (See Mark 1:14-15)

Here’s Scott’s quote from the message:

“And in a world where we watch violence unfold and the elimination of enemies is celebrated as good news by all sides, we need a different story.

In a world where so many of us seek success and security, celebrating acquisition and accomplishment as good news while not being completely honest about the cost they exact on our bodies, minds, and relationships, we need a different story.

In a world where you receive the news about who others think you are - you take in the messaging about who you have to become to be good, when deep down you know, or you want to believe, or you struggle to hold on to something more true. That you are gift, that you are valuable, that you do have a voice. We need a better story.”

Take away: Mark’s Jesus is described as getting out there and 'getting after it'. In Mark 1:15, Jesus says "The time has come, the kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news." How does Scott’s invitation to enter time resonates with you? Is there an area of your life, or a relationship, or a community issue, where you feel like it’s time for you to act, and what could that action look like?

Benediction:

*In Christ’s action,
God entered time in a unique way.
And Mark invites us to consider how,
in following the way of Jesus,
we’re invited to enter time too.*

*We’re invited to grow in our awareness that
in some relationship,
in some area of our responsibility,
in some issue facing our local community,
the time has come.
That there’s a need for good news.
And that maybe we can bring it.
Amen*