

Mark's Wild Gospel

Week 1 – A Wild Kingdom

Mark's gospel was written by John Mark – the nephew of Peter around AD60. It draws on Peter's intimate knowledge of Jesus. It was written for Gentile Christians – most likely those in Rome, who were going through persecution.

This was a new genre of writing – accounts of the life of Jesus for teaching of the church and for those wishing to understand more about this good news. The gospel concentrates more on what Jesus did than what He said. It reads like an action movie, with the word 'immediately' used 42 times.

As will become quickly evident, the Gospel of Mark focuses on Jesus' suffering and death and how this death relates both to Jesus' identity and to the nearness of God's kingdom. His message of the kingdom disrupted their understanding and demanded a new and radical response. It is probably the first of the gospels to be written down.

1. **Read Mark 1:1-13.** What do you see as John the Baptist's main role? What was the main content of his message?
2. John focused on the task at hand. Are there any things you need to cut out of your life in order to focus on serving the Lord? Have there been any things that have become a distraction, soaking up your time, energy, or money which take you away from God's call in your life?
3. Why did John baptise Jesus? What does this teach us about Jesus? What's the significance of verses 10-11?
4. **Read Mark 1:14-15.** After John was imprisoned, what did Jesus do? Why was and is Jesus' message of the kingdom of God good news?
5. In ways was Jesus' message similar to that of John's and how was it different?
6. What does Jesus mean when he says that the "kingdom of God is at hand?" What do you understand by the kingdom of God? When have you seen the kingdom come in your life, or those around you or throughout the world?
7. What is repentance and why is the need to repent a difficult concept for people today? Was it a hard decision for you to decide to follow Jesus?
8. Sam stressed the importance and severity of this moment. In what ways have you been diminishing or making smaller the teaching of Jesus? What parts do you like and which parts do you tend to ignore? In what ways can we start to follow all of His teaching, not just the parts that are comfortable to follow?
9. What might God be calling you to do based on this account of Jesus coming to announce that the Kingdom of God was near? Can we simplify our lives? Is there something to turn from and towards? Can less be more? Do we need to humble ourselves? Take some quiet time together to reflect on this and perhaps to share some thoughts and prayers around this topic.