



## **MARK: Jesus Unfiltered**

### **The Kingdom of God - Mark 1:14-45**

#### **SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

*(Leaders, please use these questions **as a guide for discussion**. Please don't feel like you have to go through every one!)*

#### **Warm-Up**

1. When you hear the word “kingdom”, what ideas or images come to mind? Are they positive, negative, or mixed?

#### **Read Mark 1:14-20**

2. Read verses 14–15. What does Jesus say has happened, and what does he call people to do in response? Why do you think Jesus pairs repent and believe together?
3. What is the Kingdom of God and why is it good news that it is near?
4. The phrase “the kingdom of God is at hand/has come near” is very physical language. What does this suggest about Jesus himself?
5. What might repentance look like practically in everyday life?

#### **Read Mark 1:21–34**

6. In verses 21–22, how is Jesus’ teaching different from the scribes? What is his authority?
7. Read verses 23–28. How does the unclean spirit respond to Jesus, and what does this show about Jesus’ power? Why is it significant that Jesus simply speaks and the spirit obeys?
8. In verses 29–34, what do you notice about the range of people Jesus helps? What picture of the Kingdom does this give us?

#### **Read Mark 1:35–45**

9. In verses 35–39, why does Jesus choose prayer and preaching over popularity and crowds? What does this show about his priorities?
10. What risks does Jesus take in touching the man with leprosy? How does this encounter show both Jesus’ authority and his compassion working together?
11. The leper is unclean, excluded, and powerless. What does this tell us about who Jesus welcomes into his Kingdom?

#### **Apply:**

12. Where are you most tempted to be “king” of your own life rather than living under Jesus’ rule?
13. What would it look like this week to “take off your crown” and place it back on Jesus in one specific area of life?
14. How does seeing Jesus as both all-powerful and deeply compassionate shape your trust in him?

**PRAY:** *Heavenly Father, we thank you so much that your kingdom has come in the coming of King Jesus and will come in all its fullness when he returns. Help us to bring every area of our lives under your authority and show off the fruits of your kingdom in our lives. In Jesus’ Name, Amen.*

**TITLE:** The Kingdom of God

**PASSAGE:** Mark 1:14-45

**LOCATION:** St John's Wishart 9AM

**BI:** Jesus is the King bringing in the Kingdom of God which is entered by Repentance and belief

**STRUCTURE:**

- The King's Command [14-20]
  - The King's Authority [21-34]
  - The King's Character [35-45]
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- If you're on social media, you would have noticed a trend recently of people showing photos or moments of themselves from 2016 - 10 years ago...
  - So if you're interested, here's what I was up to in 2016...
  - It seems like people are longing for perhaps a simpler time, a better time...when social media was really social, when online learning or online meetings weren't a thing, when we were perhaps more energetic, less wrinkly...more spritely!
  - But if we go back to 2016 - I think we'd find that people were longing for similar thing.
    - Longing for a simpler time...
    - Longing to go back to the innocence of the 1990's
    - Longing for comfort. Peace.
  - People are searching for stability, security something better...
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- Well - here's good news from Mark today - Jesus brings in a Kingdom which is so much better than what we have now. A Kingdom of security and stability, which lasts for ETERNITY!
  - He comes proclaiming that anyone can enter this Kingdom! This kingdom is called the Kingdom of God
  - Jesus comes as the king who has Authority over people, sickness, truth, and even evil spirits
  - And he comes as the King who has compassion on people like you and me.
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- But firstly, some background information is needed here, because you might be thinking: Michael, what on earth is the Kingdom of God!?
  - Well put it simply: The Kingdom of God is a place wherever God's people are living in God's place and living under God's rule which is total.
    - And when you are part of this Kingdom, you will find peace, you will find hope, you will find love, and you will find deep rest and satisfaction.
  - We get glimpses of the Kingdom of God all throughout the Old Testament. But that's all.
    - The nation of Israel was meant to be a display of what living under God's rule in the Kingdom looks like...but they failed at that completely...
  - And It was hoped that when the Messiah comes, that he will bring in the Kingdom of God completely and utterly.
  - And well, Mark has already put forward that Jesus is the Messiah - the Christ...
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- **The King's Command**
  - And this is what the Messiah says:
    - V14-15 "Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel."
  - The time is fulfilled! As in all the promises are about to come through and come true!
  - The expectations are about to be met!
    - *My wife and I are currently expecting our second child who is supposed to be due on the second of March.*

- *But really, he could come anytime he wants! We're waiting for that time to come...that time to be fulfilled!*
- *And when he comes - we could say that the 'time is fulfilled'*
- *Our expectations of a baby are going to be met! The promises are going to come through and true... God-willing*
- That's what Jesus means when he says that the time is fulfilled.
- He's saying - it's all happening, right here, Right now!
- The Kingdom of God is coming near - the time is now.
- Other translations of the bible translate this that the Kingdom of God has come near.
- And this is a physical term!
  - Like I could say that this side table is near to me, or the front row is near to me...
  - Or when my son now walks to me - I could say that Hudson has drawn near...
- The Kingdom has similarly come near...and the king of that Kingdom is Jesus.
- Because the King has come near - the kingdom is brought in with that King!
- This promised Kingdom of the total rule of God...this kingdom of peace, of justice, of rest, of goodness, of love, of security, of salvation - has come near because of and through Jesus!
- And the way into this Kingdom is simple.
- Repent and believe in the gospel. Repent and believe in the good news. Believe in Jesus!
- You see when we aren't living for Jesus we are living for another king. When we aren't living with Jesus as our king, we usually make ourselves King or queen. We set our own rules, we live our own way.
  - Our culture celebrates this doesn't it? Do your own thing, live your best life, protect your peace, put yourself first...
- And so when I'm not living for King Jesus, I'm living for King Michael...
  - *Now King Michael doesn't seem too bad at first. There's a pretty long leash, I can get away with a lot under King Michael.*
    - *Be selfish: Go for it!*
    - *Say that word in anger because it might make you feel good: Go nuts*
    - *Lie to protect yourself: Of course!*
    - *Do whatever feels good!!*
    - *King Michael's reign is great...until it isn't...*
  - Because my kingship is doomed to destruction...when I make myself king, when I just live my own way and not God's - I reject the one who is actually the real king.
  - When I reject God's rule - I reject the one who created me...who made the universe...the one who is in control of everything!
  - And so doing this, deserves punishment. It leads to death...rejecting the life-giver means having that life taken away...
- But there's a way back to living under God's good rule...There is a way back to life!
- And that is through **repentance**
- Repentance begins with saying sorry and recognising that we have done the wrong thing AND IS ALSO a complete change of life outlook
  - Repentance means vacating our throne, rejecting our rule over our lives and accepting God's rule over our lives. It means making God King once again...and living for him..
    - His ways over our ways,
    - His desires over our desires
    - His will over our will
    - His rule over our own rule
  - It means placing him first above our: careers, families, comfort, friends, hobbies, interests, finances, holidays, way of life, desires, relationships - a complete life turn around! A 180 - a reorientation..

- It's not about being really good, but dropping everything that gets us in the way of putting God first. And believing that Jesus is the King!
- And if we do this - then we are graciously gifted and entrance pass into the kingdom of God which lasts for eternity. We are forgiven for rejecting God as king and welcomed into his Kingdom...No expiry, no fine print, to terms and conditions - eternal entrance...//
- You can do this today!
- Be part of the Kingdom which has drawn near.
- This side of eternity - We can only experience these things in part now. We get moments of peace, moments of joy and health - but only really partially. There's a lot of grey at the moment!
- But when we physically die those who are part of the Kingdom won't die but - he will bring you into the completely whole Kingdom which will last for eternity.
  - Peace, rest, security, stability, hope, and love - for eternity. Sounds pretty good doesn't it?
- I wonder, are you here today - wanting to be part of this Kingdom?
- Are you dissatisfied with life? Longing for a simpler time? For 2016 or 2006 or 1996?
- Well - come and be part of the Kingdom which will give you so much more than time travel can..
- Be part of the Kingdom of God - by repenting and believing in him!!
- Take off your crown - and put it in its rightful place - on Jesus
  - That's what we see Simon, Andrew, and James and John do.
  - For us it might look different in the details...but entrance to the kingdom remains the same - hearing King Jesus' command and obeying it!
- Because he is a good King.
- He has complete authority and also a completely gracious character.
- **The King's Authority**
  - *If someone came through those back doors here today - and claimed to be from God or even the Son of God...well we might be mildly concerned.*
  - *We might wonder what medication they are on...or what they got up to in their spare time...*
  - *That is unless they could show some credentials...show some authority!*
  - *If you claim to be the creator of the universe, you should be able to demonstrate that you actually are!!*
- And well - this is what Jesus does.
- He shows off that he is the one who has complete authority because he is the son of God.
- In verses 21-34 we see his authority displayed in three main areas - authority to teach, authority over evil, and authority over sickness.
- But also we get glimpses of what the Kingdom is like...we see the effects of his rule as things get put right in the world...
- So three scenes + 3 areas of authority, 3 glimpses of the kingdom..
- Scene 1 - his authority to teach
  - V21-22 "And they went into Capernaum, and immediately on the Sabbath he entered the synagogue and was teaching. And they were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as one who had authority, and not as the scribes"
- Back in the day, the synagogue was like your local church. A place to get together and hear teaching.
- But the teachers of the day, taught a lot by quoting other teachers.
- They would have said "Rabbi this and that said this...or Rabbi so and so said this!"
- But they didn't teach as if they had authority.

- But Jesus does something different. His teaching and insight from what we now have as our Old Testament was amazing. Remarkable. He said "I say to you..." and taught with authority.
- And he can only do this because he is God! In him is all that is true! He doesn't lie, he doesn't deceive, he doesn't trick, he doesn't manipulate - all that Jesus says is the truth!
- He has authority to teach.
- Scene 2 - his authority over evil spirits.
- At that same time in the synagogue, there was a man with an unclean or an evil spirit or a demon.
- A real evil spirit.
- We don't have time to go into details - but I'm confident that they existed then and exist now here today!
- But let's look at what happens:
- V24 Man with the Spirit says: "What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God." But Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Be silent, and come out of him!" And the unclean spirit, convulsing him and crying out with a loud voice, came out of him."
  - Just as a side note: Notice how the spirit even knows who Jesus is! It's not enough to know stuff about Jesus - repentance is what's needed!
- But also note more importantly that Jesus just spoke and the spirit obeyed?
- There was no incantation, no ritual - He just spoke!
- That's the type of authority that Jesus has even over spirits and the spiritual realm.
  - *Today we might think we're above this stuff in the 21st century...but every so often on my instagram feed, I see people claiming to be witches. People doing incantations and all sorts of stuff..burning leaves, using resonating bowls.*
  - *People are reaching out for something spiritual, a spiritual experience -*
  - *But the occult and other demonic spirits only bind people, and lead them to death and decay,,,*
- But Jesus is the one in authority over the spirits! He has come to put evil spirits in chains - and instead give his Holy Spirit which gives freedom and life!
- Scene 3 - Authority to heal.
- After leaving the synagogue - Jesus then goes to one of his first disciples house, and his mother in law had a fever. She was so sick, she had to be lying down.
- These days, you have a fever and you pop a panadole, in those days a fever could send you to the grave!
- But Jesus does this:
  - V31 "And he came and took her by the hand and lifted her up, and the fever left her, and she began to serve them."
- That's his authority! He didn't even have to speak - he just touched her and she was completely healed!
- No recovery time, no sick days, nothing like that, she just stood up and began to help out.
- Complete authority.
- And then we get this paragraph:
  - V32 "That evening at sundown they brought to him all who were sick or oppressed by demons. 33 And the whole city was gathered together at the door. And he healed many who were sick with various diseases, and cast out many demons."
- Many sick people, many spirits - no problem for the King, he has complete authority.
- This is who Jesus is! The Son of God, the King with all authority!
- And his Kingdom - is one of truth, one with no sickness, and no evil!
- BUT complete authority by itself is scary isn't it?
- Someone in control and authority - can be dangerous...

- But with Jesus, he doesn't use his authority to serve himself, but uses it with compassion and care.
- His Character is good.
- **The King's Character**
- Firstly - Jesus was getting very popular. Very very popular.
- And so one morning, he went out to pray, but his disciples came to him and told him that everyone is looking for him!!
- And any modern celebrity would go back to the crowds for fame, get a book deal, get a netflix documentary on the way - but not with Jesus.
- He says that he needed to move on to be able to teach rather than just do miracles and gain popularity. That's why he came! To teach!
- But after this, Jesus encounters a man with leprosy.
- Leprosy could refer to any number of skin diseases in the 1st century. It was considered extremely contagious, and anyone who had leprosy had to be excluded from the community - had to stay away from contact with people, and ostracized from worshipping God at the temple.
- So they were socially excluded, spiritually excluded, and with no way out and no hope for a cure.
- If you were a leper, it was a terrible life.
- And so Jesus is approached by this man who implores him to heal him.
- And Jesus moved by compassion, with a gut wrenching compassion, a feel it in your bowels type compassion - reaches out his hand, touches him and heals him. Cleanses him.
- The King reaches out to touch the outcast, dirty, unclean leper - and Jesus doesn't become unclean, but rather the leper becomes clean.
- That's his character! He has compassion for the outcast, the unclean, the sinner - and has come to cleanse them and forgive and restore them...//
- This is Jesus unfiltered! The King of all with Complete authority, and complete compassion.
- And his kingdom is good.
- Do you want to know this King? Know his compassion? This security, this salvation and hope?
- Do you want to be part of this kingdom and have this freedom?
- Well you can.
- All that you have to do is return to the king - repent of living for yourself - and turn and believe in him!
- And he has compassion enough to even go to the cross so that we could be forgiven and brought into his eternal kingdom!
- And as we reject our own agenda for our lives and instead put JESUS first over everything - he welcomes us in. He gives us his presence in the Holy Spirit.
- And the knowledge and awareness of his Kingdom will only grow as we pray your kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven.
- We will grow in our peace, in our satisfaction and security in Jesus.
- And instead of looking back and longing for 2016 or 1990's - we'll more and more look forward to when Jesus returns as the eternal forever great King.