



Hello Friends,

The notes throughout the book of Mark will look different. We are trying to accommodate our friends that are exploring the good news of Jesus. Here are a few things to know for this week:

- If you have new people, make the focus on relationships. Use or don't use the notes to whatever fits your group.
- The notes are designed to read the passage and discuss it while together.
- I didn't include prayer requests for this week.
- Look for ways to encourage relationships throughout the week.

## LEARN FROM THE BIBLE TOGETHER

### A NEW YEAR

Question: Is the new year start-up just another day on the calendar or a time to look back and look forward? Perhaps you might be a mix of both. What percentage are you of each?

I am usually a 30% look back and 70% look forward. This year might be different – still working on it!

### WHAT WAS GOOD NEWS TO YOU?

Most of us have received 'good news' at various times in life. What was some for you?

When we learned that Diane was PG (1973), when the surgeon told us that the large tumor in Diane (age 22) was benign, etc.

### THE GOOD NEWS OF "MARK"

Read the first thirteen verses of Mark chapter one. (Mark 1:1-13)

Mark begins his account with the words "The beginning of the good news . . . "

My tendency is to be glad for the good news at the time and then hope for MORE good news. That is, the good news of this life doesn't last forever – it is limited to one situation or desire.

What if Mark's "good news" lasts for our entire lives and beyond (i.e. eternity)?

What if this "good news" is meant to give a cover of good news that supersedes all other news?

Tips:

- The word "gospel" = good news
- Isaiah was a prophet in the Old Testament who predicted the actions of "John" (v. 4)
- To "prepare the way" means that something / someone is coming and you should prepare or be ready for it/them.
- Mark is citing the prophet Isaiah (2-3) who promised that a Messiah would come and that he would be announced
- John is sometimes called John the Baptist
- "He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit" refers to what Jesus Christ does in the life of a disciple (follower). He sends the Holy Spirit to immerse us in the life of God through Jesus. The Holy Spirit (God) comes to live in us, reconciles and unites us to God, and places us in the family of God.

## **CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS TOGETHER**

Mark's narrative of "the good news about Jesus Christ" moves fast. He is succinct, selective, and focused on key points.

As we read these thirteen verses, who are the key players?

How are each of them a part of the story of Jesus?

**By the way: Looking forward, the first eight chapters of Mark are very much focused on the identity and authority of Jesus as the Messiah, the Son of God. How are each of these a part of revealing the authority and identity of Jesus?**

What are the key points in Mark's introduction?

How does the temptation (i.e. testing) of Jesus figure into this story?

**(One aspect of the temptation is that (1) it happens in the wilderness such as when Israel was in the wilderness), (2) Jesus was successful in the trials while the people in the wilderness were not, and (3) Jesus' success was because of His love and faith in God.**

What 'tone' do these key points set for the rest of the narrative of good news?

**Right away we expect great things from Jesus: He fulfilled Scripture / prophecy, He was affirmed by God the Father and the Spirit, He was referred to and worshiped by John the Baptist, and He was successful in the trials and temptations, and angels served Him.**

Great things are ahead. He is no ordinary person.

## **DISCUSS TOGETHER**

The following are opinion questions. They are meant to spur on further reading, understanding, and consideration. It is not necessary to arrive at the perfect answers.

How do we separate fact from fiction when we consider a story about someone?

What, in this account, seems authentic? What doesn't?

If you were one of the original readers of this account, what might you think or feel? What questions might you ask?

## **BEYOND INFORMATION**

Each week, we will be discussing how the information in the Scriptures can be applied in our lives. For this week, what stands out to you? What is something you might consider?