

# Following Jesus!

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[ 0 : 00 ] So God has given to us four Gospels. We have Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

Four different histories, recordings, reminders to us of the life of Jesus.

And each are different. Matthew was written to the Jews. He seeks over and over again to show that Jesus fulfills the Scriptures, that He is the Jewish Messiah, the one who was expected.

Matthew has an emphasis on the teaching of Jesus as he has five long sections of Jesus' sermons and parables and warnings.

Luke, his Gospel is written not by one of the apostles of Jesus, but rather one who was connected to Paul.

[ 1 : 07 ] Dr. Luke carefully researched and interviewed witnesses, and he wrote a Gospel that was, he said, as he says in his introduction, of consecutive order.

So he wrote it orderly and in chronological detail. John, on the other hand, as an apostle of Jesus, wrote a Gospel many years later that emphasizes Jesus as God.

And in fact, John includes a lot of unique teachings that the other Gospels do not have. And so we have four Gospels. Why did we choose Mark?

Mark's the shortest, so maybe, you know, that saves us time. If we'd have gone through Matthew, it might have taken us five years. John might have taken us six. Mark only took us two, so maybe that was why.

Now, what is it about Mark? What's significant about Mark? Well, Mark was the first Gospel written. It is often a Gospel that is overshadowed by the other ones.

[ 2 : 13 ] After Mark, Matthew wrote, based most of his writing upon Mark, as did Luke, and then supplemented and added other things.

So Mark's Gospel's been much overlooked and neglected because the others have taken the forefront. But what I discovered in this study of Mark has surprised me.

I've grown to really appreciate Mark's unique style of writing. Which brings us to how did Mark write his Gospel. His style is unique to the whole New Testament.

There's no other book in the New Testament written the way Mark is written. The same stories are told in the other Gospels, but the style of writing is completely unique. In fact, it was unique to that time in history.

You see, his writing is basically a sermon, a proclamation. And as the early church fathers tell us, that Mark's Gospel was based on the preaching of Peter.

[ 3 : 18 ] So basically, we have Peter's Gospel here. And it's written in a style to be read aloud. It's a Gospel to be heard and listened to.

So Mark wrote it knowing that it would be spoken and others would hear it. So he wrote it to be more easily heard. So not long sentences, not long details.

It's got a quick pace. It's got a brief summaries. It moves, moves, moves. In fact, one of Mark's favorite words is immediately and immediately after that.

And immediately after that. So it has this kind of quick movement to it. Interesting as well in the culture that Mark is writing to, and most scholars believe he's writing to Roman believers because he translates a lot of things from the Latin to the Roman language.

There was a 10% literacy rate at the time. So only 10% of the people read. And so Mark is writing, not among the Jews, but among the Romans.

[ 4 : 26 ] And so Mark is writing to those Romans so they could hear the word because they're not going to be able to read it. So he's writing for them to hear it. And then Mark's structure is very simple.

The first half, the first eight chapters basically, are building up to a climax of Peter's confession there. Who am I? Jesus says, and Peter says, you are the Christ.

So the whole first half of the gospel is, who is Jesus? Who is he? Who is he? Who is he? And then Peter answers, you are the Christ. And then from that point there where we read in Mark 8, 31, it just drastically changes direction.

Before the gospel had been a public ministry, Jesus publicly healing, publicly teaching, teaching in parables. Now it takes a turn where Jesus begins to, now at the end of the third year and into his final year, begins to teach privately to his disciples.

And so the next three chapters, chapter 8, 9, and 10, focus on discipleship. And then we come to chapter 11 of Mark, and we're at the final week of Jesus.

[ 5 : 41 ] The last six chapters of Mark are all about just one week from his triumphal entry to his resurrection. And so you see the majority of Mark, as well as most gospels, are centered and highlight that final week of Jesus.

That being the most significant, when he enters his passion, when he throws down the gauntlet, when he throws down the challenge, and is therefore condemned and crucified, as was his plan. So what I want us to do today, in terms of review, is just kind of ask, what stands out in the gospel of Mark? Were there any surprises?

Did anything we discover here in the gospel change your view of Jesus? Did anything change your view of what it means to follow Jesus?

Because that's what the gospel is about. The first half of the gospel is about who is this Jesus.

Second half is about the way of the cross. What does it mean to follow Jesus?

[ 6 : 52 ] So from the very beginning, Jesus, in chapter one of Mark, calls his first disciples. He sees Peter and Andrew fishing, and he calls them to follow him.

He says, follow me, and I will make you fishers of men. And that really summarizes the whole Christian experience. Follow me. Learn from me.

Follow me. Be disciplined by me. And then I will, in turn, make you a fisher of men. You don't make yourself that. I will make that of you.

As you follow me, I will begin to make you a fisher of men. And it's interesting, in the gospel of Mark, it's not until the end of the third year, or end of the second year, that he starts to send them out, make them fishers of men.

They follow for two years before he begins to send them. He doesn't push them out quick. And even then, when he sent them out, we remember that they weren't really getting everything, not understanding everything.

[ 7 : 57 ] But that was his process. So I want us to look at the two themes here. One, an invitation to discover who Jesus is.

Mark writes in such a way that he draws his readers to a discovery, to who is Jesus.

Mark doesn't make a lot of comments in his gospel. He just kind of tells the story without explanation. So who is Jesus? The basis of this theme is discipleship.

So we see in chapter one, he calls the disciples, he calls Peter and Andrew, he calls James and John, follow me and I'll make you fishers of men. Then in chapter three of Mark, we see him begin to appoint apostles.

So those who had been following him, after about a year, now he appoints, he goes up to the mountain, he prays, he comes down, he chooses 12 men who will be with him and whom he will send out to preach.

[ 8 : 59 ] So he calls them, he appoints them as apostles. And then in chapter six, at the end of the second year, he begins to send them out. So we have this discipleship process that is in the midst of this.

That's the basis of the theme. But the main theme is about discovery. Mark tells a story so that we can discover who Jesus is. He draws the reader in to discover.

He shows the reactions of people. As Jesus teaches, as Jesus performs a miracle, he'll say, this is how people responded. This was people's, this was the reaction.

He highlights their responses. And so in a way, he draws us in because he doesn't tell us this is who he is. This proves who Jesus is like Matthew does.

He simply tells us the story, people's responses, and then he moves on. And so it kind of draws us in to go, what wouldn't be my response? What if I saw that? How would I respond? What would I

think of Jesus in that situation?

[10:02] So let me give you just a couple of examples. We're not going to look at all of them, obviously. Let me just give you a couple of examples in the book of Mark, starting chapter one, verse 21. One of the first things Mark records about Jesus in Mark 1, 21, right after he calls these early disciples to follow him, verse 21, he says, they went into Capernaum and immediately on the Sabbath, he entered the synagogue and was teaching.

And watch this. And they were astonished at his teaching. Why? What was so astonishing? And literally the word astonished means to strike out.

They're blown away, we might say in our vernacular. They're struck out. They were astonished at his teaching. Why? For he taught them as one who had authority and not as their scribes.

So his whole style of teaching is very unique. He taught as if he meant it. He taught as if it was his own word to give. He taught with authority, with force, and not as his scribes.

So they're astonished at his teaching. And then, verse 23, and immediately there was in their synagogue a man with unclean spirit. And he cried out, what do you have to do with me, Jesus of Nazareth?

[11:23] Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God, speaks this unclean spirit. But Jesus rebuked him, saying, be silent and come out.

And we find in the Gospel of Mark, that was Jesus' typical response to demons. Jesus would be preaching, or teaching, and the demons would reveal themselves. So he didn't go out demon hunting.

They responded to Jesus' teaching. And Jesus immediately would, silence, come out. He didn't battle with them. He just simply, silence, and get out.

Didn't want them speaking, because they are liars. So you don't really want to listen to what a demon has to say. Silence come out of him. And the unclean spirit convulsing him and crying out with a loud voice came out.

And here's again another response. Verse 27, And they were all amazed, so that they questioned among themselves saying, what is this?

[12:21] No one does this. A new teaching with authority? He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him? Who is this?

See, this is the response that Mark is building. He tells the story. He just tells their reactions. Verse 28, And once his fame spread everywhere throughout the surrounding region of Galilee.

Why? Because this is unknown. There's no one like this. This is completely unique. This is out of their comfort zone. It has struck them.

Then we see in the next story, chapter 2, when he returned to Capernaum after some days, it was reported that he was at home. Jesus was at home in Capernaum. And many were gathered together so that there was no more room, not even at the door.

And he was preaching the word to them. And they came, bringing to him a paralyzed man carried by four men.

[13:23] And when they could not get near him because of the crowd, they climbed up and removed the roof above him. And when they had made an opening, they dug through the mud roof, they let down the bed on which the paralytic lay.

And when Jesus saw their faith, that's an interesting way of saying it, isn't it? When he saw their faith, he didn't see what they did. He saw their faith. When he saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, son, your sins are forgiven.

Your sins are forgiven. Well, how do people react to that? How does somebody forgive sin?

Some of the scribes were sitting there questioning in their hearts, why does this man speak like that? He's blaspheming. Who can forgive sins but God alone? That does raise a good question, doesn't it?

Who can forgive sins but God alone? Who's this guy? And immediately Jesus, perceiving in his spirit that they were thus questioned within themselves, said to them, why do you question these things in your heart?

[14:38] Which is easier to say to the paralytic, your sins are forgiven, or to say, rise, take up your bed and walk. Watch what Jesus does. But that you may know that the son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins.

He said to the paralytic, I say to you, rise, pick up your bed and go home. And immediately, here's Mark's word, and immediately he rose and picked up his bed and went out before them so that they were all amazed and glorified God saying, we never saw anything like this.

Again, the word there means they're displaced. They're just, they're kind of out, they're out of their mind. I mean, they don't know this.

Mark uses strong emotional words for describing people's reactions. They're blown away. They're knocked out of their mind. They're displaced.

They don't know what to do with themselves. And so we translate it with words like amazed, and that really doesn't capture what Mark is, it's like it's more, boom, more powerful.

[15:49] There's an impact that what Jesus has done is they have never seen anything like it. There's nobody like this. These are the responses that Mark is showing.

Later in chapter two, he will show that he does have not just these positive responses of people who are amazed at him, but he has people who begin to dislike him and hate him.

There are people who criticize him. They criticize him for eating with sinners, to which Jesus says, I did not come for the righteous, I came for the sinner. I came to be with the sinners.

I love sinners. I care for sinners. It's not the healthy who need a doctor, it's the sick. It's not the righteous who need the gospel, it's the sinner who needs the gospel.

And then they condemn him for breaking the Sabbath over and over again. Why is Jesus breaking the Sabbath? He seems to do that intentionally. He seems to push their button. And his reaction at the end of chapter three, Mark tells us that there's different reactions to Jesus.

[16:56] His own family, his mother and his brothers, remember Mother Mary, his mother and his brother are on the far outside of where Jesus is teaching. And Mark says that his family thinks that he's basically lost his mind.

He's lost his marbles. He's been displaced himself. That's the family's view. They're not rooting him on.

They're like, something's wrong with him. This is not what we expected him to be. And then the scribes, the religious leaders say, well, I know what it is. He's possessed. That's how he casts out the demons.

He's on the demon's side. To which Jesus argues, well, that would be self-defeating for the devil to fight against himself. So that's not a good answer.

Beginning in chapter four, Mark, Jesus begins a new way of teaching. He teaches in parables. And he teaches in parables, not to illustrate truth more clearly, but to actually hide truth from outsiders.

[17:56] It's more of a mystery. It is a way of teaching the insiders. By insiders, we mean those who want to come, who want to ask the questions of Jesus, who want to listen.

From the outsiders, who don't really care what he's saying, we just like to watch the miracles. The outsiders include people like his family and the religious leaders. So he has this new way of teaching to teach the insiders and still hide the pearl of the truth from the outsiders.

And of course, an outsider can become an insider simply by coming in and asking Jesus, what do you mean by that? Then we come to the end of chapter four. Just one more I want to read here.

The end of chapter four, one more reaction about how Jesus responds from his own 12 disciples. Mark 4, 35. On that day when evening had come, he said to them, to his 12 disciples, let us go across to the other side. And leaving the crowd, they took him with them into the boat, just as he was, and other boats were with him.

And a great windstorm arose and the waves were breaking into the boat so that the boat was already filling with water. But he was in the stern asleep on the cushion in the middle of the storm.

[19:24] While the boat's filling with water, he's sleeping on the cushion in the back. And they woke him and said, teacher, don't you care that we are perishing? We're gonna die, don't you care?

And he awoke and he rebuked the wind and said to this sea, peace, be still. And the wind ceased and there was a great calm.

And he said to them, why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith? And Mark records, they were filled with great fear and said to one another, who then is this?

That even the wind and the sea obey him. This is the 12 disciples who've already been following him, who've seen him do miracles, seen him cast out demons.

Now they see him in a storm, say two words, and the sea and the wind obey him, and they have great fear. Who is this? He is not what we expected.

[ 20 : 41 ] He's not just a prophet. He's not some mere great prophet like of old. He's more than that. So we see other responses.

Mark will tell us about those who respond with faith. And interesting, it's outsiders. It's non-Jews who respond with faith.

We have, well, in chapter five, Jairus, well, he's a Jew, but he's a synagogue leader who comes to Jesus to heal his servant.

And the woman who had 12 years of a blood flow comes to him, hopefully secretly, but she believes he can heal him. Later, we have a Canaanite woman who comes desperately seeking Jesus, begging him for mercy on her demonized daughter.

And Jesus, with a word, says go, and your daughter is well. And she is. So we have those coming with faith. We also have those you would expect to receive him who don't receive him.

[ 21 : 49 ] He goes to his hometown in Mark 6, and they're offended. They're offended. Oh, we know who he is. We know his mother. We know his father. We know his four brothers.

We know at least his two sisters. We know his family. This can't be the Messiah. We know him. We saw him grow up. This is little, little Yesu, little Yesu, who's now a man and doing things that don't make sense to him.

So we see, and then we see again at the end of chapter 6, more astonishment from the 12 as Jesus walks on the water, and they are again, as Mark puts it, exceedingly blown away.

He's walking on water now. It's one thing he calms the sea. It's another thing now he's, now he's, he's just disregarding laws of nature. Who is this?

So again and again, this is what we see in the first chapter, first eight chapters of Mark is he's telling the stories, what Jesus does and how people react. Some reactions are positive, some are negative. And then we come to the end of chapter 8, where Jesus finally asks them, who do you say that I am?

[ 23 : 02 ] And Peter comes with his confession, you are the Christ. You are the one. And then Jesus tells him, yes, I am the Christ, but here's the kind of Christ I am.

The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected and be killed and after three days rise again. And what's Peter's response to that? Here's where everything turns.

Yay. I'm with you, Jesus. Let's go to the cross. What's Peter's response to Jesus saying, yes, you're right. I am the Messiah. And this is what the Messiah does.

He comes to suffer and die and rise again. Peter's response is, according to Mark, he rebuked Jesus. Can you imagine that? I want to see that scene. You know, Peter, Peter, first he confesses the great, you're the Christ.

I got it. I got it. And just moments later, Jesus rebukes him back and says, you get behind me, Satan. So he's from the top of the class to the bottom of the class.

[ 24 : 09 ] That's Peter. That's how I would love him. But Peter doesn't, Peter doesn't want that kind of Messiah. See, even the 12 disciples, after they've been following him for two years, still have this idea, preconceived idea, what Jesus is supposed to be.

And now he begins to reveal to them, I'm going to go die. No, that doesn't fit my, that doesn't fit my picture. Peter, no, you can't do that.

That's not, no, we're here, we're marching on Rome. You got power, man. You got more power than the kind of blows. You can walk on water. You can destroy Rome.

So no, I don't want that kind of Messiah. I don't want one that suffers and dies. I don't want a suffering Messiah. I don't want a humble king. I want a conquering king.

So what we see in the first half of Mark is, Jesus is what nobody expected. It's not what his mother expected. Not what his brothers expected. Not what the Pharisees expected. Not what the disciples even expected.

[ 25 : 14 ] After two years with him. And he continues to challenge them. Do you not yet get it? Have you not yet put the pieces together?

Have you, do you not yet understand? Why are you afraid? I'm with you. Why are you afraid? Why are you worried about whether you bring bread?

So, so first of all, first theme, this invitation to discover who is Jesus. What basically has Mark shown us? What have we discovered?

Well, this is a Jesus who amazes people. He offends people. He stirs up fear and he stirs up faith. He seeks sinners and he repels religious people.

He has the power to teach. He has powerful teaching. He has power over evil. He has power even over creation. And yet with this, all this power, he forgives sinners.

[ 26 : 12 ] He wants to eat with sinners. He cares about sinners. He cares about people with weaknesses. He heals the deaf and the blind and the leper.

And he raises the dead. There is no one like this. So that's our first theme. And the second theme we see in the gospel of Mark is instruction in the way of the cross.

Now, in the second half of Mark, we see a lot more private teaching. A lot less public. He's still teaching publicly, but a lot more just with the 12.

He's now training them. We're coming into the end of his third year with them and his final year with them. In this final year with the disciples, now he's really focusing on not just teaching generally, but training them specifically the way of the cross.

This is personal training. Jesus chose a few men, we're told back in chapter 3, to be with him, to spend time with him, to follow him, to watch him, to learn from him, to begin to gain understanding about who he is and what he's about.

[ 27 : 27 ] And then these are the very ones that he will send out. These are the ones after he is gone that will take the mission, carry on the task, bring salvation to the world.

So it begins with this personal training. And it begins at the end of Mark 8, where he began to teach them this is what the Messiah is.

He will suffer, he will be killed, he will rise after three days. Peter, of course, responds in the negative as we saw. Don't do that, we don't want that.

Jesus retrains. What does Jesus say about following him? He says in verse 34 of Mark 8, if anyone would come after me, if anyone's going to follow me, this is what it means.

This is what real Christianity looks like. This is what real discipleship is. This is what my people are like. If anyone will come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow me.

[ 28 : 27 ] And then he begins to talk about losing your soul, losing your soul in this world in order to save your soul. You know, not follow your soul. Your soul is, by the way, the part of your life, part of your makeup that wants the easiest way out, wants the quick escape.

So if you always follow your soul, if you're always trying to save and guard your soul, you will lose your life because you'll live worldly. But to reject your soul in this world will ultimately save your soul.

So Jesus talks about what does that mean? It means self-denial, deny yourself. Take up your cross, it's a life of suffering. It's not your best life now. It's a life of suffering and denial.

And it's following Jesus. Then he says the same thing in chapter 9. Three times now Jesus is going to tell them what his mission is. Chapter 8, I will go to Jerusalem, die, and rise again.

Again, chapter 9, verse 30. They went on from here and passed through Galilee. He did not want anyone to know. Why? For he's teaching his disciples in private.

[ 29 : 38 ] Again, notice the focus on private teaching. He's teaching his disciples saying to them, What? The son of man is going to be delivered into the hands of men. They will kill him. And when he is killed after three days, he will rise.

What's the response? But they did not understand the saying and were afraid to ask him. See, because the last time somebody said anything, they got rebuked and called Satan.

So, I don't think I want to say, I don't want to raise any questions, but I don't get it. I don't get it. You're the Messiah. You're the powerful one and you're going to go die.

Don't get it. So, this is the second time he tells them, I'm going to Jerusalem, going to be killed, and I will rise on the third day. And then again, chapter 10, 1033, 1032, again, a third time now, tells them.

They were on the road going up to Jerusalem. So, this is right before he gets to Jerusalem.

Remember, chapter 11 is the triumphal entry, the beginning of the last week. So, here we are at the end of chapter 10.

[ 30 : 50 ] They were on the road going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was walking ahead of them, and they were amazed. And those who followed were afraid.

So, this wasn't a casual walk to Jerusalem. This wasn't an exciting walk to Jerusalem. On their way, they know he's already been talking about this confrontation that's coming, and so they are just amazed that he's walking ahead.

He's ready to go, and they're trembling and paralyzed. They don't know what to do. And taking the 12 again, again, private, taking the 12 again, he began to tell them what was to happen to him. Okay, guys, this is what I've already told you. This is what's going to happen. Verse 33, saying, See, behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and scribes.

Word there, delivered over, means betrayed. He will be betrayed over to the chief priests and scribes. They will condemn him to death, and they will deliver him over, betray him over to the Gentiles.

[ 31 : 54 ] And they, the Gentiles, will mock him and spit on him and flog him and kill him. And, by the way, after three days, he will rise. So, again, the third time, telling them this is what's happening.

The disciples don't get it. They're afraid. They don't get it. And then Jesus is saying, this is what it means to follow in the cross. If you'll come after me, deny yourself, take up your cross.

What does it mean? It means being the servant of all. What does it mean? It means being the slave of all. Look at verse 43. After he catches the disciples arguing about which one of the 12 are the greatest, is the greatest of the 12.

He's going to lay his life down, and they're talking about which one of them is the greatest. Really supportive group of guys here. He says to them, verse 41, When the 10 heard it, that they were arguing about who's the greatest, they began to be indignant with James and John.

And Jesus called them and said to them, You know that those who are considered rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. But not with you. It shall not be so among you.

[ 33 : 09 ] You're not like that. Whoever would be great among you must be your servant. And whoever would be first among you must be slave of all.

Why? For even the Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve. And to give his life as a ransom for many.

See, that's the model of Jesus. And that's the model we follow in. He did not come to be served. It wasn't about him, although it was about him. He didn't make it about him in the way that he acted.

The way that he lived. He came to serve. And to give his life as a ransom for many.

Is that how we live? Are we following this walk to the cross? Then he would come after me and deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me.

[ 34 : 18 ] It's pretty simple. But not easy. This is what he calls us to do. Now, the rest of Mark, we have lots of other stuff that we saw.

This was his personal training we saw in 8, 9, and 10. And again, in chapter 13, there will be a private discussion and teaching where he will talk about the future events.

They ask him about the temple. He will tell them the temple will be destroyed within one generation. And that this is what you can expect in the future. You can expect, basically, to suffer because things are changing.

Once that temple comes down, things will change. Things will change in a big way. But then there's also public teaching we see of Jesus in chapters 10, 11, and 12 of Mark.

And these are more not so much Jesus standing up to teach as Jesus is being asked questions.

He's either being asked questions by some who are sincere, who just want to know an answer, or some who are trying to trap him and debate with him.

[ 35 : 25 ] So in chapter 10, Jesus does teaching by answering questions about divorce, about children, about the difficulty of riches, and who can be saved. If the rich person, if it's difficult for the rich person to be saved, because his riches become an impediment, then who can be saved?

So he's answering those questions. Chapter 11, triumphal entry, he teaches about king, about what a real king is, a humble king, a savior king. He teaches about the temple as he cleanses the temple, as he confronts the religious leaders who are robbing people in the temple.

He talks about the prayer of faith, the fig tree withering quickly, and Jesus turns that into a lesson on the prayer of faith. And then Jesus begins in chapter 12 to turn the tables as he teaches a parable publicly about the son who gets rejected, and the religious leaders understand that Jesus is talking about them, that he's condemning them as those who are rejecting him as the son of God.

They get it, and yet they reject him. Chapter 12, they try to trip him up about taxes. He answers questions about taxes, about life after death, the greatest commandment.

What's the greatest commandment? About the Messiah, Jesus himself poses the question, who's the Messiah? What does the scripture say about the Messiah? And then he quotes David and says, if David calls him Lord, how can the Messiah also be the son of David and the Lord of David?

[ 36 : 59 ] And he stumps them with, who is this Messiah? You're right, we haven't thought clearly about that. And then an example of giving. So we have the private training, the public teaching, and then in chapters 14, 15, and 16, we have the passion of Christ, his trial, his suffering.

The passion, meaning the suffering of Christ, begins with the Passover meal, where there, we spent some time in there in chapter 14, looking at the Passover meal, and how Jesus transformed the meaning of that meal from that which focused on the past redemption out of Egypt to now a new redemption from sin.

And the changing of what the meaning of the bread means, the matzah, to being the body of Christ, and the meaning of the wine, meaning the blood of the lamb, Passover lamb, to being the blood of Jesus himself, which will bring forgiveness.

That's eternal. So he transforms the meaning of the meal. He reveals who is betrayer. Well, he reveals that he will be betrayed by one of the 12. He reveals that all of them will fall and fail him and desert him.

And then he reveals that Peter himself will deny him three times before the rooster crows once. And perhaps three times before he, the rooster crows a second time.

[ 38 : 23 ] Mark introduces the possibility that Jesus, that Peter betrayed Jesus, not just three, but six times. And only Mark gives us that perspective, and that would be Peter himself humbly saying, no, I didn't just do three, I did six.

That's how much I failed the Lord. So we have that. Then we have, of course, at the end of chapter 14 of Mark, the Gethsemane. And then Jesus' arrest, his trial, where he confesses, are you the Christ?

He says, I am. And then adds to that, you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of glory and coming in the clouds of glory, not coming down, coming up.

Ascending to the throne and there beginning his kingdom. You will see that in your own lifetime. You will see that that happens. And then chapter 15, we have the Roman trial, the crucifixion of Jesus, the signs of his death.

Remember, as he died, darkness. And as he died, the veil split in two, the signs and the meaning of his death. Then we see his burial. And then, of course, chapter 16, we see his resurrection.

[ 39 : 37 ] There's Mark. What do you do with it? And I'm sitting at home thinking, man, how do you? And that's where I really wanted us to be together so I could hear, I wanted to hear, how did it impact you?

How did it impact you? And I wish we'd have done an earlier review when we were halfway through instead of waiting for two years and now we're doing a review.

I can't even remember two years ago. I can't remember two months ago, let alone two years ago. So, Pastor, I don't know what to tell you. But there must be an overall impact. How does it impact you? How do you answer the question that Mark poses, who is Jesus?

How do you answer that? Just how would you answer that? Do you have a different view of Jesus than you did before? And chances are, yeah, or at least it's a growing view, maybe, or a greater appreciation, a deeper understanding.

Not maybe something brand new, but, whoa, that's another side of Jesus now I appreciate more. As well as, what do you expect of Jesus?

[ 40 : 52 ] One of the biggest surprises we have in Mark is that Jesus was totally unexpected. That the disciples expected him to be this way and he was this way.

His mother expected him. Remember, his mother heard the angels and heard, you know, all this stuff. And she expected a certain thing and he's something else. So, we too, we can do that, have a preconceived idea of what Jesus is supposed to be.

And then he blows it apart. So, maybe there's something like that that Jesus has shown, okay, I've got him in a box and I need to let him go. And then the second half of the gospel, the way of the cross.

You know, are you following the way of the cross? And every one of us could say, I'm sure, if we're honest, not that well. Thank you very much. Yeah, I don't like that way.

That's really self-denying and taking up, you know, I don't really like that. It doesn't come natural for me. Exactly. It doesn't come natural. Our natural is self-focused, self-reliant, self-pushy, you know, about self.

[ 42 : 06 ] And now Jesus wants me to be not about me and about others. And that's not natural. Interesting. I was just talking to my wife this morning about, you know, this is, we're at two months into this seclusion time.

And this social distancing or space distancing or whatever you want to call it. And my wife mentions, because she's out there more in the shopping and all that. People are starting to lose their patience. People are starting to, you know, at first everybody's in, you know, we're good. We got that image of God so we can do good. We can be good. We know how to be nice to one another and we can do that for a while. But after eight weeks, it's getting old. It's getting old. How do you keep doing it? Especially if I don't see, you know, a glimmer of hope here. Some people tell us there's a glimmer of hope. Well, I hope. But nobody knows. How long is this going to go on?

[ 43 : 09 ] How long can I do it? How long can I be nice? And some people have already shut it down. They're not nice anymore. Now all the natural kicks in. Get out of my way.

I'm not waiting for the aisle to clear before I come down. I'm going to go ahead and go down that aisle. I don't care about social distancing because I've got to get my stuff. It's a simple little thing like that, a little selfish thing like that.

My wife's over here keeping the rule, keeping the debt, waiting, you know, for the aisle to clear. Somebody comes around and just goes around. That was me, by the way. No, it wasn't. Could be. I could see myself doing that. And so in this kind of environment, you talk about the way of the cross. What's the way of the cross in this life, in this now?

Self-denial. Others more important. Not just generally, but because I follow Jesus and that's how Jesus lived.

[ 44 : 15 ] How do you, after two months, I don't have the energy for that. I can't just do that anymore. So how do I get the strength to do that? Well, only Christians who believe in Jesus and have a tap into the power of the Lord Jesus and the Holy Spirit can do it.

Because we and ourselves can't. No, we're done. We're out. I need power from on high. And I have to look to Him.

If I'm going to be the servant of all, that doesn't come naturally. I need outside help. And that's what the cross is about. That's the way of the cross. And to truly, and only when my mind is changed do I begin to value, really, honestly, genuinely value caring for others.

Because Jesus talks about it. If you want to be first, be the servant of all. If you want to be the greatest, be the slave of all. And then we're thinking, wait a minute, that's all backwards thinking. How do I do that?

Well, then I have to value that. Because that's what Jesus valued. He valued people. That's why He lived like He did. That's why He gave up His life like He did.

[ 45 : 30 ] That's why in their walking up to Jerusalem, He's in the head. Because He values people. He really does. He's not just doing it so that other people go, oh, good for you. He's not doing the commercials on TV that pats themselves on the back because they're, you know, we're doing that.

Right thing. We're serving people. And bless them for doing that. I don't know their hearts, but knowing what the Bible says about people's hearts, I kind of think there's probably a little selfishness in there.

Well, we've been on a journey of learning. Two questions left.

Do you accept who Jesus is? How He presents Himself? And secondly, will you follow Him? Not by your strength, but by His grace. Can I mention what we're doing next week? Lord willing. Where are we going?

[ 46 : 35 ] What are we? We're done with Mark. Are we really done with Mark? Are you going to come back with another Mark? We're going to Ruth. Book of Ruth. And I'm not sure there's a more appropriate book for our time than the book of Ruth.

Dealing with times of darkness and uncertainty and where's God. So we're going to Ruth for a little while. A couple years. No. A couple months. I don't know. Okay.

Let me pray. Father, thank you for this wonderful book. I thank you that every time I go through the Scriptures, you seem to surprise me.

I shouldn't be surprised. But you begin to unpack things and show me things that I did not have an appreciation about before.

Even this little gospel of Mark compared to the others, the little gospel, written so brilliantly. We don't expect that from, or at least I didn't, from folks in the first century.

[ 47 : 42 ] Did they know how to write? Like, we know how to write? Yeah, they knew how to write better than we do. And so, thank you. Not just the style, but the content. Thank you. That we get to see who you are.

You remind us about who our Jesus is and what it means to follow him. Not as a, I have to. Not as a, I should.

But I want to walk like Jesus walked. Because Jesus is my Lord. So work in our hearts, Father.

Apply these things to us by your gracious spirit.

We pray in Christ's name. Amen.