

Into the Life of Jesus

a study in the gospel of Mark
study #2

Intro – Where have we been?

Recall the context of Mark's bursting Good News:

- When was it written & when did the events happen that Mark writes about?
- What's happening geographically, politically, culturally when Mark announces his news?
- Who is Mark writing to? A general audience or a particular group?
 - *Is he also writing to you in 2019 or is it only 'ancient literature' from long, long ago in a galaxy far, far away?*
- Is 'Gospel' a religious, churchy word or something else?
- How important is it to understand Jesus within the context of Israel's calling and story?

Mark 1:14-15

Read these two short verses aloud as a group.

Paying attention: Instead of reading at normal pace, intentionally slow down and pause when you encounter a comma or period. (We DO tend to 'speed-read' familiar texts, don't we?)

Some Questions:

- Notice the jarring absence of information between verses 9-13 and verse 14 (especially about John). Why do you think Mark does this?
- How do Jesus' own opening words in verse 15 echo the opening of Mark's Gospel?
- Who is Jesus addressing and where does he do it? Why does this matter?
- If you were to imagine Jesus' face and voice, what does he look and sound like? Would he be grim-faced and judgmental, or something else?

Digging Deeper:

- What are the root meanings of *gospel*, *repent*, *kingdom* and *believe* (go ahead, use some internet resources)? Experiment further: try to use each of these four words in a non-churchy way, i.e. without employing 'Christianese jargon'. Eg. How would you use the word *repent* in a hiking or driving situation?
- Jesus says that the kingdom of God "has come" and "has come near". Arrived near to what and whom? And what difference does this make (for them and for us)?
- Why might this first-ever gospel announcement be in Galilee? Why not a political or religious centre like Rome or Jerusalem? Is Jesus just 'getting the kinks' out before he takes his message on the road? *Or is something else happening?*
- Has the gospel announcement ever come jarringly real to YOU personally? How and when?

PRAY: for one another, especially that Mark's gospel would go beyond being merely informational and instead truly transformational.