

The Gospel According to St. Mark
Bible Study Curriculum
High School Ministry







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I. Introduction

The 4 Gospels comparison				
	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
To whom it was written	Jews	Romans	Greeks	Christians
Subject	The Messiah the king	The Messiah the conqueror of Satan	Christ the lover of mankind	Christ the Incarnate Word
Main message of Jesus	Fulfills the Law	Performs wonders	Saves mankind	Dwells among us
Gospel content	Focuses on prophecies	Focuses on deeds	Focused on history	Focused on theology
Symbol	The human face	The lion	The Ox	The Eagle

Symbols of the Four Gospels			
			
Matthew Winged Man	Mark Winged Lion	Luke Winged Ox	John Winged Eagle

An 8 minutes illustrative video that could be used by servants to prepare or to show kids part at the beginning of each unit. Use only till the minute 8:20, as the last part is not verified.

<https://youtu.be/HGHqu9-DtXk>

Servant's preparation:

A link for the whole series of 22 sermons covering the whole book of St. Mark's gospel

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ibq9HrbU1b8&list=PLvMAQ886ucetCnNPq4ft5YY0dujWRuADy>

An introduction sermon to Gospel of St. Mark by Abouna Daoud Lamei in English

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ibq9HrbU1b8&list=PLvMAQ886ucetCnNPq4ft5YY0dujWRuADy>

A BIOGRAPHY OF SAINT MARK*

HIS UPBRINGING

- ❖ St. Mark was born in 'Cyrene,' one of the cities of Pentapolis in Libya, in a town called 'Ebryatolis,' from Jewish parents related to the tribe of Levi. His father's name is 'Aristopolis,' and his mother
- ❖ 'Mary' was a pious woman, of some stature among the early Christians of Jerusalem.
- ❖ Mark had two names (Act 12:12, 25; 15:37): **John**, a Hebrew name which means "the kingdom of God," and **Mark** a Latin name which means "Hammer."

- ❖ St. Mark was a relative of Barnabas, the Apostle. (nephew or Cousin Col. 4:10). His father was also a cousin of St. Peter's wife.
- ❖ He learned and mastered both Greek and Latin.
- ❖ After the barbarians attacked their home, they left Cyrene to Palestine, where he and his mother enjoyed the company of the Lord Jesus Christ. Mark's mother, Mary, was one of the women who ministered to the Lord with their resources. She offered her house to the Lord to eat the Passover with His disciples in the upper room. There, He washed their feet and gave them the Sacrament of the Eucharist. By that, her house became the first church in the world, consecrated by the Lord Himself through His holy presence and His practicing of the Sacrament of the Eucharist. In that same upper room, the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples (Act 2:1-4), and in it the disciples assembled.
- ❖ St. Mark was one of the seventy apostles chosen by the Lord for ministry, as testified by **Origen** and by St. Epiphanius.
- ❖ St. Mark attended the wedding of Cana of Galilee; and he was the man carrying the pitcher of water who met the two disciples sent by Lord Jesus to prepare the Passover (Mk. 14:13,14; Lk. 22:11). He was also the young man who left his linen cloth and fled naked during the incident of the arrest of the Lord (Mk. 14:52)

*Much of the information above is from Holy Tradition which other denominations do not often acknowledge. We have got to appreciating and valuing the wealth we have in our tradition.

Why do we see a lion in his icon?

- ❖ St. Mark attracted his own father to Christianity when he struck two hungry lions dead by the sign of the cross.
- ❖ He started writing his gospel by describing John the Baptist as a lion roaring in the wilderness and he also portrayed Jesus as the Divine Master serving the power of a lion.

HIS MISSIONARY WORK:

- ❖ He began his preaching with Saint Peter in Jerusalem then joined St. Paul and St. Barnabas on their first missionary journey, but he left them and return to Jerusalem. Later he traveled with St. Barnabas to Cyprus from which he proceeded to Lybia his homeland.
- ❖ In 61 A.D. he went to Egypt and established the church of Alexandria which we all belong to. History tells us the story of how Anianus accepted the Christian Faith, as the first Egyptian to do so. When Mark's footwear needed repair, he approached Anianus the shoemaker, who, as the needle pierced his finger, he uttered the words "O God the One." St. Mark healed him in the name of Lord Christ, and began talking to him of "God, the One." Anianus and his household accepted faith. As Christian faith quickly spread in Alexandria, St. Mark ordained Anianus a bishop, and with him three priests and seven deacons.

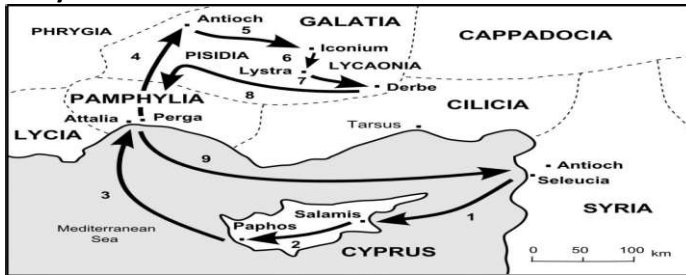
- ❖ The pagan mob rose in anger, which compelled St. Mark to leave Alexandria to Perga (Lybia), and from there he headed to Rome, where he joined St. Peter and St. Paul, to remain with them until their martyrdom in the year 64 A.D.
- ❖ When St. Mark returned to Alexandria in the year 65 A.D. to find out how the Christian faith had flourished, he decided to visit Pentapolis before getting back to Alexandria to be martyred at the district of 'Bokalia.'

The message and features of the Gospel:

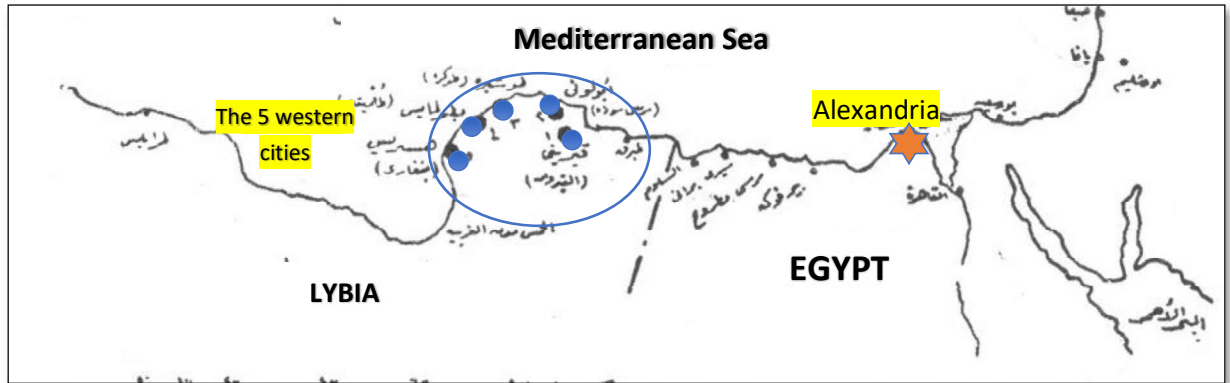
- ❖ It is believed to be the oldest of the four Gospels written between the years 65 to 70 A.D.
- ❖ While in Rome, the people asked him to write a summary of what they had received by word of mouth, so he wrote it to the Romans after the death of St. Peter and St. Paul.
- ❖ Writing his gospel to the Romans, explains why he may have not included many prophecies from the Old Testament like the gospel of Saint Matthew which was addressed to the Jews and why he had to explain many popular Jewish words and traditions.
- ❖ The Romans believed in authority and influence through war and violence, so he offered to them Jesus Christ as the true ruler over devils 1:27, disease 1:42, nature 4:41, plants 11:12-20, and the temple 11:33. Angels minister to him 1:13, He is Lord of the Sabbath 2:28, knows what's in the heart and mind of people 2:8, speaks with authority 1:12, feeds the multitude 6:33, the destroyer of death 5:35. His authority is evident through love, kindness, service, humility, and through pain.
- ❖ The Romans believed in authority through violence, pride, and oppression, but St. Mark the Evangelist proclaimed the authority of the Lord through humility and ministry to others (9:33; 10:35, 45).

I. St Mark Proclamation Maps

First Journey with St Paul



The Medetirraian Missionary- Egypt and the Five Western Cities



1- Unit 1: (Chapter 1-6)

Getting to Know Christ: Chapter 1:1-11

His Ministry in Galilee: Chapters 1:12-6:30

- 1) In chapter 1, St. Mark begins by describing Christ as a servant to mankind, sacrificing Himself, aiming to deliver us. That is why he does not detail the birth of Christ, but rather focuses on His ministry.
- 2) John the Baptist prepares the road for Christ the servant (Chapter 1)
- 3) Jesus served in Galilee, prayed for us in the desert, healed many on the Sabbath, in the house, by the sea, and wherever He went.
- 4) Jesus called others to preach with Him (the disciples)
- 5) His service is resisted (Chapter 2)
- 6) Jesus continued His preaching (Chapter 3)
- 7) His parables were marveled at by the people despite the resistance by the scribes (Chapter 4).
- 8) He commanded the evil spirits, death, and disease (Chapter 5).
- 9) Strange behavior towards this Servant who is unique in His love and work (Chapter 6)

2-Unit 2:

His retreat from Galilee (Chapters 7 to 9)

- 1) Jesus left Galilee not to avoid the trouble but to prepare the minds to accept the cross. He fed the multitude, healed whoever touched Him, and comforted even the Gentiles.
- 2) St. Mark recorded many conversations and questions that revealed Jesus's person and mission in chapters 8 to 10.
- 3) Through His transfiguration, He acknowledged His kingdom.

3-Unit 3:

His service in Judea chapter 10:

In this chapter, he provides us with life examples for the path of the cross.

- A. The difficult commandment (no divorce)
- B. Accepting children with love
- C. Wealth
- D. Leaving all to take up the cross
- E. Discarding the love of higher positions.

4- Unit 4:

Crucifixion and resurrection chapters 11 to 16

- 1) The events of the passion week,
- 2) His entry to Jerusalem (Chapter 11).
- 3) Resisting Him in Jerusalem (Chapter 12).
- 4) The cross and the signs of the end (Chapter 13).
- 5) The preparation of the cross (Chapter 14).
- 6) The events of the crucifixion (Chapter 15).
- 7) His resurrection declared the glory of this unique Servant, who is capable of rising from the dead.
- 8) The One who rose from the dead is still serving us, as He sent His disciples to preach and He is still serving His church.
- 9) He ascended to heaven so that our hearts may ascend with Him also



IV. Unit 3:

His service in Judea chapter 10:

In this chapter, he provides us with life examples for the path of the cross.

- A. The difficult commandment (no divorce)
- B. Accepting children with love
- C. Wealth
- D. Leaving all to take up the cross
- E. Discarding the love of higher positions.

A. Chapter 10

Servant's preparation:

A sermon about Chapter 10 explaining the Gospel of St. Mark by Abona Doud Lamei in English

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XY2GCp3BhRo&list=PLvMAQ886ucetCnNPq4ft5YY0dujWRuADy&index=11>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2ShZR5oylO8&list=PLvMAQ886ucetCnNPq4ft5YY0dujWRuADy&index=12>

Brief introduction:

At the beginning of each lesson, please review book overview questions.

- ✓ Who is St. Mark? He was one of the 70 apostles whose house was the 1st church Jesus used and who later preached in many countries including Egypt where our Coptic church originated.
- ✓ Who did he write his gospel to? The Romans
- ✓ What is the main message of the book? To show the great power of Jesus Christ who through His amazing actions, He demonstrated His Divine power.

Remember:

Last lesson, we have talked about the transfiguration of Jesus and His talk to His disciples about how to define the greatest among them. The greatest is the one who serves the others. Jesus also healed a mute boy, there we learned from the boy's father that our faith needs to constantly grow and that fasting, and praying can do miracles when combined.

Main points in the Chapter:

1. Marriage and Divorce 1-12
2. Jesus Blesses Little Children 13-16
3. Jesus Counsels the Rich Young Ruler 17-22
4. With God All Things Are Possible 23-27
5. The act of leaving for the sake of following Christ 28-34
6. Greatness Is Serving 35-45
7. Jesus Heals Blind Bartimaeus 46-52

Lesson overview:

In this chapter, Jesus explains to us how a Christian family should look like, there is no divorce unless in special cases because the married couple are made one through marriage. Jesus showed how He loves children and that He wants everyone to accept faith like a child with simplicity to get to heaven easily. When Jesus talked to a rich man, He explained that people who rely and love their money more than God, can not enter heaven, just as camel can not pass through a needle's hole. However, everything is possible with God that He can change the hearts and make stubborn people draw near to Him. Jesus reminds His disciples that He will die and rise again and that the more important person among them is the one who serves others. We talked about that in a previous chapter.

Meditation

1. Marriage and Divorce 1-12

- The Pharisees, often came to Him, not to benefit from His teaching but, out of fear, that if they did not, all people would follow Him.
- They used to approach Him in groups, to ask Him questions with the intention of confusing Him before the multitude. And now, realizing from His actions, filled with love and compassion, that He would not permit divorce, they presented Him with that question, in order to fish for a fault in His teaching, whether he approves divorce or refuses it.
- But the Lord, rejecting the easy way of divorce, took His believers along the difficult commandment, answering wisely, along the following lines:
 - (1) He intended to uproot from their hearts and minds, the permission of divorce; so, His answer came in an indirect form, to avoid falling in their trap. He dignified the law and Moses by saying, 'What did Moses command you?' He did not ignore what He had already proclaimed through His prophet Moses, but intended to reveal the depths of the law, to enter with them into its spirit and not its letter.
 - (2) He let them answer His question, to respond on the basis of their answer itself. They said, 'Moses permitted a man to write a certificate of divorce, and to dismiss her'... Thus, Moses did not permit divorce, but rather permitted to write a certificate of divorce, and to dismiss her.' *Here, there is a difference between the two expressions:*
 - For permitting divorce, makes of it an easy task; while getting first, a written certificate of divorce, means that, before divorcing his wife, a man has to go to a scribe, to let him write for him a certificate of divorce.
 - In that case, a wise scribe would discuss the matter with him, would approach the elders of his tribe if needed, in order to try to make peace, and to reconcile the two parties.
 - For fear, that, in the infancy of their spiritual life, a man may kill his wife, or may deviate to one of the pagan religions that enables him to divorce his wife, He permitted him to divorce, but cautiously.
 - That is why the Lord Christ goes on, saying: "Because of the hardness of your hearts he wrote you this percept." The Mosaic commandment was not a free permission for divorce, but within certain limits, for reason of the hardness of their hearts, a thing that should not be.

- To confirm it to them, the Lord took them back to the natural law, established by God at the beginning of creation, saying: “From the beginning of the creation, God made them male and female. Then, after his nature got corrupted, and his heart got hardened, that natural law was no longer suitable for him; he saw it as a deprivation and a difficult way.
- God permitted him to write a certificate of divorce to calm him down. And now, the Lord Christ came, not to present a new commandment, but rather a new nature, free of hardness of the heart, to get man back to the pure old life, so as to accept that commandment - refraining from divorce -, once seen by him as difficult, now as an easy divine commandment, fitting for his new self. It bears the image of the spiritual marriage joining the Lord Christ and the Church, His one and only bride!

2. Jesus Blesses Little Children 13-16

- The disciples wanted for the Lord Christ the easy and respectable way, rejecting the nuisance and trouble of the little children. But the Lord presented to them the simple, yet difficult way, which should be followed equally by the whole congregation.
- Taking the children in His arms; who were then with no rights, reveals that the Lord was not seeking respect or glory for Himself, but seeking a soul attached to the Lord, that of a child, a slave, or even a thief.
- St. John Chrysostom: A child’s mind is indeed free of sins; that is why it is fitting for us to practice; what children are doing by nature.

3. Jesus Counsels the Rich Young Ruler 17-22

- The Lord responded to him by saying, ‘Why do you call Me good, while denying that I am God? Why do you call Me good, when no one is good but One, that is God?’ The Lord did not deny that He is good, but refers that He is God... If the Father is good, He is likewise good.
- The rich man tried to deceive Jesus pretending to be submissive to Him; but He, who Knows all, said to him: “Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is God;” As it is written: “He catches the wise in their own craftiness.” (Job 5:13) The Lord proved that that man was not as wise and learned as he pretended to be.
- Some people may wonder, how could the Lord love someone He knows that he does not follow Him?! To answer that, we say that He loved the man’s good beginning, although He rejected his later deviation; He loved in him what deserves to be loved, in order to motivate him to what is greater; yet, not through compulsion, but with complete freedom.
- Jesus revealed to the disciples, that there is nothing wrong with richness in itself, but in the heart that trusts in it!
- St. John Chrysostom: The Lord said that to His disciples, who own nothing, to teach them not to be ashamed of their poverty, explaining the reason He forbade them to own anything.

4. With God All Things Are Possible 23-27

The Lord revealed to them that nothing is impossible for God. If God allows someone to get rich, He can, by His grace, turn his wealth to the good

5. The act of leaving for the sake of following Christ 28-34

- Let us see now, how can anyone, who leaves house or father or mother or brothers or sisters, or even a wife, receive a hundredfold “now in this time”?!
- Will he become a husband of many wives, or will he find on earth many fathers to make up for the one he left?! It could not be like that, as far as relationships according to the flesh, are concerned; but, rather, as we forsake what concern the body and the world, we receive what are a hundredfold greater than what we had.
- Every one of us, who believes in Christ and loves His name, if he forsakes a house, will receive dwellings that are high above.
- St. John Chrysostom: Jesus told them what is going to happen to Him in Jerusalem, so that they would not be disturbed if they were suddenly confronted by the actual events.

6. Greatness Is Serving 35-45

- When Jesus asked John and James ‘What do you want?’ it was not because He does not know, but to commit them to an answer, in order to open the wound, and to present the cure.
- He drew them, from their question, to the commitment of fellowship with Him, to strengthen their zeal.
- He was saying to them: ‘You will enjoy suffering with me, and martyrdom also. Yet, as far as enjoying the glories of the kingdom is concerned, that is a divine matter which is to be granted to you, not according to your materialistic thought, but according to God’s salvation plan.
- St. Jerome: Let us follow the example of our Lord Jesus Christ; For “He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked.” (1 Jn. 2:6) The Lord Christ did not come to be served, but to serve. He did not come to order, but to obey; He did not come to have His feet washed, but to wash the feet of His disciples. He came to be beaten, not to beat; to receive smites from others, not to smite anybody; to be crucified, not to crucify... Therefore, let us follow His example: Whoever bears the weaknesses of others, is following His example; while the aggressive, is following that of the antichrist¹ .

7. Jesus Heals Blind Bartimaeus 46-52

- Even, inside the Church, when someone wishes to approach the Lord through the Spirit, he may face resistance and spirit of criticism, that can drive him to despair. But a soul, that abides in the living faith, feeling its need for the Savior, would only be strengthened by such resistance, and would go on “crying out all the more,”
- The Lord asked him, “What do you want Me to do for you?” not because He needs to be told, but to proclaim his faith before all, and to confirm that He is willing to give those who would ask.

Application:

In verses 17-31, Jesus explains how hard it is for those who depend on their richness to go to heaven but yet all things are possible with God. Let us explore how we can allow God to change in us so we can do the impossible and get to heaven by changing wrong habits that seemed hard to stop or change.

God will not cause you to miss heaven because you are rich, but He will cause you to miss heaven if you put your money ahead of God. Jesus did not say a rich man could not be saved, He said it

would be hard. God looks into the heart. Rich and poor who have pure hearts and who depend on Jesus Christ as their Savior will be saved.

Application delivery idea

This lesson is based on Mark 10:17-31 when Jesus speaks about the rich.

Lesson – Through the Needle’s Eye

supplies – sewing needle, thread, thick yarn, small piece of woven cloth with raw edges

If we have hole, we need to guess if an object can fit through that hole.

Are we ready to play “Can it Fit?”

Before we can begin guessing, we need to have our hole. And here it is, our hole! Can you see it? All the way on this end of the needle there is a little hole.

- First up, I have a piece of thread. What do you think, can it fit?
It fits! Thread is exactly what this hole is made for, so it is a perfect fit.
Next up we have this piece of yarn. It’s a little bit bigger, but it’s still pretty small. So, can it fit?
Nope. It won’t fit. It’s just a little bit too big.
And last up, we have this piece of fabric. What do you think, can it fit?
I try, and try, and try, but there is NO WAY this is ever going to fit. It’s just too big.
Jesus actually talked about this in the Bible, only instead of trying to fit yarn and fabric through the hole, He talked about something MUCH bigger.
- The rich man in the story wasn’t ready for that answer from Jesus. Maybe if Jesus wanted him to give a little bit to the poor, but all of it? Everything he owned and worked so hard for? Then he would be even poorer than the poor. The rich man couldn’t do it, and he left sad and upset.
- Then Jesus turned to His disciples, who had all seen what had happened. Jesus told them that it was easier for a camel to fit through the hole of a needle, than for a rich man to make it to heaven.
- Do you want to know why Jesus said it was so hard? The rich man’s greed. Greed is when you love money and things more than you love God and people. And loving God and people is actually what the 10 Commandments are all about.
- The disciples didn’t like hearing this. How was anyone supposed to make it to heaven? Why would God want to make it so impossible?
- But Jesus told them it wasn’t impossible, because with God ALL things are possible. If the rich man would turn to God and allow God to change him, he would make it to heaven. No matter how greedy he was, God could make it possible.
- Let’s look at our fabric again. I’m going to try one more time to see if I can make this fit. I mean, didn’t we just say that with God all things are possible?
Still no. It just isn’t going to happen. Unless...
- What did we just say about the rich man? What did he need to do in order to make it into heaven? The rich man needed to let God change him.
I wonder if that would work for this fabric. Do you think we could change it somehow and make it fit?
- You know, fabric is actually just a whole bunch of thread woven together. And what was the only thing so far to fit through the hole in the needle? Thread! If we were to change it by taking it apart into individual threads, this piece of fabric should make it through that hole.

- I'm going to start with a thread from the outside, and I'm going to smooth it out really good. (If it is frayed, dampen the ends to get the fibers to lay down.) Are you ready? Here it goes...
It worked! Let's do another one.
- This is actually working! If we took this whole piece of fabric apart, we would be able to fit the whole thing through the hole in the needle. And it's still the fabric. We didn't turn it into mustard, or make it disappear; we changed it, but it's still the same piece of fabric we started with.
- It's just like how God can change the rich man. The rich man is still the same man. If his name was Anthony James and he was 6 feet tall with brown hair and green eyes, even after God changed him, he would still be 6-foot-tall Anthony James, with brown hair and green eyes. God just changed his heart to make the impossible, possible.
- No one can make it to heaven on their own. Even if they try hard, follow all the rules, give away their money, and preach all day every day, it is still not enough. Without God, it is impossible to get to heaven. We all have to let God change us, to turn us into who He wants us to be. We will still be the same people; we will just be the kind of person who gets to go to heaven. Because with God all things are possible.
- It is easy to criticize the rich man. It is easy to name other people who get following Jesus all wrong. But, what about you? Most of us have one thing that hinders us from being the disciple that we need to be for Christ.

General Discussion:

- What would you say is the one thing that keeps you from truly following Jesus?
- What is the excuse you use to try to justify your life? (ex. "I'm good," "I try really hard," etc.)
- How can trusting Jesus be harder than trying to gain our salvation some other way?

Some of you who are here have not made up your mind that you are sure about following Jesus. Your issue may not be giving up money to follow God, but Jesus commanded us to give up EVERYTHING to follow him. I want you to seriously consider what things stand in the way of truly following God and allowing you to be a disciple.

If this were you in this story, what would Jesus say to you?

Memory Verse:

15 Assuredly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it." Or

"With men it is impossible, but not with God; for with God all things are possible."