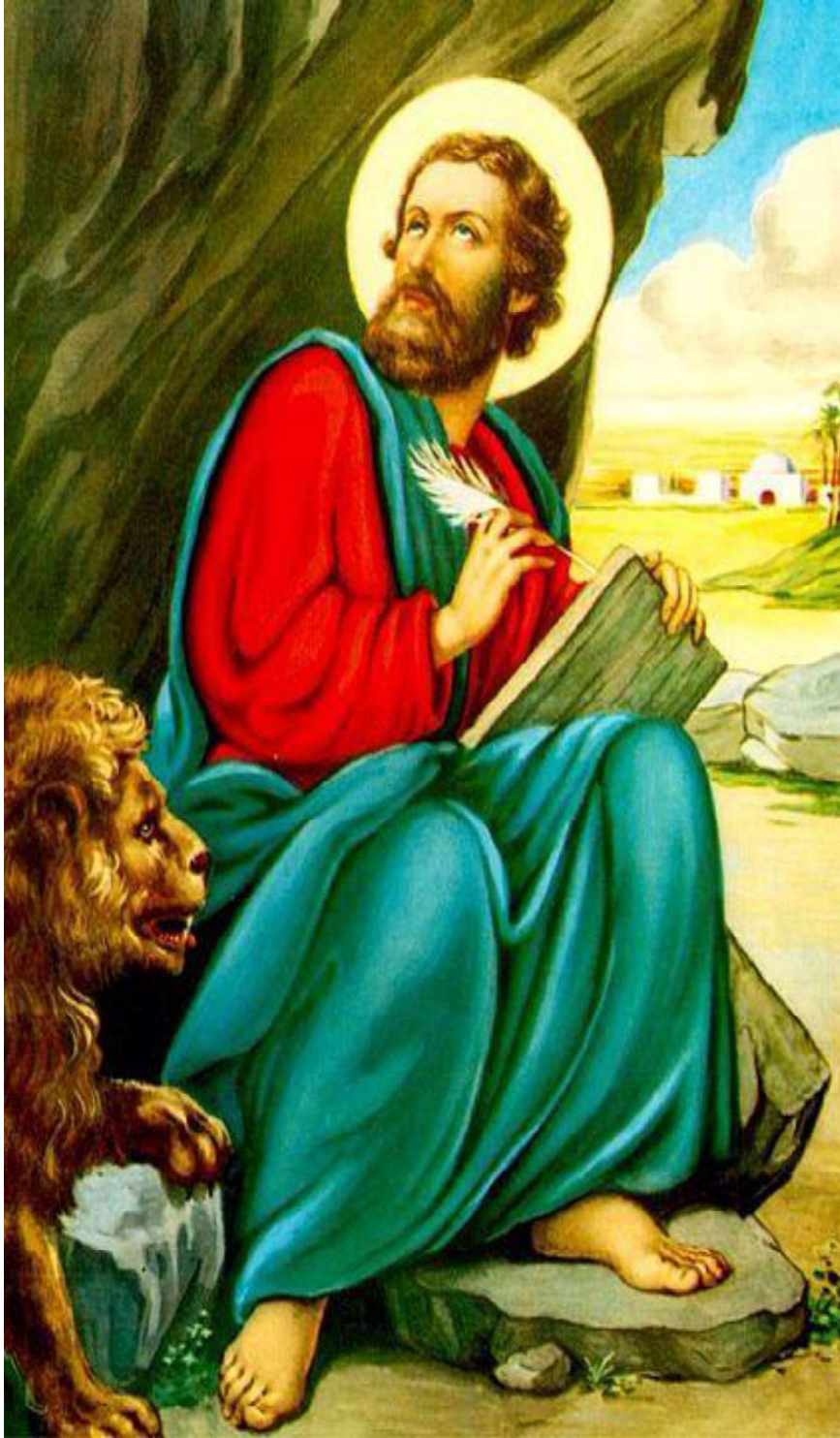


The Gospel According to St. Mark

Bible study Curriculum for Elementary Ministry



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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



An 8 minutes illustrative video that could be used by servants to prepare or to show the kids a part at the beginning of each unit. Use only till minute 8:20, as the last part is not verified.
<https://youtu.be/HGHqu9-DtXk>

Servant's preparation:

A link to 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 introductory sermon to the Gospel of St. Mark by Abouna Daoud Lamei in English:

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

Who is St. Mark?

- ❖ He was born in Libya near Egypt to Jewish parents.
- ❖ He is a relative to St. Barnabas and to St. Peter, the disciple.
- ❖ He moved to Jerusalem with his family while Jesus was preaching.
- ❖ His house was the first church where Jesus instituted the Eucharist with His disciples.
- ❖ His Jewish name is "John" while his Roman name is "Mark".

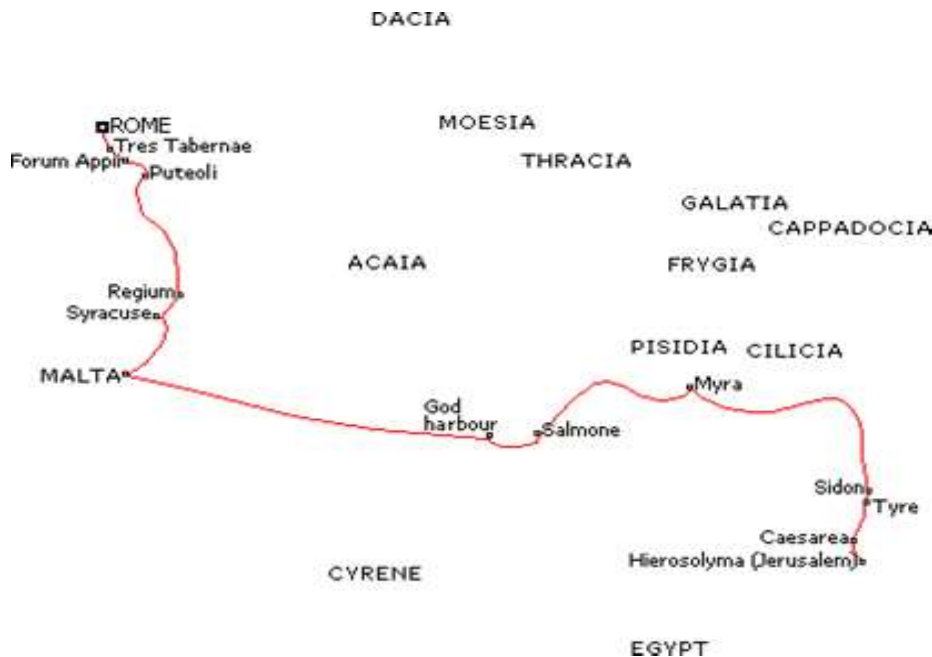
- ❖ He was chosen among the 70 apostles.
- ❖ He was with Jesus at Cana of Galilee wedding, Passover and when Jesus was arrested, he was the young follower who left his garment and ran away.

Why do we see a lion in his icon?

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

The message of the Gospel:

- ❖ He began his preaching with St. Peter in Jerusalem then joined St. Paul and St. Barnabas on their first missionary journey. But he left them and returned to Jerusalem. Later he traveled with St. Barnabas to Cyprus. Afterwards, St. Paul needed St. Mark with him and they both preached in Colosse (Col 4:10), Rome (Phil 24; 2 Tim 4:11) and perhaps in Venice, from which St. Mark proceeded to Libya his homeland.
- ❖ In 61 A.D. he went to Egypt and established the church of Alexandria which we all belong to. Then he preached in Rome with St. Peter.
- ❖ 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 inspired by his teachings.
- ❖ Since he wrote his gospel to the Romans, he did not include many prophecies from the Old Testament as opposed to the gospel of St. Matthew which was written for the Jews and which therefore included many of those prophecies. St. Mark also explained in his gospel to the Romans many popular Jewish words and traditions.
- ❖ The Romans believed in authority and influence through war and violence, so he presented 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, He knows what's in the heart and mind of people 2:8, He speaks with authority 1:21, He feeds the multitude 6:30-44, and He is the destroyer of death 5:21-43. His authority is evident through love, service, humility, and through pain.



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) Resistance of His service (Chapter 2)
- 6) Jesus continued His preaching (Chapter 3)
- 7) The people marveled at His parables despite resistance from 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 trouble but to prepare his disciples' minds to accept the cross. He fed the multitude, healed whoever touched Him, 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 into Jerusalem (Chapter 11).
- 3) Resisting Him in Jerusalem (Chapter 12).
- 4) The cross and the signs of the end (Chapter 13).
- 5) The preparation for 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.



Chapter 8

Servant's preparation:

A sermon about Chapter 8 explaining the Gospel of St. Mark by Abouna Daoud Lamei in English
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NREX4VaQwHI&list=PLvMAQ886ucetCnNPq4ft5YY0dujWRuADy&index=8>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=16vxV0fr0k&list=PLvMAQ886ucetCnNPq4ft5YY0dujWRuADy&index=9>

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 demonstrated His Divine power.

Remember:

Last lesson we talked about how to tame our tongue and that words coming out of the mouth can be either helpful or hurtful. We used a toothpaste game to conclude that things that come out easy might not go back inside easy or not at all. We also talked about the Canaanite woman with the great faith who asked Jesus to heal her daughter, He told her, "it is not good to take the children's bread and throw *it* to the little dogs" to test her faith but she acknowledged that she is willing to eat the crumbs off the table. This shows how humble she is.

Main points in the Chapter:

1. Feeding the Four Thousand
2. Beware of the Leaven of the Pharisees and Herod
3. A Blind Man Healed at Bethsaida
4. Peter Confesses Jesus as the Christ
5. Jesus Predicts His Death and Resurrection
6. Take Up the Cross and Follow Him





Lesson overview:

In a few minutes, briefly explain the main events of the chapter with a picture for each event, reading parts of the chapter.

In this chapter, Jesus wants us to focus more on our eternal life. He fed 4000 men with 7 fishes and 7 baskets of leftovers were collected. He warned His disciples of the leaven of the Pharisees. Leaven starts small then causes the bread to rise and puff, just like little sins if left without repentance.

Jesus knows what we need on earth and wants us not to worry about it but remember to carry the cross and follow Him to be glorified in heaven. He gave His disciples heads up about His death and resurrection, but Peter got angry as he thought no one should suffer. Jesus told him that when he think this way, he is pleasing Satan because going to heaven requires us to work hard and possibly to suffer on earth for God's name.

Goal we learn:

In this chapter, we will focus on verses 34-36: Jesus wants us to follow Him. This idea of leaving everything, carrying the cross and following the footsteps of Jesus could be explained in the following delivery idea.

Lesson delivery idea

<https://youtu.be/dFn1N0tnzyQ> [This link has slides representing the following talk. So you can use parts of it if needed.]

There are three commandments in Mark 8:34 that lead up to our Lord's question. We will consider each of these commandments, because if we keep them, we will save our souls. Otherwise, we might gain much temporarily in this world, but forfeit our souls and eternal life.

1. "Desire to Come After Me"

Jesus said, "If anyone desires to come after me..." (Mark 8:34). Jesus doesn't mean that this desire is optional. Rather, this desire is *essential* to saving your soul.

Jesus defines the desire as "to come after me" (Mark 8:34). By this Jesus means that He is going somewhere, and you can go there too, at a later time. He was predicting His death and resurrection followed by His ascension. He will go on into heaven before us. He promises that we can "come after" him. We will do that "when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels" (Mark 8:38).

However, for that to happen, we must *desire* it, Jesus says, "If you desire to save your soul, you will lose it" (Mark 8:35). Jesus isn't speaking here of salvation to eternal life, but of saving your soul from the pains of discipleship —from carrying a cross.

You can desire pleasure and power in this world to save your soul from suffering here. But that profits you nothing, for you lose your soul in the next world. Or you can desire to bear your cross in this world so that your soul will be saved in the next.

2. "Deny Yourself and Take Up Your Cross"

The second commandment is to translate desire into *dedication*. Jesus says, "deny yourself and take up your cross..." (Mark 8:34). We all know that we must sacrifice much to gain much.

Jesus expects you to deny yourself, and he doesn't mean denying yourself chocolate. He means dedicating yourself to him at the expense of your very soul. Lose your soul to save it. He denied Himself and carried a cross for you. Now it's your turn.

This doesn't mean you have to give up the things that are normal and needed in this life, such as education, career, material possessions, food and healthy activities, rest, and recreation, caring for others. But these things must be secondary and they must fit Jesus's framework, not a "me first" framework.

We have to make decisions – important decisions, tough decisions, decisions that will determine our eternal destiny. They are, indeed, "major." And, right there in the middle of these instructions is the Christ's question about what it profits a man if he could gain the whole world and lose his own soul in the process. Well, what is the answer? In the big picture of things, what *would* it profit him? Jesus' inquiry causes us to think about what really matters most in life. In our heart of hearts, just what is it that ranks right up there in the top position on our list of "most important stuff?"

If a woman could become the richest female in history, but in the process rebels against God and loses her soul, what profit would there be for her to have heaps of gold and the happiness of being so rich that she cannot possibly count all of her money?

If a Christian couple can gather mountains of money, but when it comes to contributing to the Lord's work, they give like beggars, what shall it profit them to have gigantic sums of wealth if they only give God their leftover crumbs and ultimately lose their souls?

If two Christian men who are brothers in the flesh run a business that has been in their family for three generations, and they take that business to a financial level that brings them outrageous sums of money in annual profits, but they make a bunch of their profit by dishonesty and other immoral practices, not to mention the fact that, due to their job commitments, they only attend 25% of the services of the church (because a fellow has to make a little living, you know) – *what, what, what* does all of their money profit them, if in the end they lose their souls?!

3. "Follow Me"

The third commandment gives *direction* to desire and dedication. Jesus says, "and follow me" (Mark 8:34). This is not the ultimate following of Christ into heaven that we discussed earlier but following Christ's teaching and example while in this world.

This same Peter was the one Jesus rebuked before asking the question, "What shall it profit...?" Jesus said to Peter, "Get behind me Satan! You are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men" (Mark 8:33).

Jesus is aware that following Him is not easy. There's a lot of opposition along the way. But He says, "If you are ashamed of me and my words in this sinful and adulterous generation, the Son of Man will in turn be ashamed of you when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels" (Mark 8:38).

It profits you nothing to follow the world. So, although the journey is difficult, follow Jesus. And remember, "Narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it" (Matthew 7:13-14).

Memory Verse:

³⁵ For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it. OR

³⁶ For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?