

BIG QUESTIONS

LEADERS

more to
life
with Jesus

STUDY OUTLINE LEADERS NOTES

Study 1 Are you ready? Mark 1:1-13

Study 2 Who can forgive sins? Mark 2: 1-12

Study 3 What's the heart of the problem? Mark 7: 1-23

Study 4 Who is Jesus? Mark 8:27-38

Study 5 What must I do to gain eternal life? Mark 10:13-31

Study 6 Why did Jesus die? Mark 15:1-34

TO BEGIN

1. Discuss which people went to “life” and what parts of the series made the greatest impression. This is an ice-breaker question.
2. Explain the format of “More to Life”, that it will examine part of Mark’s biography to enable people to more carefully and deeply investigate the claims of Jesus and why they matter.
3. Encourage people to;
 - a) Read the whole gospel.
 - b) Try to answer the questions before coming each week.



The speech bubble icon will denote a point to “discuss”.



The book icon denotes a point to “read”.



Since the “Kingdom of God” is the over arching theme of the Bible, its not surprising that Mark begins with a quote from the Old Testament, that involves two figures who would one day appear.

Read Mark 1:1-13

1. Let’s find out about Jesus. What are we told about His identity?



Verse 1

Verse 7

Verse 11

What words or ideas suggest Jesus’ importance.

2. Mark quotes a part of the Old Testament of the bible to explain more about John in verse 2-3. What do we find out about John’s purpose?

What does the quote imply about the one who is coming?

3. What can you find out about John and his message?



Verse 4

Verses 7-8

Do these verses raise any questions?

STUDY 1- ARE YOU READY?

MARK 1:1-13

Read Mark 1:14-15

4. The word gospel means message, news, announcement. What is Jesus' message?

"The time has come!" What does this imply? What do you think is meant by "the Kingdom of God"?



a. What do you understand by the term 'repent'?

Illustrate repentance.

b. What do you understand by the term 'believe'?

The word "believe" really means to "trust". What other words have this same idea?

As we read through Mark's biography in the coming weeks we'll examine Jesus' message. His message will call on us to do those two things; to repent and believe.

Mark's gospel tells the news that God's kingdom is coming and that Jesus is the King. Why might this be "good news"?

STUDY 2 WHO CAN FORGIVE SINS?

MARK 2:1-12



Suppose you did a phone poll asking people their greatest need, what answers would you get?

Read Mark 2:1-7

1. What demonstrates that the men who came to Jesus had confidence in his ability to heal? (Verses 1-4)



2. In the light of this situation, what is surprising about Jesus' response in verse 5?

What could explain Jesus' strange response in verse 5?

How would you define "sin"? (Review ladder illustration)

3. The word "sin" is an important one (verses 5, 7, 10). How does the following Bible verse help understand what the Bible means by "sin" ?



"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God". Romans 3:23

Do you think it's possible to do wrong but not feel guilty? How might this relate to us and God?

4. The religious leaders are shocked by Jesus' pronouncement of forgiveness. Why? What qualifications would someone need to be able to offer God's forgiveness?

Read Mark 2:8-12

5. What can you learn about Jesus in verses 8-12?



STUDY 2 WHO CAN FORGIVE SINS?

MARK 2:1-12

In verse 9 if both statements are equally easy to “say” why do you think Jesus chooses to perform the healing?

6. Jesus poses an unusual question in verse 9. Which do you think is easier? How does Jesus prove He is qualified to provide forgiveness for sins?

What qualifications would someone need in order to offer God's forgiveness to many others?

7. It's easy to under estimate the importance of forgiveness of sins. What are some reasons why this might be?



The Bible says that we all have a “sin problem”. People try to deal with it in different ways but Jesus says there is in fact, only one way. How does He deal with this man's problem?



Faced with a man in serious need of healing, Jesus' first response is to forgive his sins. What can you conclude from this?



Jesus alone can provide the forgiveness we need. How can we obtain it from Him? (See verse 5 for a clue)?

What is the encouragement in this account for us?

Summary:

Our greatest need is forgiveness.

Jesus alone is qualified to provide forgiveness.

Jesus provides forgiveness to those who put their confidence in Him.

MARK 7:1-23



Do you remember the 'ladder night' at LIFE? We learnt that none of us is as good as we think we are, and a long way short of God's perfection. In this passage in Mark's Gospel we see Jesus talking to a group of religious people (Pharisees) about being acceptable or unacceptable to God. The terms they used in Jesus' day were 'clean' and 'unclean'.

Read Mark 7:1-5

1. What were some things these religious people (Pharisees) did to make themselves 'clean' i.e. acceptable to God? (Verses 1-4)



2. What might people today think is required of them to be acceptable to God?

Every religion/philosophy in the world except Christianity insists that there is something we must do to get right with God or the universe or simply ourselves. What are some examples?

Read Mark 7:6-15

3. What does Jesus say is the problem with the Pharisees' approach to making themselves acceptable to God?



a. Verses 6-9

b. Verses 14-15


The "corban law" was a loop hole that enabled some people to "devote" things to God which either remained in their possession or from which they continued to earn interest.

Nobody is perfect but what are some things which experts think cause people to do what they know is wrong?


STUDY 3 WHAT'S THE HEART OF THE PROBLEM?

MARK 7:1-23

Read Mark 7:17-23

-  4. Like lots of religious people today, the Pharisees concentrated only on external behaviour, what everyone can see. In verses 17-23 where does Jesus say the real problem with people lies?

Explain that the "heart" is the centre of our being - the part that wills, thinks, desires etc... What does this mean about our "hearts"?

-  5. A disease is always seen by its symptoms, e.g. we know we have the measles virus by the appearance of spots. In verses 21-22, what are some symptoms of the real problem?

6. Jesus says that the condition of our hearts produces evil, and makes us unacceptable to God. Why is the human heart like this? (There's a clue in verse 6.)


What are the consequences of our sinful hearts?

Draw half of the "Bridge Illustration" showing the gulf between us and God.

Elsewhere in the Bible, God describes the human heart like this:

"The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?"

Jeremiah 17:9

-  7. You may have heard it said: "I've got my faults but I'm basically good at heart." What do you think Jesus would say to this?

Why might some people suggest that Jesus' view is too pessimistic? (See Romans 8:7)

8. How accurate is Jesus' assessment of human nature?

9. Why can't religious rituals or other man-made solutions make us acceptable to God?



10. In the light of this passage, what hope do you have of being accepted by God?

This passage alone leaves us no hope. What two things would God need to do to solve our problem with sin?

SUMMARY:

- The human heart is far from God and produces evil.
- We are unacceptable to God as we are and under His judgement.
- We can't fix this problem - but God can!

STUDY 4 WHO IS JESUS?

MARK 8:27-38



What do people today say about who Jesus is?

Read Mark 8:27-30

1. What opinions are there about who Jesus is in verses 27-30?



2. Who does Jesus infer that He is? (Verse 30) What else can you learn about Him from Mark 14:61,62?

What striking claims are you aware of that Jesus made? (Share some of them). The box below contains the key to all these claims.



Contrary to popular myth, "Christ" was not Jesus' surname. It was a Greek word that meant "the anointed one" or "the chosen one".

It was a title, given by God, to the person He had chosen and who He would send as His appointed king. This "Christ" (which also means Messiah) would fix up the world's problems and would rule forever. Jesus also took for Himself another title from the Old Testament - the "Son of Man" - to indicate He was the man to be sent by God to rule the world.

3. It is well known that Jesus performed many astonishing miracles. In the Old Testament the only one with this sort of power is the Lord God Almighty and his promised "Christ".



What can you learn about the Christ from the box below?

¹Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him, and he will bring justice to the nations.

²He will not shout or cry out, or raise his voice in the streets.

³A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out. In faithfulness he will bring forth justice;

Isaiah 42:1-3

4. Recall Mark 1:14-15. What do you think Jesus meant when He said, “The time has come, the kingdom of God is near”?



Read Mark 8:31-33

6. In Mark 8:31-33, what does Jesus say about His immediate future? In the light of what we know about the Christ, why is this surprising?



A strange fate for a king? Peter certainly thought so! (Verses 32-33) It seems like a mystery but the Old Testament explains it! Find out in Isaiah 53.

STUDY 4 WHO IS JESUS?

MARK 8:27-38

Read Mark 8:34-38

7. Jesus comes as the king, the Christ! In verses 34-38 he talks about the importance of responding to Him appropriately. What does Jesus say about the right way to respond to Him?

a. Verse 34

b. Verse 35

What are the implications of following Jesus? In verse 35, what do you think he means by “whoever wants to save their life?”

What are the implications of NOT following Him?

c. Verse 38

7. In today’s world, what things do people live for? Who do they live for?



8. If Jesus’ claims about himself are true, how should you live?

- What might make you hesitate to follow Jesus?
- What might change for you if you accept Jesus as your King?

SUMMARY:

- Jesus is God’s chosen King over all and forever.
- We need to submit to him as the rightful ruler.
- The benefit lasts for forever.

Human beings have always had a hope of a life beyond this one, in which the problems of this world are done away with. That's what lies behind the question asked by the young man in this passage, *"What must I do to inherit eternal life?"* (Mark 10:17) Jesus' answer in verse 15 is a seemingly strange one; *"...receive the kingdom of God like a little child!"* What does He mean? We'll get the point when we consider these two encounters together.

Read Mark 10:13-16

1. "What must I do to inherit eternal life?" How might different people answer that question?



2. What does Jesus say here about what is required to enter the kingdom of God?

What do you learn about Jesus in this episode?

Why would these words be surprising?

Read Mark 10:17-22

3. What can you find out about the man who meets Jesus in verses 17-22?



Why might this man seem well qualified for eternal life?



What might he have been relying on?

4. This man comes enquiring about how to inherit eternal life. What other expressions are used in the passage to describe eternal life? (Verses 21, 23-25, 30)



STUDY 5 HOW CAN I HAVE LIFE?

MARK 10:13-31


5.  The rich man thought that obeying commandments would give him eternal life. According to Jesus, what was necessary for this man to do? (Verse 21)
6.  Jesus is not just selling a very expensive ticket to heaven! He is forcing the man to make a choice. What does he have to choose between?
7. What does his choice reveal about what this young man was relying upon for eternal life?
How does Jesus forcing this choice help the young man take another look at himself? (See verse 18.)

Read Mark 10:21-31

8. This demand of Jesus might seem too much. Is poverty required of everyone who wants to enter God's kingdom? How does the first episode with the children reveal what Jesus really wants from people?
Why do you think it is so hard for the rich to enter the kingdom?
How are the rich unlike the children in verses 13-16.

9. What does Jesus promise to those who choose to follow Him? (Verses 29-31)

Some might say that the cost of following Jesus is too high. How does he answer this in verses 29-31?

10. Such dependence on Jesus the king will mean putting Him first.  What could keep you from doing this?

SUMMARY:

- Gaining eternal life requires Jesus to be your first priority.
- There is great benefit in following Jesus but there is a cost to weigh.
- Jesus demands the right to set the priorities of life.

STUDY 6 WHY DID JESUS DIE?

MARK 15:1-34



If you died tonight and you stood before God and He asked you, “Why should I let you into heaven?” What would you say?



For many people the crucifixion of Jesus is nothing but the tragic death of a helpless martyr. We’ve seen however, that Jesus is the Christ. Understanding what this means is central to grasping what His death has achieved!

Read Mark 15:1-15 (you may also read Mark 14:53-65)

1. What seems to be Jesus’ attitude during His trial? What do you make of this?

What things does Jesus do that seem to make his execution inevitable?

2. What evidence in the passage suggests that Jesus was innocent of any crime? (Verses 9-15.)

3. What surprising swap happens in verse 15?

 **Given what you know about both Barrabbas and Jesus, why is this swap so ironic?**

Despite considering Jesus to be innocent, Pilate follows the demands of the mob. He hands Jesus over to the Roman soldiers to be executed by crucifixion.

Read Mark 15:16-34

 In these verses how do the various people mock Jesus?

In Mark 15:25-32, what do the people expect of the Christ?



Why would God forsake His perfect Son, his chosen King?

God explained the meaning and purpose of Jesus' death 700 years before it happened in terms of another "surprising swap".

This can be seen in the words of an Old Testament prophet;

"Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering, but we considered him punished by God, stricken by him and afflicted.

But he was pierced through for our transgressions,

He was crushed for our iniquities

The punishment that brought us peace was upon him,

And by his wounds we are healed.

We all, like sheep, have gone astray,

Each of us has turned to his own way;

And the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all."

Isaiah 53:4-6

5. These verses from Isaiah 53 describe an extraordinary exchange or swap.



- a. What is being swapped?

How would you summarise the last 3 lines of the passage above?

- b. What are the consequences of the swap for Jesus?



- c. With all this in mind why did Jesus cry out, "My God, my God why have you forsaken me?" (Verse 34). How does Isaiah 53 give an explanation for this?

STUDY 6 WHY DID JESUS DIE?

MARK 15:1-34

6. Jesus could have saved himself. Why do you think He didn't?



Jesus death is a swap. See 1 Peter 3:18.

Share the "Book Illustration".

Jesus' death was no accident. He deliberately gave up His life according to God's eternal plan. He bore the punishment for our sins to make it possible for us to enjoy God's forgiveness forever!

7. Of course, Jesus' death is not the end of the story. Read Mark 16:1-8. Why is Jesus' resurrection so important?



8. A friend tells you, "I'm sure I'm forgiven by God and sure I'm going to heaven!" Is this too great a claim? Why or why not?



9. Jesus is the Son of God, the Christ. He has paid God's rescue payment for your sins:

a. What response do these events demand?

If Jesus death is God's ransom payment for our sins, what might be the consequence of rejecting it? See John 3:36

b. What response have you made?

From these Big Questions from the book of Mark, what have you concluded about:

1. What's the big problem between you and God?
2. Who is Jesus?
3. Why did Jesus die?
4. Have you come to the place where you are confident that you are right with God? Why?

For Group Members to write down:

1. **If you've never made a decision to follow Jesus;**
 - **What's stopping you?**
 - **What would help you?**
2. **If you have made a decision to follow Jesus;**
 - **What fears does this raise?**
 - **What would help you?**

