

ENGAGE

Like Jesus

GROWTH GROUPS
WEEK 2
WEEK OF SEPTEMBER 23RD

GROWTH GROUP FALL 2018

WEEK 2 – SEPTEMBER 23, 2018 - MARK 1:9-15

GETTING TO KNOW ONE ANOTHER

- 1) Throughout this sermon series we are going to catch glimpses of Jesus teaching others about the kingdom of God and what God's love and mercy are all about. Share about a favorite teacher you had and why you liked them.

SETTING THE CONTEXT

The gospel of Mark is more than likely written by John Mark whom we read about in Acts 12:12. He had accompanied Barnabas and Saul on their first missionary journey (Acts 12:25 and 13:4), but for some reason he left the team in Perga (Acts 13:13). Later Paul and Barnabas would separate in their mission journeys because of a disagreement over Mark's departure from the first missionary journey.

However, as we read in Colossians and 2 Timothy, Paul was eventually reconciled to Mark. We also read in 1 Peter 5:13 that Mark and Peter worked together. This is probably where Mark began collecting the stories that would form the gospel of Mark.

As Jesus is baptized, God speaks and the heavens are "torn open." The language that is used here is also used in Mark 15:38, to describe the tearing of the curtain in the temple, when Jesus is crucified.

After the baptism of Jesus, he is tested in the wilderness for forty days. The number forty could recall Moses on the mountain (Exodus 24:18; 34:28), Elijah's journey to Mount Horeb (1 Kings 19:8), as well as Jesus' instruction of his disciples (Acts 1:3), and finally Israel's forty years in the wilderness. At the end of forty days Jesus is now ready for his mission.

Jesus announces that the kingdom of God has come near. God is going to fulfill what had been written in the Old Testament. The kingdom that Jesus brings would look very different than what the people of Israel had expected. Israel was waiting for a king who would rule over the nations and re-establish the prosperity of Israel.

The kingdom that Jesus reveals does not come with power or might of an earthly king, but comes with the power of Holy Spirit. It is a kingdom that is marked by repentance, service and humility.



EXPLORING THE TEXT

Read Mark 1:9-15

⁹ At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. ¹⁰ Just as Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. ¹¹ And a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased." ¹² At once the Spirit sent him out into the wilderness, ¹³ and he was in the wilderness forty days, being tempted[a] by Satan. He was with the wild animals, and angels attended him. ¹⁴ After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. ¹⁵ "The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!"

- 2) What is the significance of the heavens (Mark 1:10) and the curtain of the temple (Mark 15:38) being torn open when Jesus was baptized? Why do you think Mark chooses to use this kind of language to describe these two events?
- 3) We read that John the Baptist helped to prepare the way for Jesus. Was there someone in your life who helped to prepare the way of Jesus in your own life?
- 4) Why do you think Jesus was sent into the desert to be tested for forty days? Is there significance in the number forty? What would have been accomplished in those forty days? See Matthew 4:1-11 and Luke 4:1-13 for more details on the testing of Jesus.
- 5) There were two different words for "time" in the Greek language. Chronos had to do with chronological time – dates, times and places. Kairos had to do with an appointed or opportune time. Sometimes we experience "kairos" moments in our faith. A "God moment" that was not planned, but which impacted your life. Share about a "kairos moment" with your group.
- 6) What do you think Jesus was trying to convey when he told the disciples that the kingdom of God was near?
- 7) What do you think of when you hear the phrase "kingdom of God?" How would you help someone understand that the kingdom of God has come near? Is that concept something that is easy to explain or is it difficult to explain?

BRINGING IT HOME

- 8) Jesus came to bring the kingdom of God to our world. How can you help to show the kingdom of God to others in the upcoming week?