



*‘Now!’ Sermon Series*

Sermon #1

*‘Overview of Mark!’*

- *This morning we are going to begin our verse-by-verse sermon series through the book of Mark.*
  - Today I’ll be preaching an overview on the book of Mark and sharing important details so that we will have some facts under our belts before we begin our week to week exposition of the text.
- *As you can already tell, we are calling this series ‘Now!’.*
  - The Lord laid this book on my heart because I felt that God wanted us to go through one of the Gospels all the way through.
    - *I realize that this will be a long sermon series to go through, but I believe the spiritual blessings for us as a Church will be unfathomable.*

- Obviously, we are starting this series today, with the plan to conclude this series on Easter Sunday of 2025.
  - *This does mean that for the next year, we will be in the book of Mark on Sunday mornings.*
- In order to give each passage justice and the due time that each text deserves, I am going to have to have an aggressive strategy when it comes to preaching through Mark.
  - *So, I’m asking you to be patient with me this year on Holidays, as I will be preaching straight through Mark instead of stopping for Holidays.*
- *Why are we calling this series, ‘NOW?’*
  - In reading through Mark several times to prepare for this series, I have found that Mark’s Gospel focuses on the life of Jesus, the urgency of the Gospel, and the importance of Discipleship.
    - *Now is the time for us to share the story of Jesus that Mark walks us through.*
    - *Now is the time to have urgency in our lives to live for the Lord and to see those around us live for the Lord.*
    - *Now is the time to be discipled and for us to disciple others.*
- *Mark 10:45 is often regarded as the ‘THEME’ verse for the book of Mark. I believe it represents what*

*Mark is trying to present all throughout his Gospel and does show us that the Gospel is now.*

**\*Read Mark 10:45\***

### **Question to Ask:**

*What are important attributes of Mark that we need to consider in order to be prepared for a year-long verse-by-verse series through the Gospel of Mark?*

### **#1: Authorship:**

- There is little debate when it comes to who is the author of this Gospel.
  - *Among the early Church fathers as far as the end of the second century, there is strong evidence that John Mark was the writer.*
    - Dr. Daniel Aiken said *'The early Church never ascribed authorship of the second Gospel to anyone other than Mark.'*
  - *'Unlike the NT epistles, the writers of the Gospels do not name their authors' JM*

### **Who was Mark?**

- Mark's name appears 8 times in the NT.
  - Acts 12:12, Acts 12:25, Acts 13:5, Acts 13:13, Acts 15:37-39, Colossians 4:10, 2nd Timothy 4:11, Philemon 23-24 and 1st Peter 5:13.
- In understanding Mark, we may be tempted to ask, why is he sometimes called 'John Mark?'

**John was his Jewish name, and Mark was his Roman name.**

- *Mark was the son of a Jerusalem widow who had a large home that became the meeting place for believers during the early days of the NT Church.*
  - 'When he realized this, he went to the house of Mary, the mother of John whose other name was Mark, where many were gathered together and were praying.' Acts 12:12
- *Mark was the cousin of Barnabas.*
  - Mark and Barnabas accompanied the apostle Paul on his first missionary journey in Acts 12:25.
  - Acts 13:13 tells us that Mark turned back before the mission had ended.
    - 'Now Paul and his companions set sail from Paphos and came to Perga in Pamphylia. And John left them and returned to Jerusalem,' Acts 13:13
    - *We know that this created division between Paul and Barnabas in Acts 15:36-41.*
- **But, Paul and Mark reconciled eventually:**
  - 'Luke alone is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is very useful to me for ministry.' 2nd Timothy 4:11

- **Where did Mark get his information?**

- Mark was not an apostle (eye witness of Jesus), but he was very close friends with the apostle Peter.
  - **Most scholars will conclude that Peter passed on the eyewitness accounts of the things that Mark wrote down.**
- **1st Peter 5:13, gives us indication that Peter may have even led Mark to faith in Christ. While we don't know this for sure, the two were close.**
  - 'She who is at Babylon, who is likewise chosen, sends you greetings, and so does Mark, my son.' 1 Peter 5:13

- **How can we scripturally support the claim that Mark was the author?**

- #1: Mark is the only Gospel writer that records the incident of the young man who fled from Getsemane. The early Church, and myself, believes this was Mark talking about himself.
  - 'And a young man followed him, with nothing but a linen cloth about his body. And they seized him, 52 but he left the linen cloth and ran away naked.' Mark 14:51-52
- #2: Within the book of Mark there is strong evidence that there was a knowledge of Aramaic and local customs that would fit Mark.

- **Acts 12:17 tells us that he was a Palestinian Jew.**

**#2: Date:**

- **Most evidence points to the book of Mark being written between 65 AD but before the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem in 70 AD.**
  - Now there are some scholars that will say Mark was written in the 50's A.D.
    - Due to the fact that Peter was in Rome (where Mark was written), during the 50s A.D.
    - **Some believe that Mark was written in the 50 A.D. 's due to the fact they believe Luke used Mark's outline and material for his Gospel, and most scholars believe Luke was written in the early 60's.**
- **I personally believe that Matthew was the first Gospel written, so I believe that the date of Mark's Gospel would have been close to Peter's death.**
  - Church fathers in Church history state that the book of Mark was written both before and after Peter's death, so we really don't know.
    - **For me personally, I'd place the writing of Mark between 65-67 A.D.**
  - Whether Mark was the first of the Gospels written or not, we cannot be sure of.

**#3 Location:**

- It is believed and agreed by most scholars and theologians that this book was written in Rome.
  - ***1 Peter 5:13 confirms that Mark was with Peter in Rome, because 'Babylon' was believed to have been a code name that refers to Rome.***
    - 'She who is at Babylon, who is likewise chosen, sends you greetings, and so does Mark, my son.' 1 Peter 5:13
  - ***One of the Church fathers, Clement of Alexandria was quoted as saying 'The Gospel was written in Rome at the request of the Roman Christians and delivered to them upon its completion.'***
- This would make sense, since Mark is a gentile name, that he would be writing this in Rome.
  - A scholar by the name of Schlatter stated ***'Mark thus held from the beginning a central place in the Church. He witnessed how the Jewish and Greek churches took shape; he enjoyed extended times of personal contact both with Peter and Paul, and thus became a special witness to the apostolic preaching. Furthermore, he himself engaged in an extensive teaching ministry in the Church.'***

#### #4 Recipients:

- Both internal and external evidence points to Roman Christians that were living in Rome, being the recipients of this letter. The Christian Church at Rome.

- ***There are several reasons in Mark's Gospel that we believe it was written to the gentile Christians in Rome.***
  - **#1:** Only 1 OT quotation is given by Mark.
    - Unlike Paul, who uses so much OT scripture (he was a Jew and Pharisee).
  - **#2:** Aramaic expressions are translated to the Greek.
  - **#3:** Mark takes the time to explain the Jewish customs that are mentioned.
  - **#4:** No preaching prohibitions are listed.
  - **#5:** Mark 13:20 states that the Gospel is to be preached to all nations, not just the Jews.
  - **#6:** The temple was to be a house of prayer for all nations, according to Mark 11:17.
- Commentator Grant Osborne said ***'Being a Christian in Rome meant being part of a distinct minority, religiously, and socially. Rome was filled with gods, and the prevailing thought was that all the gods were real. Thus, Jews and Christians were viewed as atheists because they believe in only one God and denied the existence of all the pagan deities.'***
  - We also don't need to forget that Rome was the most powerful country in the world at this time.

- **Under the reign of Emperor Nero (54-68 AD), believers were suffering from persecution.**
- **Dr. Daniel Aiken said ‘Following a fire that swept the city in A.D. 64, the Christians were blamed and local persecution broke out with many being imprisoned and martyred.**
  - The recipients needed the content that Mark’s Gospel contains, just as we need it today.
- To realize the urgency of the Gospel.

#### #5: Purpose of the Gospel of Mark:

- There are three scriptures verses in Mark’s Gospel, that I believe show us the purpose as to why it was written:
  - ‘The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.’ Mark 1:1
  - ‘And he asked them, “But who do you say that I am?” Peter answered him, “You are the Christ.”’ Mark 8:29
  - ‘And when the centurion, who stood facing him, saw that in this way he[a] breathed his last, he said, “Truly this man was the Son[b] of God!”’ Mark 15:39
    - **The purpose of the book of Mark, to demonstrate and show that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.**
- I believe there are **4** specific topics that Mark mentions in his Gospel to prove that Jesus is the Son of God.

- **#1: Servanthood.**
  - In this Gospel we will see time and time again that Jesus came to earth with the mission of saving us.
    - **In doing this, He (Jesus), fulfilled many OT prophecies.**
  - **Most of the Jews expected Jesus to come as a conquering king.**
    - But, he came as a servant.
  - Mark record that Jesus said this in Mark 10:45:
    - **‘For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.’**
- **#2: Discipleship.**
  - All throughout the ministry of Jesus, it seems clear that the disciples did not fully understand the parables, miracles, certain teachings, and His own predictions on death and resurrection.
    - **Jesus knew that the disciples wouldn’t fully grasp who He was until after the resurrection.**
  - **Even though Jesus knew they would not fully understand, this did not stop Him from discipling them, spending time with them, and trying to teach the Cost of following Him the humility that**

*comes with Kingdom living, and what it means about serving.*

- Mark gives a lot of priority in making sure that discipleship is communicated and understood in his Gospel.
- **#3: Miracles.**
  - I think it's interesting to point out that Mark records more of Jesus' miracles than he does his sermons.
    - *In fact, in the first 10 chapters of Mark, a miracle is included.*
  - *I believe that Mark wanted his Roman readers to know that Jesus was a Man of power and action and not just words.*
    - Anyone can talk and say the 'right' things.
      - *But it takes the Godman to be able to DO these things.*
- **#4: Evangelism.**
  - Mark 1:-28 and Mark 1:38-39, shows us that Jesus directed His public ministry first to the Jews.
    - But, he also healed and preached to non-Jews.
      - *Mark 7:24-30 and Mark 5:1-20 and Mark 7:31-37 show us that Jesus*

*spread the Good News to Syrians and Gentiles.*

- *In Mark 6:7-13 Jesus challenged all those that follow after him to take the Gospel to all the world.*
- Grant Osbourne said this concerning the evangelism of Jesus as seen in Mark:
  - *'Jesus crossed national, racial, social, and economic barriers to spread the Gospel. His message of faith and forgiveness is for the whole world, not just out Church, neighborhood, community, or nation.'*
- Mark wrote this Gospel to demonstrate that Jesus Christ is the Son of God to ALL by explaining His servanthood, discipleship, miracles, and evangelism.

#### **#6: Key Characters in Mark:**

- **Jesus.**
  - Obviously, the typical SS answer is true in this case. Jesus is seen all throughout Mark as He came to be a sacrifice for our sins.
- **The 12 Disciples.**
  - Simon Peter, Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, Thomas, Matthew, James, Thaddaeus, Simon, and Judas are the 12 men that Jesus hand picked to help Him in His

ministry on earth of discipleship, evangelism, and miracles.

- **Pilate.**

- The Roman governor who ordered the crucifixion of Jesus in the place of Barabbas.

- **Jewish Religious Leaders.**

- This group would have been the Pharisees and Sadducees. These are the two religious groups that joined together in opposing Jesus Christ and His ministry.

#### #7: **Interesting Facts about Mark's Gospel:**

- #1: It is known as the Gospel of **Action**.
  - The word 'immediately' occurs 42 times in Mark.
    - **Which shows part of the reason why I felt led to name our series 'now'.**
- #2: Mark is the **Shortest** of the Four Gospels.
- #3: Mark regularly mentions that the '**masses**' were around Jesus.
- #4: The **emotions** of Christ are given special attention to.
- #5: A short **historical narrative**, straight and to the point, does not give much content.
- #6: **40%** of Mark's Gospel deals with the last week of Christ's life.
- #7: Mark concludes the most **abrupt** ending compared to the other Gospels.
- #8: Mark includes **19** of the **37** miracles of Jesus that are recorded through the 4 Gospels.

#### #8: **Interesting things that Mark leaves out of his Gospel:**

- Just as Mark has some interesting things that make it very unique, it is also to look at what Mark chose not to include, especially since it is very brief.
  - #1: No genealogy is given.
  - #2: No information on the miraculous birth of Jesus is given.
  - #3: No mention of the shepherds of Bethlehem.
  - #4: No mention of the wise men visiting.
  - #5: No description of Jesus' childhood in Nazareth.
  - #6: No mention of the growth in wisdom noted.
  - #7: No mention of the sermon on the mount.
  - #8: No lengthy discourses.
  - #9: Very few parables.

#### #9: **How can God use the Gospel of Mark in the life of First Baptist Church of Gaston?**

- **As I mentioned at the beginning of my sermon today, I truly believe that this 'NOW' sermon series has the potential and ability to turn this Church upside down, in a good way.**
  - We will spend the next year during our Sunday Morning worship time studying each verse, and examining each word and what it means for our lives.
    - **Allow me to gently remind you, that we are only going to get out of this series, what you're willing to put into it.**

- This includes your commitment to being here, reading resources on Mark before you come, reading the sermon text all throughout the week before Sunday, praying for the message, and then responding to the message in how you live your life.
- *I understand preaching through big books of the Bible such as Mark, may not be popular, but I do believe it to be Biblical.*
  - I truly believe that God has laid this particular book on my heart to preach, for such a time as this here at First Baptist Church.
- *Next week, we will begin our verse-by-verse exposition. I believe there are three ways we can divide the book of Mark up as:*
  - *Jesus was Sent to the Masses. (Mark Chapters 1-8)*
    - His Deity is seen.
    - His Power is seen.
  - *Jesus was a Servant to the Disciples. (Mark Chapters 9-10)*
    - His Discipleship is seen.
    - The Principles of Christ are seen.
  - *Jesus was a Sacrifice for the World. (Mark Chapters 11-16)*

- His Death is seen.
- The Passion that Christ displays is seen.
- *As we close this morning, as your Pastor, here's what I believe this sermon series can do for our Church, and ask you to pray over these things during this time of invitation.*
  - *Now is the time for us to share the story of Jesus that Mark walks us through.*
  - *Now is the time to have urgency in our lives to live for the Lord and to see those around us live for the Lord.*
  - *Now is the time to be disciplined and for us to disciple others.*
    - Now is REALLY and TRULY the time for First Baptist Church of Gaston to take the Gospel that we read, sing, and know so well, SERIOUSLY.
  - *And if we do that, it'll be seen in how urgently we share, the Word, Speak the Word and Send the Word out to others.*