

# The Gospel: Jesus is Lord

Mark 1:1-15

**What is the Gospel?** In verse 1 here Mark announces “the beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.” And in verse 15 Jesus declares,

*“The kingdom of heaven is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.” Mark 1:15*

The gospel is a message of good news. And this good news is all about Jesus. The first half of Mark’s book will establish **the identity of Jesus**, the Christ - the Son of God. The second half will show **his purpose** – to die on the cross for us. So this good news is based on the person and work of Jesus.

And Mark is clear that **the Gospel is Good News for FAILURES**. Right away in chapter one John the Baptist calls people to repent. And as soon as Jesus expresses the Gospel He immediately connects repentance and faith (1:15). You cannot come to Jesus without first admitting your need to repent.

Mark understood failure. Most likely he includes the details in chapter 14 that the other three gospel writers leave out because it refers to HIM.

**The Gospel is Good News for Failures:**

*“And a young man followed him... and they seized him, but he left the linen cloth and ran away naked.” Mark 14:51-52*

Mark was not one of the twelve disciples but early church tradition indicates that he consulted Peter directly as he compiled this account. Who else would know the details of Peter’s denial of Jesus if not Peter himself? So through Mark, Peter helped document the Gospel which is good news for sinners and failures like them and like us.

Peter denied Jesus. Mark abandoned Jesus. The other disciples fled. Even the women who stayed with him through the crucifixion covered in fear when they saw the empty tomb. The original book of Mark almost certainly ends with 16:8.

**The Gospel is Good News for Failures:**

*“And they went out and fled from the tomb, for trembling and astonishment had seized them, and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.” 16:8*

Even those closest to Jesus let him down. We are all failures and screw ups. The problem in this world is not the world, it is **us**. But thanks be to God, the Gospel addresses this very problem! The religious conservatives of Jesus’ day, the Pharisees, asked the question in Mark 2:7, “Who can forgive sins but God alone?” when Jesus claimed to forgive a paralyzed man for his sins. And then, to prove his authority to forgive sins, Jesus said to this man who could not walk, “get up and walk!” and he did.

Then when the religious people questioned why he was hanging out with tax collectors and sinners, Jesus explained:

The Gospel is Good News for **Failures**:

*“Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I have not come to call the righteous, **but sinners.**” Luke 2:17*

Mark – the nudist who abandoned Jesus and the weak one who could not keep up with the apostle Paul is the one the Lord used to document the very first written Gospel account – which is good news for failures like Peter and Mark and you and me!

Mark proposes two key questions in his book so we will begin and end with those today. Who is Jesus? And who is Jesus to YOU? You can see these in your Mark insert.

At the end of Mark 4, after Jesus calms the storm with a word the disciples ask:

**Key Questions:**

*“Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?” Mark 4:41*

*“But who do **you** say that I am?” Mark 8:29*

Then at the midpoint of the book Jesus pulls Peter aside and asks him the question – who do people say that I am? But who do YOU say that I am? Jesus asks every one of us the same question. In the end, everyone must come to an answer on this all important question – because it is what will decide where you spend eternity. ***Who do YOU say that Jesus is?*** What is your final answer?

What Mark presents is **a three dimensional view of Jesus and the gospel.** This message is not just good news for our past that God offers to forgive sinners and failures. It is also wonderfully good news for our present – that power has broken into the world and is available to all who trust in and walk with Jesus. And the gospel is infinitely good news for our future – that the glory of Jesus is what we will personally experience for all of eternity! Past – present – future: three dimensions of Gospel truth.

Our faith looks back on Jesus’ work to pay for our sins. Our faith looks up to the Lord of heaven to empower and guide us. And our faith looks forward to that moment when Jesus will return and set everything right, when we will fully and eternally experience His glory.

All three dimensions are right there in Mark 1:1

**The 3D Gospel:**

*“The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.” Mark 1:1*

- Look back on **Jesus** and His perfect humanity
- Look up to **the Christ** and His perfect authority
- Look forward to **the Son of God** and His perfect divinity

This is the summary of the Good News in just four words: ***Jesus Christ is Lord.*** Jesus, the perfect man, is the Savior of men. Christ, the anointed King reigns over all things. And the Son of God –

one with the Father and Spirit for all of eternity, is coming back soon to restore all things and reveal the fullness of His glory.

Over the next ten weeks we will study *the Gospel of the ten saving acts of Jesus*. All of them depend on this central and foundational truth – that Jesus is LORD. If you remove the Lordship of Jesus from his identity then you destroy his ability to accomplish his purpose to save us. A Savior who is not fully divine could not pay for the sins of the world. A Savior who is not fully divine cannot help anyone today. A Savior who is not fully divine cannot offer hope for resurrection and the restoration of all things.

But the good news of Jesus Christ is that this carpenter from Nazareth is, in fact, the Lord of heaven and earth (1). And so we CAN trust Him with our sins, for our strength and with our struggles.

### The Good News of the 10 Saving Acts of Jesus:

1. *Jesus is Lord*
2. *Jesus came*
3. *Jesus lived the perfect life*
4. *Jesus calls sinners*
5. *Jesus died for us*
6. *Jesus rose*
7. *Jesus forgives those who believe*
8. *Jesus gives us a new heart*
9. *Jesus reigns over all things*
10. *Jesus is coming back soon*

- He is the Son of Man who came (2) and lived the perfect life (3) so he could become the perfect sacrifice.
- He is the Savior who calls sinners to repent (4) and gave up His life (5) as a ransom for many.
- He is the conquering warrior who stomped on the devil's head when he rose from the dead (6) and defeated sin and death forever.
- Jesus is the Lamb of God who forgives sinners (7) who repent by taking their sin upon Himself.
- Jesus is the great High Priest who gives (8) us His righteousness, changing our hearts and filling us with His Spirit.
- Jesus is the Christ, the anointed King who reigns (9) over all things.
- And Jesus is coming back soon (10) to restore all things.

That's a preview of where we're heading over the next ten weeks. But all of those Gospel truths depend on the first one – that Jesus Christ IS LORD. So today let's study the three dimensional glory of the Gospel of Jesus Christ the Lord.

Often when we think about the Lordship of Christ we think only about His authority and power – and that is an important expression of His Lordship. But Jesus is much more than sheer power. He does have total and ultimate authority over all things, but he is also perfect in righteousness

and in the fullness of the glory of God. So I like to call it the 3D gospel so we can appreciate all that it means that Jesus is Lord.

- We look back on His perfect humanity – so we can trust Him with our sins.
- We look up on His perfect authority – so we can trust Him for our strength
- And we look forward to His perfect divinity – so we can trust Him with our struggles – for he will put everything right one day soon.
- That is the 3D Gospel!

First, let's look back on the Lord Jesus and his perfect humanity.

### **The 3D Gospel**

#### **1. Look back on Jesus and His Perfect Humanity**

*"The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God." Mark 1:1*

We will look at each of these titles in turn – Jesus, the Christ, the Son of God. First, the name Jesus means Savior. This was the name the angel told Mary and Joseph to name their miracle baby for, "He will save his people from their sins" (Matt. 1:21). His parents would have pronounced it Yeshua. This was his common, day to day name – just like every other child on the planet.

Jesus was fully and completely human – he experienced everything you and I do. Mark 1:13 says "He was in the wilderness forty days, being tempted by Satan." Just as the nation of Israel was in the wilderness for 40 years, so Jesus entered the wilderness for 40 days. But at every point that Israel failed, Jesus succeeded.

His life was so perfectly righteous that the Father spoke at his baptism in Mark 1 and again on the Mountain in Mark 9.

### **The 3D Gospel**

#### **1. Look back on Jesus and His Perfect Humanity**

*"A voice came from heaven, 'You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased.'" Mark 1:11*

*"And a voice came out of the cloud, 'This is my beloved Son; listen to him.'" Mark 9:7*

Jesus obeyed the Father every time – all the way, right away and with a happy heart. He left nothing undone that should have been done and he never once violated either the spirit or the letter of the Law. He lived the perfect human life. And he had to in order to satisfy the righteous requirements of the Law on our behalf.

By living the perfect life, Jesus became the perfect – once for all – sacrifice for sinners. Only the perfect human could give His life as a substitute for sinful humans. And Jesus was that perfect One. The only person in history who did not deserve to die said,

### **The 3D Gospel**

#### **1. Look back on Jesus and His Perfect Humanity**

*"The Son of Man must suffer many things... and be killed, and after three days rise again." Mark 8:31*

*"For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and **to give his life as a ransom for many.**" Mark 10:45*

This is the whole reason Jesus came – “to give his life as a ransom for many” (Mark 10:45). For the sacrifice to satisfy God’s justice for mankind, Jesus had to be fully human. For the ransom to be valuable enough to pay for all people, Jesus had to be fully divine. This is the glorious mystery of the incarnation – that the God Man *had to suffer and die*, that He chose to *give up his life as a ransom*. The eternally divine, perfectly righteous Lord Jesus died for you and He died for me.

And that is the first dimension of the Gospel. We can look back on Jesus’ perfect humanity and trust Him with our sins.

### **The 3D Gospel**

#### **1. Look back on Jesus and His Perfect Humanity**

- So we can trust Him with our **sins**

*"He said to the paralytic, **'Son, your sins are forgiven.'** ... 'Who can forgive sins but God alone?'" Mark 2:5,7*

Already in Mark 2 people are crowding around Jesus because they can tell there is something dramatically different about Him. He teaches with an authority that is not based on anyone else, speaking like the AUTHOR of truth (which He is). He heals diseases with just a word. He casts out demons. A group of men hear about this miracle worker and they bring a friend of theirs who was paralyzed. The crowd around Jesus is so large that they can't get to Jesus, but they are desperate enough for their friend and bold enough to climb up on the roof of the house, dig through the roof and lower their friend down right in front of the remarkable Rabbi.

Can you imagine the scene? Jesus was teaching – mid-sentence of his sermon. People are jammed into the little house that was their home base in Capernaum. Suddenly clumps of dirt and straw start to fall from the ceiling and then a body is lowered on ropes, right in front of the Rabbi. People must have been angry and annoyed at the interruption – who are these obnoxious, destructive interrupters?

But Jesus doesn't rebuke them – he approves of THEIR faith! They were right that Jesus was the answer for their paralyzed friend. They knew that if anyone could heal him it was this traveling Rabbi. But Jesus wanted to do more for this man than just heal his body – a temporary fix. So Jesus looked at the man in front of him and said, "Son, your sins are forgiven."

No doubt the paralytic was like, "Ok, thanks for that. That's a nice sentiment and I feel a little warm inside. But I think you can see that I have a bigger issue here? Can you maybe help me with my crippled legs?" The guys on the roof peering down into the house probably felt the same way. "We went to all this trouble and this charlatan just pronounces some spiritual mumbo jumbo about 'forgiving sins.' He must not be that powerful after all..."

But the scribes who were there – the religious leaders and Bible scholars – they immediately start questioning *in their hearts* the monumental claim Jesus has just made. "Who can forgive sins but God alone?" If you were having marriage trouble and came to me for help and I said, "Your sins are forgiven. I forgive you." You'd say, "Ok, thanks there pastor – but we didn't sin against

you, so you aren't really in the place to pronounce our forgiveness.." Only the offended party can extend that kind of grace.

But Jesus is saying, "***I AM the offended party.*** Whoever else you have sinned against, you have ultimately sinned against ME. But I am also the one who has come to pay for your sins. It will cost me my life, but I will lay it down in payment for all of your sins. So I DO have the authority to make this declaration – 'Son, your sins are forgiven.'"

Think about Jesus' question here – "Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Rise, take up your bed and walk?'" (2:9). We might think, on the surface, that it's easier to say a phrase like "You are forgiven," than it is to heal crippled legs. But as Jesus considers it, He knows – as the Creator of bones and joints – that a miraculous healing is NOTHING compared to the price He must pay to accomplish the forgiveness of sins.

But hear this today! Because Jesus is Lord in perfect humanity and total righteousness, He alone can say to you, "Your sins are forgiven." No one else can say that to you. Nothing else can deal with that fundamental problem in your heart and life. You probably have some other things in life that feel more pressing for you – like a physical healing or a financial situation or a work problem or a relationship – but Jesus says, "the problem underneath all your other problems is sin – and I'm the only One who can fix that for you, because I'm the only One righteous enough to die for sinners and gracious enough to die for you."

But because Jesus was the perfectly righteous Son of Man, we can trust Him with our sins. Look back on Jesus in faith and trust Him as the Savior for sinners like you and me. This is good news for failures!

Second, let's look upward to the Christ and His perfect Authority.

### **The 3D Gospel**

#### **2. Look up to the Christ and His Perfect Authority**

***"Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, and saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.'*** Mark 1:14-15

Mark's first verse introduces the gospel of Jesus Christ. The title Christ means anointed one and is a reference to the long awaiting King of Israel who would reign on David's throne. Kings of Israel were identified and installed by being anointed by a prophet or priest, as Samuel chose David, the youngest in his whole family, pouring oil over his head. So when we hear the title Christ or Messiah, we should think KING.

Jesus is not only Lord in perfect humanity, He is the King – He is Lord in perfect, total, ultimate authority. That is why his Gospel message was all about the KINGDOM. "The time has come. The kingdom of God is at hand." In other words – the Kingdom of God is arriving, because ***the KING of Heaven has come.***

The demons knew who he was and that he could obliterate them with a word – "Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are – the Holy One of God" (1:25). Jesus silenced the evil spirit because it wasn't yet time for His full identity to be revealed. In the early chapters of Mark Jesus

showed His power over demons and diseases, healing people of all kinds of illnesses. He called disciples to follow Him, leaving everything in their past lives behind – trading it all in for HIM.

Jesus also showed His authority to teach – correcting the surface religion of the Pharisees by teaching them to spirit of the Sabbath laws. The Pharisees confronted his disciples for picking heads of grain on the Sabbath and Jesus said, “The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath.” The Pharisees had their rules – hundreds and hundreds of them. And Jesus said, “Listen to me. I am the fulfillment of the Law. I haven’t come to teach you more rules. I’ve come to set you free from the burden of your rules.

You think you understand the Sabbath but the rules you’ve set up just put you in control of other people and the Sabbath wasn’t designed for you to manipulate people but to liberate people and teach them about REST.” Jesus says to all of us – the Rest that your heart longs for can only be found in ME – not in your rules. I am the Giver of rest. I am the King. Only I can offer you peace – shalom. “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest.”

Jesus is the Christ – the King – with perfect authority. This comes to a head in Mark 4 when they cross the Sea of Galilee and hurricane force winds beat down on their small ship and it is about to sink – with Jesus somehow asleep in the boat! Four long time fishermen who know the Sea of Galilee are in such a panic they think they are going to die. Finally they wake Jesus up saying, “Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?”

### **The 3D Gospel**

#### **2. Look up to the Christ and His Perfect Authority**

*“A great windstorm arose, and the waves were breaking into the boat, so that the boat was already filling... And they woke him and said to him, ‘Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?’” Mark 4:37-38*

In this moment of crisis they call him TEACHER. Of course, he is their teacher and rabbi. But is that ALL that Jesus is? He wakes up and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, “Peace! Be still!” And the wind ceased and there was a great calm. As quickly as the storm swept in, even more suddenly the winds not only stopped but even the waves went perfectly flat. Suddenly the boat that was nearly filled up with water, tossed about on giant waves, was utterly becalmed in a sunny, peaceful postcard scene without even the rustle of a breeze.

And Jesus said to them, “Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?” As scared as they were in the middle of the storm, suddenly they are even more afraid and said to one another, “WHO IS THIS, that even the wind and the sea obey him?”

### **The 3D Gospel**

#### **2. Look up to the Christ and His Perfect Authority**

*“And he awoke and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, ‘Peace! Be still!’ And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm... And they were filled with great fear and said to one another, ‘Who is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?’” Mark 4:39,41*

Jesus rebukes the storm like we would rebuke a toddler. Stop it. Quiet down. Not sure how your kids responded to you as toddlers, but it’s not that common for instant and total obedience. But that is precisely what the storm and sea gave Jesus – immediate and perfect obedience. In those

days everyone saw the Sea as a symbol of chaos – an uncontrollable danger. No one could control the Sea.

Do you remember Jonah? When he was asleep in the middle of a storm the sailors knew it was no natural thing and some god or gods were angry. Jonah agreed and told them to throw him overboard. Instantly the storm stopped, confirming their suspicions that it was Jonah's God who was angry. The sacrifice of Jonah appeased the Lord and saved the sailors. That is how the ancient world thought of the Sea – a dangerous, unpredictable world of chaos.

And Jesus wakes up and calmly says, "Stop." And the wind and waves obey. This is the King. This is the Creator. He is Lord in perfect authority. Listen to Mark 1:7, John the Baptist says:

### The 3D Gospel

#### 2. Look up to the Christ and His Perfect Authority

*"After me comes one who is mightier than I, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. I have baptized you with water, but **he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.**"*  
Mark 1:7-8

John was the last prophet – a truly holy man, dedicated to the Lord from birth. But John himself says that he is NOTHING next to Jesus. John is the messenger, Jesus is the message. John is the forerunner, Jesus is the King. John can only baptize with water. Jesus can baptize with the very Spirit of God!

Jesus is the King. He is the Christ – the anointed ruler who reigns over all things. He is the giver of the Holy Spirit. So we can trust Him for our strength. Our faith not only looks back on His perfect sacrifice it also looks upward for our daily bread. He is the vine, we are the branches. He is the bread of life. He gives the living water. He pours out the Holy Spirit into the hearts of His people.

We are starting the Gospel of Mark Bible study this week – I hope you'll take advantage of one of the opportunities. This is the eight week course that I led over and over again as an Outreach pastor in Chicago. We saw dozens of people come to a joyful understanding of who Jesus is and why He came through this course.

One of my favorite stories was a woman who had been battling an alcohol addiction for several years. Her marriage was in trouble and she was desperate to get help. She knew about Jesus but the Bible study brought her face to face with Jesus. And as her group studied the early chapters of Mark's gospel she saw Jesus' power of disease and demons, over nature and even over death itself. And she observed for the group – "Wow. It seems like Jesus has authority over everything!"

Ding, ding, ding! Yes. That is precisely what Mark is showing us – calling one witness after another to testify. Jesus has authority over everything. And as I met with this woman and her husband she came to realize that only Jesus had the power she needed to overcome the draw of alcohol in her life. No one else could free her from that. But Jesus could. And by the grace of God she re-committed her life to Christ and, from what I hear, just got her two year sobriety chip.

You can trust Jesus for your strength. He has perfect authority. There is nothing in this world that is outside of His power and control. Trust in His timing. Trust in His love. Trust in His plan for



you. Don't just look back to trust Him to forgive your sins – look up every day and trust Him to give you the power you need to live in holiness and serve Him.

Finally, look forward to the Son of God and His perfect Divinity.

### **The 3D Gospel**

3. Look forward to the Son of God and His perfect Divinity.

*“The voice of one crying in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of **the Lord**, make his paths straight.’”*

Mark 1:3; Isaiah 40:3

Mark calls forward witnesses to support his claim in verse 1 that the gospel is the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. His first witnesses are Malachi and Isaiah in verse two and three. Both foretold a messenger who would go before the Messiah – that messenger was John the Baptist. For whom was this messenger preparing the way? Isaiah 40:3 says, “Prepare the way of the LORD.” In the Hebrew that was the personal name of God – Yahweh. So when Mark says this message is about the Son of God, He is saying that the Messianic King is God in the flesh. Son of God does not mean less than God it means the fullness of the deity. We will see this over and over in Mark's Gospel – from the first verse all the way to the cross:

### **The 3D Gospel**

3. Look forward to the Son of God and His perfect Divinity.

*“When the centurion, who stood facing him, saw that in this way he breathed his last, he said, ‘Truly this man was **the Son of God!**’”* Mark 15:39

The centurion was a seasoned Roman soldier who had seen dozens, if not hundreds, of people die. It was the way that Jesus died that proved to this hardened man of war that this rabbi was much more than a rabbi – but was, in fact, the Son of God. Jesus is Lord in perfect divinity. So you can trust Him with your struggles.

Whatever you are dealing with right now, know that Jesus WILL fix it one day. Look forward to His coming and when you will be with Him forever. In that moment all that we have been through will fade away and we will see Him as He truly is – the glorious, fully divine Son of God, eternally One with the Father and reigning right now at the Father's right hand.

So we come back to that essential question: Who is Jesus? And Jesus asks each one of us – “Who do YOU say that I am?” Please join us on this journey through Mark over the next 10 weeks and look closely at the life, death and resurrection of Jesus! What you'll find is that:

Jesus Christ is LORD! He is Lord in perfect humanity – so we can trust Him with our sins as we look back. He is Lord in perfect authority – so we can trust Him as we look up for His power. And Jesus is Lord in perfect divinity – so we can trust Him with our struggles.

Let's pray.