



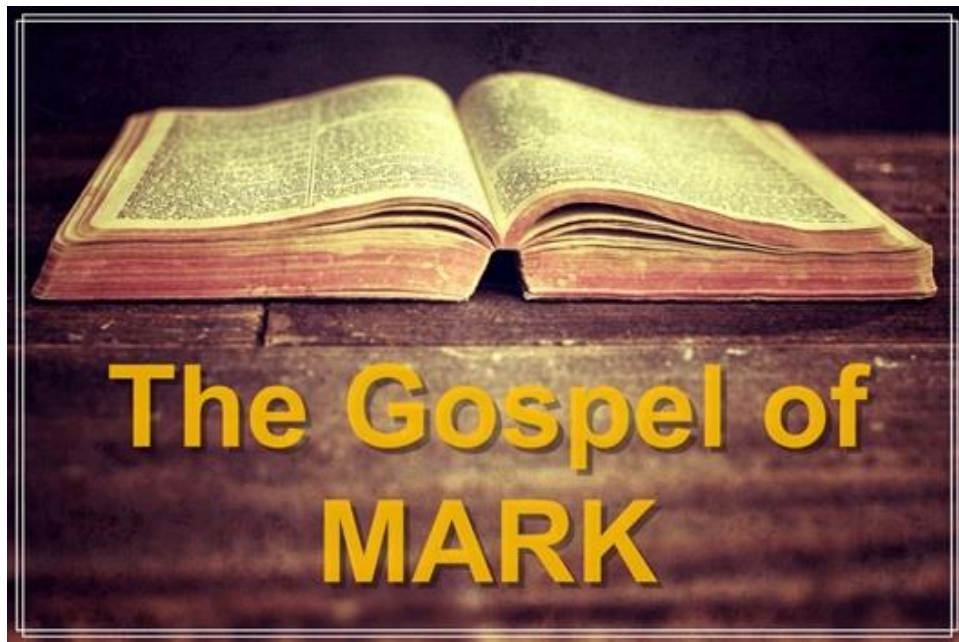
My Drift

Title: Bible – Book of Mark

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Summary

The Gospel of Mark is the second of the four canonical gospels and one of the three synoptic Gospels. The Synoptic Gospels are Matthew, Mark, and Luke that share many of the same stories, often in a similar order and with similar wording. It tells of the ministry of Jesus from his baptism by John the Baptist to his death, the burial of his body, and the discovery of his empty tomb. This Gospel emphasizes two important characteristics of Jesus Christ:

- His authority as the Son of God
- His compassionate service to people (particularly in miracles)



Jesus is Baptized by John the Baptist

Outline

1. Jesus announces the kingdom (Mk 1:1–8:21)
 - Jesus is the new king (1:1–3:6)
 - Jesus starts a new kingdom (3:7–6:6)
 - Jesus sets up a new order (6:7–8:21)
2. John the Baptist arrest and beheading (Mk 6:14-29)
3. Jesus predicts his death to the disciples three times (Mk 8:14–10:52)
 - Jesus heals a blind man (8:22–26)
 - First prediction cycle (8:27–9:29)
 - Second prediction (9:30–10:31)
 - Third prediction cycle (10:32–10:45)
 - Jesus heals another blind man (10:46–52)
4. Jesus: the suffering servant (Mk 11–15)
 - Jesus enters Jerusalem as king and lawgiver (Mk 11–12)
 - Jesus predicts the fall of Jerusalem (Mk 13)

- Jesus suffers (Mk 14–15)
- Jesus' resurrection (Mk 16:1–8)

Jesus Announces the Kingdom of God

What Was the Core of Jesus' Preaching?

What was the message of Jesus?

Most people would answer these questions by saying something about love, because we rightly associate Jesus' teaching with love. But, as it turns out, love is not the core of his message, though it is close and essential to that core. What Jesus actually proclaimed, first and foremost, was not that we should love, but something else.

We find a succinct summary of this “something else” in the first description of Jesus' ministry in the Gospel of Mark:

Now after John the Baptist was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, and saying, **‘The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news’** (Mark 1:14-15).



Jesus announces that the “The kingdom of God has come near.”

Here is Mark's summary of the core of Jesus' message. It is, in a nutshell: “The kingdom of God has come near.”

The phrase “kingdom of God” appears 53 times in the New Testament Gospels, almost always on the lips of Jesus. The synonymous phrase, “kingdom of heaven,” appears 32 times in the Gospel of Matthew. Throughout the accounts of Jesus' ministry, he is always talking about the kingdom of God. But can you answer the following questions?

- *What is the kingdom of God?*
- *How did Jesus proclaim the message of the kingdom?*
- *Where is the kingdom of God?*
- *When is the kingdom of God coming?*
- *What will life in the kingdom of God be like?*
- *Who will bring the kingdom of God?*
- *How is the kingdom of God coming?*

The kingdom of God has been equated with all sorts of things in the last two millennia.

- Some have claimed that it is heaven, and that Jesus was saying, in so many words, “Now you can go to heaven when you die.”
- Others have understood “the kingdom of God” as referring to the Church. From their perspective, Jesus announced the beginning of the age of the Church.
- Still others have seen the kingdom of God as a world infused by divine justice. They have taken Jesus’ announcement as a call to social action.
- In recent times, “spiritually” inclined people have reduced the kingdom of God to inner awareness of one’s divinity. Like the ancient Gnostics, they understand the good news of the kingdom to mean “You are divine.”

None of these renditions fail to take seriously both what Jesus actually says about the kingdom of God, and what his fellow Jews, especially the Old Testament prophets, had been saying about the kingdom for centuries.

So, when Jesus proclaims that the kingdom of God has come near, he doesn’t mean that a place is approaching, but that God’s own royal authority and power have come on the scene. So, we could paraphrase Mark 1:15, which summarizes Jesus’ preaching, as follows: “God’s reign is at hand. God’s power is being unleashed. Turn your life around and put your trust in this good news.”

According to prophecy, at the right time the LORD himself will be the “king of Israel.” In this role, God will give victory to God’s people, removing their oppressors, gathering their scattered exiles, and restoring their fortunes. The return of the LORD to Jerusalem will bring joyful singing, comfort and redemption for Judah, and the impact of God’s salvation upon the whole earth. The announcement of God’s reign will be, indeed, “good news.”

John the Baptist Arrest and Beheading

John the Baptist was arrested and beheaded by King Herod Antipas during a birthday banquet in the royal city of Machaerus, which is now in Jordan:

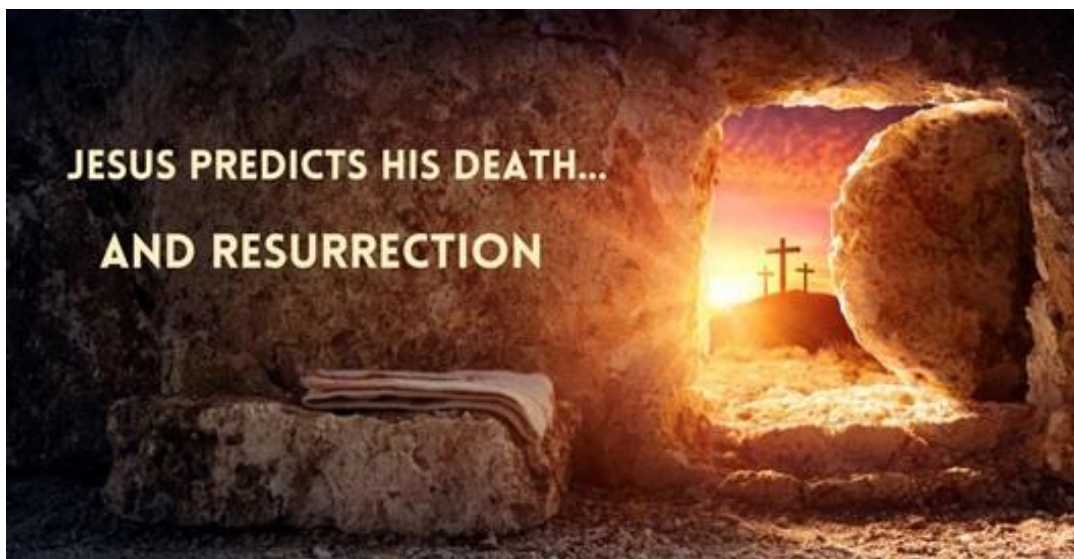
Arrest: John the Baptist was arrested for publicly condemning Herod's marriage to Herodias, his brother Philip's wife.

Beheading: Herod's wife's daughter, Herodias, asked for John the Baptist's head on a platter after dancing for Herod and his guests. Herod was distressed but agreed to the request because of his oaths and dinner guests. An executioner beheaded John in prison and brought his head back on a platter.



John the Baptist Beheading

Jesus predicts his death to the disciples



And he began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes and be killed, and after three days rise again.

In the Gospel of Mark, Jesus predicts his death three times:

- **Mark 8:31-33:** Jesus emphasizes the necessity of his death in the region of Caesarea Philippi.
- **Mark 9:30-32:** Jesus stresses the certainty of his death while traveling through Galilee.
- **Mark 10:32-34:** Jesus describes his death in greater detail on the road to Jerusalem.

Jesus: The suffering servant

Jesus enters Jerusalem as king and lawgiver

Jesus' entry into Jerusalem is described in the Gospels as a triumphal entry, where he was greeted as a king and lawgiver:

Triumphal entry

Jesus entered Jerusalem on a donkey a few days before his crucifixion. The crowds greeted him with palm branches and cloaks on the ground and praised him as the Messiah.



Jesus entered Jerusalem on a Donkey

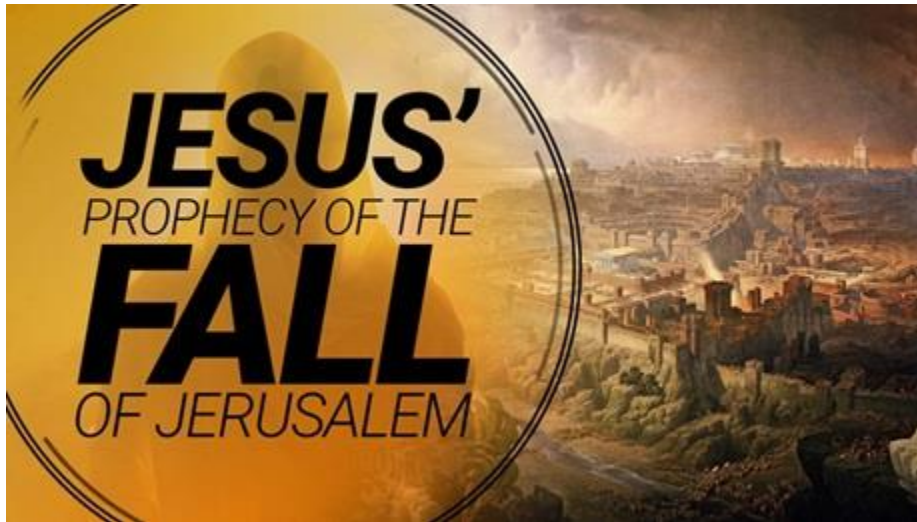
King

The crowds praised Jesus as their king, shouting "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the LORD!".

Lawgiver

Jesus is described as the Lawgiver, and the doctrine of the atonement states that he gave himself for the sins of others.

Jesus predicts the fall of Jerusalem



Jesus prophesied that Jerusalem would be destroyed, stating that "not one stone here will be left on another; everyone will be thrown down," essentially predicting the complete destruction of the temple and the city, which is widely interpreted as referring to the Roman siege of Jerusalem in 70 AD.

Jesus suffers - No One Has Suffered More than Jesus



Jesus on the Cross

For many, the story of Jesus's crucifixion has become so familiar that it's easy to brush over what He actually endured on the cross when He died in our place for our sins. We tend to under-estimate what He went through in the hours leading up to being crucified and during the six hours He hung on a cross in our stead.

Suffering in Trials

When Jesus heard the approaching soldiers, He stood up, fully submitted to the Father's will. This submission made Him the calmest person in every scene that was to come.

As soon as He was arrested, all of His friends, the disciples, fled into the darkness. Have you ever felt abandoned by a friend? Jesus was abandoned by all of His.

The soldiers and guards marched Jesus into Jerusalem in the darkness. Over the next few hours, He endured six trials, three religious and three civil—and all illegal.

During those trials, He was mocked, slapped, and punched, over and over again. But Jesus never fought back. Although He could have called down lightning to destroy them all or dispatched an army of angels from Heaven to wipe them all out, He just took every punch, every slap, and every false accusation. Jesus was willing to do whatever it took.

Suffering in Torture

After Roman governor Pontius Pilate handed Jesus over to be crucified, the real brutality began.

Roman soldiers—experts at torture and death—stripped Jesus of His clothes and chained Him to a stone pillar. They beat Him again and again with a Roman flagrum, a whip that would have had anywhere from three to twelve strands of leather. Metal balls were woven into the leather, and at the end of each strand were pieces of broken pottery, glass, nails, bone, or twisted metal, designed to grab flesh and rip.

Imagine Jesus as He was beaten over and over again, huge pieces of skin and muscle being ripped and torn away with every blow. By the time the soldiers were done, His back and buttocks and legs would have been bloody, mangled ribbons of flesh and muscle and sinew.

This beating was nicknamed “the half death,” because half the men who received it died from it. But not Jesus. He had more to endure.

The soldiers put a purple robe on Him, twisted together a crown of thorns from the famous Jerusalem thorn bush—with thorns that were up to 3 inches long—and beat it into His skull with a rod, which they also used to batter His face. More than 700 years before Jesus was crucified, the prophet Isaiah prophesied that the Son of God would be beaten so badly He wouldn't even look human.

But many were amazed when they saw Him. His face was so disfigured He seemed hardly human, and from His appearance, one would scarcely know He was a man.

Now Jesus became an object of mockery. The Roman soldiers knelt before Him, laughingly calling out, “Hail, King of the Jews.” They slapped Him and spit on Him. Through it all, He remained silent.

Suffering in Crucifixion

Soon, they marched Him off to Golgotha, the hill of the skull, just outside Jerusalem. Here the Roman soldiers stripped Him of all His clothes, threw Him down on a wooden cross, stretched out His hands, took a spike nail, and hammered it into His right wrist.

Imagine the pain of each blow, as the hammer came down again and again, driving the nail deeper and deeper into His wrist, Why His wrists? Because the weight of His body, once lifted up on the cross, would tear His hands through the nail if it were put through His palm instead of His wrist. Only the spot where the two bones of the wrist come together could support the full weight of a man hung by a spike nail. In Jewish culture, wrists were considered a part of the hands.

Next, the soldiers crossed His feet and drove a spike nail through them. I can’t even fathom the pain.

The soldiers then lifted the cross up and dropped it into a previously dug hole. It was probably at this point that, according to Psalm 22:14, all of His bones came out of joint.

And that’s when the slow suffering began. There He was for all the world to see—naked and bleeding and dying, before the eyes of the very ones He’d created. To add insult to His many injuries, the thieves being crucified next to Him began to mock Him, as did the religious leaders and the crowds who had gathered.

To breathe on the cross is no small thing. Jesus had to push His body up to exhale and come down to inhale, scraping His open, bloody back against the rough-hewn wood of the cross for hours. The pain would have been excruciating.

Suffering in Abandonment

Finally, after six hours of tortured breathing, the end was near. Jesus looked up to Heaven and said, “Eloi! Eloi! Lama sabachthani” which means, “My God!

My God! Why have you forsaken me?” (Mark 15:34). Because in that moment, Jesus was enduring the ultimate agony. In that moment, there was a tremor in the Trinity, as God the Father turned His back on His only Son and poured out His wrath—His anger for all of the sin of humanity—on Jesus.

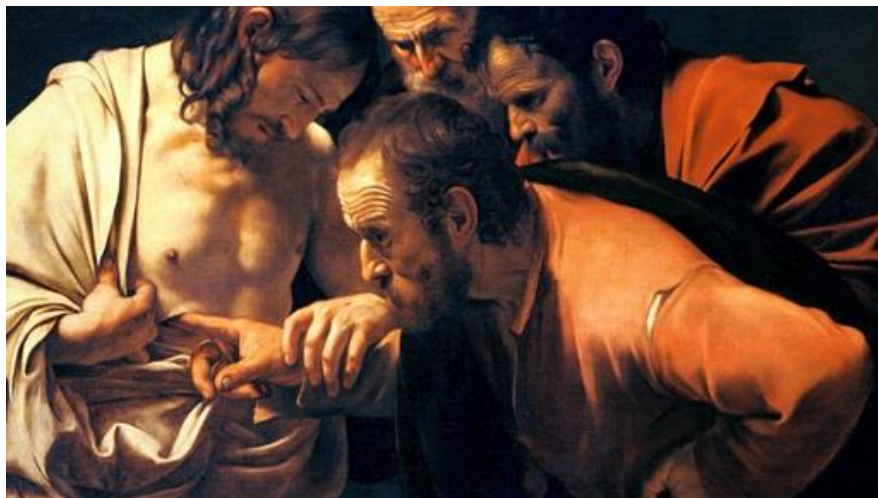
Then Jesus yelled out the three words that would change the course of history—“It is finished”—and He bowed His bloodied head and died.

Jesus’ resurrection



Jesus’ Resurrection on Easter

At the heart of Christianity is the truth that Jesus Christ walked on this earth for 33 years, was killed on a cross and then, three days later, came back to life. The resurrection — the fact that Jesus rose from the dead — is at the very core of the gospel. Without it, the whole message falls apart.



Jesus Rose from the Dead

Jesus conquering death and coming back to life is central to the Christian faith, and many volumes have been written about its implications for us. Let's examine what the resurrection is, why Christians believed in it, and some of the reasons it matters.

Just as Jesus prophesied, He did rise from the grave. This wasn't a metaphor. He physically rose from the dead! When Mary Magdalene, one of His followers, first saw Him in the garden, she mistook Him for the gardener (John 20:15). Later, He appeared to other disciples (John 20:19-20, 26-27). He showed them the scars on His body from His crucifixion.

Jesus went out of the way to ensure the disciples understood He wasn't a ghost or apparition. He was the same Jesus who had spent the last three years with them, and He had conquered death.

He didn't just appear to Mary and the disciples. He appeared to two other of His followers on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-43) and later to more than 500 people at once (1 Corinthians 15:6). Paul, the early Christian leader who wrote much of the New Testament, told the followers of Jesus in one church that most of those 500 people were still alive at the time he was writing and could verify his claim that Jesus had risen from the dead.

Peter, a leader among the disciples, preached to a packed crowd in Jerusalem after Jesus had ascended to heaven. This first Christian message focused on the resurrection. After reminding the crowd of Jesus' gruesome demise, Peter said, "God raised Him from the dead, freeing Him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on Him."

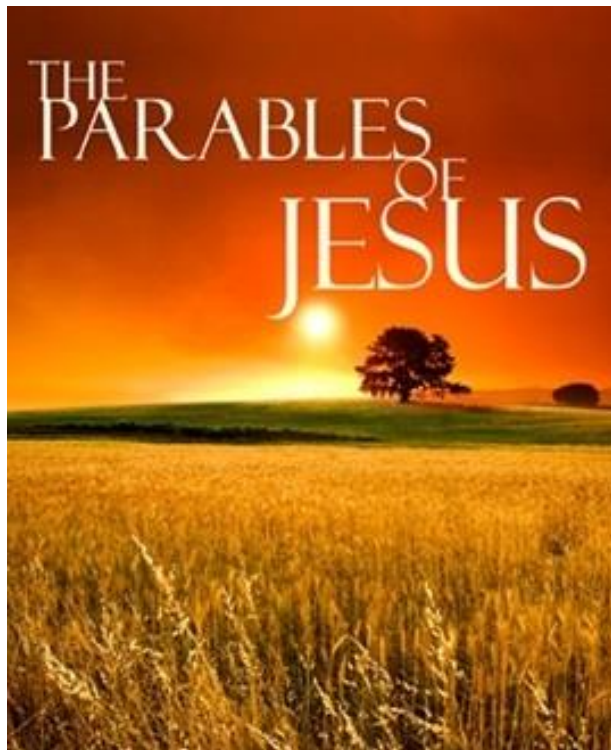


Forty days after his resurrection, Christ, shrouded in clouds, ascends to Heaven. The climactic event of his time on Earth is witnessed by 11 of his 12 Disciples: Judas Iscariot, who betrayed Christ for 30 pieces of silver, had hanged himself in shame.

What is a Parable in the Bible?

A parable is a short, simple story in the Bible that teaches a moral or religious lesson. The word "parable" comes from the Greek word “parabolē”, which means "a comparison or analogy".

Jesus used parables to teach his audience about life lived as God intended, and to encourage them to consider a deeper meaning to his words. Parables are found in the Synoptic Gospels, which are Matthew, Mark, and Luke.



The 8 Parables in the Book of Mark include:

1. Parable of the New Cloth and New Wineskins (Mark 2:21-22)

In the Parable of the New Cloth and New Wineskins, Jesus uses two vivid images to illustrate the need for new structures to accommodate the new realities he is bringing through his ministry. He explains that no one sews a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old garment, as the new cloth will shrink and tear the old, making the tear worse. Similarly, no one pours new wine into old wineskins. If they do, the wine will burst the skins, and both the wine and the

wineskins will be ruined. Instead, new wine must be put into new wineskins. This parable succinctly captures the essence of the transformative nature of Jesus' teachings and the Kingdom of God, emphasizing that the new life he offers cannot be contained within the old religious structures and practices.

The parable highlights the themes of renewal and transformation, pointing to the incompatibility of Jesus' new covenant with the old covenant's legalistic and ritualistic systems. It underscores the idea that Jesus' teachings and the salvation he brings require a complete overhaul of one's life, rather than a mere patching up of old habits and beliefs. This metaphor serves as a call for openness to change and willingness to embrace the new ways of the Kingdom of God, which involve a radical departure from the status quo:

- Just as new wine requires new wineskin, the gospel necessitates a new approach to spirituality.
- Jesus' teachings are incompatible with legalism.
- Jesus challenges us to be open and adaptable to God's ongoing work and revelation.

2. Parable of the Sower (Mark 4:1-20)

In the Parable of the Sower, Jesus describes a farmer scattering seeds, which fall on different types of ground: the path, rocky ground, among thorns, and good soil. Each type of ground represents a different response to hearing God's word. The seeds on the path are quickly eaten by birds, symbolizing those who hear the word but let Satan immediately take it away. The seeds on rocky ground spring up quickly but wither under the sun because they have no root, representing those who receive the word with joy but fall away when troubles or persecution arise. The seeds among thorns are choked and yield no grain, symbolizing those whose faith is strangled by worries, wealth, and desires. Finally, the seeds on good soil produce a fruitful harvest, representing those who hear the word, accept it, and bear fruit in their lives.

This parable underscores the varying responses to the gospel and the importance of a receptive and persevering heart. Jesus explains to his disciples that understanding the parable is key to understanding all his teachings. The different soils illustrate the obstacles to spiritual growth, such as lack of understanding, superficial faith, and worldly distractions. Conversely, the good soil highlights the potential for abundant spiritual fruit when the word is received deeply and nurtured. This teaching encourages believers to cultivate their hearts, ensuring they are receptive and steadfast, allowing God's word to produce a bountiful harvest in their lives.

Different types of soil represent the varied responses to God's word, emphasizing the importance of a receptive heart.

The parable highlights the need for persistence and deep-rooted faith amidst trials and tribulations.

True acceptance of God's word leads to spiritual growth and the production of abundant fruit.

3. Parable of the Lamp (Mark 4:21-25)

The Parable of the Lamp emphasizes the importance of making one's faith visible and accessible to others. Jesus compares the word of God to a lamp that should not be hidden under a bowl or bed but placed on a stand where it can illuminate the room. This parable teaches that the truth of God's kingdom is meant to be shared openly and not kept hidden. Jesus further explains that whatever is hidden will be disclosed, and whatever is concealed will be brought to light, stressing the inevitability of the revelation of God's truth.

This parable serves as a call to action for believers to live out their faith transparently and boldly. It underscores the responsibility to share the gospel and be a visible testimony of God's grace and truth. The imagery of the lamp highlights the transformative power of God's word, capable of dispelling darkness and guiding others to the light. Jesus also warns that the measure one uses will be measured back to them, encouraging generosity in sharing the gospel and living out one's faith. This teaching urges believers to be proactive in their witness, ensuring that the light of Christ shines through their actions and words.

The lamp symbolizes the revelation of truth, indicating that God's word is meant to be shared openly.

The parable emphasizes the accountability of those who receive God's word to spread it to others.

Understanding and applying spiritual truths leads to greater wisdom and blessings.

4. Parable of the Growing Seed (Mark 4:26-29)

In the Parable of the Growing Seed, Jesus likens the kingdom of God to a man who scatters seed on the ground. The man then goes about his daily routine, and the seed sprouts and grows, though he does not know how. The earth produces crops by itself—first the stalk, then the head, then the full kernel in

the head. When the grain is ripe, the man harvests it because the harvest has come. This parable highlights the mysterious and autonomous growth of God's kingdom, independent of human effort or understanding.

This parable underscores the natural and divine process of spiritual growth and the kingdom's expansion. It reassures believers that God's work is ongoing and often unseen, growing and maturing in its own time. The farmer's role is to sow the seed and wait patiently, trusting in the growth process. This teaching encourages patience and faith in God's timing and sovereignty, reminding believers that their efforts in sowing the word are part of a larger, divine plan that will ultimately yield a fruitful harvest. It emphasizes the importance of faithfulness in spreading the gospel, confident that God will bring about growth and maturity in His time.

The parable illustrates that spiritual growth happens in stages and often beyond human understanding.

It emphasizes that God is in control of the growth process, working invisibly in the hearts of believers.

The culmination of growth leads to a bountiful harvest, representing the fulfillment of God's kingdom.

5. Parable of the Mustard Seed (Mark 4:30-32)

The Parable of the Mustard Seed illustrates the kingdom of God using the imagery of a tiny mustard seed, which, when sown, grows into the largest of all garden plants, with branches large enough for birds to perch in its shade. This parable emphasizes the small and seemingly insignificant beginnings of God's kingdom, which, despite its humble start, grows into something grand and expansive. The mustard seed's transformation into a large tree symbolizes the kingdom's capacity for growth and its far-reaching impact.

This parable provides hope and encouragement by highlighting the kingdom's potential for tremendous growth from modest beginnings. It reassures believers that their small acts of faith and obedience contribute to a larger, divine purpose that will flourish over time. The imagery of the birds finding shelter in the tree branches illustrates the kingdom's inclusivity and the refuge it offers to all who seek it. This teaching encourages believers to trust in the power of

God's kingdom, remain faithful in their endeavors, and anticipate the significant, transformative impact of their seemingly small contributions.

The small mustard seed growing into a large plant symbolizes the expansive and transformative nature of God's kingdom.

Small acts of faith can lead to significant, impactful growth in the kingdom of God.

The large branches providing shelter for birds represent the inclusivity and far-reaching impact of God's kingdom.

6. Parable of the Tenants (Mark 12:1-12)

The Parable of the Tenants tells the story of a landowner who plants a vineyard, equips it, and rents it to some farmers before leaving on a journey. When the harvest time approaches, the landowner sends servants to collect some of the fruit, but the tenants beat and kill them. He sends more servants, and the same fate befalls them. Finally, he sends his son, thinking they will respect him, but the tenants kill the son, hoping to seize his inheritance. Jesus explains that the landowner will come and punish the tenants and give the vineyard to others. This parable is a pointed critique of the religious leaders who have rejected God's messengers and ultimately His Son.

This parable underscores the themes of accountability, judgment, and the consequences of rejecting God's authority. The tenants' actions reflect the persistent rejection and mistreatment of prophets sent by God, culminating in the rejection of Jesus, the Son. The landowner's response signifies God's judgment and the transfer of the kingdom to those who will produce its fruit. This teaching serves as a warning to the religious leaders and a reminder to all believers of the importance of accepting God's messengers and producing fruit in keeping with repentance. It highlights God's patience and justice, and the eventual vindication of His Son.

Rejection of Prophets: The tenants' mistreatment of the servants symbolizes Israel's rejection of God's prophets.

Judgment and Accountability: The parable warns of the consequences of rejecting God's messengers and misusing entrusted responsibilities.

Jesus as the Son: The sending of the son represents Jesus, emphasizing his unique authority and the ultimate rejection he faced.

7. Parable of the Fig Tree (Mark 13:28-31)

In the Parable of the Fig Tree, Jesus uses the budding fig tree as an illustration to teach about recognizing the signs of the times. He explains that just as the budding of the fig tree signals the arrival of summer, the signs he has described will indicate that the end times and the coming of God's kingdom are near. Jesus emphasizes that although the exact day and hour are unknown, the signs are clear and should prompt vigilance and readiness among believers.

This parable emphasizes the importance of discernment and preparedness in the face of prophetic signs. Jesus encourages believers to be attentive and aware, recognizing the indications of God's unfolding plan. The analogy of the fig tree highlights the natural and observable nature of these signs, urging believers to stay alert and maintain a posture of readiness. This teaching calls for a balanced approach to eschatology—one that is watchful and discerning, yet not speculative about exact timings. It underscores the certainty of God's promises and the need for continual faithfulness and vigilance as believers await the fulfillment of God's kingdom.

The budding fig tree serves as a metaphor for recognizing the signs of the approaching end times.

The parable underscores the nearness of God's kingdom and the need for readiness.

It assures believers of the certainty and reliability of Jesus' prophetic words.

8. Parable of the Faithful Servant (Mark 13:33-37)

The Parable of the Faithful Servant urges believers to remain vigilant and diligent in their duties as they await the master's return. Jesus compares his followers to servants left in charge of a household while the master is away, instructing them to keep watch and be prepared for his return at any time. The parable underscores the unpredictability of the master's return and the necessity for constant readiness, warning against complacency and urging faithful stewardship.

This parable highlights the themes of vigilance, responsibility, and faithfulness in the Christian life. Jesus calls his followers to live in a state of readiness, actively fulfilling their responsibilities and duties. The unpredictable timing of the master's return serves as a reminder that believers must remain diligent and faithful, regardless of how long the wait may seem. This teaching encourages a lifestyle of active service, continual watchfulness, and unwavering commitment to the tasks entrusted by God, reinforcing the importance of being prepared for Christ's return at any moment.

The parable emphasizes the importance of vigilance and preparedness for the master's return.

It highlights the responsibility of believers to faithfully manage what has been entrusted to them.

The parable underscores that faithful service will be recognized and rewarded by God.

What lessons do we learn from the book of Mark?

In summary, Mark's Gospel is a narrative proclamation that Jesus is the Messiah and Son of God, whose death and resurrection paid the penalty for our sins and achieved victory over Satan, sin, and death. With this joyful announcement comes the call to all believers for faith and cross-bearing discipleship.

We also learned that our relationship with Christ should be very personal and remember that Jesus was both fully human and fully divine. We learn from Mark that, in an incredibly short time, the world can change. And Mark's life illustrates for us that even sinners and outcasts are welcomed by Jesus.

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