



We are in week one of a series called “Misunderstood: Jesus According to Mark.” This series is an opportunity for us to prepare our hearts and lives for Easter as we study the book of Mark together. This discussion guide is designed to help your small group or class dive deeper into what is being taught each weekend, and to be intentional about applying it to your life as you prepare to celebrate Easter. If you weren’t able to hear the sermon this weekend, please check it out at:
<http://www.firstdecatur.org/sermons/>

WEEK 1: NEW WAY vs. OLD WAY

Mark wrote his gospel with the purpose in mind of bringing clarity to his readers about who Jesus truly is. As Pastor Brian mentioned this weekend, one of the ways Mark did this is by focusing on ways people misunderstood who Jesus is, why he came, how he was supposed to come, and what he was going to do. As we prepare our hearts for Easter, it is important that we take time to reflect on who Jesus truly is and what it means to follow him.

START

Clarity is something we each value, even when we don’t realize it. Think about how frustrating it can be when someone misunderstands you. If you’ve ever played the game Taboo, or Catchphrase, or Charades, you know exactly what I mean. It takes a great deal of work to communicate clearly, and sometimes even our best efforts lead to confusion. In some situations, misunderstanding someone can lead to stress and even unwarranted relational tension. However, other times misunderstanding someone or something can lead to humorous moments.

- ▶ As you begin your conversation today, take a minute for each person in your group to share a humorous story about a time they misunderstood someone or something. If nothing comes to mind, share a song lyric that you completely misunderstood when you were younger.
- ▶ Throughout this series we are talking about the ways people have misunderstood Jesus. How have you at one time or another misunderstood Jesus? What helped bring clarity about this misunderstanding?

VIDEO

Take a minute to watch “Week 1: Misunderstood: Jesus According to Mark” and think about the different lenses Mark wants us to see Jesus through. You can stream or download the video at: <https://vimeo.com/album/4987313> or on the Grow Together Blog at: <https://fccgrowtogether.org>



READ MARK 1:1

As Pastor Brian shared this weekend, and talked about in the video, this one verse is packed full of meaning. The word “beginning” is the same word used in the first verse of Genesis. Mark’s original readers would have caught the significance of this word. Mark was conveying that Jesus is a new beginning. The rest of the verse is a play on words used to communicate that not only is Jesus preaching the Gospel, but he is the Gospel. In other words, the first misunderstanding that Mark wants to clarify is that Jesus is the Gospel, he is the good news, he is the Messiah who came to rescue us and redeem us.

- ▶ Why would Mark begin his account of Jesus’ life this way? Why would Jesus being the “good news” be the first lens he wants us to see Jesus through? What will his readers miss if they don’t understand this key point?
- ▶ While Mark wrote these words to a specific audience, they also have meaning for our lives today. As you read these words and think about Mark’s intentions, what does this mean for your life today?



READ MARK 1:2-8

In this passage, Mark describes how Isaiah prophesied about John the Baptist, and how John prepared the way for Jesus’ ministry and ultimately his death and resurrection. Jesus didn’t just show up on the scene. God sent John to prepare the people for his arrival. As Pastor Brian mentioned this weekend, there are three ways that we want each person in our congregation to prepare their hearts for Jesus this Easter. The first way is through attending a service each weekend for the purpose of learning and worshipping together. Secondly, through engaging in this study with a small group or class to further that understanding and to encourage one another in growth. Thirdly, by listening to the audio devotion each week prior to the sermon.

- ▶ As you think about this passage, other than John’s strange attire and dietary habits, what stands out to you? What was Mark conveying about who Jesus is in this passage?
- ▶ Just as you prepare your home for someone to visit, how do you want to prepare your heart for Jesus during this season? How can you do this personally, and what could you do as a group or class to encourage one another in this?



READ MARK 1:9-15

As we talked about this weekend and Brian mentioned in the video, this passage demonstrates that Jesus is simultaneously God and human. Following his baptism, God himself proclaims that Jesus is God,

and yet in the next verse, Mark shows us that he is a human being capable of being tempted. It is difficult for us to comprehend, and yet it should bring us comfort knowing that our sovereign and powerful God understands what it is like to be one of us. He understands what it's like to be tempted, to be tired, to be hungry, and to experience pain, frustration, sorrow and loss.

- ▶ If Jesus is both fully God and fully human, how does that shape your relationship with him? How does it impact the way you think about him? If we don't keep these ideas in balance, how can we end up misunderstanding who Jesus is and why he came? On a personal level, how are you prone to lean too far toward Jesus's humanity or too far toward his deity?
- ▶ Mark ends this section of scripture with Jesus talking about the kingdom of God being near, and then calling his audience to repent and believe the good news. The word "repent" here means to turn around or change your mind. It requires action, not just thought. In light of this week's discussion, how will you turn around or change your mind toward a deeper understanding of the "good news"? How will you live as a member of God's Kingdom that is fully here and simultaneously yet to come?



BRING IT HOME

As you close your time, take time to pray for one another. Pray that over the course of the next six weeks you will each see Jesus for who he really is and why he came. Pray that God will reveal to each of you, areas within you or misunderstandings you may have, that need to change. Pray that you will embrace the Gospel more deeply and live more powerfully in his kingdom.

On your own this week, take time to reflect on what God is revealing to you through the book of Mark. Please also take time this week to listen to the audio devotional and prepare for next weekend.