



We are in week three 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 3: PANIC?

Mark wrote his gospel with the purpose in mind of bringing clarity to his readers about who Jesus truly is. During last weekend’s sermon we encountered Jesus in the midst of chaos. We saw how he calmly cared for a deeply concerned father and a demon-possessed boy. In the midst of a panicked situation, Jesus stepped in and focused on what was most important.

START

As a reminder, one of the purposes of this series is to help us focus our hearts as we prepare for Easter on who Jesus really is. Throughout the Bible, we see that God intended for his people to develop rhythms of celebration that reminded them of his goodness and faithfulness. While we should remember every day what God done for us, the weeks leading up to Easter should be a special and intentional season of remembering what God has done for us through Christ.

- ▶ As you begin your conversation today, take a minute for each person in your group to share what they have been reflecting on through this series so far, and how they would like to focus more on Christ in the weeks between now and Easter.
- ▶ While fasting throughout the Lenten season may not be a part of your faith tradition, there is incredible value in fasting (or giving up something) during these weeks for the purpose of deeper focus on Christ. While there are only a few weeks left before Easter, is there something you could give up for the remaining weeks to help you focus more deeply on the power of what Jesus has done for you?

VIDEO

Take a minute to watch “Week 3: Panic?” and think about what Mark wanted us to understand about Jesus. 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 9:14-29

As Pastor Wayne shared this weekend, it would be easy to read this passage and focus on the demon possession because it is unfamiliar to us. While we may not ever experience or witness demon possession, it is still very real in our world today, and we read in the Bible that demonic forces are at work in the world around us all the time (Eph. 6:12). However, demon possession is not the focus of Mark's storyline, and if we focus on that, we miss what Mark wanted his readers to understand. Mark wanted his readers to pay attention to the father in this account. In the midst of the chaotic moment in this man's life, Jesus focused on this man's faith, before focusing on his concern.

Whether it's family, work, school, friendships, or just the details of life, we each have those moments or seasons of life when chaos seems to throw everything important to the ground. In those moments we want answers. We want the chaos to end, and we find it difficult to turn our minds from the turmoil until things are resolved the way we want them to be.

In this father's moment of panic, Jesus wasn't fazed by the situation, and Jesus isn't fazed by the panic in our lives either. Often, like the father in this account, we find our selves saying "Jesus I believe, but help me believe more." The truth is that God wants to bring healing, change, restitution, and redemption into our lives. However, as we wait, he wants to deal with us. He wants to deal with our ability to trust him. He wants to help us grow in our walk with him. Just as Jesus healed the boy despite the father's faith, the depth of our trust and growth do not impact his ability to bring healing and restoration into the chaos of our lives. Ultimately he wants to deal with our chaos, but he wants to have an impact on our soul's health first.

- ▶ We know that God is eager to hear from us and respond to the chaotic issues in our lives, and yet sometimes he doesn't deal with them the way we expect. In a moment of chaos, how has God missed your expectations and still given you exactly what you need?
- ▶ Why would Jesus deal with this man's spirituality before addressing his son's need? What does that mean for you and I in the midst of panic and chaos in our lives?
- ▶ In an incredibly chaotic moment, Jesus remained calm. How does it impact you to know that Jesus also remains calm in the chaos of your life? How does that impact the chaos you are experiencing right now?
- ▶ One of the reasons we gather in groups and classes is to be honest with one another and to encourage one another. In light of that, what area of chaos are you facing right now that you need to trust God to handle? What might he be doing in your life as you wait?
- ▶ If it's true that God wants to bring restoration and healing to our chaos, why is it that we so easily lose hope and trust in God in the chaotic moments or seasons?



READ MARK 9:1-12

As Pastor Wayne talked about in the video, this is one of the most deeply spiritual moments that Peter, James and John would ever experience. In that moment, Peter wanted to camp out. He wanted to make it last. He wanted to avoid returning to the chaotic moments of life. We each need intentional moments of spiritual refreshment and rest, but we also must be willing to leave those moments ready to face the turmoil and chaos of life. We have to be willing to wade into the mess and trust and learn and grow along the way.

- ▶ When was the last time you had a deeply spiritual moment in your life? How do you build opportunities into your calendar for those moments? How could you create space in the days leading up to Easter for that type of experience?
- ▶ When we have these deeply spiritual moments, why is it so difficult to re-engage the chaos and mess? How are you tempted to disengage from the mess?
- ▶ What could you do this week to engage the mess?



BRING IT HOME

As you close your time, take time to pray for one another. Pray that over the course of these 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.