



FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
EL DORADO

Mission: Make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world

Vision: Change lives, Develop leaders, Share Christ

Discipleship Pathway: We live as disciples of Jesus Christ as we worship, grow, give, serve and share.

2016 Lent Reading Plan for the Gospel according to Mark

From *Meeting God in Mark: Reflections for the Season of Lent* by Rowan Williams

Week One

Date	Day	Reading
February 10	Wednesday	Mark 1:1-13
February 11	Thursday	Mark 1:14-28
February 12	Friday	Mark 1:29-45
February 13	Saturday	Mark 2:1-17

Sunday Reflection¹

Unlike the other Gospels, Mark jumps right into Jesus' adult life and ministry, with his baptism by John, temptation in the wilderness, calling of the first disciples and numerous healings. The 62 verses read this week offer an intense, close-up view of Jesus' early ministry. If these passages were all you knew of the Jesus story, what would your reaction be? Try to imagine yourself hearing this bit of 'good news' for the first time, and encountering Jesus afresh, without the baggage of centuries of conflict and myriad interpretations. Let the story of Jesus surprise and amaze you.

God, grant me fresh eyes to see Jesus like one of those first receiving the good news.

¹ Rowan Williams, *Meeting God in Mark: Reflections for the Season of Lent* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2014), 78.



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Week Two

Date	Day	Reading
February 15	Monday	Mark 2:18-28
February 16	Tuesday	Mark 3:1-12
February 17	Wednesday	Mark 3:13-35
February 18	Thursday	Mark 4:1-20
February 19	Friday	Mark 4:21-34
February 20	Saturday	Mark 4:35-41

Sunday Reflection²

Jesus was a controversial figure, and sometimes a confusing one. He plucked grain on the Sabbath, which was unlawful but not unprecedented. His own family said he was out of his mind and must have a demon. He told cryptic stories but wouldn't explain them, except to his disciples. He healed without even a touch and calmed a raging storm with a simple rebuke. What is your reaction to these stories? Does it make a difference to you whether these events happened just as Mark says? What impression do these stories give you of Jesus, and how do you experience God through them?

God, let me stand in awe of your power. Give me wonder that goes beyond fact and fiction. Amen.

² Rowan Williams, *Meeting God in Mark: Reflections for the Season of Lent* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2014), 79.



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Week Three

Date	Day	Reading
February 22	Monday	Mark 5:1-20
February 23	Tuesday	Mark 5:21-43
February 24	Wednesday	Mark 6:1-13
February 25	Thursday	Mark 6:14-29
February 26	Friday	Mark 6:30-56
February 27	Saturday	Mark 7:1-23

Sunday Reflection³

Reactions to Jesus (and similarly, John, in the middle of Chapter 6) vary widely, from awe and enthusiasm to contempt and violent rejection. What distinctions do you see between those who are eager to see, hear and touch these holy men and those who condemn them? We all like to think we would have embraced Jesus enthusiastically and looked to him for wisdom and healing, but might we have been among his opponents? What do you have in common with those who embraced Jesus, and what do you have in common with those who rejected him?

God, grant me humility to see my own privilege. Let me see Jesus' challenge as a gift and not a threat. Amen.

³ Rowan Williams, *Meeting God in Mark: Reflections for the Season of Lent* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2014), 80.



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Week Four

Date	Day	Reading
February 29	Monday	Mark 7:24-37
March 1	Tuesday	Mark 8:1-21
March 2	Wednesday	Mark 8:22-9:1
March 3	Thursday	Mark 9:2-29
March 4	Friday	Mark 9:30-50
March 5	Saturday	Mark 10:1-16

Sunday Reflection⁴

The stakes seem to grow higher as Jesus gets deeper into his public ministry. He seems to get easily frustrated, dismissing a Syro-Phoenician woman who asks for help and walking away from Pharisees who ask for a sign. He shames disciples who don't seem to 'get it', but sternly orders those who do proclaim his identity to keep quiet about it. Combined with Jesus' discussion of his coming death, bold display on the mountaintop, and affirmation of those outside the disciples' circle, what do you think is behind Jesus' attitude in these chapters? Why do you think Mark portrayed Jesus this way, even if his writing would make readers confused by or concerned about Jesus?

God, help me to walk in Jesus' shoes and experience the world through his eyes as we approach the time of his trial and death. Amen.

⁴ Rowan Williams, *Meeting God in Mark: Reflections for the Season of Lent* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2014), 80-1.



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Week Five

Date	Day	Reading
March 7	Monday	Mark 10:17-34
March 8	Tuesday	Mark 10:35-52
March 9	Wednesday	Mark 11:1-11
March 10	Thursday	Mark 11:12-33
March 11	Friday	Mark 12:1-17
March 12	Saturday	Mark 12:18-37

Sunday Reflection⁵

Some people dismiss Lent as a depressing time of unnecessary, self-imposed suffering. Reflect on your own experience of self-denial and also on struggles people endure by sheer accident or misfortune. Consider these things in the light of Jesus' teachings about the blessedness of those who are not rich, who have left home and family to follow him, and who take on the role of servant to others. Do your ideas of who is blessed in the world align with Jesus'? How do these teachings challenge you to live differently, not just during Lent but throughout the year?

*God, help me to see my own struggles and those of others through your eyes.
Transform my desire for success and satisfaction into a desire to please you. Amen.*

⁵ Rowan Williams, *Meeting God in Mark: Reflections for the Season of Lent* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2014), 81-2.



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Week Six

Date	Day	Reading
March 14	Monday	Mark 12:38-44
March 15	Tuesday	Mark 13:1-23
March 16	Wednesday	Mark 13:24-37
March 17	Thursday	Mark 14:1-11
March 18	Friday	Mark 14:12-31
March 19	Saturday	Mark 14:32-52

Sunday Reflection⁶

From Jesus' teaching in the Temple to his dramatic arrest in the garden, the tension between Jesus and the authorities is building, as is the reader's sense of agitation. Jesus is becoming more isolated, and even his followers' efforts at faithfulness are found wanting. As readers, our enthusiasm for this climax to Jesus' story is tempered by his unsettling apocalyptic warnings. What do you imagine God is experiencing as the time of the Son's death draws near? How would you feel if you were one of Jesus' disciples at this stage of his ministry?

God, give me insight to experience Jesus' story as it was, not only the beautiful parts, but the difficult as well. Amen.

⁶ Rowan Williams, *Meeting God in Mark: Reflections for the Season of Lent* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2014), 82.



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Week 7

Date	Day	Reading
March 21	Monday	Mark 14:53-72
March 22	Tuesday	Mark 15:1-20
March 23	Wednesday	Mark 15:21-39
March 24	Thursday	Mark 15:40-47
March 25	Friday	Mark 16:1-8a
March 26	Saturday	Mark 16:8b-20

Sunday Reflection⁷

The ending of Mark's Gospel is notably largely for what it doesn't say. Jesus' near-total silence during his trial and crucifixion emphasizes the mood of resignation and despair, and the seeming prematurity of the book's original ending adds mystery as well as anticipation. This strikes some readers as powerful and evocative while causing confusion and skepticism in others. Imagine you were alive in the second century and considering conversion to Christianity: what effect would Mark's points of silence have on you? As a modern follower of Jesus celebrating Easter Sunday, what impact do accounts of Jesus' resurrection appearances have on you?

God, thank you for Jesus' triumph over death. Thank you for the writers who passed down the good news of Jesus, each in their own way. Amen.

⁷ Rowan Williams, *Meeting God in Mark: Reflections for the Season of Lent* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2014), 78.