

### Media and Graphics Notes

<b>Sermon Starter Video?</b>	Yes
<b>Sermon Notes?</b>	There are a few scriptures and notes in the sermon.
<b>Other Notes</b>	

## Key Questions

### ***What is this sermon about?***

This sermon is about the beginning of the good news, as contained in the gospel of Mark.

### ***Why is this sermon important?***

It is important because it introduces us to the gospel of Mark and invites us to move knowledge to action.

### ***What is the context of this sermon?***

This is the first sermon in our series for lent focusing on the gospel of Mark.

### ***What are the next action steps?***

The next action steps are to take action in the areas of our life which we know call for action.

### ***What is the good news (bottom line)?***

The good news is Jesus Christ, God's Son, who fulfills God's promise of salvation.



## Metadata

### **Topic(s)**

1. Change Lives
2. Grow
3. Make Disciples

### **Sermon Books of the Bible**

1. Mark

1st Sunday in Lent  
Mark - The Beginning of the Good News  
First United Methodist Church of El Dorado  
Text Online at <http://j.mp/1QZNIBC>

February 14, 2016  
Mark 1:1-13  
Preaching Target Word Count: 2,142  
Audio Online at <http://j.mp/1O9WOaj>

## Tags

sermon, worship, church, Methodist, UnitedMethodist, UnitedMethodistChurch, FirstUnitedMethodistChurch, ElDorado, Kansas, GreatPlains, AnnualConference, GreatPlainsAnnualConference, Mark, gospel, GoodNews,

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## Mark 1:1-13, CEB

The beginning of the good news about Jesus Christ, God's Son, happened just as it was written about in the prophecy of Isaiah: Look, I am sending my messenger before you. He will prepare your way, a voice shouting in the wilderness: "Prepare the way for the Lord; make his paths straight."

John the Baptist was in the wilderness calling for people to be baptized to show that they were changing their hearts and lives and wanted God to forgive their sins. Everyone in Judea and all the people of Jerusalem went out to the Jordan River and were being baptized by John as they confessed their sins. John wore clothes made of camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist. He ate locusts and wild honey. He announced, "One stronger than I am is coming after me. I'm not even worthy to bend over and loosen the strap of his sandals. I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

About that time, Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and John baptized him in the Jordan River. While he was coming up out of the water, Jesus saw heaven splitting open and the Spirit, like a dove, coming down on him. And there was a voice from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I dearly love; in you I find happiness." At once the Spirit forced Jesus out into the wilderness. He was in the wilderness for forty days, tempted by Satan. He was among the wild animals, and the angels took care of him.

### Response to Scripture

One: The Word of God for the People of God.

**All: Thanks be to God!**

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## Introduction

### Sermon Starter Video

[Play sermon starter video.](#)

### Mark: Eyewitness to the Gospel

He spent three years with Jesus. He watched Jesus work, heard him teach and walked with him in Galilee. He was there on the night in which Jesus was taken to be crucified. Before this man died, he passed on the testimony of what he had seen and heard. The gospel of Mark is that testimony.

### Sermon Notes and Scripture Study

#### *Take Notes*

I invite you to open your bulletin to a place where you can take notes during the message today.

### ***God Speaking***

I pray that you will hear God speaking to you sometime during the service today. Listen for God's word for you – something that helps you live as a disciple of Jesus Christ. Whenever you hear it, write it down.

### ***Tool for Spiritual Growth***

Then, take this bulletin home with you so that you can grow in your faith outside of worship by reflecting on what you heard today, praying for others connected with our community and reading scripture.

### **Prayer**

Will you pray with me? O God, use these words to speak good news so that as individuals and as a congregation we will fear nothing but sin, desire nothing but you and live as part of your kingdom on earth as it is in heaven. Amen.

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## **The Main Thing - Jesus Christ, God's Son**

### **Good News to Share**

What do you do when you have good news to share?

Imagine a time in your life when there was something significant that occurred - and it was good. Perhaps:

- Receiving your final grades and knowing that you will graduate.
- Getting the call with a job offer for your dream job.
- Having your partner say, "Yes!" to a marriage proposal.
- Giving birth to a child.

What do you do next? You want to tell someone!

### ***Personal Example: Birth of our Children***

I remember the birth of our children. I had a group text message set up to keep our family up to date of how we were doing at the hospital. Well, mostly about how Nicole was doing. I was clearly much less involved than she was in this process.

Not long after each of them were born, I sent a quick message with the news of their birth and that all were doing well. Later, I would give my parents a call on the phone. This was great news! We have a baby!

Later in the day, after taking a few pictures, I sent an email with more information and a bit more information. This is news that is worth sharing, it is news that changed our life.

### ***Invitation to Reflection***

What about in your life? What did you do first when you had good news that you wanted and needed to share? Did you call? Text? Write a letter? What was the first thing that you did? What spread the news to others that your life was going to be different?

## Good News of Jesus Christ

The very first verse of the Gospel of Mark is that like that text message, phone call or letter. It is a signal to others that something important has happened.

It provides the context for what is to come.

The first message that you share with others about good news in your life is not all that needs to be shared. However, it may be the most important and critical.

You want to share it first before you go on to say more.

### ***Personal Example: A Story too Fast***

Have you ever had someone call you on the phone that is clearly excited about something?

“I can’t believe it! This is the best day of my life. I had to call you first – it’s just so incredible. I can’t wait until next week and the week after that... Next year? That’s going to be amazing...”

“Stop. Wait a minute. What’s going on? What are you talking about?”

Have you ever had a conversation like that? Maybe you have been the one sharing the story or maybe you have been the one hearing it.

### ***Mark 1:1***

This is what happens in the first verse of Mark:

**The beginning of the good news about Jesus Christ, God’s Son,<sup>1</sup>**

This is the essence. This is what is most important.

This is the main thing.

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## Key Themes of Mark

This introduction provides the context for the remainder of the Gospel of Mark, which, according to theologian Mitzi Minor, contains four major themes:

**God**

**Jesus**

**Kingdom of God**

**Followers of Jesus**

Let’s take a closer look at each one...

### **God**

“The God who appears as the source of the story that unfolds in Mark’s Gospel is the God of life for whom the impossible is possible. God has dramatically entered our world, acted decisively to fulfill the [momentous] hope of God’s people, and drawn God’s own kingdom near to God’s people, offering them an alternative to living under Caesar’s

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<sup>1</sup> Mark 1:1, CEB.

rule. ... God's power does not rely on force. It is not dominating or manipulative or violent. The power of Mark's God rests in the power of life."<sup>2</sup>

## Jesus

Jesus is the beloved son of this God, the Messiah anointed with the Spirit by God to proclaim that God's kingdom has drawn near and to live the life of God's kingdom among God's people."<sup>3</sup>

As Mark tells the story of Jesus, "He dreads the suffering he knows is coming, is afraid, asks God to have it pass him by, and screams his sense of abandonment from the cross. Yet neither the threats, the suffering, nor his fear could turn him back from his faithful, purposeful, free living in God's kingdom.

In so doing he shows followers that they can live within God's kingdom and find life, even as they face the threats and violence of the powers who oppose God. He called followers to see the life that was possible for them because of God"<sup>4</sup>

## Kingdom of God

"In God's kingdom there are no structures of subordination or exploitation. All are welcome. All are forgiven. All are servants of one another. ... The claim at the end of Mark's Gospel that Jesus was resurrected dramatically confirms Jesus' announcement<sup>5</sup>: "Now is the time! Here comes God's kingdom! Change your hearts and lives, and trust this good news!"<sup>6</sup>

## Followers of Jesus

"Followers of Mark's Jesus are called to see that Jesus is resurrected, that the kingdom of God has drawn near, and that their exodus from slavery is under way. They are called to share their bread, practice the radical inclusivity of God's kingdom, serve one another, cast out evil, pray together, heal, and forgive.

They are also called to take up the cross, to accept the risks of bearing witness to all nations that they can live in God's kingdom and resist Caesar's domination and oppression.

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<sup>2</sup> Minor, Mitzi "Gospel of Mark." In Volume 3, *The New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, edited by Katharine D. Sakenfield, et al. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2006.

<sup>3</sup> Minor, Mitzi "Gospel of Mark." In Volume 3, *The New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, edited by Katharine D. Sakenfield, et al. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2006.

<sup>4</sup> Minor, Mitzi "Gospel of Mark." In Volume 3, *The New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, edited by Katharine D. Sakenfield, et al. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2006.

<sup>5</sup> Minor, Mitzi "Gospel of Mark." In Volume 3, *The New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, edited by Katharine D. Sakenfield, et al. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2006.

<sup>6</sup> Mark 1:15, CEB.



The call is hardly an easy one. Some of those who encounter Jesus seem to see clearly and join themselves fully to God's kingdom... But others, including the Twelve struggle with the call to discipleship. Indeed, the stories of the struggles of the Twelve remind readers of just how challenging the call of Mark's Jesus is."<sup>7</sup>

### **Transition**

God  
Jesus  
Kingdom of God  
Followers of Jesus

These themes throughout Mark give us clues about the essence of "the good news about Jesus Christ, God's Son."<sup>8</sup>

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## **Knowledge to Action**

It is important to know the main thing - the most important news.  
It is helpful to know a framework for reading the story of Jesus in Mark.  
Knowing is not the end, the next step is to take action.

### **Personal Example of Knowledge to Action**

Let me give you a few examples of circumstances in my life when knowledge leads to action.

#### **Fireworks**

I love fireworks. When I was growing up, one of the highlights of my summer was to save for, select and shoot off fireworks. It was the most fun with cousins. A couple years ago, I remember being disappointed with some of the selections that I had made at the fireworks stand. There were some that literally gave more bang for the buck.

I could never remember from year to year which were my favorites...

Until that year...

I wrote down the ones that were great and I have a list on my phone that I pull out in the summer to get the very best fireworks for the price.

Knowledge leads to action.

#### **Restaurant**

Another example is at a restaurant. Imagine the place where you go out to eat most often. You have tried a good number of things on the menu and know what you like and don't like. Soon, you don't even have to look at the menu. You just order the

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<sup>7</sup> Minor, Mitzi "Gospel of Mark." In Volume 3, *The New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, edited by Katharine D. Sakenfield, et al. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2006.

<sup>8</sup> Mark 1:1, CEB.

usual. For some, you don't even have to try a lot of items on the menu - once you find something that you like, you stick with it.

Knowledge leads to action.

## **The Gospel in Action**

The same is true for Gospel of Mark. It is good to know more about this book, the key themes of

God

Jesus

Kingdom of God

Followers of Jesus

and the main thing:

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*The beginning of the good news about Jesus Christ, God's Son,<sup>9</sup>*

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Yet knowing the good news is not the end of the journey.

## **Message of Salvation in Jesus**

Theologians remind us that "Christianity did not begin with a new book. Its Scripture was that of the Jewish people. Christianity began with a "new message" about what the God known through that Scripture had done in Jesus Christ. The sayings of Jesus and stories about him had circulated by word of mouth for years before Mark was written. Unlike a technical manual, these stories do not depend on writing to be remembered. The good news itself is a simple message of salvation in Jesus, which people can take anywhere in the world."<sup>10</sup>

## **God's Love**

The gospel of Mark is a reminder that God's promise of salvation is fulfilled in the "public ministry, death on the cross, and resurrection of Jesus." These are the ways in which God's love comes to humanity.<sup>11</sup>

## **Our Response**

We respond to God's love in faith loving God and neighbor. We live as disciples of Jesus Christ as we worship, grow, give, serve and share. We live out the message of salvation every day.

Knowledge leads to action.

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<sup>9</sup> Mark 1:1, CEB.

<sup>10</sup> Leander E. Keck, ed., *Mark*, vol. VIII of *The New Interpreter's Bible* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2002, 529.

<sup>11</sup> Leander E. Keck, ed., *Mark*, vol. VIII of *The New Interpreter's Bible* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2002, 529.

## **Conclusion**

### **Good News**

The good news is Jesus Christ, God's Son, who fulfills God's promise of salvation.

### **Call to Action**

So, what is it that you know that leads you to take action?  
Perhaps with your faith, personal life, family, friends or what you do for a living.  
Don't just know it.  
Take action.  
Trust God for strength.  
Your life can be different. We can become more like Christ.

### **Invitation**

Knowing Jesus Christ, God's son, is good news...  
And it is just the beginning.

### **Closing Prayer**

[Text here]  
Amen.