**Who was Mark? by Thailer Jimerson**

Earlier this month we revealed our theme for 2019: Jesus the King. We’re aiming to understand the person of Jesus as the Holy Spirit describes him in revealed Scripture, despite all the guesses and theories popular at our time. What does it mean to understand the person of Christ as he defines himself? In last week’s sermon, I had one thesis (which is Mark’s thesis) from **Mark 1.1-15**: Jesus is the Son of God. This designation carries many echoes found in the Old Testament. It describes his *divinity*, *royalty*, and *humanity*.

 We’ll be spending extended time in Mark not only to understand the fully the question of Jesus, but also to be equipped to go out and share this basic message about Jesus with those who know him not, or at least entertain a level of misunderstanding. Our aim this year is the equip every member of our congregation to share the gospel of Mark, to be able to sit down at a table and, maybe over a cup of coffee, simply read through Mark and lead others to an experience of the revealed Christ, our King. Every member needs to be a sharing member. Every member needs to be able to do this. It’s basic to our identity as followers of Jesus.

 But who is Mark? And can we trust what he’s telling us about Jesus?

 According to early church history, Mark was a disciple of Peter. Papias writes:

 *“Mark, being the interpreter of Peter, whatsoever he remembered he wrote accurately, but not however in the order that these things were spoken or done by our Lord. For he neither heard the Lord, nor followed him, but afterwards, as I said, he was with Peter, who did not make a complete [or ordered] account of the Lord’s logia, but constructed his teachings according to chreiai [concise self-contained teachings]. So Mark did nothing wrong in writing down single matters as he remembered them, for he gave special attention to one thing, of not passing by anything he heard, and not falsifying anything in these matters.”*

With this, New Testament evidence agrees. Peter wrote this at the end of his first letter, where he concludes with this final greeting: “She who is at Babylon, who is likewise chosen, sends you greetings, and so does Mark, my son.” (**1 Peter 5.13**) Some even believe that this Mark who followed Peter, recorded his gospel, and most likely served as his personal amanuensis, might even be the same person as John Mark in the book of Acts (see **Acts 12.12, 25; 13.5, 13; 15.37**; and **2 Timothy 4.11**).

So, when we read the ‘Gospel of Mark’ (which in the original manuscript is untitled), there’s good reason to believe that this is none other than Peter’s eyewitness testimony of his time with Jesus. For this reason, Mark places an emphasis on Peter’s place: he’s mentioned by his Hebrew name “Simon”, and is frequently first in the list of apostles, and many of the stories are told from his perspective, to an overwhelming degree.

What makes this even more interesting is that when one compares the sermons of Peter to Mark’s gospel, they carry the same themes and emphases. So, if you want a good summary of what’s to come in the Gospel of Mark, consider Peter’s sermon to Cornelius’ household:

*“So Peter opened his mouth and said: “Truly I understand that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him. As for the word that he sent to Israel, preaching good news of peace through Jesus Christ (he is Lord of all), you yourselves know what happened throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee after the baptism that John proclaimed: how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. And we are witnesses of all that he did both in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree, but God raised him on the third day and made him to appear, not to all the people but to us who had been chosen by God as witnesses, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. And he commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one appointed by God to be judge of the living and the dead. To him all the prophets bear witness that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.”* (**Acts 10.34-43**)

**Schedule of Messages:**

January 20th – Jesus: The Fisherman, Mark 1.15-20

January 27th – Jesus: The Exorcist, Mark 1.21-28

February 3rd – Who Can Forgive Sins? Mark 2.1-12

February 10th – Why Does He Eat With Sinners? Mark 2.13-22

**Memory Verse:**

 3  “Let us burst their bonds apart

 and cast away their cords from us.”

 4  He who sits in the heavens laughs;

 the Lord holds them in derision.

 (**Psalm 2.3-4**)