

The Gospel According to Mark

The Gospel According to Mark was the first Gospel to be written. It is shorter than Matthew, Luke, and John. But like those Gospels, it has many stories about what Jesus said and did. Mark's Gospel helps us to be better followers of Jesus. It teaches us to love like Jesus. It teaches us to follow his Commandments. It reminds us that Jesus suffered and that we might have to suffer too. But it also reminds us to have hope. If we love Jesus and follow his Commandments, one day we will live with him in Heaven.

Mark

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The Preaching of John the Baptist

1 This is the Good News about Jesus Christ, the Son of God. **2** It began as the prophet Isaiah had written:

"God said, 'I will send my messenger ahead of you to open the way for you.'

3 Someone is shouting in the desert,

'Get the road ready for the Lord;

make a straight path for him to travel!'"

4 So John appeared in the desert, baptizing and preaching. "Turn away from your sins and be baptized," he told the people, "and God will forgive your sins." **5** Many people from the province of Judea and the city of Jerusalem went out to hear John. They confessed their sins, and he baptized them in the Jordan River.

6 John wore clothes made of camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. **7** He announced to the people, "The man who will come after me is much greater than I am. I am not good enough even to bend down and untie his sandals. **8** I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

The Baptism and Temptation of Jesus

9 Not long afterward Jesus came from Nazareth in the province of Galilee, and was baptized by John in the Jordan. **10** As soon as Jesus came up out of the water, he saw heaven opening and the Spirit coming down on him like a dove. **11** And a voice came from heaven, "You are my own dear Son. I am pleased with you."

12 At once the Spirit made him go into the desert, **13** where he stayed forty days, being tempted by Satan. Wild animals were there also, but angels came and helped him.

Jesus Calls Four Fishermen

14 After John had been put in prison, Jesus went to Galilee and preached the Good News from God. **15** "The right time has come," he said, "and the Kingdom of God is near! Turn away from your sins and believe the Good News!"

16 As Jesus walked along the shore of Lake Galilee, he saw two fishermen, Simon and his brother Andrew, catching fish with a net. **17** Jesus said to them, "Come with me, and I will teach you to catch people." **18** At once they left their nets and went with him.

19 He went a little farther on and saw two other brothers, James and John, the sons of Zebedee. They were in their boat getting their nets ready.

20 As soon as Jesus saw them, he called them; they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men and went with Jesus.

A Man with an Evil Spirit

21 Jesus and his disciples came to the town of Capernaum, and on the next Sabbath Jesus went to the synagogue and began to teach. **22** The people who heard him were amazed at the way he taught, for he wasn't like the teachers of the Law; instead, he taught with authority.

23 Just then a man with an evil spirit came into the synagogue and screamed, **24** "What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Are you here to destroy us? I know who you are—you are God's holy messenger!"

Jesus ordered the spirit, "Be silent and come out of the man!"

The evil spirit shook the man and gave a loud scream, and came out of him. **27** The people were all so amazed that they started saying to one another, "What is this? Is it some kind of new teaching? This man has authority to give orders to the evil spirits, and they obey him!"

And so the news about Jesus spread quickly everywhere in the province of Galilee.

Jesus Heals Many People

Jesus and his disciples, including Peter and John, left the synagogue and went straight to the home of Simon and Andrew. **30** Simon's mother-in-law was sick in bed with a fever, and as soon as Jesus arrived, he was up and about her. **31** He went to her, took her by the hand, and helped her up. She never left her, and she began to praise them.

After the sun had set and evening had come, people brought to Jesus all the sick and those who had demons. **33** All the people of the town gathered in front of the house. **34** Jesus healed many who were sick with all kinds of diseases and drove out many demons. He would not let the demons say anything, because they knew who he was.

Jesus Preaches in Galilee

Very early the next morning, long before daylight, Jesus got up and left the house. He went out of town to a lonely place, where he prayed. **36** But Peter and his companions went out searching for him, **37** and when they found him, they said, "Everyone is looking for you."

38 But Jesus answered, "We must go on to the other villages around here. I have to preach in them also, because that is why I came."

39 So he traveled all over Galilee, preaching in the synagogues and driving out demons.

Jesus Heals a Man

40 A man suffering from a dreaded skin disease came to Jesus, knelt down, and begged him for help. "If you want to," he said, "you can make me clean."

41 Jesus was filled with pity, and reached out and touched him. "I do want to," he answered. "Be clean!"

42 At once the disease left the man, and he was clean. **43** Then Jesus spoke sternly to him and sent him away at once, **44** after saying to him, "Listen, don't tell anyone about this. But go straight to the priest and let him examine you; then in order to prove to everyone that you are cured, offer the sacrifice that Moses ordered."

45 But the man went away and began to spread the news everywhere. Indeed, he talked so much that Jesus could not go into a town publicly. Instead, he stayed out in lonely places, and people came to him from everywhere.

Jesus Heals a Paralyzed Man

2 **1** A few days later Jesus went back to Capernaum, and the news spread that he was at home. **2** So many people came together that there was no room left, not even out in front of the door. Jesus was preaching the message to them **3** when four men arrived, carrying a paralyzed man to Jesus. **4** Because of the crowd, however, they could not get the man to him. So they

John the Baptist Prepares People for Jesus



Mark 1:4-8 (For the full story, read Mark 1:1-8.)

4 So John appeared in the desert, baptizing and preaching. "Turn away from your sins and be baptized," he told the people, "and God will forgive your sins." 5 Many people . . . went out to hear John. They confessed their sins, and he baptized them in the Jordan River.

6 John wore clothes made of camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and his food was **locusts** and wild honey. 7 He announced to the people, "The man who will come after me is much greater than I am. I am not good enough even to bend down and untie his sandals. 8 I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

locust a large grasshopper



Understand It!

When a visitor is coming, your family prepares. You clean the house, prepare food, and put on nice clothes. When Jesus came to earth, God sent John the Baptist to prepare for him. In this Bible story from Mark, John tells people to admit their sins and stop sinning. He baptizes them in the Jordan River as a sign that they wanted to change their hearts.

John also tells people that Jesus is coming. John explains that Jesus is far, far greater than he is. He says that the Baptism Jesus would give would be much more powerful than his. Jesus would baptize with the Holy Spirit. This is the Baptism we received. It washed away our sins and made us members of the Church, the family of God!

STORY

Mark 1

Live It!

Say this prayer to tell God you are sorry for your sins. It is called an Act of Contrition. We use this prayer in the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation.

My God,
 I am sorry for my sins with all my heart.
 In choosing to do wrong and failing to
 do good,
 I have sinned against you whom I should
 love above all things.
 I firmly intend, with your help, to do penance,
 to sin no more,
 and to avoid whatever leads me to sin. Amen.

Tell It!



Using the pictures above, retell this story in your own words.



made a hole in the roof right above the place where Jesus was. When they had made an opening, they let the man down, lying on his mat. **5** Seeing how much faith they had, Jesus said to the paralyzed man, "My son, your sins are forgiven."

6 Some teachers of the Law who were sitting there thought to themselves, **7** "How does he dare talk like this? This is blasphemy! God is the only one who can forgive sins!"

8 At once Jesus knew what they were thinking, so he said to them, "Why do you think such things? **9** Is it easier to say to this paralyzed man, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up, pick up your mat, and walk'? **10** I will prove to you, then, that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins." So he said to the paralyzed man, **11** "I tell you, get up, pick up your mat, and go home!"

12 While they all watched, the man got up, picked up his mat, and hurried away. They were all completely amazed and praised God, saying, "We have never seen anything like this!"

Jesus Calls Levi

13 Jesus went back again to the shore of Lake Galilee. A crowd came to him, and he started teaching them. **14** As he walked along, he saw a tax collector, Levi son of Alphaeus, sitting in his office. Jesus said to him, "Follow me." Levi got up and followed him.

15 Later on Jesus was having a meal in Levi's house. A large number of tax collectors and other outcasts was following Jesus, and many of them joined him and his disciples at the table. **16** Some teachers of the Law, who were Pharisees, saw that Jesus

was eating with these outcasts and tax collectors, so they asked his disciples, "Why does he eat with such people?"

17 Jesus heard them and answered, "People who are well do not need a doctor, but only those who are sick. I have not come to call respectable people, but outcasts."

The Question about Fasting

18 On one occasion the followers of John the Baptist and the Pharisees were fasting. Some people came to Jesus and asked him, "Why is it that the disciples of John the Baptist and the disciples of the Pharisees fast, but yours do not?"

19 Jesus answered, "Do you expect the guests at a wedding party to go without food? Of course not! As long as the bridegroom is with them, they will not do that. **20** But the day will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast.

21 "No one uses a piece of new cloth to patch up an old coat, because the new patch will shrink and tear off some of the old cloth, making an even bigger hole. **22** Nor does anyone pour new wine into used wineskins, because the wine will burst the skins, and both the wine and the skins will be ruined. Instead, new wine must be poured into fresh wineskins."

The Question about the Sabbath

23 Jesus was walking through some wheat fields on a Sabbath. As his disciples walked along with him, they began to pick the heads of wheat. **24** So the Pharisees said to Jesus, "Look, it is against our Law for your disciples to do that on the Sabbath!"

25 Jesus answered, "Have you never read what David did that time when he needed something to eat? He and his men were hungry, **26** so he went into the house of God and ate the bread offered to God. This happened when Abiathar was the High Priest. According to our Law only the priests may eat this bread—but David ate it and even gave it to his men."

27 And Jesus concluded, "The Sabbath was made for the good of human beings; they were not made for the Sabbath. **28** So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath."

The Man with a Paralyzed Hand

3 **1** Then Jesus went back to the synagogue, where there was a man who had a paralyzed hand. **2** Some people were there who wanted to accuse Jesus of doing wrong; so they watched him closely to see whether he would cure the man on the Sabbath. **3** Jesus said to the man, "Come up here to the front." **4** Then he asked the people, "What does our Law allow us to do on the Sabbath? To help or to harm? To save someone's life or to destroy it?"

But they did not say a thing. **5** Jesus was angry as he looked around at them, but at the same time he felt sorry for them, because they were so stubborn and wrong. Then he said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." He stretched it out, and it became well again. **6** So the Pharisees left the synagogue and met at once with some members of Herod's party, and they made plans to kill Jesus.

A Crowd by the Lake

7 Jesus and his disciples went away to Lake Galilee, and a large crowd

followed him. They had come from Galilee, from Judea, **8** from Jerusalem, from the territory of Idumea, from the territory on the east side of the Jordan, and from the region around the cities of Tyre and Sidon. All these people came to Jesus because they had heard of the things he was doing. **9** The crowd was so large that Jesus told his disciples to get a boat ready for him, so that the people would not crush him. **10** He had healed many people, and all the sick kept pushing their way to him in order to touch him. **11** And whenever the people who had evil spirits in them saw him, they would fall down before him and scream, "You are the Son of God!"

12 Jesus sternly ordered the evil spirits not to tell anyone who he was.

Jesus Chooses the Twelve Apostles

13 Then Jesus went up a hill and called to himself the men he wanted. They came to him, **14** and he chose twelve, whom he named apostles. "I have chosen you to be with me," he told them. "I will also send you out to preach, **15** and you will have authority to drive out demons."

16 These are the twelve he chose: Simon (Jesus gave him the name Peter); **17** James and his brother John, the sons of Zebedee (Jesus gave them the name Boanerges, which means "Men of Thunder"); **18** Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Patriot, **19** and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed Jesus.

Jesus and Beelzebul

20 Then Jesus went home. Again such a large crowd gathered that Jesus

Jesus Heals People from Sin and Sickness



Mark 2:2-5, 10-12 (For the full story, read Mark 2:1-12.)

2 Jesus was preaching. . . 3 when four men arrived, carrying a **paralyzed** man to Jesus. 4 Because of the crowd, however, they could not get the man to him. So they made a hole in the roof right above the place where Jesus was. . . they let the man down, lying on his mat. 5 . . . Jesus said to the paralyzed man, "My son, your sins are forgiven."

10 "I will prove to you, then, that the Son of Man has **authority** on earth to forgive sins." So he said to the paralyzed man, 11 "I tell you, get up, pick up your mat, and go home!"

12 While they all watched, the man got up, picked up his mat, and hurried away.

paralyzed unable to move because of a sickness

authority the right to rule

Understand It!

In this Bible story, four men believe that Jesus can heal. They know that Jesus is preaching inside a house. So they want to bring their paralyzed friend to him. When they can't get in the crowded house, they don't give up. They climb the outside stairs to the roof. The men make a hole in the roof and lower their friend inside the house.

First Jesus tells the man that his sins are forgiven. Some people are shocked because only God can forgive sins. They don't realize that Jesus is God. Jesus tells the paralyzed man to get up. To everyone's surprise, the man gets up. He is no longer paralyzed! Jesus can cure people who are sick in body. Jesus can also cure people who are hurting because of their sins.

STORY

Mark 2

Live It!

This story shows that Jesus has power to help sick people. You can show sick people the love of Jesus. Think of someone who is sick. Pray that he or she gets better. Visit if you can, or call. Let the person know that you are praying for him or her.

Tell It!



Using the pictures above, retell this story in your own words.



and his disciples had no time to eat. **21** When his family heard about it, they set out to take charge of him, because people were saying, "He's gone mad!"

22 Some teachers of the Law who had come from Jerusalem were saying, "He has Beelzebul in him! It is the chief of the demons who gives him the power to drive them out."

23 So Jesus called them to him and spoke to them in parables: "How can Satan drive out Satan? **24** If a country divides itself into groups which fight each other, that country will fall apart. **25** If a family divides itself into groups which fight each other, that family will fall apart. **26** So if Satan's kingdom divides into groups, it cannot last, but will fall apart and come to an end.

27 "No one can break into a strong man's house and take away his belongings unless he first ties up the strong man; then he can plunder his house.

28 "I assure you that people can be forgiven all their sins and all the evil things they may say. **29** But whoever says evil things against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven, because he has committed an eternal sin." (**30** Jesus said this because some people were saying, "He has an evil spirit in him.")

Jesus' Mother and Brothers

31 Then Jesus' mother and brothers arrived. They stood outside the house and sent in a message, asking for him. **32** A crowd was sitting around Jesus, and they said to him, "Look, your mother and your brothers and sisters are outside, and they want you."

33 Jesus answered, "Who is my mother? Who are my brothers?" **34** He

looked at the people sitting around him and said, "Look! Here are my mother and my brothers! **35** Whoever does what God wants is my brother, my sister, my mother."

The Parable of the Sower

1 Again Jesus began to teach beside Lake Galilee. The crowd that gathered around him was so large that he got into a boat and sat in it. The boat was out in the water, and the crowd stood on the shore at the water's edge. **2** He used parables to teach them many things, saying to them:

3 "Listen! Once there was a man who went out to sow grain. **4** As he scattered the seed in the field, some of it fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. **5** Some of it fell on rocky ground, where there was little soil. The seeds soon sprouted, because the soil wasn't deep. **6** Then, when the sun came up, it burned the young plants; and because the roots had not grown deep enough, the plants soon dried up. **7** Some of the seed fell among thorn bushes, which grew up and choked the plants, and they did not bear grain. **8** But some seeds fell in good soil, and the plants sprouted, grew, and bore grain: some had thirty grains, others sixty, and others one hundred."

9 And Jesus concluded, "Listen, then, if you have ears!"

The Purpose of the Parables

10 When Jesus was alone, some of those who had heard him came to him with the twelve disciples and asked him to explain the parables. **11** "You have been given the secret of the Kingdom of God," Jesus answered. "But

the others, who are on the outside, hear all things by means of parables, so that,

They may look and look,
yet not see;
they may listen and listen,
yet not understand.
For if they did, they would turn
to God,
and he would forgive them.' "

Jesus Explains the Parable of the Sower

Then Jesus asked them, "Don't you understand this parable? How, then, will you ever understand any parable? The sower sows God's message. Some people are like the seeds that fall along the path; as soon as they hear the message, Satan comes and takes it away. Other people are like the seeds that fall on rocky ground. As soon as they hear the message, they receive it gladly. But it does not sink deep into them, and they don't last long. So when trouble or persecution comes because of the message, they give up at once. Other people are like the seeds sown among the thorn bushes. These are the ones who hear the message, but the worries about this life, the love for riches, and all other kinds of desires crowd in and choke the message, and they don't bear fruit. But other people are like seeds sown in good soil. They hear the message, accept it, and bear fruit: some thirty, some sixty, and some one hundred."

A Lamp under a Bowl

Jesus continued, "Does anyone ever bring in a lamp and put it under a bowl or under the bed? Isn't it put on the lampstand? Whatever is

hidden away will be brought out into the open, and whatever is covered up will be uncovered. Listen, then, if you have ears!"

He also said to them, "Pay attention to what you hear! The same rules you use to judge others will be used by God to judge you—but with even greater severity. Those who have something will be given more, and those who have nothing will have taken away from them even the little they have."

The Parable of the Growing Seed

Jesus went on to say, "The Kingdom of God is like this. A man scatters seed in his field. He sleeps at night, is up and about during the day, and all the while the seeds are sprouting and growing. Yet he does not know how it happens. The soil itself makes the plants grow and bear fruit; first the tender stalk appears, then the head, and finally the head full of grain. When the grain is ripe, the man starts cutting it with his sickle, because harvest time has come.

The Parable of the Mustard Seed

"What shall we say the Kingdom of God is like?" asked Jesus. "What parable shall we use to explain it? It is like this. A man takes a mustard seed, the smallest seed in the world, and plants it in the ground. After a while it grows up and becomes the biggest of all plants. It puts out such large branches that the birds come and make their nests in its shade."

Jesus preached his message to the people, using many other parables like these; he told them as much as