

Mark is believed to be the first gospel written. Shorter than the other gospels, it moves quickly and one of the challenges in reading it is to savor what is written. Many believe that the gospels are written as teaching for new Christians, so as we read the gospel together a question to ask is, "what is this earliest written account of the life of Jesus trying to teach?"

### Getting Out of Wilderness

John the Baptist baptizes Jesus in the wilderness, and Jesus is tempted in the wilderness. Let's look at the importance of "wilderness" and "making a way."

- Read Isaiah 40:3-5. What promises are made in these verses?
- Read Malachi 3:1-3. What is said about the messenger?
- Read Mark 1: 2-8. What similarities between Mark and the above two passages do you see?
- Jesus will "be a messenger who will make a way." How would you rewrite that in modern language?
- How do you see Jesus trying to move you out of the wilderness now?

### Three Clashes With Jewish Practice

Jesus was Jewish – yet he clashed with his tradition. In Mark 2 Jesus rubs up against Jewish practice in three ways. Read Mark 2 now, and let's consider each encounter.

#### Jesus and the Paralytic

Read and react to:

2 Samuel 12:13 –

Psalm 103:3 –

Isaiah 6:7 –

Do you believe God causes illness in us because of our sin? Why?

How are our weaknesses opportunities for Jesus to show His power in our lives?

## Jesus and Fasting - Mark 2:18-22.

Do Jesus' disciples fast at this point? Why or why not?

Read Judges 20:26. What is described and how is fasting used?

What is Jesus' answer in Mark 2 as why his disciples do not fast?

Have you ever fasted – why or why not?

## Jesus and the Sabbath – Mark 2: 23-37

Write down Exodus 34:21 below.

Do you think Jesus is violating the Sabbath in Mark 2:23?

Jesus' basis for an answer is 1 Samuel 21:1-6. Read that passage and describe your reaction to Jesus' violation of the Sabbath.

## Jesus and Crowds

### Read Mark 3. Read Mark 3:7-12.

Where have we seen crowds so far in Mark?

How do you think the growing numbers of people attracted to Jesus influenced his appointing 12 disciples in Mark 3:13-19?

Has Jesus called you as a disciple to help handle 'the crowd'? What do you think?