

Jesus is King

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[0 : 00] To Mark chapter 1. We've just started a new series last week, Mark chapter 1, which is found on page 1002.

If you're using a red-covered Bible, if you haven't got a Bible, there's plenty at the back. Page 1002, Mark chapter 1, starting at verse 14 through to verse 39.

It's good to have Dave back. Dave was away, saving lives on the beaches of Kerry, and nobody drowned. So that was good. Yeah. So, anyway, over to you, Dave.

After John was put into prison, Jesus went to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. The time has come, he said. The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news.

As Jesus walked beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew, casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. Come, follow me, Jesus said, and I will make you fishers of men.

[1 : 11] At once they left their nets and followed him. When he had gone a little further, he saw James, son of Zebedee, and his brother John in a boat, preparing their nets.

Without delay, he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men and followed him. They went to the Capernaum, and when the Sabbath came, Jesus went into the synagogue and began to teach.

The people were amazed at his teaching, because he taught them as one who had authority, not as the teachers of the law. Just then, a man in the synagogue, who was possessed by an evil spirit, cried out, What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God.

Be quiet, said Jesus sternly. Come out of him. The evil spirit shook the man violently and came out of him with a shriek.

The people were all so amazed that they asked each other, What is this? A new teaching, and with authority, he even gives orders to evil spirits when they obey him.

[2 : 27] News about him spreads quickly over the whole region of Galilee. As soon as they left the synagogue, they went with James and John to the home of Simon and Andrew.

Simon's mother-in-law was in bed with a fever, and they told Jesus about her. So he went up to her, took her hand and helped her. The fever left her, and she began to wait on them.

That evening, after sunset, the people brought to Jesus all the sick and the demon-possessed.

The whole town gathered at the door, and Jesus healed many who had various diseases. He drove out many demons, but he would not let the demon speak, because they knew who he was.

Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house, and went off to a solitary place where he prayed. Simon and his companions went to look for him, and when they found him, they exclaimed, Everyone is looking for you.

[3 : 34] Jesus replied, Let us go somewhere else, to the nearby villages, so that I can preach there also. That is why I have come. So he travelled throughout Galilee, preaching in the synagogues and driving out demons.

Thanks very much, Dave.

Well, please follow along in your Bibles. Some of you may have got a sheet with headings, if not, on the back of the new sheet. You can take notes. And please do ask questions afterwards, if there's anything you want to talk through.

And also, at the back on the table, there's an introduction to the Gospel of Mark, to give you a big picture of what it's all about. Well, before we get stuck into this very exciting and dramatic, action-packed text, we're going to ask for God's help as we look at it together.

So let's pray. Father, because you are King, you are the God who owns all things, and therefore we ask that you would give us an appreciation of the wonder of who you are.

[4 : 51] By your Holy Spirit, speak into each of our lives, individually and together as a church family. That we would be people who are orientated around you, that your kingdom becomes our priority, and we would learn what it is, that you are King.

So please encourage us all this morning. In Jesus we pray, and for his glory alone. Amen. Well, I'm sure you will all know Louis Armstrong's famous song, What a Wonderful World.

It's a touching, optimistic look at what life is like. I'm not going to sing, don't worry, I haven't got a great voice. But here it goes. I see trees of green, red roses too.

I see them bloom for you and for me, and I think to myself, What a wonderful world. It's a song that celebrates life at its best, or perhaps what we wish the world was really like.

The colours of the rainbow so pretty in the sky are also on the faces of those going by. I see friends shaking hands saying, How do you do? They're really saying, I love you.

[6 : 10] And I think to myself, What a wonderful world. But reality sings a different song. Today, as we've been seeing on the news, marks the 10th anniversary of the 9-11 attacks.

And since then, over the last decade, there have been many more terrorist attacks. More wars and genocide. There's not too many people shaking hands saying, I love you.

I love you. This week, I read an article that said, 2.5 million people are trafficked into the sex industry every year.

Half of whom are children, to be abused and raped at will. There's no rainbows in their sky. And as we sit in comfort in this room, with bellies full after our breakfast, a billion more live with acute malnutrition, lack of basic needs like fresh water, and suffering curable disease like HIV.

Not too many roses are blooming there either. You see, looking around our world, we realise it's a disordered world, filled with broken lives.

[7 : 30] But imagine for a minute, a world where the sound of laughter replaces the cries of pain. Where people begin to embrace one another, and no gun can be found.

A world where suffering and sickness is no more. Where rainbows fill the sky, replacing hurricanes and tornadoes and destructive earthquakes. A world where justice rules, where cruel dictators are banished, where evil traffickers are removed, where health and prosperity is a given for all.

Look at verse 14. After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God.

The time has come, he said. The kingdom of God is near. You see, the touching optimism of Louis Armstrong, and the dream of every one of us, becomes a reality in the coming of Jesus Christ.

The promise of the prophets long ago, that the Lord would be king over the whole earth, was about to start with the coming of Jesus.

[8 : 53] Jesus came into the world with a message. He said, the kingdom of God is near. God had intervened into the world, and was about to rule in a new, and a different way.

The kingdom of God meant that things were now going to be done God's way. Wrongs would be put right, justice would prevail, peace would be established, and suffering would come to an end.

And those, as they gathered around Jesus, were on the verge of a new world order. And Jesus said, it's very near.

Of course, little did they know that Jesus was the king, who was going to make it a reality before their very eyes. For Jesus was much more than an announcer saying to people, the kingdom is coming.

Jesus was the king of this promised kingdom. Now, from our vantage point of where we are today, we can look back over all of history, and we can wonder and ask the question, has Jesus made any difference at all?

[10 : 06] As far as I can see, the world hasn't got any better. It seems to have got worse. So where is this kingdom that he's promised? And where on earth has this king gone?

Well, we must read carefully what Jesus has said. Look at verse 15, the first part. Jesus said, the time has come. The coming of Jesus marked the start or the beginning of his rule.

But it didn't stop there. Read on. Look what it says at the end of verse 15. He says, the kingdom of God is near. It started, but it's not yet finished.

One day it's going to be fulfilled. He's saying the day is yet to come. The good news is it has started. It's near. It's close.

The king is in place to bring that process about. But it one day will be fulfilled. In fact, part of all that good news is, is that Jesus was inviting people to be a part of his kingdom.

[11 : 20] The king came with a specific call. Let's read 15 again. The time has come, he said. The kingdom of God is near. Response? Repent and believe the good news.

Well, what does he mean, repent and believe? Well, let's read on. Verse 16. As Jesus walked beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake because they're fishermen.

Come follow me, Jesus said, and I'm going to make you fishers of men. And at once they left their nets and they followed him. And when he'd gone a little further, he saw James, son of Zebedee, and his brother John in a boat preparing their nets.

Without delay, he called them and they left their father Zebedee in the boat and the hired men and they followed Jesus. Now, I think this gives us a picture of what it means to repent and believe the good news.

Here we've got two sets of brothers. Simon, who later becomes, we know as Peter, Simon and Andrew, and then we've got James and John. They're four hardworking blokes, down-to-earth guys, getting on with life as best they could, trying to make a living and to provide for their family.

[12 : 35] They're like the neighbour who lives across the road from you or the person in your office. But like us, and like everyone, they're called to repent and believe.

Now, pay attention to what Jesus says to them and how they respond, verse 17. Jesus comes to them. He hasn't met them before, as far as we know. He says to them, verse 17, Come, follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.

And look at verse 20. Without delay, he called them, and they left, and they followed him. Simon and Andrew leave their nets, implying they're leaving their work.

James and John leave their father and the rest of their buddies in the boat, implying they're leaving their family and their friends behind. It's a picture of what repentance and belief is all about.

It's submitting to Jesus and his rule and making Jesus and his kingdom your priority. It doesn't mean to say that we all have to leave our work and not do any work, but making him our priority.

[13 : 45] Jesus has announced the good news of the kingdom, and now he's calling people, ordinary people, like you and me, to be part of it. He's welcoming us on board.

And it calls for a radical decision on our part. A decisive action that each one of us must do to turn from our own selfish wants and desires and our own plans and ambitions and making Jesus' wants and desires the rule of your life.

Now let's settle on that for a minute and let's probe a little bit deeper and ask ourselves the question, what is the priority in your life?

What's the priority in my life? What's your main ambition? What do you hope to achieve? A stable job, a good salary. What is it?

Or here's another question. Who is your greatest desire? Who is the one that consumes you, that you love the most? Your spouse, your children, your circle of friends?

[14 : 57] Well, Jesus says, none of those things are bad. But as Jesus comes to us, he is saying, our greatest desire in life must be Jesus.

Jesus, and his kingdom must be our priority. Above all else, everything else must serve those ends. In fact, he's calling us to a completely new life altogether.

Look at verse 17. He says, come and follow me and I will make you fishers of men. He's calling us that whatever work we do, whatever our life situation it is, that our priority is about doing what Jesus did, inviting other people to submit to Jesus and to invite them to be part of his kingdom.

So if you find yourself tomorrow morning, Monday morning, at work, with your mates and with your buddies, whoever you're with, your main priority, your main ambition is to be seeking that they come to be part of God's kingdom.

If you're with children, it's about raising your kids to know who Jesus is, that he is the king and that they too would be part of his kingdom. Now we're not different to anybody else.

[16 : 17] People long for a different world. Everybody sees the same news that we see. Everybody wants suffering to end. Everybody wants a ruler who's going to bring justice and peace to this world.

And the amazing thing is people who are followers of Jesus know who that king is. They know who's going to do it. And they know the kind of kingdom that he has promised to bring about.

That's what makes us exciting. And Jesus proves to us that he is the king to do all of this.

And he gives us a reason of why we should be following him. Look at his authority, verse 21. They went to Capernaum and when the Sabbath came, Jesus went into the synagogue, their kind of local church, and he began to teach.

And it was usual for those who could read and translate Hebrew to kind of get up and teach on a Sabbath and explain what the passage meant.

[17:20] And so Jesus stood up and he began to talk. Except for this time it was different to anybody else who had ever stood up. Verse 22. The people were amazed at his teaching because he taught them as one who had authority, not as the teachers of the law.

You see, other teachers that came along would quote various scholars and that was their authority. They would say things like, oh, Rabbi so-and-so said this and that's why it's important. But when Jesus came along, Jesus would say things like, I say to you.

Or I tell you the truth. Or you do this because I tell you to do it. Jesus was claiming to be an authority himself. He didn't need anybody to back him up.

He didn't need books or scholars to agree with him. Jesus was an authority. Everything that he said was authoritative. And if any of us are in doubt about his authority, read on in this story.

You could imagine, okay, a gathering just like this as we are. Just then, a man in their synagogue who was possessed by an evil spirit cried out in the middle of Jesus' sermon, What do you want with us?

[18:37] Jesus of Nazareth. Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God. Be quiet, said Jesus sternly.

Come out of him. And the evil spirit shook the man violently and came out of him with a shriek. The people were all so amazed that they asked each other, What is this?

A new teaching? And with authority? He even gives orders to evil spirits and they obey him. Now it would certainly liven up a Sunday morning, wouldn't it, if that happened?

And I think we would all be amazed. But there's no arguments going on here. There's no mystical mantras. There's no quiet playing of music and people waving white handkerchiefs around.

It's just a simple word. Be quiet. Come out of him. Jesus confronting the servants of Satan and they not only listen, but they actually obey and they submit to his supreme authority.

[19:47] They do what he tells them to do. It's hardly surprising then, look at verse 28, that news about Jesus spread quickly over the whole region.

Did you hear what happened in church last Sunday? Man, this guy came up did you hear about it? And all the news started to travel around. But that's not all.

Look at the power of this king. Verse 29. As soon as they left the synagogue, they went with James and John to the home of Simon and Andrew. And Simon's mother-in-law was in bed with a fever.

And they told Jesus about her. So he went to her, took her hand, helped her up. The fever left her and she began to wait on them.

Now it's really quite extraordinary, isn't it? There's just a simple touch, a holding of the hand, there's no words, lifts her up and immediately the fever goes.

[20:50] The high temperature, whatever sickness it was, it's just gone. Her strength returns and she begins to go and get dinner ready for everyone. And if that doesn't amaze us, I mean, it just gets more exciting.

Look at verse 32. That evening, after all the word had gone around, after sunset, the people brought to Jesus all the sick and the demon-possessed.

The whole town gathered at the door and Jesus healed many who had various diseases. Now we have to step back here from the familiarity of these accounts because we've probably read this story before and we just kind of read over and go, ah, yeah, yeah, I know that.

But we've got to step back and be amazed at what's going on. Today it would be like walking through CUH. going into every ward, going down to accident and emergency, going down to the cancer treatment, down to the children's ward, touching them all, speaking to them all, and one by one getting out of their beds and walking out of that hospital, leaving all their tubes and everything else behind.

The hospital completely empty. Now isn't that amazing? He healed the whole town. There's no special meeting, no gimmicks, no men in white suits with their gold rings with big flashing things, donate here and you'll be healed.

[22 : 30] Just a man with supreme power, touching and healing. before their very eyes, the kingdom that Jesus announced, the kingdom that he said was near, Jesus was now beginning to demonstrate it amongst them.

By his authority and by his power, he was proving that he is God's king who's come to restore broken lives and to renew this disordered world. The evil spirit that he came across, the servant of Satan knows that Jesus had come to restore broken lives.

Look at what he says back in verse 24. He says, have you come to destroy us? Jesus was demonstrating that he has authority over evil, over Satan, over darkness, over his servants. He's come to destroy Satan's rule to free people and to release them from his grasp. and all the sick who had come to his door, who had come to the house, most of whom would have been poor and ostracised from society, they recognised that in Jesus there was something different. He has one who has power to renew their broken world. Where they would have been ostracised, left outside by the rest of society, now made well and brought back in.

[24 : 01] Jesus is demonstrating that he has power over all the brokenness, that he has come to fix the suffering and the pain that the world has been plagued with.

He's giving them a picture. He's undoing everything that's gone wrong. Now as awesome as all this is, and it truly is, Mark, the writer, does not want us to miss the crucial points, the priorities of the king.

Look at the end of verse 34. We didn't finish that off. Let's read the end of verse 34. Jesus also drove out demons, but he would not let the demons speak because they knew who he was. Now doesn't that sound rather strange? Surely the whole purpose of Jesus coming is that people would know who he is. You would think he would want as much advertisement as possible. So why is he telling him not to speak? Why is he wanting to keep it all a big secret? Well the answer I think comes as we read on, verse 35. Very early in the morning when it was still dark, Jesus got up, left his house and went off to a place on his own where he could pray.

[25 : 28] Simon and his companions went to look for him and when they found him they exclaimed, everyone is looking for you. Now it's not surprising that everybody is looking for Jesus.

He's just healed a whole town. And like us, they want a miracle worker who's going to end all present suffering and end all the disease that's around the place. Ironically, however, it's the demons who know that Jesus is much more than just a miracle worker. Look back at chapter 1, verse 24.

They know who he is. Look at what it says at the end. He says, I know who you are. You're the Holy One of God. But, the demons know that Jesus is the chosen one from God.

The king. And Jesus then does a strange thing. He silences them. And the reason I think is, and you can come back to me on this afterwards if you want, is because he doesn't want his identity to be misunderstood as just a miracle worker.

[26 : 47] Yes, Jesus is the Son of God. Yes, he is God's king. Yes, he is a miracle worker. But the Son of God is so much more than just that.

That's just the tip of the iceberg. He's far greater than all of that. Jesus is supremely concerned about present suffering.

But Jesus is especially concerned about eternal suffering. You see, our priority in life is always physical and temporary.

If you ask people, what's the problem? It's what's immediate and what's now. What can we do to fix it now? For Jesus, his priority was spiritual and eternal.

What can we do to make life eternally right? and I think the answer comes for us as we read on verse 38. They say, everyone's looking for you.

[27 : 52] What does Jesus say? Let us go somewhere else. Away from these crowds to nearby villages so that I can preach there also.

That is why I have come. His priority was to preach the good news of the kingdom, to announce it. That the kingdom of God is near.

That people need to repent and that they need to believe and they need to get right with God. And I think it's important for us to understand the king's priority.

The healing and the casting out of demons, it was wonderful. And it demonstrates what the kingdom would be like. A world without suffering and a world without evil.

But you know what? Being physically healed, being freed from demons, wouldn't actually get you into the kingdom. The only way to qualify for God's eternal kingdom was by doing what Simon and Andrew and James and John did.

[28 : 59] They repented and they believed and they made him their priority. Jesus didn't come to relieve as many people as possible from physical suffering.

He came to rescue as many people as possible from eternal suffering. Let me just give you two references for this.

Chapter 2 verse 17. Chapter 2 verse 17. Jesus said to them, it's not the healthy who need a doctor but the sick.

I have not come to call the righteous or I haven't come for people who think they're well and that they're alright. Jesus says, I've come for sinners. A spiritual problem, a heart problem, not a physical problem.

look at chapter 10 verse 45. Mark chapter 10 verse 45.

[30 : 13] For even the Son of Man, that's Jesus, did not come to be served. He was king, alright, but he didn't come for everybody to serve him.

But as the king he came to serve. and to give his life as a ransom for many. He's talking there about his coming death.

His death on the cross where he was crucified, nailed, was about dealing with the wrath of God, the judgment that we all deserve for not treating Jesus as king.

and Jesus says, I'll deal with that so that I can bring you safely to my eternal kingdom where there is no suffering and no pain and where all evil is banished.

Back to Mark chapter 1. Now as much as that is Jesus' priority, it does not mean Jesus stops doing his miracles.

[31 : 20] Verse 39 of chapter 1. So we travel throughout Galilee, preaching in their synagogues, announcing the good news, and driving out demons.

Jesus was filled with compassion and love for the people that he came to. And he healed them. Not everybody got healed that was living at the time of Jesus.

And in effect he was saying, look, I have come to restore broken lives and to renew this disordered world, but if you want to be part of my eternal kingdom, you've got to repent and you've got to believe.

And here is a crucial lesson for us as a church. As we examine and watch the life of Jesus, we must never separate what we might say demonstration and proclamation.

We must never separate just word and deed and kind of split them apart. Jesus did both and so should we.

[32 : 31] We should be concerned about the suffering in the world. We should be ministering to the sick and to the dying. We should practically take steps to rid the world of evils like human trafficking.

We should stand for those things. We should desire peace and justice and an end to all terrorism.

We should be at the forefront of these things and shouting about it.

And we should do all of this because this is the kind of world that God has promised to bring about.

He longs that things would be put right. But let's get this clear.

None of those things will bring any individual into the kingdom of God. They might point people into the direction, but I won't get them there.

Therefore, like Jesus, we must be especially concerned about eternal suffering and the priority to announce the good news that the kingdom has come.

[33 : 41] It's near and we long for the day of its fulfillment. Let's pray together. our Father God, we are truly amazed at these accounts recorded for us of when Jesus, the King, walked on this earth.

The people that he met, the suffering that he encountered, the changes that he brought about. It's truly amazing.

Lord, impact us afresh at the authority and the power that you have. But help us to grasp and to hear clearly what you are saying.

That while you are concerned about physical and present suffering, you are especially concerned with spiritual and eternal suffering, your desire is that none would perish, that none would go to hell, but that all would turn to you, repent and believe, and find their hope in Jesus Christ, the King over all.

Lord, help us if we have not yet done that, to make Jesus our King right now, to understand the urgency and the priority.

[35 : 33] And if we have, may we be people who demonstrate your kingdom, that we would live it, that we would proclaim it, point people to Jesus, invite them and encourage them and show them that Jesus is the only hope for our broken world and for disordered lives.

We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen. we're going to sing a song that I've chosen to try and pick up on some of the themes of the song.