

# The Gospel Of Mark

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[ 0 : 00 ] The following sermon is made available by Lakeside Bible Church in Cornelius, North Carolina.

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What we come to today in our study is the beginning of what I think is certainly the most exciting and perhaps even the most important study in the young life of our church.

Now, while we understand that all of the Bible is there for the purpose of showing us the story of redemption, the redemptive narrative of God specifically through Jesus, it's in the Gospels that we see most clearly the person of Jesus, the work that he has accomplished in order to bring salvation to man.

[ 1 : 18 ] There's no more important story for us to focus in on than this one because it tells us exactly who Jesus is and what he has done.

And it's precisely for this reason that the four books that relate to the life of Jesus are some of the most contested books in Scripture. It's not only that people are averse to the Bible in and of itself. Some people have a great appreciation for it. But to get to these four Gospels and to accept them as absolute truth and something that is necessary for us to believe is difficult for many people. And there's even an unfortunate amount of instability amongst professing Christians when it comes especially to the exclusivity of Jesus Christ and the exclusivity of the Gospel.

Ligonier Ministries, every two years, does a survey, a theological survey, in which they try to find insights into what is the spiritual temperature of the United States.

[ 2 : 28 ] And this year was one of the years that they conducted that survey. They conducted it with 3,002 people. 573 of those 3,000 said that they were evangelical Christians, professing Christians that would say that they are what we are and that they are who we are.

The third question in their survey this year was this. It wasn't a question. It was a statement. And the respondents answered on a scale of strongly disagree up to strongly agree. And the statement was this.

God accepts the worship of all religions, including Christianity, Judaism, and Islam. God accepts the worship of all religions.

That was the third statement. And they wanted to gauge what was the spiritual temperature of most people in the United States. It wouldn't be surprising to us to know that 76% of all respondents answered that they were either unsure or that they strongly agreed with that statement.

That God does indeed accept all the worship, no matter whether it's a subscription to Christianity or Islam or some other form of religion.

[ 3 : 37 ] 76% of the respondents said that they were either unsure or they agree with that. It should shock us to know that 51% of professing Christians surveyed agreed with that statement.

51% of people in the United States, according to this survey, perhaps would say that I am a Christian. I follow Christ. But Christ is not exclusive in my belief for God's acceptance.

That there are plenty of religions out there. God accepts the praise of all people. He just cares about the sincerity of your heart is probably what they would insinuate. And of course, we understand through the scripture that God is far less concerned about the sincerity of your heart.

He doesn't care about that unless it is related specifically to your belief and sincerity in the gospel of Jesus Christ. The sincerity of heart has sent many a people to an eternity of hell.

It's not just sincerity that God is looking for. It is sincerity in truth. And what we have in the gospels is the truth of Jesus Christ.

[ 4 : 46 ] John Stott said, Nothing hinders evangelism more than the widespread loss of confidence in the truth, relevance, and power of the gospel.

The problem with that survey and the problem with the dynamic of the belief in the gospel today is not merely in what outsiders in the church, those outside of the church would believe about it.

The problem is the weakening of those that claim to be within the church. That they have lost confidence in the truth of the book that we are about to study in the gospel of Mark.

So we don't come to this study casually. We need to study this gospel book sincerely. As we acknowledge that it is not merely the story of an ancient prophet that is far removed from any kind of relevance in modern times.

But it is the message of salvation revealed through the life of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. The objective of our study today is to grasp the context of Mark's book so that we can rightly understand as we move forward over what will end up being probably several months of study in this one book.

[ 6 : 13 ] Let's just take a moment to examine what a gospel is. What are the gospels? The gospels are, at least in the way that we refer to them in this context, we're speaking of a collection of books that are specifically about the life and ministry of Jesus of Nazareth.

There's four of them in the New Testament and they're arranged as the first four books of the New Testament. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. They're all telling the same story, but each with their own unique purpose and unique audience.

And consistent among all four of these gospels is the fact that they are all eyewitness accounts of the life, the teaching, the crucifixion, the resurrection, and the ascension of Jesus Christ.

It's not that they are writing far removed from the time of Christ's life, but they are writing the eyewitness accounts of what real people really saw of a real man named Jesus of Nazareth.

Matthew, Mark, and Luke are commonly referred to as the synoptic gospels. Synoptic meaning together sight is what the word means. It's a summary that looks at these three books and the similarity of their content.

[ 7 : 34 ] John then is the last to be written, as we understand, and he fills in the gaps that Matthew, Mark, and Luke, the synoptics, kind of leave out in their stories, and he brings in another dimension to it.

Now, gospel actually describes the genre of the book. These are not merely biographies of Jesus. Like I said, they are eyewitness testimonies to the truth of Jesus that doesn't seek to tell us a story, but rather to strengthen the faith of believers and to evangelize unbelievers.

A biography is just that. It's something that tells a story. It tells just for intellectual exercise. It tells us the story of a unique individual in a unique period of time.

That is not what these four gospels are. They do contain biographical content, but they are not in and of themselves biographies. The intention is not just to tell us a story about a man in a specific time.

They are eyewitness accounts. Their purpose is to persuade. They don't mean to just tell you this is who Jesus is. They mean to persuade you to believe who Jesus is, to receive who Jesus is, and to follow him as Lord and Savior.

[ 8 : 51 ] Donald Guthrie said, The gospel writers were not literary men, nor were they setting out to be. They themselves had received a remarkable transformation as a result of the stupendous events they related.

This is not a few men hoping to make a few bucks by publishing a few novels about a man that most people might be interested in. That is not the intention of these four books.

These are four men who were radically transformed by what they knew to be true about Jesus Christ, and their writing then is to relay what has transformed their lives in order that it might transform your life.

They don't just want you to know the man Jesus. They want you to know the Savior Jesus, and they want you to follow him. So they weren't seeking to publish incredible tales.

They weren't trying to gain fame or wealth in doing so. But they were inspired by the Holy Spirit of God to write the good news of Jesus Christ.

[ 9 : 59 ] And so we ask then, where does Mark fit into that equation? If there's four of these such gospels, what makes Mark unique and significant, and why are we indeed studying it now as a

church?

And the simple answer to that, before we even get to probably a more appropriate answer, is it's the shortest of the gospels. And you all know that brevity is not my strength. And so we can go through 16 chapters of Mark a lot faster than we can go through 28 chapters of Matthew, or so on and so forth.

But it's by far the most concise of the four gospels. But it's primarily the record of the apostolic testimony of Peter. Peter, the account that we read and that we'll study over the next several months, the account of Jesus's life is from the eyes of perhaps Jesus's most famous disciple. And what we understand in church history is that as Peter carried out the great commission given to him specifically by Jesus before his ascension, Peter carries out this great commission, and he eventually makes his way to Rome preaching the gospel.

And as he did that, Mark wrote down the testimony of the events that Peter relayed. As Peter told these stories in Jerusalem, as he preached these messages in Rome and elsewhere, Mark tagged along, and Mark began to write down what it was that Peter said and what it was that Peter preached.

[ 11 : 24 ] And this became a collection of the eyewitness testimony of the apostle Peter. So understanding the writing and intentions of each gospel author depends on recognizing their intended audience as well.

Mark's gospel came at the specific request of Roman believers living in Rome, not Jewish believers, but pagan converts to Christianity.

And so where did this gospel come from? Well, Mark tagged along with Peter. Peter preached his eyewitness account of the gospel. People came that were saved, and they said, Mark, would you mind writing this down for us?

We don't want to, we're going to forget it. Can you write it down? And Peter was pleased for him to do that because of the revelation of the Holy Spirit to Peter for Mark to do so. And so he made this collection of Peter's eyewitness account of Jesus Christ, and that is what we study over the next several months.

What Peter said was true of Jesus is what Mark has written for us here in the Bible. The audience that Mark wrote to was not familiar with the language and customs of the Jewish people, which is why you'll find when you sit down and do that full reading, Mark often is explaining or defining Jewish words.

[ 12 : 36 ] He's explaining Jewish rituals because his audience were not Jews. He omits certain things that would have been of particular interest to the Jews, like the genealogies of Christ, the birth narrative of Christ are not included in Mark's gospel because his audience didn't demand it in the same way that a Jewish audience would have demanded it for their understanding.

And so when we go to Matthew, we see a great genealogy and birth story presenting Jesus as the true king. Well, that was unnecessary for Mark to do because of his audience.

Here's what he really wanted to do. He wanted people to look at the life of Jesus, to learn from the teaching of Jesus, and then to become faithful followers in the way that they lived like Jesus.

And that is our approach to this book as we study through it. We want to look at Jesus, we want to learn from Jesus, and we want to live for Jesus and live like Jesus.

So let's read our text for today, and then we're gonna jump in and talk about the author and the structure, and then the goal of the book of Mark, okay? The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

[ 13 : 53 ] Let's first look at the author of the gospel. That's the thing that's actually missing in this verse, right? Many of the books of the Bible, we read through them, especially in the New Testament, the letters especially, we find specific signatures and greetings that alert us right away to who it is that's writing, to whom they are writing to.

But Mark doesn't do that. There was no need for him, at least in this case, for him to introduce himself. He just tells us the beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. He states his purpose in the first verse.

He's saying, this is what I'm writing about, and everything beyond verse one goes to support that purpose. But he leaves himself out. But for us to really understand the book and understand it in the best possible way, we need to understand the author.

Now, this man was also referred to as John Mark. And it's possible that a small amount of the material in the gospel of Mark actually came from Mark's eyewitness account himself.

Mark, we know, was a resident of the city of Jerusalem. And we know that his house was, or at least his mother's house, was a central point of activity for the early church.

[15:02] Now, some scholars believe that it was Mark's mother's house in Jerusalem where the Last Supper took place between Jesus and his disciples. Others believe that, or have suggested at least, that the young man mentioned in chapter 14 is Mark.

Of those two things, we can't be absolutely certain. We don't know if that was really Mark. Could have been, but we don't know. We don't know if the Last Supper really took place in Mark's home in Jerusalem.

We don't know that for certain. What we do know for certain is that Mark's mother's house was indeed a central point of activity for that early church in Jerusalem.

And Acts chapter 12 tells us how this takes place. In fact, turn with me to Acts chapter 12. In fact, keep your Bibles handy today. We're gonna be skipping around to a few different places, at least as we learn who Mark is.

If you'll remember in Acts chapter 12, Peter has been preaching and he's been arrested and he is awaiting actually execution. And he is chained and sleeping between two guards in the dungeon or in the prison, wherever it was that they had taken him.

[16:13] And the guards had fallen asleep as well. An angel of the Lord, we're told, comes to Peter, wakes him up, tells him to put his clothes on, and then frees him from the prison. Peter knows that the church would have been gathered somewhere that night praying for him.

That would have been, he knew exactly what they would have been doing. And he knew that they would have been doing it in a specific place. Look with me at verse 12, Acts chapter 12 and verse 12.

And when he had considered the thing, after he had left the prison, he came to the house of Mary, the mother of John, whose surname was Mark, where many were gathered together praying. And so right off the bat, we know who is John Mark. He was at least intimately related to these early apostles and these early disciples. His house where he was growing up with the involvement of his mother specifically was a central place of ministry for the early church in Jerusalem.

So Jesus has ascended into heaven. Now the apostles are coming together to do the great commission there in Jerusalem. And Mark is right in the middle of all of it. Now we're also certain that Mark had a tremendous heritage of faithful disciples in his family.

[17:28] In fact, Paul's letter to the Colossians tells us that Mark was the cousin of Barnabas, who was the great encourager and partner of the apostle Paul.

So he was surrounded by faithful Christians, many of which were eyewitnesses to the life of Christ. So it should be no surprise to us that Mark not only was writing the account of Peter, but he could verify the things that he heard because he had been around so many other eyewitnesses of the life and ministry of Jesus Christ.

But it's not enough for us, at least in today's study, it's not enough for us to know about Mark's connections. We need to know Mark.

We need to know who he is. And fortunately, the Bible has told us a lot about him, or at least we can gather a lot about who this man was. And this is probably my favorite part of the study today. So let's look at four things about Mark, and then we're gonna come back to verse number one, okay? The first thing I want you to see, and maybe even note this, is you wanna see Mark the helper. Mark the helper.

[18:33] You're in Acts chapter 12, we're gonna stay there. This is the first true glimpse that we get of John Mark in the scriptures. He had accompanied Barnabas and Paul on kind of a pre-missionary journey mission.

The church had collected an offering and was sending it to help people in Jerusalem, and Paul and Barnabas took John Mark along with them. Look at verse 25, Acts chapter 12. And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem when they had fulfilled their ministry and took with them John, whose surname was Mark.

Now that's important. It's especially important as we see this next verse in chapter 13. After the mission to Jerusalem, Paul and Barnabas were commissioned by the church of Antioch to go on this first missionary journey.

They knew that they were gonna need some assistance on the way. And who was it that they turned to to be their assistant? It was the one that had already proven in this smaller mission that he would be a faithful minister and helper to them.

Look at Acts chapter 13 and verse five. And when they were in Salamis, they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews, and they had also John to their minister.

[19:47] John as their helper. Now when we think of someone that God would use so monumentally as to actually author one of the four gospels that explains the life and ministry and gospel of Jesus Christ, we would assume that he would choose someone with an elaborate pedigree.

And indeed he did that. Matthew and John both were apostles of Jesus Christ. Luke was the famous doctor that traveled along with Paul and Barnabas and Silas and Timothy and many others through the New Testament.

But Mark was neither an apostle, nor was he a pastor, nor was he a church leader. Nothing in the scriptures ever refer to Mark in those ways.

When we see him in the Bible, we see him as he is described in Acts 13, five, as a helper. That's who Mark was. He was a minister, a servant, a helper, an assistant.

The word itself, minister or helper, means under rower. It's the picture of those that are stuck in the bottom of the ship vigorously rowing in order to serve and minister to those of more importance that were on the top of the ship.

[21:06] That's the picture that we get of Mark here. He's the under rower. He's just a helper. He wasn't anything significant. This was the character of John Mark. And it's exactly what made him fit for use in God's service.

You don't have to be significant in the eyes of any man to be utilized mightily in the ministry of God. You don't have to be a church leader to make a difference for the sake of the gospel.

You need only be a willing, zealous helper. And indeed, that's what the vast majority of believers are. God will not call most of us to be pastors.

The apostolic age is over. We certainly wouldn't be apostles. He may not call you to be a missionary. He may not call you to be a prominent church leader, but he has called you to be a helper.

And that's who Mark was. Just because you're not in an official position of leadership does not mean that you are beyond use in God's kingdom. It is this helper that God used so awesomely that we will glean from his understanding of the gospel and his teaching of the gospel.

[22:13] We are gonna benefit from that. Well, who was he? He's just a helper. God uses helpers. And we need to be encouraged by that. But he wasn't just a helper. Secondly, and tragically, Mark was a deserter.

Mark the deserter. Things didn't always go so well with him. Like us, he failed. And he failed miserably. And perhaps his greatest failure is recorded for us in the Bible for us to know.

Look at Acts chapter 13 again. This time look at verse 13. Now, when Paul and his company loosed from Paphos, they came to Perga in Pamphylia.

And John, departing from them, returned to Jerusalem. Now, that seems just like a quick passing phrase. There's much more to this than what it may seem.

Luke didn't seem to think that it was necessary to explain the reasons for Mark's desertion here. But it is safe for us to assume that the difficulty they faced on the journey was far too much for him to handle.

[23:24] He was a helper, a willing one, a zealous one. But when things got difficult, when the journey got hard, he became a deserter. He quit. He quit on Paul and on Barnabas, and he went home.

We know that there was not an acceptable reason for this because it actually became a source of contention between Paul and Barnabas. In fact, to me, one of the most tragic stories of the Bible, or at least of the early church, is this story of Paul and Barnabas, who we look at and we see what great influence and effect Barnabas had on Paul and Saul even, bringing him into the fold of the church.

It was Barnabas in that early mission that was the leader, not Paul. But then when they get into the missionary journeys, we see that discipleship kind of transform there, and the disciple becomes the discipler, and Paul kind of takes over the ministry.

But we see this great partnership between them. But it was because of Mark's desertion and their disagreement between one another that we find out in Acts chapter 15, that Paul and Barnabas actually broke ways.

They were no longer partners together. They felt that the contention was so sharp between them that the best thing for them to do was actually split and go different ways in ministries.

[ 24 : 40 ] To me, that's tragic. That's why we know when we look back at Mark's story, we don't know exactly why he deserted, but we know there couldn't have been an acceptable reason because it was so contentious between two other faithful men.

After some time, Mark repented of this, and he desired to help the men again, but the stigma of being a quitter is not easily erased.

Paul refused to take Mark along, and he ended up for a while ministering only with Barnabas. And it was during this time with Barnabas that we believe Peter took Mark under his own wing.

And this is what's so fantastic about this. At the end of his first epistle from Rome, Peter included a greeting from Mark. 1 Peter chapter 5 and verse 13.

Here's what it says. She who is in Babylon, chosen together with you, sends you greeting, and so does my son Mark. This is Peter writing.

[ 25 : 40 ] He refers to Mark in the same way that we so often recognize Paul referring to Timothy as his son.

Now think about this. What better person to disciple a deserter than one who was formerly a deserter?

That's exactly who Peter was. Remember just before Jesus' crucifixion, and there was this scene where Jesus proclaimed that all the disciples were gonna abandon him.

They were gonna forsake him. And Jesus and Peter denies the Lord's truthful statement. He had such arrogance sometimes, didn't he? And he even says to the Lord, though all of these men forsake you, I will never forsake you.

And Jesus says, actually, before the rooster crows, you're gonna deny me three times. And we see that played out in the crucifixion story. Right when Peter was confronted by others as being a follower of Jesus, Peter three times denies and swears, no, I do not know him.

[ 26 : 45 ] And immediately he hears the rooster crow. His eyes lock with Jesus' eyes, and immediately he runs away and weeps. He was a deserter. And we see even after the resurrection, there was still a period where he struggled with effectiveness.

Could he still be used in ministry? What good could he offer after he had failed so miserably? And it was Jesus himself that restores Peter there on the shore of the Sea of Galilee.

What better person to take Mark under his wing than somebody like Peter? And that's exactly what he did. He didn't cast him off and condemn him. He took him under his wing and he related to him. And he helped him. And he looked at him and viewed him not as just a partner in ministry, but as a son in the faith. Mark's life reminds us that there is nothing from which a believer cannot be restored by the love and mercy of Jesus Christ.

Nothing. You see, the problem with my life is I don't know how effective I can be because I'm not what I was at one point. You know, Pastor, there was a time in my life where I was involved with everything and I was faithful and all I cared about was serving and then I just had this thing.

[ 28 : 02 ] Maybe it was sin or something else and I just kind of, I'm just not what I once was. I'm ashamed by that. Everybody knows it. And I just, nobody's gonna trust me anymore. I just don't think that I can be used.

Listen, there is nothing, nothing in the life of a believer that is beyond redemption. Nothing that you cannot be restored from in the love and mercy of Jesus Christ.

I don't care if you're a quitter. You don't have to be a quitter anymore. I don't care what your problem has been in the past. Peter literally denied Christ.

Abandoned him at his most vulnerable moment. Yeah, look at how we view Peter. Mark deserted, but look at how we view him now. Look at what we've received from the work of God in his life now. Paul was a murderer. Doesn't matter. God can redeem you. His grace is great. It's also a lesson for those of us who are former deserters to take in those who are struggling rather than condemning and forsaking them.

[ 29 : 14 ] Unfortunately, the habit of the church many times is to find someone who will quit or someone who will falter in their faithfulness to Christ and instead of lovingly restoring them, they

condemn them and castigate them and ignore them.

This is a reminder for us. Imagine the fruit that was born to Peter's account not because he wrote this book, but because he influenced the one who did.

Amazing. So we see Mark as the helper and Mark as the deserter and now we see him as Mark the author. The author. And what a wonderful thing it is to consider that.

That Mark was chosen by God to write one of his gospels. Mark was everything that we would disregard, but he was exactly who God intended to use.

You may be what everybody else would disregard, but it doesn't matter what everybody else disregards. You're exactly what God wants to use. We learn that from Mark's life. And then fourthly, we find Mark the finisher.

[ 30 : 27 ] Mark the finisher. The Bible doesn't tell us exactly what happened to Mark after all of this, but church history does. And we can go back and we can look at the accounts and we can gather what came of Mark's life.

Now cynics, like often I am guilty of being, like Paul was in Acts 15, might consider that once a quitter, always a quitter.

That wasn't true of Mark. We might think what Paul and those guys faced in terms of persecution was intense. There's no doubt about that and severe, but what the church was going to face over the next couple of centuries after their time was abundantly severe.

It wasn't just for church leaders. It was for everybody. If Mark was so willing to desert the ministry when things were just starting to get intense, how was he going to fare when they're literally killing everyone?

Well, church tradition tells us. Let me read you this excerpt from Fox's Book of Martyrs about Mark. A capable evangelist in his own right, Mark had a longstanding connection with the city of Alexandria in Egypt and was instrumental in founding and nurturing the church there.

[ 31 : 48 ] As was often the case, the good news about Jesus was bad news for the existing pagan religious structures and communities. So within days of his arrival in Alexandria, Mark was a marked man.

Though years passed before action was taken, a mob eventually exercised its demonic energy against him. Mark was tied with ropes, hooks may have also been used, and he was dragged through the cobblestone streets of Alexandria until his body was ripped, wounded, and badly injured.

After a night in prison, he amazingly survived that. The same treatment was repeated again and again until he died.

Though the crowd intended to burn Mark's body, there was a persistent account that a storm delayed the process and allowed other Christians a chance to retrieve and bury his remains. Mark was a finisher. He was a finisher. For anyone who may question the authenticity and truth of the gospel, they cannot escape the reality of what Mark was willing to go through and to give up for the sake of the truth that he had written here.

[ 33 : 10 ] If this was a lie, why would he be so willing to be tied up and dragged again and again? What profit did he seem to gain?

There was no profit for him to perpetrate a lie. No profit at all. But it wasn't a lie. And so there was no cost that was too great for the cause of the gospel.

That's the man that has written us this book through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. He was a helper, deserter, but then he became an author and then a finisher. And we are encouraged by that. Quickly, we'll finish this. Let's look at the structure of the gospel of Mark. The structure. We can go back to Mark chapter 1 now. I told you before the issue with the author is not explicitly stated in the verse, but the structure is.

This verse really is Mark's stated purpose for why he's writing and how we should view it. As mentioned before, every gospel writer was telling the same story, but they each come with a unique personality and a unique audience and a unique objective.

[ 34 : 25 ] Like I said before, Matthew wrote to a primarily Jewish audience, so he spends a lot of time emphasizing Jesus as the true king and he's got the genealogies and the frequent quotations of the Old Testament.

Luke was writing to a more general Greek audience, which is why we see him emphasizing so often Jesus' sympathetic ministry toward Gentiles and those who were not Jews.

John's objective was to focus on the deity of Christ, which is why we get that great prologue at the beginning of John chapter 1. In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God and so on.

Mark summarizes his objective somewhat in these first two words. The beginning. The beginning. He never intended for this gospel to be a comprehensive telling of the life of Christ.

There's relatively very little of Jesus' teaching recorded. There's no major sermons really listed in Mark's book. It's all action-oriented and the content of it moves at a very brisk pace.

[ 35 : 35 ] As you read through it maybe this week, if you'll do that and sit down, you'll notice he's just continually moving on from one thing to another. He's not getting lost in the weeds very often. And so it moves fast.

Because his audience wasn't Jewish, it wasn't necessary for him to include some of the other things. So how can we understand his structure then? Here's what it is. Mark's gospel is a striking mosaic of the life and ministry of Jesus.

You know what I mean by mosaic. It's a collection. You can imagine going into a cathedral somewhere, maybe that has the beautiful stained glass windows and they have the different mosaics as it goes along. One giant window that tells several different stories.

That's really how we can view the gospel of Mark. He's not writing chronologically about Jesus' life. He's writing categorically about Jesus' life.

For instance, instead of sprinkling Jesus' parables throughout a linear line of story throughout the book of Mark, he just takes chapter 4 and just devotes all of chapter 4 to the parables of Jesus.

[ 36 : 39 ] And so on and so forth we see this striking mosaic of the life of Jesus Christ. He also gave a substantial amount of space to the events leading up to the passion of Christ, the crucifixion and resurrection.

Nearly a third of the book is devoted to the weeks leading up to Jesus' death. And the significance of this structure is Mark's insistence that it's only the beginning and his point was not only that this was literally the beginning of the writing but his point is that Jesus' work is not finished.

That what he was writing in this book is just the beginning of what could be told and what will be told. Though his atoning work on the cross has been accomplished, the story of Christ's salvation lives on today.

It is a story that's being told in your life today. So Mark says what I'm giving you here is just the beginning. This is just the beginning of what Christ has done and what Christ will do. And so we see that played out as really the structure of his book.

Thirdly, we see the goal of his book and that's really where we find the substance here in this verse. Mark says his goal clearly in verse one.

[ 37 : 53 ] His desire was to proclaim the good news that Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah the Son of God. That's the stated purpose.

He wasn't trying to tell the story of a man that he admired. He was proclaiming that this man is the one that would bring salvation to man. And it's in this sense that Mark wasn't telling a story.

He was making a statement. This book is not about a story. It's about a proclamation that this man Jesus of Nazareth is indeed the Son of God who has come to save sinners.

And I want you to consider for just a moment the words that he uses. The first one is gospel. Now in the New Testament we refer to gospel as a genre but in the New Testament it's not a reference to a literary genre but to the message of salvation.

The Greek term is euangelion. It's the same word that we get our English word evangelical or evangelical. And it's often understood as good news because that's indeed its context.

[ 39 : 02 ] It's good news. And it's a term that Romans and Jews both would have been familiar. But its use in ancient Jewish and Roman writings always had a specific reference to the good news of a new king that would save his people.

And it always had the picture of a herald. You know what I mean? A herald that would come into a town blow the trumpet hear ye hear ye the beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ the son of God. That's what he means by gospel. This is a proclamation. It's a proclamation about a new king that has come to save his people. Now let me show you this in the scripture. In the Old Testament in the Hebrew the Hebrew equivalent equivalent of euangelion.

In fact the Bible that Jesus would have used the Greek translation that Septuagint actually uses in this chapter the word euangelion. Isaiah chapter 40 says it this way.

Get yourself up on a high mountain O Zion bearer of good news bearer of euangelion. Proclamation. Get on the mountain to make this proclamation.

[ 40 : 16 ] And he goes on. Lift up your voice this mightily O Jerusalem bearer of good news. Euangelion. Lift it up. Do not fear. And here's the proclamation. Say to the cities of Judah here is your God.

Behold the Lord God will come with might with his arm ruling for him. Behold his reward is with him and his recompense before him.

When the Jews would have heard this word they would have immediately connected it back to this. They would have connected it back to a king the king the king the proclamation here is your God here is salvation.

The Romans had a similar use for this word euangelion. In fact there are writings specifically about Caesar Augustus at his birth that uses this word and they believed him to be their divine deliverer. So when they used it in relation to Caesar Augustus it was the herald going from town to town Caesar Augustus has been born and there's this elaborate statement about all he will do using biblical like language that he will save his people he will save us is what they said about Caesar.

[ 41 : 30 ] So when Mark writes this and he says the beginning of the euangelion he say I have a proclamation about the true king that has come to save his people and then we see the next word Jesus Christ Jesus Christ Jesus is the earthly name of the Messiah and it's the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew Joshua Joshua means Yahweh is salvation God is salvation remember this was the name that the angel told Joseph specifically to name him Matthew chapter one she will bear a son and you shall call his name Jesus and then the angel says why to call his name Joshua Yahweh is salvation for he will save his people from their sins Christ is not a name Christ is a title it's the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew Messiah it's the designation of the one that would bring salvation to

God's people so Mark stating his purpose and he's saying this is just the beginning of the good news that God is salvation the Messiah has come hear ye hear ye this is not just the life of a man this is the proclamation that the son of God has come to save sinners and then he uses that final phrase son of God this is the divine quality that Jesus possessed the Romans regarded their Caesars to be gods but Mark was introducing them to the true God and it's this description that makes possible everything that we read in this book is only made possible because he is indeed the son of God this was Jesus his own claim and the scriptures continually assert that Jesus is not merely a man but he is indeed the son of

God co-equal co-eternal with God the father and God the holy spirit John 1 again in the beginning was the word the logos the person Jesus in the beginning was the word and the word was with God and the word was God he was in the beginning with God all things came into being through him and apart from him nothing came into being that has come into being in him was life and the life was the light of men this is Mark stated purpose his book is to proclaim the good news that Jesus is the Messiah the son of God and he has brought salvation from God and we can rejoice in that how does he accomplish this one of the things you'll notice as you read through the gospel of Mark is that he's confronting or he's describing all of these groups who basically all had the same question about Jesus who is this who is this his family asked that question and tried to stop him they thought he was crazy who is this the people in

Nazareth when he came back to town said isn't this the son of Mary isn't this his brothers and sisters over here who is this who does he think he is in other words is what they were saying the disciples on that night when the storm comes on the sea of Galilee and they think they're going to die and they wake Jesus up remember and Jesus we're going to study it I want to talk about it now though and Jesus he gets up from the hinder part of the ship and he says three words he says peace be still and immediately the storm stops and what's the response of the disciples well they say what manner of man is this who is this they had seen him do some pretty incredible things they hadn't seen this who is this Herod says who is this man this is John the Baptist he's come back to to come after me to haunt me because I killed him and it tells that story but his question is who is this Pontius

Pilate says who are you who are you that's the question that keeps getting asked through this book over and over and over you know what Mark's purpose is his purpose is to answer that question if you could summarize it in one thing Mark is saying let me tell you who Jesus is and he focuses his attention on Jesus identity and on Jesus work the first eight chapters of the book zero in on his identity the second eight chapters of the book zero in on his work his salvific work and it's like an

uphill climb in the first eight chapters with the climax coming I believe at the end of chapter eight Jesus is near Caesarea Philippi and he asked his disciples who do men say that I am and they said some people say you're John the Baptist some people say you're Elijah or one of the other prophets and then Jesus says but who do you say that I am and

[ 46 : 47 ] Peter says in that famous confession you are the Christ everything in the first eight chapters builds up to that one confession! you are the!

and it's only once his identity is established in the mind of his closest followers that he begins to describe his work immediately after that he says the son of man has come he will be delivered into the hands of men he will be put to death but he will rise three days later and everything after that builds on that identity that's how we're going to approach this book we're going to!

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