

Mark, The Original Comeback Kid

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[0 : 0 0] This message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in Alfred, Georgia. It is our prayer that you will be blessed by the preaching of God's Word.

Take your Bibles and please open them to the book of 2 Timothy chapter 4 and verse 11. I am excited to be with you today and to take the opportunity to celebrate what the Lord Jesus Christ has been doing in our lives.

You know, when we celebrate as a church, we can't celebrate any of us. We have to celebrate Him. Amen? It's Him that, it is He that died on the cross.

It's He that the church is His. He's the head. He's the body. And so today we celebrate Him and what He has done in our midst.

I am honored to have five of my grandkids, or four of my grandkids watching. They're sick. That's bad that they're sick, but I'm glad you're at Vision Baptist Church today. All the way over in Harlem, Georgia.

[1 : 0 1] So glad to have them. Glad to have all of you here. Today after we get through with the message, and there'll be some announcement videos, then we're going to step outside and take a picture, if you would.

We're going to launch a bunch of balloons, and we're going to take a picture of everybody that celebrated with us today. If you'd be willing to do that with us, we'd sure appreciate that. Then we're going to have lunch, and it's already fixed.

And I'm sure the ladies have done well more than enough, and so I hope you'll stay for that. And then after that, we're going to have evening service, and you're going to get to hear from four, I think four of our guys, or three or four or five of our guys that are going to preach.

Our young men that are preparing, and they're going to preach this afternoon. That's going to be a lot of fun. And after that, we'll have a men's meeting, and after that, you'll be on break. Amen? And so it's going to be a good, good day.

Go with me, if you would, to 2 Timothy 4, verse 11. We're starting the book of Mark. And I thought as I got ready to start the book of Mark with you, what if you got introduced to Mark, and you knew a little bit more about him?

[2 : 0 2] He's not mentioned a lot in the Bible. He writes the gospel of Mark, and so that's a great thing. But maybe you don't know about him. He is the original Comeback Kid.

And I'm going to show you today, he messes up at least once. It's very clear. Possibly a second time that's not clear. And yet, by the end of his life, he's being greatly used of God.

And here we are, 2,000 years later, still talking about this guy. So you could mess up in your spiritual life and still be used of God.

You could mess up and not be all you ought to be, and then still be used of God. You're going to be introduced to a great guy. But the hero of the story is the Lord Jesus Christ.

Because it is Jesus who saves Mark. It is Jesus that saves his mother. It is Jesus that saves everybody that disciples him. And the hero of all of our stories is the Lord Jesus Christ.

[2 : 56] Amen? If you don't have him as the hero of your story, then you haven't yet seen your sinful condition. You have not yet recognized that if you died, you'd go to hell. You've not recognized yet that it is Jesus who's done everything to give you life and life more abundantly.

Read with me, if you would. 2 Timothy chapter 4 and verse 11. The apostle Paul, writing to Timothy, says, Only Luke is with me. Take Mark and bring him with you.

For he is profitable to me for the ministry. You'll understand why that's a very big verse in just a minute. Let's bow our heads for a word of prayer. Father, we love you and thank you so much for the opportunity to open your word today.

And I pray, God, that you would help us to celebrate you, to celebrate your word, to celebrate our salvation, to celebrate your work, your vision. And to celebrate the work you did in the life of Mark and all of his family and all the things that happened.

And I pray, God, that you would challenge us. Lord, there might be somebody here today that's not saved. And I pray that they would come to realize their sin and they'd trust Christ and be saved. There might be somebody here today, Lord, that's saved but not living like they ought to be, not walking with you like they ought to be.

[4 : 09] And they know that they have walked away from you. They know they're living in rebellion and sin. And I pray, Holy Spirit, today you would convict them and bring them back. And I will give you great honor and glory and praise for all that you do.

In Jesus' precious name, amen. Now, if you would, go with me in your Bibles to Acts chapter 12 and verse 12, where we started in our Bible reading this morning. And we're going to find out that Mark, the evangelist, Mark, the man who writes this book, he writes a gospel book.

You got there, Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, any one of those four guys had to be great guys to be so used of God. But this is the story of Mark. And I want you to look at what God did in his life.

And then I want you to look in your own family. I want you to examine yourself. I want you to examine your family. And I want to see if you can't see how this would work in our lives. Mark becomes a great man of God.

And I believe a great part is due to the fact that he had the right start because of his family. He had the right start because of his family. Read with me, if you would, in Acts 12, 12.

[5 : 17] The Bible says, When he had considered a thing, he came to the house of Mary, the mother of John, whose surname was Mark, where many were gathered together praying.

Now, if you've got your Bible open, you'll notice here that when he had considered a thing, it was in the house of Mary. Underline that. That's Mark's mom. And then she's called the mother of John.

John would be his Jewish name. Mark would be his Roman name, his public name, the one when he's out in society. My name, if you were ever around, my name is Austin.

And that's what I use all over America. But when I'm in Latin America, I am Guillermo, which is William translated. My first name is William. That's William translated into Spanish.

And so if you were to go with me somewhere else and you said Austin, they'd have to know me pretty well to know I'm Austin. Now, people in Arequipa know, but everywhere else, I'm Guillermo. I was walking down the street in Arequipa or in Lima one day, and I'm walking down the street, and this guy kept hollering, hey, Bill.

[6 : 20] I thought, well, I wonder where Bill is. I just kept walking. He said, Bill. And I kept walking. He said, Willie. I kept walking. He said, William. And I kept walking. And finally, I was like, man, this guy's a nut.

So I turned around to see why he was yelling. And he said, do you not know your name in English? And I said, my name in English is Austin, buddy. My name in Spanish is Guillermo. He said, well, Guillermo is William, and so William is Bill.

You don't answer to Bill, and you didn't answer Will or Willie or William. They got two names, so that shouldn't confuse you. His name is John Mark. His name is John Mark. Now, look what's going on in the house.

Look at verse 12, and notice this. There are many gathered together, and they're praying. There are many gathered together, and they're praying. They're in the house of Mary, and they're praying.

Now, you remember the story. You remember why. Now, you remember that Peter, James got killed. James was arrested. James, brother John, he got arrested, and he got killed. And after that happened, they saw that everybody was really happy about that.

[7 : 20] They said, hey, well, we got James. Let's go for Peter. So they arrested Peter with the full intention of killing Peter. And they arrested Peter and put him in jail. And he was waiting for the right day during the religious ceremony that he would have Peter killed.

And while Peter was in jail getting ready to be killed, all the people in the church were praying and begging God to do something and get Peter out of jail. Peter's laying in jail.

He's got soldiers on both sides of him. He's chained, handcuffed to this guy and handcuffed to this guy. There's at least two more standing at the door. And he's inside two other doors. So he's in this cell and gets out of this cell.

He's got to get past that door. He gets past that door. He's got to get past the other door. And Roman soldiers don't let people get away. Because when a Roman soldier lets somebody escape, he has to die. So Roman soldiers don't let people get away.

And Peter's just laying there asleep. And the angel shows up and gives him a good slap, wakes him up. And when he wakes up, chains fall off and he stands up. And Peter's not sure if he's dreaming or not.

[8 : 22] And they walk out. They get the door. Door opens. Get the second door. Door opens. Get the third door. Door opens. Walk on down the road to another street. And all of a sudden, the angel disappears. Peter goes, wow, I'm really out of jail. I thought I was dreaming.

I had no idea. And Peter starts thinking, no, they don't have Facebook and Twitter. They don't have fine friends. So there's no way for him to know where to go. But he knows.

He knows. I'm going to Mary's house. Because you can mark it down. My brothers and sisters are all meeting together at Mary's house. And they're praying. And I'm going to go. So he goes there. Mary's kind of a wealthy woman.

Got a room and a house big enough to have all the people there. She has a maid named Rhoda. Rhoda comes to the door. As he knocks on the door, Rhoda gets to the door. And Peter says, hey, Rhoda, let me in. And the lady said, wow, that's Peter.

She's so excited. She runs in the house and doesn't let him in. Gets inside of the house and tells all the guys that are praying. She said, hey, Peter's at the door. And when she said that, they all, oh, you're crazy.

[9 : 17] We might be praying and asking God and believing God. But we don't believe you. It couldn't be God had let Peter out. It couldn't be that Peter got out of jail. And so they're not expecting that to be true. And she's, I'm telling you it's the truth.

And they're like, no, it's not. And old Peter's just still like they're knocking the door. He's ringing the doorbell over and over and over. Finally, they let him in. And everybody's all excited about what's going on. And he said, he raised his hand.

Let me just tell you, I didn't get out of jail. God got me out of jail. You ain't going to believe this. An angel showed up. But here's a big thing I want you to catch on to. Where'd all this happen? Mark's house.

Mark's house. Mark's mom's Mary. Mary owns the house where the church is meeting. And this has got to be one of the best ways a guy could ever get started. Walk with me through that.

Here it is. A Mary. Obviously a widow woman. Her husband's never mentioned. She's got money. Got to have a big enough house. She's got influence. Church people are there. The church is meeting in her house. Her house is the center of activity for the Christians in the new church.

[10:16] She's obviously a godly woman. She has met the Lord and been saved. Now, you know, Mary's not the hero in this story. You know that Mary was a sinner just like you. And so it's easy sometimes to be like, oh, I wish I could be like Mary.

You can. Because if you're honest, Mary was a sinner and you're a sinner. Mary was a failure and you're a failure. But Jesus died on the cross to save us, rescue us, and give us new life.

And that's how Mary got to be the woman of God she was. Amen? So everybody in this room can be used to God. And everybody in this room can know that. Not only was Mary a great woman, he has an uncle named Barnabas.

Look, if you would, it's Colossians chapter 4 and verse 10. Colossians chapter 4 and verse 10. Aristarchus, my fellow prisoner, salutes you. And Marcus, sister's son to Barnabas, touching whom you have received commandments.

If he come unto you, receive him. Sister's son to Barnabas. So not only has he got a mama who is on fire for God. Do you have any idea what it's like to have all them church people in your house?

[11:21] Do you have any idea how they trash your house before they leave? Mindy Bush does. She has people in her house all the time. And the Pearsons probably do because they have people in their house all the time. Can you imagine what happens?

All these people are in the house. And all these people are praying. And all these people are going to the bathroom. And all these people are wanting something to drink. And all these people are wanting a snack. And so that's a wild house to be in.

It's a house so much used of God that Peter, when he wakes up in the street, goes, I know where to go. It'll be Peter's house. It'll be Mary's house. But now we find out that not only does he have a great mama, he got a great uncle.

His uncle is Barnabas, the son of consolation. You know who he is? Barnabas. He's one of the most godly men in the New Testament. Barnabas had a lot of land in Cyprus.

And the church was having financial problems. They didn't know what they were going to do. And so people were going hungry. And so Barnabas, his name wasn't even Barnabas. It was Joseph. And he goes over and he sells his land and brings all the money and just lays it down at the apostles' feet.

[12:24] Says, hey, men of God, administer this money. Let's take care of some people. Here's my money. And they said, we're not going to let you be called that anymore. You get a new name start today. Your name is Barnabas, son of consolation.

This guy is tremendous. This guy is tremendous. And then when the apostle Paul is still Saul and he recently gets saved, Saul goes down to the gathering of the believers.

All the believers are out here gathered. Chuck Littlefield is out there with Lamar and they're out there at the door. And they look up and they see Saul coming and they're like, he ain't getting in here. We know that guy.

Ushers and deacons, you know, they're out. Nope, nope, not this guy. We know you. You persecuted church. Door's locked. You're not getting in. And Saul goes back across the street, sits on the curb like, I don't know, you know, I want to do something for God.

I know I've been a bad guy, but God's changed my life. I mean, I'm a new man. I'm a new creature. Nobody let him in. Barnabas, I don't know. Somebody ran in and told Barnabas. He's out there.

[13 : 19] The murderer. The guy who arrests our people and puts them in jail. Barnabas says, God, let me handle that. Barnabas goes out there. I don't know what happens. He sits down with him. He hears his testimony or what. He walks by and says, hey, come on, Chuck.

Lamar, step out of the way. This guy's one of us. Takes him in and he's in the church. Barnabas, the son of consolation. Barnabas, the guy with the sweetest, tenderest heart in the Bible.

That's Mark's uncle. That's Mark's uncle. Can you get a sense of this house? A house full of faith. Believers excited to serve Jesus. People willing to pay the price to serve God.

People sharing their faith. People dealing with persecution. People faithful to be in the worship service. People that have seen Jesus make a difference in their life. Her house is full of people.

And the children are seeing that. And I want you to listen to this before I go on. Right start. If you're a mom or a dad in this room, you have any idea of the influence you could have.

[14 : 19] I doubt Mary ever thought, my boy will write the gospel of Mark. I doubt she thought that.

He was kind of a little rich spoiled brat, to be honest with you. I think he was raised in Alpharetta or something. And I think he, like Greg, he had his, all of his instruments, you know, all of his iPads and his, I mean, he had it all.

And he was kind of like that. You reckon, Mary, ever thought, my boy, my boy. But you as a mom and you as a dad are having a tremendous amount of influence.

So here's some ideas that you need to have. Number one, you need to know you're saved. Mama, your salvation doesn't just affect you. And Daddy, your salvation just doesn't affect you. Your kids grow up and they're in a home with godly parents and they're hearing the gospel and they're always in church and they're always around God's people.

The chances of your children getting saved and going to heaven are going to be so much greater because of your godly influence. Are you saved? Do you know that you're going to go to heaven when you die?

[15 : 28] Then I ask you a question. Are you surrendered? You see, a lot of you get saved and you know Jesus, but that's all, you only know him so that it can be on your burial. You only know him so the preacher can say it at your funeral.

You only know him so you can claim I'm saved, but you don't really, really serve Jesus. You're not faithful to church, you're not faithful to read your Bible, you're not faithful to pray, you're not really.

Now, are you surrounding yourself with other godly people? I don't know if you can picture this house. Mark comes out of his bedroom, steps out of the bedroom, wherever it is in his house. He said, hey, Peter, how you doing?

Apostle guy walked with Jesus. Hey, Barnabas, hey, uncle, how you doing? God who knows Jesus. Hey, there's James and John, and there's all the men of God. Everybody's here. Everybody knew Jesus in my house.

They're all getting coffee and cake at the end of the evening. And you know what the conversations are. Peter's talking about Jesus. John's talking about Jesus. They're surrounded with things about Jesus.

[16 : 28] Are you letting your children see Jesus? How is your relationship with the Lord right now? If we were to ask your children, would they think you're really saved?

Would they think you're faithful? Would they think that you really love Jesus? I want to talk about it. And can I just tell you, I've been doing this a long time, over 40 years, and those nominal Christians, their children don't even want to go to church.

Because those nominal Christians say, well, Mom and Daddy didn't really think it was that important. We skipped any time we could. Mom and Daddy never talked about Jesus. It was only what we did on Sunday morning. I never saw the purpose in it, and so I'm not going to go myself.

Here's a question. Are you giving your children the right start? How about an amen right there? Or an oh me? How many of you are ready to shoot me and say amen? Number two, he had the right friends.

Go with me if you would to 1 Peter 5, verse 13. He had the right friends. He had the right start because he had the right family. Then he had the right friends. He had the right friends.

[17 : 32] The first thing the Bible says in 1 Peter 5, verse 13, the church that is at Babylon, elected together with you, salutes you. And so does Marcus, my son.

That's John Mark again. So does Marcus, my son. That term, my son, is a term used in the Bible when you're their spiritual father.

And Peter just flat out calls him, in writing, in Scripture, my son. At least it implies that he led him to Christ. But maybe if he didn't lead him to Christ, at least it implies he was a big disciple and a big trainer and a big worker in Peter's life.

And it describes that very clearly. So Barnabas is his uncle and Mary is his mother. And all these people are hanging around his house. But Peter says, I got a very special relationship with that guy.

He's my son in the Lord Jesus. He's not his daddy. He's his spiritual father. He had men in his life that cared and taught him about Jesus and brought him up.

[18 : 36] Then he's going into ministry with Paul and Barnabas. Go with me, if you would, to Acts chapter 12, verse 25. So he gets saved because of the influence of Peter, evidently.

And now he's going to go into ministry. Go with me to Acts chapter 12 and verse 25. The Bible says, There you go.

Barnabas, the great leader. Saul, the guy that's going to write a big portion of the New Testament. Take Mark with them. Yesterday I was reading and listening to a book, actually.

I was listening to a book, and it talked about all of the major close leaders of George Washington and everybody that was really close to George Washington, except two, ended up doing something big in government and leadership in our country.

If they ran around with Washington, they turned out to be somebody. This boy's running around with Peter. He's running around with Barnabas. He's running around with Paul. He's going to turn out to do something big.

[19 : 47] He had the right friends. Can you imagine his house? Can you imagine his house? Everybody knows Mark. I don't know how old he was when everybody started going to his house, but everybody knows Mark.

They all come walking in the house. There's Mark. Everybody's in there. They come in the house, and Mary's got the house open. There's the preacher sitting over there, but everybody knows Mark. He's got the right friends.

He's got the right people working in his life. Think of all those that would come and go. Think of him knowing the apostle Peter enough to be called his son. Think of Saul or Paul inviting him to go along in the ministry.

Think of him hanging out with the gospel team. Hanging out with the gospel team. They're in there singing gospel music, and there's old Mark sitting there on the front row. They're out there going out to go sow it, and there's Mark.

You know, you become like what you hang around. Whoever you hang around with has a great deal of influence in your life. In Peru, we would say, tell me who your friends are, and I'll tell you who you are.

[20 : 50] Tell me who your friends are, and I'll tell you who you are. Mark was probably overcome with emotion and excitement with all that's happening around him. You get the picture?

Peter, the whole church is crying and praying. James is dead. The whole church is under this deathly pall of losing this deathly cloud, dark cloud, because they've lost James, and now Peter's been arrested, and they're probably all scared.

And Mark's there listing his mom, and all the church people are praying, and people are begging God. And I don't know if he was in the house that night, but all of a sudden Peter knocked on the door, and all of his friends, and all his family, and all the people he hangs around with, and somebody comes running in the room and says, He's at the door!

And I can only imagine Mark going, Yeah, but before it's over, Mark will know just how powerful Jesus is. How are your friends affecting you? Do they motivate you to love and serve Jesus more, or do they motivate you to the opposite?

Do you hear about God and the Word and righteous living, or do you hear about sin and rebellion when you're hanging around your friends? Decide to make friends that will further your spiritual life and work.

[22 : 02] That's why you should get totally involved in church and make a difference. Listen to me. I love it that you come on Sunday morning. But you know what? You really want in?

You don't need to just come to the services. You need to learn to hang around with them. I had the privilege of sitting in my office before church and praying, and a dear lady prayed this morning. husband and wife, husband and wife praying around the room, and a dear lady prayed and said, This is our family.

This is our family. She said, These are our friends. These are our family. That's what a church is supposed to be. I mean, get in and get to know people and be involved like he was.

Friendships are affecting your attitudes and your life and your thought life. Third thing I want to show you real quick. Go with me, if you would, to the book of Mark, chapter 14 and verse 15.

Mark's got right attitudes. Right attitudes that are going to change his life for good. You see, because Mark is known for failure. Mark is known for messing up.

[23 : 05] But he doesn't allow that to stop him from being greatly used of God. Now, the verse I'm about to read with you in Mark, chapter 14 and verse 51, is a verse about a young man who is there when Jesus is about to be crucified.

Only one gospel writer mentions him, Mark. No other gospel writer even mentions him. This kid has a linen garment, which regular people can't afford. You've got to come out of a pretty well-to-do family to have a linen garment.

And he's got this linen garment. And probably, it's a good chance, that during the night when the disciples got through with their Lord's Supper in the upper room, which very likely took place in old Mary's house, and they go out into the garden.

This kid puts on, he gets up naked, throws this linen garment around him, and he follows them out to the crucifixion place, to the place where Jesus will be arrested, and all the crucifixion stuff about to happen.

And when he gets out there, and they start arresting people, they go for Mark. And when they go for Mark, or this young man, we don't know if he's Mark for sure. And when they do, he leaves his linen garment and runs off naked.

[24 : 12] Read the verse. But you didn't know the Bible talked about stuff like that, did you? Look, if you would, he's the first streaker in the Bible. Mark, chapter 14, verse 51. And there followed a certain young man.

It's interesting, Mark's writing the story. He said, guys, let me tell you, there was a certain young man, I'm not saying who it was, but I have a friend. There's a certain young man having a linen cloth cast about his naked body, and the young man laid hold on him, and he left the linen cloth, and he fled from them naked.

Now, is it Mark? I'm not sure it's Mark. But if it is, that's an interesting story. He's hanging around at the house. He's seeing all these people. It's very like his mom may not even be saved yet.

His dad may still be alive. Who knows what's going on? But whoever, this guy's in the garden, this guy sees Jesus getting taken, and he runs scared. Now, Matthew doesn't tell us about that, and Luke doesn't tell us about that, and John doesn't tell us about that, which is very interesting, because like 90% of everything Mark says is in one of the other books.

So this is a Mark thing. Mark talked about it. What a failure. Get back to the house. Comes to the door. Knocking on the door. A little immodest.

[25 : 21] Trying to get back in the house. What happened to your nice linen cloth that I gave you? Don't want to talk about it. It's back on. It's an embarrassing moment in Mark's life.

Can he recover? Will he be used of God? Will he be able to come back? Because they all know he ran now, if that's who it was, and he tells the story. Now, go with me, if you would, to Acts 13, 5.

This one's a failure you can't deny that he had. In Acts chapter 13, verse 5, he's in the ministry with the apostle Paul and Barnabas. And he's on the missionary job.

And he's doing the work of God in the ministry. In Acts chapter 13, verse 5, it says, And when they were at Salimus, they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews, and they had John to their minister.

So Mark has been going with him. He left Jerusalem with him. He's going to Antioch. He's on this missionary trip. And he's traveling with his uncle Barnabas. And he's traveling with Paul. And he's there. But his job is he's a minister.

[26 : 20] That's pretty hard when you're rich. That's pretty hard when you've been raised in a lap of luxury, right, wearing linen cloths. And your mama's the big shot to be just a servant. Who knows what he did?

He had to check. He had to put out the Twitter accounts and tell what was going on in the story. Who knows what he's doing? Had to carry the suitcases. Had to polish his shoes. Had to wash the feet. All we know is he's a minister.

The word minister here is the word servant. Notice they preached and he served. Mark brought up wealth. He is serving. And in Acts chapter 13 and verse 13, he goes home.

Look at that. Now when Paul and his company loosed from Pappas, they came to Perga in Pamphylia, and John, departing from them, returned to Jerusalem.

Now what happened? Nobody knows for sure. Maybe he didn't like the interracial stuff because he was very Jewish, and he didn't like them reaching all these Gentiles. Maybe he didn't like being a servant.

[27 : 19] Maybe all the demons and the harsh people and the rude stuff that's going on scared him. Maybe he just got tired. Maybe he got disillusioned. Maybe church wasn't meaning to him what he thought.

Maybe back home when it was church meetings, it was exciting. But out here, it was just a nitty-gritty everyday ministry. Who knows why he left? But he left. And he returned to Jerusalem, back to mommy's house.

Now go to Acts 15, 38. This failure is so great that Paul will not work with him. It's so great that Paul, whatever happened, Paul's like, I'm not working with that punk.

If you, just about the time we get out there, just about the time we're doing the work, just about the time I'm going to need him, he's going to tuck tail and run, and we both know it. So I ain't taking him. So look with me.

Acts 15, verse 38. Paul thought it not good to take him with them who departed from them from Pampillia and went not with them to the work. He didn't go to the work. Time to work.

[28 : 21] Mark took a dodge and ran. Verse 39. And the contention was so sharp between them that they departed asunder one from the other. Barnabas took Mark and sailed a cypress.

Now watch this. I'm not sure what happens here. But Barnabas, the son of consolation, this is like the sweetest guy you're ever going to meet. I mean, this guy's like, he's just like sugar and honey, buddy.

But Paul said, I'm not taking him with me. And Barnabas, I don't know. I'm just guessing here. But Barnabas probably said, come on, everybody needs a second chance. I know the kid messed up. Let's give the kid a break.

Paul said, I ain't giving no breaks. That kid, about the time we're in the middle of needing him to do something, he's going to cut tail and run. I'm not going to let him in. Nope, nope, he's not going. And Barnabas probably said, we can disciple the boy.

We can help the kid. We can get him back on the road. Paul said, I said he's not going me. Barnabas, okay. And Barnabas takes Mark and he goes and Paul takes Silas and he goes.

[29 : 18] His failure could have destroyed him. That's a pretty big failure. Okay, maybe he's not the naked boy, but he is the coward boy. Maybe he's not the naked boy, but he is the boy that breaks and runs and doesn't do the ministry.

That's no doubt. And by the way, it's so bad that the big guy in the New Testament doesn't want to deal with him. He could have gotten bitter against the Lord. He could have gotten bitter against Paul.

But instead, Mark will regain everybody's confidence. When Paul writes Philemon, he mentions Mark as a fellow laborer.

So somewhere between the time, you know, he got saved, maybe sometime after the resurrection, who knows, he got saved. And his dad died. Who knows exactly how all that happened.

And now mama's there. Maybe he got saved. He wasn't grounded. He wasn't strong enough. He wasn't ready. But he went out in the ministry. He messed up. He had to go back. And maybe after that, he's written now.

[30 : 18] He's written the gospel. We don't know when he wrote that gospel exactly in this parallel here. But all of a sudden, Paul's starting to think he's a good guy. So look if you would in Philemon 24.

That's a book right before Hebrews. The Bible says, The guy who wouldn't go to the ministry, the guy who wouldn't do right, the guy who cut and run, he's now working with me.

He has overcome. The embarrassment of running away naked, the shame of being a quitter, the opinions of others to the point that Paul had to tell people to respect him.

By the way, when Paul writes the church of Colossians, I want you to read the letter. I kind of think Mark got a really bad reputation. I kind of think that when he showed back up in Jerusalem, they all said, What are you doing here?

You said you was going to do something for God and you've done quit. So look what happens in the book of Colossians, if you would, verse 4, chapter 4, verse 10. Colossians chapter 4, verse 10. Our Starkus, my fellow prisoner, salutes you.

[31 : 18] And Marcus, sister, son to Barnabas, touching whom you receive commandments, I've given you orders. I've given you clear instructions that if he comes, you receive him.

You don't write that about anybody else in the whole Bible. He's like, Vision. Now if Mark shows up, I don't want y'all acting ugly. You hear me?

I've given clear instructions. And when he comes, you receive him. So Paul's even, it seems like a lot of people aren't too plowed. A lot of people aren't too pleased with old Mark.

What attitudes have you developed? You see, he had a right family. He had right friends, but he had right attitudes. And in the story here, he hasn't let his pride stop him from repenting.

Have you? See, some of you won't get on your knees and pray. Some of you won't get baptized. Some of you won't serve God because in your pride, you won't admit you're wrong and you need God.

[32 : 19] You know people are going to go to hell because they're just too good to say they're sinners? People are going to go to hell because they're a positive thinker. They're thinking, I'm positive I'm a good guy. When you're not. Do you accept correction when it's needed?

Will you do what's needed to gain the respect of fellow believers again? That's what Mark did. Now go with me if you would to 2 Timothy chapter 4 and verse 11. Right finish.

He has the right finish. He started out with the right family helping him, I think. He had right friends, I think, helping him. He had the right attitude because he overcame. But he finished right.

He finished right. Not too big a deal how you get started. It is a big deal how you finish. Can I get an amen right there? We all started out sinners and we all started out on our way to hell and we all started out deserving to go to hell but Jesus died for us and paid our sin debt and we get saved.

So Mark's a different man by the end of the story. He writes the gospel of Mark. Some of the introductions to the book of Mark, some of the people that talk about the book of Mark say, you know, it doesn't start like a regular book.

[33 : 26] He just starts off, boom, it's going. And when he gets to the end of it, he doesn't even really shut her down. He's like, boom. It's like new beginnings are abrupt and they don't stop. So that's how I'm writing my book. So he wrote a book.

It's believed from the way it's written and from the teaching and from church history that Peter taught Mark a bunch of what he's going to end up saying.

That it was Peter's discipleship that shows up clearly as the Holy Spirit guides Mark in what to write. He had been a minister. He had been a servant.

And he writes of Jesus and his whole book's about Jesus being a servant. Like he was a servant. He had a clear understanding of Jesus in his ministry. And he won Paul's opinion back.

Look if you would at 2 Timothy 4, verse 11. Only Luke is with me. Take Mark and bring him with you. For he is profitable me for the ministry.

[34 : 27] Now that's an about face. I will not work with that man. Hey, if you're coming to see me, could you make sure Mark comes with you? Because I mean that guy, he is a big help.

That guy's in it. That guy's making a difference. Mark, the fearful failure finished so well that we are still talking about him today. How are you going to finish?

How are you going to finish? I guess the first question about your finishing is when somebody preaches your funeral, will there be confidence you knew Jesus? That's the big finish, isn't it?

There will come a day when your body will be there and people are going to preach about you will people know you're saved. Do you know you're saved? You know you're going to heaven. It doesn't matter how many times you've failed, but have you learned to get back up and go about the ministry?

Look if you would at Proverbs 24, 16. Now listen to me. All of us stumble and falter and mess up when we're getting started. And all of us have mess ups.

[35 : 29] And so like if you think you get saved and everybody in the room's got it all together, you're totally misunderstanding. We don't have it together. He has it together and we're trying to serve him and let him work through us.

But in Proverbs 24, 16, the Bible said, for a just man falls seven times and rises up again. God's people might mess up, but they don't let mess up keep them from finishing.

God's people might fail, but they get back up. God's people might fall, but they don't quit. That's what old Mark shows us, if anybody does. Will you allow your embarrassment to keep you from being used of God?

Will you allow bitterness to destroy how you finish? How many of you in this room are bitter, selfish, hanging on to stuff? How many of you in this room are saying, I would serve, but you know.

I would serve, but nobody appreciates me. I think Mark went through all that. But he overcame it. And he got victory. And he was used of God. Let me sum it all up with this.

[36 : 30] I think Mark's life is the right formula for all of us. He had the family that loved Jesus and worked at loving Jesus. That doesn't mean they were perfect. You know, if we'd have known Mary, you'd have probably seen a little bit of attitude every now and then when she was trying to scrape food off a plate, trying to clean everything up.

She was tired. She probably showed a little attitude. She wasn't perfect, but she loved Jesus. She wasn't perfect, but she knew she was saved. She evidently had enough contagious love that everybody noticed it.

Mark was around the greatest men in history. And Mark's mom put him in contact. How are you handling your family, mama? I can tell you this about me.

You know, I know a lot of things about my parents that they could have done better. I have never missed church. I do not know when I learned how to tithe. I do not know when I memorized John 3, 16.

I do not know when I memorized all the books of the Bible. I don't know. Mama and daddy had me there. I can remember when they gave me my first real Bible.

[37 : 39] I was 15 years of age. I had other Bibles, but this one was like, it didn't cross-reference in a concordance. And I thought I'd died and gone to heaven. I started studying and reading. And they always encouraged me.

They never tried to not let me not be a missionary. They never tried to not let me be a pastor. Mom and dad, how you doing? Today, you ought to stop and say, I have massive influence over my children.

Number two, Mark had the right kind of friends, remember? He had the right kind of friends. He had the right kind of friends that talked about Jesus, led him to salvation, shared the gospel with him, disciplined him, disciplined him, and taught him and did ministry with him.

Get connected. Get connected with people that will help you serve Jesus. Mark showed right attitudes. He dealt with crushing defeats and still came back.

Mark stayed after the goal and never gave up until he was greatly used of God. Mark stayed after the goal and he never gave up. What are you going to do with your life today? What are you going to do with your life today?

[38 : 43] Will you build a family around Jesus? Will you have the right friends? Will you build a family around the church and ministry? Will you have the right attitude so your family knows that you love Jesus?

Will you teach your children about that? Will you be a servant? This guy's going to write the book of Mark. He's going to write the gospel of Mark and we're going to study it for the next few months and we're going to have a blast studying it.

But you need to know who wrote it. This guy, I think he was probably that guy running around naked. I know he quit when he had a chance to work with Paul. I mean, can you imagine working with the apostle Paul?

He had a chance. He knew Peter very well. So much that Peter called him his son. And he messed up. He messed up.

But he got up. He got right. And went ahead and did things for God. Where are you today? Are you sure you're saved? Are you sure that your sins have been forgiven?

[39 : 41] Are you sure that you're on your way to heaven when you die? If you're not saved, today's your day. You've got to get saved. Are you as a family? Are you teaching your kids about Jesus?

Mom and dad, it's a time to say this is important. This is important. Yesterday, the Spanish church was polishing off these hills, man.

They were out there working in the rain and mowing grass, weed-eating grass. Brett Johnson had already cut all the stuff up here at the top. And I don't know what we had planned for that, but the Spanish church came in like crazy. What a wonderful thing.

And their family, their kids were out there working with them. Huh? There were people all around this church. I walked out and there were people in here fixing microphones and singing. There were people in the kitchen. There were people decorating.

Families working together. That's the whole point. That's the whole point. That Jesus would be central. That they took a Saturday to say, I love Jesus enough. That I'm going to be there working and doing something for Jesus.

[40 : 37] They didn't do that for vision. I'm sure they did a little bit of it for vision, but they were thinking about Jesus. They were thinking about you. What kind of family are you giving them? What kind of family? What kind of attitudes have you got?

I really think the Holy Spirit's dealing with your heart. And I'm challenging you to make a decision. This message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in Alfred, Georgia.

For more information, log on to www.visionbaptist.com where you can find our service times, location, contact information, and more audio and video recordings.

Thanks. Thanks. Thanks. Thanks. Thanks. Thanks.