

## Of Mark and Method

## Class 4

*“The Word of God, which is the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith, is set forth and displays its power in a most wonderful way in the writings of the New Testament” which hand on the ultimate truth of God’s Revelation. Their central object is Jesus Christ, God’s incarnate Son: his acts, teachings, Passion and glorification, and his Church’s beginnings under the Spirit’s guidance.” CCC 124*

### What is a gospel and what is THE Gospel?

The word gospel refers to the good news and to the story of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. There are four gospels Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Each was written for a particular purpose and has a particular audience. “The Gospel” refers the salvific action of Jesus. It refers to resurrected Messiah, in this sense “The Gospel” is presence is many facets of life. Where is THE Gospel in your life?

### The Synoptic Gospels: Matthew, Mark, and Luke – A Synopsis of Jesus

The word synoptic comes from the Greek word which means *to see together*. Matthew, Mark, and Luke are called the Synoptic Gospels because they can be set down in parallel columns, and their common matter can be looked at together. The stories and parables of Jesus are placed in different order to help each writer convey the point. Now is it important when this events historically happen? No. The date isn’t important, the event in and within itself is important. It can be argued that Mark’s Gospel is the most important, because nearly everyone agrees that Mark is the earliest of all the gospel accounts.

#### The Gospel of Matthew

- Jesus = King of Jews
- Matthew was a Tax collector and Apostle
- Emphasis on the teachings of Jesus
- Jesus Fulfills the words of the Law & Prophets & The Jesus Faith

#### The Gospel of Mark

- Jesus = Suffering Servant
- Mark was a Missionary and follower of Peter.
- Shows Jesus’ Authority
- The Whole book is a declaration of Jesus’ work
- Probably a source for Matthew & Luke

#### The Gospel of Luke

- Jesus = Savior for all
- A Physician and follower of Paul
- Educational: Seeks to arrange details of Jesus’ life & ministry in order
- Written by a non-Jewish person for another non-Jew

### Author – Source – Point of View: Who is Mark?

Written c. 65AD Mark was an apprentice of St. Peter and is thus writing the gospel from a collection of thoughts given to him by Peter. From the very beginning Mark was brought up in the very center of the Christian world, Mark was the nephew of Barnabas and when Barnabas and Paul set out on their first missionary journey they took Mark along to be their secretary to document their accounts. At some point Mark left their journey and return home causing conflict with Paul. Mark is usually depicted writing in a scroll and his characterized as being a bit of a ‘journalist’. Therefor the Gospel of Mark contains much detail and yet moves quickly from story to story; it almost reads like a fast pace newspaper article or a book report. Tradition has it that Mark’s gospel is nothing other than a record of the preaching material of Peter. Therefore an understanding of Peter is important to understand where Mark is coming from. Mark is often referred to as Peter’s Gospel and because it has details about Peter that are absent from the other Gospels. Peter is painted very honestly in this Gospel and Mark is not afraid to tell truths that paint Peter in a negative light.

Tradition has it that Mark’s target audience are the Roman Christians who Peter recently converted. Therefore, Mark’s gospel lacks the language and customs of the Jews, because they would have been unknown to the majority of his readers. There is great evidence in the text that the Romans were his target audience. Mark assumes this his readers are familiar with Pilate and his office, the type and value of roman currency, and the meaning of certain ‘Latin-isms’ that would be known to those who lived near Rome.

### The Question: Who is the Son of Man? Jesus Christ the Son of God

Mark, like the other Gospels, never forgets the divine side of Jesus and records Jesus’ life, His miracles, betrayal, death, resurrection, and commission. However, Mark’s Gospel is very brief (nearly half as long as Luke) and focuses more on things Jesus did than things Jesus said. Mark’s stories are not arranged

chronologically; instead they're put together to give us a quick, accurate view of Jesus. Mark's Gospel emphasizes two important characteristics of Jesus: 1) His authority as the Son of God, and 2) his compassion for others through his miracles. Somewhat ironically, Mark paints Jesus in a very human way as he tries to show that Jesus Christ is the 'Son of God.' In the opening sentence Mark makes a declarative statement that "Jesus Christ, is the Son of God" and yet uses the theme of a suffering servant to prove that. Every passage in Mark, every miracle, every conversation, every deed, points back to Jesus' authority as the Son of God. The greatest proof is that "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many." (Mk 10:45)

### **Mark's Tactics: Urgency and Sandwiches**

Mark's Gospel is known for its speed. Being only 16 chapters, Mark moves along quickly by using the phrases 'immediately' and 'straight away.' They occur in the gospel almost 30 times, and thus it is said that the story "marches along" full steam ahead. There are multiple reason why this may be the case, one is that Mark is using his memory of the verbal account of Peter as his primary source for material and thus Peter may tell a story using quick transitions. This would be similar to how a child uses the phrase "and then, and then" when telling a detailed account of a situation. Therefor Mark tells his gospel in a breathless way as an attempt to make the story of Jesus as the Son of God to be as vivid for others as it is for himself. This partially could be why Mark does not have a detailed account of the resurrection. The Gospel ends abruptly, almost in a way that in modern terms would be defined as a "drop the mic" moment.

Although the gospel moves along at a fast pace, Mark often temporarily interrupts a story with something that appears to be unrelated. This is referred to as a "Markian Sandwich", where he stops in the middle of telling a story to explain something else and then returns to finish his initial story. Markian sandwiches bracket the telling of a story to create a contrast and form a dichotomy between the pieces of information that are being presented.

Several Examples:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Healing of Paralytic 2:1-5a</li> <li>b. Authority to Forgive Sin 2:5b-10a</li> <li>c. Healing of the Paralytic 2:10b-12</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Jairus' Daughter 5:21-24a</li> <li>b. Issue of Blood 5:22-30</li> <li>c. Jairus' Daughter 5:35-43</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Cursing of the Fig Tree 11:12-14</li> <li>b. Cleansing of the Temple 11:15-19</li> <li>c. Cursing of the Fig Tree 11:20-25</li> </ul> |
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### **Mark's outline**

1. Jesus announces the kingdom (Mk 1:1–8:21) *Chapters 1-8*
  - Jesus is the new king (1:1–3:6)
  - Jesus starts a new kingdom (3:7–6:6)
  - Jesus sets up a new order (6:7–8:21)
2. Jesus predicts his death to **the disciples** three times (Mk 8:14–10:52) *Chapters 8-10*
  - Jesus heals a blind man (8:22–26)
  - First prediction cycle (8:27–9:29)
  - Second prediction (9:30–10:31)
  - Third prediction cycle (10:32–10:45)
  - Jesus heals another blind man (10:46–52)
3. Jesus: the suffering servant (Mk 11–15) *Chapters 11-16*
  - Jesus enters Jerusalem as king and lawgiver (11–12)
  - Jesus predicts the fall of Jerusalem (13)
  - Jesus suffers (14–15)
  - Jesus' resurrection (Mk 16:1–8)
  - [Possibly added endings of the disciples' response]