

KINGDOM

the gospel of mark

Week 4 | Kingdom: The Gospel of Mark | January 25, 2015

Opening Up:

Now we seem to enter a new series of stories. Some have called Chapter 1 "Authority Stories" and Chapters 2 and 3 "Conflict Stories." Jesus has been demonstrating, in Mark's gospel, his authority and he has been defying expectations. Now we see Jesus creating a new community, a new people of God who will embody the kingdom of God. He builds his community by serving, teaching, preaching, training, counseling, healing, and liberating.

In what ways have you benefited from the community Jesus has created?

What makes Jesus' community different?

Read (or reference): Mark 3

Discuss:

1. In 3:1-6 there is a stark contrast between Jesus and the religious leaders. James Edwards wrote about this when he said, "A litmus test of true versus false religion is its response to injustice." In what ways do you see true and false religion in this text? In ways do you see true or false religion in the world today? How do we avoid being guilty of false religion?
2. What do you think of what Tim Keller writes in his book *Generous Justice*?
"Conservatives may argue that this is the parents' fault. It is due to a failure of moral character and the breakdown of the family. Liberals, however, see it as a failure of the government system to stem systemic racism and to change unjust social structures. But nobody says that it is the children's fault they were born where they were. Those children are in poverty largely because they were not born into a family like mine. My three sons, just by being born where they were, have a far better chance to have a flourishing, happy life in society. There is an inequitable distribution of goods and opportunities in this world. Therefore, if you have been assigned the goods of this world by God and you don't share them with others, it isn't just stinginess, it is injustice." (92)
3. In 3:7-12 we find that "those who shouldn't, do, and those who should, don't." In other words the religious should except Jesus, but it is the broken and sinners who do. Why is Jesus a magnet for sinners and the broken? How have you witnessed this to be true in your life? Or, Have you witnessed or not witnessed this in your church background?
4. In 3:13-17 Jesus calls, names, and makes (or appoints) the twelve? When we name things we describe them, but when God names things he makes them. Through the twelve Jesus is creating a new community. When we are saved we are saved to Jesus new family. The apostles were to be "with" Jesus and to be "sent" by Jesus. How are you doing at being with Jesus? Where have you been sent by Jesus?
5. In verse 35 we read that "whoever does the will of God" is in Jesus' family. Do you live every day like you are a member of God's family, accepted, and loved? A child in a family obeys not in order to be loved and accepted, but because he already is loved and accepted. Do you live as a child of the king, or as his slave?
6. Pray.