## Group Study Week One: Mark 1:1-8

**Further Reading***:* Read **Isaiah 40** and **Malachi 3** to better understand the context of **Mark 1:1-3**

**Further Study:** As you read write out any words in this passage that would be helpful for you to look up in a dictionary.

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**Intro:** Who is Jesus? What is he like? Why did he come? Why does it matter for mankind? It’s these questions the Gospel of Mark tries to answer. Mark begins his Gospel with a statement about the purpose of the book. The entire book of Mark is the “good news” of Jesus Christ. But Mark is not writing a new story from scratch, he is entering an ongoing story that originates back in the Old Testament book of Genesis. God’s people have been waiting for the promised Messiah since Adam and Eve sinned against the Lord in Genesis 3. The entire Old Testament points to the coming Messiah. The prophets spoke of him before God’s people, Israel, were sent into exile. Mark starts his Gospel by pointing back to a couple of the last voices that promised the coming Christ, Malachi and Isaiah (vs. 2-3). God’s people have been waiting over 400 years to hear from God. This is where Mark’s Gospel picks up the story of redemption, a new prophet has come on the scene in John the Baptist just as was prophesied hundreds of years earlier.

**Share Hopes:** Before beginning the study, have everyone share 1 or 2 hopes or expectations of reading the Gospel of Mark together. In what ways are they hoping to learn and grow?

**Prayer: Pray for your time together.**

**Read:** Ask a person to read Mark 1:1-1-8

**Summarize:** Have 2 group members share how they would summarize the passage in their own words.

**Confession Questions:**

1. Imagine being an Israelite waiting to hear from the Lord and waiting over 400 years!

*Do you remember the longest time you ever had to wait for a promise to be fulfilled? Share with the group what it was. How did you feel when you finally received what you were waiting for?*

1. An important underlying theme in the first 3 verses of Mark is that God is fulfilling what he promised hundreds and even thousands of years earlier. He is pointing back to what He said through the prophets and showing us that he has kept his word.

*What promises of God stir your affections and strengthen your faith? Why?*

*What promises of God are difficult for you to believe? Why?*

**Notes:** Use this section to write out any questions or ideas that would be good for further study or conversation later.

**Further Study:**

*(If you don’t know many promises of God it’s ok…you can share that)*

1. Vss. 4-5 shows all the people of the region going out to John because he is offering forgiveness of sins.

*If you were living during this time how do you think you would have responded to John’s preaching? Why?*

1. According to the first 5 verses of Mark is seems like there is a connection between confessing sin and preparing the path of the Lord.

*In your own words, why do you think confessing sin prepares the way of the Lord?*

1. *Do you think confessing sin is an on going necessity for believers of Christ? Why?*
2. Look at verse 7. The first specific characteristic of Jesus in the Gospel of Mark is that he is mighty.

*When you think of Jesus, what is the first characteristic that comes to mind? How do you think that affects your relationship with Him?*

**What are some things from this passage you would like to study further? Write them down in the column to the left.**

**Response Discussion:**

*Personal:* Discuss with your group habits of pursuing the Lord (aka. spiritual disciplines) you would like to grow in this semester. How do you hope to grow in your faith?

*Church:*  Discuss some ways your group can grow in reminding each other of God’s grace this semester.

*World:* Discuss a couple ways your group can grow in praying for the spread of the Gospel in your neighborhood.

**Pray Together**