

Encountering Jesus through the Gospel of Mark

Week 5: Many Lanes, One Road

Hi Small Group Leaders,

We continue to be Marked by Jesus as we deepen in relationship with him through the Gospel of Mark. I hope you are experiencing increasing unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace as you gather each week.

Please pray for those in your group this week as you prepare to meet asking that “your love may abound more and more with knowledge and depth of insight” (Phil. 1:9). God’s great love to you!

I. Catch Up

- Play a game, have fun, share some food, or catch up together (15 mins)

II. Dig In

- Seek Understanding
 - Read Mark 6:6-29
 - What parallels and what differences are there in the two stories (‘sending out of the disciples’ and ‘death of John the Baptist’)?
 - What significance might Mark have intended in putting these two stories back-to-back?
 - What are the disciples sent out to do? Why are they sent out?
 - Why did Jesus tell the disciples not to bring anything with them except a staff?
 - What was the significance of them shaking the dust off their feet?
 - Why did Herod behead John the Baptist?
 - John and Jesus were good friends. How do you think Jesus would have responded to this news of John’s beheading?
 - What do you think Herod’s reaction would be to Jesus when rumours were spreading that he was John the Baptist raised from the dead?
- Apply
 - As John the Baptist is being beheaded, the disciples are seeing the Kingdom of God come in power. Geoff noted that comparing ourselves can lead to distress. He used the analogy of driving in different ‘lanes’ and becoming frustrated with what’s happening in our lane compared to others.
 - What’s happening in your ‘lane’ these days (Where is God moving? What are the obstacles?)?
 - Why is it difficult to celebrate when God is using others in ways we’d like to be used?
 - How do we practically encourage other people in their ‘lanes’?

Marked

- Faithfulness looked different at this point for the disciples and for John the Baptist. What does faithfulness to God look like for you in these days [as best as you can tell]?
 - What is hardest about that for you?
- There is suffering for both the disciples (leaving their belongings behind) and John the Baptist (imprisonment and beheading) in their faithfulness. What kind of suffering are you being called to endure in these days? What might God be teaching you through it?
- If the disciples' mission was to go and proclaim the Kingdom of God in word and deed, what is *our* mission? (cf. Mt 28:19-20; John 13:34-35; John 20:21, etc.)
 - What implications does this passage have for *how* we do ministry? (in Jesus' authority, not in ours!; with others)
- Pray
 - How can we pray for one another in the things God is calling us to in these days?
 - How do you/we hope to participate in God's mission this year?
 - Take some time to listen and pray for each other and your group.
- Plans
 - On the heels of Christianity and Culture, we are excited to announce another 4-week course called '**Gibberish: Why Knowing and Communicating the Gospel is Our Call**'. In our four evenings together we will aim to deepen our understanding of the Good News and the ways it is hope for our present cultural moment. In addition, we will work out the implications of this gospel for our work, our family life, and our communities. You will leave with practical help in communicating the gospel in every setting you find yourself and an expanding wonder at the beauty and comprehensiveness of God's mission. It will run on Tuesday nights from 6:30-8:30pm in Rm 201 from Feb 13-March 6. Childcare is provided. Sign up here: <https://www.peaceportalalliance.com/gibberishcourse>
 - Continue to discuss how your group will **serve** together this year? Get some ideas from people in your group and pray that God will make clear if there are needs in your neighbourhood that he would invite you into. Then keep your eyes and ears open in the weeks ahead!