

Living the Way of Jesus Week 1

'Announcing Revolution'

Bible Passage: Mark 1:1-15

Between now and Easter, we will be following the story of Mark's gospel from the appearance of John the Baptist in the wilderness, to the discovery of the empty tomb.

In addition to the regular questions on the weekly church mailing, there is excellent material for Life Groups in the Tom Wright 'Bible Study Guide: Mark for Everyone' and also the LICC 'Living the Way of Jesus in the World' by Tracy Cotterell. This second booklet has some good supplementary material, along with practical suggestions for living out faith on our frontlines. However, it only looks in detail at six selected passages from within the gospel.

These opening two questions are ones that we will return to later, and can be discussed now or later.

- What do you think about new year's resolutions? Do you think they are helpful or not?
- At the start of this new year, what challenges are you facing on your frontline? Are there any things you are looking forward to in 2022?

If possible, show (or invite people to look online ahead) the summary of Mark's gospel to be found in the Bibleproject.com at <https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/mark/>

It is excellent! (NB. It lasts nine and a half minutes.)

Read Mark 1:1-15

- Tom Wright begins his commentary on these verses by telling people that this gospel opens with a spiritual wake-up call. Looking at verses 1-7, and 14-15, can you see why?
- John's baptism is a baptism of repentance. What do you understand by the word 'repentance', and why might it be helpful at the start of a new year?
- How might repentance and faith (1:15) help to transform your new year's resolutions?
- The LICC booklet says that this opening chapter of Mark is about 'Announcing Revolution'. In what sense are verses 1, and 14-15 revolutionary? (It might be helpful to discuss what revolution means.)
- When you consider the challenges that you might be facing on your frontline in 2022, how might it help to have a truly revolutionary faith?
- Mark's gospel is very action orientated, and moves on at such a swift pace that it is easy to overlook verses 7-12. But in what ways are they important? Why has Mark included them?

- Verse 15 gives us the very first words spoken by Jesus in this gospel. Why are they so important, and what is he actually talking about?
- In verse 14, Jesus is not simply saying something; he is 'proclaiming'. This emphasises the importance of his challenge. How can we know the nearness of the kingdom of God on our frontlines both this week, and throughout 2022?

Spend some time in repentance and dedication, offering to God our frontlines.

Let's continue to pray the prayer that Jesus taught his followers: 'Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.'