

The beginning of the Good News.

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[0 : 00] Well, we're starting this new series in Mark's Gospel. And really what we're going to be thinking about over the next few weeks, probably up until the summer, is who is Jesus? Who is Jesus?

And as we think that through, the question of who is Jesus, but actually what does it mean for my life? If he is who he is, how will I live after it? And just to begin, I have this statement.

I wonder if you would agree with me on this statement. That who you think someone is, who you think someone is, it does have an impact as to how you treat them.

Who you think someone is has an impact as to how you would treat them. I think there's a degree of truth to that statement. I think of my mum and dad and my sister.

They are different. I have a different relationship with them. And so I treat them differently. So with the same respect and equality, although you might have not noticed that when I was a teenager.

[1 : 03] But you think of other people that you know in your life. You think of your local coffee barista and a policeman. You treat them very differently. You think of a surgeon or a postman.

Because of who you think someone is, you treat them differently onto who they are. We assign levels of importance.

Sometimes, well, majority of the time probably it's unconscious. To who people are, what they do and how we should respond to them. Is that statement true about Jesus Christ?

Who you think Jesus is or believe him to be will influence how you respond or treat him. You might think he's lots of things. Now, you might think he's just a good moral teacher.

And if that's the case, you would treat him differently. You might just think you listen to some of what he says that you like when he talks about loving your neighbour. That sounds great.

[2 : 06] Everybody loves that. But leave out maybe some of the things you're not keen on. The difficult things that Jesus says. Or you may even just think he's a good teacher. But you think, well, I can...

If you think about he's just a good teacher, you might think, well, I could probably get my morality as someone else. What's wrong with Aesop's fables? You could think that perhaps you might think that he's a revolutionary who whipped up a crowd against the evil oppression of the Romans.

Or you might think, you might think, I don't really hold to anything that Jesus says. He sounds a little bit deranged. And if I'm being honest, he should be locked up.

That's what they did. That's what they would do today with people who have... Who think... Who go around claiming that they're sons of God. They might be put into...

They might be put into... Who said they've had supernatural powers. Because they'd be... Say they've got a psychiatric condition. You might think he's a myth. Or just a legend. Or...

[3 : 10] You could think that he is who he said he is. That is the option. That Jesus is who he said he is. Whatever you think about Jesus.

That will have a bearing on how you respond to him. It will have a bearing. It is a critical question to answer. Because the one thing with Jesus is you can't be neutral on that question.

You can't be neutral. There's not... You can't sit on the fence with that one. C.S. Lewis, who wrote the Narnia series.

He started off as an atheist. Someone who didn't believe in God. But later on in life he became a follower of Jesus. He wrote lots about Jesus. And there's this famous quote that he said. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said.

Would not be just a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic. And then he says on the level with the man who says he's a poached egg. Or else he would be the devil of hell.

[4 : 11] You must make your choice. Either this man was and is the son of God. Or else he's a madman. Or something else. You cannot shut him up for a fool.

You can spit at him and kill him. Or you can fall at his feet and say my Lord and my God. You can't be neutral about Jesus.

You can't sit on the fence about him. And what we're doing each week as I mentioned is we're thinking that through. Who is Jesus? Who did he say that he was? Why did he come? And importantly what is the impact with that on our lives?

What is the impact with that on our lives? This week we're considering that Jesus coming is good news. And how we might prepare to meet him. That Jesus coming is good news.

And how we might prepare to meet him. And we're going to be thinking of that through three things. Thinking about what is the good news. Who is Jesus? And to get ready for him. So firstly the news is good.

[5 : 14] The good news. The news is good. Verse 1 look with me. Verse 1 in the book of Mark. It operates really as a summary statement. About the whole of this book of the Bible.

About this gospel that we're going through. It's kind of a heading. If it was released as a book today. It would be the subscript tagline. Or the blurb on the back. Verse 1.

The beginning of the good news. About Jesus the Messiah. The Son of God. What is Mark's gospel about? The beginning of the good news. About Jesus the Messiah.

The Son of God. It tells you what it's about. And who it's about. And the first thing. That I want to hone in on. That the news in this book. Is good news.

It is good news. Now the word. In the original language. That the Bible is written in Greek. It means good message. It should just be a slide. On the screen.

[6 : 11] Just coming up. So in Greek. The word for good message. Is evangel. It's where we get things like. If you've heard of evangelism. Or evangelico.

I want you to notice one thing. Evangel. It breaks up into two words. Ev. And angel. Ev means good. Angel. It just means a message. Or a messenger. So we have good message.

Or good news. That's what it means. You put the two together. You get good message. Now. The interesting thing about this. This is really important to understand. What Mark's talking about. Evangel.

We might think today. That sounds like a. A Christian word. A religious word. It's everything.

Whenever you think of that. You think Christian. But in the day. Evangel is not a Christian word. It's a word imported.

From. From the Greek understanding. The word evangel. At the time that the gospel was written. Was always used. About a good message. Of victory. Brought. When a battle was being fought.

[7 : 08] If you know anything. About your Roman history. The Roman Empire. Was used. To inherit. To inherit. There was lots of announcements. That victory.

Had been secured. Against somewhere in Europe. The way that. The news of victory. Was announced. Was that someone from. The fields of battle.

Was given the job. Of returning to Rome. Or the nearest. Roman settlement. And they would. Be the angel. With the message. They would. Not an angel.

Like we think. But they would be the messenger. And they would be bringing. The evangel. They would bring. The good news. That victory. Had been secured. And the latest conquest.

Over some barbarian tribe. Had been completed. And following the announcement. Rome. Or wherever it was. Would have great. Celebrations. As their. Empire.

[8 : 01] Expanded. And the Caesar. Was held. In higher. Esteem. It's really important. To understand this. From the off. That this good message. The evangel.

It is. An announcement. It's an announcement. It is something. Proclaimed. So that the empire. Or in our place. The kingdom of heaven. Can rejoice. It's news.

It means that. Today. If. It would be. The kind of thing. That would be. The headline. On the front. Of every newspaper. Across the world. It would be.

On. It would be. The headline. On every news channel. Throughout the entire globe. You can. It's the type. Imagine the headline. If. Russia. Were to ever give in.

To Ukraine. Or imagine. The headline. On the D-Day landing. This is. This is victory. For the whole world. Is taking notice of. It is news.

[8 : 56] It is brilliant. It is. The best news. It'd be the. On the front. Headline. Of every newspaper. Across the world. Which does actually. Change how we understand.

What the summary. Of this book. Is telling you. Because it informs us. What we're reading. The gospel. The evangel. The good news. Primarily. Primarily. It means.

It's not. Primarily. It's not. Primarily. It's not. Primarily. Now. It is. Good advice. To. To. Listen. And hear the gospel. But it's not. Primarily. Advice.

It means. It's not. Primarily. Good counsel. It means. The good news. It's not. A suggestion. But it's. An announcement. Of victory.

The good news. Is an announcement. That. That Jesus. Has. And does. Actually. Win. Completely. Totally. Over the whole. Of the cosmos. The whole universe. This book.

[9 : 51] Is about. The good news. Of a victory. Secured. By the man. Jesus Christ. Okay. That's what it's about. So who is this man?

So we know. That. The good news. The victory. Proclamation. Of Jesus. It's about his life. Death. And his resurrection. But the reason. This matters. Is. Really.

This victory message. Is because of who Jesus is. And we're told. At the end of the first verse. Who is Jesus? Verse one. He's the Messiah. The son of God.

Two titles. Messiah. Son of God. And we're just going to look at. What these. These titles. They kind of come together. What do they mean. Together. Again. It's kind of a religious sounding word.

Isn't it? Messiah. It's not a word. That you often come across. Outside of church. But it. It's actually. The same. Exactly. The same word. That's used for Christ. Christ. It's. As Jesus Christ.

[10 : 48] Jesus Messiah. Jesus Christ. We still have the same issue. What does Christ mean? Christ is not Jesus' second name. It is a title. And it means. Anointed one. Anointed one.

Now. That could mean three things. When it. Means anointed one. It could mean that he's the. He's the priest. It could mean that he's the prophet. It could mean he's the king. It could mean all three. But I think here.

The focus. Is on that he's the king. He's the king. The anointed king. And that this title is significant. The reason I think that. Is because of the way that evangel means a victory message of a leader. It makes sense that when Jesus. Who is this Jesus? That he's saying he's the anointed king. He's the king. To understand what that means. We do need to do a little bit of digging into the history of Israel.

The history of God's people. And the digging could perhaps. Comes the most famous king in Israel's history. After Jesus. Is King David. And that God made a promise to him.

[11 : 51] There just should. Should words. Should come on the screen. There is a typo on this. It says 2 Samuel 4. It's 2 Samuel 7. But it's the same verses. I'll just. This is the.

This is a promise. The living God. Made to. To David. He said to David. When your days are over. And you rest with your ancestors.

I will raise up your offspring. To succeed you. Your own flesh. And blood. And I will establish his kingdom. He is the one. Who will build a house for my name. And I will establish the throne of his kingdom.

Forever. I will be his father. And he will be my son. This is the promise made to King David. By God. Verse 12. That King David's offspring.

That's his child. His seed. Would have a kingdom. In the future. Established. And we see in verse 13. That that kingdom will last. Forever. It is a forever kingdom.

[12 : 51] The final promise. I will be his father. And he will be. My son. The Jewish people. Of that day. And until. Many years later.

Until. Until. As Christians. We realized. Who that king was. Hung on to this promise. They hung on to it. This promise. Of a future king. In the face of.

Oppression. Under Roman rule. They hung on to this promise. That the living God. Would establish. His kingly rule. Again. Right from the beginning. Of this gospel.

We get an insight. Into the identity. Of who Jesus is. Because he is. The fulfillment. Of this promise. To King David. If you were to look back.

At Jesus family history. You would see. That David. Was his great. Great. Great. Great. Great. Great. Great. Great. Great. Grandfather. Jesus.

[13 : 45] Is a child. Is a child. Of David. In that respect. But. But do we also see. How the second title. Is also hinted at. In the promise. Do you see that?

I will be his father. And he will be. My son. And in the verse one. We saw he was. Messiah. Son of God. The Jews did not realize.

Just how unique. This promise would be. Because Jesus. Isn't just. A son. Of God. He is the. Son. Of God. He is God the Son. The relationship.

Between God the Father. And God the Son. Between God the Father. And God the Son. Between Jesus Christ. Is unique. It predates. The entirety of history. Before the universe.

Began. God the Son. Jesus Christ. And God the Father. Were in fellowship. With one another. That is the identity. Of this man. He is 100% man.

[14:42] The anointed king. In the line of David. But he is 100% God. 100% man. And 100% divine. He is God. In human flesh. This is who Jesus is. This puts meat.

Onto the bones. Of the good news. Because it is. News. About the living God. Coming to earth. In the flesh. To save.

A people. For himself. And it is the news. Of victory. Victory. Of the king. It is the announcement. Of a new type of rule. Because. It is the victory. Of the king.

And actually. It mirrors. The type. Of good news. Of victory. That would have circulated. Across the Roman Empire. As they had victories. In battles. Across Europe.

Caesar. Was. Tread. Like. A king. Like a messiah. He wanted to be known. As a son. Of God. When people.

[15:41] Tread him. They thought. Caesar was like. A god. They thought. He would come down. From the gods. They said. What did they say? Hail Caesar. When the empire.

Had grown. After another people. Had been crushed. And. In the face. Of that being true. About what was happening. At the time. Here. We get Mark. Saying. No. No. No. Jesus.

The king. God himself. With a kingdom. Is. He's coming. He's here. With a victory message. Not by defeating a people. With brute aggressive force. But by Jesus coming.

To serve his people. With compassionate. Humble. Sacrifice. Where his throne. Would actually. Not be. Not be a gold plated thing.

That you'd sit on. But where his throne. Would actually be. A method of execution. His throne. Would be. The cross. And the. With. With. With the moment. Of his coronation.

[16:36] When they placed. A crown of thorns. On his head. His coronation. Would be his. Execution. Which is where. The victory. Was won.

Not by beating people. But by beating death. By defeating sin. And crushing. Evil. This is the beginning.

Of the good news. About Jesus. Messiah. The Christ. The son. Of God. And so.

What do we do with that? What do we do with that? Our third is. We need to get ready. For Jesus. We need to get ready. For Jesus. So our first two points. We focused on. Just verse one.

We've had the summary. Of what this book. Is about. That the good news. Is about the victory. That Jesus wins. In his life. Death. And resurrection. And that Jesus. Is both Messiah. Anointed King.

[17:31] And the son of God. Human and divine. He wins his victory. At the cross. God. And the good news. The good news. However. From verse two onwards. In our reading today. It seems like someone else.

Seems to take the main focus. Doesn't it? The focus is on. Someone else. Verse two. We have this set of quotations. From prophets. In the Old Testament. That have predicted.

They've not predicted about Jesus. But about Jesus' cousin. John the Baptist. And the job that he would do. His job. John the Baptist's job. Was to prepare the way.

For the arrival. Of Jesus the King. You see that in verse two. God makes the promise. To Jesus. God makes the promise. He makes the promise. To Jesus.

Of what John will do. For him. Verse two. I will send my messenger. A messenger ahead of you. Who will prepare your way. A voice of one calling. In the wilderness. Prepare the way.

[18:26] For the Lord. Make straight paths. For him. You'll notice that word. Prepare. Prepare. It comes twice. In those quotations. How would you prepare.

If the king. Was coming to your house. Well. I don't know. This is never going to happen. But you have to go with me on this. You know. Imagine. If.

It's only a few weeks before. His own coronation. On May the 6th. But imagine. In preparation for that. He decided. King Charles. Decides to come to your house. For tea. I don't know.

How do you prepare for that. I think there'd be a lot of stress. In our house. I think we'd get out the best china. I think we'd probably go out. Get a new china. Just to. To make sure that everything. We'd. We'd be cleaning it.

The toy. All the Paw Patrol toys. Would be put in the. In the kids room. It'd be immaculate. Wouldn't it? If you were to prepare. Your house. For the king. For the king. For the king to come.

[19:21] And. That's what we have. That. That is. That is. The role of John the Baptist here. But he's not preparing. He is preparing a house. He's not preparing a physical house.

He's preparing a people. To meet with Jesus. To prepare a people. To meet with the king. The son. Of God. Now. We're in a different situation.

Are we? That. The preparation that John the Baptist. Is talking about. Is. It's before Jesus begins his earthly tasks. And we live after Jesus has died. And been raised.

However. The. The question is. Is still important for us. I wonder. Would we be prepared to meet with Jesus Christ ourselves? Would we be prepared to meet him?

The king. God the son. The reason I ask that. Is that. One day. We all will have to stand. Before him. And are we ready? John the Baptist.

[20:19] Prepares. The people. To meet with Jesus. By telling them. To do. One thing really. It comes across as a few things. But really. He's asking them to do one thing. Turn from your sin.

He's telling them to repent. And if they do that. They will receive forgiveness. Turn from your sin. To receive. Forgiveness. Verse four. John the Baptist.

Appeared in the wilderness. Preaching a baptism. Of repentance. For the forgiveness. Of sins. It appears. Doesn't it. That the people. That the people. Actually want to be ready. Verse five. The whole Judean countryside.

And all the people. Of Jerusalem. Went out to him. They went. Confessing their sins. And they were baptized. By him. In the Jordan. And verse seven. John makes it very clear.

Why they need to be prepared. Because he's very powerful. Do you see how he. Points. Just to how great. Jesus is. Compared to himself.

[21:16] John chooses. John chooses. The most menial of tasks. He chooses. A task that. That normally. Only a slave would do. Strapping. Someone's sandals. It's the most menial task.

The lowest task. Of the law. The bottom of the pile. Of society would do. Would be to strap someone's sandals. And he says. I'm not even worthy to do that. For this one.

That's how great. Jesus is. He's saying. I'm not worthy to do that. He's saying. Even if Jesus had a slave. He would have more honour than I do. Because I'm not worthy to do the lowest job.

His preparation is boiled down. To this. He's very powerful. But he's actually. By saying that. He's actually telling everyone. None of us are worthy. To tell you something.

Be prepared. For the arrival of this powerful king. By turning from your sin. By being cleansed. From your sin. And so let me pose this question again.

[22:14] To us. Are we ready to stand. Before the king. He's the king of kings. He's God himself. Are we prepared to meet him. To be ready to stand before him. If Jesus is. Who he said he is.

And. If you knew that you would meet him today. What would you do? We're not left in the dark here. Because the answer lies in these verses.

That we should turn from our sin. That means turning from our old lives. And asking the living God. To give us new ones. To turn. Turn away from the mess we've made.

The times where we've been a daft day. And live new lives. Where Jesus is in charge. What does this look like? Well. There's a really simple. Way.

Of what this might look like. In practice. And some of you may have heard me. Say this before.

Hopefully you'll have. Remembered what these three. Three words are. To keep you. To give you a steer.

[23:07] As to how. What this might look like. In your own life. And something that. That I.

Personally. Have held on for. For a long time. It's. Sorry. Thank you please. Sorry. Thank you please. Firstly.

Sorry. That means. It means admitting. Saying sorry. For the wrongs. The mistakes. The mess. When living our own way. Has caused hurt. When we've lied.

Gossiped hurt others. And rejected God. When we've said to God. I know better than you. That is. The first step. Sorry. Secondly. It is saying thank you.

That means. Saying thank you. To the living God. Saying. Thank you. That God came. In the person of his son. Jesus Christ. As king. To be crowned on a cross. For you. For dying. For dying. For dying in your place. For all the times. When we have messed up. For taking all that punishment. On himself. It's like.

[24 : 01] Imagine. A funnel. Over Jesus head. And all the sin. All the mess. That you've done. Is poured. Onto him. And he takes it. All in his body.

And he. Pinned. He's pinned onto the cross. And in dying. He takes it. All away from me. He said thank you. That you did that. For me. And then finally. Please. It's asking the Lord Jesus. Please. Come and stay with me. Be in my life. Give me new life. Forever. And never leave me.

Sorry. Thank you. Please. Baptism. Is a visual picture. Of what is happening. When you repent. That the water. Is cleaning. And cleaning.

And cleansing. Is a picture. Of you being cleaned. And cleansed. On the inside. That you're. That actually. As you go under the water. That all that. Old. Muck.

[24 : 58] And dirt. Dies. As you come out. Of the water. You come out. As a new person. There's a picture. Of what is going on. Spiritually. Receiving forgiveness.

The offer. Of. Coming to Jesus. Coming to him. In repentance. And faith. Is open to everyone. Who will trust and believe. In Jesus Christ. Doesn't matter what you've done. It doesn't matter.

Your family background. You might feel. Like God will never forgive you. Because of what you've done. But that is a lie. Forgiveness is open. And on offer. To all. To all.

And everyone. Who will put their trust in him. If you want to be prepared. To meet with Jesus. To be able to meet him. Stand before him. With your head. Held high.

Upright. Because all the mistakes. All the mess. Has been washed away. You can do. You can say. You can repent. You can say. Sorry. Thank you. Please. Today. Today is a good day.

[25 : 56] To prepare yourself. To meet the king. It's a good day. To do that. And so. Who is Jesus? Who is Jesus?

He's the king. He's the son of God. And he came to bring. About victory. That is good news. That is good news for us. Because he has victory. Over all the things. That we want.

To him to have victory over. He has victory over your sin. He has victory over the effects. Of sin in our world. He has victory over your suffering. He has victory over the corruption.

And the lies. And the evil. That we have become accustomed to. And that we think is normal. It is not normal. It is not normal. And Jesus promises you freedom. And forgiveness.

From everything that is in there. That you want him to defeat. He's there to bring victory over that. And he proclaims. That he's done it. And he will do it. On the last day.

[26 : 50] When we see all those things went to it. And a new creation replaced. With everything that we want him. With everything that we want him to do. He's the king who offers you forgiveness.

But did we notice that there's something else to what he says? He offers you a new start in life. He offers you freedom and forgiveness. This is who Jesus is. We need to be prepared to meet him.

But the last thing. One thing I didn't mention is. Do you see that this book says this is the beginning? With it saying the beginning. This book is the beginning. It does suggest doesn't it?

That there is a lot more to come. Because in a story you have a beginning. You have a middle. And you have an end. But if this book. This gospel.

Is the victory of Jesus Christ. His life, death and resurrection is the beginning. There is a suggestion that the middle and the end. Will only get better. And we're left.

[27 : 55] In eager anticipation of what might be to come. If the beginning is this good. Surely the middle and the end will blow away. Paul writes that.

He says what no eye has seen. No ear heard. Nor the heart of man imagined. What God has prepared. For those who love him. If this is the beginning.

There will be a crescendo. There will be an end. A finale. Where God will vanquish. All evil and wrong. And sin. And death. It will be gone. He will wipe the tear from your eye.

And you will be a new creation. Designed and made. And prepared to live with him forever. In peace. And harmony. And hope. And prosperity. And love. And affection.

And compassion. Forever. Let's prepare ourselves to live with Jesus. Almighty God.

[28 : 57] We thank you that Jesus is our king. We thank you that he reigns and he rules. And that his kingdom will last forever. We thank you that it is a kingdom of hope.

And I pray that you would give us hope today. You would give us hope in an eternal future where all sin and suffering and evil are vanquished forever. Help us to trust you.

And comfort us in the knowledge of that. Help us to live with that truth. The truth of eternity being a reality in our lives. Comfort us Lord Jesus.

I thank you that you do reign and that you will. Bless us Lord Jesus. With everything that's going on in our lives.

We just come to you now. With all the things that we're thinking and feeling. And things that are going on. The individual circumstances that we find ourselves in.

[29 : 57] The anxieties and the worries. And we come to you and we say would you be king over our lives Lord. We want you to be. We're sorry for the sins that we've done.

We're sorry for the times where we've not lived. As you would want us to. But we thank you for the cross. We thank you that you've been crowned as the king over all.

That you have said it is finished. And we pray and ask please Lord Jesus. Would you come into our life. And would you never leave us. And if we've drifted from you.

Would you come into our life afresh. Today. Would we encounter you. And would we always know your presence in your heavenly gates. We ask for this.

In the name of Jesus. Amen.