

THE SURPRISING JESUS

Studies in the Book of Mark

~Week One~

“The Authority of Jesus”

Mark 1:16-45



Life Groups

Welcome to UPC's study of the book of Mark entitled "The Surprising Jesus." It is our prayer that you will grow in love for the Savior who never stops surprising us with power and grace.

Whether you work through these studies on your own, with a friend, or with a UPC Life Group, we believe these weekly studies will help you develop a HEAD that enjoys God's truth, a HEART of love for God and neighbor, and HANDS eager to serve the King.

SOME PRELIMINARIES AS WE BEGIN:

- **These studies** are coordinated with the Sunday sermons at UPC. On Sunday morning you will hear a sermon on a passage from the book of Mark. That week's study guide will focus on the NEXT section in the book of Mark. So each of these studies includes a "Look Back" section in which you reflect on the previous Sunday's sermon. If you missed that sermon, you can always listen to it online. Just go to our website: www.upc-orlando.com.
- Now, it will help if you have a **"big picture" view** of the book of Mark. Here's a simple outline:
 - I. Chapters 1-8 – Who is Jesus?
 - II. Chapters 9-16 – What did Jesus come to do?
- **Who wrote Mark?** Most likely it was John Mark, a cousin of Barnabas, traveling companion to Paul, and close associate of Peter. You can find out more about John Mark in the following places: Acts 12:12, 25; 15:37-39; Colossians 4:10; 2 Timothy 4:11; and Philemon 24. (Some scholars think Mark is the young man who appears in Mark 14:51-52!)
- **What's surprising about the book of Mark?** It is shorter than the other three gospels. As someone has said, it is "brisk, vivid, and to the point." Mark skips over the birth and childhood of Jesus and jumps right into the ministry of Jesus at the age of 30. It seems that his audience is mostly Gentile, not Jewish. The focus is more on Jesus' deeds than Jesus' words. Mark "cuts to the chase" and doesn't spend a lot of time with details of time or place. So this book is not really a biography of Jesus. Instead it is, as Mark himself puts it, "the beginning of the gospel about Jesus Christ" (1:1).

LOOK BACK – Mark 1:1-15

In the previous section (Mark 1:1-15), John the Baptist announces the coming of Jesus Christ and baptizes Him in the Jordan River. Jesus begins His ministry.

- a) Did you find anything surprising about John the Baptist (vss. 4-8)? If he were among us today, in our culture, what do you think he would be doing? How would he dress? How would people react to him? How would you react?

- b) Did anything surprise you about the way Jesus began His earthly ministry (vss. 9-13)?

- c) When push comes to shove, what does the statement, “The kingdom of God is near” (vs. 15), really mean to you?

LOOK UP – Mark 1:16-45

Jesus has announced the coming of the Kingdom (vs. 15). Immediately He begins displaying His authority as the King.

Mark 1:16-20 – Jesus Calls with Authority

- a) Read Luke’s account in Luke 5:1-11. What additional data does Luke include in his story that helps to better understand the response of Peter, James, and John?

- b) What were the risks and costs involved in the disciples’ decision to leave their nets and follow Jesus?

Mark 1:21-22 – Jesus Teaches with Authority

- a) What made the teaching of Jesus so different from that of the religious leaders of His day? Was it technique, or content, or what?

Mark 1:23-45 – Jesus Heals with Authority

- a) What types of maladies does Jesus cure in this passage?

- b) What sets Jesus apart from modern-day “faith healers”?

LOOK IN – Reflect

- a) Picture yourself having an ordinary morning at work, at home, or out shopping. A man walks up to you and says, “Come, follow me.” What would it take to convince you to do what he says?

- b) Does the word “authority” (vss. 22, 27) conjure up positive emotions for you, or negative ones? Why do you think that is the case?

- c) Have you been healed by Jesus? If so, how?

LOOK OUT – Apply

Something that may surprise you about Jesus is His devotion in prayer (vs. 35). If our Savior needed to pray, how much more do we! In what condition is your prayer life these days? Remember: Believing and resting in the authority of Jesus will help you pray with more frequency and fervency.