

Outline of Mark's Story

To you has been given the secret of the kingdom of God (4:11)

I. Title and Prologue

- The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus (the) Christ, the Son of God* 1:1-13
- The Baptist (who is forerunner of Jesus in life & death in Mk)
 - The Baptism (Jesus is anointed as *Son of God & Servant* – Ps 2:7; Is 42:1)
 - The Temptation (in which Jesus ties up the strong man) 3:27

II. Jesus the Christ

- a) *His proclamation & his rejection by Pharisees & Herodians* 1:14-3:6
- “The time is fulfilled & the Kingdom of God is at hand; repent & believe in the gospel.” 1:15
 - Jesus calls four disciples. 1:16-20
 - He shows his authority in healing & exorcism. 1:21-45
 - He shows his authority in word & controversy. 2:1-3:6
 - Response: Pharisees & Herodians plot to destroy him. 3:6
- b) *His healing & exorcising mission to the whole of the Holy Land, & his rejection by his family & his home town.*
- He heals, exorcises, orders them not to make him known. 3:7-12
 - He calls the 12, *to be with him*. 3:13-17
 - Neither family nor Jerusalem scribes accept him. 3:20-35
 - He shows his wisdom to the crowds in parables. 4:1-34
 - He shows his mighty power over: forces of nature 4:35-41
forces of hell 5:1-20
forces of disease & death 5:21-43
 - Response: his home town prevents him from doing any miracle there. 6:1-6
- c) *His mission of teaching & feeding concludes with the blind eyes, deaf ears, hardened hearts of own disciples (the “bread section”)* 6:6b-8:21
- He teaches around the villages 6:6b
 - He sends out disciples to heal & exorcise as he had done 6:7-13
 - The fate of the Baptist (anticipates Jesus’ own fate) 6:14-29
 - Rest of disciples leads to the good shepherd feeding 5000 6:30-44
 - He walks on the sea; heals in country villages & cities 6:45-56
 - The *lip-service* of the Pharisees 7:1-23
 - The faith of a Greek woman 7:24-30
 - The healing of eyes & lips of a Gentile man 7:31-37
 - He feeds 4000 Gentiles & refuses a sign to the Pharisees 8:1-13
 - Response: Jesus severely laments the attitude of his own disciples: “Do you not yet understand?” 8:14-21
- d) *Conclusion:*
- Healing of the blind man of Bethsaida - saw men like trees walking 8:22-26
(A symbolic story showing how it would be as difficult for Jesus to cure the blindness of his own disciples as it was to cure this blind man).
 - Peter confesses Jesus to be the Christ 8:27-29
- ### **III. The Way to Jerusalem**
- a) *Jesus predicts his suffering, death & resurrection for the first time* 8:31
- Peter misunderstands: is called Satan 8:32-33

- Solemn teaching for all 8:34-9:1
 - The Transfiguration reinforces the message of the cross 9:2-13
 - The disciples fail in their mission of casting out spirits 9:14-29
- b) Jesus makes his second prediction of passion* 9:31
- All disciples misunderstand 9:32-34
 - Solemn teaching about true greatness for all 9:34-37
 - Further teachings on tolerance, scandal, divorce, children, riches, rewards 9:38-10:31
- c) Jesus makes his third prediction of passion* 10:32-34
- James & John misunderstand & the rest share in it 10:35-41
 - Solemn teaching for all: Jesus explains purpose of his mission, “not to be served but to serve” 10:42-44
- d) Conclusion: healing of the blind Bartimaeus* 10:45-52
- Bartimaeus is the perfect disciple. He shows his need, perseveres in his prayer, is able to follow Jesus *on the way*.

IV. The Ministry in Jerusalem

- a) Day One: The entry.* 11:1-11
- b) Day Two: The fig tree & the temple* 11:12-19
- c) Day Three:*
- Conflicts with temple authorities & Jewish parties 11:20-12:40
 - The widow & her coins 12:41-44
 - Jesus’ farewell, apocalyptic discourse 13:1-37

V. The Passion

- a) Preparation:*
- The plot of the priests & scribes 14:1-2
 - The woman of Bethany 14:3-9
 - Judas goes to the priests 14:10-11
 - Preparation for the Passover 14:12-16
 - The supper: “my blood of the covenant which will be poured out for many” 14:17-25
 - The Mount of Olives & Gethsemane 14:26-42
- b) The Passion itself*
- The arrest 14:43-52
 - The trials 14:53-15:20
 - The execution & confession of the Gentile centurion; “this man was the son of God” 15:21-41
 - The burial 15:42-47
 - The women at the empty tomb 16:1-8
- c) Additional endings to the Gospel by other hands* 16:9-20

Readings from Mark's Gospel for Sundays & Feasts in Year B

Sundays in Ordinary Time

1.	1:7-11	26.	9:38-43, 45, 47-48
3.	1:14-20	27.	10:2-16
4.	1:21-28	28.	10:17-30
5.	1:29-39	29.	10:35-45
6.	1:40-45	30.	10:46-52
7.	2:1-12	31.	12:28-34
8.	2:18-22	32.	12:38-44
9.	2:23-3:6	33.	13:24-32
10.	3:20-35		
11.	4:26-34		
12.	4:35-41		
13.	5:21-43		
14.	6:1-6		
15.	6:7-13		
16.	6:30-34		
22.	7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23		
23.	7:31-37		
24.	8:27-35		
25.	9:30-37		

Other Feasts

Advent 1	13:33-37
Advent 2	1:1-8
Lent 1	1:12-15
Lent 2	9:2-10
Palm Sunday	11:1-10 & 14:1-15:47
Easter	16:1-7
Ascension	16:15-20
Corpus Christi	14:12-16, 22-26

For a good overview & guide to the readings of Mark for Cycle B see:

Peter Edmonds SJ, "The Voice of Saint Mark: Year B and the Gospel of Mark" on *Thinking Faith: The Online Journal of the Jesuits in Britain* Posted on 5th December 2011 and amended in December 2014 and again in November 2017 to account for differences between the beginnings of these liturgical years. Go to www.thinkingfaith.org

The 'little people' in Mark

If the disciples Jesus called turned out to be warnings more often than examples, who are we to adopt as models of Christian behaviour? One answer is to ponder “one appearance people”, like the woman who anointed the feet of Jesus, of whom he said “*Wherever the gospel is preached in the whole world, what she has done will be told in remembrance of her*” (Mk 14:9).

There is a considerable group of such people, both men & women, some of whom provide an example by what they do & others through what they say.

- The Gerasene demoniac (5:1-20)
- The woman with the haemorrhage for 12 years (5:25-34)
- Jairus (5:35-43).
- The Syro-Phoenician woman (7:24-30)
- The father of the epileptic demoniac (9:14-29)
- Bartimaeus the blind beggar (10:46-52)
- A scribe (12:28-34)
- The widow in the temple (12:44).
- Simon of Cyrene (15:21).
- The women (15:40-41; 16:6),
- The Roman centurion (15:39)
- The respected member of the council (15:43-46).

Exercise

- Which follower/disciple/character do you most relate to in Mark's story?
- What part does he/she play in the narrative?
- How does Jesus relate to him/her?
- What is his/her response to Jesus?
- What do you learn about discipleship from this person?

Mk 5:1-20 The Gerasene Demoniac

They came to the other side of the lake, to the country of the Gerasenes. & when he had stepped out of the boat, immediately a man out of the tombs with an unclean spirit met him. He lived among the tombs; & no one could restrain him any more, even with a chain; for he had often been restrained with shackles & chains, but the chains he wrenched apart, & the shackles he broke in pieces; & no one had the strength to subdue him. Night & day among the tombs & on the mountains he was always howling & bruising himself with stones. When he saw Jesus from a distance, he ran & bowed down before him; & he shouted at the top of his voice, 'What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I adjure you by God, do not torment me.' For he had said to him, 'Come out of the man, you unclean spirit!' Then Jesus asked him, 'What is your name?' He replied, 'My name is Legion; for we are many.' He begged him earnestly not to send them out of the country. Now there on the hillside a great herd of swine was feeding; & the unclean spirits begged him, 'Send us into the swine; let us enter them.' So he gave them permission. & the unclean spirits came out & entered the swine; & the herd, numbering about two thousand, rushed down the steep bank into the lake, & were drowned in the lake.

The swineherds ran off & told it in the city & in the country. Then people came to see what it was that had happened. They came to Jesus & saw the demoniac sitting there, clothed & in his right mind, the very man who had had the legion; & they were afraid. Those who had seen what had happened to the demoniac & to the swine reported it. Then they began to beg Jesus to leave their neighbourhood. As he was getting into the boat, the man who had been possessed by demons begged him that he might be with him. But Jesus refused, & said to him, 'Go home to your friends, & tell them how much the Lord has done for you, & what mercy he has shown you.' & he went away & began to proclaim in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him; & everyone was amazed.

Mk 5:25-34 The woman with the haemorrhage for twelve years

Now there was a woman who had been suffering from haemorrhages for twelve years. She had endured much under many physicians, & had spent all that she had; & she was no better, but rather grew worse. She had heard about Jesus, & came up behind him in the crowd & touched his cloak, for she said, 'If I but touch his clothes, I will be made well.' Immediately her haemorrhage stopped; & she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease. Immediately aware that power had gone forth from him, Jesus turned about in the crowd & said, 'Who touched my clothes?' & his disciples said to him, 'You see the crowd pressing in on you; how can you say, "Who touched me?"' He looked all round to see who had done it. But

the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came in fear & trembling, fell down before him, & told him the whole truth. He said to her, 'Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace, & be healed of your disease.'

Mk 5:21-24; 35-43 Jairus

When Jesus had crossed again in the boat to the other side, a great crowd gathered round him; & he was by the lake. Then one of the leaders of the synagogue named Jairus came &, when he saw him, fell at his feet & begged him repeatedly, 'My little daughter is at the point of death. Come & lay your hands on her, so that she may be made well, & live.' So he went with him.....

While he was still speaking, some people came from the leader's house to say, 'Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the teacher any further?' But overhearing what they said, Jesus said to the leader of the synagogue, 'Do not fear, only believe.' He allowed no one to follow him except Peter, James, & John, the brother of James. When they came to the house of the leader of the synagogue, he saw a commotion, people weeping & wailing loudly. When he had entered, he said to them, 'Why do you make a commotion & weep? The child is not dead but sleeping.' & they laughed at him. Then he put them all outside, & took the child's father & mother & those who were with him, & went in where the child was. He took her by the hand & said to her, 'Talitha cum', which means, 'Little girl, get up!' & immediately the girl got up & began to walk about (she was twelve years of age). At this they were overcome with amazement. He strictly ordered them that no one should know this, & told them to give her something to eat.

Mk 7:24-30 The Syrophenician Woman

From there he set out & went away to the region of Tyre. He entered a house & did not want anyone to know he was there. Yet he could not escape notice, but a woman whose little daughter had an unclean spirit immediately heard about him, & she came & bowed down at his feet. Now the woman was a Gentile, of Syrophenician origin. She begged him to cast the demon out of her daughter. He said to her, 'Let the children be fed first, for it is not fair to take the children's food & throw it to the dogs.' But she answered him, 'Sir, even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs.' Then he said to her, 'For saying that, you may go—the demon has left your daughter.' So she went home, found the child lying on the bed, & the demon gone.

Mk 9:14-29 The father of the epileptic demoniac

When they came to the disciples, they saw a great crowd around them, & some scribes arguing with them. When the whole crowd saw him, they were immediately overcome with awe, & they ran forward to greet him. He asked them, 'What are you arguing about with them?' Someone from the crowd answered him, 'Teacher, I brought you my son; he has a spirit that makes him unable to speak; & whenever it seizes him, it dashes him down; & he foams & grinds his teeth & becomes rigid; & I asked your disciples to cast it out, but they could not do so.' He answered them, 'You faithless generation, how much longer must I be among you? How much longer must I put up with you? Bring him to me.' & they brought the boy to him. When the spirit saw him, immediately it threw the boy into convulsions, & he fell on the ground & rolled about, foaming at the mouth. Jesus asked the father, 'How long has this been happening to him?' & he said, 'From childhood. It has often cast him into the fire & into the water, to destroy him; but if you are able to do anything, have pity on us & help us.' Jesus said to him, 'If you are able!—All things can be done for the one who believes.' Immediately the father of the child cried out, 'I believe; help my unbelief!' When Jesus saw that a crowd came running together, he rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, 'You spirit that keep this boy from speaking & hearing, I command you, come out of him, & never enter him again!' After crying out & convulsing him terribly, it came out, & the boy was like a corpse, so that most of them said, 'He is dead.' But Jesus took him by the hand & lifted him up, & he was able to stand. When he had entered the house, his disciples asked him privately, 'Why could we not cast it out?' He said to them, 'This kind can come out only through prayer.'

Mk 10:46-52 Bartimaeus the blind beggar

They came to Jericho. As he & his disciples & a large crowd were leaving Jericho, Bartimaeus son of Timaeus, a blind beggar, was sitting by the roadside. When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout out & say, 'Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!' Many sternly ordered him to be quiet, but he cried out even more loudly, 'Son of David, have mercy on me!' Jesus stood still & said, 'Call him here.' & they called the blind man, saying to him, 'Take heart; get up, he is calling you.' So throwing off his cloak, he sprang up & came to Jesus. Then Jesus said to him, 'What do you want me to do for you?' The blind man said to him, 'My teacher, let me see again.' Jesus said to him, 'Go; your faith has made you well.' Immediately he regained his sight & followed him on the way.

Mk 12:28-34 A scribe

One of the scribes came near & heard them disputing with one another, & seeing that he answered them well, he asked him, 'Which commandment

is the first of all?’ Jesus answered, ‘The first is, “Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one; you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, & with all your soul, & with all your mind, & with all your strength.” The second is this, “You shall love your neighbour as yourself.” There is no other commandment greater than these.’ Then the scribe said to him, ‘You are right, Teacher; you have truly said that “he is one, & besides him there is no other”; & “to love him with all the heart, & with all the understanding, & with all the strength”, & “to love one’s neighbour as oneself”,—this is much more important than all whole burnt-offerings & sacrifices.’ When Jesus saw that he answered wisely, he said to him, ‘You are not far from the kingdom of God.’ After that no one dared to ask him any question.

Mk 12:44 The widow in the Temple

For all of them have contributed out of their abundance; but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on.’

Mk 15:21 Simon of Cyrene

They compelled a passer-by, who was coming in from the country, to carry his cross; it was Simon of Cyrene, the father of Alexander & Rufus.

Mk 15:40-41; 16:6 The women

There were also women looking on from a distance; among them were Mary Magdalene, & Mary the mother of James the younger & of Joses, & Salome. These used to follow him & provided for him when he was in Galilee; & there were many other women who had come up with him to Jerusalem. But he said to them, ‘Do not be alarmed; you are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has been raised; he is not here. Look, there is the place they laid him.

Mk 15:39 The Roman Centurion

Now when the centurion, who stood facing him, saw that in this way he breathed his last, he said, ‘Truly this man was God’s Son!’

Mk 15:43-46 Joseph of Arimathea

Joseph of Arimathea, a respected member of the council, who was also himself waiting expectantly for the kingdom of God, went boldly to Pilate & asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate wondered if he were already dead; & summoning the centurion, he asked him whether he had been dead for some time. When he learned from the centurion that he was dead, he

granted the body to Joseph. Then Joseph bought a linen cloth, & taking down the body, wrapped it in the linen cloth, & laid it in a tomb that had been hewn out of the rock. He then rolled a stone against the door of the tomb.

Want to Know More?

For official Catholic Church teaching on the Bible & its interpretation, the best source is Vatican II's Constitution on Divine Revelation (*Dei Verbum*). The best & most

authoritative guide to biblical exegesis & interpretation is the Pontifical Biblical Commission's 1993 document on *The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church*. A compact edition is available from St. Paul's Books & Media. This was followed in 2010 by Benedict XVI's *Verbum Domini*, the Post-Synodal Exhortation on the Word of God. Further explanations of various exegetical methods appear in Daniel J. Harrington's *Interpreting the NT* (rev.ed.: Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1988).

A "synopsis" of the Gospels provides the texts of the three Synoptic Gospels (& John where relevant) in parallel columns, making a detailed comparison of the texts easier e.g. Burton Throckmorton (ed.), *Gospel Parallels* (5th ed.: Nashville, Nelson, 1992).

The following large commentaries on Mark may be helpful to some: John R. Donahue & Daniel J. Harrington, *The Gospel of Mark 2*: Sacra Pagina, Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2005 & Morna D. Hooker, *The Gospel According to St. Mark*, Black's NT Commentary; Peabody, MA; Hendrickson, 1993.

More manageable (& affordable!) introductions to Mark's Gospel include:

Elena Bosetti, *Mark: The Risk of Believing*, Boston: Pauline Books, 2006.

Brendan Byrne, *A Costly Freedom: A Theological Reading of Mark's Gospel*, Collegeville Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2008

Timothy Carmody, *The Gospel of Mark Question by Question*, New York: Paulist Press, 2010

Daniel Harrington, *Meeting St. Mark Today*, Chicago: Loyola Press, 2011

Daniel Harrington, *What are they saying about Mark?*, New York: Paulist Press, 2004

Nicholas King, *The Strangest Gospel: A Study of Mark*, Boxhall, Stowmarket: Mayhew, 2006.

George Martin, *Bringing the Gospel of Mark to Life: Insight & Inspiration*, Huntington, Indiana: Our Sunday Visitor Publishing, 2005.

Denis McBride, *The Gospel of Mark: A Reflective Commentary*, Dublin: Dominican Publications, 1996.

Ched Myers, Marie Dennis, Joseph Nangle, Cynthia Moe-Lobeda, Stuart Taylor, "*Say to this mountain*": *Mark's Story of Discipleship*, Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1996.

Joseph O'Hanlon, *Mark: My Words*, Slough: St. Paul's, 1994.

Dennis Sweetland, *Mark: From Death to Life*, New York: New City Press, 2007.

Rowan Williams, *Meeting God in Mark*, London: SPCK 2014.

A useful website is that of Felix Just SJ: www.catholic-resources.org If you enter the site & click on "Electronic New Testament" there is a wealth of material there – including material on each of the Gospels & the Synoptic Problem.