



The Kingdom is Near!

“The time is fulfilled and the Kingdom of God is near” - the message declared by John the Baptist is expanded by Jesus as He begins His public ministry. What does this Kingdom mean for us today?

1 - “Check-in” with your Group - Take about 30-45 seconds each to share:

Have you seen the hand of God moving this week?

2 - Watch Pastor Scott’s Video for Kingdom > Empire #2, “The Kingdom is Near”

Read Jeremiah 31:31-34, Jeremiah 33:14-22, and Ezekiel 36:22-27

- These prophetic passages describe aspects of the Kingdom of God yet to come, and how God will bring it about. A few important details:
 - *The Kingdom is not just for Israel & Judah, but all nations*
 - *It is marked by the presence of the Spirit of God within the faithful; it is both a spiritual Kingdom within those who believe, and a physical Kingdom created by the faithful actions of believers.*

Read Mark 1:7-8, 10-11, 15 - In light of the prophetic words of Jeremiah and Ezekiel, how do Mark’s words in these verses explain Jesus’ mission?

Read Mark 1:12-13 - Mark’s readers were Christians in Rome facing persecution, isolation, even being killed by wild animals in the Colosseum for their belief in Jesus.

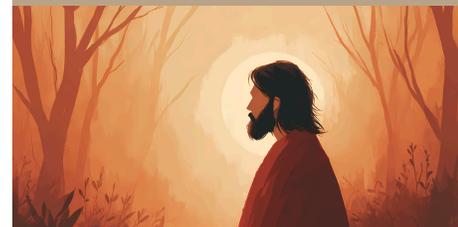
- *How would this passage bring comfort to 1st Century believers?*
- *How does it speak to us today about Jesus our Savior and guide?*

Read Mark 1:21-28 - When Jesus teaches in the synagogue at Capernaum, an unclean spirit identifies Him! This is an important theme in Mark - Jesus doesn’t announce that He is the Messiah, but others do!

- *Already in just one chapter, we hear Mark, John the Baptist, God’s voice from Heaven, a demon, and a leper all proclaim that Jesus is the Son of God. This has been called Mark’s “Messianic Secret”. Why do you think Jesus’ identity is presented this way?*

Spiritual Formation practice: Follow the Mark reading guide on the back of this page.

Prayer: Share requests and pray for one another, asking God to guide us to understand His Kingdom and the power we have as followers of the true Son of God!



The “Messianic Secret” in Mark:

- **People silenced:** Jesus tells people not to reveal his miracles (e.g., Mark 1:44) or his identity (e.g., Mark 8:30) before the time appointed by God.
- **Demons silenced:** Jesus strictly commands demons to be silent, as they know His true identity.
- **Purpose:** This secrecy prevents Jesus’ premature death by Roman authorities and redefines the Messiah from a political, militaristic ruler to a suffering servant.
- **Understanding Jesus’ Mission:** Jesus intentionally avoids becoming known as a mere “wonderworker”, anti-Roman political rebel, or wandering philosopher, and ensures his mission is understood through the cross and resurrection.
- **Reversal at the End!** The theme dramatically shifts at the crucifixion, where the secret is ultimately revealed by a Roman centurion (Mark 15:39).

The concept is central to understanding the Gospel of Mark’s portrayal of Jesus as the hidden, suffering, and ultimately revealed Son of God. He is not a political or military leader, but inaugurates a powerful spiritual Kingdom that offers freedom from sin, death, and the forces of evil.





Mark Scripture Readings

Use this chart to guide your time meditating on God's Word...

Week	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
1: 1/22-28	Mark 1:1-13	Mark 1:14-28	Mark 1:29-45	Mark 2:1-12	Mark 2:13-17
2: 3/1-7	Mark 2:18-28	Mark 3:1-12	Mark 3:13-35	Mark 4:1-20	Mark 4:21-34
3: 3/8-14	Mark 4:35-41	Mark 5:1-20	Mark 5:21-43	Mark 6:1-13	Mark 6:14-32
4: 3/15-21	Mark 6:33-56	Mark 7:1-23	Mark 7:24-37	Mark 8:1-10	Mark 8:11-38
5: 3/22-28	Mark 9:1-13	Mark 9:14-32	Mark 9:33-49	Mark 10:1-22	Mark 10:23-45
6: 3/29-4/4	Mark 10:46-52	Mark 11:1-14	Mark 11:15-33	Mark 12:1-27	Mark 12:28-44
7: 4/5-11	Mark 13:1-37	Mark 14:1-50	Mark 14:51-72	Mark 15	Mark 16