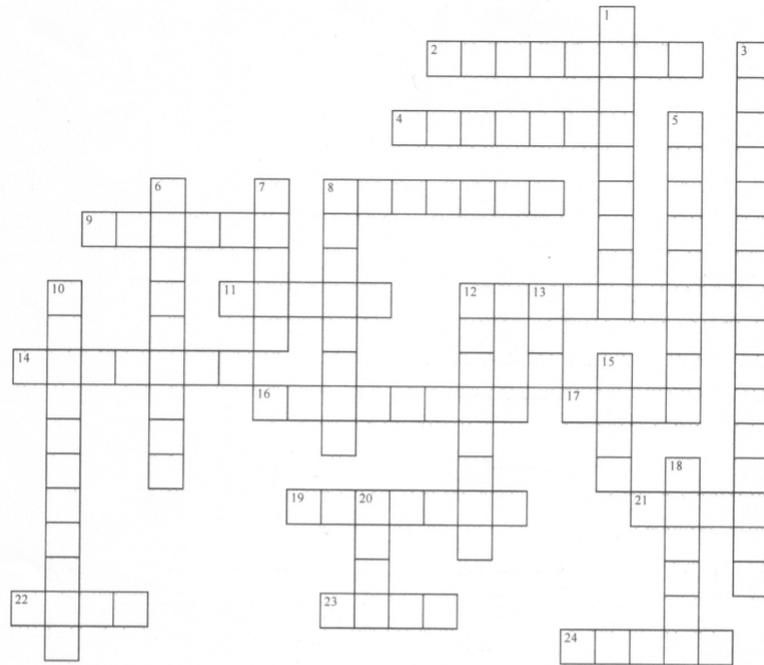


Crossword



ACROSS

- 2 Hometown of Jesus
- 4 A common teaching tool Jesus used
- 8 On what day did the Pharisees and Herodians plot Jesus' death
- 9 How many apostles did Jesus appoint?
- 11 Married his brother's wife
- 12 Where a blind man needed to be healed twice?
- 14 What seed starts small and grows big?
- 16 Greatest opponents in Jesus' ministry
- 17 Announced Jesus' coming
- 19 Northern Israel
- 21 What should you never put under your bed?
- 22 A word to describe non-Jews
- 23 How many loaves did Jesus use to feed the five thousand?
- 24 Jesus warned his disciples to look out for the ----- of the Pharisees and Herod.

DOWN

- 1 The region where the Demon-possessed man was healed
- 3 Where Peter said Jesus was the Christ?
- 5 Two non-Jewish towns Jesus worked near
- 6 Capital of Judea
- 7 Who was unsure that Jesus would want to heal him?
- 8 What title did Jesus prefer to Son of God
- 10 Execution for slaves and non-Romans
- 12 This happened to John the Baptist
- 13 How many fish did Jesus use to feed the five thousand?
- 15 What laws did Jesus make redundant
- 18 The name of a grateful synagogue ruler?
- 20 The name of a tax collector

Contents

Study	Title	Passage	Page
	Introduction		1
1	A New Kingdom	Mark 1.1-20	3
2	A Surprising Kingdom	Mark 1.21-45	6
3	Kingdom Values	Mark 2.1-12	9
4	Who Am I?	Mark 2.1-3.6	11
5	Citizens of the Kingdom	Mark 3.7-34	14
6	Riddles of the Kingdom	Mark 4.1-34	17
7	A Compassionate Kingdom	Mark 4.35-41	19
8	Gentile Check-up	Mark 5.1-20	21
9	Jewish Check-up	Mark 5.21-6.13	24
10	Two Kings—Two Feasts	Mark 6.14-56	27
11	Redefining Kosher	Mark 7-8.21	29
12	Now you see it ... now you...?	Mark 8.22-9.1	32
	Crossword		35

Introduction

Mark's Gospel is evangelistic. From the very first words it proclaims and announces a new and different kingdom that rivals and challenges and undermines the pretensions of the kingdoms of the world, 'The beginning of the gospel about Jesus Christ, the Son of God.'

This is the announcement of God's Kingdom coming in the coming of God's king, Jesus. But while the terms 'gospel' and 'son of God' are the conventional terms used for kingdom announcements in the first century, the doings of the king and the nature of the kingdom are far from conventional or ordinary.

If we are Christians—God's people in Christ—we need to be re-evangelised and re-converted. We need to hear and see differently what has become ordinary in relation to our salvation. We need to hear the call to new challenges and changes in our life.

One of those challenges is to live a life of passionate witness. In the twelve talks that cover Mark 1-9.1 there will be specific opportunities to invite your non-Christian friends to church, to hear a talk that is specially shaped for them. But I would suggest that any of the 12 talks will have a gospel edge to them—they are 'simply Jesus' talks, and we, like Levi (Mark 2.13-17), only need to invite our friends to meet him.

Those opportunities will be represented in these studies. You will have the opportunity to share with others in your group who you are praying for to become a follower of King Jesus and who you want to invite to the special church meetings, as well as what are some of the fears and concerns you have and talk those over together.

Read 9.1

8. If this verse is true, then when did the kingdom come with power in the life of the disciples?

Prayer for:

Other members of the Group...

Things in my life...

The next invitation service...

Those I would like to share Jesus with...

3. How well is Peter seeing in v29?

Peter has the right answers, but the wrong working out. Jesus gives the right 'working out' in his teaching on the Son of Man in v31-38.

4. What does Jesus tell his disciples must happen to the Son of Man?

5. How well is Peter seeing in v32?

6. Jesus gets a strong response to his words from Peter. What sort of response does Jesus give back to Peter and why?

In v31-38 Jesus redefines their expectations of the consequences of following him.

Memorise v34-38. Why? - Because we desperately need to internalise these words if we are going to live real Christian lives - this creates the right expectation and attitude.

7. What were the disciples' wrong expectations?

The special church meetings are:

Aug 13	Kingdom Values	Mark 2.1-12
Aug 20	Who Am I?	Mark 2.1-3.6
Sep 10	A Compassionate Kingdom	Mark 4.35-41
Oct 1	Two Kings—Two Feasts	Mark 6.14-56
Oct 22	Now You see it, now you...?	Mark 8.22-9.1

As per usual, you will find in the studies the Big Idea so you can look at the different talks and see which is most appropriate for your friend or family member to be invited to.

You will notice that at the beginning of each study there is not only the usual suspects; 'Key Verse and 'Big Idea, but a new member of the line up - 'Telling Stories'. The idea is this: at the beginning of each study there will be an opportunity for a member or some members of the group to tell the story or stories in the passage that the group is looking at that evening. Maybe someone will memorise it or tell it in their own words, but every week we will tell the gospel stories to each other and listen and maybe hear new things in the telling.

I want to remind you just how important our HOMEchurch groups are. Remember to be praying for your facilitators and encourage them by preparing well yourself.

Your Brother in the Lord,



David Thurston

Study 1 A New Kingdom

Mark 1.1-20

Big Idea

Mark's Gospel is the announcement of a new kingdom with the coming of God's true King Jesus. This is both the fulfilment of God's promises and our hopes of a truly human life.

Key Verse Mark 1.1

The beginning of the gospel about Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

Telling Stories

Background

Mark's Gospel was probably the first 'Gospel' written. It was used by Matthew and Luke as the 'skeleton' to which they added their own and shared material.

John's gospel seems to assume Mark when it identifies details Mark omits (in Mark 14.3 the woman is not named whereas in John 11.2 the woman is identified as Martha).

1. What do the words 'the beginning' remind you of and what point is Mark making by using them?

2. This piece of writing is described as a gospel—what do you think a gospel is?

3. Read 1 Sam 31.9; 2 Kings 7.9; Ps 96 esp. v2 and Isa. 40.9.

Look at the context and come up with a summary statement of what a gospel is in the OT.

Political Terms

We cannot avoid the fact that 'son of God', 'king', 'kingdom' and 'Christ' are political terms. It goes some way to explain why Jesus was

Study 12 Now you see it... now you...? Mark 8.22-9.1

Big Idea

The two-part healing of the blind man anticipates the blindness of the disciples and Peter who see that Jesus is the Christ but don't see he is the Son of Man who must suffer.

Key Verse Mark 8:34

Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me..."

Telling Stories

What if Jesus did this miracle (giving a blind man a two-part healing) at this point as a comment on how well the disciples see? It is sandwiched between two sections that deal with the fragmentary nature of the disciples' understanding of Jesus' person and mission. So...

1. When Jesus heals the man the first time what does the man see?

2. How well are the disciples seeing Jesus and his mission at this point?

Read 8.27-9.1

11. Why did the Pharisees ask for a sign?

Read Mark 8.14-21

12. The disciples don't seem to work very well with symbolic language. The 'yeast of the Pharisees and that of Herod' seems to set the disciples' minds on thinking that Jesus is having a go at them for not bringing any bread.

How does Jesus put at rest their fears but raise the issue of their dullness to new heights?

13. Who are the disciples most like at this point? Mark 4.12

14. What do you think the 'yeast of the Pharisees and of Herod' is?

15. The last time these two persons or groups came together was in Mark 3.6. Does this have anything to do with the yeast Jesus is speaking of?

Prayer for:

Other members of the Group...

Things in my life...

The next invitation service...

Those I would like to share Jesus with...

so crucifiable and why the early Christians were persecuted—they would worship no other Lord but Jesus. The kingdom of God challenges all other kingdoms and yet is different from them.

4. The gospel is about a someone called Jesus. He is described as 'Christ' and 'Son of God'. What did these terms mean in Israel (Psalm 2) and the Greek/Roman world of the first century?

Isaiah 40 is the announcement of Israel's return from exile. It was an announcement that went far beyond simply a geographic relocation back to the land of Israel—a return to the Promised Land it was to be a return to the Lord God. This is demonstrated by the quote from...

Malachi 3.1 Israel has returned to the Land but not to God. In Malachi Israel is being warned that the Lord is about to arrive at his Temple for judgment.

5. Verse 2 is more than just a reference to Isaiah 40, it is also a reference to Malachi 3.1—together they tell us what the 'theological' time is. What time is it?

6. What is John the Baptist's role and how did people respond to his ministry v4-6?

7. What was the main difference between John's ministry and the ministry of 'the coming one'? How does this fit in with the theological time (Ezek. 36.24-28; 37.1-14)?

Read Genesis 1.1-3.

8. What similarities are there with Jesus' baptism? So what—how does it help us read the rest of Mark?

9. Read Psalm 2 to understand the quote—'you are my son' (Son of God). What titles are also used of this son of God? (Look at Mark 1.1)

10. Who does v12 –13a remind you of?

11. Read 11b. He was with wild animals and angels attended him. What does this mean?

Q11 Digging Deeper

Read Psalm 8 and Daniel 7—both of which refer to God's kingdom and God's kingdom being headed up by a true human being. So what are we being told?

12. Read v14-15. John's departure seems to be the trigger for Jesus' public ministry. How is the gospel (good news) described?

13. Why would this news be good—repenting doesn't sound like a fun time?

14. Read v16-20. The fishermen give us a demonstration of believing the gospel. Explain.

More Reflection

What are the dehumanising forces at work in our culture - they don't look like empires any more but for all of that they are just, if not more powerful?

Prayer for:

Other members of the Group...

Things in my life...

The next invitation service...

Those I would like to share Jesus with...

3. Re-read the Isaiah quote. Why are the traditions of men unhelpful?

4. What does this tell you about the sort of change that Jesus wants to effect in us?

5. What change are we normally happy to see in ourselves and in others that falls short of this?

6. What are the implications of Jesus' words in v19?

Read Mark 7.24-30

It is no surprise that with the collapse of the food laws, we meet a Gentile woman. Has the distinction between Jew and Greek also collapsed - at first sight would you say no?

7. What does the Greek woman show by her answer?

8. What does she receive because of her answer?

Read Mark 8.1-13

9. Where is Jesus 7.31?

10. This all happens in Gentile territory and the 'dogs' seem to be getting better than crumbs. What is this saying about Jesus mission?

Big Idea

What makes someone acceptable to God? Nothing! The right question is, 'Who makes someone acceptable to God?' Jesus.

Key Verse Mark 7:19

For it doesn't go into his heart but into his stomach, and then out of his body." (In saying this, Jesus declared all foods "clean.")

Telling Stories

The food laws and ceremonial laws were all designed to give Israel a sense of holiness and wholesomeness. Israel rightly understood that this kept her separate from the other nations. She was to be holy, clean and separate - firstly, because the Lord was holy clean and separate from sin and secondly, so that she could shed the clean light of salvation to the nations.

Read Mark 7.1-13

Since giving the laws to Moses another layer of laws had been added to God's laws and these 'muffled' the shape and intention of God's law. These were called the oral law or the traditions of the elders.

Read Mark 7.14-23

1. Let's assume that Jesus' response to the disciples, 'Are you so dull?' did not arise from a lack of sleep but love. What is he saying?

2. Where does Jesus locate the cause of all sinful action v19, 20?

Big Idea

The ministry of Jesus is one of apparent contradiction – power but shunning popularity. Authority that avoids compulsion. What sort of King is this?

Key Verse Mark 1:41

Filled with compassion, Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. "I am willing," he said. "Be clean!"

Telling Stories**Read Mark 1.21-45**

1. Jesus, the king, comes to Israel. In what health does he find Israel?

2. Read Mark 1.21-28 and v39. Jesus' teaching seems to directly impact on the demonic kingdom, why?

3. What strikes the crowd at the synagogue in Capernaum as amazing?

4. Read Mark 1.29-31. The saying is 'feed a fever, starve a cold' – but here a mother-in-law with a fever is healed and then feeds everyone else. Fever in all its forms has been a killer till only recently. In antiquity, it wasn't seen as a symptom of many diseases such as malaria and tuberculosis, but a condition from which you died. As such it was one of the most common causes of death.

Why, then, would it be significant that the first 'physical' healing be a woman with a fever?

For a moment just think about how many times you have had a fever.

Read Mark 1.32-39.

5. What is understandable about the crowd gathering?

6. What is surprising about Jesus' departure?

7. Jesus prays at significant times, 14.35; 39. Why do you think Jesus prays at this point in his ministry?

8. How does Jesus define his ministry v38, 39?

Read Mark 1.40-45.

The term leprosy was not a term that was specific; it was used of many skin diseases. While it might not have the physical consequences of true Hansen's disease (our leprosy), the social consequences were just as bad.

Leviticus 13:44-48

...the man is diseased and is unclean. The priest shall pronounce him unclean because of the sore on his head. ⁴⁵The person with such an infectious disease must wear torn clothes, let his hair be unkempt, cover the lower part of his face and cry out, 'Unclean! Unclean!' ⁴⁶As long as he has the infection he remains unclean. He must live alone; he must live outside the camp. ⁴⁷If any clothing is contaminated with mildew-- any woollen or linen clothing, ⁴⁸any woven or knitted material of linen or wool, any leather or anything made of leather.

6. Why did Jesus tell his disciples to give the crowd something to eat?

7. How do you feel when your inadequacy is exposed?

8. What is the significance of the number of baskets of food left over?

9. What do you think it means in v52 'for they had not understood about the loaves; their hearts were hardened.'?

10. What sort of leader are you? (mother, father, worker etc)

11. What sort of leadership model does Jesus give his followers?

Prayer for:

Other members of the Group...

Things in my life...

The next invitation service...

Those I would like to share Jesus with...

Study 10 Two Kings—Two Feasts Mark 6.14-56

Big Idea What sort of king do you want to serve – A king like Herod—self serving, manipulative, ruthless or like Jesus—a true king?

Key Verse **Mark 6:34** ³⁴ When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So he began teaching them many things.

Telling Stories

Read Ezekiel ³⁴ Israel's leaders were to be shepherds - not because David was a shepherd but because God was a shepherd.

Read 6.14-29

1. What sort of shepherd was Herod?

2. What sort of Man was Herod?

3. What does the death of John the Baptist anticipate?

Read Mark 6.30-56

4. What similarities are there between what Jesus does and the Lord in Psalm 23?

5. How had the mission of the twelve gone?

9. Why would the man with 'leprosy' say 'if you are willing, you can make me clean'?

10. Why would Jesus be 'filled with compassion' —our translation for angry?

11. What is significant about Jesus touching the man?

12. What happens as a consequence of the man ignoring Jesus' instruction?

13. When have you felt rejected and unclean?

Prayer for:

Other members of the Group...

Things in my life...

The next invitation service...

Those I would like to share Jesus with...

Big Idea

What is most surprising about this miracle is that the miracle is not the most surprising thing – forgiveness is. Jesus' ministry as the Son of Man is forgiveness.

Key Verse Mark 2:5

When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven."

Telling Stories

1. Where did an Israelite normally go to get forgiveness of sins?
2. Imagine that these are people who had come to Capernaum before, not knowing that Jesus had already moved on (1.38). The news is that he is now back home. Do you think they will be put off from seeing Jesus again? To what lengths and what desperate acts were these men prepared to go to get their friend to Jesus?
3. When it became obvious to everyone that the man on the mat was paralysed, what did they all expect was about to happen?
4. What is the immediate effect of forgiving the man his sins?
5. Consider the number of sins a paralysed man would commit.

12. How does Jesus saying 'she is only sleeping' and giving 'strict orders not to tell anyone about this' come together. Why would Jesus do this?

Read Mark 6.1-6a

13. When Jesus goes home what response does he get?

Read 6.6b-13

14. What responses does Jesus expect his 12 missionary disciples to receive from Israel?

15. How do you assess God's People's health?

Prayer for:

Other members of the Group...

Things in my life...

The next invitation service...

Those I would like to share Jesus with...

4. In what ways do you sense that you are like the young girl and the older woman?

5. What was the woman afraid of once she had been healed (Lev 15.25-27)?

6. In what way did the woman's faith make her well?

7. What change had occurred in the woman's life?

8. Why does Jesus tell Jairus not to be afraid (v36)?

9. Are you afraid to die? Don't answer quickly.

10. Are you afraid to lose a child or a loved one? Why?

11. Why did the mourners laugh?

6. What is this telling us about the nature of sin?

7. Why are the teachers of the Law annoyed?

8. What is the point of the 'which is easier to say' challenge?

9. Look up Dan. 7.13-15. What is Jesus saying about the kingdom he is proclaiming?

10. The man is healed. What was the crowd most surprised by—forgiven sins or a paralysed man able to walk?

11. What was harder for Jesus to do—heal the man or heal the relationship with God? Explain.

12. Is Jesus making a connection between sin and sickness?

13. How are you like the paralysed man?

Prayer for:

Other members of the Group...

Things in my life...

The next invitation service...

Those I would like to share Jesus with...

Study 4 Who Am I?

Mark 2.1-3.6

Big Idea

In 5 scenes Jesus surprises the religious gurus with an action – he justifies it with a statement about who he is and it is a big picture he paints. The religious leaders can either reconsider their position or stick to their guns.

Key Verse Mark 3:6

Then the Pharisees went out and began to plot with the Herodians how they might kill Jesus.

Telling Stories

In these four stories there is a pattern which demonstrates that when the real thing comes it's time to let go of the things that were temporary.

1. The Pattern

1. Jesus or his disciples do or say something controversial.
2. Questions are asked about this of Jesus/ disciples by Israel's leaders
3. Jesus discloses something of who he is which explains the action/saying
4. This raises an expectation as to whether the leaders will believe Jesus or not.

Study 9 Jewish Check-up

Mark 5.21-6.13

Big Idea

We expect God's people to be better than the Gentiles but we are shown through these two stories Israel herself is unclean & dead. The saviour nation needs to be saved.

Key Verse Mark 6:4

Jesus said to them, "Only in his hometown, among his relatives and in his own house is a prophet without honour."

Telling Stories

1. Jesus is returning to Jewish territory - back amongst the people of God. What sort of 'Report Card' do you expect they will get and how different from the Gentiles' Card?

2. What repeated themes are there in this passage when compared to the previous passage?

3. In Ezekiel 16 Israel and Judah are described as older and younger sisters with the same problem. Are these healing stories saying more than Jesus can heal?

7. How are you like this man?

8. How would the Gentile 'Report Card' read?

Prayer for:

Other members of the Group...

Things in my life...

The next invitation service...

Those I would like to share Jesus with...

	1	2	3	4
Mark 2.1-12				
Mark 2.13-17				
Mark 2.18-22				
Mark 2.23-28				
Mark 3.1-7				

2. What is the significance of the collaboration between the Herodians and the Pharisees?

3. Why does Israel's leadership reject Jesus from this point on - what are the different motives?

4. Why do we find change so difficult - even when it is real and life giving?

5. What is it that makes Jesus crucifiable?

Prayer for:

Other members of the Group...

Things in my life...

The next invitation service...

Those I would like to share Jesus with...

Read Mark 5.6-8.

2. How would you have felt if you had been there?
What question would still have been going through the disciples' minds?

Read Mark 5.9-13

3. What does the response of the pigs indicate?

Read Mark 5.14-17

4. What does the physical/emotional/spiritual state of the man indicate about Jesus?

5. What are the points of similarity between the disciples' response at the calming of the sea and the crowd's response to the calming of the man?

Read Mark 5.18-20

6. How do these verses answer the question, 'Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!'

Big Idea

What's wrong with the Gentiles (non-Jews)? Strong but unclean and dying – their humanity is being destroyed. Jesus restores humanity because Jesus is LORD.

Key Verse Mark 5:19-20

Jesus did not let him, but said, "Go home to your family and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you." ²⁰So the man went away and began to tell in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him. And all the people were amazed.

Telling Stories

The place where the healing of the demon possessed man takes place is Gentile territory - part of the area called the Decapolis - the region of the ten (Deca) cities (polis) - they are allowed to keep pigs. This is the sort of country the prodigal son ran off to.

1. Read the description of the man in 5.1-5.

Spend some time listing and commenting on each part of the description.

Description	Comment

Big Idea

Jesus becomes the defining point for who God's people are – not all who are Israel are the Israel of God. Only those who do God's will.

Key Verse Mark 3:35

"Whoever does God's will is my brother and sister and mother."

Telling Stories

Read 3.7-12

1. Despite the rejection of Jesus by the Herodians and the Pharisees, what is the overwhelming response to Jesus' ministry and how does Mark get this across?

Read 3.13-19

2. What is the significance of appointing 12 apostles given Israel's history?

3. What is the purpose of calling them apostles (sent ones)?

4. What is the effect on you on hearing that there are already plots to kill Jesus and one of his apostles will betray Jesus?

5. By Jesus appointing 12 new heads of Israel's 12 tribes, he seems to be suggesting that there is a problem with Israel or at least its leadership - what is that?

Read 3.22-30

6. Why do you think some teachers of the Law came from Jerusalem?

7. What is their assessment of Jesus and why would they come to this assessment?

8. What argument does Jesus give to counter this false accusation v22?

9. How big is forgiveness in this new kingdom (v28)?

10. Why is blasphemy against the Holy Spirit so significant c.f. Mark 1.8?

Read 3.20-21; 31-34

11. Jesus' family are also disturbed by the size of his popularity. What are they trying to do by getting access to him? Control him - reclaim him by familial ties.

5. Do we ask this question of God today? When?

6. How does Jesus respond to the disciples' question? What is Jesus getting at?

7. How does the rest of Mark's gospel answer the question, 'Don't you care if we perish?'

8. When Jesus saved the disciples they weren't comfortable or at ease. Salvation turns our world upside down. Look for parallels between Mark 16.1-8 (another salvation story) and this passage.

9. How would you answer someone who asked you, 'Do you think God cares if we suffer?'

Prayer for:

Other members of the Group...

Things in my life...

The next invitation service...

Those I would like to share Jesus with...

Study 7 A Compassionate Kingdom Mark 4.35-41

Big Idea

There are striking parallels with the Jonah story. Going to a Gentile territory and sleeping in a storm in a boat is Jonah-like but Jesus stilling the storm is God-like. With Jonah, the sailors are greatly afraid of the storm too and then when it is stilled, even more afraid of the one whom stilled it. But here it is Jesus. To the question, 'Don't you care if we perish' the answer is 'yes'. But the bigger question is, 'Who is this?'

Key Verse Mark 4:41

They were terrified and asked each other, "Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!"

Telling Stories

1. The story is shaped by three questions, what are they?
2. How do the three questions set an agenda for the rest of the gospel?
3. Read Jonah 1. What comparisons and contrasts are there with Jesus and Jonah?
4. What are the disciples saying to Jesus by asking, 'Don't you care if we perish?'

12. Jesus radically redefines family, how?

13. What is the 'will of God' that Jesus is referring to?

Prayer for:

Other members of the Group...

Things in my life...

The next invitation service...

Those I would like to share Jesus with...

Study 6 Riddles of the Kingdom Mark 4.1-34

Big Idea

The parables of Jesus are not to make clear – they are designed to be an impediment to thinking the same way about God's kingdom that you already do.

Key Verse Mark 4:11

He told them, "The secret of the kingdom of God has been given to you. But to those on the outside everything is said in parables..."

A Clue for this study - these are parables about Jesus' ministry firstly and not about our ministry.

Telling Stories

Read Mark 4.10-20

1. What is the surprising purpose of the parables?

Parables in Jesus' ministry are therefore not teaching devices designed to illustrate and clarify, but to obscure. They are a means of telling people something without there being immediate transparency. The judgement mentioned by Isaiah would not last forever (read Isaiah 6.9, 10) but the present judgement in Jesus' ministry was a matter of not being included in the group that got the message in a simple way.

2. The parable is easy when it is explained. So what is Jesus saying about the different responses to his ministry?

Read Mark 4.21-25

3. What does v21-23 say about Jesus' ministry?

4. What does v24-25 say about how we hear Jesus' teaching?

Read Mark 4.26-29

5. What does this parable say about Jesus' ministry?

Read Mark 4.30-34

6. What does this parable say about Jesus' ministry?

7. So what can we learn about the way God works in the ministry of Jesus?

8. How do these parables help us develop realistic expectations of ministry?

Prayer for:

Other members of the Group...

Things in my life...

The next invitation service...

Those I would like to share Jesus with...