

Christianity explained

1

JESUS—Son of God

"This is the Good News about
Jesus Christ, the Son of God."

Mark 1: 1

This is God's world, and we have seen that Jesus comes into the world with all the authority of God himself. We have seen:

Jesus' authority as a teacher (Mark 1: 21-22)

Jesus' authority over evil spirits (Mark 1: 23-28)

Jesus' authority over sickness (Mark 1: 29-31)

Jesus' authority to forgive sins (Mark 2: 1-12)

Jesus' authority over nature (Mark 4: 35-41)

Jesus' authority over life and death (Mark 5: 35-42)

But most importantly, as far as we are concerned today, we have seen:

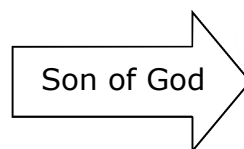
Jesus' authority over people (Mark 1: 16-20)

Conclusion

We have seen in this study:

- **Jesus' great authority as the Son of God**
- **Jesus' claim to be divine, that is, God**
- **The call for us to follow him**

Someone has called Jesus
'The man you can't ignore'.
He is either a *liar*, a *lunatic*
or *the Lord*. There are three
concepts which you must
believe to be a Christian.
We have seen the first of these:



Read Mark chapters 1 to 5. Note anything you do not understand, or would like to discuss. There will be time for discussing these things at the beginning of next week's session.

2

JESUS—His death on the cross

The facts of the cross



Read Mark 15: 21-39

The meaning of the cross

The Darkness (15: 33)

Indicates that, in the death of Jesus, God was doing a special, supernatural act.

The Cry (15: 34-37)

'*Why did you abandon me?*' We see that at least to some extent, God had forsaken or abandoned his Son when he was on the cross. Remember the book, which we imagined was a record of every time we have lived our way instead of God's way. Jesus, who always lived his Father's way, '*bore our sins in his body on the cross*', and our sins formed a barrier between himself and his Father. Jesus dealt with our sins and their guilt and punishment, and his resurrection showed that God was satisfied with the sin-bearing that Jesus had completed on the cross.

The Curtain (15: 38)

The tearing of the curtain indicated that people come back into relationship with God only through Jesus' death.

The Ransom (10: 45)

This is the price Jesus paid to buy us back to God—that price was the giving of his life, that is, his death.

Conclusion

Jesus' death is sufficient for the sins of anyone, but God's forgiveness is not automatically given to everybody. Each of us must individually accept by faith the Jesus of the cross.



There are three basic concepts which you must believe to be a Christian.

We have now seen two of these.



Read Mark chapters 6 to 10.

Note anything you do not understand, or would like to discuss. There will be time for discussing these things next week.

3

JESUS—His resurrection

The resurrection predicted



Read Mark 10: 32-34

The facts of the resurrection

In the Bible there are recorded at least ten occasions when the risen Jesus appeared to His followers. He spoke to them, ate with them, was touched by them (eg Luke 24: 36-43)

The meaning of the resurrection



Read Acts 10: 39-43

All people will be raised

'the living and the dead'

All people will be judged

'judge of the living and the dead'

The risen Jesus will be the judge

'He is the one God has appointed judge'

All will be divided into two groups

'everyone who believes . . . sins forgiven'

'If a person is ashamed of me . . . I will be ashamed of him'

The division is forever

Conclusion

Jesus' attitude to me on the day of judgment is the same as my attitude to Him now, in this life.

*If I accept Him now, He will accept me then.
If I reject Him now, He will reject me then.*

There are three basic concepts which you must believe to be a Christian.

Son of God

The Cross

His Resurrection



Read Mark chapters 11 to 16.

Note anything you do not understand, or would like to discuss. There will be time for discussing these things next week.

4

God's gift—not our works

Imagine that you have just died and that God is judging your life. God says to you 'give me one good reason why I should accept you into heaven with me'

What would you reply?

The wrong answer: what I have done

God you should accept me because I have:

- lived a good life
- kept the Ten Commandments
- given to charities
- been a good citizen
- been a good parent
- prayed and read the Bible
- been to church
- been baptised etc



Mark 7: 20-23

The right answer: what Christ has done

God you should accept me because of what Christ has done for me, and that alone.

Good works do not produce salvation

But

Salvation produces good works



Ephesians 2: 8-10

Conclusion

We have seen that eternal life, forgiveness of sins and a place in God's Kingdom cannot be earned or deserved by us. They have been earned for people by the Son of God, through His death and rising again.

NOT



BUT



So forgiveness and eternal life is the free gift of God to all who receive the giver - that is Jesus Christ.

Next week we will discuss how we do this.

This is the vital question—**What is a Christian?**



Read the booklet you have been given. Note anything you do not understand, or would like to discuss. Also re-read these passages from Mark's gospel, and answer the question 'What does it mean to follow Jesus?'

5

What is a Christian? Repenting

*'The Kingdom of God is at hand,
repent and believe the Good News'*

Mark 1: 15

Review

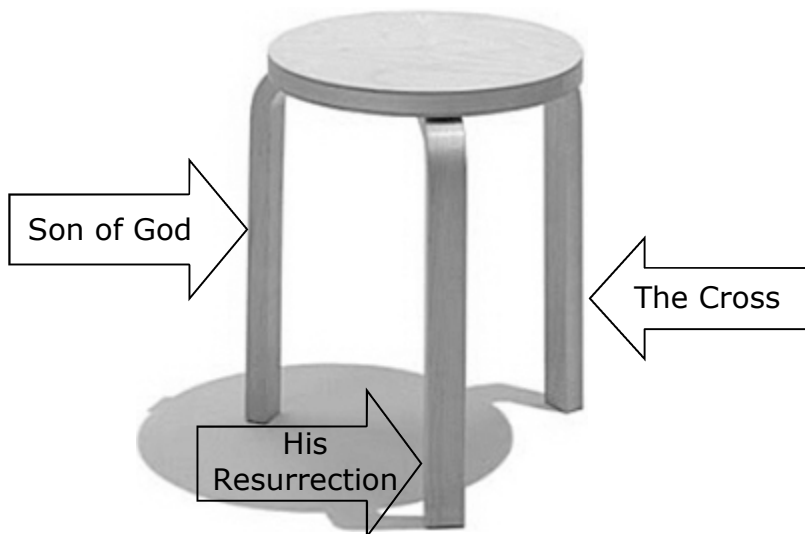
What is a Christian?

Someone who belongs to the Kingdom of God.

How can I belong to the Kingdom of God?

Repent and believe in Jesus Christ.

We have seen that a Christian believes certain facts about Jesus Christ:



But being a Christian is more than just believing these facts.

Repentance means:

I PUT JESUS FIRST. . .

. . . BEFORE MY WILL

. . . BEFORE MY AMBITIONS

. . . BEFORE MY POPULARITY

. . . BEFORE ANYONE/ANYTHING ELSE

See Mark 8: 34-38 and Mark 9: 43- 48



Re-read the booklet you have been given.

What gifts does God promise to those who repent and believe?

Mark 1: 8 H_ _ _ S_ _ _ _ _

Mark 2: 10 F_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

Mark 10: 30 E_ _ _ _ _ L_ _ _ _

6

What is a Christian? Believing

*'The Kingdom of God is at hand,
repent and believe the Good News'*

Mark 1: 15

Review

What is a Christian?

Someone who belongs to the Kingdom of God.

How can I belong to the Kingdom of God?

Repent and believe in Jesus Christ.

What is faith, or believing?



Read Mark 5: 21-24, 35-43

FAITH IS. . .

. . . TAKING JESUS AT HIS WORD



Read Mark 5: 25-34

. . . REACHING OUT TO JESUS



Read Mark 10: 13-16

. . . HAVING CHILD-LIKE TRUST

. . . RECEIVING JESUS AS YOUR KING

"Whoever does not receive the Kingdom of God like a child will never enter it."

Mark 10: 15



Read John 5: 24

. . . KNOWING GOD ACCEPTS ME

PRESENT I have eternal life.

FUTURE I will not be judged.