



BOOK OF MARK

Book of Mark Series

Friend, we have a problem. When it comes to being the church, we regularly gather because we share a common interest. The problem is most of us don't feel comfortable talking about our common interest: **Jesus**.

Unfortunately, for Jesus followers, this makes things awkward. If you are a follower of Jesus, not talking about Jesus - It's kind of like a vacuum cleaner salesman coming to your door and never talking about a vacuum. It's like going to a professional baseball game - you buy your peanuts and cracker jacks and they announce all the players - but they never actually play baseball. Yes, all the other stuff we talk about matters (a lot!), but if we can't talk about Jesus ...well, we're just water skiing without a boat.

So, how about it? Would you join me on a journey through Jesus' life as it is found in the book of Mark? Why Mark? First, it is short...and you are busy. We've broken the book up into 21 readings. One a day and you are done in 3 weeks. Second, it is the closest thing we have to a firsthand account of the life of Jesus. The author got his facts from eyewitnesses to Jesus' life and ministry. Finally, Mark is fast-paced. The word "immediately" appears over 40 times in this short book. It's like a high-speed chase, only instead of chasing down a bad guy, we're in pursuit of the ultimate good guy.

Book of Mark is a four-week series designed to help worshippers get comfortable navigating the Bible and consider more deeply what it means for their lives today. The goal is to equip them with the tools and confidence they need to use the Bible themselves and put its wisdom to work in their lives. But beyond that, we want to see them meet Jesus and come to know more about what God is like in the pages of the Bible.

Book of Mark Devotional Book: Hans created a devotional book that divides the book of Mark into 21 readings along with brief notes, which we will distribute to worshippers during this series. Books are available through the Calvary Partner Network.

Orange Curriculum: We have paired this series with Orange's Middle School Series called "Compass" and High School Series called "Table of Contents."

Series Graphics:

<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/bfl416t0807w4v9t82vi0/h?rlkey=wozinel59nymdwm3f2xnci6ug&dl=0>

Week 1: Why read the Bible?

Week 2: Why is the Bible so confusing?

Week 3: What's the point of the Bible?

Week 4: What does reading the Bible do for us?

Theme verse: *Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path (Psalm 119:105)*

Week 1: Why read the Bible?

Mark 1:1-11

We read the Bible because God is in it and God Uses the Bible to Change Us.

Point? **During this series we're asking everyone to read the book of Mark. Why? The Bible is light for our life. It helps us know God better, understand ourselves better, changes us for the better, and helps us see and live the life God has for us.**

As we begin this series, recognize that worshippers will come with differing backgrounds and experience levels when it comes to reading the Bible. Some come from families who made the Bible a part of their lives since childhood. Some may be new to faith and discovering the Bible for the first time. And some may have attended church all their lives, but haven't ever read it or even learned much about it and are a bit embarrassed to admit it. Be inclusive, being careful not to ostracize anyone who has little to no experience or knowledge of the Bible. Remember: The Bible makes some people uncomfortable and insecure. The goal is to equip worshippers with the tools

they need to navigate the Bible themselves and the confidence to do so, so they can put its wisdom to work in their lives. Most of all, we want to see them meet Jesus and come to know more about what God is like in the pages of the Bible.

Compass

Have you ever been in a situation when a compass would have been helpful? We don't see these all that often. Maybe when you were a kid and went to Boyscout camp, you used a compass for an orienteering badge. A compass is simply a tool used to help us navigate the direction we're going. Today, I have a compass on my AppleWatch - it's called GPS. My son is in cross country and he's trying to decide which Garmin GPS watch to buy for the season. What does a GPS do? On the golf course, I have a GPS enabled map that tells me exactly how many yards it is to the hole. When I'm hunting, I can pull up a map of the hunting land to know exactly where I need to go. What does a compass or GPS do? It guides you to the destination you're trying to reach, one step at a time. Unless you're into camping, or navigating the open waters on a boat, or working in special-ops in the military, chances are high you'll never actually use a compass in your everyday life.

So...What's the point of this little navigational lesson I just gave you? Well, when we're unsure of how to get where we want to go, we need a tool to help us. We need something or someone to guide us.

As followers of Jesus, we think the Bible is that tool. If I want to find the wisdom I need most in life, we look to the Bible to find it. It's the compass I use to help me make decisions, take next steps, and decide what's best for my life in any given situation. And that's exactly what we're going to unpack together as we walk through the Book of Mark. Over the next few weeks, we'll navigate a Book of the Bible together and wonder how we can use it, and what it means for our lives today.

The Bible is challenging

Admit: I find the Bible hard to read and understand. It almost feels like I need something like a compass or GPS to help me know where to start, what to read, and how to understand what it means for my life. Because of that, I've found myself asking a lot of questions about the Bible:

Talk about some specific questions you had about the Bible: Examples...

- How is this book different from any other religious book?
- Is everything in the Bible real?
- How does this book written thousands of years ago actually help me today?

(The goal here isn't to give any answers, but to model for people that, when it comes to the Bible, it's okay to ask questions.)

Maybe you can relate! (Maybe you could take a second and have people actually tell someone around them one question they've had about the Bible.)

Our list of questions could probably go on and on! And honestly, I think that's great and think God does too. God isn't afraid of our questions. God isn't offended, or hurt, or mad that we aren't always sure how to understand the complicated parts of our faith. In fact, as we dive into the Bible together we want our church to be a safe place for you to ask all the questions you have about things like the Bible. We want this to be a place you can speak honestly and think about what the Bible really means.

Because, while I've had a lot of the same questions that you may have about the Bible, I also know that the Bible has given me a lot of answers. It has helped me navigate so many parts of my life with wisdom, love, patience, and more. Tell a story from your own life: For example...

- Talk about a time the Bible has given you an answer or a direction that you really needed.
- Maybe when Scripture helped you make a tough decision, or encouraged you in a difficult time, or just showed you something new about God.

Because the Bible has impacted my life this way, I don't want to just stop reading when I'm confused, or lost, or just don't see the point. I don't want you to, either!

So today, I want to dive into why the Bible can be an important tool to help us navigate the good, the bad, and everything in between in our lives?

Book of Mark

So...to experience this for yourself, over the course of the next 21 days, you are invited to give this a try. To read the Bible. Yes you. And, here's the deal: We're going to make it easy for you! As you leave you will get a copy of the Book of Mark divided up into 21 readings along with some of my thoughts and notes.

We picked Mark because Mark is the shortest Gospel in the Bible - just 16 chapters long. Second, it's the closest thing we have to an actual eyewitness retelling of the events of Jesus' life. It was the Gospel written the closest to Jesus' death and resurrection. And finally, Mark is the most action-packed,

fast-moving Gospel - so if you have ADD like me, this is the book of the Bible for you!

But, from the very beginning of the book of Mark, we come to understand why Christians for 1000's of years have continued to read the Bible.

In the first lines of Mark we hear: *The beginning of the **good news** about Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God...* (Mark 1:1)

We don't know exactly who the author of the book of Mark was. Some call him John Mark and most scholars believe he did most of his writing in Rome. This is not insignificant, because the Jewish people had long awaited the Jewish Messiah - the Son of God. And, during this time, Israel was occupied by Rome - meaning they ruled over the Jewish people. So naturally, they concluded that this messiah - their savior - was going to take the Roman empire by storm. Rule victoriously with favor toward the Jewish people. But that's not quite how things happened.

Instead of overthrowing Rome, the mock, kill and bury him. And yet the author was **inspired** to tell the story of Jesus and call it "Good news". The good news wasn't what they expected - a military conquest that led to a powerful kingdom that was temporary - it was about establishing a kingdom of mercy, peace and love that would reign in our hearts forever. Against all external evidence, the author was **inspired** by God to tell this story.

Mark goes on: **2** *as it is written in **Isaiah the prophet**: "I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way"—***3** *"a voice of one calling in the wilderness, 'Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.'" (Mark 1:2)*

The author is reaching back - Some 700 years before Jesus was even born - quoting the prophet Isaiah who some 700 years before Jesus **inspired** amid his own circumstances to point with faithfulness to this God who - amid unthinkable circumstances - would find God's way into this world.

Mark goes on: **4** *And so John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. **5** The whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem went out to him. Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River. **6** John wore clothing made of camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. **7** And this was his message: "**After me comes the one more powerful than I, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie.**" (Mark 1:4-7)*

Again, before Jesus was even anything significant, John the Baptist was **inspired** to prepare the way for Jesus. To point to Jesus. To say - this guy whose coming is going to change everything. Some believe that John was Jesus' cousin. I don't know about you, but my cousins - I love them, but if you tried to convince me that one of them was the son/daughter of God, I'd laugh in your face. I know them. They aren't perfect people. I've fought with some of them. I've gotten into a lot of trouble with them. Do you know how hard it would be to convince me they were anything holy? If John believed his cousin was the son of God - God must've **inspired** it.

Finally, in the book of Mark, Jesus comes on the scene: **9** At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. **10** Just as Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. **11** And a voice came from heaven: **"You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased."**

The author of Mark was **inspired** to pen the words of God - that this guy Jesus wasn't just any yahoo. This was God's own son...and he'd be inspired to go on throughout the rest of the book to prove that point - he performs miracles, healings, controls waves, walks on water and feeds 1000's of people with a single portion. Mark was **inspired** by God to say - this wasn't a normal guy - this was the Son of God.

Martin Luther and the Bible

First, Luther believed that the Bible is divinely inspired. He affirmed with the Apostle Paul that "all Scripture is breathed out [inspired] by God" (2 Tim. 3:16). Pointing to the Scriptures, Luther confidently asserted, "The Holy Spirit is the Author of this book." He confessed, "They are God's Scriptures and God's Word." Further, he contended, "We attribute to the Holy Spirit all of the Holy Scripture."

Luther recognized that the biblical books were written by human beings: "The Scriptures, although they are written by men, are neither of men nor from men but from God."

God inspired it!

When we read the Bible, we learn how to recognize what God has inspired. It helps us see God's inspiration in our lives and in the world around us. Now, that leads us to something important. God inspired everything. God created the Earth and everything in it, and we can find God in so many places. In a worship song. In nature. In a great conversation with a friend. When we open God's Word, God comes to life in new and unexpected ways. **We learn so much more about God in the pages of Scripture! You see, we can learn things about God in Scripture that we wouldn't necessarily be able to**

learn anywhere else. Inside its pages, we read about people's experiences with God from thousands of years ago. We read about the questions they asked about life. We learn about their struggles and their joys. As we read the Bible, we find that we're part of a bigger story. We aren't alone in trying to know God. **Every time we read the Bible, we find that there have been a bunch of people asking the same questions and going through a lot of the same things we're going through today.** And I think there's a lot we can learn about God through their stories and their faith. We read the Bible because God is in it

“What are some ways you can get to know someone?”

If you have a best friend, you probably know a lot about them. But you probably didn't know those things the moment you first met. Getting to know them took time. You hung out together, you texted each other, you talked about your days, you shared experiences. Eventually, all those moments added up to a really good relationship. The Bible can work in a similar way in your life.

We read the Bible because God is in it.

We learn more about what is true about God and God's desire for us and for our lives when we spend time reading the Bible. But like any relationship, we can't simply talk to God once and expect to know it all right away. When you read the Bible, God's Spirit can work in both the words on the page and in your heart to guide you, encourage you, and teach you. And the more time you spend getting to know God through the Bible, the better your relationship will be.

A Challenge

This week, here's where we challenge you to do:

- 1) Put in the time. Commit to spending some time reading the Bible each day. Even if it's just ten minutes, give it a try. We're going to give you a copy of the book of Mark divided into daily readings to make it super easy. Included are some thoughts I have on each reading. Write down thoughts or questions you have as you go
- 2) Be consistent. Don't give up when you don't understand, or things don't change, or you just aren't feeling it. Instead, keep going. Be consistent in your reading, even if it's just for this week.
- 3) Listen for what God might be saying to you each day. Remember that God's Spirit is at work in you. Wonder how what you are reading might impact your life. How might God teach you things or change your perspective, or even answer your prayers over time.

Remember, we read the Bible because God is in it. I know the Bible can be hard to understand sometimes. That's one of the reasons we have small

groups here at Calvary. It's a place where you can find encouragement in your walk with God. And it's also a place where you can talk through things that can be hard to understand, like the Bible! We'd love for you to do that by participating in this week's reading plan. Together, as a church, let's encourage each other to spend time reading God's Word and asking God to teach us as we read.

Week 2: Why is the Bible so confusing?

Mark 6:30-44

The context of the Bible, its authors and the stories creates clarity. In fact, the Bible wasn't written to you, but it was written for you.

Point? **During this series we're asking everyone to read the book of Mark, but at times the Bible is confusing. Why? Context matters when it comes to reading, understanding, and applying Scripture to our everyday lives. Context creates clarity.**

What's the craziest story you've ever heard?

Give some examples of stories from the news or stories from your own life. Then tell a story from Scripture that sounds unbelievable or strange out of context. Then say something like, "What I just shared is more than just a story; it's a real thing that happened that we can read about in the Bible."

Really?

Sometimes we read stories in the Bible and wonder how they can be helpful, what they have to do with us, and if they make sense. Sometimes we randomly pick a spot - like on Sunday mornings in worship - and start reading passages in the Bible. We try to understand it without any **context, background ,or details** about why it was written or who it was written to. Not having this context can lead us to struggle to understand the Bible and what it means for us today. When we don't know the whole story, we don't understand the point of what we're reading. What if we made an effort to not just learn verses, but instead get the whole story of what we read in the Bible?

Literalism

Often, when reading the Bible, our default is to read the Bible quite **literally**. Most people desire the Bible to be a self-help book with 10 clear steps to a "healthy, wealthy life." Unfortunately, that's not how the Bible works. And, reading the Bible that way can have harmful and disastrous consequences.

In order to understand what the authors were conveying, and ultimately what reflects who God is, we have to recognize that everything in the bible had a context. All the characters and authors were people just like us, and understanding more about them and the world in which they lived will ultimately help bring clarity to the Bible and the God we find inside it to life.

What is the Bible?

The Bible is a collection of historical documents, poems, letters, eyewitness accounts, teachings, songs, and other kinds of writings. We call each separate writing a “book.” There are 66 books in the Bible written over the course of some 1500 years. These books were written at different times throughout history by different people, some known and some unknown, but all of them were leaders of God’s people who were inspired by God to write what they did. The writings were passed down from generation to generation, kept safe by scribes who had the important job of preserving the writings and carefully making more copies.

The first part, the Old Testament, tells us about how people followed God before Jesus came. The New Testament was written after Jesus’ death and resurrection more than 2,000 years ago and is about His life and followers.

Roughly, the Bible is broken into the story of 3 covenants God made with God’s people. The first covenant is the Covenant God made with **Abraham**. Early in the old testament it talks about all that led to God’s covenant with this **individual** family. The second covenant is the covenant God made with a **nation** - the people of **Israel**. The third covenant is the covenant God made with all the **world** - the Covenant we see in Jesus and the New Testament - the covenant that is for **us**.

Here’s the deal: Not all the covenants are for you. The first two are helpful in knowing our family story as Christians, but the terms of those covenants are not for you. You were not the intended audience. The only covenant that was meant for you was the covenant God made with the world in Jesus.

Knowing this kind of information helps us understand the context of the things we read...especially in the Old Testament.

How do we read the Bible?

The Bible is confusing. So what do we do when we read something that seems out of place, confusing or even disturbing?

I like the image of a filter. Each morning when I make my pot of coffee, I use a filter. The filter makes sure I have a delicious cup of Joe every morning and it keeps those nasty grounds out.

Every book, verse, or letter you read in the Bible won't always make sense right away because it was written in a specific time, culture, and set of circumstances. One of the best ways to understand Scripture is to put everything in context—use the question: What is the context? as your filter. When we have context, we understand more about who wrote the Bible, why and when they wrote it, and who they wrote it to.

An example

One of the most popular verses in the Bible was written by Paul: *For I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength* (Philippians 4:13 NLT). If we read this verse literally, it doesn't make a lot of sense. You and I, we can't do everything! It's impossible. But...We get the whole picture once we understand that Paul wrote it after being arrested and after Jesus gave Paul the strength to make it through this difficult time. When we understand Paul's life in the context of this Scripture, we understand the meaning behind the verse and can better apply it to our lives. Context helps us understand the Bible.

The Book of Mark: Feeding of the 5000

Chapter 6 of the Book of Mark contains several stories that have us scratching our heads. For example, Mark 6:30-44 tells the story of the feeding of the 5000. Most read this story literally. Like a magician pulling a rabbit out of a hat, Jesus somehow does his magic and makes the 5 loaves and 2 fish multiply into enough to feed the masses.

If we know the **context** of the story, we might understand the story to be even more profound. The story says they were in a "remote place." They were out in the wilderness. Miles and miles from town. They couldn't run to the grocery store. They couldn't order Dominoes. And, here's what everyone in that ancient world knew: If you were going out into the wilderness, you brought something to eat. You wouldn't survive without provisions. Now, the crowd Jesus gathered was filled with the poor who had little or nothing, and others who had more than enough.

The disciples went looking for "extra" food people had that they were willing to share and only came back with 5 loaves and 2 fish. But, when Jesus began to teach - the miracle happened - they realized they all had more than enough. They realized they didn't need to hoard and stockpile. They realized God had provided them with more than their share - and so they shared. They let go of the stuff they held onto so tightly.

You see, knowing the **context** helps us read the story.

If we want to understand the Bible better, we have to learn the full story of what was going on. The next time you read something confusing in the Bible, ask yourself if you have the context you need. Ask:

- Who wrote this and who were they writing to?
- Why was this written?
- Is it helpful to me right now?

Context helps us understand the Bible, and - by the way - a Connect Group is a great place to discover answers you have about things you read in the Bible.

The Bible may not have been written to you, but it was written for you.

Every detail in the Bible is there to guide and encourage us. The more you read, talk about, and ask questions about the Bible, the more context you'll have to understand God's story in the Bible.

Week 3: What's the point of the Bible?

Mark 10:35-45

The Bible points us to Jesus and helps us to know God.

Point? **During this series we are asking everyone who worships to read the story of Jesus' life as found in the Gospel of Mark. Why is the Bible important? The Bible helps us know God.**

To understand the Bible, we have to understand what the Bible is pointing us to. The Bible points us to Jesus, the living Word of God. Knowing Jesus helps us to know the heart of God.

The Bible is frustrating.

Maybe you've tried to read the Bible a few times. Someone might've told you it has the potential to impact your life in a big way. But when you actually read it, you didn't experience that impact at all. In fact, not much changed for you. I know because I've been there! I've read the Bible and wondered things like:

- What will this actually do for me?
- Why don't I feel any different?
- Why didn't this change anything?
- Nothing is different about my situation after reading it, so why should I keep reading at all?

Maybe you've wondered something like that before, too. **We often go to the Bible with hope we'll find encouragement to keep going, or the motivation we need, or information about something new, or steps we should take to improve our lives.** But when we read it, we don't always feel like we get any of the stuff we're looking for. What do we do then?

We stop reading the Bible. We give up on reading it because we aren't getting much out of it. If that's where you are today, I am so glad you're here. Because I think all those great things you've heard about the Bible actually are true! I believe God wants to use the Bible as a way for you to learn more about God, about life, and about this whole faith thing.

But what if the way we read the Bible could change what we learn from it? I think if we can learn to navigate it differently, we'll find the Bible can actually be a really helpful tool to make us better at life.

The Book of Mark

In the Book of Mark, chapter 10, the author of Mark recalls Jesus saying something that is important for us as we think about reading the Bible. Something that can help us approach the Bible in a different way.

Jesus has shared with his disciples that he will be arrested - spit on, flogged and killed. The disciples then do something odd:

35 *Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to him. "Teacher," they said, "we want you to do for us whatever we ask."* **36** *"What do you want me to do for you?" he asked. (Mark 10:35-36)*

They go on to tell Jesus that they want him to let them be #2 and #3 in command. He's just told them he's going to die!? How insensitive. Like they are preparing for their inheritance. If he's going to die, we better jockey for position now so we have something when he's gone.

I sometimes think we read the Bible in a similar way: What's in it for me? How do I live a better life? We put me, myself and I first.

Jesus sets the disciples straight: **45** *For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."*

This isn't about you.

If we want to know what's really important about the Bible, all we need to do is look at Jesus. He is God's Word come to life. **That means every verse, every story, every piece of instruction in the Bible should be read with Jesus in mind.** In the same way a compass points us to our destination, the Bible points us to Jesus. Because Jesus is the best and most perfect representation of God. If we want to understand what God is like, we can start by looking to Jesus. **The Bible points us to Jesus.** Jesus is God's Word lived out in everyday life. The way He treated others, the way He interacted with people, the habits He had, what and who He said were important, the decisions He made.

If we really believe that the Bible points us to Jesus, then that can change the way we read it.

It can change how we understand it. It can change how we apply it to our lives. We started this series with the image of a compass. A compass guides us step by step to our destination. Well, the same is true for the way we read the Bible. **Rather than try to figure out the whole thing all at once, let's take it step by step. Let's start with Jesus.** A great place to begin is to actually read it. Join us in reading the book of Mark. Read it to get to know more about Jesus. And as you do, ask yourself these questions to help you navigate what you're reading:

- What does this teach me about Jesus?
- What do His words, actions, and examples show me about what God is like?
- Then...Since Jesus' life is an example of how we should live, what does this mean for me? What does this teach me about myself? What does this teach me about how I treat others?

Remember, **the Bible points us to Jesus**

A Connect Group is a great place for asking questions, sharing opinions, and talking through what you read in the Bible together.

Week 4: What does reading the Bible do for us?

Mark 14:66-72

The Bible gives us wisdom and lights a better path for our lives.

Point? **During this series we're asking everyone to read the book of Mark. Why? The Bible gives us wisdom and can light a better path for your life.**

There's a difference between wisdom and answers.

This is challenging for those of us accustomed to quick answers. Wisdom is more long-term; it can be applied to more than one situation or circumstance in our lives. It directs our path. It's lasting. God-given wisdom is different than quick and easy answers.

Show us a GIF of what it feels like when you can't find the answer you're looking for. Now, show us a GIF of what it feels like when you finally find the answer you're looking for.

When we need to find answers, where do we go?

Most of us go to social media. To Youtube! Sometimes we find the answer we're looking for, and other times it can lead us in a completely wrong direction. Tell a personal story about a time you searched for an answer online and got wrong or unexpected information. For example:

- A bad cooking recipe
- Bad advice on a home improvement project
- Some opinion vs fact that hurt you on a project or argument

Can I make a confession? Sometimes, I treat the Bible a lot like I do

YouTube. I know it's there when I have a question or need an answer. Sometimes, I find what I'm looking for. Other times, I end up getting completely and totally lost. Sometimes we treat the Bible like YouTube or TikTok. We go to it when we have questions. Sometimes, we find what we're looking for, but more often than not we get totally lost.

Where are the answers!?

When the Bible tells us what we want to hear, we love it! [Give relevant examples.] When we don't find the answers we're looking for in the Bible, we might not know what to do. We can feel like the Bible isn't that helpful. [Give relevant examples.] When we don't immediately find the answers we're looking for in the Bible, we often go to our friends, social media, or others until we get the answers we want. Finding answers in the Bible isn't always easy, and we don't always feel like it's helpful. If the Bible is supposed to be a compass that guides us toward the life God wants us to experience, shouldn't it be easier to navigate?

On a scale of 1-10, how often do you go to the Bible to find answers about something?

The book of Psalms is a collection of prayers, songs, and things people wrote in response to their relationship with God. Most of the psalms were written by King David, one of the most influential and important people in the history of our faith. In Psalms, we find wisdom that can help us understand how the Bible can guide us: *Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path* (Psalm 119:105 NIV)

A light in your bedroom.

Think about this verse like a bedroom light. The first thing you do when you enter your room at night is turn on the light so that you can navigate around everything. The writer of this Psalm said the Bible does the same thing: It lights our path and helps us know what to do next. Like a compass, the Bible

guides us in the right direction and shows us the whole path. The Bible gives us wisdom.

The Bible doesn't just give us answers to our questions, it provides guidance and wisdom to make the best choices and take the next steps.

How is having wisdom different from knowing the answer to something?

Has anyone ever shared wisdom with you?

How might looking for wisdom in the Bible help us?

Problem: We only read when we're desperate.

Most of us wait til our marriage is falling apart, or we're not talking with our kids or parents, or we're bankrupt to go to the Bible. Don't wait until you're desperate and things are falling apart to go to the Bible. Treat the Bible like a compass that helps guide you toward wisdom and a closer relationship with God. Take these steps to use the Bible differently than how you've used it in the past: Commit to reading your Bible ten minutes every day this week.

The Bible gives us wisdom

The Book of Mark

The author of Mark shares the wisdom of Jesus. There's a great article that talks about the hermeneutic of Wisdom in the book of Mark:

<https://spoiledmilks.com/2018/12/07/hermeneutic-wisdom-in-mark/>

For example, Jesus doesn't give answers, rather imparts wisdom on the topic of Fear and Faith:

- Passages on **Fear**: 4.16-17; 6.50; 7.28; 9.32; 10.32; 14.51-52, 66-72
- Passages on **Faith**: 4.20; 6.54-55; 14.3, 8, 62; 15.43

In Mark 4.35-5.43 this theme is especially prevalent:

- Jesus Calms the storm in Mark 4
- Jesus meets Jairus in Mark 5
- Jesus heals a woman and daughter in Mark 5

As we wrap up this series, pointing out the story of **Peter's denial (14:66-72)** could be a powerful example of the wisdom of God at work and the power that fear has in our lives.

Prayer of the Day

Lord God, your Word is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path. Lead us, guide us, and direct us in your ways and your will. Amen.

Prayers of the Church

Lord God, teach us. Teach us to learn to love your Word and your wisdom. Give us a passion to hear your voice and encounter your truths.. LIYM, HOP

Abundant Creator, we give you thanks for educators and principals, paraprofessionals and coaches, staff and students. We ask you to be with those who are starting school. Guide and protect them. LIYM, HOP

Merciful God, just as you healed in the Bible, your healing power is everywhere about us. Strengthen those who work with the sick; give them courage and confidence in all they do. Encourage them when their efforts seem futile or when death prevails. Provide them support and care, LIYM, HOP

Holy Spirit, in the places where we feel fear, guide us to lean into our faith, into your love, and into your presence. LIYM, HOP

Generous Savior, we ask you at this time to come close to those in our hearts who are struggling at this time. People suffering from illness, depression, grief, addiction, anxiety, and loneliness. Come close in struggles.

We pray this in Jesus name, Amen.