

The Jefferson Spirit

Sundays at 9:00AM
& 10:30AM

Pastor Mark Jarema

January 19, 2025



"The Good News Begins"

Mark 1:1-15 marks the beginning of the Gospel, introducing Jesus as the Son of God. John the Baptist prepares the way, calling for repentance and baptizing in the Jordan River. At Jesus' baptism, the Spirit descends like a dove, and God declares, "You are my Son, whom I love." After facing temptation in the wilderness, Jesus begins His ministry, proclaiming, "The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!"

Scripture Reading: Mark 1:1-5 (NIV)

1 The beginning of the good news about Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God,² as it is written in Isaiah the prophet: ⁴And so John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. ⁵The 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. ⁶John wore clothing made of camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. ⁷And 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. ⁸I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit." ⁹At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. ¹⁰Just as Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven



being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. ¹¹And a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased." ¹²At once the Spirit sent him out into the wilderness, ¹³and he was in the wilderness forty days, being tempted by Satan. He was with the wild animals, and angels attended him. ¹⁴After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. ¹⁵"The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!"

Interesting Facts About the Gospel of Mark

1. **Authorship:** Mark is traditionally attributed to John Mark, a companion of Peter, whose teachings and experiences are believed to have heavily influenced the Gospel.
2. **Shortest Gospel:** Mark is the shortest of the four Gospels, with 16 chapters, making it concise and action-oriented.
3. **First Gospel Written:** Most scholars believe Mark was the first Gospel written, around 60-70 AD, and served as a source for Matthew and Luke.
4. **Focus on Action:** Mark emphasizes Jesus' actions more than His teachings, using the word "immediately" frequently to convey a sense of urgency.
5. **No Genealogy or Birth Narrative:** Unlike Matthew and Luke, Mark skips Jesus' genealogy and birth story, starting directly with His public ministry.
6. **Audience:** The Gospel was likely written for a Gentile audience, explaining Jewish customs and translating Aramaic terms for readers unfamiliar with them.
7. **Unique Parables:** Some parables in Mark, like the Parable of the Growing Seed (Mark 4:26-29), are not found in the other Gospels.
8. **Peter's Influence:** Many believe the Gospel reflects Peter's firsthand accounts, as Mark was closely associated with him.
9. **Ending Controversy:** The original ending of Mark (16:8) is abrupt, leaving the women at the tomb afraid. Later manuscripts include additional verses (Mark 16:9-20) that describe resurrection appearances.
10. **Messianic Secret:** Mark highlights the "Messianic Secret," where Jesus often instructs people to keep His identity and miracles private.

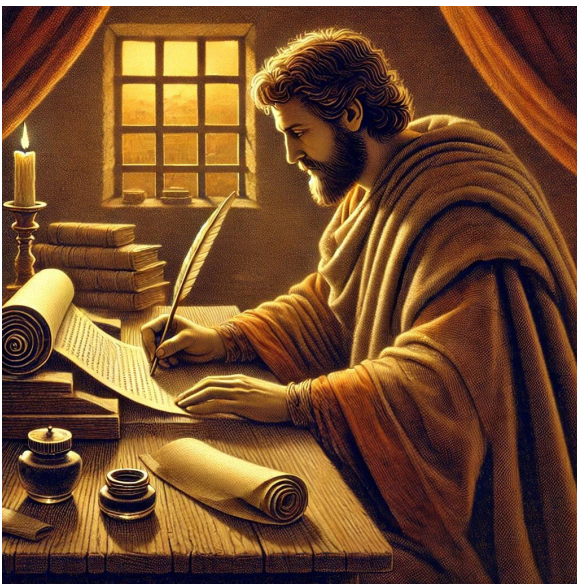
11. **Mark's Symbol:** In Christian tradition, Mark is symbolized by a lion, representing courage and the Gospel's opening with John the Baptist's voice "crying out in the wilderness."

12. **Roman Context:** Mark's Gospel reflects the struggles of early Christians under Roman rule, emphasizing discipleship and endurance in suffering.

13. **Focus on Suffering:** Mark portrays Jesus as the suffering servant, emphasizing His humanity and sacrifice for humanity.

14. **First Resurrection Witnesses:** Mark is the only Gospel where women are the first witnesses to the resurrection, underscoring their role in the early Christian community.

15. **Vivid Details:** Mark includes vivid and specific details, such as Jesus' emotions (e.g., compassion, anger), providing a more personal and relatable image of Him.



Mark, traditionally identified as **John Mark**, was not one of the twelve apostles. However, he played a significant role in the early church and was closely associated with key apostolic figures:

1. **Companion of Peter:** Mark is believed to have been a close associate of the Apostle Peter. Early church tradition, particularly from Papias (a 2nd-century bishop), suggests that Mark acted as Peter's interpreter, recording Peter's eyewitness accounts of Jesus' life and ministry. This connection is why Mark's Gospel is often viewed as reflecting Peter's perspective.

2. **Companion of Paul and Barnabas:** Mark accompanied Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey (Acts 12:25; 13:5). However, he left the journey early, which caused tension between Paul and Barnabas (Acts 13:13; 15:36-40). Despite this, Paul later reconciled with Mark and commended him as helpful for ministry (2 Timothy 4:11; Philemon 24).

3. **Evangelist:** Mark is traditionally regarded as one of the four Gospel writers, earning him the title of "Evangelist." He is credited with writing the Gospel of Mark, which is the earliest and most concise of the four Gospels.

4. **Not an Apostle:** While Mark was not one of the twelve apostles, he played a vital supporting role in the spread of the Gospel and the early Christian movement. His work in documenting Jesus' life and ministry made him an essential figure in the New Testament.



In summary, Mark was a close companion of apostles like Peter and Paul but was not himself an apostle. Instead, he is recognized as an evangelist and an important figure in the early church.

Order of Worship

Welcome

Opening Prayer

*Call to Worship (Congregation)

Leader: The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God!

People: Prepare the way of the Lord; make His paths straight.

Leader: Just as John proclaimed a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins,

People: We come, confessing our need for grace and turning our hearts toward God.

Leader: In the wilderness, the voice of God calls us to prepare for the coming of His kingdom.

People: We listen, we follow, we believe the good news!

Leader: The Spirit of the Lord descends, and the voice of heaven declares:

All: "You are My beloved; with You, I am well pleased." Let us worship the Lord!

Children's Message

***Come Thou Long Expected Jesus, p.196 UMC Hymnal**

Scripture Reading: Mark 1:1-5

Sermon: The Good News Begins

Offertory - **Music by Eileen Gordon**

*Doxology - p.95 UMC Hymnal

***Congregational Confession and Pardon**

Confession (All):

Merciful and loving God,

We confess that we have not loved You with our whole hearts.

We have not always been faithful to Your ways,

And we have fallen short of Your calling.

We have neglected our neighbors in need,

Spoken words that harm, and held onto bitterness.

Forgive us, O Lord.

Cleanse our hearts and renew our spirits,

That we may walk in Your light and share Your love with the world.

Through Jesus Christ, our Lord, we pray. Amen.

Pardon (Leader):

Hear the good news:

God's mercy is from everlasting to everlasting.

In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven and made new.

Let us live as forgiven people, filled with grace and love.

All:

**Thanks be to God! Amen. Called to be the hands and voice of Jesus,
To share the good news, serve others,
And make disciples for the transformation of the world.**

**We believe in God's kingdom,
Where justice and peace will reign forever,
And in the promise of eternal life
Through Christ our Lord.**

Thanks be to God! Amen.

O Love How Deep, p.267 UMC Hymnal

Announcements

Joys and Concerns

Pastoral Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

***Jesus shall Reign, p.157 UMC Hymnal**

*Sending Forth

Postlude

Upcoming Events:

January 12 - 10am January Birthday Celebration

January 5 - February 9 Souper Bowl Can Food Drive starts. Please bring in food for the local food pantry - most needed items are canned fruit, vegetables and peanut butter.

January 26 - Let Pastor Mark or Doris Branch know of your interest in the Sight & Sound bus trip to see Noah. We hope to get a date in September 2025.

January 26 - Safe Sanctuary Training needs to be completed and paperwork signed.

February 2 - Holy Communion

February 8 - 3-5 Paint Day - Come join us for another afternoon of fellowship and painting.

February 9 - 10am February Birthday Celebration

February 9 - 11am Methodism 101 with Pastor Katie - RSVP to Pastor Mark or Lisa Pearre by February 2nd.

February 16 - 10am Potluck after church

February 18 - April 8th every Tuesday from 7-8pm Online Bible Study exploring Liz Curtis Higgs' bestselling book, Bad Girls of the Bible.

February 22 - Community Movie Night

Sermon Insights

Sermon Lesson:

Mark 1:1-15 invites us into the beginning of the greatest story ever told, proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. This passage reminds us that preparation is key to encountering God's kingdom. John the Baptist calls for repentance, a turning away from sin and toward a life aligned with God's purpose. As Jesus is baptized, we see a powerful affirmation of His identity and mission, with the heavens opening and God declaring His love. Even as Jesus is led into the wilderness to face temptation, He emerges to announce, "The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!" This lesson challenges us to examine our hearts: Are we prepared to make room for Jesus? Are we willing to turn from our old ways, trust in God's promises, and boldly proclaim His love to the world?

Application:

1. **Prepare Your Heart Daily:** Spend time each morning in prayer and reflection, asking God to reveal anything in your life that needs repentance. Just as John the Baptist called people to prepare the way of the Lord, clear space in your heart for God to work by confessing sins and seeking His guidance.
2. **Embrace the Wilderness:** Reflect on any challenges or "wilderness" experiences you're facing and invite God into those moments. Like Jesus in the wilderness, use this time to grow closer to God, trusting Him to strengthen you against temptation and provide direction.
3. **Proclaim the Good News:** Find one way this week to share God's love with someone else. This could be through an encouraging word, an act of kindness, or simply inviting someone to church. Remember, the good news of the kingdom is meant to be shared boldly and joyfully!

Conclusion:

Mark 1:1-15 sets the stage for the ministry of Jesus, calling us to prepare our hearts, turn from sin, and embrace the good news of God's kingdom. Through John the Baptist's call to repentance, Jesus' baptism, and His victory in the wilderness, we see a Savior who identifies with us, empowers us, and leads us to new life. The message is clear: the time is now to respond to God's invitation. As we go forward, let us repent, believe, and live as people transformed by the love and grace of Christ, ready to proclaim His kingdom wherever we go.



Prayer Requests:

Kevin Anderson, lung cancer and has stopped treatments
Trish with her health issues
Deborah & Ronald Fulk with their health issues
The Family of Donald Corun on his passing
The Family of Kathy Simmons on her passing
The Family of Emily Mangan on her passing




Souper Bowl Canned Food Drive Reminder!



As we gear up for the big game, let's rally together for an even bigger cause—helping our neighbors in need! Our Souper Bowl Canned Food Drive is in full swing, and we need your help to make it a success. The food bank is especially in need of:

Canned Fruit  

Canned Tomato or Vegetable Soup  

Peanut Butter 

Join Us for an 8-Week Online Bible Study!

You're invited to an engaging and thought-provoking **8-week Bible study** exploring Liz Curtis Higgs' bestselling book, *Bad Girls of the Bible*. Together, we'll dive into the stories of women in Scripture, uncovering lessons of grace, redemption, and God's transformative love.

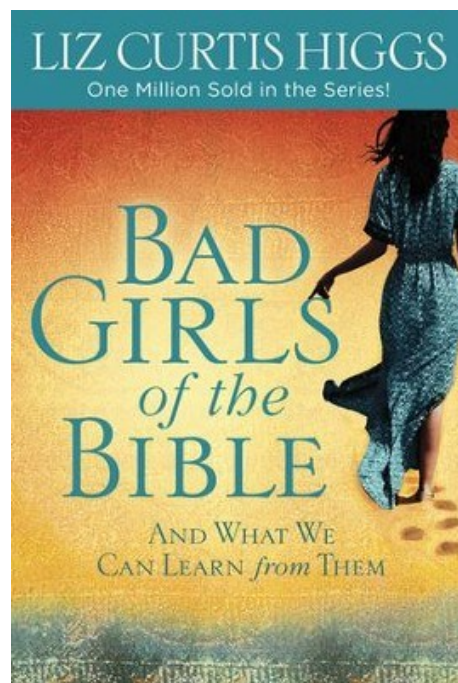
- **When:** Every Tuesday, from 7:00 PM to 8:00 PM
- **Where:** Online via Zoom
- **Start Date: February 18th to April 8th.**

This study is open to **both men and women** as we learn from and celebrate the women of the Bible. Whether you're new to Bible studies or a seasoned participant, this is a chance to deepen your faith and connect with others.

You do not need to attend Bible study every week. Please share with your family and friends, as the bible study is open to anyone who wants to participate.

What You'll Need

Please purchase a copy of *Bad Girls of the Bible* by Liz Curtis Higgs to follow along.





DISTRICT WIDE

Confirmation Retreat

AT MANIDOKAN CAMP & RETREAT CENTER
MARCH 21 - MARCH 23 2025

A weekend experience for all youth in Confirmation to gather, worship, learn, and claim their faith.

The retreat will cover the "United Methodist" parts of the typical Confirmation curriculum who we are, what we believe, why it matters.

\$140 PER PERSON

This will be a great time to learn, but there will also be time to relax and have fun.

If you have a group of 10 or more - bring them!

If you have a group of 1 - bring them!

If you have middle or high-school youth who aren't being confirmed - bring them!

There's room for all!

Each child or group of youth must be accompanied by chaperones for the entire duration of the retreat.

- Is Mark the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, or 4th of the Gospels? _____
- Who gets baptized at the beginning of this book? _____
- Who were the first disciples Jesus recruited? _____
- Where was Bartimaeus when he was healed by Jesus? _____
- What type of tree did Jesus curse in chapter 11? _____
- What holiday were the disciples and Jesus celebrating when the Last Supper occurred in chapter 14? _____
- In 14:26-42, who did Jesus bring with him to the Garden? _____
- After Jesus died, who claimed his body? _____
- What book comes after Mark? _____
- How many chapters are in Mark? _____