

The Gospel according to St. Mark

and the Gospel according to Martin Luther

CHS. 1-7: WHO IS THIS JESUS PERSON ANYWAY?

1: John the Baptist, Jesus' baptism, wilderness temptation, "Repent and believe!", calls the first disciples, teaches in Capernaum synagogue as one with authority, first exorcism, first healing, more exorcisms and healings, private prayer, more teaching and exorcism, healing a leper, can no longer openly enter a town

2: breaking the roof of Jesus' own house, healing paralytic ("when he saw *their* faith, he said to the man..."), tax collectors and sinners, dispute over fasting, Lord of the Sabbath

3: healing withered hand on Sabbath, Pharisees want to destroy him, exorcisms and healings, selecting disciples, criticisms from family (he's crazy!) and scribes (he's demonic!)

4: Sermon on the Boat: sower and seeds, lamp, mustard seed, "they may indeed see but not perceive, and may indeed hear but not understand, lest they should turn and be forgiven," explains to the disciples but they don't understand, then the stilling of the storm ("who IS this...?")

5: two long stories: healing Gerasene (=Gentile) demoniac sent as first missionary/first violation of messianic secret, the hemorrhaging woman and Jairus's daughter. Nature, demons, disease, and death submit to Jesus, but then...

6: no miracles in Nazareth "because of their unbelief," disciples sent on their first preaching mission, death of John the Baptist, feeding the 5000, walking on water, disciples' hearts hardened, more healings

7: controversy with Pharisees over unclean foods, what comes out of the heart makes unclean healing Syrophenician (=Gentile) woman demands healing for her daughter, Ephphatha healing

8: feeding of 4000, conflict with Pharisees, incomprehension of disciples, healing another blind man

8:27-38 → THE TURNING POINT ← 9:1-13

Peter confesses that Jesus is the Christ, Jesus teaches the disciples about his cross *for the first time*, Peter rejects the cross, Jesus rebukes (=exorcises) Peter; then the Transfiguration with Moses and Elijah and a foreshadowing of the resurrection

CHS. 9-13: RAISING THE STAKES AS THE TENSION BUILDS

9: very first act of disciples after learning the truth about Jesus: they fail to heal an epileptic boy, Jesus: "All things are possible for one who believes," father: "I believe, help my unbelief!", Jesus teaches about the cross again but disciples don't understand and are afraid, questions and teaching on other topics

10: Jesus teaches on divorce then immediately blesses children, the rich young man, Jesus speaks about cross again, James and John want to sit at his right hand in glory, Jesus warns them of the baptism of death, he is a ransom for many, blind Bartimaeus made well by faith

11: Palm Sunday, cursing figs, cleansing temple, fig tree again (frame around temple unprepared to accept Jesus in season), "do not doubt but believe," mountain flung into the sea by faith, by what authority does Jesus teach?

12: parable of vineyard, render to Caesar, Sadducees and resurrection, the true commandments to love God and neighbor, how can Jesus be the Son of David?, critique of scribes vs. the widow's mite

13: "little apocalypse": end time teaching, no one knows the hour, keep awake

CHS. 14-16 HERE COMES THE CROSS! (...AND THE RESURRECTION?)

14: woman anoints Jesus with nard, Judas plans betrayal, Passover supper, Mount of Olives, Gethsemane, arrest, trial by high priest, Peter's denial

15: trial before Pilate, crucifixion, he saved others so why not save himself?, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?", death, temple curtain torn, centurion (=Gentile)'s confession ("truly this was the Son of God!"), burial with women watching

16: news of resurrection, fear and silence, no mention of God except indirectly in the passive voice: "he has been raised" [resurrection appearance and commissioning for ministry]

THREE BIG THEMES IN MARK

ELECTION: *God* does the choosing, revealing, and saving. On their own, nobody can choose God, get God to choose them, understand God, or save themselves. Even Jesus' disciples don't grasp what's going on most of the time. His friends and family misunderstand him as badly as his enemies. Everybody is stuck! It's as if Mark dares you to keep on reading.

Luther: bondage of the will, original sin, simul justus et peccator, Third Article of the Creed

FAITH: But when God comes to you, He opens up the possibility for you to respond in faith. God gives faith, teaches faith, encourages faith, and responds to faith (even *other* people's faith on your behalf!). Jesus: "All things are possible for one who believes." Child's father: "I believe; help my unbelief!" Faith exists only inside of God's election. It's a response, not a cause.

Luther: justification by faith, Third Article of the Creed (again!), infant baptism, pastoral ministry

CROSS: Election and faith both belong to the cross. The God Who elects is the one Who went to the cross for you. God's blessings of forgiveness, healing, exorcism, teaching, feeding lead Him to the cross. When you have faith, it's in the one Who died on the cross. Faith will cause you to carry your own cross. No one will stay in faith or election if they reject Jesus' cross.

Luther: theology of the cross, Second Article of the Creed, the marks of the church