

*The*  
GOSPEL  
*of* MARK

CHURCH WIDE STUDY FOR LENT  
FEBRUARY 14 - MARCH 30, 2024

*The*  
GOSPEL  
*of* MARK

**CHURCH WIDE STUDY FOR LENT  
FEBRUARY 14 - MARCH 30, 2024**

## *Invitation to Church Wide Study*

The Season of Lent is upon us, beginning on February 14th which is Ash Wednesday, and concluding on March 30th as we celebrate Easter on March 31st. During Lent, we examine and reflect on our lives as our journey takes us through a wilderness time recalling Jesus' final days and his ultimate sacrifice. It is a time for quiet reflection, listening, and spiritual practices that bring us closer to God. One of the spiritual practices we can do is to read scripture. As we begin Lent, I invite you to participate in our Lenten Study of the Gospel of Mark, either individually or with a group. I hope that our reading will help us to examine our own lives, stimulate conversation, grow closer to God, and fill us with gratitude for the Good News of Jesus Christ. I invite you to read the daily readings slowly, and take in the words and the lessons they teach us. You may want to journal your thoughts, write down any questions you have, pray and ask God to help you understand the message the scripture has. If you get behind in your reading, just catch up when you can or pick back up in the reading on the day you begin again. This is not legalistic but a spiritual practice designed to help us read and meditate on the Word of God. Each week there are questions you can answer on your own or with a group, based on our daily reading plan. On Sundays there are also questions based on the sermon scripture for that day.

I hope this study will bless your experience of Lent this year and may it help us all to grow spiritually as we travel through the wilderness.

Kim Harvey

*Director of Congregational Care & Spiritual Formation*

Mount Tabor UMC

*[kim.harvey@mttaborumc.org](mailto:kim.harvey@mttaborumc.org)*

# *Reading and Studying the Bible*

There are many ways to read the Bible. Here are a few suggestions:

- **Simply read the passages each day, savor them, think about them, and rest in them.**
- **What does God's Word say?** Read the passage and make a list of facts from each verse, using the words from scripture.
- **What does God's Word mean?** As you read back through the facts, what are the lessons to be learned?
- **What does God's Word mean to me?** Take the lessons you have identified and put them in the form of a question that you would ask yourself or someone else. Listen for God to communicate to you through His Word. Take some time to prayerfully meditate and find out what God is saying to you.
  
- Another method is the ancient spiritual practice of **Lectio Divina** which means sacred reading. Pray or take some time to center yourself and get quiet.
- Read the passage and note what stands out to you.
- Read the passage again and reflect on what stands out to you. What might God be saying to you in the scripture?
- Read the passage again and respond to God – pray from your heart or journal about the passage.
- Rest in God's Holy Word.

Bible Study is the reading of the scriptures for information and an understanding of the context of the passage. Lectio Divina is a reflective reading of scripture that leads us into the deeper meaning of scripture and transformation of our lives.

# *Sermons with Scriptures & Services*

FEBRUARY 14 • ASH WEDNESDAY

Confessions in the Wilderness *by Dr. Michael Brown*

| Scripture: Mark 1:9-13

## SERMON SERIES

### **"A WAY THROUGH THE WILDERNESS"**

FEBRUARY 18 • 1ST SUNDAY

The Wilderness of Guilt

*by Dr. Michael Brown*

| Scripture: Mark 2:1-12

FEBRUARY 25 • 2ND SUNDAY

The Wilderness of Anger

*by Dr. Michael Brown*

| Scripture: Mark 11:11-17

MARCH 3 • 3RD SUNDAY

The Wilderness of Loneliness

*by Dr. Michael Brown*

| Scripture: Mark 14:32-41

MARCH 10 • 4TH SUNDAY

The Wilderness of Fear

*by Dr. Preston Davis*

| Scripture: Mark 3:20-27

MARCH 17 • 5TH SUNDAY

The Wilderness of Grief

*by Dr. Michael Brown*

| Scripture: Mark 15:33-41

## HOLY WEEK

MARCH 24 • PALM SUNDAY

The Wilderness of Heartache

*by Dr. Michael Brown*

| Scripture: Mark 11:1-11

MARCH 28 • MAUNDY THURSDAY

Nevertheless

*by Dr. Michael Brown*

| Scripture: Mark 14:32-36

MARCH 29 • GOOD FRIDAY

Completed

*by Dr. Michael Brown*

| Scripture: Mark 15:33-39

& John 19:28-30

MARCH 31 • EASTER SUNDAY

Easter Sunday Services

- 8:00 AM  
(Sanctuary concluding  
in Memory Garden)
- 9:00 AM Modern  
(Alspaugh Worship Center)
- 11:00 AM Traditional  
(Sanctuary)



# The GOSPEL of MARK

The Gospel of Mark is the shortest gospel and was probably the first gospel written. The author is John Mark who accompanied the Apostle Paul on his first missionary journey and who is thought to have also been a friend of Peter, one of Jesus' twelve disciples. Mark was probably written between AD 55 and 65. Mark is direct, beginning his gospel with the announcement that this is the Good News about Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God. The setting for Mark is the Roman Empire under Tiberius Caesar. For a century or so before Jesus was born, the region had been overrun by Romans who had marched in and taken over. The Romans were seen by most as the enemy and the people wanted them gone. Mark writes to encourage Roman Christians and prove beyond a doubt that Jesus is the Messiah. Mark is fast-paced and full of action, skipping over Jesus' birth and diving right in, using the word immediately over 40 times. He focuses on Jesus' teaching, his accomplishments, and the cross. We see a Jesus that serves, sacrifices, and saves. Mark comes rushing in, like the driver of a fast moving car, screeching his brakes and slowing down long enough to tell us to hop in. We've got somewhere to go and he's got a story to tell so let's buckle up.



# Reading Plan for

FEBRUARY 14 – FEBRUARY 18

- ☐ Wednesday, February 14: Mark 1:1-11
- ☐ Thursday, February 15: Mark 1:12-15
- ☐ Friday, February 16: Mark 1:16-28
- ☐ Saturday, February 17: Mark 1:29-39
- ☐ Sunday, February 18: Mark 1:40-Mark 2:12

## QUESTIONS & REFLECTIONS

1. What stood out to you in the reading this week?

2. Mark's Gospel opens with the messenger who will prepare the way for Jesus, John the Baptist. For an oppressed people waiting for a sign of better days ahead and a Messiah to free them, John the Baptist was not who they expected, telling them to repent of their sins. What was their reaction to him? What would have been your reaction to him?
3. What kind of Messiah do you think they were expecting?
4. Jesus began his public ministry by getting baptized by John the Baptist. What was God's response? We are God's children, who he loves very much. Do you believe and accept this? Does this comfort you or challenge you that you are loved that much by the God of the universe?
5. Mark 1:35 tells us that Jesus went out by himself alone and prayed. Jesus himself needed to spend time alone with God. What kind of time can you set apart for God or for prayer, Bible reading, and devotional time? What other ways could you carve out time for God? Maybe you could spend time in nature or write in a gratitude journal? What new spiritual practice might you put into place this Lent?
6. In Mark 1:14-15, Jesus came into Galilee proclaiming the gospel (Good News). What was it?







# Reading Plan for

FEBRUARY 19 - FEBRUARY 25

- ☐ Monday, February 19: Mark 2:13-22
- ☐ Tuesday, February 20: Mark 2:23-Mark 3:6
- ☐ Wednesday, February 21: Mark 3:7-21
- ☐ Thursday, February 22: Mark 3:22-35
- ☐ Friday, February 23: Mark 4: 1-20
- ☐ Saturday, February 24: Mark 4:21-29
- ☐ Sunday, February 25: Mark 4:30-41

## QUESTIONS & REFLECTIONS

1. What about the reading this week stood out to you?
2. What was scandalous about Jesus' dinner companions at Matthew's house? Who might we define as scandalous dinner companions in our time? Would we eat with them?
3. Keeping the Sabbath is 1 of the 10 commandments. In Mark 3:1-6 Jesus healed a man with a withered hand on the Sabbath. Why did this infuriate the Pharisees?
4. Do churches ever get so caught up in keeping the rules that they fail to support God's work or are distracted from it?
5. Many today no longer keep the Sabbath as in the past. How important is Sabbath to you and what would a true day of rest look like for you? (Keep in mind that taking a day of rest can occur on other days besides Sundays.)
6. What have you seen Jesus accomplish so far in the gospel of Mark?
7. Jesus continued to attract more followers. What attracts you to be a Jesus follower? What kinds of reactions have you gotten from people when they find out you're a follower of Jesus?
8. Who or what do you follow besides Jesus (social, political, cultural, etc.) and how can you keep a good balance between the two? How do we order our priorities?
9. Jesus told stories (parables) using illustrations from daily life to teach spiritual truths. In reading The Parable of the Sower in Mark 4:1-9, what can you glean about spiritual truths and growth? What seeds can we plant in ourselves, our children, our grandchildren? (Our faith grows deeper when we make a habit of spiritual practices) Are there things keeping you from time spent reading God's Word. Where are you seeing fruit produced in your spiritual life?





# Reading Plan for FEBRUARY 26 - MARCH 3

- ☐ Monday, February 26: Mark 5:1-43
- ☐ Tuesday, February 27: Mark 6:1-13
- ☐ Wednesday, February 28: Mark 6:14-44
- ☐ Thursday, February 29: Mark 6:45-56
- ☐ Friday, March 1: Mark 7:1-23
- ☐ Saturday, March 2: Mark 7:24-37
- ☐ Sunday, March 3: Mark 8:1-13

## QUESTIONS & REFLECTIONS

1. What stood out to you this week in your reading? Did anything challenge you? Comfort you?
2. Jesus continued to heal people in Mark 5. Is there anything you need to be healed of? In Mark 5:1-20 Jesus healed a man with an unclean spirit. Compare his appearance and actions when Jesus met him to after Jesus healed him. What did Jesus tell him to do after healing him?
3. Jesus also healed a woman who had been bleeding for 12 years. She had great faith but also fear. Have you ever wanted to reach out to Jesus for something you longed to be healed of? Can you hold faith and fear in tension together? Do you hesitate to ask Jesus to heal something in your life? Have you ever conquered your fear to ask Jesus for something?
4. In Mark 6:7-13 Jesus sends the disciples out. What instructions did Jesus give them about what to take on their journey? Compare that with what you pack to go on a journey (trip). Why do you think Jesus told them to pack so light? Can you think of a time when God provided for you? Or when you had to totally rely on God?
5. Why did Jesus tell the disciples to shake the dust from their feet when they left a place that would not welcome or listen to them? We have a responsibility to share the good news of Jesus but are not responsible if people reject it. Does that challenge you or console you?
6. Being a Jesus follower can be potentially costly. Why do you think Herod went along with the request to behead John the Baptist? Do you ever struggle with people pleasing over pleasing God? Or rather than obeying God?
7. The story of Jesus feeding the 5000 shows Jesus' compassion for the people who had come to see him. How does Jesus describe them? When have you seen an act of compassion that reflected Jesus' love and light? What was the disciples' reaction to the crowds? If we were in this situation, would we react like Jesus or the disciples? How were the 5000 fed? Can you think of a time when God provided much with very little?
8. Jesus and the Pharisees got into a debate about cleanliness. What was the problem and what was Jesus' radical response? (Mark 7:1-23)



# *Reading Plan for*

## MARCH 4 – MARCH 10

- ☐ Monday, March 4: Mark 8:14-26
- ☐ Tuesday, March 5: Mark 8:27-Mark 9:1
- ☐ Wednesday, March 6: Mark 9:2-29
- ☐ Thursday, March 7: Mark 9:30-37
- ☐ Friday, March 8: Mark 9:38-50
- ☐ Saturday, March 9: Mark 10:1-16
- ☐ Sunday, March 10: Mark 10:17-34

### QUESTIONS & REFLECTIONS

1. What stood out to you this week in your reading? Did anything challenge you? Comfort you?
2. In Mark 8, Jesus asked his disciples, "Who do people say that I am?" What were their answers? Jesus was not who the people expected the Messiah to be. In our modern day it's sometimes hard to grasp how radical Jesus was and why some of his actions infuriated the religious leaders of the day.
3. If Jesus asked us the same question, who would we say that he is, and what is he doing in the world today?
4. What did Jesus say would happen to himself?
5. In Mark 8:34 what does Jesus say we must do to be his follower? What encourages you to follow Jesus even when it's difficult to do so? Is it challenging to you to submit to Jesus and let him be in control?
6. In Mark 9 we read of the Transfiguration. What captures your attention of this mountaintop experience?
7. The Father in Mark 9:24 tells Jesus, "I believe, help my unbelief!" Do you ever struggle with this same thought?
8. In Mark 10:14, what did Jesus say about the children?
9. What was 1 thing the rich young man in Mark 10 lacked when he asked Jesus what he needs to do to inherit eternal life? What was the young man's reaction to Jesus' words?
10. Have you ever struggled with the love of money or possessions to the point of them interfering with your relationship with Jesus? Have they become idols in your life? Jesus wasn't suggesting that all believers sell all their possessions. Are there barriers that keep you from following Jesus fully?
11. In Mark 10:32-34 Jesus predicts his death for the 3rd time. What does he tell the disciples will happen to him when they go to Jerusalem?



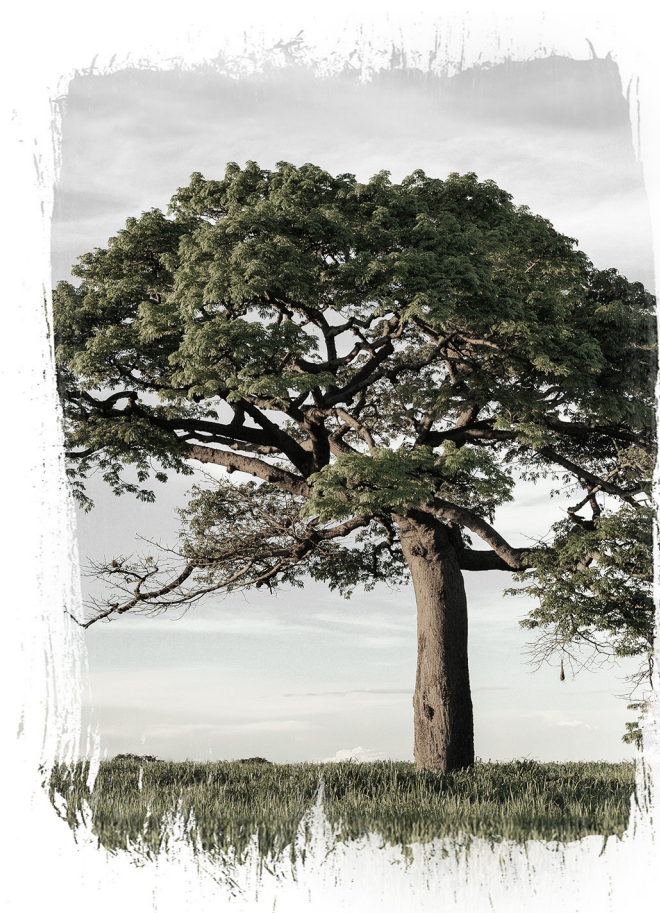
# Reading Plan for

## MARCH 11 – MARCH 17

- ☐ Monday, March 11: Mark 10:35-52
- ☐ Tuesday, March 12: Mark 11:1-14
- ☐ Wednesday, March 13: Mark 11:15-26
- ☐ Thursday, March 14: Mark 11:27-Mark 12:12
- ☐ Friday, March 15: Mark 12:13-27
- ☐ Saturday, March 16: Mark 12:28-37
- ☐ Sunday, March 17: Mark 12:38-44

### QUESTIONS & REFLECTIONS

1. What stood out to you this week in your reading? Did anything challenge you? Comfort you?
2. After Jesus has just predicted his death for the 3rd time, what do James and John ask him for? What is Jesus' response? In Mark 10:43- 44, how does Jesus describe a leader?
3. In Mark 10:51 what does Bartimaeus ask Jesus for? Bartimaeus may have been physically blind, but he was not spiritually blind. What made him well? Is there something you want Jesus to do for you?
4. Read Zechariah 9:9 to see what prophecy was about to be fulfilled. How is the king described? What was the people's response to Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem? Pay close attention to their response – it will change very soon.
5. In Mark 11, we read about the fig tree and the cleansing of the temple. The tree showed the promise of fruit but there was none. The temple was supposed to be a place for worship. Instead there were people selling and buying there. Can you draw a parallel between the fig tree and the temple and a life that claims to have faith?
6. Jesus was asked which commandment is the most important? What was Jesus' answer? What does this look like in your own life?
7. Jesus tells the story of the widow's offering. By most standards, she gave very little, but how did Jesus categorize her offering? And why?





*SERMON*

MARCH 17 • 5TH SUNDAY IN LENT

The Wilderness of Grief

| Scripture: Mark 15:33-41

NOTES



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

*GROWTH GUIDE*  
*based on sermon scripture*

CONTEXT

Jesus has been arrested, tried, sentenced to death and is now crucified.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What happened at noon? (See Mark 15:33)
2. What were the actions of the bystanders?
3. What words did Jesus speak at 3:00 pm?
4. What did the Roman Officer say when Jesus died? Why would this be significant, considering who he is?
5. Who were the women watching in the distance? What was their connection to Jesus?

## *Reading Plan for* MARCH 18 - MARCH 24

- ☐ Monday, March 18: Mark 13:1-13
- ☐ Tuesday, March 19: Mark 13:14-27
- ☐ Wednesday, March 20: Mark 13:28-37
- ☐ Thursday, March 21: Mark 14:1-9
- ☐ Friday, March 22: Mark 14:10-21
- ☐ Saturday, March 23: Mark 14:22-31
- ☐ Sunday, March 24: Mark 14:32-52 (Palm Sunday)

### QUESTIONS & REFLECTIONS

1. What stood out to you this week in your reading? Did anything challenge you? Comfort you?
2. Some believe that Mark 13:3-37 talks about the end times, others believe that Jesus is talking about the destruction of the temple, and some may believe the passage addresses both events. What does Jesus say will take place and how does Jesus say his followers should live in the meantime? How might verse 13 be consoling to those who suffer persecution in the world? What warnings does Jesus give?
3. Jesus makes the statement that heaven and earth may disappear but what will never disappear? (Mark 13:31)
4. For those who wonder the day and hour of these and future events, what does Jesus say in Mark 13:32? What does he say in verse 37?
5. Jesus' time on earth is drawing to a close. While the religious leaders are trying to find a way to arrest and kill him, he eats a meal at Simon's house (a former leper). A woman comes in and pours expensive perfume on his head. Why do you think she did that? What was Jesus' response?
6. It's hard to read about Judas, one of the disciples, betraying Jesus.  
  
However, we must ask ourselves, have we professed to be a Christian and then betrayed Jesus in our own life by disobeying him or distrusting him?
7. During the Last Supper, Jesus instituted The Lord's Supper, which we call Communion today. What did Jesus say the bread and wine represented? When you hear these words as you are served Communion, what connection do you feel with Jesus, who became the sacrificial Lamb for us, so that we might be delivered from sin and have eternal life? What change or transformation might take place? What connection do you feel with others as you wait in line to receive Communion or kneel at the altar together in prayer? Another name for Communion is the Eucharist which means thanksgiving. When you are served Communion you may want to say a prayer of thanks for Christ's work in you.
8. Who does Jesus say will deny him?
9. In Gethsemane, we see a different Jesus. How would you describe him? Who do you identify with most in the Garden of Gethsemane scene?
10. What happened after Jesus was arrested, just as Jesus said it would?



## *Reading Plan for* MARCH 25 - MARCH 30

- ☐ Monday, March 25: Mark 14:53-65
- ☐ Tuesday, March 26: Mark 14:66-Mark 15:5
- ☐ Wednesday, March 27: Mark 15:6-20
- ☐ Thursday, March 28: Mark 15:21-41 (Maundy Thursday)
- ☐ Friday, March 29: Mark 15:42- Mark 16:8 (Good Friday)
- ☐ Saturday, March 30: Mark 16:9-20 (Holy Saturday)

### QUESTIONS & REFLECTIONS

1. What stood out to you this week in your reading? Did anything challenge you? Comfort you?
2. What is Jesus charged with?
3. How does Jesus respond to his accusers?
4. What details does Mark write about in Mark 15:16-32?
5. What happens right before Jesus dies? (Mark 15:33-37)
6. What was the Roman Officer's response to Jesus' death? (Mark 15:39)
7. Why is it significant that a Roman soldier gave Jesus this title?
8. What difference has Jesus dying on a cross made in your life?
9. Who does Mark report was watching the crucifixion from a distance?
10. Could you have had Joseph of Arimathea's courage? What did he do for Jesus?
11. What was the purpose of the women going to the tomb? What did they see and what was their response? What were they told to do? What did they do as Mark abruptly comes to an end in Mark 16:8?
12. In the longer ending of Mark which most agree was added later – what details are added? Why do you think they were added?
13. Write the words of the Great Commission down. How are you doing with this in your own life? Is God calling you to share the gospel in a specific way? How might you spread the gospel?





## *Reading Plan Overview*

- February 14: Mark 1:1-11  
(Ash Wednesday)
- February 15: Mark 1:12-15
- February 16: Mark 1:16-28
- February 17: Mark 1:29-39
- February 18: Mark 1:40-Mark 2:12
- February 19: Mark 2:13-22
- February 20: Mark 2:23-Mark 3:6
- February 21: Mark 3:7-21
- February 22: Mark 3:22-35
- February 23: Mark 4:1-20
- February 24: Mark 4:21-29
- February 25: Mark 4:30-41
- February 26: Mark 5:1-43
- February 27: Mark 6:1-13
- February 28: Mark 6:14-44
- February 29: Mark 6:45-56
- March 1: Mark 7:1-23
- March 2: Mark 7:24-37
- March 3: Mark 8:1-13
- March 4: Mark 8:14-26
- March 5: Mark 8:27-Mark 9:1
- March 6: Mark 9:2-29
- March 7: Mark 9:30-37
- March 8: Mark 9:38-50
- March 9: Mark 10:1-16
- March 10: Mark 10:17-34
- March 11: Mark 10:35-52
- March 12: Mark 11:1-14
- March 13: Mark 11:15-26
- March 14: Mark 11:27-Mark 12:12
- March 15: Mark 12:13-27
- March 16: Mark 12:28-37
- March 17: Mark 12:38-44
- March 18: Mark 13:1-13
- March 19: Mark 13:14-27
- March 20: Mark 13:28-37
- March 21: Mark 14:1-9
- March 22: Mark 14:10-21
- March 23: Mark 14:22-31
- March 24: Mark 14:32-50  
(Palm Sunday)
- March 25: Mark 14:51-65
- March 26: Mark 14:66-Mark 15:5
- March 27: Mark 15:6-20
- March 28: Mark 15:21-41  
(Maundy Thursday)
- March 29: Mark 15:42- Mark 16:8  
(Good Friday)
- March 30: Mark 16:9-20  
(Holy Saturday)



## *Additional Resources for Lent*

- Reliving the Passion - Meditations on the Suffering, Death, and Resurrection of Jesus as Recorded in Mark  
by Walter Wangerin, Jr.
- Small Surrenders - A Lenten Journey  
by Emilie Griffin
- The Awkward Season - Prayers for Lent  
by Pamela C. Hawkins
- Following Christ - A Lenten Reader to Stretch Your Soul  
by Carmen Acevedo Butcher
- Journey to the Cross - A 40 Day Lenten Devotional  
by Paul David Tripp
- Bitter & Sweet - A Journey into Easter  
by TSH Oxenreider

HOLY WEEK AT MOUNT TABOR UMC

*Palm*  
SUNDAY

**March 24**

Modern at 9 AM in the  
Alspaugh Worship Center

Traditional at 11 AM  
in the Sanctuary

*Maunder*  
THURSDAY

**March 28**

Service at 7 PM in the  
Alspaugh Worship Center

*Good*  
FRIDAY

**March 29**

Service at 7 PM  
in the Sanctuary

Sunrise Service at 8 AM  
in the Sanctuary

Modern at 9 AM in the  
Alspaugh Worship Center

Traditional at 11 AM  
in the Sanctuary

*Easter*  
SUNDAY

**March 31**