

The Story of Jesus

Part 1: How does Jesus make me new?

Mark 1:1-15 - [watch online](#)

Summary

Sure Jesus of Nazareth is the most well known figure in human history. And yeah he had some really good ideas, but the full story about healings, miracles, rising from the dead, and Jesus actually being God is pretty hard to believe. But for 2000 years, this story has transformed millions of individual lives and the entire world. Maybe there's more to the story of Jesus than we first thought. What if it is true? What could that mean for us now?

Main Points

[01:13] The story of Jesus is often difficult to believe.

[02:40] The questions we all have to wrestle with are: Who is Jesus? and What does it mean to follow him?

[05:08] God promised a new beginning for all of humanity.

[08:05] The story of Jesus is the story of humanity's new beginning.

[11:02] Jesus is humanity's representative and the one who restores our true humanity.

[13:30] Where we sin and ruin everything Jesus heals and restores everything.

[15:30] Jesus claimed to be launching God's new revolution.

[16:05] Repentance is a complete revolution in how we see God, ourselves, our lives, and our world.

[16:36] We all long for some kind of new beginning.

[17:26] The NEW we are all looking for is found not in something but in someone: Jesus of Nazareth.

[21:05] We are all invited into the story of Jesus.

Challenge

Write a sentence or two of your initial thoughts:

Who is Jesus?

What does it look like to actually follow him today?

Extra: Read along with us each week.

Discussion Questions

1. Growing up, what were your thoughts, impressions, or feelings about Jesus?
2. Why do you think the story of Jesus is often hard for many people to believe?
3. Read Mark 1:1-15. What stands out to you? What questions does it raise for you?
4. If Mark's introduction to Jesus' story is true, what does/could that mean for your daily life today?
5. How can your group pray with you this week?

Transcript:

INTRO: Xians believe a Jewish peasant in 1st cent Middle East, named Jesus, was crucified by the Roman Empire, rose from the dead, and is actually God (creator of the universe) who came to restore humanity's perfect relationship with himself.

That's actually pretty crazy if you think about it. Honestly, it can be a little hard to believe.

BUT... if it's true... It means there is hope for a new beginning no matter who we are, where we are from, or what we have done.

So does this absurd claim have any truth to it... and if so, what does that mean for us right now?

These questions can only be answered if we take the time to immerse ourselves in the Story of Jesus... so let's talk about it... together

WE: Around 60 AD, a man named Mark attempted to explain how all of this could possibly be true.

He wrote an account of Jesus' life that has come to be called the Book/Gospel of Mark.

B/c **The story of Jesus is often difficult to believe.**

In his account he attempted to explain how someone who was crucified by the Romans... who never physically conquered the Romans... who never started a political kingdom could actually be the King of all creation.

Also known as John Mark, he was in the inner circle of the first JF's.

He was a companion of the Apostle Paul and later a companion and follower of the Apostle Peter.

Because of the many eyewitness details in his account... It is believed what he wrote was taken directly from Peter's teachings and memories about Jesus... Most likely while Peter and many other eye-witnesses were still alive.

And from what we know about Peter... a man of action and passion... we can see his influence in this account... It is fast paced, action oriented.

It's easy to miss b/c of how we tend to approach things in the Bible...

Mark's account wasn't written simply to be read by ourselves in little pieces in a quiet room for personal reflection with a cup of coffee.

It was designed to be read aloud in one sitting in a community of people who had never personally seen Jesus (2nd gen) and are wrestling with who Jesus is and what it means to follow him in this new life everyday.

As we read the story we are invited into the same questions the people in the story wrestle with...

The question we all have to wrestle with... Who is Jesus and what does it mean to follow him?

GOD: Here is how Mark introduces this story... **V. 1a**

The Good News

- Gospel: Greek word *Euangelion*... *Eu-* Good *Angelion-* Announcement.
- Hebrew: *Bisser*... National/Royal News... a herald spreading the news of a new king coming to the throne

What is this Good Royal Announcement? Something new is happening... There is a new King.

- The Messiah... God's promised anointed one has come
- The Son of God the one who came from God... shares his essence/power/authority is here... also a title Caser claimed for himself and a title that came to be used to describe the coming Messiah

Ancient Israel's prophets had said someday God would rescue his people and bring his heavenly kingdom to earth again... undoing the effects of sin and restoring creation to its original perfect design.

According to the BW's all of the pain, hurt, hate, injustice, oppression we experience in life is a result of our separation from our Heavenly Father... and it's only exacerbated by our attempts to fix what is broken on our own.

- Both as societies and individuals.
- BW's call it SIN
- Sin separates and kills... spiritually, relationally, even physically.

We are separated not b/c God is mad at us but b/c we don't trust God. We don't trust that he is good and loves us.

We choose to trust ourselves and choose to forge our own path... which ultimately leads to a spiral of hurt and pain that we can't get ourselves out of

So, through Israel's prophets, God promised to fix the mess... save his people... offer a way to begin again... He would bring his kingdom to earth and give a new beginning for all of humanity.

God promised a new beginning for all of humanity.

Overtime, many people envisioned a man anointed by God... the Messiah who would set up a Jewish kingdom and conquer all of Israel's enemies in battle and restore the proper worship of God in the way their great prophet Moses had 1st directed them.

So Mark is setting the main theme of his account... and presenting the message and belief of the first JF's... Jesus is the Messiah who offers us a new beginning in God's Kingdom now... but it doesn't look like anyone expected.

This is the only time Mark tells us what he thinks about Jesus' identity... the rest of the book gives us what we need to decide for ourselves.

But before he jumps into the full story he gives us a behind the scenes look at what the story we're about to read really means...

V. 1b-6 Through both the prophets Malachi and Isaiah God had promised before his new kingdom came he would send someone to prepare the way... Mark says John the Baptist was the fulfillment of those promises.

But here's the interesting thing... Who are those prophecies saying the way will be prepared for? Not a mere human Messiah...

Prepare the way for the LORD... They prophesied about the day God himself would come and restore his creation and heal his people.

Mark is explaining the story he is about to tell is bigger than what people were expecting and it all started out in the wilderness with John the B.

In the wilderness... not necessarily negative! For the Jews, the wilderness was a place of hope and new beginnings.

After Moses led the freed Israelite slaves out of Egypt (The Exodus), the wilderness is where Yahweh/God met them and officially declared them as his chosen people.

And now, Mark is saying, a new Exodus is beginning... God is creating a new people for himself by leading people out of their sin and separation.

And this new beginning is happening in the same way... in the wilderness. **The story of Jesus is the story of humanity's new beginning.**

So John the B is calling the people of Israel to repent... not just feel bad... but to change their direction... turn their allegiance from their-selves (wants/desires/fear) and give their allegiance to God to receive forgiveness... be ready for the new that is coming.

And to symbolize this change he is baptizing them...

Jews practiced regular ritual washings/baths but this was something new... this was more like a conversion ceremony... showing they had cleansed themselves from their self-rule and are ready for the NEW that is about to happen.

But what is this NEW?

V. 7-8 Someone is coming. The someone they've all been waiting for... it's all about to happen just like another ancient prophet said... **Ezekiel 36:25-27**

Again... it is God who is said to be the one who will pour out the HS

John the B is saying the one who is coming is somehow the one sent from God but is also God bringing the HS of God to live in his people.

And who is this mysterious someone? Mark has built up the suspense enough... **V. 9-11**

Jesus of Nazareth. A real historical figure that almost every reputable historian recognizes as a real person who actually lived at this time.

And Jesus is baptized... Why? He's perfect. Jesus is both identifying with/representing Israel in this new beginning and Exodus.

- A rather deep idea that hopefully we'll be able to unpack as we go through this account.

Jesus is humanity's representative and the one who restores our true humanity.

And as he comes out of the water the “the heavens split apart.”

- The veil of our “real” world is pulled back.
- We are given a picture of true reality... **there is a truer realm behind what we can observe.**

The HS descends on him (very reminiscent of the HS fluttering over the waters in the story of creation) and God’s own voice declares Jesus to be his promised Messiah and Son.

- Notice the Trinity being present, as if to say, "Now is the time for us to rescue humanity."

Jesus is anointed for his role as the one who will both embody Israel and rescue Israel and the rest of humanity.

All of this is presented as carrying on and fulfilling the story of God... **Isaiah 11:2; 42:1; 61:1**

And then keeping with the idea of the new Exodus, the HS compels Jesus (the representative of Israel) to go into the wilderness to be tested.

V. 12-13 We’ll talk about Satan and angels and stuff in a later episode. But for now...

When Israel was first sent to the wilderness in the first Exodus, they failed to trust God and had to wander for 40 yrs until a new generation came that was ready to trust him.

Jesus, now representing Israel as their Messiah, goes into the wilderness and passes the test... Where Israel failed, Jesus triumphed.

Where we sin and ruin everything, Jesus heals and restores everything.

V. 14-15 As the one who prepared the way fades from the story the scene is set for the main character to begin his story...

And Mark lays out Jesus’ main message... “Believe the Good News...the *Euangelion*... the Good royal announcement that the new King is here. I am here bringing God’s Kingdom to earth now...”

Kingdom of God? ... Heaven? Godly society? State of mind? People choosing to be really good?

Not really even a *thing*... the Kingdom of God is more of an *action*... The Action of God... Best way to describe it... The Revolution of God.

Jesus is saying the old kingdom that has ruled most of human history... and even our lives today... Is ending.

- A kingdom of self-rule... Look out for yourself b/c, who else will?
- Might/wealth makes right.
- Get as much for yourself as possible and remove any obstacle/people that get in the way of you getting what you want
- It’s a kingdom that ultimately leads to emptiness, purposelessness, loneliness, death.
- And we are simultaneously part of the problem yet also trapped like slaves/prisoners in this old kingdom
- And though we all long for something new to come we don't know how to find it.

Jesus claimed to be launching God's new revolution ... He is the *new* King who is here to bring a *new* kingdom.

A kingdom based on love... not fear.

Led by a servant king not a power hungry tyrant.

A king who doesn't conquer by killing but by dying.

Who doesn't take from his people but gives them true life.

And a new King and kingdom means a new way of life... so Jesus says repent... meaning change allegiances.

Repentance is a complete revolution in how we see God, ourselves, our lives, and our world.

We see everything not through the, what do I want and what can I get for me, lens, but through the lens of what does our Heavenly Father want and what does he value... how did he create us to truly operate as full healthy humans?

It's choosing to change from self-rule to God's kingship of our lives.

WE: We all long for some kind of new beginning.

Every culture and people group has tried to find a path to this NEW...

Whether it was through religion, empire building, technology, science, education, laws, justice, the right economic philosophy whether it was capitalism, socialism, and communism. Even politics.

And we personally keep trying to find the right NEW for our individual lives...

- New career, opportunities, city, family, spouse, house, car, boat, mindset, lifestyle, even a new cat.
- Might be why you are watching this right now... hoping some religion/church will help

If we could just find the right NEW everything would finally be good.

From the beginning, Xianity's claim has been... **The NEW we are all looking for is found not in something but in someone... Jesus of Nazareth.**

Jesus, God in a body, the true King of the universe, came to rescue us from what we can't rescue ourselves from.

- He freed us from the power of sin and its result of death... by dying on the cross as the representative of all of broken humanity, basically putting our sin/separation to death... and rising again destroying the power of sin/death and giving us new life in him now and forever.

We can take our lives and all the hurt, pain, suffering, anger, selfishness that keeps us from God... and we can try to turn our lives around... we can try to turn over a new leaf... but it's still there...

- **What we need, what everyone needs is a true new start that wipes clean all of that darkness...**

Jesus claimed to be the one who can do that... he didn't offer a way to do it, he didn't offer a technique, he didn't offer a philosophy... he offered himself as the new beginning humanity needs.

And through him we can all experience God personally telling us... “You are my dearly loved child, and you bring me great joy!”

It begins with repenting and believing the good news about the king and kingdom.

YOU: It’s a very weighty claim... one that is hard to believe and has always been hard to believe...

So Mark has us wondering... is this true? Will Jesus really prove to be who he has been presented as?

And for the rest of the book we will see what Jesus said, what Jesus did, and be invited to wrestle with his claims and decide if we believe him or not.

And we’ll be invited to discover what this new beginning in the kingdom of God really looks like in our lives right now...

So as we begin this journey, whether you are exploring what this Jesus Story is all about or whether you’ve been a JF for years... we need to consciously and seriously attempt to answer the questions for ourselves and in our own words...

Who is Jesus?

What does it look like to actually follow him today?

If the story of Jesus even *might be* true we owe it to ourselves to truly wrestle with these questions.

Try to formulate a one sentence answer to each of those qs, and then save it and compare it as we take this journey through Mark's account of Jesus’ life.

Extra: Read along with us each week.

Meditate on the passage for the week

What stands out?

WE: We need a new beginning. You do. I do. Our world does.

We are invited to a new life... a new start... of living as a forgiven, free, loved, and enjoyed child of God. And we find the way to this life in the story of Jesus.

B/c the story of Jesus isn’t just Jesus’ story... It can be our story as well. **We are all invited into the story of Jesus.**

Come back, watch the next episode and discover what that can really look like for your life now and tomorrow.