

## **Reading Together**

### **New Testament Bible Reading**

### **January 1 - 3**

If you are new to Bible study, here are a few tips to help you get started.

First, use a version of the Bible that is easy for you to understand. Some good translations are the King James (KJV), New King James (NKJV), New American Standard (NAS), and the English Standard Version (ESV). These versions are more literal translations of the original languages in which the Bible was written. Other good translations are the New International Version (NIV), and the New Living Testament (NLT). These translations are done in a way to try to make them more readable, and as such, are not intended to be literal translations. However, even though they are not literal translations, they still, for the most part, do a good job of conveying the important truths of Scripture. If you have questions about which translations would be good for you. I will be happy to help you find one that will be good for you to use. A Bible that also includes study notes can also be very helpful.

Second, keep in mind that applying what you read to your life is just as important as doing the reading, so as you read, try asking yourself these questions:

- What does the passage say about human brokenness and sin?
- What does the passage reveal about the Gospel and the God who redeems?
- Consider how God might want you to apply the passage to your heart, head, and hands.
  - Heart: How is God calling me to love Him and others better?
  - Head: What is God calling me to believe?
  - Hands: What is God calling me to do?

**MEADOW CREEK PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

## **Introduction to the Gospel of Mark**

Mark's Gospel was probably the first of the four Gospels to be written. It was written by Mark, who although he was not a direct disciple of Jesus, was Peter's right hand man. It would be fair to say the Gospel of Mark was dictated to Mark by Peter. Mark's Gospel is the simplest of the four Gospels and it has been described as the Gospel of shock and awe. Mark makes a point to describe Jesus in ways that shock people and cause them to be filled with awe at who Jesus is and what Jesus has done. Throughout this Gospel you will find people amazed at Jesus. As you read it ask God to use your time in Mark's Gospel to amaze you all over again at who Jesus is and what Jesus has done for you.

### **January 1 – Mark 1: 1 – 20**

Notice the word gospel in verse 1. Gospel means "good news." So Mark's Gospel actually starts out by saying "The beginning of the good news about Jesus Christ, the Son of God." In verses 1- 8 of chapter 1 Mark introduces us to John the Baptist who points us ahead to the coming of Christ. In verses 9 – 11 Mark gives us an account of the baptism of Jesus and once again Mark emphasizes that Jesus is the Son of God. Mark only touches briefly on Jesus' temptation in verse 12 (Matthew and Luke's Gospels give us much more detail about this). In verses 14 -20 Jesus calls his first disciples. Notice Jesus' message in verse 15 and his call to Peter and Andrew in verse 17. Jesus' message is the same to us today—repent and follow him. As you think about today's reading, and you begin a new year ask yourself if you are heeding Jesus' call to repent and believe. Is there sin in your life that you are cherishing and are unwilling to give up? Are there times when you are still trying to earn your own righteousness, rather than believing that Christ's righteousness is sufficient? Repent and believe is not just how we become Christians; it is also how we are to live each day of our lives.

## **January 2 – Mark 1: 21 – 2: 12**

In these verses Jesus heals a man with an evil spirit (1: 21 – 28), Peter’s mother in law and others (1: 29 – 34), a man with leprosy (1: 40 – 45) and finally a man who was paralyzed and had to be lowered by his friends through the roof of the building Jesus where was teaching, because the crowds were so great around Jesus (2: 1- 12). As you read these accounts notice the response of the people in 1: 27; 1: 44-45; and 2: 12. People are amazed at who Jesus is and what Jesus does. Does Jesus still amaze you? Or has everything become very routine in your life and in your faith? It is easy for us to get into a rut, and to stop being amazed at Jesus. Ask Jesus to come and amaze you. Ask him to break into your life in ways that surprise you and draw you closer to him.

## **January 3 – Mark 2: 13 – 3: 6**

In today’s reading we see the Pharisees become scandalized over and over again by Jesus’ behavior. First, Jesus makes a “sinner” one of his disciples, then Jesus doesn’t fast or observe the Sabbath the way the Pharisees think he should. Over and over again Jesus upsets what is considered to be normal behavior, but as this account comes to its climax in Mark 3: 1- 6 we see that the hearts of the Pharisees are so dark that they condemn Jesus for healing on the Sabbath, and they start to put in motion a plot to kill Jesus. Think about why the Pharisees got so upset with Jesus. He was upsetting their religion. Sometimes, that’s what Christianity becomes to us—just religion—just something we do, and we just go through the motions day in and day out. In fact, like the Pharisees, we too can get upset when our practice of religion is tinkered with or disrupted. We generally don’t like things that mess up the routine. But Jesus should never be just routine to us, and sometimes it takes the status quo being interrupted for Jesus to break into our lives.