



Trinity United Methodist Church Newsletter



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Understanding the New Testament The Gospels: The Gospel of Mark

The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Mark 1:1 NRSV

²³ Jesus said to him [in response to the question asking if Jesus could cast out the spirit possessing his son], “If you are able!—All things can be done for the one who believes.” ²⁴ Immediately the father of the child cried out, “I believe; help my unbelief!” Mark 9:23-24 NRSV

⁶ But he said to them, “Do not be alarmed; you are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has been raised; he is not here. Look, there is the place they laid him. ⁷ But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him, just as he told you.” ⁸ So they went out and fled from the tomb, for terror and amazement had seized them; and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.

Mark 16:6-8 NRSV

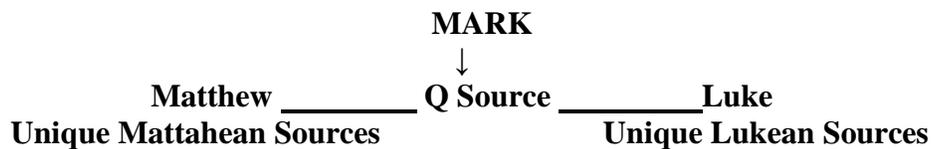
Although the Gospel of Mark is placed after Matthew in the New Testament, most scholars believe that it was written before the other three Gospels. It is dated between 65 and 75 CE during the persecutions of the Emperor Nero, probably before 70 CE. Many scholars believe that it was written in Rome but others argue that it might have been written in Northern Palestine. Church tradition suggests that the Gospel account itself was provided by the Apostle Peter and written after his death in Rome. As with the Gospel of Matthew, the identity of the author is not known. Church tradition suggests that the author was a disciple of Peter named Mark and some have argued that it was the “failed missionary” John Mark who had a falling out with Paul. Acts 13:13-15:38. One final tradition holds that the author was the otherwise unidentified young man who escaped when Jesus was arrested:

⁵¹ A certain young man was following him, wearing nothing but a linen cloth. They caught hold of him, ⁵² but he left the linen cloth and ran off naked. Mark 14:51-52. NRSV

The Synoptic Gospels Matthew, Mark and Luke

The word “synoptic” is composed of the Latin roots meaning together (syn) and vision (opti). The Synoptic Gospels then are the Gospels that should be “seen together.” A cursory examination of these three Gospels shows that much of the material in them is similar and some parts are reproduced word for word in at least two of the three Gospels.

One of the primary reasons that scholars believe Mark was written first is that it seems to provide the outline used in Matthew and Luke and those Gospels each contain most of what is written in Mark. There also seems to be some material that only appears in Matthew and Luke and both Matthew and Luke contain material that appears nowhere else. Accordingly, scholars believe that Matthew and Luke drew heavily on the Gospel of Mark, an unknown source of teachings of Jesus usually referred to as the “Q Source” and then other sources containing the material unique to their narratives. The relationship between the Gospels can be shown graphically as follows:



The “Hard Hitting” Gospel

Mark is the shortest of the four Gospels and its writing style is very terse. It is the only Gospel that calls itself a Gospel, declaring so in the very first verse: *The beginning of the good news [Gospel] of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.* Unlike Matthew and Luke it does not concern itself with the birth of Jesus or stories of his youth. Instead it jumps right into the story of John the Baptist and Jesus’ Baptism. Jesus, like John the Baptist, spreads a Gospel focused on repentance and preparation for the coming Kingdom of God.

There are a couple of literary devices used in Mark that deserve mention. One is the use of the word “immediately.” The word “immediately” is used almost 30 times to mark transitions and keep the events in the story moving along to their climax. For instance:

¹² *And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. Mark 1:12 NRSV*

⁴⁵ *Immediately he made his disciples get into the boat and go on ahead to the other side, to Bethsaida, while he dismissed the crowd. Mark 6:45 NRSV*

⁵² *Jesus said to him, “Go; your faith has made you well.” Immediately he regained his sight and followed him on the way. Mark 10:52 NRSV*

The other device used in Mark is Jesus portrayed as the “Hidden Messiah.” In several places Jesus instructs his Disciples and those he helps not to tell others about him or their belief that he is the Messiah. For instance, in Mark 3:11 Jesus orders the “unclean spirits” cast out of individuals not to tell people that he is the Son of God. When he raised the daughter of Jarius he ordered the family not to speak of it. Mark 5:43. Following the transfiguration he orders his disciples not to tell what they have seen until after his resurrection. Mark 9:9. Many Christians have wondered why Jesus seemingly tries to hide his identity.

Although several explanations have been offered, the most persuasive one for me is that Jesus did not want people to make assumptions about the nature of his Messiahship. Many in Israel believed that the Messiah

would be a great military leader who would lead an army, possibly made up of angels as well as men, in battle against the Romans. The Romans would be thrown out and the Messiah would establish a new kingdom like that of King David. Jesus knew that his battle was with powers greater than the Romans and that his Kingdom would extend to the whole earth, not just Israel. He wanted to show people what his Messiahship was to be, not have them expect something else entirely.

Unlike the Gospel of Matthew, in Mark there is very little emphasis on Jesus' Jewish identity or of the law. In general Jesus does not extol the law as he does in Matthew but he does explain why it does not prevent helping those in need. For these reasons many scholars believe that Mark was probably written for a primarily gentile community.

Of all the Gospels, the Gospel of Mark is the least favorable in its portrayal of the Disciples. They are often portrayed as clueless concerning Jesus' ministry and seemly without faith. This portrayal reaches its culmination in Chapter 16. By this time all the male Disciples have deserted Jesus and only the women remain. The women encounter an angelic figure in the tomb who tells them that Jesus has risen and that they should go and tell Peter and the Disciples. Yet, even these women fail:

⁸ So they went out and fled from the tomb, for terror and amazement had seized them; and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid. Mark 16:8. NRSV

Most scholars agree that 16:8a marks the end of the Gospel as originally written. In virtually all modern translations there is a note that verses 8b - 20 were almost certainly added by later scribes seeking to reconcile the Gospel of Mark with other gospel accounts. Yet it is consistent with the rest of the Gospel of Mark to have the Gospel end in the transitory failure of the Disciples. It is a reminder that the choice to share the Gospel of Christ is always before us. As with the women at the tomb, we may choose to share the Gospel or remain silent.

Halloween Trunk or Treat Event at Trinity *From Jeanne Rybolt*

For the uninitiated, think of Trunk or Treat as tailgating for Halloween. We'll have cars placed in the parking lot with their trunks decorated and the kids go from car trunk to car trunk to trick or treat. We'll also have hot chocolate available for the kids. The event will be from 6 to 8:00 PM on Saturday, October 29th. There is still time to bring a trunk load of goodies for the event.

Children's Church/Nursery

Sunday School and Nursery care is available every Sunday during the Sunday school hour. Children from birth through the 6th grade are welcome. Children's Church and Nursery care are available for Children from birth through pre-k after the Children's Time in worship. We encourage parents to keep their children of Kindergarten age and up in the sanctuary during worship. It's important that our children experience the worship of the Church community from an early age.

Lesson plans are currently available that volunteers can use to lead Children's Church during worship. These lesson plans (almost 100 separate plans) do not require any preparation or pre-planning. Each lesson includes a short Bible Story to be read to the children as well as a corresponding craft project. All supplies for the crafts are on hand in the Nursery.

We need two volunteers each Sunday to provide Children's Church during worship. With enough volunteers it shouldn't be necessary for any adult to miss worship more than one Sunday every two months. If you would be willing to volunteer to help with the Children's Church ministry please see Jeanne Rybolt, Julia Moore, Dawn Stevens or Dana Bauguess to learn more.

Preacher, What Does the Bible Say about ...?

From the time I came to Trinity I have stated on numerous occasions that I am willing to consider a sermon, or sermon series, on any subject that is of concern. If there is a subject upon which you would like me to preach I will consider it. If I do not think it appropriate for a sermon I will explain why. It might also be appropriate to address some issues as part of a Newsletter article or series or as part of the Sunday School curriculum. But, if at all possible, I will seek to speak to these issues that are of interest on Sunday morning. One purpose of worship is to contemplate our relationship with God and if something is bothering you it is likely bothering others as well.

Thursday Morning Bible Study

The Thursday Morning Bible Study Group meets weekly on Thursdays from 10:00 to 11:30 AM. This week we will begin a study of the Book of Revelation.

Prayer Ministry

The following persons are part of the prayer ministry at Trinity UMC:

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|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|
| Elva Beard | Rachel Newman | Sam Richardson |
| Larry Eastwood | Kenneth Stevens | Judy Richardson |
| Leslie Eastwood | Patricia Stevens | Charles Wilson |

The members of the prayer ministry of Trinity United Methodist church covenant with one another to pray daily for:

- Those concerns on the prayer list of the Church and for healing of body and spirit for all persons listed;
- For each ministry of the church that each ministry would work to bring the Gospel to those within our community and most especially to bring the Gospel to those who have not yet accepted Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior;
- For all the members of the Trinity UMC community that they be led and enabled to live as the Body of Christ;
- For our local community and all its needs, especially for those who are struggling with the burden of poverty;

- For our nation and our world that God help lead the people of the world to live in peace with God's Kingdom.

If you would like to be a part of this ministry (or if you have already spoken to me about it and were inadvertently left off the list) please let me know and I will see that you are added.

Up-Coming Sermons

October 30th: Sermon: How Goes It With Your Soul? This was the traditional question for all participants in a Methodist Class meeting. Accepting Christ was just the beginning. How has your faith affected your life? My texts are Psalm 119:137–144 and Luke 19:1–10.

November 6th: Sermon: It's Good to be Poor? There are passages of scripture that leave us scratching our heads in confusion. My texts are Ephesians 1:11–23 and Luke 6:20–31.

Worship Leaders

October 30th

Renita Hartsock, **Liturgist**

Gina Locke and Brandon Stewart, **Greeters**

Greg and Sherry Locke, **Ushers**

November 6

Mike Fetting, **Liturgist**

Dawn and Richard Stevens, **Greeters**

Jan and Stacy Bell, **Ushers**

ANNOUNCEMENTS

GraceWorks has a shortage on many items in our food pantry, and we need your help restocking it! Here is a list of some very critical items needed in our food pantry: **Critical Needs:** Canned green vegetables (not green beans), Canned beans, Canned meat (not tuna), Cereal, Hamburger Helper type boxed meals, Soup. Please support this important ministry with your regular donations. The box is located beside the side door.

Bishop Paul Mbithi, who, with his wife, are leaders of an African mission for children. He will be visiting our church **November 13** and will speak during the Sunday School hour. All members are encouraged to attend this special time. Our church has been supporting this mission for the past several years. Love offerings will be collected.

We will be hosting dinner for those who come to **61st st. United Methodist Church this Saturday, October 29**. Volunteers are needed and should be at the 61st St. church by **4:00 PM**. This is a mission of our church which we have supported for many years. Those who participate are blessed. Won't you join us?

Hosts and Hostesses for First Sunday Lunch: Please see the sign-up sheet on the bulletin board. Please add your name to host this occasion for the coming months.

The Nanette Crowell Companions in Christ Sunday School Class is both learning and enjoying a series of videos, narrated by Ray Vanderlann. The videos as well as the narration take place in ancient lands described in the Old Testament. We enjoy discussion about what we are learning and the application of the lessons to our lives. We enjoy fellowship beginning at 9:45 with our study beginning at 10:00. All are welcome to join us as we pursue Biblical truths and the application for our lives.

Birthdays in October

Elaine Rohrig, David Stafford, Julia Moore, Jan Strait, Reba Collier

Happy Birthday to each of you!