

# Bible-Reading Coach Podcast Transcript

## Week 42: Mark, *Jesus, the Doer*

Welcome to Week 42 of the Bible Reading Coach Podcast. My name is Karl Vaters and I'm here to help you read through the entire Bible in 52 weeks.

This week, our teaching, like the book of Mark will be shorter than last week, which was Matthew and a much longer book and a much longer teaching. Of course, the reason for that is last week, we didn't just introduce you to the book of Matthew, we also introduced you to the New Testament, we introduced you to the Gospels. And we saw the life of Jesus and the template of his life for the first time, which of course will repeat this week, next week and the following week, so we won't have to go over all of that again.

So what will we be talking about this week? Well, last week, as we mentioned, we talked about the shift between the Old and New Testament, how it uses different language and different teachings and takes us in a different direction, and about how the time between the Old and New Testament brought about that change. This week, we're going to ask and answer this simple question that a lot of first time Bible readers ask, and that is, why are there four different versions of Jesus' life? Why didn't we just get one simple version? Well, it's because the gospels were all written for different reasons to different people. So let's talk about those four different reasons and the four different types of people that the gospels were written to.

First of all, as we saw last week, the book of Matthew was written primarily to the Jewish people about how Jesus was their long awaited Messiah, and how he fulfilled Old Testament prophecy. There aren't as many mentions of fulfillment in Old Testament prophecy in the rest of the Gospels. Because today we'll be talking about the book of Mark written to the Romans, the Romans didn't know or care about the Old Testament, that's not their concern. But for the Jews, that was a passion. So that was last week, Matthew, written to the Jewish people about Jesus as Messiah. This week, we'll be reading the book of Mark. And as I said, it was written to the Romans by a man named John Mark, who was a friend of the apostle Peter, and the apostle Paul, this book was highly likely dictated to Mark by Peter, it's probably Peter's account dictated to Mark and edited by Mark, so Mark got to put his name on it.

It was almost certainly the first of the Gospels written. In fact, we know that Luke and Matthew especially studied the book of Mark before they wrote their books, you can see the repetitions in that way. It is the shortest of the four Gospels, and it's the most action-oriented of the four Gospels. So it was written by Mark to the Romans, about Jesus, the doer, because for Romans, it didn't matter about fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy. They weren't even all that concerned about what Jesus taught. They want to know what he did, because the Romans were doers.

Next week, we'll take a look at Luke. And Luke was written by a friend of Paul named Luke, he was also a doctor. And he was a researcher. In fact, we'll talk next week about how he introduces it by saying, hey, I really researched this stuff thoroughly. He wrote not to the Jews, like Matthew, and not to the Romans like Mark, but he wrote to the Greek speaking people. In fact, to learn it, Greek people to smart Greek people, to the philosophers who would get together and argue philosophy all night. So he was writing to really smart people, and he was a doctor.

So as a doctor, he had an interest in miracles. So he wrote a lot about miracles and about Jesus' healings. And he also wrote about the philosophical underpinnings and the teachings of Jesus. And there's a logical progression in the way Jesus' teachings are built and put together in the book of Luke, because that's what the Greeks were interested in. And then the last gospel as we'll get to in a couple of weeks from now is John, John was the youngest of the 12 disciples. So John, and Matthew were disciples, they wrote their gospels, Mark was not a disciple, Luke was not a disciple. But Mark got his information from the disciple Peter, and Luke got his information from interviewing disciples, and from doing a whole bunch of research.

So John mentioned love more than all of the other gospels, John was really concerned about relationship, and especially about what it means for God to have loved us and for us to love God. The first three of the gospels, Matthew, Mark, and Luke are called Synoptic Gospels, because that's a Greek word meaning seeing together and when you read Matthew, Mark and Luke 90%, of what you read in Matthew and Luke, come from Mark, or the other way around 90% of what you see in Mark, you will see repeated in either Matthew or Luke either way, there's a 90% 90% overlap. Whereas John, when we get to John 90% of John is only in John, there's only a 10% overlap. So that's another reason why there's different gospels because they each have seven different things. But John also speaks to everybody about Jesus being the light of the world. So four different ways of approaching it. Four different emphases at Have the life and teachings of Jesus written for four different very types of people. And from that you really get a three dimensional portrait of Jesus that you couldn't get if you only had one account.

So this week, let's take a look at the second of the Gospels and the shortest of the Gospels. And the first gospel written the gospel that we know as the book of Mark. It begins in Mark chapter one. Last week, we saw that Matthew started slowly. It has Jesus' genealogy then his birth story then three full chapters of the sermon on the mount where Jesus teaches things. Mark, on the other hand, gets right to the point before the first chapter of Mark is done. There's no mention of Jesus' birth, but by the time the first chapter Mark is done, Jesus has called most of his disciples. He's driven out evil spirits, he's healed people.

There's a single short verse, where he gets away to pray before the disciples find him and go, Hey, come on Jesus. Let's get going, quote, everyone is looking for you, close quote. We'll read that. And in Mark chapter one, verse 35, that verse I believe, sets the tone for the entire book, okay? Jesus gets away just for a moment to pray just for a moment to rest and the disciples go, come on Jesus, let's get going. We got stuff to do, people were looking for you. That's what Mark is all about. It's a very, very active book. So why is Mark written this way? Well, first of all, Mark was the first gospel written. So it's just got the basic outline. That's why it's shorter.

Secondly, it's short, because writing material was very rare and very expensive, then. So brevity mattered. Thirdly, it's short, because quite frankly, they had stuff to do. John Mark was Peter's recording secretary. And Peter was a very busy man running the church in Jerusalem during the days when he wrote this. So he had stuff to do, he didn't have time to sit around writing and forth. One of the reasons that it is so short, is because it was written for Romans, who were people of action more than people of philosophy, most of them could not have read, certainly not in the Greek language that it was written in. So it would have been read for them and for them, and they wanted to get basically a cliff notes on what's going on. For those of you who remember the old cliff notes, which were summaries of larger books, they weren't as

interested in what Jesus taught. They wanted to know what Jesus did. And Mark gets right to the point.

So his ministry begins in chapter one. And then in chapters two through almost to the end of chapter six, we're going to see Jesus' Galilee ministry. This was laid out for us last week when we talked through the book of Matthew, so we won't go over it a lot this week. But as we saw in Matthew, last week, Jesus' life followed this path, starting with ministry in the northern region of Galilee, near his hometown. And that's what we'll read chapters two through six. I want you to note, especially though, what happens when we get to it in chapter six, when the Rabbi Jesus, who's becoming famous for his teachings, goes back home, and he's welcome back home as this returning rabbi. And isn't it great that one of our local boys became such a famous rabbi, know what happens when he teaches them, they do not receive His message? Well, the hometown boy is not always welcomed, especially when he doesn't say what they want him to say, okay, then we go to the end of chapter six, all the way through nine, that he goes away from Galilee to the other side of the river, like we talked about last week. And then back to Galilee.

Again, I want you to note that during this season, you're going to see this and you'll see it if I draw attention to it. So I will, even as Jesus draws bigger and bigger crowds during the season, note how often he either dismisses the crowds, the term dismissed is actually in it, or he tries to get away from the crowds. Even as Jesus was drawn to people, he did not have a lot of trust in crowds. There's a big difference between sitting down with people, a person or handful of people, and speaking to a crowd and Jesus knew the differences are huge. He loved people, he didn't trust crowds, even the famous feeding of the 5000. You know why it happened? It happened because Jesus was trying to get away from the crowds, he headed to the desert because there's no crowds in the desert. But the crowds heard where he was heading, rushed around and got there ahead of him. And he shows up to what he thinks is going to be an empty desert where you can get away from everybody. And there's over 5000 people there, say 5000 men plus women and children, so how many we don't know. And it's the desert.

So they're hungry, they got no food, there's no stores, there's no 711 nearby where they can run and get something he has to feed them. And that's why he performs the miracle because he was trying to get away from crowds, not trying to draw them. It's important for us to understand that today. It's really in human nature, I think to want to appeal to crowds, but in huge contrast to us and to the Romans of his day. Jesus did not seek fame. He didn't seek celebrity. He didn't run after the crowd, and he didn't seek power because he didn't trust any of them. He had a message of the Kingdom of God, which is completely opposite to all of that. We then in Mark chapter 10, we'll see again, his ministry in Judea, that's the region to the south, around Jerusalem.

In that segment, you're going to see again, the story of James and John, two of his closest disciples, asking for seats of power in heaven next to Jesus. And Jesus basically dismisses it as unimportant, because he says, Even especially in my kingdom, power isn't the point here, you're missing the point. And then we get to his final week, in Mark chapters 11 through 15. And we'll see this pushing away of power again and again, in his last week, as people are getting angrier and angrier at him, especially the religious leaders. He insists on teaching things that don't make either side happy in the political arguments or in theological arguments, he always sidesteps me and always points them to something bigger. And he always takes people off when he does, and he doesn't care because he's not seeking fame or

celebrity. You're also going to notice in Mark chapter 13, that he talks about His Second Coming like he did back in Matthew chapter 24, to 25. So take note of how his second coming will be different from his first coming.

And then of course, we again will walk through Jesus' betrayal, his arrest, his crucifixion, and the shortest account of resurrection in the entire gospels, like Mark just wants to get to the point and get on with it. It's amazing. As we get to that, though, I want to point this out. Cynics and skeptics like to say that the New Testament is anti Jewish. Of course, it's not, it was written by Jews, predominantly for Jews, and its primary hero is, was born a Jew. So it's not Jewish, it's not anti Jewish at all. Now, they say that it's anti Jewish, particularly when you get to the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus because of the cries from the Jewish leaders to crucify Jesus, okay. And at times, even when they say this, they just simply refer to it as them not as the Jewish leaders, but as the Jews.

But I want you to note, this book, The Gospel of Mark, was written to and for Romans to try to convince Romans over to their side to follow Jesus. But take a look during the crucifixion episode about how badly the Romans come across. He wasn't crucified, he wasn't killed in a Jewish manner, he was killed in a Roman manner. He was killed. He was tortured in a way that is beyond. We're so used to seeing images of Jesus on the cross. It's hard for us to fathom, we're talking about actually nailing a human body to wood. I mean, and that's just the combination after whipping in scourging and crown of thorns and tearing out of his beard, I mean, it's just the horror after horror that happens in this absolute torture. And the Romans did this, the Romans created the way of doing this. And in the very book that is supposed to convince them to come on over. They are shown the worst part of Roman culture, so why would you do that? Well, because the Bible always does that. The Bible, when we try to convince people to our side of an argument, we tend to go easy on them. The Bible never does that. Jesus never did that. Jesus in the Bible always lays out our sin in stark contrast, because if we don't understand that, if we come to an easy Jesus, if we come to an easy salvation, without recognizing the horrors of our sin, than we're not, it's not going to stick when the times get difficult. Repentance, first of all, means an understanding of how far away from God we are. And as he's laying it out for the Roman people, he shows the depths of depravity and sinfulness of Roman culture, in vivid ways.

So the Bible is not anti Jewish, it's not anti Roman. It's pro everybody, but it's anti sin. So take note of that, as you read it this week. So as you do read, let's finish it up this way. Remember that, first of all, this was the first gospel written. So try to imagine what might have been like for people to have heard this for the first time, people had never, ever heard, and a full account of the story of Jesus life until they heard this book read or they read it for themselves. Then interesting, think about that. Think about what it might have been like to hear it for the first time read in a synagogue, or from a street corner, or in a house church, surrounded by friends, and somebody invites you to go to a place where we're worshiping in a new way. And you hear this story that you've never heard, you have no clue what's coming next. And this the gospel of Mark is the first one that they hear, try to imagine it's impossible for us to but try to maybe as you're reading through this week, and then try to imagine Jesus doing all of this in just three years, and he had a walk everywhere he went, the amount that he did is mind boggling.

And then of course finally ask what is the just called us to do in response to what he has already done for us. Because that's really the most important part of this, what Jesus did

matters, knowing what Jesus did matters, studying what Jesus did matters. But none of it matters if we don't respond to him in the way he has called us to respond to him. He has not asked us simply to give head knowledge, assent and agree with him. He has asked us to do what he did. And the only way to do that is to invite Him into our hearts to as Jesus will say, eventually, in John chapter three, we have to be born again by the Spirit of God. I pray that this week as you read, you will draw closer to Christ Himself. And we'll see you next week.

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