

MARK: The Serving Savior

"For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve others and to give his life as a ransom for many." Mark 10:45 NLT



We have heard the expression - **actions speak louder than words**. This expression is the key to understanding the Gospel of Mark, the shortest of the four Gospels. Mark was writing to the **Romans**, who were very pragmatic and had solid common sense. The Gospel of Mark is all about the **deeds of Jesus**. Mark records more of Christ's miracles than any other Gospel. It is filled with stories of **what Jesus did** and very little about his teachings.

The Gospel of Mark shows us that **serving exceeds saying**. **What we do is more convincing than what we say**. Many churches today promote what is called **servant evangelism**. Serving people and meeting needs is a way to open doors to sharing the Gospel. *How can you better serve the people around you?*

Central Lesson:

Serving exceeds saying. What we do is more convincing than what we say.

Purpose: Jesus is the **SUFFERING SERVANT**.

Mark shows that Jesus was the suffering servant who gave his life on the cross to provide forgiveness and salvation (see **Mark 10:45**). The actions of Jesus proved that he was the *suffering servant of Isaiah 52-53*.

Mark records Jesus often telling his disciples of his coming suffering, death, and resurrection (cf. Mark 8:31-33; 9:9-10, 30-32; 10:32-34, 45; 12:1-11; 14:3-8, 27-28). Mark also recorded the suffering of Jesus leading up to the crucifixion (Mark 15:15-37).

One example of how the actions and suffering of Jesus could **convince the Roman mind** that Jesus was the Son of God and the Savior of the world is found in Mark 15:39. The Roman centurion watched Jesus die and said: *"This man truly was the Son of God!"*

Clement of Alexandria (an early church father of the late second century) wrote that the Gospel of Mark was written in response to a request by the Romans for a written account of the life and ministry of Jesus. They were moved by what they heard of the life of Jesus and wanted it in writing.

Author: The author of the book is **MARK**. Although he never identified himself as the author, Christian leaders in the early second century, say John Mark, wrote it in Rome based on the memories of Peter. The Gospel of Mark could be viewed as **the Gospel of PETER** through his associate Mark.

Bible scholars believe that Peter led Mark to Christ because of his reference to Mark as *"my son Mark"* (1 Peter 5:13). **John** was his **Jewish** name, and **Mark** was his **Roman** name. Also, Mark came from a wealthy family because his mother, who must have been a widow, owned a large house where a large crowd of believers gathered for prayer (Acts 12:12-17).

Mark was *not* among the 12 disciples, but the early Christian writers say he was with Jesus and the disciples. They claim that Mark was the unidentified young man at the arrest of Jesus who escaped naked, leaving his robe in the hands of the officer seeking to apprehend him (Mark 14:51-52).

Learning from Mark's Mistake: Overcoming **FAILURE**.

Mark was a quitter who got a second chance. Mark was a companion to Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey (Acts 12:25). Mark **deserted** them (Acts 13:13; 15:38). Later, Paul and Barnabas planned a second missionary journey but had a strong disagreement about taking Mark with them (15:36-40). Paul refused to take a chance on Mark. Barnabas, known for his ministry of encouragement and Mark's cousin (Col. 4:10), **insisted on giving him a second chance**. The disagreement was so intense that Paul and Barnabas decided to split up. They formed two missionary teams. Barnabas took Mark, and Paul teamed up with Silas (Acts 15:39-40). **Mark did well with his second chance**. He went on to become a dependable and helpful servant of Christ. Paul later acknowledged Mark's progress (Colossians 4:10). Also, near the end of Paul's life while in prison, he requested that Mark be brought to him *"... for he will be helpful to me in my ministry."* (2 Timothy 4:11 NLT).

We can overcome our **FAILURES** by God's grace and the encouragement of others. God's grace made Mark's inadequacies adequate. Barnabas's encouragement motivated Mark to try again. Like Matthew, who had a reputation to overcome (as a tax collector), Mark overcame his character inadequacies as a quitter.

Key Chapter: Mark chapter **8** is the key chapter because it shows the **change of emphasis** in Mark's record. It is the **pivotal point** in Mark's account of the life of Christ. Mark 1-8:30 records Jesus **servicing**. Mark 8:31 shows a shift to Jesus' **suffering**. Mark 8:31 states: *"Then Jesus began to tell them that the Son of Man must suffer many terrible things and be rejected by the elders, the leading priests, and the teachers of religious law. He would be killed, but three days later he would rise from the dead."* (NLT).

Outline:

1. Jesus **SERVING** Sinners (1:1-8:30).
2. Jesus **SUFFERING** for Sin (8:31-16:20).

Date: Probably **between A.D. 55 and 65**. Bible scholars agree that Mark had to be written before the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 because it is not mentioned. It would have been too important of an event not to say something about it. Also, Mark is the first of the four Gospels to be written.

Important Feature: The last verses of Mark (**16:9-20**) are not in the best and oldest Greek manuscripts. Conservative Bible scholars believe that a scribe added these verses. The fourth-century church fathers Eusebius and Jerome noted that almost all Greek manuscripts available to them lacked verses 9-20. John MacArthur comments: *"...these verses should always be compared with the rest of Scripture, and no doctrine should be formulated based solely on them."* The MacArthur Bible Handbook, p.325.

Central Lesson:

Serving exceeds saying. What we do is more convincing than what we say.

► Accept Christ as your Savior. ► As a Christian, dedicate your life to Christ.
► Invite someone to next Sunday's study. ► Attend a small group. ► Read the Bible & journal meaningful verses. ► Pray for friends that need Jesus.