

# 'On your Marks..'

A whistle-stop tour of Mark's account of the life and ministry of Jesus

*"After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. 'The time has come,' He said. 'The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!'" [Mark 1.14f]*

Mark was a man on a mission, and he was writing for people in a hurry. His is the shortest of the four gospel accounts, and a sense of great urgency runs through it all. He puts the spotlight on Jesus, and he wants his readers to see from the start both *that*, and *why*, Jesus is good news: and *how* He becomes good news for each of us.

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## 3.

*".. and it was completely calm.."*

Mark 4.35-5.20

There is a certain sequence to Mark's narrative, which is not just chronological but also thematic. In the previous study we saw Jesus as 'the preacher': here in this next section we now see the power of His word in calming storms.

The passage divides into two sections; in the first of them the disciples face a literal, meteorological storm, while in the second they see Jesus calming the rather different, but no less violent, 'storms' by which a man was being buffeted and destroyed.

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1. **Read Mark 4.35-5.20.** Reading the whole passage, with its record of two separate but related, narratives, will help highlight the common theme running through them both.

What 'storms' have you experienced in your life?

Have there been occasions when you have been very aware of Jesus calming such 'storms'?

2. **Read Mark 4.35-41.** Jesus and His disciples are on a mission as they cross the lake: the 'furious' nature of the squall which they meet illustrates the reality of spiritual conflict whereby the work of God is constantly contested by the powers of darkness.

How do you react/cope when in the face of your crises it seems as if the Lord is 'sleeping'?

What do you think the disciples expected Jesus to do when they woke Him?

What truth is Jesus keen to impress on His disciples in the questions He asks in v.40?

3. **Read Mark 5.1-13.** The east side of the lake is more 'Gentile' territory (Jews don't do bacon rolls): this narrative provides a good picture of our call to take the gospel to the nations.

What characterized the man with 'an impure spirit'?

In what ways do these characteristics find expression in the people 'across the lake' in our society today?

What lessons for mission were the disciples (and are you) meant to learn from this encounter?

**4. Read Mark 5.14-20.** The man is wonderfully restored: but the dramatic change effected by Jesus is too much for the people who plead with Jesus to leave.

How is the man's new condition described?

In what ways is this paralleled in the change Jesus effects in conversion?

Why do you think the people asked Jesus to leave?