

DISCUSSIONGUIDE

OPENING QUESTIONS:

As you open this new season of Core Groups, take time to introduce everyone and share something meaningful that happened over the holiday season.

DIGGING DEEPER:

Read Mark 1:1-15

The two main questions to be asked during each study in Mark are:

- 1) Who is Jesus? Or, What does this passage teach us about Jesus?
- 2) What does his life mean for our lives and how we should live today?

In verses 4-8, how does John prepare people for Jesus' coming?

- Why was John's ministry so popular?

What is significant about what happens after Jesus' baptism (vv10-13)?

- How do you feel about the Spirit driving Jesus into the wilderness? Why is it important that Jesus was tested there?
- Why do you think God often chooses to communicate with his people in the 'wilderness'?

Jesus begins his ministry by announcing good news (vv14-15).

- What do you know about the religious, social and political climate of Israel in Jesus' time?
- What is the good news he shares? What three things did Pastor Dave say Jesus' message implies for us?
- How would you summarize this good news in two sentences to someone who does not know Jesus?

How is repentance related to confession and obedience?

In this opening passage, Mark wants us to sense the urgency of the new thing God is doing. It's kind of like when you've had a restless night of sleep, where you lie awake and the night seems endless; and just about the time you drift off to sleep your alarm clock goes off! It's time to wake up! Now. The people were 'asleep' and drudging through life. In what ways are we asleep in our churches, communities and personal lives?

What 'good news' do you spread to the people you encounter? In what ways are you an agent of reconciliation and peace, and a bearer of the good news and joy of Jesus? In what specific new ways could you be?

PRAYER TIME:

Close your time together by sharing requests and praises, and praying together. Those who feel comfortable can pray as they feel led. Dedicate this season of learning and fellowship to God, asking that together you will come to know Him, and each other in deeper ways.

www.centraliachurch.com

COREGUIDE

1/14/2018

The Urgent Gospel :: Mark 1:9-15 :: Pastor Dave Bach

Things I want to remember from today's message



MONDAY**Mark 1:9-13**

After Jesus emerges from the waters of baptism, God sends down his Spirit to fill and empower Jesus, and God proclaims his love and admiration for his Son. It's a beautiful moment, a spiritual high point. We have those moments too when we feel especially close to God. But Mark moves quickly to tell us that this same dove-like spirit acts to drive Jesus into the wilderness for testing. Life isn't lived on the mountaintops, it is lived out in the reality of the valleys and wildernesses we face every day. When we are tested we have the opportunity to grow stronger. The devil tried to drive a wedge between Jesus and God, tempting him to determine his own path. The same Holy Spirit that helped Jesus resist and defeat Satan comes alongside to help us resist and stand strong as well.

TUESDAY**Mark 1:14-15**

Before we can honestly pray the sentence in the Lord's prayer "Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven," we must be willing to first pray "My kingdom go." We get caught up in building our own kingdoms, but Jesus says the time is now, the kingdom of God is near, repent and believe the good news. Mark's explicit claim is that Jesus had come to announce the reign of God in His creation, establishing a new reality, and forming a new people, who will go out and live in new way in the world. As we read the gospel accounts of Jesus' ministry, we get the clear picture that God's kingdom turns upside down the notions and aspirations of the world. To receive Jesus' message is to be willing to have our world turned upside down.

WEDNESDAY**Acts 3:19-20**

I'm sure you've changed your mind about something, maybe even today. And when you change your mind, the result is usually a change in direction of some sort. These two verses come from a much longer section containing a sermon that Peter preached to the crowd after healing a lame man. It's one of the most powerful sermons in all of Scripture, and through this message Peter commanded the people to "repent and turn back to God." Literally he asked them to change their mind and return to God. You can only turn around if you have a change of mind. If there is no change of mind and if there is no turning to God, there cannot be the forgiveness of sins. God's forgiveness is readily available for all who would change their mind and turn to him.

THURSDAY**Ephesians 2:1-10**

The free nature of God's grace can be challenging to fully embrace, in part, because it is free and there is nothing we can do to earn it. No work, just acceptance. Dallas Willard suggests that there is effort involved in working out God's grace in our life through the power of the Holy Spirit, but there should be nothing in our attitude that makes us think that by our efforts we are 'earning' anything. Part of the gift of God's grace is that he involves us in the working out to completion. Further, Paul reminds us that we are God's masterpiece, created anew in Christ Jesus. So as we draw closer to Jesus and are transformed into his likeness, we will undoubtedly notice many wonderful and beautiful changes in our lives.

FRIDAY**John 3:1-21**

Nicodemus was a prominent Pharisee, and had likely spent his whole life trying to live out the 613 rules contained in the Torah. No doubt this was all-consuming and overwhelming when viewed as the basis of justification before God. Now this Rabbi named Jesus came along suggesting that everything he had dedicated his life to practicing and preserving had missed the mark. It wasn't about the rules, it was about love. It is by grace we are saved through faith. Our salvation is the pure gift and work of God. There is nothing we can do to increase or decrease God's love for us. Nothing. I imagine that as the confusion in Nicodemus subsided over time, he realized a great sense of freedom. Jesus says believe in Him and you will be saved. Period.

PRAYER CORNER:

Ten Essential Prayers for Missions-focused Communities

- Lord, may your kingdom come and your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven
- Lord, search and cleanse the thoughts and intentions of our hearts
- Lord, keep your church unified in spirit and free from division
- Lord, may the mission be about You, not about us
- Lord, give your church a bold spirit to proclaim the gospel
- Lord, strengthen those who are being persecuted for their witness
- Lord, call and send gifted workers into the mission field
- Lord, help us to trust you in all things
- Lord, open doors for ministry and give us wisdom and grace to speak your word clearly
- Lord, may minds, hearts, and eyes be opened to the light of Christ