

## **SERMON DISCUSSION GUIDE:**

**January 25, 2026**

**Series:** MARK: *the Life of a Disciple*

**Title:** Gospel Intentions

**Passage:** Mark 1:1-20

Discussion starters:

- Have you ever been lost—like *actually* lost (wrong trail, wrong exit, wrong city)? What happened, and how did you get un-lost?
- Have you ever followed someone who confidently said, “I know where I’m going”... and they absolutely did not? How long did it take you to realize it?

**BELIEF: What is the “good news” Mark wants us to see?**

**Focus:** Mark 1:1–11

**Key Truth:** Mark starts with the end in mind—Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and the fulfillment of God’s long-promised rescue plan.

**Discussion Questions:**

1. Mark opens with a bold claim in verse 1. Why do you think he starts there instead of building up slowly?
2. What stands out to you about John the Baptist’s role in preparing the way for Jesus?
3. How does the wilderness imagery (Isaiah, John, baptism in the Jordan) help us understand what kind of rescue Jesus is bringing? How would the original audience connect with it? How does it still connect with us today regardless of our knowledge of the Old Testament themes?
4. At Jesus’ baptism, we see the Father, Son, and Spirit together. What does this moment reveal about who God is?

**Belief Anchor:** The gospel is not advice about how to find God—it’s good news that God came to us.

**BELONGING: What does baptism say about identity and community?**

**Focus:** Mark 1:8–11; Romans 6:3–4 (reference)

**Key Truth:** Baptism is not just personal—it’s public. It identifies us with Jesus *and* with His people.

**Discussion Questions:**

1. Why do you think Jesus chose to begin His public ministry with baptism?
2. How does baptism tell the story of Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection?
3. What does it mean to say that baptism is more than a symbol—it’s a sacrament where God meets us? What can go wrong if we over emphasizes baptism as *only* a symbol? Give examples.
4. Why is it important that baptism happens in community and not in isolation?
5. How does understanding baptism as something done *once* shape the way we think about God’s faithfulness?

6. Have you been baptized? When? Can you tell your story? (consider having a few people share their testimonies including their baptism to start the coming few weeks you meet)

**Belonging Anchor:** We don't grow into the family of God—we are welcomed into it, and then we grow.

**BELIEF MEETS REAL LIFE: *What does following Jesus look like in the wilderness?***

**Focus:** Mark 1:12–13

**Key Truth:** The Spirit leads Jesus into the wilderness—not away from it. God is at work even there.

**Discussion Questions:**

1. Why do you think the Spirit leads Jesus into the wilderness immediately after baptism?
2. Mark includes the detail that Jesus was “*with the wild animals*.” What might that have communicated to early Christians facing suffering or fear?
3. How does this passage challenge the idea that following Jesus means an easier life?
4. What kinds of “wilderness” experiences do people today face when they follow Jesus?

**Belief Anchor:** Following Jesus doesn't remove us from hardship—it reminds us we are not alone in it.

**BECOMING: *What does it mean to follow Jesus now?***

**Focus:** Mark 1:14–20

**Key Truth:** Jesus' call is immediate, personal, and ongoing: “*Come, follow me.*”

**Discussion Questions:**

1. What stands out to you about Jesus' message: “Repent and believe the good news”?
2. Why do you think Simon, Andrew, James, and John left their nets so quickly?
3. What might “nets” represent in our lives today—things that aren't bad, but keep us from fully following Jesus?
4. Which part of Jesus' invitation feels most challenging right now: *repent*, *believe*, or *follow*?

**Becoming Practice:**

Finish this sentence quietly, then share if you're comfortable so we can pray for and follow up next week:

*“I repent of \_\_\_\_\_, and instead I will trust that Jesus is worth faithful obedience.”*