

STUDY GUIDE  
TERM 1, 2023



THE BEGINNING  
OF THE GOSPEL





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# Welcome to Term 1

It's great to begin another year together as a church. One of my favourite pictures the Bible uses to describe the church is that of the vine and the branches. In John 15, Jesus says to his disciples, *"I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit."* I love it because it describes the kind of union we have with Jesus. It's a life-giving union. All the nutrients we need for a life of faith come from Jesus. Cut off from him, we're cut off from life itself. It's also a fruit producing union. Alive in the vine, we produce fruit. Fruit is described later as love for God and one another, expressed in obedience to God. It's such a rich picture of who we are.

As we look ahead to another year, what kind of fruit do you see Jesus growing in you? What sins is he calling you to kill off? What affections is he seeking to cultivate in you? How is he growing you in greater obedience?

These are important questions. But in the busyness and distraction of our lives, we perhaps rarely stop to ask them. That's why gathering with God's people is so important. To begin the year, we're going to look at the first part of the book of Mark. Like all gospels, Mark focuses us on Jesus, who he is, and his call on our lives. Join us as we seek to grow deeper into Jesus and allow him to produce fruit in our lives.

As well as our Sunday services, another way to grow together is through our Home Groups. If you've drifted away from a Home Group and would like to join one, you can do so at <https://my.redlands.org.au/pages/home-group-sign-up/> or by scanning the QR code.



The other significant thing we'll be doing as a church this term is returning to the vision setting process which we began in July last year. The Vision Team has been working hard to develop and sharpen what we believe God is calling us to focus on for the years ahead. We look forward to sharing our vision with the church early in the term. The best way to be involved in this is through our Home Groups. This is another good reason to join one.

We value your prayers for the term and year ahead as we seek to grow into Jesus together and produce his fruit that will last.

In Christ,

*Jen, Sam and Josh*

## Redlands Youth

This Term at Redlands Youth we have a number of exciting things happening!

From Week 3 we will start working our way through the first six chapters of Mark's gospel. Our studies in Mark's gospel will be a great opportunity for our young people to engage with Jesus and with each other. We'll be particularly looking at our need for Jesus as we look at the many stories of others encountering him 'in the wild'.

About halfway through this Term, over the weekend of March 3-5, we'll be heading away for camp – yes, camp! Our very own Redlands Youth camp called 'Summit Camp'! This is an exciting opportunity for us to share significant time together with God, dig into His Word, and build lasting experiences and memories with each other.

Later in the Term, we'll be joining together with a bunch of Presbyterian Youth groups across SEQ for a night of fun, games, challenges, and Bible teaching. 'Combo Nights' is a new 2023 initiative of Presbyterian Youth & Kids (PYK), and will happen again in Term 3. This is a wonderful moment for our youth to be reminded that they are part of something bigger, and have an opportunity for them to meet and be encouraged by other Christian youth.

These are all really exciting things coming up this Term. Please be praying that through all of these opportunities, as our youth encounter Jesus through his Word, that hearts and lives would be transformed.

And remember, you're studying the same book of the Bible as our teenagers this Term, so why not use that as an opportunity to talk to them, encourage them, and even challenge them when you see them during our Sunday services?!

*Sam*

# Religious Instruction in Schools in Queensland

## *What is it?*

Religious Instruction is a time set aside in schools in Queensland for learning about religion from a religious institution. In our region, we have Christian Religious Instruction, which means that trained and accredited volunteers can teach children the good news about God's love to us in Jesus. These classes are either weekly or fortnightly, and children who have permission from their parents are able to attend.

## *Wow! That sounds important!*

Many children today do not know very much about Christianity. Many do not know who Jesus is or what he did for us; most have never encountered a Bible and do not know how to pray. Christian RI is a chance for real people who know Jesus themselves to explain how much God loves us and share the love of Jesus with them. Sometimes, this is the only chance a child has to find out the good news of Jesus.

## *I'm interested in instructing - what is involved?*

Instructors are trained by first watching lessons taught by others, then instructing under supervision and then eventually instructing independently. There's a lot of encouragement and mentoring along the way!

There are three modules of training to be done and instructors need a Blue Card as well as some other registration requirements.

Training for this year is on Tuesday, 7<sup>th</sup> Feb from 9am-12:00pm at Cleveland Baptist Church. If you are thinking of coming, please talk to Marg Watterson!

## *How can I be praying for this?*

- Pray for the online registration process for instructors this year. It's a new system. Pray that it will go smoothly and not cause undue stress.
- Pray for enough instructors to fill all the possible slots.
- Pray for the new principals in many Redlands schools. Pray that they will welcome Christian RI in their schools.
- Pray that parents will value having this opportunity for their children and will register their children in all the stress of another school year commencing.
- Pray for the children and for their school teachers, that they might know Jesus' love for them.
- Pray for the instructors: for courage, wisdom, clarity, and stamina and thank God for them as they go into the schools each week.

## *Who can I talk to find out more about this?*

Contact Marg Watterson - 0438 729 204



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# **term 1 calendar**





# Studies





## Study 1: Mark 1:1-15

*If you were going to write a gospel, what would you put as the very first sentence? Why?*

1. What stood out to you as you read through the passage?
2. What do we learn about Jesus in the first verse? How does this help us to read the rest of the gospel?
3. Read Malachi 3:1 and Isaiah 40:3. How do these Old Testament passages help us understand what is happening in these early verses of Mark?
4. Read 2 Kings 1:8 and Malachi 4:5-6. How does this Old Testament passage help us to understand John the Baptist?
5. How does John the Baptist help us to understand who Jesus is? (1:7-8)
6. What do we learn about Jesus from his baptism?
7. What happens to Jesus in the wilderness? How does that help us to understand who Jesus is?
8. What questions do you have?

9. What have you learned about Jesus through this passage? How does this passage help you love and follow Jesus more?
10. What do I want to do differently? Are there attitudes and thoughts you have about Jesus that might need adjusting? Is your view of Jesus big enough?
11. How does John the Baptist teach us to honour Jesus? What practical ways can you do this in your life this week?
12. Why does it matter to you that God the Father is always well-pleased with God the Son? How does this help you have the courage to follow Jesus and live for him in this world?
13. What does it mean to you that God always keeps his promises?
14. Who can I share something with and how?

#### Prayer Ideas:

- Thank God that his Son, our Lord Jesus came at just the right time, into our painful and messy world. Praise him that he did this out of love for us to bring us to God.
- Pray for someone you know that needs to find this merciful Lord and ask God for a chance to show that person God's love this week in a practical way.



## Study 2: Mark 1:16-45

*What do we normally associate 'authority' with in our culture?*

1. What stood out to you as you read through the passage?
2. How does Jesus show his authority throughout this passage?
3. What does the demon say about Jesus? What do we learn about Jesus from his interaction with the demon?
4. How and why does Jesus pray? What does this show us about Jesus?
5. What priorities does Jesus show he has through the healing of the person with leprosy? How does this help us to follow him?
6. What questions do you have?
7. What have you learned about Jesus through this passage? How does this passage help you love and follow Jesus more?

8. What do I want to do differently? Are there attitudes and thoughts you have about Jesus that might need adjusting? Is your view of Jesus big enough?
9. Who can I share something with and how?
10. How do you show that Jesus has authority over you in your life? How would you like to grow in demonstrating Jesus is king in your life? Thank God for the privilege of submitting to Jesus now.
11. How does knowing that Jesus prioritised prayer help you to do the same? What one shift might you make in the way you live life this week to invest in prayer more?
12. How well do you know the Old Testament? How can you follow Jesus' in learning more of the Scriptures he valued so much?

## Prayer Ideas:

- Thank God that his Son showed such compassion on all kinds of people, particularly those who were suffering, while still having absolute authority. Praise him that Jesus could always be trusted with power and authority.
- Pray for a person who needs to know the kindness of our Saviour. Pray that you might be faithful in praying for that person this week.



## Study 3: Mark 2:1-12

*What would you say most people think is their greatest problem?*

1. What stood out to you as you read through the passage?
2. What kind of obstacles do the paralysed man's friends have to overcome to get him to Jesus?
3. Who does Jesus respond to in verse 5? How?
4. Why do the teachers of the law think Jesus is blaspheming? (v6-7)
5. How does Jesus prove to them that he is not blaspheming? According to Jesus, what does his healing of the man prove about who he is? (v9-11)
6. What questions do you have?
7. What have you learned about Jesus through this passage? How does this passage help you love and follow Jesus more?

8. What do I want to do differently? Are there attitudes and thoughts you have about Jesus that might need adjusting? Is your view of Jesus big enough?
9. How do you feel about having your sins forgiven? How much do all your other problems compare with that one? What practical steps can you take in your life to show that forgiveness of sins is one of God's greatest gifts to you?
10. How does the paralysed man's friend encourage you as you try to get your friends to Jesus? Choose a friend or family member and think of one thing you can do this week to help them to come to Jesus.
11. Are you a sinner? How do you know? Do you need to talk to Jesus about your sins and ask him to forgive you?
12. If your child or grandchild, or non-Christian co-worker or family member or friend asked you, 'You keep talking about being forgiven: why is it such a big deal?' – what would you say?
13. Who can I share something with and how?

## Prayer Ideas:

- Thank God that Jesus can forgive our sins completely and that he offers this to us with great mercy and kindness, not making us pay for this forgiveness.
- Pray for someone you know who needs to hear about this forgiveness and pray that you might know what words to speak to them and for the chance to say them.





## Study 4:

### Mark 2:13-3:6

*How do we normally respond when people don't meet our expectations? Why do we take it so personally?*

1. What stood out to you as you read through the passage?
2. What kinds of people does Jesus call? Why? (2:16-17) What does that tell us about Jesus?
3. What does Jesus reveal about himself when he is questioned about fasting?
4. How does Jesus' teaching about the Sabbath help us understand the Old Testament law? (2:27-28)
5. Why does Jesus heal the man with the withered hand? What does this show about Jesus? What does it show about his opponents? (3:1-6)
6. What questions do you have?
7. What have you learned about Jesus through this passage? How does this passage help you love and follow Jesus more?
8. How do Jesus' never-changing character and so never-changing priorities help you trust him with your life in the here and now? What specifically in your life do you need to bring to God and trust him with?

9. How do you feel about your Christian life: how many stars would you give yourself out of 5? What can you remember from this passage to help you see yourself as God sees you in Christ?
10. How do you need to grow in compassion? How well can you see and respond to the needs of those around you? How can Jesus' teaching as he heals the man with the withered hand help you to grow?
11. What one thing can you do this week to allow yourself to be joyful that Jesus loves you and has forgiven you?
12. How are you responding to Jesus' call to you come and follow him? What do you need to leave behind? How do you need to obey him?
13. What do I want to do differently? Are there attitudes and thoughts you have about Jesus that might need adjusting? Is your view of Jesus big enough?
14. Who can I share something with and how?

## Prayer Ideas:

- Thank God that Jesus' teaching and healing always helps us to see his kindness and his authority more clearly and helps us to worship and serve him as our faithful Saviour.
- Pray for someone in your life who needs to know Jesus and ask God to show you how you can connect with that person this week.



## Study 5: Mark 3:7-35

*What does 'family' mean to you?*

1. What stood out to you as you read through the passage?
2. What do the impure spirits show us about Jesus, both in what they say and do, and how Jesus responds to them? (3:11-12)
3. Why does Jesus call the twelve? Who is the surprising addition to this list? What does this show us about Jesus? (3:14-19)
4. What does Jesus mean when he warns against blaspheming against the Holy Spirit? How does this help us understand the accusations of the teachers of the law in verse 22?
5. What do Jesus' family think of Jesus? Who does Jesus think is his family? Why? (3:20-21; 31-34) What does it mean to 'do God's will'? (v35)
6. What questions do you have?
7. What have you learned about Jesus through this passage? How does this passage help you love and follow Jesus more?

8. What does Jesus' authority and power mean to you in your everyday life?
9. Who do you know who is not doing God's will – trusting in Jesus? What is a good question you might ask them? (Make it a question you really want to know the answer to, and possibly a question that is not too confronting, like "What do you think life is all about?")
10. What does it mean to you that you are part of God's family in Christ? How does this shape how you go to church each week? How could you grow in thinking of yourself as part of God's family?
11. What do I want to do differently? Are there attitudes and thoughts you have about Jesus that might need adjusting? Is your view of Jesus big enough?
12. Who can I share something with and how?

## Prayer Ideas:

- Thank God that in Christ we belong to him as family and not just servants or slaves, but his own people. Praise God for drawing us near to him forever in the Lord Jesus.
- Pray for someone you know who needs to belong to God's family. Pray for a chance to show them kindness this week.



## Study 6: Mark 4:1-34

*Why do we sometimes speak to each other in riddles?  
Or, share your favourite riddle!*

1. What stood out to you as you read through the passage?
2. Look up Isaiah 6:9-10. Why does Jesus speak in parables? What is he saying about the crowds? (4:10-12)
3. List the dangers we face to our faith. What is the best way of hearing Jesus' words? (4:15-20)
4. What other things do we learn about the kingdom of God from Jesus' parables? (4:21-30) How would you describe God's kingdom in one sentence, just from this chapter?
5. What questions do you have?
6. What have you learned about Jesus through this passage? How does this passage help you love and follow Jesus more?

7. Which of Jesus' teachings do you struggle the most to accept? Which do you struggle the most to put into practice? How would you like to pray about this?
8. Which danger to faith most concerned you as you read through the list in 4:15-20? What practical way can you push back against that danger this week?
9. What do I want to do differently? Are there attitudes and thoughts you have about Jesus that might need adjusting? Is your view of Jesus big enough?
10. Who can I share something with and how?

## Prayer Ideas:

- Thank God that we can trust Jesus' revelation of his kingdom and know that everything he tells us about you and ourselves is true and reliable.
- Pray for someone who needs to hear God's call to repent this week and ask God to help you show that person that you take Jesus' words seriously.



## Study 7: Mark 4:35-5:20

*See if you can answer this question in less than 30 seconds:  
What does it mean to you that Jesus has had mercy on you?  
How much Christian jargon did you use?*

1. What stood out to you as you read through the passage?
2. What does Jesus' sleeping and stilling the storm show us about Jesus? What do we learn about the disciples?
3. Describe the before and after picture of the man in the tombs. What difference does Jesus make to him?
4. How do the pig herders and the people from the town react to Jesus? How should they react?
5. How does this demon-possessed man, an early missionary, help others to know about Jesus?
6. What questions do you have?
7. What have you learned about Jesus through this passage? How does this passage help you love and follow Jesus more?



8. In this instance, the disciples' fear showed they didn't trust Jesus. How does this work for us? Does all our fear reflect our lack of faith? When might it? When might it not?
9. How can you trust Jesus with all the details of your life more this week?
10. What in your life feels out of control, like the possessed man? How does knowing Jesus make a difference to how you think about this? How do you want to talk to God about this?
11. What do I want to do differently? Are there attitudes and thoughts you have about Jesus that might need adjusting? Is your view of Jesus big enough?
12. How would you like to answer the question 'What does it mean to you that Jesus has had mercy on you?' Think of a real person who might have this conversation with you if this helps!

#### Prayer Ideas:

- Thank God that Jesus is utterly powerful and uses his authority and power to benefit his people in all kinds of ways, especially through his death and resurrection for us.
- Pray for someone who needs to know Jesus' mercy and ask for words and opportunity to tell that person how Jesus has had mercy on you.



## Study 8: Mark 5:21-43

*How do we figure out who is a really important person – what kinds of things do we usually look at? Shoes, car, etc.*

1. What stood out to you as you read through the passage?
2. What do the girl and the woman have in common? What makes them different from one another?
3. How confident is the woman that Jesus might want to heal her? What does Jesus show her by identifying and speaking to her? (5:28-34)
4. How does Jesus respond to the news that the girl is dead? What does that show you about him?
5. Describe Jesus from just this chapter in one sentence!
6. What questions do you have?
7. What have you learned about Jesus through this passage? How does this passage help you love and follow Jesus more?

8. How important are you to Jesus? How do you know? How would you like to respond to this?
9. What does it mean to you that Jesus will raise you up on the last day as easily as he raised up this girl? How does that help you to think about your death?
10. What do you have trouble trusting God with in your life? How can Jesus' words to the girl's parents help you this week? Write a one sentence prayer to stick on your mirror and pray through this week.
11. What do I want to do differently? Are there attitudes and thoughts you have about Jesus that might need adjusting? Is your view of Jesus big enough?
12. Who can I share something with and how?

Prayer Ideas:

- Thank God that we can trust him for all we need, and do not need to impress him with anything all because in Christ we can come to him.
- Pray for someone you know who needs to meet Jesus and ask for an opportunity to share with them why you love him.



## Study 9: Mark 6:1-31

*What is a good 'restful' day for you?*

1. How stood out to you as you read through the passage?
2. What do the people in Jesus' hometown respond to him? What evidence do they use to support this belief? (6:1-3) How do we know, from what we have read so far in the gospel that this is not good enough evidence to draw a conclusion?
3. Why does Jesus send out his disciples? What kinds of things do they do? Who else does these things? (6:7-13)
4. Why did Herod behead John the Baptist? What does this have in common with how Jesus will be executed?
5. How does Jesus care for his disciples? (6:30-31)
6. What questions do you have?
7. What have you learned about Jesus through this passage? How does this passage help you love and follow Jesus more?

8. How does this passage help us talk to people who are investigating Jesus' claims about himself in the gospels? What kinds of things are really important to know? What things might get in the way?
9. What expectations should we have of our justice system? How do we cope with awful and unjust situations – like the execution of John of Baptist – today? What things help us to trust God despite corruption and bad systems?
10. How do you spend time with God in your rest? What kinds of things might be helpful to do or not do when you take time out to pray and rest?
11. What do I want to do differently? Are there attitudes and thoughts you have about Jesus that might need adjusting? Is your view of Jesus big enough?
12. Who can I share something with and how?

## Prayer Ideas:

- Thank God that he is totally and impartially just and will bring final justice and that he can enable us to cope with injustice in the here and now and for the patience of Jesus who suffered such injustice.
- Pray for someone in your life who you want to see trust in Jesus and ask God to invite them to something at church over Easter.



## Study 10: Mark 6: 32-56

*When have you seen or heard something and only later realised its significance?*

1. What stood out to you as you read through the passage?
2. What is Jesus trying to do before he is interrupted by all these people? Why does he teach and then feed them? (6:30-34)
3. How does Jesus teach his disciples in this situation? (6:36-44)
4. Re-read Mark 6:34-42. How many references to Psalm 23 can you see? How does this help us to understand what Jesus is doing when he is feeding these people?
5. How does this passage fit with Exodus 16:1-5? What does this tell us about Jesus?
6. What do the disciples learn about Jesus in Mark 6:45-52?
7. How does Psalm 36:6 help us understand what it means for Jesus to walk on the waves? Who does he show himself to be?
8. What questions do you have?
9. What have you learned about Jesus through this passage? How does this passage help you love and follow Jesus more?

10. How does God provide for you? In 3 minutes, list as many things as you can that God has given you. Figure out what the top three are and turn them into a prayer.
11. How does Jesus' patience with the crowds and the disciples encourage you as you learn how to follow him from day to day?
12. What does it mean to you that Jesus is your Shepherd, who teaches your heart and provides for you needs each day?
13. After a busy day, Jesus went up on the mountain to pray. How can we follow his example (without being crippled by guilt)? What one thing could you do this week to make prayer more central to your life?
14. In what ways can you remind yourself of Jesus' supreme power and authority in all situations, such as the storm on the lake, in order to trust him more with your life?
15. What do I want to do differently? Are there attitudes and thoughts you have about Jesus that might need adjusting? Is your view of Jesus big enough?
16. Who can I share something with and how?

## Prayer Ideas:

- Thank God for Jesus: the true king, who has all power and authority, and yet is so patient with his people and constantly provides for us.
- Pray for someone you know who needs Jesus and pray that you'll have the chance this Easter to explain why remembering Jesus death for you is so important to you.







