

DAY 1

THE KINGDOM OF GOD COMES NEAR

Mark 1; Nahum 1:15; Malachi 3:1

PAGE 16 OF YOUR MARK STUDY BOOK

We all have that friend who is a skilled and elaborate storyteller. For them, context is everything and colorful details rule the day. Many of us also have that friend who's known—and appreciated—for getting to the point. For them, the economy of words is more prized than a creative delivery. They're direct because they value your time, yet somehow are just as engaging. What they have to say is always worth the listen.

This is one of the things I appreciate about the book of Mark. He hits the ground running! This first chapter alone includes at least ten significant plot points of Jesus's life, all

connected with words like “immediately” and “right away.” There's an efficiency to Mark's message that tells me there's no time to spare. The gospel is urgent, and there is so much he wants his readers to know about the Christ he loves and follows.

Still, amid the rapid-fire storyline of the first chapter of Mark, the moments of stillness have a way of standing out. Juxtaposing all the noisy action on the page, Jesus retreats to the wilderness (v.12), silences an unclean spirit (v.25), forbids the demons from speaking (v.34), goes away to a deserted place to pray (v.35), tells the healed man to keep quiet (vv.43–44), and ultimately begins preaching in deserted places (v.45). These many instances of quiet become too loud to ignore on a page with so much activity.

Mark doesn't waste words. From the very first line, he gets straight to the point: Jesus Christ is “the Son of God” (v.1). Later, God Himself addresses Jesus as His “beloved Son” (v.11), and even the unclean spirit says to Jesus, “I know who you are—the Holy One of God!” (v.24).

I'm a person who appreciates efficiency, so you can see why the book of Mark appeals to me. But that doesn't mean it isn't tender to my heart as well. “This is why I have come,” Jesus tells His disciples (v.38). Not to be flashy, not to draw big crowds, but to preach the gospel and bring the kingdom with a contagious holiness that could drive out demons and heal the sick. Yes, there is a lot of action, but the theme and thrust are clear, spoken from the lips of Christ Himself: “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!” (v.15).

As we begin this journey through the Gospel of Mark, let's pay attention to the inspired, intentional way this very unique book was written. But let's not forget to also engage our hearts, remembering Christ's simple call to “repent and believe” that the gospel is true. It is good news, and it is for all of us.

 RAEHEL MYERS