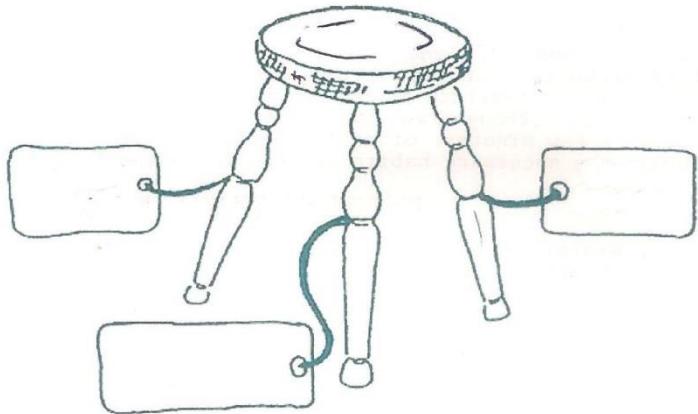


# christianity *simply* explored

...Know Jesus, Know God



# CHRISTIANITY *SIMPLY* EXPLORED

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## TWO WAYS TO LIVE: *The Bad News*

1. God is the loving ruler of the world. He made the world.

He made us rulers of the world but under his authority.

**But is that the way things are now?**



**"You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honour and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being."**

*Revelation 4:11*

2. We all reject the ruler God by trying to run this world, and our lives our own way and without him.

But we fail to rule society or ourselves.

**What will God do about this rebellion or treason?**



**As it is written: "There is no one righteous, not even one; 11 there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. 12 All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one."**

*Romans 3:10-12*

3. God won't let us rebel forever.

God's punishment for our rebellion is death and judgement.

**God's justice sounds hard doesn't it? But...**



**Man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment.**

*Hebrews 9:27*

## TWO WAYS TO LIVE: *The Good News*

4. Because of his love, God sent his Son into the world: the man Jesus Christ. Unlike you or I, Jesus always lived under God's rule or authority.

And yet by dying in our place he took our punishment and brought us forgiveness.

**But that's not all...**

5. God raised Jesus to life again as the ruler of the world.

Jesus has conquered death, now he gives new life, and will return to judge.

**Well, where does that leave us?**



**For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God.**

*1 Peter 3:18*



**Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.**

*1 Peter 1:3*

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### **TWIL - The Choice We All Face – Way A or B?**

#### **A. Our way**

Reject the ruler-God  
Try to run life our own way

#### **Result**

Condemned by God  
Facing death and Judgment

#### **B. God's new way**

Submit to Jesus as our ruler  
Rely on Jesus' death and resurrection

#### **Result**

Forgiven by God  
Given eternal life



**Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him." - John 3:36**

***Which of these 2 ways represents the way you want to live?***

## **Questions/Notes:-**

**Write down below any questions that were raised in your mind from this session including anything from the pictures or Bible verses in the TWTL presentation of the Bible's message. Feel free to ask about them in your next session.**

### **A prayer to consider saying before reading and studying Mark's Gospel**

Dear God, please help me as I read Mark's account. Help me to understand why what he has written is good news. Help me to better understand who Jesus is why he came. Help me to better understand the parts I find difficult or hard to accept, and above all help me to respond to Jesus in the right way. Amen



## **Jesus: The Son of God**

### **Mark 1:1**

The beginning of the gospel about Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

### **Mark 1:21-28**

They went to Capernaum, and when the Sabbath came, Jesus went into the synagogue and began to teach. 22 The people were amazed at his teaching, because he taught them as one who had authority, not as the teachers of the law. 23 Just then a man in their synagogue who was possessed by an evil spirit cried out, 24 "What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God!"

25 "Be quiet!" said Jesus sternly. "Come out of him!" 26 The evil spirit shook the man violently and came out of him with a shriek. 27 The people were all so amazed that they asked each other, "What is this? A new teaching—and with authority! He even gives orders to evil spirits and they obey him." 28 News about him spread quickly over the whole region of Galilee.

### **Mark 2:1-12**

A few days later, when Jesus again entered Capernaum, the people heard that he had come home. 2 So many gathered that there was no room left, not even outside the door, and he preached the word to them. 3 Some men came, bringing to him a paralytic, carried by four of them. 4 Since they could not get him to Jesus because of the crowd, they made an opening in the roof above Jesus and, after digging through it, lowered the mat the paralyzed man was lying on. 5 When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven." 6 Now some teachers of the law were sitting there, thinking to themselves,

7 "Why does this fellow talk like that? He's blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?" 8 Immediately Jesus knew in his spirit that this was what they were thinking in their hearts, and he said to them, "Why are you thinking these things? 9 Which is easier: to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up, take your mat and walk'? 10 But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins..." He said to the paralytic, 11 "I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home." 12 He got up, took his mat and walked out in full view of them all. This amazed everyone and they praised God, saying, "We have never seen anything like this!"

### **Mark 1:16-20**

As Jesus walked beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. 17 "Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will make you fishers of men." 18 At once they left their nets and followed him. 19 When he had gone a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John in a boat, preparing their nets. 20 Without delay he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men and followed him.

## **Read Mark chapter 1 verse 1**

Mark tells us that his book is about the gospel (good news) concerning Jesus Christ the Son of God. The question is what does it mean that Jesus is the Son of God? Mark teaches us that it means Jesus is a person with great authority. Jesus has all the authority of God his Father. Today we will put the first leg of our three legged stool in place.

## **Read Mark chapter 1 verses 21 to 28 – AUTHORITY AS A TEACHER**

The people were surprised and amazed by the method of Jesus' teaching. He did not quote the thoughts of other Rabbi's or teachers. Rather he would teach by saying 'I say to you...' Jesus taught by his own authority such that even evil spirits obeyed him.

## **Read Mark chapter 2 verses 1 to 12 – AUTHORITY OVER SICKNESS**

Simply by speaking Jesus was able to heal the paralysed man. Mark's biography of Jesus' words and actions records many such incidents. The sick, lame, blind and even lepers were all healed by Jesus.

Mark records many extraordinary things done by Jesus which demonstrate his amazing power and authority, for example:

- During a violent storm, Jesus stood up in a boat and commanded both the wind and the waves to die down and they obeyed his command instantly (Mark 4:35-41).
- He healed demon-possessed people with a word (Mark 1:23-27, 5:1-20).
- On three separate occasions Jesus raised up dead people to life again. One of them, a man named Lazarus had been dead four days (See also Mark 5:35-43).

## **Read Mark chapter 2 verses 5 to 12 again – AUTHORITY TO FORGIVE SINS**

Despite the paralysed man's obvious physical need the first thing Jesus says to him is that his sins are forgiven. This is something only God can do as pointed out by the religious leaders. They clearly understand that Jesus is claiming to be God so they accused him of blasphemy. In Mark's gospel as well as the rest of the New Testament we are taught that Jesus is indeed equal with God as God's Son. Jesus is both fully God and fully man in one person.

So in summary Jesus has come into God's created world with the full authority of God. There is no part of creation that Jesus does not rule over whether human or spiritual, living or non-living. But also as God in human form Jesus is also able to forgive sins. There remains however one other area where Mark tells us Jesus has authority.

## **Read Mark chapter 1 verses 16 to 20 – AUTHORITY OVER PEOPLE**

Jesus commanded people to leave everything (including their family and jobs) to follow him. As the Son of God Jesus makes the same claim over each of our lives today, both yours and mine. Jesus is not saying that we have to leave our family, our jobs or studies. But he is saying that he will not tolerate anything less than being the most important person in your life. He calls ordinary people like you and I from all walks of life to follow him. In the whole of creation Jesus' will is never resisted except by human beings like you and I.

## SUMMARY PAGE

This is God's world, and we have seen in this study that Jesus came into this world with all the authority of God himself, because he is indeed God come in the flesh. We have seen:

### Jesus' authority:

<b>As a teacher</b>	(Mark 1:21-22)
<b>Over evil</b>	(Mark 1:23-28)
<b>Over sickness</b>	(Mark 1:29-31)
<b>To forgive sins</b>	(Mark 2:5-12)
<b>Over nature</b>	(Mark 4:35-41)
<b>Over life and death</b>	(Mark 5:35-43)

But most importantly, as far as you and I are concerned, we have seen:

**Jesus' authority over people** (Mark 1:16-20)  
(i.e. you and I)

### CONCLUSION

We have seen in this study:

- *Jesus' great authority as the Son of God.*
- *Jesus' claim to be divine, that is: God come in the flesh.*
- *Jesus calls for each of us to follow him*

Jesus has been described as the man you cannot ignore. Either he is mad, bad or he is the God he claims to be. The evidence of the four most reliable documents we have regarding his life and teachings (i.e. Matthew, Mark, Luke and John) suggest that these are the only three possible answers we can give to the question 'who is the real Jesus?'

To be able to sit on the stool below you need all three legs need to be in place. In a similar way there are three things you need to understand and believe before you can become a follower of Jesus or a Christian. The first is what it means that Jesus is the Son of God? We have now seen the first of these:



## Notes/Questions:-

Try reading as much of chapters 1 to 5 of Mark's Gospel as you feel able. Write down below anything you have questions about and also things that strike you as interesting, shocking or surprising. You can ask any questions you may have about them in our next session.

## Bible words

**Disciples:** Those called to follow Jesus and to learn from him

**Pharisees:** Jewish religious leaders

**Sabbath:** The Jewish day set aside for rest and enjoyment of God

**Sins:** Rebellion against God. Failure to think, say and do what we should

**Blaspheming:** Misrepresenting God, treating his name or character carelessly

**Son of Man:** Old Testament figure from heaven who is given eternal rule over the whole world. Jesus often used this title to refer to himself.

**Parable:** A story often from everyday life but with a spiritual meaning

## Jesus: The Cross

### Mark 15:33-39

33 At the sixth hour **darkness** came over the whole land until the ninth hour.

34 And at the ninth hour Jesus **cried** out in a loud voice, "*Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?*"—which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

35 When some of those standing near heard this, they said, "Listen, he's calling Elijah." 36 One man ran, filled a sponge with wine vinegar, put it on a stick, and offered it to Jesus to drink. "Now leave him alone. Let's see if Elijah comes to take him down," he said.

37 With a loud cry, Jesus breathed his last. 38 The **curtain** of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. 39 And when the centurion, who stood there in front of Jesus, heard his cry and saw how he died, he said, "Surely this man was the Son of God!"

### Mark 10:45

For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

## **Brief recap**

In the first study we looked at a brief summary of the Bible's message concerning Jesus. In study 2 we learned that *Jesus' has great authority as the Son of God. He (Jesus) claimed to be divine, that is, God himself come in person to visit his creation and he calls upon each of us to follow him!* So far only one legs of our three legged stool has been put in place, today we will put the second in place.

## **Read Mark chapter 15 verses 33 to 39 – THE FACT OF THE CROSS**

The central symbol of the Christian faith is not a light symbolising the brilliant life Jesus lived. Nor even a book symbolising his great teaching. The central symbol of the Christian faith is 'The Cross' an instrument of public execution. But what actually happened during the six hours Jesus spent on the cross?

## **Read Mark chapter 15 verse 33 – THE DARKNESS**

This darkness was a supernatural event indicating that something very special was happening as Jesus hung on the cross. It could not have been an eclipse because Jesus was crucified during a festival called the Passover. The Passover happened during the time when there was a full moon. In the Bible darkness is used as picture highlighting the judgement of God that is soon to fall.

## **Read Mark chapter 15 verses 34 – THE CRY**

Some people think that this cry of Jesus in vs.34 is an expression of his loss of faith. But it is better to take it at face value. Jesus was forsaken by God as he hung dying on the cross. The Bible makes it clear that on the cross Jesus was punished in our place (yours and mine). We all naturally rebel against God's authority in our lives deciding that we want to run our lives our way without letting God have any say even though he is our creator.

The Bible calls this attitude SIN and it leads to all kinds of actions or SINS that separate us from God. Jesus took our guilt upon himself and was punished in *our* place as *our* substitute on the cross. God's anger over *our* sins was poured out on Jesus so that it would not have to be poured out on us. That is why Jesus was forsaken by God on the cross. The resurrection demonstrates God's satisfaction with the work Jesus did on the cross.

## **Read Mark chapter 15 verses 37 to 38 – THE CURTAIN**

Notice the focus moves from outside the city wall where Jesus was crucified in vs.37 to the temple inside the city in vs.38. Behind the curtain mentioned in vs.38 God dwelt separate from his sinful people. Immediately after Jesus dies in vs.37 this curtain is torn in two from top to bottom (from heaven to earth) in vs.38. The partition that separated us from God has been removed by the death of Jesus. We now have access to God; in other words we can have a relationship with him because Jesus has reconciled us to God by his death on the cross

## **Read Mark chapter 10 verse 45 – THE RANSOM**

Before going to the cross Jesus explained that he would give his life as the ransom for many. A ransom is the payment of a valuable price in order to set free or buy back a lost person or thing. This is similar to the idea of buying back something from a pawn shop, or paying kidnappers a certain price in order to secure the release of their captive. No one automatically benefits from what Jesus did on the cross. If you or I don't accept what Jesus did on the cross personally; we are in effect saying to God 'I will pay for my own sins when I die'. We must all therefore individually accept by faith the Jesus of the cross.

## SUMMARY PAGE

On the cross Jesus died in my place as my substitute, taking upon himself my guilt and my punishment for all the wrong I have done as he is forsaken by God so that I would not have to be:

### We have seen:

#### The fact of the cross

(Mark 15:21-39)

#### The meaning of the cross

a) **the darkness** shows that the judgement of God was about to fall on Jesus (Mark 15:33).

b) **the cry** shows that Jesus was abandoned and punished by God so that you and I would not have to be because of our sin (Mark 15:34).

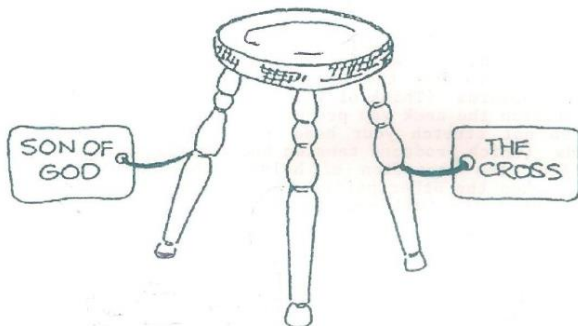
c) **the curtain** tearing shows that people like you and I can come back into relationship with God, but only through the death of Jesus on the cross (Mark 15:37-38).

### CONCLUSION

We have seen in this study:

- *Jesus' death on the cross is sufficient for the sins of everyone*
- *God's forgiveness is not automatically given*
- *Each of us must accept by faith personally the Jesus of the cross*

There are three things you need to understand and believe to be a Christian. The first is what it means that Jesus is the Son of God? The second is what it means that Jesus died on the cross? We have now seen two of these:



## Questions/Notes:-

Try reading as much of chapters 6 to 10 of Mark's Gospel as you feel able. Write down below anything you have questions about and also things that strike you as shocking, surprising or interesting. You can ask about them in our next session.

## Bible words

**Soul:** The part of us that lives on after physical death

**Sinners:** Those who sin (i.e. all of us except Jesus). See also page 9.

**Righteous:** Being right with God

**Glory:** A highly exalted state or position

**Eternal life:** Life in all its fullness, with God for ever in his kingdom

**Ransom:** A price paid so that a slave could be set free

**Satan:** A spiritual being who opposes God, his people and all that is good. His name means 'adversary' and he is also known as the devil.

## Jesus: The Resurrection

### Mark 8:31 & 9:31

8:31 He then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and *after three days rise again*. 9:31 He said to them, "The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men. They will kill him, and *after three days he will rise*."

### Mark 10:32-34

32 They were on their way up to Jerusalem, with Jesus leading the way, and the disciples were astonished, while those who followed were afraid. Again he took the Twelve aside and told them what was going to happen to him. 33 "We are going up to Jerusalem," he said, "and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and teachers of the law. They will condemn him to death and will hand him over to the Gentiles, 34 who will mock him and spit on him, flog him and kill him. *Three days later he will rise*."

### Mark 15:42-47

42 It was Preparation Day (*that is, the day before the Sabbath*). So as evening approached, 43 Joseph of Arimathea, a prominent member of the Council, who was himself waiting for the kingdom of God, went boldly to Pilate and asked for Jesus' body. 44 Pilate was surprised to hear that he was already dead. Summoning the centurion, he asked him if Jesus had already died. 45 When he learned from the centurion that it was so, he gave the body to Joseph. 46 So Joseph bought some linen cloth, took down the body, wrapped it in the linen, and placed it in a tomb cut out of rock. Then he rolled a stone against the entrance of the tomb. 47 Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joseph saw where he was laid.

### Mark 16:1-8

1 When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices so that they might go to anoint Jesus' body. 2 Very early on the first day of the week, just after sunrise, they were on their way to the tomb 3 and they asked each other, "Who will roll the stone away from the entrance of the tomb?" 4 But when they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had been rolled away. 5 As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man dressed in a white robe sitting on the right side, and they were alarmed. 6 "Don't be alarmed," he said. "You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him. 7 But go, tell his disciples and Peter, 'He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.'" 8 Trembling and bewildered, the women went out and fled from the tomb. They said nothing to anyone, because they were afraid.

### Act 17:30-31

In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent. 31 For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to all men by raising him from the dead."

### 1 Corinthians 15:3-7

3...Christ died for our sins...4...he was buried...he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, 5 and...he appeared to Cephas, and then to the Twelve. 6 After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. 7 Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, 8 and last of all he appeared to me also...

### Mark 8:38

If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in his Father's glory with the holy angels.

## **Brief recap**

So far we have learned that Jesus is God come in the flesh and he died on the cross for our sins, making a relationship with God possible for those who put their trust in him. So far two legs of our three legged stool are in place, today we will put the third in place.

## **Read Mark 8:31; 9:31 & 10:32-34 – THE RESURRECTION WAS PREDICTED!**

Jesus repeatedly talked about what would happen to him in Jerusalem. Crucially he also claimed that he would be raised to life again on the third day after his death on the cross. His death and resurrection was no accident, at least not as far as Jesus was concerned.

## **Read Mark chapter 15:42-47 – THE DEATH OF JESUS REALLY DID HAPPENED!**

Mark presents us with a number of witnesses of the fact that Jesus really did die: Joseph of Arimathea asked Pilate for his dead body. Under the circumstances he would not have approached Pilate unless he was sure Jesus was really dead. Both Pilate and the Roman centurion confirmed that Jesus was indeed dead. Finally the two women: Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joseph both saw where his body was laid.

## **Read Mark chapter 16:1-18 – THE RESURRECTION WAS UNEXPECTED!**

And yet 36 hours later, the huge stone covering the entrance to his tomb had been rolled away (vs.4). On the way to the tomb to anoint the dead body of Jesus the women discussed who would roll the stone away (vs.3). Notice that it was a group of women who first discovered that Jesus had risen. This is interesting because a woman's testimony was not considered as valuable as a man's in the first century. One second century Greek Philosopher named Celsus argued that Christianity could not be true because the accounts of the resurrection were based on the eyewitness testimony of hysterical women. The point is if Mark was making up this story in order to get the Christian movement up and running, he would never have written women into the accounts as the first eyewitnesses to Jesus' empty tomb. This adds authenticity to Mark's account suggesting that he wrote what he did because it was the truth.

A young man dressed in white told the women visiting the tomb that Jesus had already risen from the dead. He also said that the disciples would see him in Galilee, just as he told them before he died (vss.5-7). Clearly the women are not expecting any of this because they run away confused and frighten and contrary to what they were told, they don't tell anyone about what they had seen (vs.8). Furthermore none of Jesus closest disciples can be found waiting at the tomb in case Jesus did rise on the third day. They were simply neither prepared for nor expecting Jesus to rise from the dead.

## **Read Acts chapter 17:30-31 – THE MEANING OF THE RESURRECTION**

If you read all the gospel accounts you will see that Jesus appeared to his disciples on at least ten separate occasions after his death on the cross. He also appeared to more than 500 people at the same time (see *1 Cor. 15*). But it is not only the disciples who will see the risen Jesus. We will see him too. The resurrection guarantees that one day we will all be physically raised from the dead. And the risen Jesus will be our judge on that great day.

Jesus died on the cross to pay for sin, and rose from death in order to prove that my sin and yours was truly paid for. If we put our trust in him, all of our sin will be fully and finally paid for and forgiven. However if we reject Jesus now, he will reject us when he comes to judge the world (*Mark 8:38*). The resurrection of Jesus means you can trust Jesus with your own death. So the question becomes: are you truly ready to meet him?

## SUMMARY PAGE

After dying on the cross for our sins, Jesus rose from the dead and has been appointed as the one who will judge all people everywhere. He will call each person to give an account for how they have lived the life he has given them:

### We have seen:

#### The resurrection was predicted!

(Mark 8:31, 9:31 & 10:32-34)

#### The death of Jesus really happened!

(Mark 15:42-47)

Mark presents us with several witnesses to Jesus' death and burial, leaving us in no doubt that Jesus's crucifixion truly ended with his death.

#### The resurrection was unexpected!

(Mark 16:1-8)

The three female witnesses to the resurrection were clearly not expecting it. The whole point of their visit to the tomb was to anoint Jesus' *dead* body. They wondered who would move the stone (i.e. they clearly expected it to still be in place). They ran from the tomb confused and frightened and did not tell anyone.

#### The meaning of the resurrection!

(Acts 17:30-31)

The resurrection is the guarantee that we will all one day be raised. And that the risen Jesus is the one who will judge everyone.

But most importantly, as far as you and I are concerned, we have seen that:

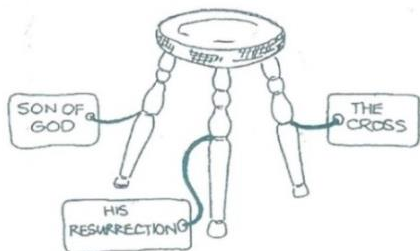
If we are ashamed of Jesus (*i.e. the Son of Man*) now, he will be ashamed of us then on the day of judgement (Mark 8:38).

## CONCLUSION

We have seen in this study:

- *Jesus really did die for my sin on the cross and his resurrection is the proof that his sacrifice was accepted on my behalf*
- *Jesus' attitude to me on the day of judgement will be the same as my attitude towards him now*
- *If I accept him now, he will accept me then. If I reject Jesus now, he will reject me then.*

There are three basic things you need to understand and believe to be a Christian. The first is what it means that Jesus is the Son of God. The second is what it means that Jesus died on the cross. The third is what it means that Jesus was raised from the dead. We have now seen all three of these. All three legs of our stool are now in place!



## Notes/Questions:-

Try reading as much of chapters 11 to 16 of Mark's Gospel as you can. Write down below anything you have questions about and also things that strike you as shocking, interesting or surprising. Write down the main thing you think you have learned from Mark's Gospel? We can discuss these things in our next session.

## Bible words

**Gentiles:** Non-Jews, anyone not Jewish by birth

**Pilate:** The Roman governor in Jerusalem at the time of Jesus' death

**Kingdom of God:** Where God's king (Jesus) rules over God's people. Not a geographical kingdom.

## Jesus: Repentance and faith

### Mark 1:15

"The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!"

### Mark 8:34-38

34 Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. 35 For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me and for the gospel will save it. 36 What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his soul? 37 Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul? 38 If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in his Father's glory with the holy angels."

### Mark 9:43-48

If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life maimed than with two hands to go into hell, where the fire never goes out, 44 [*where "their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched."*] 45 And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life crippled than to have two feet and be thrown into hell, 46 [*where "their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched."*] 47 And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into hell, 48 where "*their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched.*"

### Mark 5:22-43

Then one of the synagogue rulers, named Jairus, came there. Seeing Jesus, he fell at his feet 23 and pleaded earnestly with him, "My little daughter is dying. Please come and put your hands on her so that she will be healed and live." 24 So Jesus went with him. A large crowd followed and pressed around him. 25 And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years. 26 She had suffered a great deal under the care of many doctors and had spent all she had, yet instead of getting better she grew worse. 27 When she heard about Jesus, she came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, 28 because she thought, "If I just touch his clothes, I will be healed." 29 Immediately her bleeding stopped and she felt in her body that she was freed from her suffering. 30 At once Jesus realized that power had gone out from him. He turned around in the crowd and asked, "Who touched my clothes?" 31 "You see the people crowding against you," his disciples answered, "and yet you can ask, 'Who touched me?'" 32 But Jesus kept looking around to see who had done it. 33 Then the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell at his feet and, trembling with fear, told him the whole truth. 34 He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering."

35 While Jesus was still speaking, some men came from the house of Jairus, the synagogue ruler. "Your daughter is dead," they said. "Why bother the teacher any more?" 36 Ignoring what they said, Jesus told the synagogue ruler, "Don't be afraid; just believe." 37 He did not let anyone follow him except Peter, James and John the brother of James. 38 When they came to the home of the synagogue ruler, Jesus saw a commotion, with people crying and wailing loudly. 39 He went in and said to them, "Why all this commotion and wailing? The child is not dead but asleep." 40 But they laughed at him. After he put them all out, he took the child's father and mother and the disciples who were with him, and went in where the child was. 41 He took her by the hand and said to her, "*Talitha koum!*" (which means, "Little girl, I say to you, get up!"). 42 Immediately the girl stood up and walked around (she was twelve years old). At this they were completely astonished. 43 He gave strict orders not to let anyone know about this, and told them to give her something to eat.

### Mark 10:13-16

People were bringing little children to Jesus to have him touch them, but the disciples rebuked them. 14 When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. 15 I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it." 16 And he took the children in his arms, put his hands on them and blessed them.

## Brief recap

To be a Christian you need to understand and believe that Jesus is God come in the flesh, that he died for **your** sins on the cross and **is** also going to judge the whole world including you and I.

## Part 1a

### Read Mark chapter 8 verses 34 to 88 – WHAT IS REPENTANCE?

Repentance is basically a change of mind in terms of how I think about God, which in turn leads to a change in my behaviour. In practical everyday terms it will involve putting Jesus first:

#### ***Before my will (verse 34)***

I am to surrender to the God-given right of Jesus to run my life. Jesus says I am to carry my cross. I am to go through a death like experience. I need to die to the right to run my own life.

#### ***Before my ambitions (verses 36-37)***

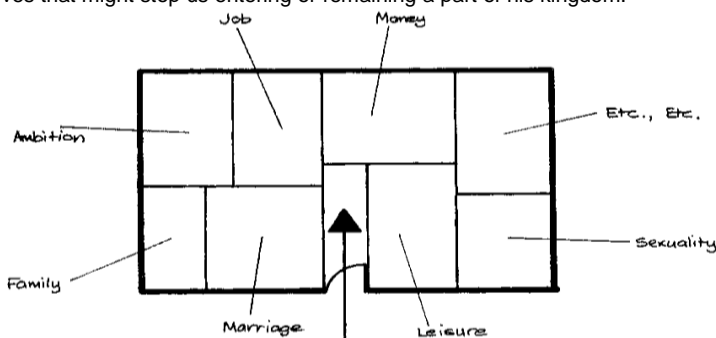
People everywhere are spending all their time trying to gain the whole world while thinking very little about their eternal soul. They are chasing after fame and fortune. Now these things may not be wrong, but they can become wrong if they are the things we live for. Putting Jesus in the number one spot in our lives allows these others things to be seen with the right perspective.

#### ***Before my popularity (verse 38)***

If we are ashamed of Jesus he will be ashamed of us. It is not popular to follow Jesus. Friends and family members may think you are strange; they may even oppose you quite openly. You should not allow any of this to make you feel embarrassed to meet with God's people (i.e. attend a church or Bible study), or stop you talking to others about what Jesus means to you.

#### ***Before anyone or anything (Mark 9:43-48)***

Jesus is not saying we should mutilate ourselves. He is using strong language to convey just how serious sin is. He is saying you and I should take radical action to remove anything in our lives that might stop us entering or remaining a part of his kingdom.



Becoming a Christian is a bit like buying a house; when you buy a house the first thing you do is move in. After you have lived in it for a while you begin seeing things that need fixing

so you start doing some renovations in the various rooms. Well similarly when you become a Christian God moves in by his Holy Spirit. He comes and lives within you. Then over the years God the Holy Spirit starts changing you from the inside out. Not content to remain in the doorway of your life, he instead goes into the different rooms of your life (see diagram above). Gradually he will want to make changes to each room until each has been completely renovated. This process however will take the rest of your life.

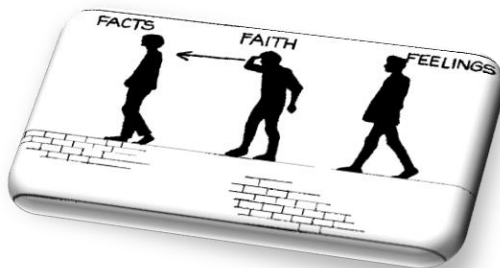
## Part 1b

### Read Mark chapter 5 verses 22 to 43 – WHAT IS BELIEVING?

To believe is to put your faith or trust in Jesus. Believing is more about the object of your trust and less about your feelings and emotions. Strong faith in the wrong object will not save you. But a small amount of faith in the right object, namely Jesus can and will save you. Therefore faith is:

#### ***Taking Jesus at his word (verse 36)***

If you were Jairus how would you have felt once you heard the news that your daughter was dead? Faith here is trust in Jesus' word, despite the evidence to the contrary and the way you might be feeling. Jairus could trust Jesus because of the evidence of who he is. Faith says keep your eyes on the facts about Jesus (see studies 2, 3 and 4) and not on your experiences or feelings (see diagram below).



#### ***Reaching out to Jesus (vs.27)***

The woman's faith was small. It involved only a secret touch of Jesus' garment. Jesus said if you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you can move mountains. A mustard seed was extremely small. The important thing about faith is not the quantity, but the direction in which it is exercised. It has to be exercised towards the right object; in the case of saving faith that object is the Lord Jesus Christ. I can believe with all my heart that eating chocolate every day will save me. Now I love chocolate, but the fact is it will not save me no matter how much I eat nor how strong my faith in it is. Faith *in Jesus* is the only kind of faith that will save you or I.

#### ***Having child-like trust (Mark 10:13-16)***

Jesus is not saying you have to be childish to enter his kingdom. Rather you have to have child-like trust or faith. Children readily put their trust in their parents, teachers or an adult that is in charge of them. A child will happily throw herself into daddy's arms without stopping to worry about whether he will catch her or not. Children often find it easier to demonstrate such faith than do adults. You and I have to be willing to receive the kingdom of God in this manner trusting that Jesus will catch us (i.e. do all that he has promised in his word).

## SUMMARY PAGE

A Christian is someone who belongs to God's kingdom. This is only possible once you have repented (had a change of mind resulting in a change of behaviour) and believed (put your trust in who Jesus is and what he has done for you).

### We have seen that:

#### **Repentances means putting Jesus first (Part 1a)** (Mark 8:34-38)

*before my will*

*before my ambitions*

*before my popularity*

*before anyone or anything*

(Mark 9:43-48)

#### **Faith or believing means (Part 1b)**

(Mark 5:21-43)

taking Jesus at his word

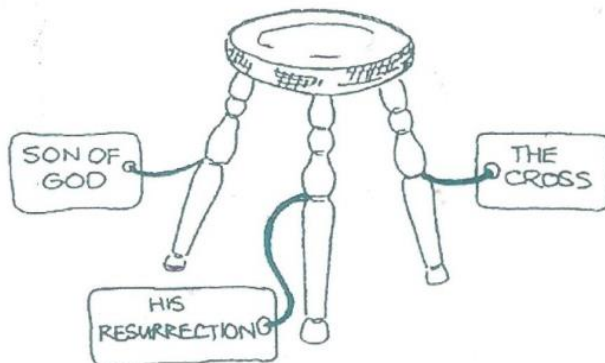
reaching out to Jesus

having child-like trust

### CONCLUSION

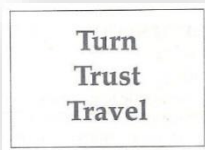
We have seen in this study that being a Christian is more than just believing with your mind certain facts about Jesus, the cross and the resurrection. It also must involve true repentance and faith:

1. *Repentance means putting Jesus first before my will, my ambitions, my popularity, and before everyone and everything in my daily life.*
2. *Faith or believing will mean taking Jesus at his word, reaching out to Jesus and exercising child-like trust with respect to all the promises he has made to you in his word the Bible.*



# CONCLUSION

Becoming a Christian can be summarised in just three words



**Turn** *from all you know to be wrong*  
**Trust** *in what Jesus has done for you*  
**Travel** *or live in obedience to his word*

*If God has been speaking to you during this course...  
If you want to be sure that you are a Christian...  
If you're not a Christian but would like to be...*

**Then seriously consider praying this prayer of commitment:**

**Dear God**

**I know that I am not worthy to be accepted by you. I don't deserve your gift of eternal life. I am guilty of rebelling against you and ignoring you. I need your forgiveness.**

**Thank you for sending your Son Jesus to die for me so that I may be forgiven. Thank you that He rose from the dead and offers me new spiritual life.**

**Please forgive me and change me so that from this day onwards I may live with Jesus as my Saviour and King. – Amen**

## **Books well worth reading:**

- *John Dickson, If I were God, I'd end all the pain, Matthias Media.*
- *John Dickson, If I were God, I'd make myself clearer, Matthias Media.*
- *John Stott, Basic Christianity, Inter-Varsity Press.*
- *John Dickson, Stranger than fiction, Matthias Media.*
- *Williams and Cooper, If you could ask God one question, Christianity Explored Books.*
- *Daniel Clark, Dead or Alive: the truth and relevance of the resurrection, IVP*

# Appendix: Can you rely on Mark's Gospel?

## Who? When? Why?

Mark was a close friend and companion of Peter, who was one of Jesus' disciples. Peter was an apostle. This means he was specially called to witness the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. In one of the two letters Peter wrote to first century Christian churches, we read the following: "I will make every effort to see that after my departure (i.e. his death) you will always be able to remember these things" (2 Peter 1:15). Peter was referring to the things he saw, heard and knew about Jesus. He passed them on to others like Mark. Peter died in the mid 60s of the first century. We have reason to believe that Mark's Gospel was written around about that time.

Mark it would seem had the same desire as Peter's, so he wrote these things down in a book for future generations to read. The opening sentence of his Gospel reveals the subject of his book: "The beginning of the gospel about Jesus Christ, the Son of God." (Mark 1:1).

Jesus died, rose again and returned to heaven around AD30. Mark wrote his book about 30 years later. This is well within the lifetime of those who lived through the events he recorded. So Mark had to get his facts right because any inaccuracies would have discredited both him and his account of events.

## Has Mark's book changed over time?

How different is Mark's original book from the book that we have today? We don't have Mark's original to compare with the book we call Mark's Gospel. This is normal because ancient documents like Mark's Gospel would have been written on papyrus or parchment, which would eventually rot away. For this reason historians assess the reliability of copies of an original by asking the following questions:

- *How old are the copies?*
- *How much time has elapsed between the writing of the original document and the production of the copies that now exist?*
- *How many copies have been found?*

The table below answers these questions for three widely-trusted historical documents, and compares them with the New Testament (including Mark's Gospel).

	Date of original document	Date of oldest surviving copy	Approximate time between original and oldest surviving copy	Number of ancient copies in existence today
<b>THUCYDIDES' HISTORY OF THE PELOPONNESIAN WAR</b>	C. 431-400 BC	AD 900 plus a few late century fragments	1,300 years	73
<b>CAESAR'S GALLIC WAR</b>	C. 58-50 BC	AD 825	875 years	10
<b>TACITUS' HISTORIES AND ANNALS</b>	C. AD 98-108	c. AD 850	750 years	2
<b>THE WHOLE NEW TESTAMENT</b>	AD 40-100	AD 350	310 years	14,000 (approx. 5,000 Greek, 8,000 Latin, 1000 in other languages)
<b>(MARK'S GOSPEL)</b>	AD 60-65	(3 <sup>rd</sup> century)	(240 years)	

As the table shows, the oldest surviving copies of Mark's Gospel were produced 240 years after his original (a small time frame when compared with other ancient documents) and an astonishing 14,000 copies exist today (many more than for other ancient documents). So, we have good reason to have great confidence that what we read is what Mark wrote.

# Map

In his Gospel Mark tells us about the amazing things Jesus did and said. He also tells us where Jesus was at the time. Use the map to help you follow the story as you read about Jesus' travels around the country of Israel.



## Why not keep on exploring...

Check out the Christianity Explored website:

[www.christianityexplored.org](http://www.christianityexplored.org)

helps you to keep exploring Jesus' life and message at your own pace and in your own way. It includes features such as:

- A visual outline explaining what the Christian faith is about
- Real-life stories from people who have started to follow Jesus
- Answers to tough questions.

Many people have found it helps them to think through what they believe. We hope you will find the same!

