



A Well-Defined  
**FAITH**

*[fāth] (noun)*

Biblical words used in church...  
Discover what they really mean.



Sunday  
May 10, 2026

## Example Teaching Rhythm

### **Welcome and Connect: 10 Minutes**

This helps people feel connected and more comfortable participating in the study and discussion.

### **Look Forward: 5-10 Minutes**

Share any important church events, service opportunities, or upcoming group plans. Keep this brief but clear.

### **Look at Scripture: 25-35 Minutes**

This is the main focus of Community Groups. Read the selected scripture together and guide the group through discussion questions and observations.

### **Prayer: 10 Minutes**

Invite members to share prayer requests and praises, then pray together as a group. This is a time to support one another.

## Explaining the H.E.A.R Method

The acronym **HEAR** stands for **Highlight, Explain, Apply, and Respond**. Each of these four steps aims to cultivate an atmosphere to hear God speak.

**Highlight** - After praying for the Holy Spirit's guidance, read the passage of scripture, and highlight each verse that speaks to you.

**Explain** - Explain what the text means. Ask questions like:

- Who wrote this, to whom, and why? What does this reveal about God? What do the key words actually mean? What did this call the original audience to, and what does that reveal for me?

By asking questions, with the help of God's Spirit, and by using helpful study resources, you can understand the meaning of a passage or verse.

**Apply** - This application is the heart of the process. Everything you have done so far culminates under this heading. As you have done before, work to uncover the significance of these verses and the implications they have. Ask questions like:

- What does this passage reveal about God, yourself, or the world that you need to embrace or sit with? Does this passage challenge an attitude, assumption, or habit that needs to change? Is there something to do? Is there someone to love?

**Respond** - Your response to the passage may take on many forms. Ask: Is there something to pray? - Let the passage shape your prayer, not just inform it. Use the "Five Daily Prayer Prompts" to guide you in your response.

# “Gospel - the good news of what Jesus has done to restore our relationship with God”

## Introduction

The Gospel is the word Christianity is built on – and one of the most frequently misunderstood. We sing it. We preach it. We put it on our church signs and in our mission statements. And somewhere in all that repetition, it can quietly lose its weight – until we are carrying the word around with confidence but without really knowing what it means anymore.

The word itself means good news. Not good advice. Not a good system. Not a good set of moral principles to live by. News – something that has happened, that you are receiving, that changes everything whether or not you were expecting it. There is a difference between advice and news that is easy to miss when you have been inside the church long enough. Advice tells you what to do. News tells you what has been done. The Gospel is the second kind, and that distinction matters more than most people realize.

Mark 1:1 is the most direct opening sentence in all four Gospels: The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. No birth narrative, no genealogy, no careful prologue establishing credentials. Just an announcement – one sentence that functions as both title and thesis for everything that follows. Mark writes as a man who cannot wait to tell you what has happened. The Gospel, for Mark, is not a warm-up or a preamble. It is the whole thing, and he wants you to feel its weight immediately.

What has happened is this: Jesus, the Son of God, has entered history to do what no human effort, no religious system, and no amount of moral seriousness could accomplish – restore a broken relationship between God and human beings. Not improve it. Not manage it. Not patch it at the edges. Restore it. The distance that existed between God and humanity was not a gap that could be narrowed from the human side. It required someone to cross it from the other direction entirely.

Before we go further, sit honestly with a few questions: Is the Gospel, for you, genuinely good news – something that still lands with the force of a discovery – or has it become background noise? Do you actually understand what needed to be fixed, and how serious the problem was? And what would it look like to live this week as someone who has received news this good, rather than someone still trying to earn what has already been freely given?

## Discussion Questions + Illustration

Select a question or two below to open up discussion.

- When did you last receive genuinely good news – news you didn't earn and didn't expect? What did it feel like?
- What's the difference between following Jesus because you have to and following Him because you've received something? Where do you fall?
- If someone who had never been to church asked you to explain the Gospel in two minutes, what would you actually say?
- Is there a version of the Gospel you've been carrying that is more about behavior management than about restored relationship? Where did that version come from?
- What would it mean for the Gospel to be the center of your life this week – not just the starting point of it?

Hiroo Onoda was a Japanese soldier who kept fighting in the Philippine jungle until 1974 – nearly thirty years after the war ended. He wasn't irrational. He was loyal, disciplined, and committed to a reality that had already passed. He wasn't alone either; dozens of soldiers did the same across the Pacific, some into the 1950s and 60s. Their courage was real. Their information was wrong.

- That's what the Gospel addresses. The decisive battle has already been fought and won. The Gospel is not a call to fight harder – it's the news that the war is over, and an invitation to stop living as though it's not.

## Highlight | Read Mark 1:1

Mark opens his Gospel with a single sentence that functions as both title and thesis: the beginning of the good news about Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God. Everything that follows – every healing, every confrontation, every parable – is Mark's evidence for that claim.

The word translated "gospel" – euangelion – was not invented by the church. In the Roman world, it was the word used when a messenger arrived to announce a military victory, the birth of an emperor, or a decisive event that had changed the political order. It was news about something that had already happened, with consequences that demanded a response. Mark deliberately borrows that word and applies it to Jesus.

By verse 15, Jesus Himself is preaching: the time is fulfilled, the Kingdom of God is near, repent and believe the Gospel. The announcement and the call arrive together. The Gospel is not simply information to file away – it is news that creates a moment of decision. What Jesus announces is not a new religion to consider but a new reality to reckon with – one that has already arrived and is pressing for a response. The question Mark's opening forces is not whether the Gospel is interesting, but whether the person hearing it will treat it as the kind of news that actually changes something.

- Why does it matter that Mark calls his opening sentence "the beginning" – and what does that suggest the Gospel is still doing?
- The word euangelion carried political weight in the Roman world. What is Mark claiming by using it for Jesus?

## Explain | Consider the Context

Mark was almost certainly written for a Roman audience – people who knew exactly what a euangelion was, who understood imperial power, and who were being told that the real announcement of decisive victory belonged not to Caesar but to a crucified Jew from Galilee who had risen from the dead.

Mark's Gospel is the shortest and fastest-paced of the four. He uses the word "immediately" more than any other Gospel writer. There is an urgency to it – not panic, but the urgency of someone who has received news too important to bury in preamble. Jesus appears, is baptized, is tempted, and begins preaching – all within fifteen verses. Mark won't let you ease slowly into this.

The context matters because it resists the tendency to make the Gospel primarily about personal improvement. The Gospel, in Mark's framing, is an announcement that something has changed in the structure of reality itself – sin's grip, death's finality, the broken relationship between God and humanity – and that the one who accomplished this change is the Son of God.

- Mark's original audience understood euangelion as political news about power. How does that frame the Gospel differently than you normally think about it?
- Where has the Gospel become background noise in your daily life?

## Apply | Discuss as a Group

If the Gospel is genuinely news – received, not earned – then it produces a specific kind of person. Not a more disciplined person. A more free one. Free to be honest about failure because the verdict isn't pending. Free to serve without needing credit because the account is already full. Free to love people who can offer nothing in return because you're not operating from scarcity.

That freedom has a texture. It shows up in whether you can absorb criticism without collapsing, whether you can serve without scorekeeping, whether you can sit with someone in pain without needing to fix it quickly so you can feel useful. The Gospel, when it has actually landed, produces people who are less defensive, less performing, and less afraid – not because they've worked harder at those things, but because something has been settled. Most of us know what it feels like to believe the Gospel on Sunday and functionally forget it by Wednesday – not because we stopped believing it was true, but because we stopped letting it be enough.

The question for this week isn't doctrinal. It's diagnostic: which one are you, in practice? The most honest answer usually isn't found in what you believe about the Gospel but in what you automatically reach for when things start to fall apart.

- Is the Gospel, in practice, the ongoing center of your life – or the foundation you laid years ago and rarely return to?
- What would it look like for the people around you to encounter the Gospel through the way you actually live this week?

## Respond | How should I live/pray?

Mark 1:1 does not open with a command. It opens with an announcement. The posture the Gospel creates is not first effort – it is first reception. Before you are asked to do anything, you are told something: that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, has entered history, and that what He came to do has been done.

The appropriate first response to good news is not a plan. It is the kind of relief and reorientation that only arrives when something you desperately needed has been given to you without condition. Israel sang before they organized. The disciples left their nets before they understood where they were going. The Gospel creates movement not because it demands it, but because genuine news always does. Most of us have been taught to respond to problems with effort – but the Gospel interrupts that instinct and insists that the most important thing has already been handled by someone else.

The honest question this week is not whether you affirm the Gospel. It is whether you are living inside it – or living as though the war is still going and everything depends on your performance. The most telling sign is not what you believe on Sunday morning but what you reach for on Tuesday afternoon when things go wrong and no one is watching. The good news is not that God will help you do better. It is that what stood between you and God has been removed, and the relationship that was broken has been restored.

- Where are you still living as though the Gospel is something you have to maintain rather than something you have received?
- What would change about how you begin each morning this week if the first thing you remembered was the Gospel – not your to-do list, not your failures, but the news?

## Response Tool: Five Daily Prayer Prompts

As you leave today, let these five questions carry the weight of your response into the week ahead – not as a checklist, but as an ongoing conversation with God. Introduce the five daily questions as a simple spiritual practice that can help us intentionally live out our faith in our workplaces, homes, families, and communities.

- God, where do you want me to go?
- God, who do you want me to see?
- God, what do you want me to say?
- God, what do you want me to pray?
- God, how do you want me to serve?

After this time of reflection, transition into a time of prayer requests. Allow time for members to share and, if appropriate, allow others in the class to pray for each other.

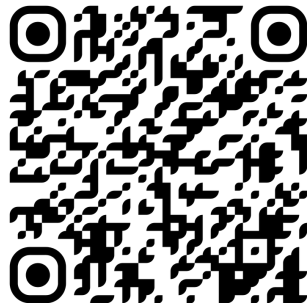
## Additional Commentary

- On euangelion (Mark 1:1) – "gospel": In the Greco-Roman world, this word announced decisive political events – a military victory, an emperor's accession – news with consequences that demanded immediate response. Mark's use of it for Jesus is a deliberate claim: the most significant announcement in history belongs not to Caesar but to the Son of God. The Gospel is not a philosophy. It is a report – and like every genuine report, it assumes that what it describes actually happened and that the person receiving it must now reckon with that fact.
- On "the Son of God" (Mark 1:1): "Son of God" was a title used for Roman emperors – a claim of divine authority, cosmic legitimacy, and the right to rule. Mark is not being subtle – he is making a direct counter-claim about where true authority resides. To a Roman reader, this opening sentence was not devotional. It was political in the deepest sense.
- On "the beginning" (Mark 1:1): The word arche carries the sense of origin point – the source from which everything else derives its existence and direction. Mark is not simply introducing his book – he is identifying the moment from which everything else flows. The Gospel is not one chapter in a larger story; it is the event that gives every other chapter its meaning.
- On repentance and belief (Mark 1:15): Jesus announces two responses to the Gospel: repentance (metanoia – a genuine turning) and belief (pisteuō – active, ongoing trust). Neither is a one-time transaction. Repentance without belief collapses into self-improvement; belief without repentance remains abstract. Jesus holds them together because the Gospel demands both the turning and the trusting.
- On the structure of Mark 1:1–15: These verses function as Mark's entire thesis compressed into a prologue – the remainder of the Gospel is evidence. Mark doesn't argue for the Gospel; he shows it at work in healing, calling, and confrontation with everything that destroys. The Gospel is not an idea to be convinced of. It is a power to be encountered, and Mark structures his entire account so that the reader is pressed into a decision about Jesus, not merely informed about Him.

## Community Group Resource Page

Visit our website to view our [leadership resources](#).

From Community Group training and resources to Discipleship Group starter guides, we want to equip you to make disciples.



# Additional Study

## Watch

### Bible Project - Mark



See a collection of videos, classes, and articles that dive into **Mark** and its themes.

### Bible Project - The Gospel



In this video, we look at the **Gospel**.

## Overview

### Enduring Word - Mark 1



Text commentary, written materials, and audio/video recordings of **Mark 1**.

### Got Questions - The Gospel



Biblical Q&A, articles, translations, audios, videos, apps, social media, podcasts, and more on the **Gospel**.

## Expand

### Bible Ref - Mark 1



Explore chapter and verse commentaries to deepen your understanding of **Mark 1**.

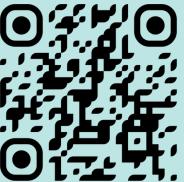
### Bible Hub - Mark 1



Parallel translations, language tools, commentaries, and much more on **Mark 1**.

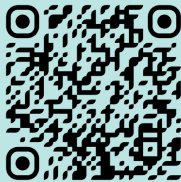
## Deepen

### Logos Factbook - The Gospel?



Logos Factbook shares information resources and articles about the **Gospel**.

### Blue Letter Bible - Mark 1



Original texts, Translations, Cross-Refs, Commentaries, Dictionaries + more on **Mark 1**.

