



SERMON: A Very Different Kind of Kingdom – *“The Biggest & Boldest Opening Line Ever!”*

Watch [this week's sermon](#)

Read [Mark 1:1-20](#) – **“John the Baptist Prepares the Way”**

- Mark skips a birth story and opens with a flat-out declaration that this is good news about Jesus the Messiah. What is your first reaction to that kind of bold opening? What does it say about what Mark most wants you to walk away knowing? How does framing Jesus as "good news" from the very first line shape the way you hear everything that follows?
- Pastor Jeremy noted that Mark's gospel is packed with imperative commands like "repent," "believe," and "follow me." What does that urgency tell you about how Jesus views the stakes of his message? How does it challenge a laid-back or take-it-or-leave-it approach to faith? Where do you notice yourself being more passive about following Jesus than he seems to be inviting you to be?
- Jesus calls ordinary fishermen with no education, no power, and no influence, and tells them to follow him. Why do you think Jesus consistently chooses unlikely people for his mission? Where do you hear echoes of that call in your own life, and what makes it hard to believe it's actually meant for you? What would it look like to take one step toward saying yes to it this week?
- The fishermen drop everything immediately when Jesus calls them. What do you think made them willing to respond so quickly and completely? What are you holding onto right now that makes that kind of response feel difficult? What might it look like to take one step toward dropping it?

Read [Isaiah 40:3](#) – **“Comfort for God's People”**

- This prophecy was written hundreds of years before John the Baptist appeared, yet it describes his role exactly. What does it stir in you to think about God planning that far in advance? What does that kind of long-range faithfulness tell you about who God is? How does it affect the way you trust him with the things in your own life that feel unresolved or uncertain?
- Pastor Jeremy described 400 years of silence before God made good on this promise. Have you ever been in a season where God felt silent or far away? What did that waiting season do to your faith, and what did you learn from it? How does knowing God eventually broke through for Israel speak into wherever you are right now?
- John's whole purpose was to point away from himself and toward Jesus. Where in your own life are you tempted to make faith more about yourself than about Jesus? How does John's posture challenge the way you think about your role in God's story? What would it look like to live more intentionally as someone who points others toward Jesus rather than toward yourself?
- John said the one coming after him was so great that he wasn't worthy to untie his sandals. How does sitting with the true magnitude of who Jesus is change the way you approach him? What would it look like to hold Jesus in higher regard in the ordinary moments of your daily life? Where do you think you most tend to shrink him down to a more manageable size?

Read [Revelation 3:20](#) – “The Message to the Church in Laodicea”

- Jesus pictures himself standing at the door and knocking, waiting to be let in. What is your gut reaction to that image? Does it surprise you that Jesus is the one waiting and pursuing rather than demanding? What does it tell you about the kind of relationship he is looking for with you?
- Pastor Jeremy talked about kairos time, God's appointed moment of breakthrough. Has there been a specific moment in your life where you recognized God breaking through in a real and unmistakable way? What made you aware of it, and how did it change you? How does reflecting on that moment shape the way you look for God moving in your life today?
- The image of Jesus knocking suggests persistence and patience. How does knowing that God keeps pursuing you even when you pull away change the way you think about your failures or seasons of distance from him? Where might God be knocking on a door in your life that you haven't fully opened yet? What is making it hard to open it?
- Pastor Jeremy shared the story of someone who spent years running from God and finally experienced a breakthrough on Easter. What would it look like for you to stop waiting for a better moment and open the door more fully right now? Who in your life might need you to help them recognize that God has been knocking for them too? What is one way you could be that presence for them this week?

Read [2 Corinthians 5:20](#) – “We Are God’s Ambassadors”

- An ambassador represents someone else's country, values, and mission in a foreign place. What does it mean to you personally to be called an ambassador of Jesus Christ? Does that feel like an honor, a responsibility, or something you're not sure you're ready for? What would change in the way you carry yourself if you took that identity seriously every day?
- Pastor Jeremy said the world needs you more than the church does and that the kingdom needs you exactly where you already are. How does that reframe the way you think about your job, your neighborhood, or your relationships? What might it look like to see those spaces as your primary mission field? What is one specific thing you could do differently this week if you approached them that way?
- Being an ambassador means carrying a message that isn't your own. How does that shift the pressure you might feel about sharing your faith? Where do you feel most equipped to represent Jesus, and where do you feel most out of your depth? What would it look like to trust that the message itself is powerful enough even when you feel inadequate?
- Pastor Jeremy described the mission of Jesus as finding the lost, healing the sick, welcoming the outsider, and loving without condition. Which of those feels most alive in you right now? Which feels most challenging or out of reach? What is one specific step you could take this week to act as an ambassador of Christ in your corner of the world?

**APPLICATION: Pick one to put into practice this week.**

1. **Reach Out to Someone Who Is Waiting:** This week, identify one person in your life who may be in a season of waiting, longing for God to show up or break through, and reach out to them intentionally. Send a message, grab coffee, or simply let them know you're thinking of them. Come ready next week to share how that conversation went.
2. **Name What's Taking Life From You:** Pastor Jeremy described repentance not as feeling bad about yourself but as turning away from the things that take life from you and turning toward the one who gives life. Pick one specific habit, distraction, or pattern in your life that you know is pulling you away from God. Write it down, name it honestly, and take one concrete step this week to loosen its grip,

whether that's deleting an app, telling a trusted friend, or simply replacing that habit with five minutes in Scripture.

3. **Be an Ambassador Where You Already Are:** You are an ambassador of Christ in the specific places God has already put you. Choose one place this week – your workplace, your neighborhood, your kids' school – and look for one intentional opportunity to reflect the love, grace, or welcome of Jesus to someone there. It doesn't have to be a big moment. It just has to be on purpose.

## DAILY BIBLE READINGS & QUESTIONS

View this week's [Daily Bible Readings](#)

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
13	14	15	16	17
Mark 1:21-28	Mark 1:29-34	Mark 1:35-39	Mark 1:40-45	Mark 2:1-12

**Monday, April 13:** Mark 1:21-28

1. Jesus walks into the synagogue and immediately begins teaching with an authority that catches everyone off guard. What do you think made his teaching feel so different from what people were used to, and where do you most need to encounter that kind of authoritative truth in your own life right now?
2. When the man with the impure spirit cries out, Jesus doesn't debate or negotiate, he simply commands, and it's done. What does that moment reveal about who Jesus is and the kind of power he carries, and how might it challenge a view of Jesus as merely a good teacher or moral example?

**Tuesday, April 14:** Mark 1:29-34

1. Jesus heals Peter's mother-in-law and she immediately gets up and begins to serve. What do you think that response says about what healing and encounter with Jesus are meant to lead to, and where might gratitude or restoration be an invitation for you to move toward serving others?
2. By evening the whole town is gathered at the door. What does the crowd's response tell you about the deep hunger people have for healing, hope, and encounter with God, and where do you see that same hunger in the people around you today?

**Wednesday, April 15:** Mark 1:35-39

1. Even in the middle of what looks like an incredibly fruitful season of ministry, Jesus slips away before sunrise to pray alone. What does that discipline reveal about how Jesus understood his own need for time with the Father, and what does it challenge in the way you tend to treat prayer?
2. When the disciples track Jesus down and tell him everyone is looking for him, he redirects them toward the next town and the larger mission. What does his response reveal about how Jesus stayed focused on his purpose rather than his popularity, and where might you be tempted to mistake busyness or demand for genuine calling?

**Thursday, April 16:** Mark 1:40-45

1. The man with leprosy approaches Jesus and says, "If you are willing, you can heal me." Jesus responds by saying, "I am willing." What does that exchange tell you about how Jesus feels toward people who come to him broken, uncertain, or ashamed, and where do you need to hear those words spoken over your own life?

2. Jesus heals the man and then tells him not to say anything, but the man can't contain it and tells everyone. What do you make of that response, and where in your own life has an encounter with Jesus been something you found genuinely hard to keep quiet about?

**Friday, April 17:** Mark 2:1-12

1. Four friends tear open a roof to get their paralyzed friend to Jesus because the crowd is in the way. What does their determination say about what it looks like to pursue Jesus on behalf of someone else, and who in your life might need that kind of relentless, creative intercession right now?
2. Jesus sees the faith of the friends and forgives the man's sins before healing his body, which infuriates the religious leaders. What does that order, forgiveness before healing, reveal about what Jesus considers most important, and how does it challenge the way you tend to think about what you most need from him?

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- [Daily devotions](#)
- Podcasts:
  - [Pastor Mike Drop!](#)
  - ["Gospel" – Word with Webb podcast](#)
- Videos:
  - [BibleProject - Mark](#) (video 1)
  - [BibleProject – Mark](#) (video 2)
- Articles:
  - ["What are the Gospels?" by Tim Mackie \(BibleProject\)](#)

