



**FOLLOW  
ME**

# Follow Me

An 8 part exploration of the book of Mark

**“Come follow me” said Jesus** to his first disciples. They did so, but did they really know what lay ahead? Probably not. An adventure, a challenge, and a whole new life is what they got. Jesus says the same thing to each one of us, and saying yes to this call is what it means to become a Christian. However Jesus isn't a standing still sort of God. He's always at work. In the gospels we see him wandering from place to place, calling others to repent, believe, be baptised and follow him. The amazing news is that he is alive and still doing that same thing today. I (Sam) write this introduction as someone who has heard the call of Jesus and has walked with him ever since.

It can be confusing at times though. In a world of 24hr advertising, rampant individualism and consumerism, how do we know what to pick up and what to leave behind as we go on the adventure with Jesus?

In this series we will be in the Gospel of Mark and looking at those who heard the call 'come follow me' and thinking about what it means and costs to answer that call. Our prayer is that we will take a fresh look at the loving God who called us and 'follow him' wherever he leads us.

## The Gospel of Mark

**Author** - Mark

**How do we know?** Although the author does not sign his name at the end, we have unanimous historical testimony from early church writings that Mark was indeed the author of this gospel.

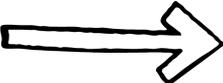
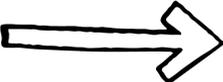
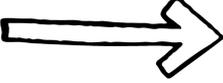
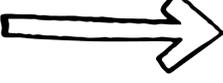
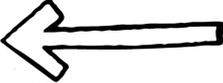
**What do we know about him?** Mark was a close friend of the Apostle Peter. The book is really a collection of Peter's preaching as he addresses the needs of the very earliest Christian communities. Mark, or John Mark, makes various appearances throughout the New Testament mainly in Acts but also in Colossians and 2 Timothy. He has a huge falling out with Paul at one point but all seems to be well as Paul sends greeting from him later on (2 Timothy 4:11).

**When was it written?** It is clear that it is before the destruction of the Temple in 70AD. Scholars place the time of writing at around 50-60AD.

**Where did he write it?** Most evidence points to him hanging out with Peter in Rome and writing it there.

**Audience?** Gentiles, probably Romans!

## The studies

<u>Week one: Mark 1:14-20</u>		Calling the disciples (p.4)
<u>Week 2: Mark 2:13-22</u>		Call of Levi (p.6)
<u>Week 3: Mark 4:1-20</u>		Parable of sower (p.8)
<u>Week 4: Mark 7:1-23</u>		Clean and unclean (p.10)
<u>Week 5: Mark 8:27-38</u>		Peter's confession (p.12)
<u>Week 6: Mark 10:17-31</u>		The rich young man (p.14)
<u>Week 7: Mark 10:35-45</u>		The first will be last (p.16)
<u>Week 8: Mark 12:28-40</u>		Greatest commandment (p.18)
<u>Useful Resources</u>		

## Doing the studies

At The Groves Church we're not really interested in dishing out right answers, we're much more interested in allowing the Holy Spirit to guide us, through our bible study and conversation, in community, into truth. Therefore we don't write lots of questions, but rather, ask questions that open the door of dialogue and exploration. So please use the questions in each study as a springboard into deeper conversation and communion with each other but most importantly with God.

## → Calling the disciples: Mark 1:14-20



### **Introduction**

Jesus is at the beginning of his public ministry. He calls his first followers, Simon, Andrew, James and John. This is the start of the Jesus adventure...

**Read - Mark 1:14-20**

## Questions for starting discussion

What did Jesus proclaim?

What is 'the Kingdom of God'?

What does it mean to repent and believe?

What did he ask the fisherman?

Why did they respond?

What does this account tell us about what it means to follow Jesus?

## Application

Have you answered Jesus' call in this way? Does anything need to change in the way you are responding to Jesus' call on your life?

## → The Call of Levi: Mark 2:13-22



### **Introduction**

Imagine a British spy in World War II who decided to betray his country and work for the Nazi's. They would be called a traitor. This is how Levi would have been looked at by his fellow countrymen. He is a Jew who has betrayed his nation to work for the invading Romans. He probably also takes a nice extra cut for himself too, so not an easy man to love!

**Read - Mark 2:13-22**

## Questions for starting discussion

What do you notice about the way Jesus calls Levi?

If you were in the crowd how would have felt witnessing this moment?

What do you make of Levi's response to Jesus?

Who needs a doctor?

Why are the Pharisees so angry at Jesus?

What does this passage tell us about the kind of church Jesus wants to build?

What did Jesus say about fasting?

What does the 'wine' and 'skins' mean?

## Application

Are there certain people who, in your mind, are beyond saving? Too hard for God to save? Spend some this week allowing God to soften your heart, and use your life to call 'Levi's'.

## ➔ Parable of the Sower: Mark 4:1-20



### **Introduction**

Throughout the gospels we see different people meeting with Jesus. They hear what he has to say but the outcome of the encounter often differs. Jesus told the Parable of the Sower to teach about what it means to follow God, and some of the hard things we may encounter as we do. It is also a great example of how Jesus used people's everyday realities to share a profound truth about God.

**Read Mark 4:1-20**

## Questions for starting discussion

What is a parable?

What is the difference between the disciples and the crowd? (see: Isaiah 6:9-10, 25, 33-34)

What is the seed? (see: 1 Peter 1:23)

What is the path?

What is the rock?

What is the thorns?

What is the good soil?

What could these things be in our culture and our own lives?

How do we cultivate heart of good soil?

What are the challenges of following Jesus raised in this passages?

## Application

Spend some time this week asking God to place good soil in your heart. Imagine him planting new seeds of faith in you. What do you want to see grow? What does he want to grow in you?

# → Clean and Unclean: Mark 7:1-23



## **Introduction**

What does it mean to follow Jesus? Clean living or clean hearts? This is what Jesus discusses with the Pharisees in this passage.

## **Read Mark 7:1-23**

## Questions for starting discussion

What is unclean according to the Pharisees?

What is the difference between tradition of the elders and the commandments?

What is modern day unclean?

In quoting Isaiah, what does Jesus seem to value most?

What is unclean according to Jesus?

Is the list Jesus gives a 'hierarchy' of unclean things?

If following Jesus means walking away from the things he lists, how might we do that? What might that mean?

## Application

Be mindful this week of what is coming out of your mouth and being seen in your actions. Are there things that you like? Are there things you don't like? Ask Jesus to continue his work of grace in your life to help you become more like him.

## ➔ Peter's confession: Mark 8:27-38



### **Introduction**

In this story we encounter a holy moment. The Holy Spirit has opened Peter's eyes to see Jesus and declare that he is Israel's, and indeed the world's, Messiah.

**Read Mark 8:27-38**

## Questions for starting discussion

Who do people say Jesus is today?

What happens in v29

How would you answer?

What was Peter's expectation of the Messiah?

Why 'satan' and 'things of men'?

What is 'the cross' that Jesus refers to in v 34?

What is losing life?

What does this mean for us today as we follow Jesus?

## Application

What are you holding onto tighter than Jesus? This week spend some time asking God to reveal what you need to die to in order to have more of his life.

➔ The rich young man: Mark 10:17-31



## Introduction

Jesus meets a man who believes he's got himself sorted and ready to follow him. Jesus suggests that he might not be as ready as he thinks.

## **Read Mark 10:17-31**

### **Questions for starting discussion**

What is the question that opens up this encounter?

What does the rich young man name as his qualifications for following Jesus?

Why does Jesus ask him to give away everything he has?

What about the Camel?

What is your relationship with money and possessions like?

What does it mean to follow Jesus in light of this encounter?

What is the answer to the question, who then can be saved? (V26)

### **Application**

Spend some time this week thinking about what makes you feel safe and secure. The chances are money and stuff may well feature. Ask God to help you to grow in radical generosity and find your safety and salvation in him.

➔ The first shall be last: Mark 10:35-45



## **Introduction**

In this passage Jesus turns the world upside down. It is a message that cuts to the heart of human sinfulness and inequality in his day and is a truth that is just as relevant today.

**Read Mark 10:35-45**

## Questions for starting discussion

Do James and John understand what they are asking?

What is the cup that Jesus is referring to?

How does Jesus redirect James and John's visions of power?

What is a servant?

What does ransom mean?

What does this passage tell us about what it means to follow Jesus?

## Application

Spend some time with God this week and ask him who in your life can you begin to serve as Jesus has ask you to.

## → The Greatest Commandment: Mark 12:28-40



### Introduction

As we come to the end of our time in Mark we find the bedrock of faith in the words of Jesus. Jesus quotes the 'Shema' an ancient prayer of Israel, and Jewish confession of faith, declaring God is 'One' before adding the command to love your neighbour. If you love God, you'll love people.

**Read Mark 12:28-40**

## Questions for starting discussion

How should we love God?

How should we love our neighbour?

Who is Jesus?

Why are the crowd delighted?

What is true obedience? (Contrast v38-40 with v29-31)

So when Jesus says follow me, what is the primary thing he is asking us to do?

What does that look like in day to day life?

Is this a reality for you?

## Application

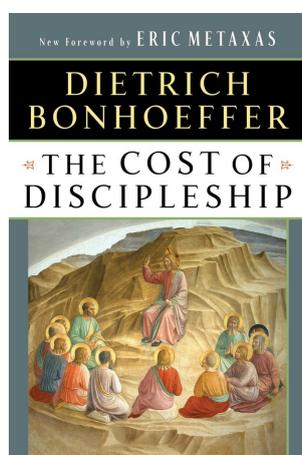
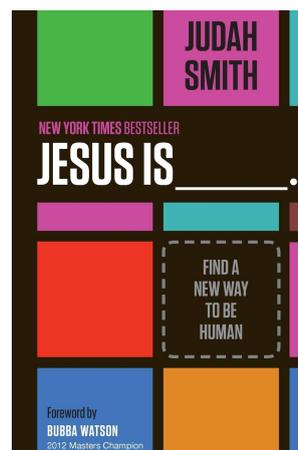
Spend some time with God this week and ask him to give you encounters of his love. "We love because he first loved us", so to love God more, we must see more of who he is.

# Useful Resources

## Jesus is \_\_\_\_\_ Judah Smith

This is a great book for the person starting out on their journey with Jesus. It is very accessible, readable and funny. Smith talks about who Jesus is and therefore what it means to follow him.

[Click here](#) to view on Eden books



## The cost of discipleship Dietrich Bonhoeffer

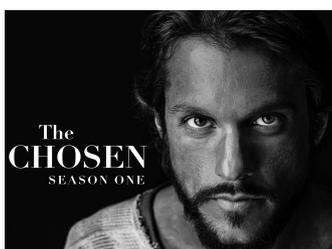
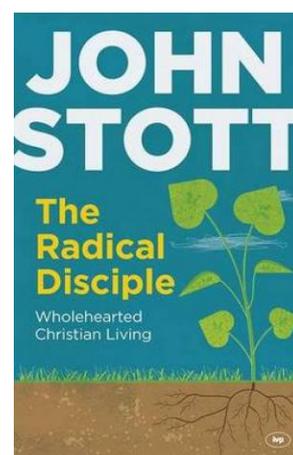
For a slightly more in depth read you can't beat a bit of Bonhoeffer. An anti-nazi German preacher who ended up giving his life to continue to faithfully preach Jesus and the gospel. He is someone who really understands the cost of discipleship.

[Click here](#) to view on Eden books

## The radical disciple John Stott

This is the last book that Stott wrote and it comes across as his letter of love to those who will come after him. It is full of hope, but also challenge to press into Jesus and keep going, despite where many others may be heading.

[Click here](#) to view on Eden books



## The Chosen - TV mini series

This is a really fun and beautiful look at what it might have been like for the first disciples as they were called to follow Jesus. You can watch it for free by downloading the 'Chosen' app or on Youtube.