

FEBRUARY 2020

SAINT LUKE JOY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

JOYFUL JOURNAL



JOHN 15:12

"My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you."



ROMANS 5:5

"And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us."



God's love is contagious. When we walk in close fellowship with Christ, God's love flows through us to those around us. The Holy Spirit fills us so we can extend unconditional love to others

From The Pastor:

By Pastor Luke Johnston

"Happy Mid-Winter, beloved of Christ! I desire to share this article from 9marks ministries. It was in reading this advice that I felt compelled to teach through the Gospel of Mark. I hope it blesses you and gives you insight as to why - the character of Jesus is so essential!

Under His Mercy, -Pastor Luke"

<https://www.9marks.org/article/gospelofmark/>

3 Reasons to Preach through the Gospel of Mark

Preaching the Gospel of Mark as early as possible into my ministry may be the best advice I have ever received as a pastor. Admittedly, pastoral advice is hard to quantify. But since proclaiming Christ is the preacher's highest priority, such a strong sentiment is well justified. Mark's Gospel, after all, unpacks who Christ is and what it looks like to follow him. Furthermore, it captures these themes in memorable ways. Mark communicates Christ and discipleship through the messiness and vividness of stories, not just through the precision of propositions. As such, this narrative Christology provides a plethora of practical benefits for the pastor and his people. This article, however, will only address three reasons for preaching Mark, with a special eye toward how it benefits some of the most prominent categories of members in your church: new believers, growing believers, and mature believers.

NEW BELIEVERS - ACCESSIBILITY

Many new believers in our day follow Christ fighting against the culturally strong undercurrents of pluralism and nominalism. Because of this, young Christians need crystal clarity concerning who Christ is and what it looks like to follow him. In turn, Mark's gospel uniquely assists believers to embrace the two great cultural conundrums of Christ's authority and costly discipleship.

Christ's Authority:

Topics like divine and absolute authority are especially distasteful to the popular, pluralistic, and post-Christian palate. And yet, Mark serves up generous portions of Jesus' exclusive authority over demons, death, disease, natural disasters, and man-made religion. In fact, he actually presents these truths in an appetizing and appealing way. There's something especially savory amid Mark's portrayals of the authoritative Christ gently leading his bumbling disciples. The authority of Christ proves to be something beautiful for the new believer, not burdensome. Even though the followers of Jesus will repeatedly fail, the authoritative Christ holds on to them until to the end.

Costly Discipleship:

What's true of Mark's teaching concerning Christ's authority equally applies to his writings on discipleship. New followers of Jesus especially need to embrace the extreme implications of following Jesus. That's why Mark presents the task of following Jesus as a harrowing one. This can be especially discouraging since, by default, we tend to think of the original followers of Jesus as men of strength and daring. Inaccurate impressions of discipleship can make following Jesus should like a fool's errand, something outside the realm of possibility. Mark, however, enables the new believer to see past this by reminding his readers that the twelve disciples were not born as the twelve apostles. This Gospel reminds us that Jesus' first followers were reared in sin like the rest of us and had to come to Jesus in repentance and faith the same way we do. The candid recounting of the disciples' frequent failures assures believers that following Jesus does not demand perfect faith and repentance, but persevering faith and repentance. The new believers in our churches must obey the radical demands of discipleship while at the same time accepting that struggling is an unavoidable part of the journey. Clearly, Mark assists with both these things.

GROWING BELIEVERS – FLEXIBILITY

All believers are "growing," but Mark's Gospel particularly benefits those who have moved beyond spiritual infancy but are not yet mature enough to have a dynamic impact upon others. I don't want to legitimize this category. But honesty compels us to acknowledge that some (if not most) in our congregation experience growth while still falling short of their potential. So, assuming the reader will grant me this assertion, I want to affirm that Mark benefits the ordinary believer as it provides a smorgasbord of theological and practical truth—truths that will be essential for taking the next stages in spiritual maturity.

Theological Foundations:

The Gospel of Mark contributes to our basic understandings of soteriology, anthropology, Christology, missiology, and eschatology. Theologically speaking, it's like a Swiss Army Knife on a camping trip or a seven iron on a golf course. Faithful, sequential exposition will provide opportunities to shore up a variety of theological truths that may be deficient in your congregation. Even biblical theology plays a prominent role in Mark as it frequently invites us to consider the meta-narrative of Scripture. This means the preacher will have multiple opportunities to show the significance of the Old Testament. While this Gospel tells a particular story, it sets us up to showcase the greater story. Mark's regular allusions to significant narratives, psalms, and prophecies provide windows into the Scripture as a whole. The prudent pastor will then capitalize upon these connections to develop his people's understanding of biblical theology.

Practical Implementations:

Mark gives us not just the story of Jesus but the story of Jesus and his disciples. The Markan scholar R. T. France points out, “It is in their discovery of and response to who Jesus is that the disciples occupy our attention; discipleship is the proper outcome of a healthy Christology” (France, 28). Thus Mark prompts believers of all stages to grow in their own faith and to share it with others. As story after story recounts Jesus’ power and authority, the anxious believer will be assured. Paragraph by paragraph, the lukewarm will be stimulated and challenged further to emulate Christ and to engage in the advance of the gospel. It is hard to study Mark while remaining neutral, lukewarm, or unengaged. Preaching Mark will move the mediocre to maturity.

MATURE BELIEVERS - LONGEVITY

Finally, Mark, provides special benefits for the mature believer. By “mature,” I’m not referencing older saints or even those who have been in Christ for a long time. Rather, I’m referring to believers who have matured to the point of maturing other believers (Eph 4:13-16; 2 Tim 2:2). Once the mature saints in your congregation grasp a more confident handle on this book, they will have the confidence to work through it on their own with non-Christian friends or other newer believers.

While your own sermon series should be enough to engender this confidence, there are several resources that could supplement your teaching and structure your people’s discipling efforts. For example, some members could begin using Mark by hosting an evangelistic program like Christianity Explored, which is based on this book. I enjoy seeing members use Mark in one-on-one settings, following the guidance of David Helm in his One-to-One Bible Reading (see chapter 11 in particular). Also, the manual produced by St. Helen’s Bishopsgate assists in this as well.

Imagine the longevity and utility of your series on Mark if your people were encouraged to use it with others in this way. What pastor doesn’t long to see his people using the Bible itself to advance the gospel? We have seen amazing fruit from this in our own congregation, and, as a bonus, the accessibility of using Mark one-to-one has emboldened some of our members to branch out to other books of the Bible as well.

CONCLUSION

If you haven’t done so already, take advantage of the wisdom passed on to me from some of the wisest pastors I know: preach the Gospel of Mark. New believers will benefit from its accessibility. Growing believers will be challenged to maturity. And mature believers will be able to leverage the confidence gleaned from your teaching to use Mark in their discipling efforts with others.

Author's note: In regard to commentaries, my personal approach is to mine a few of the best ones deeply as opposed to skimming many frenetically. These three gave me the most consistent results.

Technical: France, R. T. *The Gospel of Mark: A Commentary on the Greek Text*. New International Greek Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids, MI; Carlisle: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press, 2002.

No one captures the nuances of the narrative and exegesis so aptly. France enables us to see the unique message of Mark by resisting the popular penchant to conflate Mark with the other three gospels. Although it is a technical commentary, it is actually exciting to read.

Pastoral: Edwards, James R. *The Gospel According to Mark*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos, 2002.

If you are not feeling confident in the original languages but want to go deeper than a study Bible or someone else's sermon, Edwards is a great reference. Also, sprinkled through the commentary are some insightful excursions on key topics such as "Christ," "Son of Man," "Women in the Gospel of Mark," etc.

Homiletical: Ferguson, Sinclair B. *Let's Study Mark*. Let's Study Series. Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1999.

The constant temptation in any preaching endeavor is missing the forest for the trees. Ferguson's penchant for simplicity shines brightly in this volume providing guidance for the expositor who may be struggling to see the overall point of whatever pericope he may be preaching for Sunday.

By: Justin Harris

Colorado Mission Trip

By Rebecca Brown

WE NEED YOU! The Colorado Mission Trip is scheduled for June 13 to 20. We had our first camp meeting January 12th but the weather wasn't the best, so if you are interested in going, please let me know. I will need to know how many will be going soon so I can reserve the proper sized rental vehicle in February. The deadline to reserve your place is February 23. The registration form is attached in this email. Please note, the registration form is due February 23rd also and first payment is due March 8. If you have any questions, please contact Rebecca Brown at 816-510-4899. This is a fun trip, and the work we do at the camp helps get the camp ready for their summer season. There are jobs for all age groups.

Sweetheart Dinner

By Janice Stewart

The Child and Youth Ministry Team and the Hospitality Ministry Team invite you to join them on Sunday, February 16, after church for the annual Sweetheart Dinner. All proceeds will go to the Youth Activity Fund. There will be entertainment and good food! Tickets will be on sale February 2 and Feb 9 in the Fellowship Hall. You may also contact Janice Stewart (816-863-9222), Rebecca Brown (816-510-4899), or Selina (816-453-3741) to get your name on the list and then pay at the door. The last day to get your ticket or reserve your space is Feb 12. We need a correct count so we can purchase the food!

One of the events we have planned is a silent auction. If you would like to contribute an item (suggestions below), contact Beulah Rule (816-665-4771).

Suggestions:

Gift basket

Gift card

Offer to do something for someone: fix a meal, perform tasks for someone, perform odd jobs.

We hope to see you there!

Deacons Report

By Allegra Jrolf

The meeting was opened with prayer. A representative from CarePortal was present to provide information and instruction on the use of this network. As was stated in the November Deacons' Report, CarePortal is "an online platform" that connects churches with each other and to resources to help "children and families in crisis." If you know of any such children or families (such as a family with no heat, or a child with suspicious bruises), you can bring these people and their needs to the attention of the deacons and/or Pastor Luke. We now have access to professional resources and to other churches and ministries via CarePortal technology and support.

After the presentation, we welcomed three "new" deacons - Melissa Gould, Nancy Herron, and Lisa Goddard. Their Care Groups will be determined in the next two weeks. Care Group praises, concerns and joys were shared. Specific deacon duties were discussed and divvied up. The meeting was concluded with prayer. The next meeting will be on 2/16/2020, barring severe weather or other unforeseen circumstances.



the JOY of the Lord is your strength.
the joy of the Lord is YOUR strength.
the joy of the Lord is your STRENGTH.
But the real emphasis? It's this: "The joy OF THE LORD is your strength."
Nehemiah 8

Congregational Meeting Minutes

By Clerk Of Session, Debbie Blackman

The meeting was opened with Prayer by Pastor Luke Johnston. The meeting was called to order, with a quorum present. The purpose of the meeting was explained. The chairperson of the Nominating Committee,

Debra Blackman, shared the following nominees for the office of Elder for 2020:

Darlene Lewis to continue a new term
Al Steed to continue a new term
Pat Schoenrade to be installed and ordained.

Pastor Johnston called for any nominations from the floor. Seeing none, a motion was made by Jean McHenry and seconded by Pat Depugh that the nominees be elected as named. The vote passed unanimously.

Mrs. Blackman named the nominees for Deacon as follows:

Judy Coles to continue a new term,
Lisa Goddard
Nancy Herron
Melissa Gould

Nominations from the floor were sought. There were none. It was moved by Dennis Bailey and seconded by Jennifer Reyes that the slate of Deacons be elected as named. It was approved by a unanimous vote.

Outgoing Deacons Jennifer Reyes, Jan Smith, and Matt Hubbard were thanked for their service.



Happy
BIRTHDAY



Happy
ANNIVERSARY

1 Rebecca Brown
10 Clark Brown
13 LaVerne Jones
21 Ray Reyes
22 Gina Hipple
25 Breana Mitchell
26 Kathy Haywood
28 Hudson Bailey
29 Olivia Drydale

14 Derrrick & Amber Quinnn

Reminders

February 1 - 8:30-2:30 Elder Training
February 3 - 7pm Evening Prayer
February 8 - 9-11am Rehearsal for Scout Sunday
February 9 - Scout Sunday
February 10 - 7pm Ministry Team Meeting
February 15 - 8am Men's Breakfast
February 15 - 5pm Mariners Meeting
February 16 - Noon Deacon's Meeting
February 16 - 1:30pm Sweetheart Dinner
February 17 - 7pm Evening Prayer
February 21 - 12:30 Senior Lunch Group Meeting
February 24 - 7pm Session Meeting



COMING IN FEBRUARY

01 SATURDAY

8:30 Elder Training

02 SUNDAY

9:15 Discipleship

10:30 Worship

3:00 Girl Scouts

6:30 Choir Practice

03 MONDAY

6:00 Boy Scouts

7:00 Evening Prayer

7:00 CA Group

04 TUESDAY

7:00 Fellowship Hall

Gril Scouts

05 WEDNESDAY

12:30 Lunch Group

1:00 MidWeek Prayer

6:00 Open Table

6:30 Bible Study

7:00 CA Group

06 THURSDAY

6:30 Girl Scouts

07 FRIDAY

7:00 CA Group

08 SATURDAY

9-11 Rehearsal
for Scout Sunday

09 SUNDAY

9:15 Discipleship

10:30 Worship

Scout Sunday

6:30 Choir Practice

10 MONDAY

6:00 Boy Scouts

7:00 Ministry Team

7:00 CA Group

12 WEDNESDAY

12:30 Lunch Group

1:00 MidWeek Prayer

6:00 Open Table

6:30 Bible Study

7:00 CA Group

14 FRIDAY

7:00 CA Group

15 SATURDAY

8:00 Men's Breakfast

5:00 Mariners

16 SUNDAY

9:15 Discipleship

10:30 Worship

Noon Deacons

1:30 Sweetheart Dinner

3:00 Girl Scouts

6:30 Choir Practice

17 MONDAY

Office Closed for
President's Day

6:00 Boy Scouts

7:00 Evening Prayer

7:00 CA Group

19 WEDNESDAY

12:30 Lunch Group

1:00 MidWeek Prayer

6:00 Open Table

6:30 Bible Study

7:00 CA Group

20 THURSDAY

6:30 Girl Scouts

21 FRIDAY

12:30 Senior Lunch

Group

7:00 CA Group

23 SUNDAY

9:15 Discipleship

10:30 Worship

6:30 Choir Practice

24 MONDAY

6:00 Boy Scouts

7:00 Session

7:00 CA Group

26 WEDNESDAY

12:30 Lunch Group

1:00 MidWeek Prayer

6:00 Open Table

6:30 Bible Study

7:00 CA Group

28 FRIDAY

7:00 CA Group

29 SATURDAY

10:30-2pm CA Group

Chapter Meeting

Downstairs