



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Tested

Mark 1:12-39

1. Read Mark 1:12. **At once the Spirit sent him out into the wilderness, ¹³ and he was in the wilderness forty days, being tempted by Satan. He was with the wild animals, and angels attended him.** Mark in his characteristic style give us few details. We know from both Matthew and Luke that Jesus fasted for forty days just before he was tempted by Satan. Jesus used scripture to defeat the devil in his time of testing. Most Bible scholars think of these forty days as a time of preparation for Jesus before he began his public ministry. He was prepared through fasting, prayer, silence, solitude, and suffering. These are classic spiritual disciplines that help followers of Christ grow. Have you ever intentionally taken time to fast or chosen to be in solitude and silence for the purpose of Spiritual growth? If so, tell us that story.

2. Read Mark 1:14-15. **After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. ¹⁵ “The time has come,” he said. “The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!”** Kent Hughes commented on Jesus’ preaching by saying *“There was and is a radical ‘nowness’ to Jesus’ preaching. Now is the time to believe, now is the time to repent. He is here now asking ‘have you repented?’”* I find people reluctant to change and that they prefer to weigh out their options and delay doing things they know they should do. Jesus stands with this simple message, now! Now is the time to surrender all to me and change. Do you see the radical nowness of Jesus teaching? Do you put off making positive changes? What is one thing you know you should change now?

3. Read **Mark 1:16. 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 send you out to fish for people.” 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.** As you read these five verses, what specific words jump out to you?

What might be a message for you personally from these verses?

4. Read 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 impure 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 impure 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 impure spirits, and they obey him.”** ²⁸ News about him spread quickly over the whole region of Galilee. Mark in this section and the next is revealing to us the authority that Jesus has. First, we see Jesus has authority in his teaching. The teachers of the law taught in a boring legalistic manner. Jesus spoke directly with urgency and power. Paul commanded the young leader Titus to do the same thing when he instructed him to ... **Encourage and rebuke with all authority...** (Titus 2:15). Is it possible that you have more spiritual authority than you realize? Could you pray with and teach others with more authority? What do you think is the connection between faith and appropriately speaking with authority?

5. Read Mark 1:29-34. **As soon as they left the synagogue, they went with James and John to the home of Simon and Andrew.** ³⁰ Simon’s mother-in-law was in bed with a fever, and they immediately told Jesus about her. ³¹ So he went to her, took her hand, and helped her up. The fever left her and she began to wait on them. That evening after sunset the people brought to Jesus all the sick and demon-possessed. ³³ **The whole town gathered at the door,** ³⁴ **and Jesus healed many who had various diseases. He also drove out many demons, but he would not let the demons speak because they knew who he was.** Mark continues to show us that Jesus has authority. His authority extends over physical ailments and spiritual forces of evil. You don’t hear much about demons in our modern world. I have never heard a headline news report on demonic activity for example. On this topic C.S. Lewis says, *“One of the things that surprised me when I first read the New Testament seriously was that it talked so much about a dark power in the universe—a mighty evil spirit who was held to be the power behind death, disease, and sin. Christianity teaches...this universe is at war.”* What are your thoughts on this quote? Have you ever encountered something that you would describe as demonic activity?

How does Mark 1:29-34 impact you personally?