Living the
Mystery of Faith

THE YEAR OF MARK

# Come Away With Me

A Six-Week Lent Course



**"An invitation to step away from the busyness of life, into the Gospel of Mark and to rediscover the endlessly compelling person of Jesus."**

This year's Lent course is based on the Bishop of Horsham's 2027 Lent book, 'Come Away With Me' published by IVP.

In this guide, each of the six weekly themes are highlighted, together with questions for individuals and groups.

Copies of the book are available from all good book sellers including St Olav Christian Bookshop, Chichester
Website: www.stolavchristianbookshop.uk.
Email: mail@stolavchristianbookshop.uk

For parish bulk buy / sale or return
contact www.standrewsbookshop.co.uk.

Proceeds from Lent Course book sales will go to the charity Pancreatic Cancer Action.



# How to take part

## Weekly live-stream session

Every Monday during Lent, there will be a 90-minute LIVE online broadcast from a different part of the Diocese, with worship, and bible teaching from Bishop Ruth to inspire reflection and encourage discussion.

A recording of the live session will then be also available to watch at any time afterwards, using links which will be available on the dedicated diocesan webpage.

## Short bible discussion

For individuals or groups who would prefer a shorter discussion starter, Bishop Ruth is also recording a series of 20-minute bible talks to use. These videos will also be on the diocesan webpage: www.chichester.anglican.org/lent

## Discussion questions

There is plenty of choice in how you engage with both the Gospel of Mark and this year's Lent Course. Choose between 'Set One' or 'Set Two' questions to suit your group or personal study best:

Set One: More in-depth (designed to go alongside the course book).

Set Two: More accessible—no need to buy the book; simply read the Bible passage and use the questions.



# Dates, Venues, Hosts and Weekly Themes

Each Monday evening LIVE gatherings begins at 7.30pm.

Links to the live broadcasts and subsequent recordings will be available on the dedicated diocesan Lent 2027 webpage.

**Choose the venue nearest to you and come along!**

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| Monday<br>15 February | Southbourne (Chichester)<br>Host: The Revd Tom Robson | Revolutionary<br>King |
| Monday<br>22 February | St Mark's, Holbrook (Horsham/Crawley)<br>Host: The Revd Tim Stilwell | Holy<br>Healer |
| Monday<br>1 March | St Helen's, Ore (Eastbourne/Hastings)<br>Host: The Revd Carol Morrison | Compassionate<br>Shepherd |
| Monday<br>8 March | St Andrew's, Hove (Brighton/Lewes)<br>Host: The Revd Dan Henderson | Sovereign<br>God |
| Monday<br>15 March | St Swithun's, East Grinstead<br>Host: The Revd Luke Whiteman | Beloved<br>Son |
| Monday<br>22 March | Broadwater (Worthing)<br>Host: The Revd Ed Dines | Suffering<br>Saviour |



# **Week 1:** Revolutionary king

Read: Mark 3:7–19



## Set One: In-Depth

### The passage

1. Jesus tries to withdraw with his disciples, but the crowds pour in from the whole region (3:7–10). What do you notice about why they came, and what they hoped Jesus would be and do for them?
2. Look at the list of the Twelve disciples (3:16–19): fishermen, "sons of thunder", a Zealot, a tax collector and Judas. What does this choice of followers tell us about Jesus himself? What might it say to our church about who belongs and how we learn to work together?

### The chapter

3. Peter was called when he was tired and frustrated and still willing to say to Jesus - "Because you say so, I will"; Matthew was called from a tax collecting job where everyone resented him. What did Jesus see in each of them? Do their stories of calling resonate with your own?
4. Jesus appointed the Twelve "that they might be with him and that he might send them out" (3:14). Which comes more naturally to you, being with Jesus or being sent out by him? What happens to our service and witness when one gets ahead of the other?

### Our lives

5. Cast your mind back to when you first became aware of Jesus calling you to follow him. What were you like then, and how did you hear and respond? Looking at the highs and lows since, where can you trace the Lord's faithfulness, and what would you say now to your younger self?
6. +Ruth warns that it is possible "to be so busy doing the work of God for others that we neglect the work of God in us". How true is that of you in this season? What would it look like this Lent to accept Jesus' invitation simply to be with him?

# **Week 1:** Revolutionary king

Read: Mark 3:7–19



## Set Two: Accessible

**The story in brief: Huge crowds chase after Jesus. He goes up a hill and chooses twelve ordinary men to be his closest followers. He calls them to be with him, and then to go out and tell others about him.**

1. Why do you think so many people wanted to get close to Jesus?
2. Jesus chose fishermen, young northerners, a tax man who worked for the Roman rulers, and a man who wanted to fight the Roman rulers. What surprises you about the people Jesus chose?
3. How did you first start following Jesus? What does it mean for him to be the King of your life?
4. What helps you spend time with Jesus? What gets in the way?
5. Jesus does not call us so he can use us. He calls us because he loves us. What does God's love mean for you?

# **Week 2:** Holy healer

Read: Mark 5:21–34

**A note for leaders:**

This week touches on illness, women's health and unanswered prayer. Some group members may be carrying these things personally, so please be pastorally aware.

## Set One: In-Depth

### The passage

1. The woman reaches out to Jesus 'to be healed" (5:28). The word for 'being healed' is sozo: rescue and restoration of the whole person. In your experience have you ever seen that wider sense of healing that goes beyond the curing of an illness?
2. The disciples point out that crowds are pressing on Jesus from every side, yet only one touch draws power from him (5:30–31). What is the difference between being near Jesus and actively reaching for him? Where might we, as regular church members, settle for proximity rather than seeking Jesus' power?
3. The woman falls at Jesus' feet and tells him "the whole truth", and he calls her "Daughter" (5:32–34). Why do you think Jesus insists on a public encounter rather than letting her slip away? What does that one word, "Daughter", restore to her?

### The chapter

4. How do we hold together real trust in Jesus' power to heal with honesty about prayers that seem unanswered? What has helped you, or hurt you, in times of suffering?
5. +Ruth asks of church mission plans, "Where in the plan is the thing that only the living God can do?" What could audacious faith look like for your church this year?

### Our lives

6. Churches can fixate on certain sins and overlook others. Which blind spots might our church, or our group, have? How are you pursuing holiness in this season "not from guilty shame, but from forgiven freedom", and who in your life makes holiness look attractive?

# **Week 2:** Holy healer

Read: Mark 5:21–34

## Set Two: Accessible

**The story in brief: Jesus is on his way to help a girl who is dying. In the crowd is a woman who has been bleeding for twelve years. Because of her illness, everyone kept away from her. She touches Jesus' cloak and is healed. Jesus stops, finds her and calls her "Daughter".**

1. The woman had been ill and alone for twelve years. How do you think she felt as she reached out to touch Jesus?
2. Lots of people were close to Jesus in the crowd, but only one person reached out to him in faith. What is the difference between being near Jesus, and reaching out to him wanting his power?
3. Jesus called her "Daughter" (5:34). Why do you think that word mattered so much to her? And what about the people in the crowd listening - what would they make of this?
4. Sometimes we pray and people get better. Sometimes they don't, and we don't know why. What helps you keep trusting Jesus when life is hard?
5. Who near you is left out or alone? How could we show them Jesus' love this week?

# **Week 3:** Compassionate shepherd

Read: Mark 6:21–29 and 6:30–44

## Set One: In-Depth

### The passage

1. Mark sets two meals side by side: Herod's birthday banquet at the palace and Jesus' picnic in the hills. Compare the hosts, the guests, the atmosphere and what each meal leaves behind. What is Mark showing us about two very different kinds of king?
2. Herod "was greatly distressed" (6:26). What is really driving Herod here? Where do you see this kind of "ego-drama" in our world today?
3. "You give them something to eat." Why do you think Jesus asks the disciples to do something they cannot do?

### The chapter

4. The groups of people in hundreds and fifties look like an army forming, yet Jesus has them recline at a feast and gives them "not swords but words". What does this reveal about the revolution Jesus came to lead, and about what the crowd most deeply needed?
5. +Ruth says the honest answer to Jesus' call is often, "Lord, it is impossible. We have not got what it takes". Why is admitting our inadequacy the right starting point for ministry?

### Our lives

6. +Ruth reminds us that "me-first" power is not only the preserve of tyrants; we all live in our own ego-drama of "my kingdom come". In which relationships or settings might the Spirit be shining a light on your own me-first instincts? (Some may prefer to reflect on this in silence.)
7. Look around at the needs of our community: who is hungry for a good shepherd, and for the bread of life? What are the "five loaves" this group or church could place in Jesus' hands?

# **Week 3:** Compassionate shepherd

Read: Mark 6:21–29 and 6:30–44

## Set Two: Accessible

**The story in brief: King Herod throws a party for himself and has John the Baptist killed. Then Jesus goes to a quiet place with his friends, but a huge crowd follows. Jesus teaches them, and then performs a miracle as he feeds 5,000 people with just five loaves and two fish.**

1. Herod's party was all about Herod. Jesus' meal was all about others. What are the differences between these two kings?
2. When Jesus saw the crowd, "he had compassion on them" (6:34). What does compassion mean? Who do you think Jesus feels compassion for in our area today?
3. The disciples didn't have what they thought they needed to feed the crowd. When have you felt you didn't have enough to do what God asked? Have you ever felt God has provided in an amazing way?
4. What are your "five loaves and two fish"? What small things could you give to Jesus for him to use? How could Jesus multiply what we give him?
5. Herod always put himself first and selfishly hurt others. Where do you find it hardest not to put yourself first?

# **Week 4:** Sovereign God

Read: Mark 6:45–52

## The passage

1. Jesus "made his disciples get into the boat" and then the storm came (6:45–46). What difference does it make to recognise that some of our hardest struggles come because we have obeyed God, not because we have strayed?
2. From the mountainside Jesus "saw the disciples straining at the oars", yet he came to them "shortly before dawn", around three in the morning (6:48). What do you make of the long wait? How might this story have spoken to Mark's first readers under Nero's persecution, crying, "Jesus, where are you in this?"
3. In the Hebrew Scriptures the sea stands for chaos and death, and only God "treads on the waves of the sea" (Job 9:8). What is Jesus claiming about himself by walking on the water? Why do you think the disciples were more terrified by the sight of Jesus than by the storm?
4. The story ends with a hard note: "they had not understood about the loaves; their hearts were hardened" (6:52). Why do you think Mark ends this way? What makes it possible to see Jesus do extraordinary things and still hold back from trusting him?

## The chapter

5. +Ruth explains Jesus' offer of courage, received as a gift of comfort and joy in God's presence. When have you tried to grit your teeth and summon courage, and when have you received it from God?

## Our lives

6. Do you find it reassuring that the disciples seemed to be going backwards in their faith? How honest can we be with one another about our own wobbles?
7. +Ruth notes that many Christians spend themselves "stepping towards all kinds of difficulty in other people's lives", in Christian service. What prayer support do you need for the ways you are working to help others?

# **Week 4:** Sovereign God

Read: Mark 6:45–52

## Set Two: Accessible

**The story in brief: Jesus sends his friends across the lake in a boat. A storm brings wind and waves and they row hard all night. Just before dawn, Jesus walks out to them on the water. He says, "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid." He gets into the boat, and the wind stops.**

1. The disciples were in the storm because they had done what Jesus told them. Have you ever had a hard time even when you were obeying Jesus?
2. Jesus "saw the disciples straining at the oars" (6:48). How does it help to know that Jesus sees you when you are struggling?
3. In the Bible, only God can walk on the sea, and the sea is a symbol of darkness and chaos. What does this story tell us about who Jesus is and what he has come to do?
4. Jesus says "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid" (6:50). What in your life do you need Jesus to give you courage for? As Christians what are the things we do not need to be frightened of because of Jesus?
5. Even after seeing this miracle, the disciples had hearts that felt hard towards Jesus (6:52). Why do you think they felt like that?

**Week 5:** Beloved Son

Read: Mark 9:2–8

## The passage

1. "His clothes became dazzling white" (9:3). Have you ever had a moment of seeing or understanding the glory of Jesus more clearly than before?
2. "They no longer saw anyone with them except Jesus" (9:8). Why are the disciples safe in the presence of an all-holy God?

## The chapter

3. What is the difference between seeing Christianity as "learning what you need to do to please God" or instead as "a relationship of rescue"?
4. +Ruth describes worship as our participation, by grace, in the love within the trinity of Father, Son, and Spirit. How could this change the way we come to worship on a Sunday, or in private prayer?

## Our lives

5. Which comes more naturally to you, thinking about God or experiencing his love? How have you known yourself loved by God? What difference could God's love for you make in the week ahead?

**Week 5:** Beloved Son

Read: Mark 9:2-8



**The story in brief: Jesus takes Peter, James and John up a high mountain. Jesus' clothes shine with brilliant heavenly light. Moses and Elijah, two great heroes of the Bible, appear and talk with him. A cloud covers them, and God's voice says, "This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to him!"**

1. If you had been on that mountain, what do you think you would have felt?
2. Jesus was showing them he came from heaven and he is returning to heaven because he is God's Son. Do you believe that is true?
3. God the Father said, "Listen to him!" How do you listen to Jesus in everyday life?
4. God loves Jesus, and he loves us with that same love. How easy or hard is it for you to believe that?
5. We often look down at our phones or our worries, but God invites us to look out and up to him and think of Jesus in heaven now praying for us. What difference does this make?

# **Week 6:** Suffering saviour

Read: Mark 14:32–42



## The passage

1. Jesus "began to be deeply distressed and troubled. 'My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death'" (14:33–34). Ruth notes no one inventing a religion would describe their God collapsing in fear. What does it mean to you that Jesus faced death like this?
2. "Abba, Father … everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will" (14:36). Ruth explains the cup as God's justice against evil. How do you respond to her conclusion: "my sin must be very serious for this to be needed. And I must be very precious for this to be chosen"?
3. What does Jesus' request to "watch and pray" look like in ordinary life today?

## The chapter

4. +Ruth points out that the bible's vision of the 'good life' is where everything that happens to us conforms us to be more like Jesus. Can you share an example of when God used something difficult to make you more like Jesus?
5. "We live in a culture that wants to microwave Christian maturity." Which spiritual practices or disciplines help you to mature spiritually?

## Our lives

6. Over six weeks we have met Jesus as revolutionary king, holy healer, compassionate shepherd, sovereign God, beloved Son and suffering saviour. Which picture of him will you carry into Easter, and how has it changed you?
7. The baton of the good news of Jesus is now in our hands: who will you pass it on to? Pray for them this week and for your witness.

# **Week 6:** Suffering saviour

Read: Mark 14:32–42



**The story in brief: On the night before he dies on the cross, Jesus goes to a garden called Gethsemane to pray. He is full of sorrow. He prays, "Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will." He asks his friends to stay awake and pray, but they keep falling asleep. Jesus chose to go to the cross for us, trusting his heavenly Father completely.**

1. Jesus was very upset and troubled (14:33–34). What does it mean to you that Jesus knows what it feels like to be afraid?
2. Jesus prayed, "Not what I will, but what you will" (14:36). Why is that such a hard prayer to pray?
3. Peter promised he would never let Jesus down, then fell asleep three times. When have you meant well but got it wrong? How does Jesus treat us when we fail?
4. Why did Jesus agree to die? Why was his death needed?
5. Over these six weeks, which story about Jesus has helped you most in your faith?