



“The Gospel of Mark”
Session 2 – Restoring Purity and Wholeness
Mark Chapters 5 - 7
September 17, 2023

Opening Prayer

Holy God, you have always called your people to holy living – proclaiming your mighty acts, bearing witness to your truth, and offering our whole selves to your service. By your spirit, may these stories of the community Jesus gathered and sent yield new insight into how to live as your faithful people today. Amen.

Opening Question...

How do you react when you hear the word evangelism? When, if ever, have you risked something to talk to others about your faith?

Session 2 Video

- Which of Amy-Jill Levine’s statements resonated with you the most?

- What questions did this video segment raise for you?

Scripture Focus: Mark 6:7-13 (Volunteer to read, others close Bibles)

- Amy-Jill Levine suggests several reasons Jesus may have sent out his disciples in pairs. What do you think?

- Why does Jesus order his disciples to take so little when they go out? When have you discovered something you thought would be important wasn't – or vice versa?

- Amy-Jill Levine notes Jesus anticipates his disciples will receive hospitality. This hospitality involves potential risk and reward for those extending and receiving it. When was a time you received hospitality from a stranger? A time you extended hospitality to a stranger? How does our congregation practice hospitality?

- How does this anointing, a tactile, embodied prayer, communicate the gospel in ways words cannot? Are there times when you find human touch to be healing?

- Concerning evangelism: How do we discern which risks we should take, which risks we should not take, and which risks we might not want to take but should?

Scripture Focus: Mark 6:14-29 (Volunteer to read, others close Bible)

- Amy-Jill Levine states Mark tells this story between Jesus' commission to his disciples and their return to make the point: "Proclaim a Messiah and do deeds of mighty power in his name, and authorities will notice, not in a good way." What do you think about this statement?
- Why do you think Antipas arrested John? Why do you think Antipas was interested in what John had to say? Have you ever been both attracted and resistant to what someone had to say? The good news?
- Amy-Jill Levine suggests that while "blaming the evil woman" is an easy and common move," Antipas is ultimately responsible for John's death. Do you agree?
- If you could add to Mark's Gospel, how would you end the stories of Antipas, Herodias, and Herodias's daughter?
- How might John's death anticipate Jesus' death? Can you think of people among the "countless others who have done the right thing, at the cost of their own lives"?

Scripture Focus: Mark 7:1-15 (Volunteer to read, others close Bible)

- What translations and rituals help define your identity? Your family's? Our congregation's?
- The handwashing at issue in this story is about “symbolism, not hygiene,” Amy-Jill Levine explains, because it is a way of “extending priestly privileges to the people” – one of the Pharisee’s main concerns. How does this help shape your understanding of this passage and their approach to Jesus?
- How has our congregation adapted rituals, traditions, and other practices for new situations? What have not been adapted that maybe should be?
- Amy-Jill Levine points out that Jesus didn't abolish Jewish dietary regulations in this passage, but is making the point: “What is permitted is not necessarily what is “desirable”.” How do you distinguish between what is permissible and desirable in your life?

Closing Thought...

The opening of Mark speaks of the “Good News”. What “Good News” does Mark have for you in the opening four chapters.

Finish the following statement...

“Good News in Mark 5 - 7 for me means _____”

Closing Prayer...

Lord Jesus, you did not promise your disciples that following you would be easy. We cannot walk in your way and live in your name without risk. Whether the risks to which you call us seem small or great, may your Spirit strengthen us to take them, that we might show to others and know more fully for ourselves the life-changing love of God. Amen.

"The Gospel of Mark"

Session 3 – Sacrifice, Ransom, Prophet, Messiah

Mark Chapters 8 - 10

(Chapter 3 in the Book)

5:00 PM

September 24, 2023
