



Part I : Jesus in Galilee

Readings for the week : Mark 1:14-3:6

Introduction

- **Pray :** Take a few moments of silence and invite the Holy Spirit to guide your discussion.
- **Share :**
 - Last week, we looked at the notion in Mark's Gospel that Jesus is the "Savior King" (the Messiah). How did your decision to follow Jesus as King manifest itself this week? Have you had the opportunity to talk about Him, or has your choice to follow Him generated reluctance or criticism around you?
 - What have you learned from this week's reading?

Short summary of Mark 1:1-3:6

- At the very beginning of the text, Mark presents his story as the Good News about Jesus, "the Christ, the Son of God" (1:1).
- In addition to this title, Jesus is presented in terms of what he does: he proclaims the Good News of the Kingdom and manifests the power of this Kingdom through healings and deliverances.
- Jesus' activity and teaching arouse wonder and enthusiasm on the part of the crowd, but also suspicion and hostility on the part of the Pharisees and scribes. The end of the passage informs us that the latter are so hostile that they begin to plan his assassination (3:6).

Excerpt - The authority of Jesus

Read Mk 1:21-28

- In this text, the presence of Jesus provokes a very strong reaction among both people and spirits. It seems that the mere presence of King Jesus shakes the world of darkness. Jesus comes to threaten the kingdoms that stand in opposition to him. In this week's reading, we discover that he threatens the "kingdom" of the religious (the scribes and Pharisees) and the kingdom of demons.
- Demons are spiritual entities whose purpose is to spoil the lives of human beings. They are most effective in their work when they act incognito. Here, this spirit was quietly ruining the life of a religious person (someone in the synagogue). But he loses his nerve when Jesus comes into the room. He causes a scandal, and Jesus effortlessly rebukes him.
- In this passage, as in many others, Jesus commands the demon to be silent lest it reveal Jesus' identity. Read verse 34 again. As spirits, the demons recognize Jesus' true identity and prepare for confrontation (they know he has come to wage war against them), but Jesus postpones this confrontation until the opportune moment. Only later must his identity become fully manifest, and his final confrontation with the forces of darkness come.
- Count: how many times do you find the verb "to teach" or the noun "teaching" in this passage?
- This repetition of the notion of teaching shows Jesus' role as a teacher from God. He is a teacher who stands out from all the others (the scribes) because he is endowed with unheard-of authority (read verse 27 again).
- The association between Jesus' teaching and the expulsion of the demon shows that Jesus brings a liberating and powerful word. Here, Mark is not interested in the content of the teaching, but in its impact. Unlike the scribes (who had a possessed man in their midst), Jesus brings a truly liberating word. He has real authority because, like God, he "speaks and the thing happens" (Ps 33:9).

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Authority

- Where do we encounter the liberating word of Jesus, full of authority to change our lives? Here are three ways to let Jesus speak with authority: 1) read the Bible (+ study and meditate on it); 2) gather on Sundays to hear the Gospel preached; 3) listen to the Holy Spirit give us prophetic words.
- These three means are interdependent: it's in community and under the authority of the Bible that we really discern the words that come from God.
- What steps can you take to grow in your ability to listen to the liberating word of Jesus?

For more information on this series or for more resources to help you move forward with God, please contact Ruben (ruben.binyet@icf-ge.ch).

To deepen and develop your faith, don't forget to sign up for the next ICF-College session ([info on icf-ge.ch](http://info.on.icf-ge.ch)).