



## **Shelby Christian Church**

CORE 52: LIVING IT: GOSPEL

MARK 1:1, JOHN 2. ACTS 20:24, ROMANS 1:16, GALATIANS 1:6-9 \* 7/13/2025

### **INTRODUCTION**

**What do you usually think of when you hear the phrase the Gospel?**

**Can you think of some times in your life that you received good news? What was it? How did it make you feel?**

**Have you ever had the privilege of relaying unexpected good news to someone else? How did it make you feel to be able to tell good news?**

**Give an example of a way you've seen Christians or the Church get their duty of the sharing the gospel wrong. What are some of the consequences of that?**

Nothing quite matches the joy of hearing good news. That blur in the x-ray? That wasn't cancer, it was an x-ray malfunction. You don't have the flu; you're going to have a baby. Your child has been in an automobile accident, but everyone is okay and without injury. There are hardly words to describe how much joy a bit of good news can bring us.

The gospel of Jesus Christ is the best news that the world has ever known. The wonder of knowing that God is real, that He loves us, and that He offers forgiveness for our sins through the atoning death of His Son Jesus is simply incredible. Finding out that death has been defeated by the resurrection of Christ is more than we could have dreamed of. It is amazing to hear this good news, and it is a privilege to tell it to others.

### **UNDERSTANDING**

**HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ MARK 1:1**

**Why do you think Mark starts his Gospel this way, without a birth narrative or genealogy like Matthew or Luke?**

**What does the term "gospel" mean in this context, and how might Mark's audience have understood it?**

**Why is it significant that Jesus is called both "Christ" (Messiah) and "Son of God"?**

**How might this opening verse set the tone or theme for the rest of Mark's Gospel?**

Mark 1:1 is not a throwaway introduction—it's a bold declaration. It prepares readers for the entire message of the Gospel: Jesus is the Savior King, the divine Son, who brings the good news of God's kingdom. Everything that follows in Mark builds upon this foundational truth.

## HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ JOHN 2

**How do these events from the very beginning of Jesus' early ministry foreshadow the Good News he was here to bring?**

**In what areas of your life do you need Jesus to bring transformation?**

**How can this passage reshape our understanding of joy, celebration, or provision in Christ?**

John 2 is the first of Jesus' seven signs in John's Gospel—miracles that reveal His glory and identity. It records the beginning of Jesus' public ministry through two key events: His first miracle at a wedding in Cana, where He turns water into wine, and His cleansing of the temple in Jerusalem, where He drives out merchants and challenges corrupt worship. At the wedding, Jesus reveals His divine power and grace by providing abundant wine, symbolizing the joy of the new covenant. In the temple, He asserts His authority over true worship and points to His death and resurrection by referring to His body as the true temple. These events begin to unveil Jesus' identity as the Messiah, the Son of God, and the fulfillment of God's promises.

## HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ ACTS 20:24

**What does Paul say about how he views his own life?**

**What is Paul's main goal or "only aim" according to this verse?**

**How does Paul describe the task Jesus gave him?**

**What challenges keep you from fully embracing your calling to testify to God's grace?**

Paul is speaking to the elders of the church in Ephesus, likely for the last time. He is on his way to Jerusalem, knowing that suffering and imprisonment await him (Acts 20:22–23). This verse is part of his emotional farewell, showing his deep resolve and focus.

## HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ ROMANS 1:16

**Why might someone be tempted to be ashamed of the gospel in Paul's time—or in ours? In what situations do you personally feel tempted to stay silent about your faith?**

**What does Paul mean when he calls the gospel "the power of God"?**

**Why is it significant that salvation is offered "first to the Jew, then to the Gentile"?**

This verse serves as Paul's thesis statement for the entire book of Romans. It introduces the major themes he will unfold—the gospel, the power of God, salvation by faith, and the universal reach of the gospel.

Paul is writing to believers in Rome, the center of the world's power and culture at the time. To boldly declare the gospel in such a setting was countercultural and potentially costly, yet Paul states that he is unashamed.

## **HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ GALATIANS 1:6-9**

**What does Paul say they are doing to the gospel?**

**How does Paul describe the “different gospel”?**

**How does this “different gospel” differ from the true gospel Paul preached?**

**Who does Paul say might preach a different gospel?**

**What might “perverting the gospel” look like in today's context?**

Paul wrote this letter to the churches in Galatia to address a serious crisis: some were abandoning the gospel of grace and turning to a distorted message that required following the Jewish law—especially circumcision—as necessary for salvation.

## **APPLICATION**

**Share with the group the last bit of good news you received as well as the last "good news" you couldn't wait to share.**

**Are you uncomfortable giving Jesus the title Emperor? Why or why not? What difference would it make in the church if we actually treated Jesus as an Emperor and not merely a Savior?**

**What practical things could we do as individuals or as a group to submit to Jesus as our King?**

**What is one area of your life currently that you do not allow Jesus Christ to rule and reign in? What can you do differently this week to allow Him to?**

## **PRAYER**

## **COMMENTARY**

### **Mark 1:1**

“The beginning” - Mark opens his Gospel with a declaration, not a narrative. This phrase echoes Genesis 1:1, suggesting a new creation is underway through Jesus. Mark is not merely starting a biography—he's announcing a new chapter in God's redemptive plan. It's the inauguration of the good news that changes everything.

“The gospel” - The term gospel (Greek: euangelion) means “good news.” In the Roman world, it was often used for imperial announcements (e.g., the birth or victory of a Caesar). Mark intentionally uses

this word to show that Jesus, not Caesar, brings the true good news—a kingdom not of power and oppression but of grace and salvation.

“Of Jesus Christ” - The name “Jesus” means “The Lord saves,” and “Christ” (Greek: Christos, Hebrew: Messiah) means “Anointed One.” Mark identifies Jesus not just as a teacher or prophet, but as God’s chosen and promised deliverer. This sets the tone for a Gospel that is focused on Jesus’ identity and mission.

“The Son of God” - This title emphasizes Jesus’ divine nature and unique relationship with the Father. While others might be called sons of God in a general sense (Israel, kings, angels), Mark declares from the outset that Jesus is the Son in a unique, divine way. This statement becomes a major theme in Mark and is affirmed again at key moments (e.g., Mark 1:11; 9:7; 15:39).

## **John 2**

vv. 1–2 A wedding in Cana of Galilee—likely a small town near Nazareth. Weddings were major community events lasting several days. Jesus, His disciples, and His mother Mary are all present, suggesting close ties to the family.

vv. 3–5 Running out of wine was a major social embarrassment and breach of hospitality. Mary presents the problem to Jesus, though His response seems cautious: “Woman, what does this have to do with me? My hour has not yet come.” “Woman” was respectful in that culture (like “Ma’am”), not harsh. “My hour” refers to His path to the cross—His glorification.

vv. 6–10 Jesus turns 120–180 gallons of water into excellent wine. The water jars were for ceremonial washing—symbolic of the old covenant. The new wine may represent the abundance and joy of the new covenant. The master of the feast is amazed at the quality—Jesus’ provision is abundant and superior.

v. 11 The sign reveals Jesus’ glory, and the disciples believe in Him. It’s not just about meeting a need; it reveals who He is—Messiah, Son of God, Lord of creation.

v. 12 Jesus visits Jerusalem for Passover, a central Jewish festival. This event shows Jesus’ zeal for pure worship and foreshadows His coming sacrifice.

vv. 13–17- Jesus finds the temple filled with merchants and money changers. The outer court (for Gentiles) had become a marketplace. Jesus drives them out with a whip, overturning tables. He rebukes them for turning His Father’s house into a place of commerce. This fulfills Psalm 69:9: “Zeal for your house will consume me.”

vv. 18–22 Jewish leaders demand a sign to prove His authority. Jesus responds: “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.” They misunderstand Him, thinking He’s speaking of the physical temple. John clarifies: Jesus was speaking of His body—His death and resurrection. This is the true sign of His authority.

vv. 23–25 Many believe because of His signs, but Jesus doesn’t entrust Himself to them. He knows the human heart—belief based on miracles is shallow without true faith. This prepares readers for Nicodemus (John 3), who also struggles with true spiritual understanding.

## **Acts 20:24**

Paul is not suggesting that life has no value, but that his own comfort, safety, and personal desires are secondary to Christ's calling. He is expressing a willingness to suffer and even die for the sake of the gospel (cf. Philippians 1:21). This reflects a radical reorientation of priorities—eternal purpose over self-preservation.

Paul frequently uses athletic imagery (cf. 1 Cor. 9:24–27; 2 Tim. 4:7). The “race” refers to the lifelong journey of faith and obedience. His goal is not just to start well but to persevere and complete the mission God gave him.

Paul sees his ministry not as a career but as a divine assignment. His task is not self-chosen but assigned by Jesus, giving it eternal weight and urgency. Every believer, in some form, is also entrusted with a “task” or calling from Christ (Ephesians 2:10).

Paul summarizes his mission in one phrase: proclaiming the gospel. The gospel is described here as “the good news of God's grace”—not judgment, not law, but unearned favor from God through Christ. This grace-centered message is what Paul lived and died to proclaim.

## **Romans 1:16**

Paul acknowledges the cultural pressure and shame associated with preaching a crucified Savior (see 1 Corinthians 1:18–25). The gospel was foolishness to Greeks and offensive to Jews, yet Paul refuses to be silent or timid about it. This phrase expresses bold confidence and deep conviction in the truth of the message.

The gospel is not merely good advice or inspiring words; it is divine power. The Greek word *dynamis* (from which we get “dynamite”) implies explosive, life-changing force. God's power is embodied in the message of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection—not in human effort or wisdom.

The result of this power is salvation—rescue from sin, death, judgment, and alienation from God. Salvation is both instant (justification) and progressive (sanctification), ultimately leading to glorification. This is not just about personal peace—it's about being made right with God.

The only requirement is faith—not birthright, not works, not rituals. Salvation is open to all people, but it must be received by belief (trust, dependence, surrender) and baptism. This highlights the radical inclusivity of the gospel—available to all, regardless of background.

This reflects God's historical plan: the gospel came through the Jews (Jesus was Jewish, and the early church began in Jerusalem). “Then to the Gentile” shows that the gospel is now going to all nations, fulfilling God's promise to bless the whole world through Abraham (Genesis 12:3). It is not about favoritism, but chronology—Jews first, then all nations.