



# Groups

**Thanks for checking out our sermon-based Study Guides!** If you've never used our Study Guides before, you'll find some basic instructions beginning at the bottom of page 2.

**NEW this year: These study guides will be written by thoughtful and experienced Life Group Leaders. As always, use these guides as a head-start in your own preparation as the needs and culture is different from each group. And of course, please continue to give us feedback.**

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## **LIFE GROUP STUDY GUIDE**

for the Sermon given on January 1, 2023

by Pastor Ruthie Seiders

"THE TIME HAS COME" - Mark 1:14-20

Question: Have you heard an invitation from Jesus but no yet responded?

Bottom Line: Sometimes obedience means leaving some questions unanswered and choosing to trust in the One who holds the future.

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Happy New Year! We hope you enjoyed spending time with family and friends over the Christmas holiday. Welcome back to Grace Chapel and our first sermon of 2023.

During the advent season we spent most of our time in the gospels of Luke and Matthew who recorded most of the birth narrative. Today, Pastor Ruthie brings us to the book of Mark which focuses on Jesus' message and ministry: his proclamation of the kingdom of God and his invitation to repent and believe the good news.

Since September 2022 we have been utilizing some of the gifting and passion of talented and experienced group leaders and so much of this study has been created by one of our seasoned Life Group Leaders. Thank you for being here today.

Let's begin in prayer before we begin reading and discussing our text.

### **Main Scripture Reading: Mark 1:14-20**

<sup>14</sup> After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. <sup>15</sup> *"The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!"*

<sup>16</sup> 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. <sup>17</sup> “Come, follow me,” Jesus said, “and I will send you out to fish for people.” <sup>18</sup> At once they left their nets and followed him.

<sup>19</sup> When he had gone a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John in a boat, preparing their nets. <sup>20</sup> Without delay he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men and followed him.

### Group Discussion Questions

1. New Year’s Day is a time for new beginnings: looking to the future, trying new things and leaving the old behind. Pastor Ruthie began the message by asking us if we are ready to move forward. As Isaiah 43:19 puts it, *“See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?”* Is your mind open and your heart receptive to the new things that God has planned for you this year?
2. In Mark’s account of Jesus recruiting his first disciples, each of them drop their fishing nets immediately to follow him. Much is left to the imagination of how these men were able to give up their families and livelihood at the drop of a hat. How do you think you would have responded to Jesus if you were one of the fisherman?
3. Pastor Ruthie shared a personal story of how her family owed the IRS \$2000 and how she was uncertain that God would provide for them. Even as “believers”, when faced with hardships and suffering we can vacillate between faith and doubt. Can you think of a time when you have struggled with this? Describe the situation, what you did (or didn’t do) and what the outcome was.
4. Have you heard an invitation from Jesus, but not yet responded? Take this opportunity to discuss where you are in your spiritual journey with your small group. Perhaps you are interested in ...
  - a. Learning more ([grace.org/alpha](http://grace.org/alpha))
  - b. Making a public declaration of your faith ([grace.org/baptism](http://grace.org/baptism))
  - c. Serving ([grace.org/serve](http://grace.org/serve))
  - d. Giving ([grace.org/give](http://grace.org/give))
  - e. Becoming a member of our church ([grace.org/membership](http://grace.org/membership))

### Homework Until Next Time:

Ask the members of your LG to complete the Discipleship Planning Tool and the GPS Assessment Tool before your next meeting. Here is some fresh language:

*We’re all on a journey; where is yours taking you?*

The beauty of the way of Jesus is that it's not just good for us, it's good for the world around us. But that kind of beautiful life doesn't come from just hearing the words of Jesus; it comes from putting them into practice. Three kinds of practice, actually:

- The with-God life of our personal habits and routines;
- The with-others life of our genuine and life-changing relationships; and
- The for-the-world life that makes an impact beyond our immediate homes and families, into our communities and beyond.

Growing as disciples of Jesus will make a Kingdom difference in our world and a transformative difference in our lives as believers and as a group. And these resources are helpful in identifying the next steps for our journeys.

### Let's Pray

**Support for the Leader (These Teaching Points are provided to help the group leader make connections from the message to their group with both insights from the Biblical text and also opportunities in the life of our church).**

#### Teaching Points:

- In Mark 1:15, the Greek word *chairos* is used for time. This is not the same as chronological time (*chronos* in Greek), but means a significant moment in time. Jesus is introducing the arrival of the kingdom as he is present, and a kingdom which is going to continue through those who will follow him and proclaim his message long after he returns to the Father
- Repent = a change of mind, heart, attitude
- When Jesus calls us, we have a choice: to follow him or to turn away

#### For Further Biblical Study:

John 1:1-5; 14

<sup>1</sup> In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup> He was with God in the beginning. <sup>3</sup> Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. <sup>4</sup> In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. <sup>5</sup> The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome<sup>[a]</sup> it.

<sup>14</sup> The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Philippians 4:6-7

<sup>6</sup> Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. <sup>7</sup> And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Mark 9:14-29

<sup>14</sup> When they came to the other disciples, they saw a large crowd around them and the teachers of the law arguing with them. <sup>15</sup> As soon as all the people saw Jesus, they were overwhelmed with wonder and ran to greet him.

<sup>16</sup> “What are you arguing with them about?” he asked.

<sup>17</sup> A man in the crowd answered, “Teacher, I brought you my son, who is possessed by a spirit that has robbed him of speech. <sup>18</sup> Whenever it seizes him, it throws him to the ground. He foams at the mouth, gnashes his teeth and becomes rigid. I asked your disciples to drive out the spirit, but they could not.”

<sup>19</sup> “You unbelieving generation,” Jesus replied, “how long shall I stay with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring the boy to me.”

<sup>20</sup> So they brought him. When the spirit saw Jesus, it immediately threw the boy into a convulsion. He fell to the ground and rolled around, foaming at the mouth.

<sup>21</sup> Jesus asked the boy’s father, “How long has he been like this?”

“From childhood,” he answered. <sup>22</sup> “It has often thrown him into fire or water to kill him. But if you can do anything, take pity on us and help us.”

<sup>23</sup> “‘If you can’?” said Jesus. “Everything is possible for one who believes.”

<sup>24</sup> Immediately the boy’s father exclaimed, “I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!”

<sup>25</sup> When Jesus saw that a crowd was running to the scene, he rebuked the impure spirit. “You deaf and mute spirit,” he said, “I command you, come out of him and never enter him again.”

<sup>26</sup> The spirit shrieked, convulsed him violently and came out. The boy looked so much like a corpse that many said, “He’s dead.” <sup>27</sup> But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him to his feet, and he stood up.

<sup>28</sup> After Jesus had gone indoors, his disciples asked him privately, “Why couldn’t we drive it out?”

<sup>29</sup> He replied, “This kind can come out only by prayer.”<sup>[a]</sup>

Matthew 19:16-30

<sup>16</sup> Just then a man came up to Jesus and asked, “Teacher, what good thing must I do to get eternal life?”

<sup>17</sup> “Why do you ask me about what is good?” Jesus replied. “There is only One who is good. If you want to enter life, keep the commandments.”

<sup>18</sup> “Which ones?” he inquired.

Jesus replied, “‘You shall not murder, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal, you shall not give false testimony, <sup>19</sup> honor your father and mother,’<sup>[a]</sup> and ‘love your neighbor as yourself.’<sup>[b]</sup>”

<sup>20</sup> “All these I have kept,” the young man said. “What do I still lack?”

<sup>21</sup> Jesus answered, “If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.”

<sup>22</sup> When the young man heard this, he went away sad, because he had great wealth.

<sup>23</sup> Then Jesus said to his disciples, “Truly I tell you, it is hard for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of heaven. <sup>24</sup> Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God.”

<sup>25</sup> When the disciples heard this, they were greatly astonished and asked, “Who then can be saved?”

<sup>26</sup> Jesus looked at them and said, “With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.”

<sup>27</sup> Peter answered him, “We have left everything to follow you! What then will there be for us?”

<sup>28</sup> Jesus said to them, “Truly I tell you, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. <sup>29</sup> And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife<sup>[c]</sup> or children or fields for my sake will receive a hundred times as much and will inherit eternal life. <sup>30</sup> But many who are first will be last, and many who are last will be first.

### How to Use These Study Guides:

- Consider sending out the Scripture passage to your group members ahead of time.
- Begin each meeting with a short time of checking in with one another.
- You may want to begin the discussion by reading the Scripture passage together out loud, or by summarizing the passage if everyone has read it ahead of time.
- Don’t feel like you need to discuss every question included in the Study Guide. Pick one or two to start with, and see how the conversation flows.
- If your group meets over Zoom:
  - You may need to do more overt facilitating over Zoom than you would in person. Feel free to call on people to invite them to share.
  - Try to be sensitive to attention spans over Zoom—keep the meetings shorter than they would be in person.
- Be sure to set aside time for sharing prayer requests and praying together.

**Group Leader Support:** Please reach out to your Campus Pastor or your Coach if you have any questions about leading your group or concerns about your group dynamic. If you have questions about or feedback on the Study Guides, please reach out to Pastor Tim or Grace Lee from the Group Life team.