



21 - 27 February 2021 Beloved

Related Bible reading(s): Mark 1.9-15

Bible study on Mark 1.9-15

This study can be used by a small family/ household group, or by an online group, or – sometimes with a little adaptation - by an individual.

See our [Guidelines for a weekly Bible study](#)

Begin with an opening prayer

Loving God, thank you
for drawing us together to be your people.
Help us, as we meet together,
to see ourselves as you see us.
Give us faith to hear your words of love
beyond some of the hard realities of our lives.
May your Holy Spirit guide and inspire us
to recognise your presence in all we do.

Amen.

Read the passage

Consider different ways to read the text. For example, hearing it in more than one version of the Bible.

In an online group, you could share parts between those present, or use/adapt this week's Share the Word suggestion: Use the Jump to this week's menu on the right to go to Share the Word and scroll down to find the Gospel reading.

Explore and respond to the text

Start by reading the Bible notes below. You may want to read them more than once, or pause after each paragraph to reflect on what you have read.

Bible notes

In Mark we first meet Jesus at his baptism by John. Rising from the waters, Jesus sees the heavens opening, recalling the prophetic voice in the wilderness, 'O that you would tear open the heavens and come down' (Isaiah 64.1). As 'a wind from God swept over the face of the waters' (Genesis 1.2), so Jesus rises from the deep to see the Spirit descending like a dove on him. Anointed as God's Son (Psalm 2.7), the beloved servant equipped with the Spirit (Isaiah 42.1), he perceives God's pleasure, echoing Genesis 1.31, 'God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good'. The scene also recalls the dove flying over the receding waters in Genesis 8.8-12, and 'the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature' from the first reading (Genesis 9.16). As God's creative wind swept the waters and blew the clouds of the covenant with every creature, so Jesus is driven by the Spirit to test his calling, which like Israel's is for the sake of the whole world. Living with wild animals fulfils Isaiah's vision of creation renewed (Isaiah 11.6-9; 65.25), and the ministry of angels includes their singing the Creator's praise (Job 38.7). Jesus is ready to preach the good news of the rule of God, 'the King of Israel, and his Redeemer' (Isaiah 44.6). In Galilee, with its mixed population of Jews and Gentiles, Jesus announces that now is the time to accept this rule, which calls for a change of heart and a deep commitment.

Reflection

Spend a few moments thinking about what stands out for you from the Bible reading. This idea may help.

The Spirit drives the Father's beloved Son into the wilderness. There the Son recognises a calling extending beyond himself, returning with good news for all. Lent is an opportunity for us to be driven into the wilderness, perhaps by giving up things we rely on to protect us from our fears and our hopes. 'The wild beasts' we fear might be able to direct us to more generous insights and exciting possibilities, for our own and others' flourishing. 'The angels' we often overlook might seek to renew our hope by recognising those who minister to us. Perhaps an inspirational teacher we have almost forgotten, or a kind friend with whom we are losing touch.

See also:



In conversation with the Scriptures

Questions for reflection

You may wish to use these questions and the picture to help you think about or discuss issues arising from this week's Bible passage.



- What do you see when you look in the mirror?

- Who or what helps you to feel affirmed?
- What challenges you about your identity/who you are?

A simple worship activity

A litany asking God to show us that we are loved.

Each of the five petitions focuses on an image that could be projected or displayed by someone walking slowly through the congregation.

Holy God, you are good and great.
(display an image of planet earth)
You created the world and said that it was good –
and that includes us.

Help us to see as you do.

Holy God, we know that we are your children,
(display an image of a crowd of people)
but we try to find our identity
in the things we do and the people we mix with.

Help us to see as you do.

Holy God, we judge ourselves and others
by the standards of this world,
(display an image of an awards ceremony)
and we try to achieve and succeed
without always considering your call.

Help us to see as you do.

Holy God, when things are good,
we rely on ourselves.
(display an image of a person working alone)
But when things go wrong,
we blame you or give up even on ourselves.

Help us to see as you do.

Holy God, open our hearts and minds
to know who you made us to be,
(display an image of a rainbow)
and to trust you that you will help us
to continue in your way.

Help us to see as you do.

**Open our eyes to see not only others,
but also ourselves,
through the eyes of your love.
Amen.**

*Use the Jump to this week's menu on the right to go to
more activities
in Explore and respond*

Prayer

Adapt to your local context.

A prayer of adoration

Loving, faithful God, your love is absolute,
your promises irrevocable.
We look up after a shower of rain,
marvelling at the colourful beauty of your rainbow –
a reminder of your promise and faithfulness to all generations.
Wherever we happen to be –
wilderness, mountain or valley bottom –
your Holy Spirit is with us.
We adore you, loving, faithful God.
Amen.

*Use the Jump to this week's menu on the right to find more prayers,
including up-to-date intercessions.*

A prayer to end the Bible study

Creator God, you made us in your image
to be your people, wherever we go.
This coming week, whatever we experience,
wherever we find ourselves,
help us to know that you are with us –
guiding, revealing and sustaining – always.
Amen.

Go with God 24/7

Encourage everyone to put their faith into action.

We all know people who are going through wilderness experiences or who have no confidence in who they are. Take one idea from today's worship that you have found helpful and share it with someone.

*Encourage everyone to explore their faith this week with the **ROOTS at home resource**.*

This resource is taken from www.rootsontheweb.com and is copyright © 2002-2021 ROOTS for Churches.