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Week 3: Gospel of Mark
Reading: Wright 24
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The Gospel of Mark is a narrative that explains the ministry of Jesus and the miracles he performed and challenges he faced up until his death. The author of the gospel of Mark is unknown, but based on evidence scholars have come to believe that it was written by John Mark, a close friend and colleague of Paul and Barnabas.

Most scholars have concluded that Mark was written around AD 65-75 and was written in either Rome or Syria. The gospel of Mark resonates with Christians and provides a message of hope and encouragement as a disciple of Jesus as we live with the stresses of the world. Another message that is displayed is the perspective to ensure the reader has an understanding and believe that Jesus is the Messiah, not inspired by being crucified, but because of his crucifixion and the fact that he rose again.

Mark's story of Jesus begins with his account of John the Baptist's ministry and him baptizing Jesus, showing the solidarity with Israel in this moment. Much of Jesus's work was done in public in various areas of town primarily in Galilee as per Mark. There are several accounts of Jesus healing the sick, casting out demons, teaching people the way and challenging their views of life, and several run-ins with the local leaders and rulers.

Jesus challenged the Jewish laws and legalism as he performed several miracles and acts of service on the Sabbath day, which was to remain holy and a day to rest. He healed a man with a shriveled hand and taught against the legalistic views of the local leaders. He calmed the storm in the Sea of Galilee when he was caught in a storm with his 12 disciples and that was a turning point for them to even be amazed at Jesus and question who he is.

Wright makes several references to a Markan 'sandwich,' which is a narrative style in which there is one story that is discussed, then another story is introduced and the Mark goes back to the original story and provides a conclusion. An example of this is found in chapter 5

when Mark explains how Jesus resuscitates a young girl and heals a woman who's hemorrhaging to the point of death. These are examples of replacing fear with faith.

The first half of the Gospel of Mark gives several accounts of various healings and miracles Jesus performed and then the second half pulls the reader in to discuss the judgement, decisions to be made, and the suffering of man. Jesus challenges the reader to engage with children and appreciate their faith and innocence. Mark provides several accounts of Jesus trying to explain wealth and poverty, judgement, which he explains through another Markan 'sandwich'. Jesus curses the fig tree and pronounces judgement on the Temple and then we discovered the fig tree has shriveled up and died.

Mark shares a great deal to build the story and prepare the reader of the coming crucifixion of Jesus and the ways the religious leaders try to catch him and conspire to end his life. Jesus wanted the disciples to know that He knew the end was near and he warned them during their Passover meal that he knew one of them would betray him and he knew the Sanhedrin was making attempts to find reasons to have him executed. First they tried to focus on the destruction of the Temple, but they knew that wasn't enough, so that ultimately asked him a series of questions that "trapped" Jesus to make him clarify if he is the the Messiah, the son of God. This claim, which was considered blasphemous was exactly what was needed to take him to court and have him tried, mocked, and ultimately crucified.

The Gospel of Mark ends with the centurion's confession that 'surely this man was the son of God,' which began to echo the truths of who He is and the mistake they made, but it was too late.