

*James explains the believing is more than cognitive adherence, and that what we place our trust in is revealed by our actions not our words. What is Jesus asking us to believe and how should that change how we live?*

*“The time has come,” he said. “The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!” - Mark 1:15 NIV*

In the Greek, the word for believe is in the present perfect tense, which means it is ongoing rather than once and done. We must continue to examine our lives for areas that don't align with God, repent and change direction, and show by our actions that God is ruling in our lives.

*If you knew God was in the room, what in your life would need to shift from belief to trust in Jesus?*

## **WRAP-UP**

As John the Baptist is imprisoned, Jesus begins His ministry, announcing that the Kingdom of God is near. His message calls for repentance and belief, but it challenges Israel's expectations of a political or earthly kingdom. Jesus' message points to a kingdom that is any place where God reigns and this demands a response. Believers are urged to turn away from false securities—like ancestry, laws, or land—and instead, trust in God's new work through Jesus. The Kingdom of God requires an ongoing commitment to change, trust, and action. Jesus' call to "repent and believe" invites a life transformed by God's rule, where His will is done on earth as in heaven.

## **MEMORY VERSE**

*“The time has come,” he said. “The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!” - Mark 1:15 NIV*

## **Challenge-**

*As you gather this Thanksgiving let your actions demonstrate that God is reigning in your life.*

## **Kingdom of God** **The Gospel of Mark - Week 5**

### **INTRODUCTION**

As John the Baptist is put in prison, Jesus begins His ministry. This signals a shifting of the spotlight and refocusing on the message that Jesus is eager to announce. There is good news, the Kingdom of God is near! But is this the Kingdom that Israel was expecting? And are they ready to repent and believe? And what is our understanding about the Kingdom of God? Are we ready to accept Jesus as our king?

### **Ice Breaker**

What is the best news you've ever delivered?

### **Key Passage**

14 After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. 15 “The time has come,” he said. “The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!” - Mark 1:14-15 NIV

### **STUDY QUESTIONS**

#### **1. John Arrested**

John had an important role to play. He was the messenger of the Messiah. He fulfilled prophecy. He called people to prepare, to repent and be baptized. But once Jesus was ready to begin His ministry, John's job was done.

*28 You yourselves can testify that I said, 'I am not the Messiah but am sent ahead of him.' 29 The bride belongs to the bridegroom. The friend who attends the bridegroom waits and listens for him, and is full of joy when he hears the bridegroom's voice. That joy is mine, and it is now complete. 30 He must become greater; I must become less." - John 3:28-30 NIV*

*John was a widely recognized preacher and teacher. Just like Jesus, he had followers who depended on him for guidance. In the passage above how did he prepare his disciples for his departure? What might happen if the followers of a strong Christian leader are unprepared for their leader's departure? Are you aware of any contemporary examples of what has happened when the loss of a church leader left a vacuum?*

John wisely and clearly told his disciples that he was not their savior. It is easy to become attached to a pastor or teacher and forget that their job is to point us to Jesus. But we must keep our focus on the Lord and not men.

## **2. Kingdom of God**

Jesus brought the good news: the Kingdom of God had come near! But His audience needed to understand what He meant. In Jesus' first-century Jewish context, kingdom meant a tangible, real place on Earth, including real citizens, a real king, and a way of life governed by that king. Everyone who heard Jesus' announcement understood the idea of an earthly kingdom. At that time, Rome ruled and that was not good news.

*How do you think living under Roman rule influenced the understanding of those who heard Jesus' good news about a new kingdom? For most of us, our current cultural context of a kingdom is limited. Apart from what you've heard in church, how would you feel about living under the rulership of a monarch? Do you think this might influence how our unchurched friends respond to this good news of God's Kingdom?*

Jesus spent a great deal of time teaching about the Kingdom of God (or Kingdom of Heaven) When Jesus taught about the Kingdom of God, He was referring to any place where God rules and reigns. That isn't limited to a geographic location. It could be in our heart, in a group or in a movement.

*9 "This, then, is how you should pray: " 'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, 10 your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. - Matthew 6:9-10 NIV*

*Matthew 6:9-10 was Jesus' response to His disciples request to teach them to pray. What does this line reveal about your relationship to God and to His Kingdom? What does it tell us about God's will being done on earth? How does Jesus' good news relate to Mat 6:10?*

After Jesus instructs His disciple in how to pray, He continues to teach them how to live. As He addresses how their needs will be met, He includes Matthew 6:33.

*33 But seek first his [your heavenly Father's] kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. - Matthew 6:33 NIV*

*When you think of God ruling in our lives, what does it mean we give up and what does it imply that we gain? Which of life's worries are the most challenging to overcome with faith that God will provide all our needs? (finances, health, relationships...)*

Many of Jesus' parables were used to explain what God's Kingdom (or the Kingdom of Heaven) is like. We will study these more in Mark chapter 3.

*Which of these "kingdom is like.." parables can you name?*

When we consider how often Jesus taught about the Kingdom it seems to indicate that it was both important and misunderstood. Because God's Kingdom is near to us, it demands a response.

## **3. Repent and Believe**

In response to the good news, Jesus gave us two requirements; repent and believe. To repent means we change our minds, think differently and move in a new direction. Many of the Jews put their faith in things they associated with God (their ancestry, their laws, their temple, their land) but had lost their loyalty to the one true God. Jesus was calling the people to abandon what they had been clinging to, to trust that God was doing something new and fresh in their midst and follow Jesus.

*What are today's social or political norms that beckon us to follow them rather than Jesus? Are you willing to change your mind and move in a new direction if God challenges those norms?*

The word believe [Greek *pisteuō*] appears in the New Testament 241 times. We often translate believe as a cognitive adherence.

*9 You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that--and shudder. 20 You foolish person, do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless? - James 2:19-20 NIV*