Title: The Book of Mark: Introduction
Speaker: Charles Stone
Passage: Mark Overview
Big idea: Stepping back from Mark before stepping in will best prepare us to maximize the impact from the books message

Pre GPS days, if you wanted to travel, you needed a paper map. Then we moved up to mapquest where you could print out your map from your computer with turn-by-turn directions. Then we moved to dedicated GPS devices like Garmin that used a small screen.

Now we have smart phones and smartwatches that not only show us how to get from point A to point B, but tell where we need to go, warn us of traffic jams, and offer alternate routes. Hopefully the next iteration will be the star trek transporter.

A map gives you the overview and the detail to help you get from point A to point B.

Today we begin a new multi-month study of the book of Mark. And this message is like a map that will describe where we will go in the next few months.

Assuming everybody wants to learn and grow as we go through this study, I am going to provide multiple avenues for us to learn a retain the information that will be shared over the next few weeks.
Here are all the resources and activities that will help you retain the information:

1. A Quiz to determine what one previously knows about the book of Mark
2. A video from the Bible Project guys who do a great job explaining the purpose of the book.
3. An overview of the book including ideas and themes to look out for.
4. And some next steps.

1. Mark was one of the 12 Apostles.
    - True.
    - False.

Answer: He is probably John Mark we see in other places in the Bible who was a fellow servant with Paul and Peter. He was the son of a well-to-do mother whose house had been one of the early house churches. Mark had a falling out with Paul but they later reconciled.

2. Mark is the…
    - shortest of the four gospels,
    - longest of the four gospels,
    - neither the shortest or the longest.

Answer: Mark is the shortest of the four gospels.

3. Mark focuses more on…
    - Jesus' humanness.
    - Jesus' divinity.

Answer: Mark writes about Jesus' emotions by mentioning His sorrow (14:34), disappointment (8:12), displeasure (10:14), righteous anger (11:15-17), amazement (6:6), compassion, and fatigue (4:38). Yet, Mark never neglected Jesus' divinity. Jesus was not simply the greatest man among men, but God Himself.

4. The Gospel of Mark was the …
    - first gospel written,
    - last gospel written,
    - neither the first or the last gospel written.

Answer: Mark's gospel was the first written, giving us a glimpse of Jesus' life closest to the time he was living on earth.

5. The word Gospel means…
    - Jesus has come,
    - Jesus is coming again,
    - Jesus is good news.

Answer: If you chose any of these, you get a point here because the Gospel incorporates all of these but the word itself technically means good news.

6. Mark was written primarily with this audience in mind:
    - Gentiles (non-Jews),
    - Americans
    - Canadians.

Answer: It was written to the Gentiles.

To learn more about the book of Mark, and his purpose in writing the book, watch the Mark video done by the Bible Project guys. Follow this link: www.bibleproject.com/explore/video/gospel-mark/

Mark is a biography of the life of Jesus. He presents what Jesus did and said without adding a lot of commentary. He writes with a goal that the life of Jesus would leave a lasting, eternal impression on the reader, that it's message would transform you and me. He does this by writing about many experiences in the life of Jesus.

Mark wrote it in the mid to late 60's AD and learned much about Jesus' life from Peter. Most scholars say he wrote it while in Rome when Christians were undergoing intense persecution. 1/3 of the book is about the events leading to Jesus' crucifixion which would have encouraged those suffering believers by reminding them that following Christ is the way of the cross, and difficulty, but God will support you during your difficulty.

The first verse tells us why he wrote it,

Mark 1.1 "The beginning of the gospel about Jesus Christ, the Son of God."

He wrote it to share the Gospel, the Good News about Jesus. The Holy Spirit impressed on him to write this good news of who Jesus is, why He came, and why He died.

Mark is not writing down the events in Jesus' life simply as stories so that we know what happened, the historical facts. It's that plus more. He intends that as we learn about Jesus, we repent and believe on Him. So, this book is filled with stories of Jesus' life; not a random collection of events about His life, but a coherent book about the life and work of Jesus with a goal of spiritual transformation.

He wrote the book mostly with ordinary folks in mind, not the social elite.

Fundamentally, Mark breaks up his book into two halves, the 'who Jesus is' is found in chapters 1-8, and the 'why He came' is in chapters 9-16, with the first 13 verses setting the stage and chapters 11-16 reflecting mission accomplished.

The first section focuses more on the masses who are lost, sick, afflicted, in bondage, and controlled by sin. He gives light, heals, encourages, liberates, and forgives.

The second section focuses more on Jesus as he ministers to the twelve as the crowds fall away, as the authorities begin to resist Jesus, as conflict with them increases, his death on the cross, and the joyous truth that Jesus didn't stay dead.

The first half deals with Jesus' ministry in Galilee and the second half his journey to Jerusalem and the cross. Listed below are some of the key big picture ideas to keep in mind as you read and study the book for yourself:

1. Mark asks lots of questions: a total of 114. 77 are rhetorical ones, questions used to make a point or create a dramatic effect rather than eliciting an actual answer. Watch for those questions.

2. Mark's BIG BIG question is, 'Who is Jesus?' Keep that I mind.

3. Mark uses a sandwich technique to subtly interject theology. Mark does not overly deal with lots of theology. But, 7 times he interrupts one story with another story, seemingly unrelated to it, and then after that story he returns to the original story. This was a way to interject a theological key into the story with one story helping interpret the other. Look for those theological sandwiches.

4. Mark portrays Jesus authority over everything, nature, satan, religion, religious traditions, etc. He writes of Jesus' speaking and acting with the authority of God because He is God. But it is all in service to others. The key verse in the book tells us that.
   Mark 10.45, "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

5. Mark often includes vivid details…much like how an eye-witness reporter might report. One example is that he mentions Jesus sleeping in a storm on a boat and includes the little detail that he was sleeping on a pillow. So, look for these little details to give you a sense that you are there.

6. Mark writes with childlike enthusiasm. He used the word *and* 34 times to set up what he's about to say next. Think of a child describing their first experience at a petting zoo for the first time to their grandparent. Children can get so excited and pile on and phrases. Mark did that.

7. Mark writes with a sense of immediacy … because he uses, "immediately" and similar words 30 times as well as using the present rather than the past tense. Again, it is like you are there.

8. Mark anchors the book in three pillars: Jesus' baptism, Jesus' transfiguration, and Jesus' crucifixion.

9. Mark shows that the disciples struggled with understanding who Jesus was. The first half presents the disciples in more positive light than the second half when they were really struggling to understand who Jesus was. That should encourage us when we struggle with faith issues.

10. Mark writes that Jesus came to liberate us from sin and power of Satan.

So, if you combine all these together, the main points of the book are:

- Jesus Christ has come as God promised.
- This is Good News.
- We should repent and place our faith in Jesus.

We live in a world that increasingly forgets. Unfortunately, those who passively listen to a sermon or teaching forget most of what they heard. In the late 1800s and early 1900s, a German psychologist named Hermann Ebbinghaus researched memory. He created over 2,000 short nonsense words and experimented on himself by memorizing lists of them and then recording how long it took him to forget them. Out of his research rose what psychologists call the forgetting curve. Simply put, if we passively engage in learning, we quickly forget what we learn.

It's called the Ebbinghaus forgetting curve.

Most people will forget 70% of a talk within 24 hours and over 90% within a week

Now, I don't want to waste your time. You don't want to waste your time.

So how can you counter this tendency to forget what you hear in these messages? Of course we can't remember everything, but don't you think remembering more than 5 or so % of a message would be valuable?

I hope you are saying yes in your minds. Here is the key to countering forgetting: Active learning.

Specifically, you can practice active learning, in contrast to passive learning (just hearing me talk) with what I call the Three Learning R's I shared this diagram when we began our past book series.

1. Read means to read the upcoming Sunday's Bible passage each day. All learning is based on prior knowledge. The more familiar you are with the upcoming passage, you more you will retain what you

hear so the Holy Spirit will be able to deepen more truths into your heart. This is basically engaging yourself with God's word.

To help your reading, we have a download on our web page on Mark something called the RIPE Reading Guide which is an ancient way to read and reflect over God's word. Also, each week on our website and in the notes, you will have the passage we will look in the upcoming week. Read that section every day at least 3 times. And ideally, you can read the prior week's section as well, or start from the beginning and read through it. You can get this on our web site.

2. Record by taking notes. The research tells us that when you take notes learning gets imbedded more deeply. Even doodling about what you hear enhances learning. When you do this you are forcing yourself to consolidate what you are hearing to what stands out the most to you which engages more of your brain so you remember more. For those of you who don't take notes, why not try it during this series? As you come in each you can get an outline of the sermon which has places to take notes.

3. Reviewing is the number one way to retain what you hear from a sermon or message. You can do this as you review the notes you took, read the scriptures, review the discussion questions we provide online, watch the message again, or review the memory verse of the month which is on your sermon notes.

To help you with this process we have some Specific Steps to get the most out of this series.

Our eNews each week includes...

- a short preview video clip of the upcoming message to whet your spiritual appetite
- the upcoming scriptures to read
- a question to think about

Please email us at office@westparkchuch.ca if you want to get on our eNews.

Also, we have this little QR code that you can scan with your phone, and it will take you right to the Mark page with many resources.

Finally, we also are selling some message notes binders You can purchase one of these at the welcome center. We three hole punch the notes so you can keep them in the notebook plus there are a few more goodies in the notebook as well.

I challenge to take a new step in your spiritual growth and development during this series on the book of Mark.