



# BIBLETRACK 1

## TALK 4 THE GOSPELS (PART 2)

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### Talk Outline

#### Mark

##### i. Mark's Christology

- Teaching about Jesus' identity
- Jesus is identified as 'Son of God' for the first time at his death

*'With a loud cry, Jesus breathed his last. The curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. And when the centurion, who stood there in front of Jesus, heard his cry and saw how he died, he said, "Surely this man was the Son of God!"'* (Mark 15:37).

- Reader knows this from the beginning

*'The beginning of the gospel about Jesus Christ, the Son of God'* (Mark 1:1).

*'And a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased"'* (Mark 1:11).

*'Then a cloud appeared and enveloped them, and a voice came from the cloud: "This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to him!"'* (Mark 9:7).

- Demons know who Jesus is

*'Whenever the evil spirits saw him, they fell down before him and cried out, "You are the Son of God"'* (Mark 3:11).

- Term Messiah is used three times

*'The beginning of the gospel about Jesus Christ, the Son of God'* (Mark 1:1).

*'"But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?" Peter answered, "You are the Christ"'* (Mark 8:29–30).

*'Again the high priest asked him, "Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One?" "I am," said Jesus'* (Mark 14:61–62).

- Both times Jesus replies to claims using the term 'Son of Man'

*'He then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again. He spoke plainly about this, and Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. But when Jesus turned and looked at his disciples, he rebuked Peter. "Get behind me, Satan!" he said. "You do not have in mind the things of God, but human concerns"'* (Mark 8:31–33).

- 'Son of Man' occurs fourteen times in the Gospel
- Jesus' title of choice

- Tied in to Daniel 7 – story of God’s people suffering
- Adam and man – Jesus is seen as the second Adam
- Vindication comes after suffering

THE IMPORTANCE OF CHRISTOLOGY	QUESTION: ‘WHO IS JESUS?’	FOCUS OF THE CLIMAX OF THE BOOK
	1:27 (Capernaum)	14:61–62 (High Priest)
	4:41 (Disciples on Lake)	15:39 (Centurion)
	6:3 (Nazareth)	
	6:14–16 (Herod)	
	8:27 (Caesarea Philippi)	

- Challenge of Mark’s Gospel: points to a Jesus who suffers
- In Mark’s Gospel the revelation of Jesus’ identity comes only in his death
- The church will reveal Jesus through suffering rather than success

## ii. Mark’s disciples

### The disciples start well:

- Call of the first disciples and their response (1:16–20)
- First Sabbath (1:21–39)
- Appointment of the twelve (3:13–19)
- Twelve to indicate twelve tribes of Israel

### But no monopoly:

- No special groups (3:31–35)

‘Whoever does God’s will is my brother and sister and mother’ (Mark 3:35).

- Secret for everyone who responds (4:10–12, 33)

### Growing misunderstanding and lack of faith:

- Disciples in the storm and seeing Jesus walking on water (4:35–41; 6:45–52)

*“Teacher, don’t you care if we drown?” He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, “Quiet! Be still!” Then the wind died down and it was completely calm. He said to his disciples, “Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?”’ (Mark 4:38–40).*

- Misunderstandings about bread (8:11–21)
- Disciples now ‘hard of heart’ like the Pharisees

### **The hinge (8:22–9:13):**

- Disciples understanding is dangerously partial
- They need to be willing to take up their cross

### **Disciples' weakness, fear and pride:**

- Inability to heal (9:14–29)
- Fear and confusion at path Jesus is following (9:30–32; 10:23–31; 10:32–34)
- Pride (9:33–38; 10:35–45)

*'“Teacher,” said John, “we saw a man driving out demons in your name and we told him to stop, because he was not one of us”' (Mark 9:38).*

*'People were bringing little children to Jesus to have him touch them, but the disciples rebuked them. When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these”' (Mark 10:13–14).*

*'They replied, “Let one of us sit at your right and the other at your left in your glory.” “You don't know what you are asking,” Jesus said. “Can you drink the cup I drink or be baptised with the baptism I am baptised with?”' (Mark 10:37–38).*

### **Disciples' betrayal (chapter 14):**

*'And when they had taken their places and were eating, Jesus said, “Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me, one who is eating with me.” They began to be distressed and to say to him one after another, “Surely, not I?” He said to them, “It is one of the twelve, one who is dipping bread into the bowl with me”' (Mark 14:18–20 NRSV).*

*'But [Peter] said vehemently, “Even though I must die with you, I will not deny you.” And all of them said the same' (Mark 14:31 NRSV).*

*'All of them deserted him and fled. A certain young man was following him, wearing nothing but a linen cloth. They caught hold of him, but he left the linen cloth and ran off naked' (Mark 14:50 NRSV).*

- Illustration of disciples abandoning everything to get away from Jesus

*'When she saw Peter warming himself, she looked closely at him. “You also were with that Nazarene, Jesus,” she said. But he denied it. “I don't know or understand what you're talking about,” he said' (Mark 14:67–68).*

### **The women:**

- The women are initially more loyal
- They stand at cross and watch him die

*'So they went out and fled from the tomb, for terror and amazement had seized them; and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid' (Mark 16:6–8 NRSV).*

### **Promise of restoration:**

*'Jesus said to them, “You will all become deserters; for it is written, ‘I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.’ But after I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee”' (Mark 14:27–28 NRSV).*

- Mark and the readers of Mark's Gospel know that the disciples are restored and have founded the early church
- Disciples leave everything to follow Jesus but end up fleeing
- Warning and encouragement to us in our faith
- Mark's Gospel contains an honest portrayal of discipleship

# Matthew

## i. Matthew's opening

*'A record of the genealogy of Jesus Christ the son of David, the son of Abraham' (Matthew 1:1).*

- For many cultures genealogies are important
- This genealogy would have proved to them that Jesus was a real person
- Matthew immediately states that Jesus is the Messiah and that he was related to David and Abraham
- These statements would have caught the attention of the Jewish world

*'Thus there were fourteen generations in all from Abraham to David, fourteen from David to the exile to Babylon, and fourteen from the exile to the Christ' (Matthew 1:17).*

- Timing of this points to God's will
- That Jesus was beginning the seventh seven in this genealogy would have been hugely significant to Jews
- Jubilee was in the seventh seven of years

*' "...He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour" ' (Luke 4:18-19).*

- Matthew is written in the framework of an inner Jewish argument in the first century

## ii. Matthew's Sermon on the Mount

- Sermon on the Mount as a block of teaching is unique to Matthew although some sections also turn up in Luke

*' "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them" ' (Matthew 5:17).*

*' "... For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven" ' (Matthew 5:20).*

- Jesus has different system of righteousness to the Pharisees allowing him to welcome sinners

*' "You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'Do not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.' But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment" ' (Matthew 5:21-22).*

- Jesus takes Old Testament and reinterprets it

*' "Again, you have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'Do not break your oath, but keep the oaths you have made to the Lord.' But I tell you, Do not swear at all: either by heaven, for it is God's throne; or by the earth, for it is his footstool; or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the Great King" ' (Matthew 5:33-35).*

*'Woe to you, blind guides, who say, "Whoever swears by the sanctuary is bound by nothing, but whoever swears by the gold of the sanctuary is bound by the oath" ' (Matthew 23:16 NRSV).*

*'Simply let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No' (Matthew 5:37).*

*' "You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbour and hate your enemy.' But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous" ' (Matthew 5:43-45).*

*'Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect' (Matthew 5:48).*

*'Be holy because I, the Lord your God, am holy' (Leviticus 19:2).*

*'Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint, dill, and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. It is these you ought to have practiced without neglecting the others. You blind guides! You strain out a gnat but swallow a camel! Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and of the plate, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. You blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup, so that the outside also may become clean. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which on the outside look beautiful, but inside they are full of the bones of the dead and of all kinds of filth. So you also on the outside look righteous to others, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness' (Matthew 23:23–28 NRSV).*

- Pharisees were trying to be holy by following rules
- Matthew focuses on inner Jewish argument about how to be holy and follow the law

## Luke

### i. Luke's parables of the lost

#### What is a parable?

##### Not:

- An earthly story with a heavenly meaning
- Theology made simple for the simple
- An illustration
- Reducible to a doctrinal point

##### Deliberately

- Open-ended
- Ambiguous
- Leaves you dissatisfied, wanting more
- Works psychologically
- Not straight-forward, just as God and life are not straight-forward

##### Unique

- No real parallels to Jesus' parables
- His teaching was recognised as being unique (e.g: 'not like the scribes')
- Unique medium for a unique message

### Parables of the lost in Luke 15

*'Now the tax collectors and sinners were all gathering around to hear Jesus. But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law muttered, "This man welcomes sinners and eats with them." ' (Luke 15:1–2).*

- Jesus tells parables when he comes up against entrenched attitudes

*' "Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Doesn't he leave the ninety-nine in the*

*open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it? And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and says, 'Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep'” (Luke 15:4–6).*

- Depiction of a God who has more compassion than sense
- How does this challenge our views?
- These parables do not outline rules but present us with challenges

## John

### i. John's opening

*'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God' (John 1:1).*

*'The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God' (John 1:9–12 NRSV).*

*'And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth' (John 1:14 NRSV).*

*'No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known' (John 1:18 NRSV).*

- Two poles – the incarnation and the death
- While the synoptics (following Mark) put the theological weight solely onto Jesus' death, in John the incarnation (Jesus becoming man) is also very important

*'Then Jesus cried aloud: "Whoever believes in me believes not in me but in him who sent me. And whoever sees me sees him who sent me. I have come as light into the world, so that everyone who believes in me should not remain in the darkness. I do not judge anyone who hears my words and does not keep them, for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. The one who rejects me and does not receive my word has a judge; on the last day the word that I have spoken will serve as judge, for I have not spoken on my own, but the Father who sent me has himself given me a commandment about what to say and what to speak. And I know that his commandment is eternal life. What I speak, therefore, I speak just as the Father has told me" (John 12:44–50 NRSV).*

- Jesus is the channel through which we can see God
- John's Gospel shows how the Father and the Son relate to each other

## Meeting Jesus

- The Gospels are history, theology and literature
- They are personal and challenging
- We should wrestle with them
- We should accept that God has chosen to give us four
- Gospels are not really windows, but doorways through which we meet with Jesus

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