

First Sermon Christ Church Huntingdon Mark 1:1

V 1. If still got Bible open- p1002, on screen as well.

▲ I don't know if you've heard the story about this man, **Guy Goma**. A few years ago he turned up at the BBC for a job interview in data support in their IT department.

Unfortunately, he happened to be sitting in the Television Centre reception area where another Guy, **Guy Kewney**, was due to be called for a live interview on BBC News 24. But there was a bit of a mix up, and rather than being interviewed for the IT job, he was ushered into the studio to give a live interview on national TV about the music industry and digital downloads.

If you haven't seen the [clip](#) do google it **or click on the link** on our website. It's absolutely classic. There's this awful moment where Guy realises that there's been a massive misunderstanding, and he's going on national TV.

It's gone down in TV history winning an award last year as one of the "The Greatest TV moments of all time".

I don't know where you stand with Christianity, but it's possible in a similar way to have a massive misunderstanding about Jesus Christ....

This Autumn over the next few Sundays we are going to be looking at the first couple of episodes in the docudrama that is Jesus Christ's life, as recorded by a man called Mark, who wrote down the exact story of Jesus life right back at the beginning of Christianity.

His story begins with this verse that we are going to focus on today.

Mark 1:1 The beginning of the good news about Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God.

I'd like us this morning just to focus for a few minutes on that one sentence, so that we might have our misunderstandings cleared up about Christianity and Jesus Christ.

We'll put them on the screen.

The first thing that Mark wants us to know is that Christianity is about

1) **GOOD NEWS**

V1. The beginning of the GOOD NEWS about Jesus.

What Mark wants to tell us is GOOD NEWS.

In an age where there's

- so much **bad** news on the TV
- so much **fake** news on facebook
- so much **irrelevant** news on social media isn't it great to have some GOOD NEWS.

The word GOOD NEWS or GOSPEL means glad tidings.

It's the kind of thing that I got when I opened a text message over the summer to read this.

"Hi Charlie, It's Barry (He's a friend in the US military). I hope things are going well at Huntingdon. I've got some good news- Gloria and I just got engaged."

He used those words good news.

For many people, Christianity is bad news.

Perhaps their only experience of church has been funerals, or their only experience of Christians has been negative, but at its core that's not what Christianity is about.

It's possible to have massive misunderstandings about Christianity. It's not bad news. It's actually good news, something wonderful, something amazing that you want to share.

Think of the best day of your life, think of your happiest memories, think of smiles of joy and tears of laughter. And you're onto the right message: Glad tidings, Good news.

But even more than that, the word for good news here was used back in the day for the kind of ground breaking announcement that a new emperor had been born, or that a war had been won. Think of the town crier down in the town market, telling everyone in the days before facebook that something big, something wonderful has happened that everyone needs to know about. [Hence the megaphone on ppt!]

Don't get the wrong end of the stick about Christianity. It's good news. Glad tidings.

The second thing tells us what that good news is all about, and the answer is that it's about Jesus Christ. V1.

2) ABOUT JESUS

Now that may not sound pretty obvious to you that Christianity is about Jesus Christ. But again, it's so easy to get horribly muddled up and think that Christianity is more about

Rules to live a better life, or **ritual** or **religion**.

Take Roger. He's a painter decorator in the local area, and I was chatting to him last week. Raised in Northern Ireland in a good prebyterian home, he just decided around 13 years old that he just didn't want to go to church any more and hasn't come back since. It's not that he doesn't believe in God, though he's a bit sceptical, it's just that he doesn't do organised religion. And I can totally understand where he's coming from.

But Christianity isn't actually about organised religion. Of course there are certain things that happen in church, and certain practices that Christians do, but they are like the packaging.

The real treasure is Jesus Christ and knowing him, just like a diamond ring. Don't fall for the packaging, and miss the real jewel at the heart of it all.

Sometimes people get asked, "Oh are you religious?" And we tend to say, "no I'm not religious". Christianity isn't actually about religion. It's about a relationship with a person, Jesus Christ.

And what I'm really excited about over the next few weeks is that we are going to be looking together at Jesus as he walks off the pages of the Bible, here in Mark's gospel.

And can I say, this book is packed with Jesus. In fact you might know that there are 4 gospels, 4 biographies of Jesus in the Bible, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. But Mark is the most action packed.

And every chapter tells us how wonderful Jesus is.

- In chapter 1 we see him reach out to a man who has been shunned by society.
- In chapter 2 we see him give a paraplegic his legs and his life back.
- Ch3 we see how the authorities begin to accuse him

- Ch4 we hear teaching that has changed history.
- Etc etc
- Jump to Chapter 14 we see him disowned, arrested, tried
- In chapter 15 we see him executed for a crime he did not commit, but standing in the place of you and me, executed for the crimes we have committed, so that we might be forgiven.
- In chapter 16 we see him rise from the grave smashing death and beginning a new story of hope and adventure.

So many people get the wrong idea of Christianity. They think it's boring, irrelevant stuff about trying to be good, or becoming more religious. In fact it's not first of all about **you or me** at all.

It's about a person. Jesus Christ. The most amazing man who has ever lived. It's about JESUS. V1 The good news **about Jesus**.

3) Finally, It's about who that person is: THE KING.

Look at the verse again.

*Mark 1:1 The beginning of the good news about Jesus **the Messiah, the Son of God**.*

Those words aren't words we use every day, though you might hear that a sports player was a Messiah who saved their team from relegation.

If you look down at the bottom of the page- little A- the word literally means "anointed one", and to understand it we need to travel back in time to the Old Testament.

Remember that Jesus was born in Israel into the Jewish religion, and for many years, the people of the Old Testament were waiting for a King.

They had a succession of Kings- I'm sure you've heard of David, and Solomon. They were all anointed with oil on their heads when they were crowned- hence the term- anointed one.

But the Jewish people were expecting the big one. THE King to come- God's King, the Son of God.

There are loads of different parts of the OT that sum up the sense of expectations and I've put them on what we call the "dig deeper" sheet that the welcomers will have on the way out if you want to look them up.

But here's just one example. Jer 23; 5, 6.

"The days are coming," declares the LORD,
 "when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch,
 a King who will reign wisely
 and do what is just and right in the land.

⁶In his days Judah will be saved
 and Israel will live in safety.

This is the name by which he will be called:
 The LORD Our Righteous Savior.

There's a few things going on in that quote but do you see two things..

- 1) It's the promise of a King in the family tree of David
- 2) And this King will be a Saviour.

Son of God, also means much the same thing. A promised King who is going to be in special relationship with God and bring about a great rescue. A Saviour.

Now this explains why the coming of Jesus is good news- he is this King.

You may love our Queen, you may not – you may not be a royalist, you may want to abolish the royal family, that's not really the point, the point is that God promised that he was going to send his King to come and sort out the mess that we have caused when we turned our back on God and thought that we could do life better without him.

The cracks of that rebellion are all over our lives.

The reason our relationships with each other are often messed up is because our relationship with God is messed up. We've shoved two fingers up in his face, and we now deserve his anger.

But wonderfully, he hasn't left us to rot, he's sent his only Son Jesus into the world as the rescuing King come to sort out the mess, come to rescue us from all the terrible effects of our rebellion against God.

And Mark is saying, Jesus is THE KING. That King. The rescuer.

We've called this series "Who is this", because that's what Jesus' followers, the disciples say as they are getting to know him.

Who do you reckon Jesus is? It's easy to make a massive misunderstanding.

He's not just a religious figure of history.

He's not just an example for how to live.

He's not even just a great teacher or healer (though he did both those things). **Jesus Christ is God's King.**

A King who will Rule

A King who will Rescue

A king who will Return one day and judge the world.

1), 2), 3).

As we close our first sermon, can I give everyone a challenge.

Some of you will be unsure about Christianity, a bit like Roger the painter decorator who I mentioned earlier. Can I say you are most welcome? We want to be a church for you. Bring your questions, bring your issues.

But can I give you a challenge. Will you do something that you may never have done before. Will you look with us at Jesus in the Bible? Take one of these copies of Mark's gospel home with you today, and perhaps read a little bit each day, and ask for yourself who is Jesus. (If you're not a strong reader, we can point you to audio or video that you might prefer. Don't settle for other people's opinions- look for yourself at Jesus, and decide if you are going to make him your King, your rescuer. You'll find it's a journey of discovery- a wonderful realisation that there is a God who cares for our lives, our joys our sorrows, our mental health, our family, our forgiveness.

But for those of you who are committed Christians. You've looked into Christianity before- perhaps you've grown up with it. And you are convinced that Christianity is GOOD NEWS about JESUS who is the KING. And you've come to put your trust in him as your own King.

But perhaps sometimes you lose the wonder of what Mark is telling us here. This is GOOD NEWS. This is better than the birth of a child or a wonderful new relationship. This is the truth about God who is real and who impacts our daily lives.

Can I give you the same challenge? Will you look closely at Jesus. With a fresh pair of eyes?