



Pursue

- Throughout our text this week, Mark begins to paint a picture of a new “exodus” story taking place in the story of Jesus. (Note some of the ways these two stories are similar with your group.) This text shows us that the new “exodus” will not be a deliverance from a powerful nation (Rome) like many expected but rather a deliverance from the dominion of darkness (sin). Like the people/crowds, we can long for deliverance from circumstances outside us more than what lies within us. How have you seen that in your own life? In what areas of sin are you longing for the deliverance of Jesus?
- Another major theme in this text is the preparation and anointing of Jesus as the King of God’s Kingdom. We see this most profoundly at his baptism, in which all other persons of the trinity (Father & Spirit) affirm his divine identity and authority, while Jesus (the Son), sinless, stands in our place in the baptism waters. We also begin to see some of man's response to His authority in the calling of disciples to “follow” Him. They responded immediately and left their lives behind to follow Him; they surrendered to Christ. When is surrendering and following Jesus particularly hard for you? Why is it worth it?
- Following his baptism and temptation in the wilderness, Jesus speaks his first sermon saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.” What does the phrase “kingdom of God” mean? Jesus’ sermon indicates a response to the kingdom of God, to “repent & believe in the gospel.” How would you define repentance? Is there an area of sin in your life that you need to repent from and believe the gospel? How can your group encourage and support your repentance?

Practice

LEADERS, YOU WILL LIKELY ONLY HAVE TIME FOR ONE OF THESE ACTIVITIES.

- **OPTION 1** | In our text for this week, we read about the temptation of Christ, as he is driven out into the wilderness by the Holy Spirit and tempted by satan. This should remind us of Genesis 1-3. Where there was a garden in Genesis, there is now desert; where there was abundance, there is nothing; where man had dominion over the animals, there are now wild animals. And yet satan is here again, whispering lies to Jesus. But Jesus responds in perfect obedience to his Father.
 - Picture this scene from Mark. What is it like? Is it dry? Hot? Barren? Is His stomach aching? As you ponder these things, read Psalm 91, thinking of Jesus as the subject of this psalm.
 - What parts of this psalm do you think connect with our story today?
 - In light of this psalm, how did Jesus face this temptation and respond in obedience?
 - Read verse 14. What did Jesus have for the Father that Father delivered Him? What was His motivation for fighting temptation? (Answer: love for the Father)
 - If needed, break into smaller groups or prayer partners (perhaps men & women separately).
 - What temptations are you facing today that we can pray for? How does Psalm 91 encourage you in this struggle? Pray for each other.
 - In what ways have you given into temptation this week? Psalm 91 reveals that giving into temptation is a love issue. That our love for ourselves proved greater than our love for God. The good news of Jesus is that we can repent and believe in Him, and we will receive abundant forgiveness! Spend time in small groups practicing confession and asking the Lord to grant true repentance.
- **OPTION 2** | Followers & Enemies Chart. Our Bible Study classes received this document and this could be a great tool to use throughout our study as well. Throughout Mark, we will see two main types of people: followers of Jesus and enemies of Jesus. While the narrator will not often explicitly label someone as a follower or enemy, the reader can use the actions or responses described in the text to determine if someone is a follower or enemy. Use this linked chart to keep track of the characteristics of both types of people and how they specifically respond to Jesus. Use this list as an opportunity to consider your own character and actions: Which category do you think best describes you? Where might God be calling you to repentance or growth?
 - We see the first few followers this week? What can you note about them in this chart?

Proclaim

Jesus calls a few of his disciples in our text this week to follow Him. As we will see, while they have surrendered to him and are following Him, they don't fully understand who He is and how He will work, especially how he will accomplish the deliverance they long for. We don't have to wait to disciple or share the beauty of Christ with others until they fully understand. What is something you learned, was convicted of, or encouraged by that you will share this week with someone who doesn't have faith in Jesus?