

# Hearing Mark in Lent

You are invited to come and listen to the

## **Gospel of Mark**

read aloud in one sitting.

### *Where:*

The Church of the Ascension Chapel  
1476 Sparks Street

### *When:*

Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> March at 3pm (Jerusalem Bible)

Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> March at 10am (NRSV)

Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> March at 6:30pm (King James  
Version)

*“Mark a holy Lent with Mark”*

# A personal letter from Mark

I understand you are “marking” the words I wrote in my gospel during the season you call Lent.

So I thought I would write to introduce myself and tell you why I wrote about the good news from our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Being a Jew and serving as a minor minister in my local synagogue, I was very familiar with our customs, traditions and religious practices. My mother Mary was a devout follower of God and believed Jesus to be the Messiah; in fact the first Christians (as followers of the Christ later became known) met and worshipped in our house in Jerusalem.

As an apprentice Christian missionary, I was thrilled and excited when Paul, probably our most famous convert, invited me to accompany him on his first journey visiting the cities and towns around the Mediterranean Sea to spread the teachings of Jesus Christ. But I quickly became bored, some say homesick, and abandoned the group, returning to Jerusalem. Later I changed my mind and coaxed my cousin Barnabas to take me on his missionary journey. At first he said NO, and then relented after I convinced him I could be helpful.

I was. I began collecting stories and documenting eye witness accounts of happenings passed along by Paul, Peter and others who were making Jesus’ life and teachings well known throughout the world, as we knew it then.

About 65 years after Jesus’ birth, I began compiling everything into what is now known as the earliest and shortest of the four gospels; Matthew, Luke and John would write theirs years later.

Since I wrote my gospel less than a generation after the actual events and many of the eye witnesses were still alive, I could frequently consult with them to ensure the accuracy of my facts and details. I was very confident

my account was as true as humanly possible.

I wanted to describe the life and teachings of Jesus, as well as to show that he was indeed the Saviour or Messiah foretold in the ancient scriptures you call the Old Testament.

William Barclay – author, radio and television presenter, Church of Scotland minister and Professor of Divinity and Biblical Criticism at Glasgow University – said my gospel is the “nearest thing we will ever get to a report of Jesus’ life.” I appreciate his observation; I did try to describe the human picture of Jesus without forgetting his divinity.

As you read my gospel, particularly with the reflections provided by your fellow Christians, you will be taken through the three years of Jesus’ teaching and accomplishments.

You will celebrate his baptism, struggle with his temptations, listen with the crowds as he relates his life-moulding parables, be awed by his miracles, saddened by his rejections, tortured by his suffering and death and finally be restored to new life as you experience Jesus’ resurrection. I hope you will experience a growth in your faith as you journey with my gospel.

Your friend in Christ,

***John Mark***

*Dictated to Hollis Hiscock for the Niagara Anglican: February 2015 Edition*