

# THE GOSPEL OF MARK – LESSON 4

## WATCH THE VIDEO

Login to ***rightnowmedia.org*** and search “Francis Chan Gospel of Mark”.

For this week’s lesson, watch Video # 4 (11 min).

\* If you do not have a rightnowmedia account, contact Barbara Scorza at [bscorza@fellowshipnorth.net](mailto:bscorza@fellowshipnorth.net)

## PAUSE & PRAY

Before diving in, pause and pray. Ask God to reveal himself to you through His Word.

## READ & RESPOND

**Read Mark 3:7 - 4:34**

- What’s your immediate response to what you read?
- Write down any thoughts, questions, concerns, statements, and surprises that come to mind. You may want to write a summary that captures what you just read.

## CONTEXT & KEY INSIGHTS

This week, rather than highlight smaller nuggets along the way, we’ll instead just deep-dive here into one specific, but critically important, section of Scripture. This is one of the more challenging portions of the Bible, the so-called unforgivable sin (Mark 3:29).

The scribes confront Jesus and have spread rumors that he is possessed by a demon named Beelzebul, which was a high-ranking deity worshiped in Canaanite religion. Jesus’s response is that these scribes have blasphemed the Holy Spirit, and whoever does so is guilty of an eternal sin. What’s going on here?

It’s important to note the verb in Mark 3:30. The tense in the Greek implies an action that occurs on a habitual basis. This wasn’t a one-time event. The scribes regularly and continually attributed the works of the Holy Spirit through Jesus to the power of Satan, which is what Jesus declares unforgivable.

Despite the seriousness of Jesus’s accusation, we should not miss the hope in Jesus’s words before his warning: Jesus says, “people can be forgiven all their sins and every slander they utter” (Mark 3:28). But someone who’s made a habit of declaring Jesus a servant of Satan demonstrates a refusal to turn to Jesus in repentance. They have gone their one way, apart from Christ.

So, if you’re worried about whether or not you’ve committed the unforgivable sin, you can be sure already that you haven’t. Why? Because your heart is sensitive to the conviction of the Holy Spirit, and in that, you’re actively pursuing Christ. All the other sins you may have in your life are forgiven in him<sup>1</sup>. Romans 5:8 & 6:23 assures us of this.

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<sup>1</sup>Francis Chan, The Gospel of Mark Study Guide

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## SEEK & STUDY

Our sermon series is titled, **Who Do You Say I Am?** As we look to the Scriptures, we'll keep that question front and center, helping frame all we're seeking in the Word.

1. An interesting movement in the story takes place as Jesus withdraws with his disciples and yet is followed by a large crowd (3:7-11), followed by Jesus withdrawing with his disciples again, and then appointing and sending the disciples out (3:13-18). What do we make of Jesus's actions here? Why might he withdraw from the crowds, and what would be important about him then appointing and sending out disciples?
2. What did Jesus send the disciples out to do? Look also at how this aligns with the work Christ has already been doing (1:21-28; 1:39). What could be the point of these parallels?
3. In **Mark 3:20-35**, we get the image of a "family". How might Jesus words here speak to us as a family, as the Body of Christ today? As he is facing opposition from the teachers of the law and even his own family, what is he pushing against?
4. Read **Mark 4:1-20**. Do you get a sense of who the different seeds on the different paths are in the story? Think about who Jesus is speaking to in this moment. What seed does he intend for them to be? Think of how this connects to Jesus withdrawing regularly with this smaller group while moving away from the larger crowds.
5. Read **Mark 4:21-34** as short follow-up parables to the longer parable you just read. It's as if Jesus the Preacher has made his main point, and is now illustrating it more fully with other illustrations. What are some of the ways these smaller pieces continue to contribute to the larger message Jesus is telling?
6. At the beginning of this book, Jesus tells us, "The kingdom of God has come near" (1:15). In these parables, Jesus repeatedly explains what the kingdom of God is like (4:26, 30). In light of that, what is the kingdom of God like? How is Jesus describing it?
7. Close your study with **1 Corinthians 3:5-9**. How do you see the Apostle Paul's words here speaking into what we just looked at in Mark 4? How do these words speak to you?

## FIND & FOLLOW

Each week, we'll conclude with these two questions:

1. How did Jesus reveal more of himself to you this week?
2. From what you *found* in Christ, how will you *follow* Him now?