

Mark 1:1, Acts 1:4-8

11 October 2020

ICE BREAKER: Describe a dangerous or scary situation you ever found yourself in.

LARGE GROUP QUESTIONS:

(Read 1:1) The Greek word “good news” or “**gospel**” is **euangelion**. It is the word from which we get evangelist. In the Ancient Near East, the word euangelion was not a religious word. It was a **powerful political word**. In the 1st century, it was a word meaning a **public proclamation** to all in the Roman Empire of an important announcement. The public proclamation put every every person in the Roman Empire on notice.

Mark began by **publicly proclaiming** the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Contrary to the modern misunderstanding of Separation of Church and State, it would be foreign to Mark and all the early Christians to think their faith in Jesus Christ was simply a private, individual religious matter.

1. Why do you think we **struggle understanding** the **Christian faith** as a **public faith**?

(Read 1:1) Not only was the “**gospel**” a public word, it was a **dangerous word**. For Mark proclaimed that Jesus Christ was the **Son of God**. Only the **Roman Caesars** used that title. Archaeology has discovered Roman coins with the face of Caesar Augustus on one side and the inscription ‘Son of God’ on the other side.

The Roman Caesars declared they were the sons of God. They believed they were the mediators between the gods and humanity. They believed they were the lord or lords and king of kings.

For Christians to openly profess Jesus Christ as Son of God was a public rejection of the Roman Caesars. In effect, it was a **declaration of war**, putting their lives immediately in great danger.

2. How does realizing the **danger** in **sharing the Gospel** help us better understand why witnessing Jesus is often **difficult for us** and **threatening to others**?

(Read Galatians 3:3) To believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and the Lord or lords, effects our whole life, private and public. To **follow Jesus** is **dangerous**. It can **endanger** our **reputation**, cost us **relationships** among our family and friends, and may **call for our life**.

To follow Jesus Christ **demands courage**. To do **what the Lord calls us to do** takes both **motivation** and **power**. Christians know they should share their faith, but often we do not have the desire. Honestly, we just do not want to. We hope someone else will. At other times when we finally feel motivated to witness, we lack the courage.

3. Describe **something** now you know **you should do** (e.g. confronting or forgiving a sin, speaking the truth in love, breaking a destructive habit), but are **struggling to do it**.

(Read Acts 1:4-8) As inspiring as it was for the disciples to **see Him risen** from the dead, Jesus knew even that would **not be enough**. For the disciples to have the courage and the sustaining motivation to proclaim His dangerous Gospel, they needed more! They needed the **Holy Spirit**.

Only when the disciples were **filled with the Holy Spirit** were they able to daily possess the **motivation** and **power** to privately and publicly **live out** and **share the Gospel** to a dangerous and hostile world.

4. Describe a **key habit** or activity you often sense the **Holy Spirit’s presence** and **favor, encouraging and energizing you**.

Cut along Dotted Line & use Prayer Requests below as Bible Book Marker

PRAYER GROUP TIME

(List persons you commit to witnessing to or inviting to Community Service next week.)
