

LEADER'S DISCUSSION GUIDE - MARK 1:16 – 39

The Kingdom Comes with Authority

BIG IDEA

Jesus' kingdom comes with authority—authority expressed in His teaching and exercised over evil, sickness, and people's lives. This authority is good because the King uses it to bring freedom, healing, direction, and life.

SUGGESTED FLOW FOR A 75-MINUTE DISCUSSION

Section	Focus	Time
Read and observe	Observing content and structure	10 min
Mark 1:16–20	Jesus calls with Authority	12 min
Mark 1:21–28	Jesus teaches with Authority	12 min
Mark 1:29–34	Jesus heals with Authority	12 min
Mark 1:35–39	Jesus prays	12 min
Summary and response	Authority and discipleship	15 min

A Note for Leaders

The questions and timings are suggestions. Select the questions that will best serve your group, allow time for participants to observe the text, and do not feel pressure to cover every point. The ideas are provided to guide the conversation, not as a script that must be taught.

READ AND OBSERVE

Read the passage aloud. Then give the group a few moments to observe the text:

- Look for key elements such as who, what, when, and where, as well as repeated words, contrasts, quotations, and patterns.
- Divide the passage into thought units.
- Note anything unexpected. What questions does the passage raise?

Invite the group to share their initial observations from the text.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS AND LEADER HELPS

1. Jesus calls with authority – Mark 1:16–20

Jesus authoritatively calls His first disciples. Their response gives us a picture of repentance and belief: they leave their old lives to follow Jesus into the life and mission of God’s kingdom.

Ask: What does the response of the fishermen reveal about Jesus’ authority and the nature of discipleship?

Possible follow-ups:

- What do the disciples leave behind, and what does Jesus call them into?
- What would “fishers of people” have communicated to these fishermen? What new identity and purpose does Jesus give them through this image?
- How does this call connect with Jesus’ announcement in Mark 1:14–15?

Ideas We Hope to Hear and Discover:

- Immediately after announcing God’s kingdom and calling people to repent and believe, Jesus calls His first disciples. Their response gives us a concrete picture of repentance and belief: they leave their former securities and entrust themselves to Jesus because He and His kingdom are worth more.
- Jesus takes the initiative and personally calls these ordinary people to follow Him. His call is not merely an invitation to learn information but to be with Him, know Him, and be shaped by Him. Mark does not explain why they follow; he emphasizes Jesus’ authority and their immediate obedience.
- The repeated attention to what the disciples leave—nets, boats, livelihood, and family—reveals the cost of following Jesus. Discipleship requires a decisive reordering of life in which work, relationships, comfort, and identity can no longer stand above allegiance to Jesus.
- Jesus does not merely call the fishermen away from their former lives; He gives them a new identity and purpose as “fishers of people.” Following Jesus means joining His mission of gathering people to Himself and into the life of God’s kingdom. Discipleship and mission belong together.

2. Jesus teaches with authority— Mark 1:21–28

Jesus teaches with great authority and demonstrates it by commanding an unclean spirit to leave. His authority provokes amazement.

Ask: What do Jesus’ words and actions in the synagogue reveal about His authority and His kingdom?

Possible follow-ups:

- What is significant about the way Jesus teaches? What does it mean that He teaches with authority?
- How is Jesus’ authority in teaching connected with His authority over unclean spirits?
- Why might He have silenced the spirit?
- What is significant about the fact that Jesus’ first encounter with opposition happens in a religious place?

- What does the reaction of the onlookers reveal about Jesus and their understanding of who He is?

Ideas We Hope to Hear and Discover:

- Jesus' teaching itself is an expression of God's kingdom coming near. He does not merely repeat the traditions or authority of earlier teachers; He authoritatively announces and embodies God's reign. The people's astonishment shows that they recognize something radically new in both His teaching and the authority with which He speaks.
- As Jesus teaches, an unclean spirit interrupts Him, drawing attention away from His message and presenting His coming as a threat. The arrival of God's kingdom exposes and confronts the spiritual powers opposed to it.
- Jesus silences the spirit rather than allowing an evil power to disclose or define His identity. People must discover who Jesus is through His teaching, His actions, and ultimately His journey to the cross.
- Jesus commands the spirit to leave without ritual, incantation, or appeal to another authority, releasing the man from the power that held him. His authority brings freedom: evil retreats, the man is restored, and God's kingdom takes ground.

3. Jesus heals many — Mark 1:29–34

Jesus uses His authority to care for and restore the weak and desperate.

Ask: What is noteworthy about the healings that take place in Simon's home?

Possible follow-ups:

- What is significant about the healing of Simon's mother-in-law and the way Jesus heals her?
- How might this have affected Simon personally, especially after he had left his livelihood to follow Jesus?
- What do the healings at the doorway reveal about Jesus' authority and how He chooses to use it?
- What does the response of the townspeople reveal about how they perceive Jesus and what they believe about Him?

Ideas We Hope to Hear and Discover:

- Jesus' authority extends beyond unclean spirits to sickness. As God's kingdom comes near through Him, the brokenness of the fallen world begins to give way to healing, life, and restoration.
- Simon has left his livelihood to follow Jesus, entrusting his former securities and responsibilities to Him. Jesus enters Simon's home and cares personally for his household, using His authority with tenderness as He takes Simon's mother-in-law by the hand and raises her up.
- Jesus heals by His own authority, without ritual or appeal to another power. The woman's immediate service shows that she has been completely restored—and that Jesus restores people to participate in the life and service of His kingdom.
- As the whole town gathers at the door, Jesus brings healing and deliverance to many. Yet a tension begins to emerge: will the crowds seek Jesus only for what He can do, or will they listen to His message and follow Him as King?

4. Jesus Prays — Mark 1:35–39

Jesus prioritizes time alone with the Father, remaining focused on His purpose: to proclaim the good news of God's kingdom.

Ask: What is significant about Jesus' time spent in prayer?

Possible follow-ups:

- What does this time reveal about Jesus—His priorities, His relationship with the Father, and His mission?
- What does Simon's interaction with Jesus reveal about the crowd's priorities and understanding of Jesus?
- How does this time compare and contrast with Jesus' earlier time in the wilderness?

Ideas We Hope to Hear and Discover:

- Even after a long evening of healing and deliverance, Jesus deliberately withdraws early in the morning to be alone with God. Prayer is not separate from His mission; His authority, direction, and faithful obedience flow from His relationship with the Father.
- Jesus' return to a deserted place recalls His earlier testing in the wilderness. This time the test comes through popularity and pressure from the crowds. Jesus refuses to let success or human expectations redirect the mission He has received from the Father.
- Prayer keeps Jesus focused on His central purpose: proclaiming the good news of God's kingdom and calling people to repentance and faith. Healing and deliverance are important expressions of the kingdom, but Jesus will not allow them to replace His preaching.
- Jesus therefore moves throughout Galilee rather than returning to the waiting crowd. He follows the voice of the Father rather than the voice of popularity, proclaiming the kingdom and demonstrating its power by casting out demons.

SUMMARY AND RESPONSE

Ask:

- What are the key themes of the text? How do we see the theme of authority?
- What have we learned about Jesus, the gospel, and God's kingdom? What happens as Jesus and His kingdom come into the world?
- What are we beginning to learn about discipleship?

Ideas We Hope to Hear and Discover:

- Jesus has announced that God's kingdom has come near, and these scenes begin to reveal what that kingdom looks like. God's reign comes through Jesus' authoritative teaching and actions, confronting evil, sickness, disorder, and everything that diminishes life.
- At the center of the kingdom stands Jesus the King. His authority extends over evil spirits, sickness, His disciples' lives, and the direction of His mission. Yet He uses this authority not to dominate or destroy people, but to call, liberate, heal, restore, and give new purpose.
- Jesus exercises His authority in dependence upon the Father. Through prayer, He resists the pressure of popularity and remains faithful to His mission of proclaiming the good news throughout Galilee. His authority and compassion serve the Father's purposes rather than the expectations of the crowds.
- The proper response to Jesus' authority is repentance and belief expressed through following Him. His disciples leave their former securities, entrust themselves to Him, and receive a new identity and purpose within His kingdom. The passage therefore asks whether we will

merely be amazed by Jesus or gladly submit our lives to Him as King.

Application

- What does it mean for you to repent, believe the good news, and follow Jesus? Are there things—even good things—you might need to leave behind to be with Him and obey His call? What motivates you to take this step?
- Where do you see chaos, sickness, or brokenness in your life or in the world around you? How can you bring these things to Jesus and entrust them to His authority and compassionate care?
- How does Jesus' example of prayer challenge and encourage you? How can you make prayer a consistent part of your discipleship and decision-making?

Conclude by praying together in response to what God has revealed through His Word.