

COME TO THE FEAST

BIBLICAL REFLECTIONS ON THE EUCHARIST

St Mark's Gospel (1)

Kieran J. O'Mahony, OSA

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Programme

- **Who were the "Markan" Christians? (Mark 13)**
- Insiders, outsiders and novelty (Mark 2:1-3:6)
- Feeding the 5000 (Mark 6:32-7:23)
- Feeding the 4000 (Mark 8:1-21)
- The Lord's Supper (Mark 14:22-25)
- Lessons for today's church

Sequence

- Sources: Mark's Gospel
- Technique: Attention to hints in the writing
- Eventually: location and dating

Greek and Aramaic

- Written in Greek
- Aramaic is translated
- Jewish practices are explained
- Leadership groups
- Sabbath, fasting and purity
- Mark 5:41 Then, gently taking the child by the hand, he said to her, "**Talitha koum**," which means, "Little girl, I say to you, get up."
- Mark 7:34 Then he looked up to heaven and said with a sigh, "**Ephphatha**" (that is, "Be opened").
- Mark 14:36 He said, "**Abba**, Father, all things are possible for you. Take this cup away from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will."
- Mark 15:22 They brought Jesus to a place called **Golgotha** (which is translated, "Place of the Skull").
- Mark 15:34 Around three o'clock Jesus cried out with a loud voice, "**Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?**" which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

Jewish practices

- Mark 2:19 Jesus said to them, "The wedding guests cannot fast while the bridegroom is with them, can they? As long as they have the bridegroom with them they do not fast."
- Mark 7:3 (For the Pharisees **and all the Jews** do not eat unless they perform a ritual washing, holding fast to the tradition of the elders. 4 And when they come from the marketplace, they do not eat unless they wash. They hold fast to many other traditions: the washing of cups, pots, kettles, and dining couches.)
- Mark 10:2 Then some Pharisees came, and to test him they asked, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?"
- Mark 14:1 Two days before the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the chief priests and the experts in the law were trying to find a way to arrest Jesus by stealth and kill him.
- Mark 14:12 Now on the first day of the feast of **Unleavened Bread**, when the **Passover** lamb is sacrificed, Jesus' disciples said to him, "Where do you want us to prepare for you to eat the Passover?"
- Mark 14:64 You have heard the **blasphemy!** What is your verdict?" They all condemned him as deserving death.
- Mark 15:42 Now when evening had already come, since it was the day of preparation (that is, the day before the Sabbath),

Leadership groups

- Mark 3:6 So the Pharisees went out immediately and began plotting with the **Herodians**, as to how they could assassinate him.
- Mark 6:17 For **Herod** himself had sent men, arrested John, and bound him in prison on account of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, because Herod had married her.
- Mark 8:15 And Jesus ordered them, "Watch out! Beware of the yeast of the Pharisees and the yeast of **Herod!**"
- Mark 12:13 Then they sent some of the Pharisees and **Herodians** to trap him with his own words.

Herod and John the Baptist

- Herod Antipas was a tetrarch, not a king,
- Herodias' first husband was not Philip (6:17) but another son of Herod the Great (called Herod II and Herod Boethus).
- Herodias and her first husband had a daughter named Salome, who is usually identified with the unnamed girl in the Markan tale.
- It was Salome, not Herodias, who married her half-uncle Philip.
- Antipas divorced his first wife, a Nabatean princess, in favour of Herodias, and contrary to Jewish law, Herodias divorced her first husband in order to marry his half-brother, her own half-uncle.

Sabbath, fasting, purity

- 2:1-3:6
- Mark 7:17 Now when Jesus had left the crowd and entered the house, his disciples asked him about the parable. 18 He said to them, "Are you so foolish? Don't you understand that whatever goes into a person from outside cannot defile him? 19 For it does not enter his heart but his stomach, and then goes out into the sewer." (This means all foods are clean.) 20 He said, "What comes out of a person defiles him. 21 For from within, out of the human heart, come evil ideas, sexual immorality, theft, murder, 22 adultery, greed, evil, deceit, debauchery, envy, slander, pride, and folly. 23 All these evils come from within and defile a person."
- Fasting (2:18)
- Patterns of Sabbath observance (2:23-27; 3:1-5)
- Ritual washing and offerings (7:1-23)
- Grounds for divorce (10:1-12),
- Roman taxes (12:13-17)
- Resurrection (12:18-27)
- The greatest commandment' (12:28-31)
- The Messiah (12:37)
- Robe length and synagogue seats (12:38-40)
- The relative value of offerings from rich and poor (12:41-44)
- The Temple (11:15-18; 13:2).

And Gentiles?

- Mark has considerable interaction between Jesus and Gentiles.
- The healing of the demoniac in the **Decapolis** in 5:1-20
- The healing of the **Syro-Phoenician** woman's daughter near Tyre in 7:24-30
- The healing of the mute in the **Decapolis** in 7:31-37.
- It is noteworthy that this last story is unparalleled in any other gospel.
- A further Markan positive interaction between Jesus and a Gentile is at the death of Jesus (15:39) where the **centurion** is said to remark "Surely this was the/a son of God".

And so...

- Greek-speaking community
- Uses the Greek Old Testament (Septuagint)
- Limited knowledge of Judaism
- Predominantly Gentiles, on the edge of Judaism

- Jewish rules still an issue
- Mixed community, with integration as a problem
- Only one large city (Jerusalem)
- Agricultural imagery
- No urban metaphors
- Protagonists: poor people
- Small denomination coins mentioned
- So, lower economic stratum

Mark 13

Mark 13:3 So while he was sitting on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter, James, John, and Andrew asked him privately, **4** "Tell us, when will these things happen? And what will be the sign that all these things are about to take place?" **5** Jesus began to say to them, "Watch out that no one misleads you. **6** Many will come in my name, saying, 'I am he,' and they will mislead many. **7** When you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be alarmed. These things must happen, but the end is still to come. **8** For nation will rise up in arms against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be earthquakes in various places, and there will be famines. These are but the beginning of birth pains.

Mark 13:9 "You must watch out for yourselves. You will be handed over to councils and beaten in the synagogues. You will stand before governors and kings because of me, as a witness to them. **10** First the gospel must be preached to all nations. **11** When they arrest you and hand you over for trial, do not worry about what to speak. But say whatever is given you at that time, for it is not you speaking, but the Holy Spirit. **12** Brother will hand over brother to death, and a father his child. Children will rise against parents and have them put to death. **13** You will be hated by everyone because of my name. But the one who endures to the end will be saved.

Mark 13:14 "But when you see *the abomination of desolation* standing where it should not be (let the reader understand), then those in Judea must flee to the mountains. **15** The one on the roof must not come down or go inside to take anything out of his house. **16** The one in the field must not turn back to get his cloak. **17** Woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing their babies in those days! **18** Pray that it may not be in winter. **19** For in those days there will be suffering unlike anything that has happened from the beginning of the creation that God created until now, or ever will happen. **20** And if the Lord had not cut short those days, no one would be saved. But because of the elect, whom he chose, he has cut them short. **21** Then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or 'Look, there he is!' do not believe him. **22** For false messiahs and false prophets will appear and perform signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, the elect. **23** Be careful! I have told you everything ahead of time.

Mark 13:24 "But in those days, after that suffering, *the sun will be darkened and the moon will not give its light; 25 the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken.* **26** Then everyone will see *the Son of Man arriving in the clouds* with great power and glory. **27** Then he will send angels and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.

Mark 13:28 "Learn this parable from the fig tree: Whenever its branch becomes tender and puts out its leaves, you know that summer is near. **29** So also you, when you see these things happening, know that he is near, right at the door. **30** I tell you the truth, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place. **31** Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.

Mark 13:32 "But as for that day or hour no one knows it—neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son—except the Father. **33** Watch out! Stay alert! For you do not know when the time will come. **34** It is like a man going on a journey. He left his house and put his slaves in charge, assigning to each his work, and commanded the doorkeeper to stay alert. **35** Stay alert, then, because you do not know when the owner of the house will return—whether during evening, at midnight, when the rooster crows, or at dawn— **36** or else he

might find you asleep when he returns suddenly. **37** What I say to you I say to everyone: Stay alert!"

Mark 13

- Serious earthquakes in 60 and 63 (Tacitus, Annals 15.44)
- The Roman army was defeated by the Parthians in 62 (Tacitus, Annals 15:13-17)
- In 64, Christians in Rome were blamed for the fire (Tacitus again)
- 68 Nero committed suicide.
- 69 The year of the three emperors
- During the siege of Jerusalem, the general in charge, Vespasian, became Emperor
- Titus, his son and later successor took charge.
- Eventually, Titus won the war and held a triumph in Rome.
- So, just before or just after the destruction of the city and its Temple.

Charisms and prophecy

- Mark 13:11 When they arrest you and hand you over for trial, do not worry about what to speak. But say whatever is given you at that time, for it is not you speaking, but the Holy Spirit.
- Mark 1:8 I baptise you with water, but he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit."
- Mark 3:28 I tell you the truth, people will be forgiven for all sins, even all the blasphemies they utter. 29 But whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven, but is guilty of an eternal sin"
- Mark 13:6 Many will come in my name, saying, 'I am he,' and they will mislead many.
- Mark 13:22 For false messiahs and false prophets will appear and perform signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, the elect.

Location

- The Elder used to say: Mark, in his capacity as Peter's interpreter, wrote down accurately as many things as he recalled from memory—though not in an ordered form—of the things either said or done by the Lord. For he neither heard the Lord nor accompanied him, but later, as I said, Peter, who used to give his teachings in the form of chreiai, but had no intention of providing an ordered arrangement of the logia of the Lord. Consequently Mark did nothing wrong when he wrote down some individual items just as he related them from memory. For he made it his one concern not to omit anything he had heard or to falsify anything.
- Papias, preserved by Eusebius
- Rome?
- But no influence of Paul
- No special regard for Peter
- Not hinted at in 1 Peter and 1 Clement
- Different to the Old Roman Creed (next slide)
- Mark is known in Rome by the end of the second century
- So, most likely not written in Rome

The Old Roman Creed

I believe in God the Father almighty;
and in Christ Jesus His only Son, our Lord,
Who was born from the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary,
Who under Pontius Pilate was crucified and buried,
on the third day rose again from the dead,
ascended to heaven,
sits at the right hand of the Father,
whence He will come to judge the living and the dead;
and in the Holy Spirit,
the holy Church,
the remission of sins,
the resurrection of the flesh

(the life everlasting).

Location

- Galilee? But Mark's geography is vague and inaccurate.
- E.g. Then Jesus went out again from the region of Tyre and came through Sidon to the Sea of Galilee in the region of the Decapolis. (Mark 7:31)
- Syria – quite likely.
- Basis for Matthew, which comes from Antioch in Syria.
- Antioch had contacts with Cyrene and so the sons of Simon are still known.

Practices

- Already in the Pauline churches, baptism and the Lord's Supper are practiced (Rom 6; 1 Cor 11).
- The Didache (Jewish-Christian) also has baptism and the Lord's Supper (usually first century ad).
- Baptism in Mark: John the Baptist (1:4-5, 8-9, 6:14, 24-25, 8:28 and 11:30); Jesus (1:8-9; 10:38-39); future believers (1:8; 10:38-39)
- Eucharist in Mark: see Mk 8:6 and Mk 14:22-25.

And so...

- A mixed church
- Internal tensions
- External challenges
- Time of tremendous upheaval
- Question of faith, practice and identity
- Not so unlike our own time?

Reading Mark

- Focus: on the Eucharist / Lord's Supper
- Attempt: to read Mark as it would have sounded to the first hearers/readers
- In light of their historical and social context
- In light of their "sacramental" practice
- This means: the final text as it stands, making (legitimate!) connections across the text

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Programme

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- **Insiders, outsiders and novelty (Mark 2:1-3:6)**
- Feeding the 5000 (Mark 6:32-7:23)
- Feeding the 4000 (Mark 8:1-21)
- The Lord's Supper (Mark 14:22-25)
- Lessons for today's church

Sequence

- Reading Mark 2:1-3:6
- Mapping Mark 2:1-3:6
- Jesus?
- Post-Easter Vocabulary
- Markan community
- Linear reading
- And so...

Mapping Mark 2:1-3:6

Controversy Story: Mark 2:1-3:6

(possibly pre-Markan)

1:45 Summary			3:7-12 Summary
	2:1-12 Sin/ forgiveness	Linear telling	3:1-6 Sabbath
	2:13-17 Sinners/ eating		2:23-28 Eating / Sabbath
		2:18-22 Fasting (not eating)	

Indoors 2:1-12
Healing of a paralytic
 (Miracle)
 "Hearts"
 "Rise" (life)
Sins

Miracle
 Hearts
 Life

A* Indoors 3:1-6
Man with withered hand
 (Miracle)
 "Hearts"
 "Life"
 Sabbath

Controversy Stories Mk 2:1-3:6

B. Outdoors (2:13-17)
 Eating with **Sinners**

Eating
 Need

Eating
 Need

B* Outdoors (2:23-28)
Plucking corn on the Sabbath

Eating
 Hunger (Fast)
 Need

C. 2:18-22
 Fasting and Not Fasting
(Be hungry)
 Bridegroom "taken
 away"
 Old/New - Cloth/Skins

Mark 2:1-12

Mark 2:1 Now after some days, when he returned to Capernaum, the news spread that he was at **home (house)**. 2 So **many gathered (sunagō)** that there was no longer any room, not even by the door, and he preached the **word** to them. 3 Some people came bringing to him a paralytic, carried by **four** of them. 4 When they were **not able** to bring him in because of the crowd, they removed the roof above Jesus. Then, after tearing it out, they lowered the stretcher the paralytic was lying on. 5 When Jesus saw their **faith**, he said to the paralytic, "**Child**, your **sins** are **forgiven**." 6 Now some of the experts in the law were sitting there, turning these things over in their minds: 7 "Why does this man speak this way? He is **blaspheming!** Who can **forgive** sins but **God alone?**" 8 Now immediately, when Jesus realised in his spirit what they were thinking in their hearts, he said to them, "Why are you thinking such things in your hearts? 9 Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Stand up (**egeirō**), take your stretcher, and walk'? 10 But so that you may know that the **Son of Man** has authority on earth to forgive sins,"-he said to the paralytic - 11 "I tell you, stand up (**egeirō**), take your stretcher, and go home (**house**)."
 12 And immediately the man stood up (**egeirō**), took his stretcher, and went out in front of them all. They were all amazed and glorified God, saying, "We have never seen anything like this!"

Shema Yisrael

Listen, Israel: The Lord is our God, the Lord is one! You must love the Lord your God with your whole mind, your whole being, and all your strength. These words I am commanding you today must be kept in mind, and you must teach them to your children and speak of them as you sit in your house, as you walk along the road, as you lie down, and as you get up. You should tie them as a reminder on your forearm and fasten them as symbols on your forehead. Inscribe them on the door frames of your houses and gates. (Deuteronomy 6:4-9)

Son of Man in Mark

Son of Man in Mark

14 occurrences in Mark

Only here and in 2:28 does the Son of Man exercise authority on earth.

Central to the Passion Prediction

Part of the trial of Jesus

Mark 2:10, 28; 8:31, 38; 9:9, 12, 31; 10:33, 45; 13:26; 14:21, 41, 62

For the readers

- Jesus' preaching and destiny
 - Forgiveness
 - Blasphemy and Son of Man
 - Resurrection
 - Shema Yisrael (Mark 12)
- Post-Easter vocabulary
 - House
 - The Word
 - Many
 - Gathered (sunagō)
 - Faith
- Markan community
 - Difficulty getting in
 - Tradition as a block
 - Forgiveness extended
- The paralytic
 - A Gentile? (Four?)

Mark 3:1-6

Mark 3:1 Then Jesus entered the synagogue again, and a man was there who had a withered hand. 2 They watched Jesus closely to see if he would **heal** him on the **Sabbath**, so that they could **accuse** him. 3 So he said to the man who had the withered hand, "**Stand up (egeirō)** among all these people." 4 Then he said to them, "Is it lawful to do good on the Sabbath, or evil, to save a **life** or **destroy** it?" But they were silent. 5 After looking around at them in anger, **grieved** by the **hardness** of their **hearts**, he said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." He stretched it out, and his hand was **restored (apokathistanō)**. 6 So the Pharisees went out immediately and began plotting with the Herodians, as to how they could **destroy** him.

- Jesus' preaching and destiny
 - Healing
 - Sabbath controversies
 - Restore (Mark 3:13-19 and 9:2)
 - Accuse
 - The destruction of Jesus
 - Foreshadowing of the end
- Post-Easter vocabulary
 - Rise
 - Save
 - Life
- Markan community
 - Tradition as a block
 - Jesus' initiative: God's act in Christ *precedes* human seeking
- The paralytic
 - A Jew, certainly

Mark 2:13-17

Mark 2:13 Jesus went out again by the sea. The whole crowd came to him, and he taught them. 14 As he went along, he saw Levi, the son of Alphaeus, sitting at the tax booth. "**Follow me, (akoloutheō)** he said to him. And he **got up (anistēmi)** and followed (**akoloutheō**) him. 15 As Jesus was having a meal (**katakeimai**) in Levi's home (**house**), **many (polys)** tax collectors and **sinners** were **eating with (sunankeimai)** Jesus and his disciples, for there were **many (polys)** who **followed (akoloutheō)** him. 16 When the experts in the law and the Pharisees saw that he was eating (**esthiō**) with sinners and tax collectors, they said to his disciples, "Why does he eat (**esthiō**) with tax collectors and **sinners**?" 17 When Jesus heard this he said to them, "Those who are healthy don't need a physician, but those who are sick do. I have not come to **call** the righteous, but **sinners**."

For the readers

- Jesus' preaching and destiny
 - Call
 - Follow me
 - Sinners
 - Call of Levi (*not* one of the Twelve in Mark) resembles the call of the first disciples
 - Tax collectors were ritually impure
- Post-Easter vocabulary
 - Rise
 - Many
- Markan community
 - House
 - To recline (with)
 - To eat
 - Restricted access
 - Table fellowship: pure (Jews) and impure (Gentiles)
 - Scribes = actual opponents of Mark's day

Mark 2:23-28

Mark 2:23 Jesus was going through (lit. making his **way**) the grain fields on a **Sabbath**, and his disciples began to pick some heads of **wheat** as they made their way. 24 So the Pharisees said to him, "Look, why are they doing what is against the law on the **Sabbath**?" 25 He said to them, "Have you never read what David did when he was in need and he and his companions were hungry- 26 how he entered the house of God when Abiathar was high priest and ate the **sacred bread**, (= 5 loaves) which is against the law for any but the priests to eat, and also **gave it** to his **companions**?" 27 Then he said to them, "The Sabbath was made for people, not people for the Sabbath. 28 For this reason the **Son of Man** is lord even of the Sabbath."

For the readers

- Jesus' preaching and destiny
 - Sabbath: a foretaste of end-time joy
 - NB: the Sabbath is *still* a gift
 - Son of Man
 - Son of David
 - Psalm 110 in Mark 12:35-37
 - Feeding disciples
- Post-Easter vocabulary
 - Way
 - Loaf/loaves
 - To give
 - Lord of the Sabbath
 - Restricted access, with the priests representing restriction to Jews?
- Markan community
 - Restricted access, with the priests representing restriction to Jews?

Mark 2:18-22

Mark 2:18 Now John's disciples and the Pharisees were **fasting**. So they came to Jesus and said, "Why do the disciples of John and the disciples of the Pharisees **fast**, but your **disciples** don't **fast**?"

19 Jesus said to them, "The wedding guests cannot **fast** while the **bridegroom** is with them, can they? As long as they have the bridegroom with them they do not **fast**. 20 But **the days are coming** when the **bridegroom** will be **taken away** from them, and at that time they will **fast**."

21 No one sews a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment; otherwise, the patch pulls away from it, the **new** from the old, and the tear becomes worse.

22 And no one pours **new wine** into old wineskins; otherwise, the **wine** will burst the skins, and both the wine and the skins will be destroyed. Instead **new wine** is poured into **new** wineskins.

For the readers

- Jesus' preaching and destiny
 - Jesus "out of step" with other renewal movements.
 - New = end-time renewal
 - Fasting
 - Disciples
 - "The days are coming"
 - Taken away
- Post-Easter vocabulary
 - Bridegroom
 - Wine (wheat and bread in the next story)
- Markan community
 - "Eschatological banquet"
 - Old and new in Jesus (bridegroom)
 - Old and new (cloth)
 - Old and new (wine)
 - 3 "periods": OT, Jesus, Church
 - Implied: a disconnect with Judaism

Jesus?

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forgiveness • Blasphemy and Son of Man • Resurrection • Call • Follow me • Sinners • Fasting • | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disciples • "The days are coming" • Taken away • Son of Man • Son of David • Psalm 110 in Mark 12:35-37 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feeding disciples • Healing • Sabbath controversies • Restore (Mark 3:13-19 and 9:2) • The destruction of Jesus |
|---|--|---|

Post-Easter vocabulary

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • House • The Word • Many • Gathered (sunagō) • Faith • Rise • | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many • Bridegroom • Wine (wheat and bread in the next story) • Way • Loaf/loaves | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To give • Lord of the Sabbath • Rise • Save • Life |
|--|--|--|

Markan Community

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulty getting in • Tradition as a block • Forgiveness extended • House • To recline • To recline with • To eat | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restricted access • "Eschatological banquet" • Old and new in Jesus (bridegroom) • Old and new (cloth) • Old and new (wine) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restricted access, with the priests representing restriction to Jews? • Tradition as a block |
|---|---|---|

**Indoor
Healing**

Jesus'
perception
Divine claim

**Jesus
Scribes
Paralytic**

**Indoor
Healing**

Jesus'
perception
Divine claim

**Jesus
Pharisees
Handicapped
man**

**Eating
Uncleanness**
Disciples about
Jesus
**Jesus
Disciples
Scribes
Punchline**

**Eating
Uncleanness**
Jesus about
disciples
**Jesus
Disciples
Pharisees
Punchline**

Non-fasting

Disciples
about
disciples
**Jesus
Other
disciples
People**

Linear Reading

A: questioning in their hearts
B: questioning his disciples
C: disciples about disciples
B1: Jesus about his disciples
A1: watching to accuse him

Scribes
Scribes of the Pharisees
people
Pharisees
Pharisees

work day
work day
indefinite
Sabbath
Sabbath

A: The Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins
B: I have come to call not the righteous but sinners
C: Bridegroom, unshrunk cloth, new wine
B*: The Son of Man is lord even of the Sabbath
A* : Jesus practices his power over the Sabbath

And so...

- Central story is at the centre
- Novelty: bridegroom, cloth, wine
- Because of Jesus:
 - Forgiveness and healing to all, whenever
 - Inclusion of sinners
 - No restrictions on who may take part

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Sequence

- The pattern
- Mark
- Biblical Background
- Markan community
- Thus far...
- Suddenly...
- And so...

The Pattern

Sequence I 6:32-7:23

5000

6:32-44

Boat

6:45-52

[Summary]

6:53-56

Dispute

7:1-23

Sequence II 8:1-21

4000

8:1-10

Dispute

(8:11-12)

Boat

8:14-21

Tyre

7:24-30

Decapolis

7:31-37

Mark 6:32-44

Mark 6:32 So they went away by themselves in a boat to some remote place (**desert**).
33 But many saw them leaving and recognised them, and they hurried on foot from all
the towns and arrived there ahead of them. 34 As Jesus came ashore he saw the
large crowd and he had compassion (**splanchnizomai**) on them, because they were like
sheep without a **shepherd**. So he taught them many things.

Mark 6:35 When it was already late, his disciples came to him and said, "This is an
isolated place (**desert**) and it is already very late. 36 Send them away so that they can
go into the surrounding countryside and villages and buy something for themselves to

eat." 37 But he answered them, "You give them something to eat." And they said, "Should we go and buy bread for two hundred silver coins and give it to them to eat?" 38 He said to them, "How many loaves do you have? Go and see." When they found out, they said, "Five—and two **fish**." 39 Then he directed them all to sit down (**anaklinō**) in **groups** on the green grass. 40 So they reclined in **groups (symposia)** of **hundreds** and **fifties**. 41 He **took** the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, he **gave thanks** and **broke** the loaves. He gave them to his disciples to **serve** the people, and he divided the two fish among them all. 42 They all ate and were **satisfied**, 43 and they picked up the **broken** pieces and fish that were left over, **twelve** baskets full.

Biblical Background

- Then Micaiah said, "I saw all Israel scattered on the mountains, like sheep that have no shepherd; and the LORD said, 'These have no master; let each one go home in peace.'" (1 Kgs 22:17)
- Num 27:16-17; 1 Kings 22:17; Jdt 11:19; Ezek 34:8; Zech 10:2
- He humbled you by letting you hunger, then by feeding you with manna, with which neither you nor your ancestors were acquainted, in order to make you understand that one does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD. (Deut 8:3)
- Moses chose capable men from all Israel, and he made them heads over the people, rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens. (Exod 18:25; cf. Ex 18:21; Deut 1:15.)
- Lev 24:7 You shall put on the pile pure frankincense and salt, and they shall be as **loaves for remembrance**, set before the Lord. 8 On the day of the sabbaths he shall set them out before the Lord continually **as an everlasting covenant from the sons of Israel**. 9 And they shall be for Aaron and his sons, and they shall eat them in a holy place, for they are holy of holies; this is for him from the things sacrificed to the Lord, a perpetual precept.
- 1 Sam LXX 21:2 (21.1) And Daudid came to Nomba to the priest Abimelech. And Abimelech was astonished to meet him and said to him, "Why is it that you are alone, and no one with you?" 3 (2) And Daudid said to the priest, "The king has charged me with a matter today and said to me, 'Let no one know the matter about which I send you and concerning which I have charged you,' and I have testified solemnly to the lads in the place called Faith of God, Phellani, Alemoni, 4 (3) **and now if there are in your hand five loaves, give into my hand what is found**." 5 (4) And the priest answered Daudid and said, "There are no permitted loaves in my hand, for there are only consecrated loaves; if the lads have kept themselves from a woman, then they shall eat." 6 (5) And Daudid answered the priest and said to him, "Indeed we have kept ourselves from a woman yesterday and the third day; when I go on a journey all the lads have become consecrated, and this journey is profane, wherefore it shall be consecrated today through my implements."

Markan Community

- Bread / loaf: Mark 2:26; 3:20; 6:8, 37-38, 41, 44, 52; 7:2, 5, 27; 8:4-6, 14, 16-17, 19; 14:22.
- Fishermen: Mark 1:16-17
- Twelve: Mark 3:14, 16; 4:10; 5:25, 42; 6:7, 43; 8:19; 9:35; 10:32; 11:11; 14:10, 17, 20, 43.
- Basket (kophinos): a word used especially by Jews in later times. Used appositely in Mark 8:19.
- Broken pieces: Mark 6:43; 8:8, 19-20
- Did. 9:3 And concerning the **broken bread**: We give you thanks, our Father, for the life and knowledge that you have made known to us through Jesus, your servant; to you be the glory forever.
- Did. 9:4 Just as this **broken bread** was scattered upon the mountains and then was gathered together and became one, so may your church be gathered together from the ends of the earth into your kingdom; for yours is the glory and the power through Jesus Christ forever.

- Davidic king / messiah.
- Exodus traditions of feeding in the desert.
- Anticipating the Lord's Supper.
- Looking forward, ultimately, to the banquet of the final Kingdom of God.
- All are God's guests at the banquet of life.

Mark 6:45-52

Mark 6:45 Immediately Jesus **made** his disciples get into the boat and **go on ahead** to the other side, to Bethsaida, while he dispersed the crowd. 46 After saying good-bye to them, he went to the **mountain** to pray. 47 When **evening** came, the boat was **in the middle of the sea** and he was alone on the land. 48 He saw them straining at the oars, because the **wind** was against them. As the **night** was ending, he came to them walking on the **sea**, for he wanted **to pass by (parerchomai)** them. 49 When they saw him walking on the water they thought he was a ghost. They cried out, 50 for they all saw him and were terrified. But immediately he spoke to them: "Have courage! **It is I. Do not be afraid.**" 51 Then he **went up** with them into the boat, and the wind ceased. They were completely astonished, 52 because they did not understand about the **loaves**, but their **hearts** were **hardened**.

Biblical Background

- **Egō eimi** (it is I)
- Exod LXX 3:14 And God said to Moyses, "**I am The One Who Is.**" And he said, "Thus shall you say to the sons of Israel, 'The One Who Is has sent me to you.'"
- Deut 32:39 LXX See, see that **I am**, and there is no god except me. I will kill, and I will make alive; I will strike, and I will heal, and there is no one who will deliver from my hands.
- Isa 43:10 LXX Be my witnesses; I too am a witness, says the Lord God, and the servant whom I have chosen so that you may know and believe and understand that **I am**. Before me there was no other god, nor shall there be any after me.
- Isa 41:4 LXX Who has wrought and done these things? The one calling her from the beginning of generations has called her. I, God, am first, and for the things that are coming, **I am**.
- Cf. Mark 14:62 "**I am**," said Jesus, "and you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power and coming with the clouds of heaven."
- Exod LXX 14:21 But Moyses stretched out the hand over the **sea**, and the Lord drew off the sea by a strong south **wind** during the **whole night**, and he made the sea dry, and the water was divided. 22 And the sons of Israel entered **into the midst of the sea** on the dry ground, and the water became a wall for them on the right and a wall on the left. 23 Then the Egyptians pursued, and all the cavalry of Pharaoh and the chariots and the riders went in after them **into the midst of the sea**. 24 And it happened in the **early morning** watch that the **Lord** looked at the camp of the Egyptians in the pillar of fire and cloud, and he threw the camp of the Egyptians into disarray. 25 And he bound together the axles of their chariots and led them violently. And the Egyptians said, "Let us flee from Israel! For the Lord fights the Egyptians for them!"
- Exod LXX 24:15 And **Moyses and Iesous went up** into the **mountain**, and the cloud covered the mountain. 16 And God's glory descended upon the **mountain**, Sina, and the cloud covered it for six days, and the Lord called Moyses on the seventh day from the midst of the cloud. 17 Now the appearance of the Lord's glory was like a flaming fire on the top of the **mountain** before the sons of Israel. 18 And Moyses entered into the midst of the cloud and **went up into the mountain**, and he was there on the mountain for forty days and forty nights.
- Ps LXX 76:17 (16) Waters saw you, O God; **waters saw you, and they were afraid**, and the deep was troubled, a great roaring of waters.
- Ps LXX 76:20 (19) **In the sea was your way, and your paths in many waters**, and your footprints will not be known.
- Job LXX 9:8 ...who alone stretched out the sky and **walks on the sea** as on dry ground...

- Exod LXX 33:19 And he said, "I will pass by (**parerchomai**) before you (i.e. Moses) in my glory, and I will call by my name "Lord" before you. And I will have mercy on whomever I have me
- Ps LXX 76:17 (16) Waters saw you, O God; **waters saw you, and they were afraid**, and the deep was troubled, a great roaring of waters.
- Ps LXX 76:20 (19) **In the sea was your way, and your paths in many waters**, and your footprints will not be known.
- Job LXX 9:8 ...who alone stretched out the sky and **walks on the sea** as on dry ground...
- Exod LXX 33:19 And he said, "I will pass by (**parerchomai**) before you (i.e. Moses) in my glory, and I will call by my name "Lord" before you. And I will have mercy on whomever I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whomever I have compassion."
- Exod LXX 4:21 And the Lord said to Moyses, "As you go and return to Egypt, see, all the wonders which I put in your hands, you shall perform them before Pharaoh. But I will **harden** his heart, and he will not send the people away. cf. Exod 7:3, 13-14, 22; 8:15, 19, 32; 9:7, 12, 34-10:1; 10:20, 27; 11:10; 14:4, 8, 17

Markan Community

- Mark 14:62 "**I am**," said Jesus, "and you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power and coming with the clouds of heaven."
- Mark 6:45 Immediately Jesus made his disciples get into the boat and go on ahead (**proagō**) to the other side, to Bethsaida, while he dispersed the crowd.
- Mark 16:7 But go, tell his disciples, even Peter, that he is going ahead (**proagō**) of you into Galilee. You will see him there, just as he told you."
- Narrative portrayal of the **community**.
- Narrative portrayal of the **resurrection**.
- Link to the **supper** (loaves).
- The **epiphany** cannot be separated from the **loaves**.
- Considerable **Moses** references.
- References to the **trial/death** of Jesus and the **resurrection**.
- References to the **mission** the community.

Thus far...

- References to historical Israel
- References to Moses
- References to David / Messiah
- Even a typically Jewish word for basket
- Israelite symbolism of 5 and 12
- Location: Jewish territory
- So: Jesus is manna / bread of life for those of Jewish origin

Suddenly...

- **Dispute**: 7:1-23 (what makes one unclean?)
- **Tyre**: 7:24-30 (daughter of the Syro-Phoenician woman)
- **Decapolis**: 7:31-37 (deaf-mute man)

Mark 7:14-23

- Mark 7:14 Then he called the crowd again and said to them, "Listen to me, everyone, and understand (**suniēmi**). 15 **There is nothing outside of a person that can defile him by going into him**. Rather, it is what comes out of a person that defiles him."
- Mark 7:17 Now when Jesus had left the crowd and entered the house, his disciples asked him about the parable. 18 He said to them, "Are you so foolish (**asunetos**)? **Don't you understand (suniēmi) that whatever goes into a person from outside cannot defile him?** 19 For it does not enter his **heart** but his stomach, and then goes out into the sewer." (**This means all foods are clean.**) 20 He said, "What comes out of a person defiles him. 21 For from within, out of the human **heart**, come evil ideas, sexual immorality, theft, murder, 22

adultery, greed, evil, deceit, debauchery, envy, slander, pride, and folly. 23 All these evils come from within and defile a person."

Not understanding

- Mark 4:12 "...so that although they look they may look but not see, and although they hear they may hear but not understand (**suniēmi**), so they may not repent and be forgiven."
- Mark 6:52 because they did not understand (**suniēmi**) about the loaves, but their hearts were hardened.
- Mark 7:14 Then he called the crowd again and said to them, "Listen to me, everyone, and understand (**suniēmi**)."
- Mark 8:17 When he learned of this, Jesus said to them, "Why are you arguing about having no bread? Do you still not see or understand (**suniēmi**)? Have your hearts been hardened?"
- Mark 8:21 Then he said to them, "Do you still not understand (**suniēmi**)?"

Mark 7:24-30

Mark 7:24 After Jesus left there, he went to the region of **Tyre**. When he went into a **house**, he did not want anyone to know, but he was not able to escape notice. 25 Instead, a woman whose young daughter had an unclean spirit immediately heard about him and came and fell at his feet. 26 The woman was a **Greek**, of **Syrophoenician** origin. She asked him to cast the demon out of her daughter. 27 He said to her, "Let the children be satisfied first, for it is not right to take the children's **bread** and to throw it to the **dogs**." 28 She answered, "Yes, Lord, but even the dogs under the table eat the children's **crumbs**." 29 Then he said to her, "Because you said this, you may go. The demon has left your daughter." 30 She went home (**house**) and found the child lying on the bed, and the demon gone.

Mark 7:31-37

Mark 7:31 **Then Jesus went out again from the region of Tyre and came through Sidon** to the Sea of Galilee in the region of the **Decapolis**. 32 They brought to him a deaf man who had difficulty speaking, and they asked him to place his hands on him. 33 After Jesus took him aside privately, away from the crowd, he put his fingers in the man's ears, and after spitting, he touched his tongue. 34 **Then he looked up to heaven and said with a sigh, "Ephphatha"** (that is, "Be opened"). 35 And immediately the man's ears were opened, his tongue loosened, and he spoke plainly. 36 Jesus ordered them not to tell anything. But as much as he ordered them not to do this, **they proclaimed it all the more**. 37 People were completely astounded and said, "**He has done everything well. He even makes the deaf hear and the mute speak.**"

Privately...

- Mark 4:34 He did not speak to them without a parable. But **privately** he explained everything to his own disciples.
- Mark 6:31 He said to them, "Come with me **privately** to an isolated place and rest a while" (for many were coming and going, and there was no time to eat). 32 So they went away by themselves in a boat to some remote place.
- Mark 7:33 After Jesus took him aside **privately**, away from the crowd, he put his fingers in the man's ears, and after spitting, he touched his tongue.
- Mark 9:2 Six days later Jesus took with him Peter, James, and John and led them alone up a high mountain **privately**. And he was transfigured before them,
- Mark 9:28 Then, after he went into the house, his disciples asked him **privately**, "Why couldn't we cast it out?"
- Mark 13:3 So while he was sitting on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter, James, John, and Andrew asked him **privately**,

Doing everything well

- Gen 1:31 And God saw **all the things (panta)** that he had **done (poieō)** and see, they were exceedingly **good (kalos)**. And it came to be evening, and it came to be morning, a sixth day.

- Mark 7:37 People were completely astounded and said, "He has **done (poieō) all things (panta) well (kalōs)**. He even makes the deaf hear and the mute speak."
- *For Mark, the story narrates not merely an interesting Hellenistic wonder tales but a portrayal of eschatological salvation, the new creation.* (Eugene Boring)

And so...

- Jesus is manna/bread of life for Jews
- Jewish lines of demarcation no longer count
- On the basis of their need, he also gives life to Gentiles
- On the basis of his prayer, he enables Gentiles to hear and to proclaim
- "He has done all things well" on account of the new creation and inclusion of all humanity

COME TO THE FEAST

BIBLICAL REFLECTIONS ON THE EUCHARIST

St Mark's Gospel (4)

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Programme

- Who were the "Markan" Christians? (Mark 13)
- Insiders, outsiders and novelty (Mark 2:1-3:6)
- Feeding the 5000 (Mark 6:32-7:23)
- **Feeding the 4000 (Mark 8:1-21)**
- The Lord's Supper (Mark 14:22-25)
- Lessons for today's church

Sequence

- The pattern
- Mark
- Biblical Background
- Markan community
- And so...
- Mark 6:32-8:30

The pattern

Sequence I
6:32-7:23

Sequence II
8:1-21

5000
6:32-44

4000
8:1-10

Boat
6:45-52

Dispute
(8:11-12)

[Summary]
6:53-56

Dispute
7:1-23

Boat
8:14-21

Tyre
7:24-30

Decapolis
7:31-37

Mark 8:1-10

Mark 8:1 In those days there was another large crowd **with nothing to eat**. So Jesus called his disciples and said to them, 2 "I have **compassion** on the crowd, because they have already been here with me **three days**, and **they have nothing to eat**. 3 If I send them **home (house)** hungry, they will faint on the **way**, and some of them have come from a great distance." 4 His disciples answered him, "Where can someone get enough **bread** in this **desolate place** to satisfy **these people**?" 5 He asked them, "How many **loaves** do you have?" They replied, "**Seven**." 6 Then he directed the crowd to sit down on the ground. After he **took** the **seven loaves** and **gave thanks**, he **broke** them and **began giving** them to the disciples to **serve**. So they **served** the crowd. 7 They also had a few small fish. After **giving thanks** for these, **he told them to serve these as well**. 8 Everyone ate and was satisfied, and they picked up the **broken pieces** left over, **seven baskets full**. 9 There were about **four thousand who ate**. Then he dismissed

them. 10 Immediately he got into a boat with his disciples and went to the district of Dalmanutha.

Biblical background

- As before: desert ("theological") and manna.
- What about seven?
- Seventy nations of the world.
- On the ground (gē).
- End time banquet: they ate and were satisfied.

2 Kgs 4:38 When **Elisha** returned to Gilgal, there was a **famine** in the land. As the company of prophets was sitting before him, he said to his servant, "Put the large pot on, and make some stew for the company of prophets." 39 One of them went out into the field to gather herbs; he found a wild vine and gathered from it a lapful of wild gourds, and came and cut them up into the pot of stew, not knowing what they were. 40 **They served some for the men to eat.** But while they were eating the stew, they cried out, "O man of God, there is death in the pot!" They could not eat it. 41 He said, "Then bring some **flour.**" He threw it into the pot, and said, "**Serve the people and let them eat.**" And there was nothing harmful in the pot.

2 Kgs LXX 4:42 And a man passed through from Baithsarisa, and he brought to the man of God from the first products: twenty barley **loaves** and fruitcakes. And he said, "**Give it to the people, and let them eat.**" 43 And his **attendant (leitourgos)** said, "**Why should I set this before a hundred men?**" And he said, "**Give it to the people, and let them eat, for this is what the Lord says, 'They shall eat and leave some behind.'**" 44 And **they ate and left some behind**, according to the word of the Lord.

Markan Community

- Decapolis (i.e. Gentile area from 7:3)
- "Again" links us to the previous stories.
- Jesus *tells* the disciples he has compassion.
- Three days: surely significant at the Markan level.
- On the Way (capital w).

Mark 8:2 "I have compassion for the crowd, because they have been with me now for **three days** and have nothing to eat.

Mark 8:31 Then he began to teach them that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, **and after three days rise again.**

Mark 9:31 for he was teaching his disciples, saying to them, "The Son of Man is to be betrayed into human hands, and they will kill him, **and three days after being killed, he will rise again.**"

- 5000 in the west v. 4000 in the east.
- "From afar" v. the near people of God.
- 5000: conquering army (Josh 8:12) v. 4 a universal number.
- Missing: "hundreds and fifties" (Israelite military)
- Missing: Shepherd (king), green grass (Psalm 23)
- 5 Jewish loaves v. 7 Gentile loaves.
- 12 = the Jewish people v. 7 = wholeness, completion.
- Ordinary word for basked v. a typically Jewish word.
- "Blessing" is Jewish v. "giving thanks" which is Gentile.

Mark 10:34 they will mock him, and spit upon him, and flog him, and kill him; **and after three days he will rise again.**"

Mark 14:58 "We heard him say, 'I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, **and in three days I will build another, not made with hands.**'"

Mark 15:29 Those who passed by derided him, shaking their heads and saying, "**Aha! You who would destroy the temple and build it in three days...**"

- 5 + 2 = 7, plus unnumbered fish.
- Regular word for basket
- Elisha and Decapolis: Gentiles
- "They" have nothing to eat
- Clear echoes of the Lord's supper
- The Risen Lord is in the ritual meal (three days)
- The disciples must obey and serve them
- 4000: not just men as before
- What about the fish?
- Within the story: so little for so many.
- Within the Gospel: the call of the disciples.
- Later tradition: Luke 5 (mission)
- John 21: universal mission.

Mark 8:10-13

Mark 8:10 Immediately he got into a boat with his disciples and went to the district of Dalmanutha.

Mark 8:11 Then the Pharisees came and began to argue with Jesus, asking for a **sign from heaven to test** him. 12 Sighing deeply in his spirit he said, "Why does this generation look for a sign? I tell you the truth, no sign will be given to this generation." 13 Then he left them, got back into the boat, and went to the other side.

Markan Community

- Dalmanutha suggests a Jewish context again.
- Pharisees and Herodians take us back to 2:1-3:6 and what is "new."
- Corresponding to Mark 7.
- Rather severe refusal representing a break / shift away.
- "Signs" are not mentioned approvingly in Mark's Gospel.
 - Mark 13:4 "Tell us, when will these things happen? And what will be the **sign** that all these things are about to take place?"
 - Mark 13:22 For false messiahs and false prophets will appear and **perform signs and wonders to deceive**, if possible, the elect.

Mark 8:14-21

Mark 8:14 Now they had forgotten to take **bread (artos - plural)** except for **one loaf (artos - singular)** they had with them in the **boat**. 15 And Jesus ordered them, "Watch out! Beware of the **yeast** of the Pharisees and the **yeast** of Herod!" 16 So they began to discuss with one another about having no **bread**. 17 When he learned of this, Jesus said to them, "Why are you arguing about having no **bread**? Do you still not see or understand? Have your hearts been hardened? 18 Though you have eyes, don't you see? And though you have ears, can't you hear? Don't you remember? 19 When I broke the **five loaves for the five thousand**, how many **baskets (kophinos)** full of **pieces** did you pick up?" They replied, "**Twelve.**" 20 "When I broke the **seven loaves for the four thousand**, how many **baskets** full of **pieces** did you pick up?" They replied, "**Seven.**" 21 Then he said to them, "Do you still not understand?"

Biblical Background

Isa 6:9 And he said, "Go, and say to this people:
 'You will listen by listening, but you will not understand,
 and looking you will look, but you will not perceive.'
 10 For this people's heart has grown fat,
 and with their ears they have heard heavily,
 and they have shut their eyes
 so that they might not see with their eyes
 and hear with their ears
 and understand with their heart

and turn—and I would heal them.”

Romans	Mark	Matthew
As it is written, “God gave them a sluggish spirit, eyes that would not see and ears that would not hear, down to this very day.” (Romans 11:8)	In order that ‘they may indeed look, but not perceive, and may indeed listen, but not understand; so that they may not turn again and be forgiven.’ (Mark 4:12)	With them indeed is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah that says: ‘You will indeed listen, but never understand, and you will indeed look, but never perceive.’ (Matthew 13:14)
John	Luke	Acts
He has blinded their eyes and hardened their heart, so that they might not look with their eyes, and understand with their heart and turn— and I would heal them. (John 12:40)	He said, “To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of God; but to others I speak in parables, so that ‘looking they may not perceive, and listening they may not understand.’ (Luke 8:10)	Go to this people and say, You will indeed listen, but never understand, and you will indeed look, but never perceive. (Acts 28:26)

Markan Community

Mark 4:10 When he was alone, those around him with the twelve asked him about the parables. **11** He said to them, “The secret of the kingdom of God has been given to you. But to those outside, everything is in parables,

12 so that **although they look they may look but not see, and although they hear they may hear but not understand, so they may not repent and be forgiven.**”

- Mark obliges thinking on double multiplication
- Multiplication 1: Jewish
- Multiplication 2: Gentile
- Between 1 and 2: Dispute over unclean
- Before 2: Tyre and the Decapolis
- After 2: Break with the synagogue

- Jesus is bread for both Jews and Gentiles
- If you don’t understand this, you don’t know who he is.
- Mark 8:22-26 has a double reference:
 - 8:14-21 – the blind man of Bethsaida
 - 10:46-52 – the blind beggar of Jericho
- **Boat scene I:** 4:35-41 (calming of the storm)
 - “Who then is this? (Mark 4:41)
- **Boat scene II:** 6:45-52 (walking on the water)
 - They were completely astonished, because they did not understand about the loaves, but their hearts were hardened. (Mark 6:51-52)
- **Boat scene III:** 8:14-21, leading to
 - “Who do people say that I am?” (Mark 8:27)

And so...

- Jesus recognises the hunger.

- God's hospitality extends to the Gentiles.
- Whence? Jesus is their own hope.
- Church: third day, "on the way", fasting.
- Christology, discipleship, Eucharist.

Mark 6:32-8:30**Sequence I 6:32-7:23****5000** 6:32-44**Boat** 6:45-52*[Summary]* 6:53-56**Dispute** 7:1-23**Tyre** 7:24-30**Decapolis** 7:31-37**Sequence II 8:1-21****4000** 8:1-10**Dispute** (8:11-12)**Boat** 8:14-21**Bethsaida** 8:22-26**Caesarea Philippi** 8:27-30

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- Lessons for today's church

Sequence

- The Lord's Supper
- Backgrounds
- History: Passover, original words and meaning
- Early Christian tradition
- Unique to Mark
- The Markan Community
- And so...

The Lord's Supper

Mark 14:22 While they were eating, he **took bread**, and after **blessing** it he **broke** it, **gave** it to them, and said, "Take it. This is my body." 23 And after **taking** the **cup** and giving **thanks**, he **gave** it to them, **and they all drank from it**. 24 He said to them, "This is my **blood**, the **blood** of the **covenant**, that is poured out for **many**. 25 I tell you the truth, I will no longer **drink** of the **fruit of the vine** until that day when I drink it **new** in the **kingdom of God**."

Background: Passover

Exod 12:6 You must care for it until the fourteenth day of this month, and then the whole community of Israel will kill it around sundown. 7 They will take some of the blood and put it on the two side posts and top of the doorframe of the houses where they will eat it. 8 They will eat the meat the same night; they will eat it roasted over the fire with bread made without yeast and with bitter herbs. 9 Do not eat it raw or boiled in water, but roast it over the fire with its head, its legs, and its entrails. 10 You must leave nothing until morning, but you must burn with fire whatever remains of it until morning. 11 This is how you are to eat it—dressed to travel, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. You are to eat it in haste. It is the Lord's Passover.

Background: Unleavened Bread

Exod 12:14 This day will become a memorial for you, and you will celebrate it as a festival to the Lord—you will celebrate it perpetually as a lasting ordinance. 15 For seven days you must eat bread made without yeast. Surely on the first day you must put away yeast from your houses because anyone who eats bread made with yeast from the first day to the seventh day will be cut off from Israel.

Background: Early Judaism

The observances of Passover and the Festival of Unleavened Bread may have ancient roots in separate agrarian spring fertility rites, offerings of the firstlings of livestock and first fruits of grain. In the Hebrew scriptures, however, they are presented as joined festivals with significance both as historical rites for the Israelites related to their flight from Egypt, and as perennial commemoration of the exodus to be observed throughout subsequent generations.

Exodus 12-13; 23:15; 34:18; Lev. 23:4-8; Num. 9:1-15; 28:16-25; 33:3; Deut. 16:1-8; Josh. 5:10-12; 2 Kings 23:21-23; Ezek. 45:21-25; 2 Chron. 8:12-14; 30:1-27; 35:1-19; Ezra 6:19-22.

Background: Mishnah Pesah. 10:5

In every generation a person is duty-bound to regard himself as if he personally has gone forth from Egypt, since it is said, "And you shall tell your son in that day saying, it is because of that which the Lord did for me when I came forth out of Egypt" (Ex. 13:8).

Therefore we are duty-bound to thank, praise, glorify, honour, exalt, extol, and bless him who did for our forefathers and for us all these miracles.

He brought us forth from slavery to freedom, anguish to joy, mourning to festival, darkness to great light, subjugation to redemption, so we should say before him, Hallelujah!

Getting the date wrong

	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Synoptics	Lord's Supper	Crucifixion		First day of the week
	<i>Eve of Passover</i>	<i>Passover</i>		
John	Last Supper	Crucifixion		First day of the week
		<i>Eve of Passover</i>	<i>Passover</i>	

Traditions

Matthew	Mark	Luke	Paul
Matt 26:26 While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after giving thanks he broke it, gave it to his disciples , and said, "Take, eat , this is my body." 27 And after taking the cup and giving thanks, he gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you, 28 for this is my blood, the blood of the covenant, that is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.	Mark 14:22 While they were eating, he took bread, and after giving thanks he broke it, gave it to them, and said, "Take it. This is my body." 23 And after taking the cup and giving thanks, he gave it to them, and they all drank from it. 24 He said to them, "This is my blood, the blood of the covenant, that is poured out for many."	Luke 22:19 Then he took bread, and after giving thanks he broke it and gave it to them , saying, "This is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." 20 And in the same way he took the cup after they had eaten , saying, "This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood."	1 Cor 11:23 For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night in which he was betrayed took bread, 24 and after he had given thanks he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." 25 In the same way, he also took the cup after supper , saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, every time you drink it, in remembrance of me. "

Reconstruction

He took bread, and giving thanks [or: pronouncing a blessing], broke [it] and said: "this is my body".

Likewise also the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the covenant in my blood".

Originally

- Looking back doctrinally:
 - Institution of the Eucharist for the church
 - Perhaps (even) ordination
- Looking forward historically
 - Event in the life of Jesus
 - Context: open table fellowship
 - Context: God's compassion extended to all
 - Jesus saw his destiny as somehow part of the coming of the Kingdom
 - Called to extraordinary faithfulness
 - Prophetic gesture
 - Body: my whole self
 - Blood: my life (principle)
 - Covenant: Restoration of Israel / New Covenant (Jeremiah)

Markan Community

Mark 14:22 While they were eating, he took bread, and after giving thanks he broke it, gave it to them, and said, "Take it. This is my body." 23 And after taking the cup and giving thanks, he gave it to them, and **they all drank from it.** 24 He said to them, "This is my blood, the blood of the covenant, **that is poured out for many.**

5000

4000

Last supper

He **took** the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, he **said the blessing** and **broke** the loaves. He **gave** them to his disciples to serve the people...

he **took** bread, and **after saying the blessing**, he **broke** it, **gave** it to them

After he **took** the seven loaves and **gave thanks**, he **broke** them and began **giving** them to the disciples to serve.

And after **taking** the cup and **giving thanks**, he **gave** it to them,

Jewish**Gentile****Both Jews and Gentiles**

They all drank from it

Mark 10:35 Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to him and said, "Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask." 36 He said to them, "What do you want me to do for you?" 37 They said to him, "Permit one of us to sit at your right hand and the other at your left in your glory." 38 But Jesus said to them, "You don't know what you are asking! **Are you able to drink the cup I drink** or be baptised with the baptism I experience?" 39 They said to him, "We are able." Then Jesus said to them, "**You will drink the cup I drink**, and you will be baptised with the baptism I experience, 40 but to

sit at my right or at my left is not mine to give. It is for those for whom it has been prepared."

The blood of the covenant

Mark 3:13 Now Jesus went up the mountain and called for those he wanted, and they came to him. 14 He appointed twelve (whom he named apostles), so that they would be with him and he could send them to preach 15 and to have authority to cast out demons. 16 He appointed twelve: To Simon he gave the name Peter; 17 to James and his brother John, the sons of Zebedee, he gave the name Boanerges (that is, "sons of thunder"); 18 and Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Zealot, 19 and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.

that is poured out for many

- "Many" recurs almost recklessly throughout Mark.
- "Many" is in contrast with "few" and it really means all.
- Mark 1:34, 45; 2:2, 15; 3:7-8, 10, 12; 4:1-2, 5, 33; 5:9-10, 21, 23-24, 26, 38, 43; 6:2, 13, 20, 23, 31, 33-35; 7:4, 13; 8:1, 31; 9:12, 14, 26; 10:22, 31, 45, 48; 11:8; 12:5, 27, 37, 41, 43; 13:6, 26; 14:24, 56; 15:3, 41
- Mark 2:15 As Jesus was having a meal in Levi's home, **many** tax collectors and sinners were eating with Jesus and his disciples, for there were **many** who followed him.
- Mark 10:45 "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for **many**."
- Isa 53:11 "Having suffered, he will reflect on his work, he will be satisfied when he understands what he has done. "My servant will acquit **many**, for he carried their sins. 12 So I will assign him a portion with the **multitudes**, he will divide the spoils of victory with the powerful, because he willingly submitted to death and was numbered with the rebels, when he lifted up the sin of **many** and intervened on behalf of the rebels."

fruit of the vine

Mark 2:22 "And no one pours new **wine** into old wineskins; otherwise, the wine will burst the skins, and both the **wine** and the skins will be destroyed. Instead new **wine** is poured into new wineskins."

Mark 12:8 So they seized him, killed him, and threw his body out of the **vineyard**. 9 What then will the owner of the **vineyard** do? He will come and destroy those tenants and give the **vineyard** to others.

drink it new

Mark 1:27 They were all amazed so that they asked each other, "What is this? A **new** teaching with authority! He even commands the unclean spirits and they obey him."

Mark 2:21 No one sews a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment; otherwise, the patch pulls away from it, the **new** from the old, and the tear becomes worse. 22 And no one pours **new** wine into old wineskins; otherwise, the wine will burst the skins, and both the wine and the skins will be destroyed. Instead **new** wine is poured into **new** wineskins."

in the Kingdom of God

- Frequent: Mark 1:15; 4:11, 26, 30; 9:1, 47; 10:14-15, 23-25; 12:34; 14:25; 15:43
- Mark 1:15 Jesus said, "The time is fulfilled and the **kingdom of God** is near. Repent and believe the gospel!"
- Mark 15:43 Joseph of Arimathea, a highly regarded member of the council, who was himself looking forward to the **kingdom of God**, went boldly to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus.

And so...

- What would they have "heard"?
- Their experience of the Lord's Supper

- Biblical and early Jewish backgrounds
- Immediate context in Mark's Gospel
- Wider context: multiplications of the loaves

The Didache

- The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles
- Didache = teaching
- Text: www.thedidache.com
- Eucharist: Didache 9

COME TO THE FEAST

BIBLICAL REFLECTIONS ON THE EUCHARIST

St Mark's Gospel (6)

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www.tarsus.ie

Programme

- Who were the "Markan" Christians? (Mark 13)
- Insiders, outsiders and novelty (Mark 2:1-3:6)
- Feeding the 5000 (Mark 6:32-7:23)
- Feeding the 4000 (Mark 8:1-21)
- The Lord's Supper (Mark 14:22-25)
- **Lessons for today's church**

Sequence

- From the Lord's Supper to the Eucharist
- The context of Mark
- Reading Mark
- Lessons for today's church
- The (dreaded) further reading

From the Lord's Supper to the Eucharist

- The Lord's Supper – the Eucharist
- Jesus: prophetic gesture
 - Disciples: memorial / zikkron
 - Handed on (1 Corinthians 11)
 - Celebrated / re-interpreted over time
 - The "big" picture

The Context of Mark

- The context of Mark
 - Josephus
 - The times...
 - Follow me...discipleship
 - Who is "in" and who is out?
 - Who is Jesus?

Josephus: The Jewish War

(6.1.1) Thus did the miseries of Jerusalem grow worse and worse every day, and the seditious were still more irritated by the calamities they were under, even while the famine preyed upon themselves, after it had preyed upon the people. (6.1.1) And indeed the multitude of carcasses that lay in heaps one upon another, was a horrible sight, and produced a pestilential stench, which was a hindrance to those that would make sallies out of the city and fight the enemy: but as those were to go in battle-array, who had been already used to ten thousand murders, and must tread upon those dead bodies as they marched along, (6.1.1) so were not they terrified, or did they pity men as they marched over them; nor did they deem this affront offered to the deceased to be any ill omen to themselves; (6.1.1) but as they had their right hands already polluted with the murders of their own countrymen, and in that condition ran out to fight with foreigners, they seem to me to have cast a reproach upon God himself, as if he were too slow in punishing them; for the war was not now gone on with as if they had any hope of victory; for they gloried after a brutish manner in that despair of deliverance they were already in. (War 6:1-4)

She then attempted a most unnatural thing; (6.3.4) and snatching up her son, who was a child sucking at her breast, she said, "O, thou miserable infant! For whom shall I preserve thee in this war, this famine, and this sedition? (6.3.4) As to the war with the Romans, if they preserve our lives, we must be slaves! This famine also will destroy us, even before

that slavery comes upon us:—yet are these seditious rogues more terrible than both the other. (6.3.4) Come on; be thou my food, and be thou a fury to these seditious varlets and a byword to the world, which is all that is now wanting to complete the calamities of us Jews.” (6.3.4) As soon as she had said this she slew her son; and then roasted him, and ate the one half of him, and kept the other half by her concealed. (6.3.4) Upon this the seditious came in presently, and smelling the horrid scent of this food, they threatened her, that they would cut her throat immediately if she did not show them what food she had gotten ready. She replied, that she had saved a very fine portion of it for them; and withal uncovered what was left of her son. (6.3.4) Hereupon they were seized with a horror and amazement of mind, and stood astonished at the sight; when she said to them, “This is mine own son; and what hath been done was mine own doing! Come, eat of this food; for I have eaten of it myself! (6.3.4) Do not you pretend to be either more tender than a woman, or more compassionate than a mother; but if you be so scrupulous and do abominate this my sacrifice, as I have eaten the one half, let the rest be reserved for me also.” (6.3.4) After which, those men went out trembling, being never so much affrighted at anything as they were at this, and with some difficulty they left the rest of that meat to the mother. (War 6:204–212)

(6.8.5) So they now left these towers of themselves, or rather they were ejected out of them by God himself, and fled immediately to that valley which was under Siloam, where they again recovered themselves out of the dread they were in for a while, and ran violently against that part of the Roman wall which lay on that side; (6.8.5) but as their courage was too much depressed to make their attacks with sufficient force, and their power was now broken with fear and affliction, they were repulsed by the guards, and dispersing themselves at distances from each other, went down into the subterranean caverns. (6.8.5) So the Romans being now become masters of the walls, they both placed their ensigns upon the towers, and made joyful acclamations for the victory they had gained, as having found the end of this war much lighter than its beginning; for when they had gotten upon the last wall, without any bloodshed, they could hardly believe what they found to be true; but seeing nobody to oppose them, they stood in doubt what such an unusual solitude could mean. (6.8.5) But when they went in numbers into the lanes of the city, with their swords drawn, they slew those whom they overtook, without mercy, and set fire to the houses wether the Jews were fled, and burnt every soul in them, and laid waste a great many of the rest; (6.8.5) and when they were come to the houses to plunder them, they found in them entire families of dead men, and the upper rooms full of dead corpses, that is of such as died by the famine; they then stood in a horror at this sight, and went out without touching anything. (6.8.5) But although they had this commiseration for such as were destroyed in that manner, yet had they not the same for those that were still alive, but they ran everyone through whom they met with, and obstructed the very lanes with their dead bodies, and made the whole city run down with blood, to such a degree indeed that the fire of many of the houses was quenched with these men’s blood. (War 6:401–406)

Reading Mark

- History
- Narrative
- Catechesis / theology
- Spirituality

Lessons for today’s church

- The times...
 - Faith, fissure and future
 - Anti-God
 - Christianophobia
 - And yet...
 - Nevertheless the liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; at the same time it is the font from which all her power flows. For the aim and object of apostolic works is that all who are made sons of God by faith and baptism should come together to praise God in the midst of His

Church, to take part in the sacrifice, and to eat the Lord's supper. Vatican II (SC 1.1.10)

- Triangle: Meditation + lectio + Sacrament
- Eucharist is...
 - Proclamation of the reign of God
 - Hospitality, compassion and healing
 - Prophetic action
 - Living memorial
 - Participation in the paschal mystery
 - Creating and empowering community
- And ourselves?
 - Pure and impure, *then* and *now*
 - Christ–discipleship–belonging–Eucharist
 - Sacrament *and* Word inseparably
 - In practice, how would that look?

Further reading

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(978-0664222550)

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Thanks for your patience.