GRACEPOINT CHURCH

Weekly Devotional

God's Dream of Bringing Heaven to Earth – Ian France – 22.11.2026

Scripture
Mark 1:1; 1:14-15
Open your mind and heart as you read the passage of Scripture aloud and then again quietly to yourself. Listen for God's word to you.

Spend some time in worship.

Observation
Mark 1:1
Mark writes about the deeds of Jesus rather than what He said. His gospel is a picture of Jesus in action as a servant. It seems as if Mark's gospel was the first to be written and Mark wrote it in Rome around 50 AD for a Roman audience which had little knowledge of Jewish customs. . It may be that he was influenced by Peter. He does not include a genealogy for Jesus but begins his account with Jesus as a grown man. It is the shortest of the four gospels and every word Mark uses to describe Jesus is important He begins his gospel by telling his readers that this is good news or joyful tidings of the Son of God.

Mark briefly describes the work of John the Baptist and Jesus' baptism and His time in the wilderness. Jesus then went to Galilee where He began His ministry. Galilee was a large area north of Judea and Jerusalem and it had a large population of Jews and Gentiles who tended to live in their own cities. Josephus described the region as being approximately 95 kms by 50 kms in area. It had 204 villages each of which had more than 15000 inhabitants.

Mark 1:14-15
Mark then goes on with his account of Jesus' message as He preached the gospel of the Kingdom of God – a Kingdom of love, grace, and humility for all men (not just the Jewish people) which was to be received by choice, not imposed by force. This was the focus of Jesus' ministry. Mark described Jesus as a preacher who did amazing miracles, rather than a miracle-worker who sometimes preached. Jesus wanted people to know that they could experience the

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Kingdom of God now. He urged them not to miss their opportunity. They needed to repent; to change the direction of their lives. This was not a case of feeling sorry for their sins but was rather an action word where they needed to change their minds and their way of life. They needed to believe, to trust God, to take Him at His word and to develop a relationship whereby they would depend on Him in all things.

Icebreaker:
How does the most exciting story you have ever read begin?
When did you read it?
What stands out for you that makes you remember it now?

Application

- What is your picture of heaven? What would make this place heaven for you?
- How do you feel about the fulfilment of God's dream of heaven coming to earth? What do you think that would be like? Can you see signs of it happening?
- Jesus describes heaven as being near. Have you ever experienced the presence of God so close to you that it is almost tangible? How did that happen? Where were you? How did you feel during that time – and how do you feel about it now?
- Jesus came that all people may have the experience of heaven available to them. His sacrifice opened the way. What would you like to say to Jesus about His sacrifice to pay for your sin?
- As we approach Advent, what are the 'kings' in your life that want to claim allegiance over you? What would it take for you to put them aside and worship the King of kings alone? How do you feel about surrendering more and more of your life to Him by the power of the Holy Spirit in the days ahead?
- How can the group help you with the struggles you have mentioned during this session?

Prayer

Pray for one another regarding the issues raised during your discussion time and any other needs of the group.

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Service

Keep writing in your gratitude journal for this week. Who can you tell about it? Share it with a couple of people and encourage them to do the same.

Bibliography

https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/mark-1/

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