

# Family business: Mark 3.20-35

*Daffodils for St David's Day!*



*Looking at those who sat around him, Jesus said, “Here are my mother and my brothers! Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother.”*

*Wrong will be put right  
When Aslan comes in sight:  
When he starts to roar,  
Trouble will be no more.*

In *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, the first of C.S.Lewis’ Narnia books, Narnia is under the malevolent rule of the White Witch — where it’s “always winter, but never Christmas” — and the animals are living in secrecy and fear. But there’s a persistent rumour that Aslan, the great Lion, has been seen. Nobody knows quite where he is or what he will do — but the underground rumour is enough to worry the secret police and kindle a current of excitement and hope that Aslan will put everything to rights.

That story captures the feel of Mark’s Gospel rather well. Jesus has started a rumour — an electric undercurrent of hope: God’s Kingdom is coming! God’s going to put right everything that’s wrong with the world (Mk 1.14-15). Everything

is going to be OK! People are buzzing with it. Crowds keep gathering, and dispersing, and gathering again somewhere else. The authorities are keeping an eye out for “trouble”. People are taking sides. And at the centre of the storm is Jesus, quietly and calmly getting on with his mission — the mission of telling the world that God is King, and showing in word and action what it’s like to live in a world where God is King. That’s what he’s here for. That’s why he came (Mk 1.38).

Around Jesus, grouped on different sides of the stage, the onlookers are coalescing into groups. There are the disciples (Mk 3.13-19), Jesus’ own friends and followers. The group has been growing since the first four fishermen joined up (Mk 1.16-20). Now there are twelve of them, called “*to be with him, and to be sent out*” (Mk 3.14). Being a disciple is not an end in itself. They are Jesus’ apprentices, being formed into a community to act as agents for God’s Kingdom — which means learning to show in word and action what it’s like to live in a world where God is King. And that means taking time to be with Jesus, making space to learn from him (Mk 6.30-31). (That’s one of the things we do in Lent.) It’s like breathing in and breathing out — you can’t do one without the other.

Then there are the opposition groups (Mk 3.6). Passions are running high in the crowded streets. We saw on Friday that Jesus wasn’t afraid to pick a fight — he wasn’t one to abstain from an argument just to keep out of trouble. Not everyone is convinced that Jesus’ power comes from God — maybe he gets it from the prince of darkness (Mk 3.22-27)? That doesn’t make sense, says Jesus: what I’m doing is setting people free from the power of darkness, plundering his property, liberating his captives. This is what happens when God’s kingdom is present — you’re looking at the good news in action. The question is, whose side are you on?

But out on the streets, the crowds are unstoppable — so many people are coming, Jesus and his disciples have no time even to eat (Mk 3.20). And here come Jesus’ family, puzzled and concerned: what on earth is going on? What is our lad up to? Has he lost his marbles? This little episode in Mk 3.21 is only told in Mark. (That’s one of the reasons most scholars think Mark is the earliest Gospel: it’s more likely Matthew and Luke would have left it out, out of reverence for Jesus’ memory, than that Mark would have put it in.) Was this a little delegation of brothers (or uncles), sent to bring the boy home and stop him getting into trouble? Sometimes, the hardest people to convince are your own family.

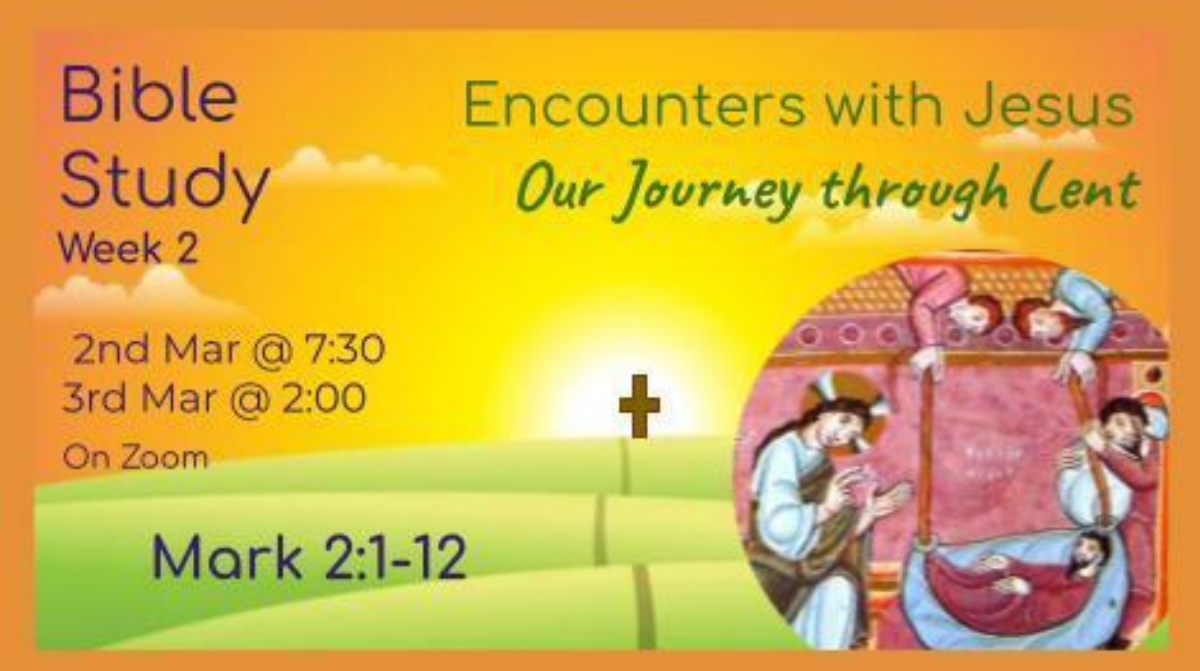
So it wasn’t always easy for Jesus, doing what he did (it never is easy, staking your life on God). And it wasn’t easy for Jesus’ mother, either (just as Simeon predicted in Luke 2.34-35). On the human level, she must often have felt the pain of separation and misunderstanding — as if her son was moving into uncharted waters that she didn’t understand. Jesus was always more than the carpenter’s son (Mk 6.3): he was never going to just settle down in the family business.

What he is doing is to start a new family business — the family of God’s Kin-Dom, based on a new set of family values (Mk 3.34-35). He’s building a new family of sisters and brothers, a worldwide family of those who share the values of God’s Kingdom, who believe passionately that God wants to put the world to rights — and are prepared to do something about it. Which means, extraordinarily, that you and I can be part of Jesus’ family! As the letter to the Hebrews puts it, God’s own Son is “not ashamed” to call you and me his sisters and brothers (Hebrews 2.11-13), to make us part of his worldwide family in our baptism and to share in our struggles (Hebrews 2.14-18).

*Question: What would our world look like if God was really king? Think of a news story, or a situation closer to home, that would be different (sharing Covid vaccines with poorer nations, maybe?). Then ask yourself: what can I do about it? What can I do — or what can we do — to bring the world a little more into alignment with God’s will, a tiny step more like a place where God is king? And then bring that situation to God as you say the Lord’s Prayer: Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.*

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Don’t forget you can join us for the Lent Study sessions tomorrow or Wednesday to explore the encounters in Mark’s Gospel in more depth! And don’t forget you can join the world-wide family on the World Day of Prayer on Friday.



The poster features a warm orange and yellow background with a bright sun. On the left, the text reads "Bible Study Week 2" in purple and blue, followed by the dates "2nd Mar @ 7:30" and "3rd Mar @ 2:00" in white, and "On Zoom" in a smaller font. The central text "Encounters with Jesus" is in green, with "Our Journey through Lent" in a cursive green font below it. A white cross is positioned in the center. On the right, there is a circular illustration of Jesus in a blue robe and brown sash, kneeling and holding a man's hand who is lying on a stretcher. Two other men are lifting the stretcher. The background of the illustration is a reddish-pink wall with a window.

Bible Study  
Week 2

2nd Mar @ 7:30  
3rd Mar @ 2:00  
On Zoom

Encounters with Jesus  
*Our Journey through Lent*

Mark 2:1-12



**WORLD DAY OF PRAYER 2021**  
**Praying with Vanuatu**



**FRIDAY 5 MARCH**

**CHURCHES TOGETHER  
IN ALDERLEY  
2-3PM**

**ON ZOOM.**

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