

“Chris Morphew takes young readers seriously. *Best News Ever* is simple, but not simplistic. It’s interactive—encouraging you to think and to respond. In one word: BRILLIANT!”

**Dave Thornton**, Youth, Children and Families’ Director,  
Christ Church, Winchester

“*Best News Ever* is a brilliantly written, simple, easy-to-engage-with walk through the Gospel of Mark, that helps you engage with the text in manageable and relatable chunks, helpfully unpacking it and offering suggestions of ways you can put it into practice in your life.”

**Jimmy Dale**, National Youth Evangelism Officer,  
The Church of England

“In *Best News Ever* Chris provides a super-readable guide to Mark’s Gospel. He has a clear talent for writing on a level which is easily accessible for a younger audience and never patronising. There are also jokes about John the Baptist’s fashion choices, something sadly lacking in many commentaries. The only danger with *Best News Ever* is that you will want to read it all in one go, instead of pacing it out over 100 days!”

**Claire Zorn**, Author, *The Sky So Heavy* and *One Would Think the Deep*

“*Best News Ever* is a heartfelt journey through one of the most important books in the Bible. Whether you’re a believer or just curious about Jesus, this devotional book will help you develop a deeper understanding of him.”

**Oliver Phommavanh**, Author, *Thai-riffic!*

“Wow—if you’re looking for a fresh devotional on the Gospel of Mark which packages the best scholarship into 100 bite-sized portions that your pre-teens will love to read, then look no further. This is the best study of Mark for this age group that I’ve ever seen. Older children (and their parents!) will find each 2-page devotional engaging (Chris is a brilliant storyteller), enlightening (he’s a master teacher), and incredibly encouraging (again and again he shines the spotlight on our Savior)! I hope you’ll get copies for the pre-teens and young people in your life—and then read it with them!”

**Champ Thornton**, Pastor; Author, *The Radical Book for Kids*; Host, *In the Word, On the Go* podcast for families.

“What a brilliantly accessible, highly engaging Bible reading resource *Best News Ever* is for both tweens and their families. The daily descriptive commentary on a short passage is chatty, readable and clear, and packed with helpful explanations and relevant illustrations. A great easy-to-use tool to help young people see Jesus’ character in the richness of Mark’s Gospel.”

**Tamar Pollard**, Youth and Children’s Worker, Grace Community Church, Bedford, UK; Author, *Epic Explorers*

“*Best News Ever* walks us through Mark’s Gospel to see and learn and think through how the truth about Jesus might change our lives forever. It’s a great mix of detail, background and big picture, delivered in really manageable, day-by-day readings.”

**Colin Buchanan**, Singer/songwriter

“*Best News Ever* is an excellent tool for parents and pastors to place in the hands of their maturing child. For those who are passionate about passing the faith on to the next generation, this is a vital tool for the young Christian seeking to deepen their understanding of the gospel of Jesus Christ.”

**Dr. John Perritt**, Director of Resources, Reformed Youth Ministries (rym.org); Author, *Mark: How Jesus Changes Everything*, *Insecure*, and *Time Out!*

“*Best News Ever* makes a way for my ten-year-old to independently spend 100 days reading, learning, and praying through the Gospel of Mark. Morphew warmly invites pre-teen readers to engage with the Biblical text first and then acts as a friendly tutor, guiding them through context, comprehension, application, and prayer. As a mother of five, I’m grateful to find a hands-on tool to assist growing disciples as they learn to walk confidently and responsibly through Scripture.”

**Lindsey Carlson**, Author, *Growing in Godliness: A Teen Girl’s Guide to Maturing in Christ*

“Chris Morphew moves through the life of Jesus with the creativity of a novelist, the clarity of an experienced teacher, and the passion of someone deeply devoted to Jesus Christ. By letting Mark’s Gospel tell the gospel, *Best News Ever* makes good on the promise of its title. I highly recommend it!”

**John Dickson**, Historian and Author, *Is Jesus History?* and *Hanging In There*

“Are you looking for a great way to engage your kids in God’s word? Chris Morphew’s devotional connects older children and young people with the Gospel of Mark to discover Jesus—the only one who can give us lasting joy. Truly the Best News Ever!”

**Barbara Reaoch**, Author, *A Jesus Christmas*

“*Best News Ever* is a practical, accessible and contemporary guide through the Gospel of Mark. It’s the perfect growth tool for middle graders considering Christ.”

**Tim Harris**, Author, *Exploding Endings* and *Mr Bambuckle’s Remarkables* series

“*Best News Ever* is beautifully written, such that the reader is turning the page always eager for more. Chris Morphew is able to faithfully explain profound theology with simplicity and clarity. Highly recommended!”

**Stuart Coulton**, Principal, Sydney Missionary and Bible College

“Reading Chris Morphew’s *Best News Ever* is like having a friendly conversation with him about the Gospel of Mark. I recommend every pre-teen and young person to have this book by their bedside.”

**Dr Paul Burgis**, Executive Principal, Presbyterian Ladies’ College, Sydney

CHRIS MORPHEW

BEST

NEWS

EVER

YOUR 100-DAY GUIDE TO  
THE GOSPEL OF MARK

the goodbook  
COMPANY

Best News Ever

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# Introduction

**T**wo thousand years ago, in an out-of-the-way corner of the Roman Empire, a dead man got up and walked out of his grave, and the world was changed forever.

By dying and coming back to life, this man not only proved that he was the King that God had promised would rule his people forever—he also made a way for anyone anywhere to follow him through death and out the other side, into never-ending life with God. These are the mind-blowing claims that Mark makes in his biography of Jesus—claims that have transformed the lives of billions of people around the world.

Maybe these ideas are brand new to you. Maybe you've heard them all before, but you wonder whether you can actually believe them. Maybe other people have been telling you about Jesus your whole life, but now you want to figure him out for yourself. Or maybe you're already following Jesus, and you want to get to know him better.

Whatever the case, I've designed this book to help you investigate Jesus for yourself, by guiding you through the whole of Mark's Gospel in a hundred short daily readings.

Each day, I'll invite you to do four things...

*1. Read the next bit of Mark in the Bible*

I've written *Best News Ever* to be like a window—something you look through to see the bigger, better, way-more-interesting thing on the other side.

Reading this book without also reading Mark's Gospel is kind of like looking at a window just to admire the glass, and ignoring the spectacular sunrise outside. So whatever you do, don't skip this step!

If you don't already have a Bible, you can probably pick one up wherever you got this book, or else you can read the whole thing online for free (at [www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com)).

There are a bunch of different English translations of the Bible out there (because a bunch of different experts have translated the Bible from its original languages into English). I used the New International Version (NIV) to write this book, so grab one of those if you can, but you should get on fine with any translation you pick.

*2. Read the next bit of Best News Ever*

Even after it's been translated into English, Mark's Gospel is still a two-thousand-year-old book written by someone living in a completely different culture to ours—

so it probably shouldn't surprise you if some of it is a bit confusing when you first read it.

Each day, I've written some notes to explain parts that might be unclear, catch you up on any historical/background information you might need to know, and show how the events of Mark's Gospel fit into the big picture of the whole Bible.

I definitely haven't answered every possible question—but hopefully, at the end of these hundred days, you'll come away with a pretty clear picture of what Mark's Gospel is all about.

### *3. Ask yourself a question*

Part of what Mark wants to show us is that Jesus isn't *just* an interesting person from history. He's the God of the universe, who we can actually get to know personally and who wants to change our lives, here and now, today. And so, along with each day's reading, I've written a question designed to help you consider your own response to what you've read, and how you might apply what you're learning to your everyday life.

### *4. Pray*

At the end of each day, I've also included a short prayer that you might like to pray as a way of talking to God about what you've been reading and thinking about.

Don't let my words limit you—you can talk to God about anything, anytime, anywhere, and know that he's

listening and that he cares. But if you're someone who finds prayer a bit weird or confusing, or you just don't know what to say, hopefully my suggested prayers will give you a starting point.

And that's it! I really hope you enjoy this book and find it useful. If you stick with it, I honestly believe that the next hundred days could change your life—not because you've read *my* book, but because you've read Mark's book, and because you've seen that the good news of Jesus really is the best news ever!

**CHRIS**  

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★ 📖 DAY 1 📖 ★

# EUANGELION!

★ READ MARK I V I ★

**W**hen was the last time you heard a piece of really incredible news? News so huge and awesome and amazing that you were just *bursting* to share it?

Mark's first readers lived under the rule of the great and powerful Roman Empire. Whenever a new Roman emperor was crowned or when the Romans won a victory over their enemies, a message would go out across the empire: *Euangelion!*

*Euangelion* means "Good news!"

And not just any good news—huge, awesome, amazing, *life-changing* news!

Mark uses this word to begin his biography of Jesus. Right up front, he wants us to know that the message of Jesus is literally the best news ever!

When you think about your relationship with God, what comes to mind?

For many people, it's a whole bunch of rules and advice you should follow if you want to get God to like you.

But here Mark tells us that the message of Jesus is something completely different.

It's not good *advice*. It's good *news*!

The message of Jesus isn't a list of things you need to do to earn God's love.

It's a life-changing announcement of what Jesus has already done for you!

Out of the four biographies of Jesus in the Bible, Mark's is the most fast-paced and action-packed. The whole time, it's like Mark can't write fast enough to get down everything he wants to say—like the good news is bursting out of him:

“Jesus has come! And nothing will ever be the same.”

*Has anyone ever shared the message of Jesus with you before?  
Did they make it sound more like good advice or good news?*

## **PRAYER**

Lord God, thank you that the good news of Jesus has been so carefully recorded for us in the Bible. As I read Mark's biography of Jesus, please help me see what Mark was so excited about! Help me see how this *euangelion* is good news for me too! Amen.



★ 📖 DAY 2 📖

★

# THE WAIT IS ★ (ALMOST) OVER!

★

READ MARK 1 v 1-5

**W**hat's the longest you've ever waited for someone to keep a promise they made you? Did you sometimes start to wonder if they'd ever keep their promise at all?

God's people had been waiting *hundreds of years* for God to send the Messiah—the great King he'd promised would rule and bless his people, and free them from their enemies forever.

It had been a long, *long* wait.

But all through their history, through special messengers called prophets, God had dropped hints about what this Messiah would be like.

Here, Mark gives us a couple of quotes from the prophets Malachi and Isaiah, who lived hundreds of years before Jesus: *Right before the Messiah appears, God will send one last messenger to get everyone ready—to go out into the wilderness and announce his arrival (v 2-3).*

And then Mark drops the bombshell: *The last messenger has come. And his name is John the Baptist* (v 4).

John appears in the wilderness. He tells the people to *get ready*, because God is about to do something huge.

The people flock to John to be baptised—to be plunged into the river as an outward symbol of an inward choice: they’re on board with John’s message. They want to turn back to God and be ready for the Messiah’s arrival.

The people are waiting. But they won’t have to wait much longer. As always, God will keep his promises to his people.

After all these years, the Messiah is just around the corner.

*Can you think of any promises that God has made to you in the Bible? How easy is it for you to believe that God will keep them? Why?*

## **PRAYER**

God, thank you for always keeping your promises—even if you don’t always keep them as quickly as I might like. When it feels like you’re taking *forever* to answer my prayers, please remind me of your faithfulness. Help me trust in your promises *and* in your perfect timing. Amen.

★ DAY 3 ★

# CENTRE STAGE

★ READ MARK 1 v 4-8 ★

**S**o John arrives to prepare the way for the Messiah, and (despite his interesting food and fashion choices, v 6) the crowds keep swarming out to meet him.

Some people even start wondering if John himself might be the Messiah. Maybe he's the one to defeat their Roman rulers and set God's people free!

And even though John's not the Messiah, it sure would be easy for him to fake it. He's got the fame. He's got the followers. It would be so easy for him to just grab all that power for himself.

But John doesn't buy into it.

*You think I'm impressive?* he says. *Just wait! When the true Messiah comes, I won't even be worthy to untie his shoelaces for him (v 7).*

John knows he isn't here to take centre stage.

He's here to shine his spotlight on the *real* star.

And as we keep reading, we'll see how all of us are invited to make this same choice.

As a fish is made for water, we are made to be with God—to be loved with his perfect love and to love him back. When we push God aside and try to live without him, we're pushing aside the abundant life we were created for.

And so God calls us to make the same decision that John made: to let Jesus take the starring role in our lives. Not because Jesus needs us, but because he knows we need him—and because it's the way we step into the true life and freedom that Jesus came to bring us.

*Is letting Jesus take the starring role in your life a new idea for you? What do you think it would look like?*

## **PRAYER**

Loving God, thank you for inviting me into abundant life with you. When I'm tempted to push you aside and shine the spotlight on myself, please remind me of your incredible love for me, and show me what it means to let Jesus take centre stage in my life. Amen.