

# Jesus and the Gospels

with Dr. Geoffrey Lentz

## Syllabus

### INTRO

Join us for the Pastor's Bible Study on Wednesday nights, Jan.17–Feb. 15, from 6:00–7:00pm in the Great Hall. We will be studying Jesus and Gospels. Did you know that there are other gospels written other than the four in our Bibles? We will learn about what a gospel is and why we have four of them, and then take a deeper dive into each of the four canonical gospel's, understanding the vision of each of the four Evangelists. By the end of the six weeks, we will get a more full understanding of the Good New of Jesus Christ.

**DATES:** Wednesday Nights, January 17–February 15, from 6:00–7:00pm in the Great Hall

**TEXT:** Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John (Recommended Translations: NRSV or NIV, but *the best translation is the one that you read!*)

**OBJECTIVE:** We will gain an understanding of what a gospel is, the purpose of the four evangelists, and their intended audience. We will review some non-canonical gospels like the Gospel of Thomas and Judas and learn why these ancient texts did not make it into the Bible. Finally, we will focus on the subject of the Gospels, Jesus Christ, and what we know about his gospel(proclamation of good news) through their combined witness.

### SCHEDULE:

#### Wednesday, January 11—What's a Gospel?

*Reading: none*

We will focus on the genre of the “gospel” as a specialized version of the Greek “bios,” and learn what gospels were indented to do. Then we will review several non-canonical gospels like the Gospel of Thomas, The Gospel of Judas, and the Gospel of Mary Magdalen, and discover what these texts are about and why they are excluded from the canon(Bible). We also will learn about “Q,” the potential lost source.

#### Wednesday, January 18—Mark: Coming in Power

*Reading: Mark 1, Mark 4, Mark 15-16*

Mark is the oldest of the four canonical Gospels. It details Jesus's activities in the world. He is seen as a miracle worker, whose death has miraculously changed the world.

#### Wednesday, January 25—Matthew: The Community of Discipleship

*Reading: Matthew 1-2, Matthew 5, Matthew 27-28*

Matthew's Gospel is listed first because it provided the best orientation to Jesus. This Gospel is the most Jewish in background and audience. Jesus is portrayed as wisdom teacher calling disciples to live into a new community and way of being.

#### Wednesday, February 1—Luke: A Transformed World

*Reading: Luke 1-2, Luke 6, Luke 10:25-37, Luke 15, Luke 24*

Luke's Gospel had the widest audience with the goal of the conversion of gentiles all over the Roman Empire. This gospel is the most political focusing on how Jesus reverses the way of the world by transforming society with the kingdom of God.

**Wednesday, February 8—John: So You May Have Life**

*Reading: John 1, John 3, John 4, John 21*

John's Gospel is the most spiritual. Using double meanings and deep theological motifs, John draws the reader into a mystical connection with Christ resulting in new spiritual life.

**Wednesday, February 15—Jesus: The Good News**

*Reading: Romans 1:1-16, Galatians 1*

The four gospels combined with Paul's witness each give us a different perspective of who Jesus was and what he was about. The attempts to harmonize and synchronize these accounts have all failed and are viewed as heterodox. The church needs the separate witness of each evangelist to get the most full picture of Christ.

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