

Welcome, and thank you for coming to the preview of “Mark—My Words,” as told by Tommy and John Thomas Oaks.

Mark is generally considered to be the first gospel to be written, and the first eyewitness account of the words and actions of Jesus.

The apostle Peter called Mark “my son.” (1 Peter 5:13)
It is very likely that Peter was the one who introduced Mark to Jesus, and that Mark traveled with Peter, heard him preach, and wrote his gospel based on Peter’s preaching.

Before Mark’s gospel was written, it was spoken. So, before there was what we call the “book” of Mark, there was the wonderful story Mark told.

Faith comes from hearing God’s word. (Romans 10:17)
As you hear tonight, it is our prayer that your faith will be strengthened.

Listen, and see what happens...

From Tommy

Why this show?

**Tell me the story of Jesus
Write on my heart every word;
Tell me the story most precious,
Dearest that ever was heard.**

- Sweney/Crosby

A long time ambition of mine has been to memorize one of the gospels and tell it in the author’s own words. I hoped this would give the listener some experience of what it might have been like to hear one of the eyewitnesses tell the story of Jesus.

I decided to work with the gospel of Mark. Mark is straightforward and action oriented. It is also the shortest of the four gospels (a bit easier to memorize!).

The reason I chose the New International Version to memorize was that when I started, it was billed as a translation in contemporary English. I hoped a translation might capture more of what it might be like to hear Mark speak. I also hoped that using “contemporary” English (versus Older English) might also give the hearer an experience closer to what it might have been like to listen to Mark.

From John Thomas

I tried my hand at “leitmotif” when putting this music together. I have always loved leitmotif (German for “leading motive”), which is melodies associated with specific characters or situations in a story. It got its start in opera, but many modern composers also use it with great effect in movies and musicals. One of the best is John Williams, and I think I feel this way because I saw Star Wars at age 9 when it first came out in the movie theaters in 1977. Once you hear that dark melody accompany Darth Vader onboard Princess Leia’s ship, you never forget the moment or the association. For those of you who like music, it’s almost magical how Mr. Williams took a major triad and made it sound minor simply by starting Darth Vader’s melody on the third degree of the scale.

I am also a big fan of Howard Shore’s work on the Lord of the Rings trilogy. He assigned specific melodies to almost every culture, character, object, and dramatic concept in Middle Earth. Even the way he orchestrated those melodies pulls you in and places you there. When analyzed, it’s amazing how most of the themes are simple, singable melodies that meander over harmonies ranging from the familiar to the strange. However they are orchestrated, and whether or not you know music theory, those tunes connect you to the characters.

I am by no means a Williams or a Shore, but I truly tried to imagine this project as a film score. I hope as you listen to Tommy recite Mark’s actual words about Jesus, the themes and melodies I have chosen for the specific characters and situations in the story will help to pull you deeper in. My ultimate hope is that my work will draw you closer to Jesus.