

# Ode to Hope

*A poem based on Mark's Gospel*

*In 50 verses*

By Dave Hopwood 2018

***Ode to Hope*** in 50 Verses

1. He wakes at dawn,  
Stretches, gives a yawn;  
Another day of planing,  
Working yet again in  
The dust, to the ticking of his heart,  
Waiting for the moment he can start.  
Philippians 2 vv 5-8, John 1 v 14

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2. There's a cousin in the waters,  
Calling out to sons and daughters,  
'Make a change, begin again,  
Let the waters wash you clean!'  
Laying down his work, the wood-man stands,  
Turns up with empty hands...  
Mark 1 vv 1-8

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3. As the waters start to rise  
His calling flows before his eyes.  
The humble king, no accolade,  
Submitting to a world he made.  
As he rises up, from above,  
He hears his father's joy and love.  
Mark 1 vv 9-11

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4. When Abram made his choice  
To walk towards that desert voice,  
He had not the first idea  
That his trek was leading here,  
To this place of dry temptation,  
Bread and power, manipulation.

Genesis 12 vv 1-3, Mark 1 vv 12-13, Matthew 4 vv 1-11

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5. 'Open your minds, unblock your thinking.'  
His words ring out to a people sinking,  
Longing for the day of peace,  
For the endless stream of hurt to cease.  
Ordinary folk narrow their eyes,  
Hear his words and sense hope rise.

Mark 1 vv 16-19

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6. Standing in the teaching zone,  
He does not sound like anyone  
They have ever heard or seen.  
They wonder what this could mean.  
Some dare to think he might be the one  
To usher in the Kingdom Come.

Mark 1 vv 21-22

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7. Clearly he's far more than talk,  
More than words that smear like chalk.  
He has power to change these lives,  
To unblock ears and open eyes.  
The repercussions could be immense  
For those who choose to come off the fence.  
Mark 1 vv 23-27

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8. The crowds flock and flock some more,  
Crowding, gasping at his door.  
Early dawn he needs some space  
Talks with his God in a quiet place.  
So when his friends beg him come home,  
He knows he must keep moving on.  
Mark 1 vv 35-39

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9a. The man must be out of his head,  
Seems to miss what Jesus said.  
His leprosy well and truly gone,  
He's been asked to hold his tongue.  
If word spreads like tumbling rubble,  
Jesus will find himself in trouble.  
Mark 1 vv 40-45

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9b. Heaving, sweating bodies form a wall,  
There's just no way through at all,  
Straw and dust fall like snow  
On the peopled chaos below.  
Straining, grunting, barely holding on,  
The four lower their friend to the smiling Son.  
Mark 2 vv 1-12

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10. He's passed that toll many a day,  
Stumped up the cash, paid his way.  
They've talked a little, about this and that,  
But today there's an invitation for Matt.  
The toll man thinks, gives a quiet cough,  
And before too long he's up and off.  
Mark 2 vv 13-14

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11. Of course some folks are ready with stingers,  
Ready to troll and point the fingers.  
This does not look right at all  
Matt is scum, barely human at all.  
How can Jesus spend time with him,  
When anyone can see the state he's in?  
Mark 2 vv 15-17

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12. They reach for food, bodies craving the stuff,  
Eat until they've had enough.

Waiting in the wings, 'The poisonous say,  
'You can't do that on the Sabbath day.'

So stuck on rules they can't see grace

When it's right there staring them full in the face.

Mark 2 vv 23-28, Mark 3 vv1-6

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13. After time alone on a mountain side,  
Picks his team for the rest of the ride.

12 men willing to learn by mistakes,  
Willing to follow whatever it takes.

Though they will flee when the going gets tough,  
For now they are willing, and that's enough.

Mark 3 vv 13-19

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14. His family have a difficult day

They've known him since that manger hay.

They come expecting his full attention,

But he hardly gives them a cursory mention.

Looks at the strangers sitting round him,

Says, 'These are my family, my kith and kin.'

Mark 3 vv 31-35

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15. He knows the truth, can face the fact,  
That not everyone who hears will act.  
Some do at first and then lose heart,  
Some never really make a start.  
Some get lost, or can't bear the load.  
But some keep trudging that narrow road.  
Mark 4 vv 1-20

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16. There's buried treasure in his fertile words -  
Worth chewing on the things they've heard.  
'Keep digging down into what I've taught  
You'll find more than you ever thought.'  
There's so much more in the living word,  
More than we've yet seen or heard.  
Mark 4 vv 24

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17. They stare at the rising waves, these fishing-men,  
The sea is a fearful beast to them.  
They can't control its ways and whims  
And right now the boat hurtles and spins.  
They panic before the decision is made,  
Then wake the one who's not afraid.  
Mark 4 vv 35-41

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18. A crowd of faces, scowls and smiles,  
So much pressure on him, and meanwhile  
Some contact made with the hem of his clothes,  
And despite the hustle and noise he knows  
The touch was full of faith and hope,  
Made by someone who cannot cope...  
Mark 5 vv 25-34

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19. A flashback in time, to a murderous night,  
When his watery cousin lost the fight  
For justice and truth and all that is good.  
A trick at a party would spill his blood.  
A dance, a promise, and too much ale,  
Ended John's life; a sad, sordid tale.  
Mark 6 vv 14-29

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20. There's a gentle rumble in the air,  
Emanating from the stomachs there.  
He knows that emptiness, that hunger  
Understands that they can wait no longer,  
A little boy with bread and fish,  
'Perfect, that's the ideal dish.'  
John 6 vv 1-13



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21. The next day they rush back here -  
'He made magic bread appear!'  
Thousands wait for mere sensation,  
His smile sags at this expectation.  
Folks who need the deepest friend...  
Just want distraction in the end.  
John 6 vv 22-27

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22. The one who beckoned life and order,  
Shows his nature as he strides on the water.  
And as they watch the Lord of all  
Defying a fatal watery fall,  
Peter wants to join that show,  
So Jesus smiles, says, 'Have a go.'  
Mark 6 vv 45-51

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23. It's so tempting to put on masks,  
To cover up the hidden facts,  
To think that Holiness is a costume,  
Something to put on so others assume  
That we're okay, not weak but strong...  
Jesus sees through it, understands what's going on.  
Mark 7 vv 1-7, Romans 7 vv 21-25

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24. She wouldn't give up, she's tough like that,  
Kept on knocking, rat-a-tat-tat.  
She had this witty, smart attack,  
When he spoke, she answered back.  
He talked of children being fed.  
'But lots of crumbs get spilled,' she said.

Mark 7 vv 24-30

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25. Bursting baskets, crumbs everywhere,  
There are mutterings of a new king in the air.  
Who is this man who clearly stands alone?  
Unlike other leaders they have known.  
They want to pounce, enthrone him today.  
But the timing's wrong and he must slip away.

Mark 8 vv 1-10 John 6 vv 1-15, Isaiah 40 v 11

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26. A question, an answer, it changes everything.  
Could he be the one who authored everything?  
Peter thinks so, and they take a walk.  
Head up a hill for a break and a talk.  
A voice of confirmation, 'Listen to my son.'  
They gasp at the glimpse of the kingdom to come.

Mark 8 vv 27-30 and Mark 9 vv 1-8

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27. It's an argument they've had again and again,  
Who's the strongest, the wisest, the coolest of men.  
When he asked them about it they were all floored,  
Didn't want to admit they were so self-absorbed.  
So he mentioned humility, showed them a child.  
Talked about Last and First, and then winked and smiled.  
Mark 9 vv 33-37

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28. 'He's busy, don't bother him,' they say,  
'Keep those kids well out of his way.'  
Jesus says, 'Hang on a mo, wait!'  
Let them come and see me, these children are great.'  
'You've so much to learn from youngsters, you lot.  
Don't dismiss the world-view that they've got.'  
Mark 10 vv 13-16

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29. A rich young man with good intent,  
Asked Jesus about life, and what it meant.  
Jesus could see what would make his heart sing,  
So suggested he let go of one thing.  
His love of money was weighing him down.  
But the man was saddened and left with a frown.  
Mark 10 vv 17-31

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30. There's a blind man begging outside the town,  
Jesus turns his life upside-down.

The locals tell the beggar to shush and get gone,  
But Jesus can see what's going on.

In the past he's used mud to help someone see,  
But this time a few words set the man free.

Mark 10 vv 46-52

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31. The streets are awash with people up ahead,  
A man comes riding through, like Zechariah said.

He predicted the sight of a humble king,  
A hero riding through, who'd change everything.

Pilate and the Romans put on their show,

But it's the man on the donkey that the people want to  
know.

Mark 11 vv 1-11, Zechariah 9 v 9

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32. So many gates get in the way,  
When all kinds of folk want to come in and pray.

A temple designed to draw people in  
Has become little more than a money machine.

There's a new Gate in town, the tables are turning,  
And everyone's welcome, whatever they're earning.

Mark 11 vv 15-18

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33. He tells a tale of what must be,  
Of a vineyard and farmers, a brutal story.  
They land-grab and sneer, they're brutal men,  
Kill anyone who stands up to them.  
When the son arrives there's little discussion,  
Don't realise this killing has a big repercussion.  
Mark 12 vv 1-12

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34. This is a stone dividing folk,  
Some ignore it, as if it's a joke.  
To others it's everything, pure solid rock,  
Will take the weight of all that we've got.  
Some trip over it, fall on their face,  
But some build a home, the best kind of place.  
Mark 12 vv 10-11, Matthew 7 vv 24-27

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35. 'What is the most important thing?'  
The man looks pensive as he questions him.  
'Loving God,' says the carpenter, 'with all you've got,  
Loving others, whether friends or not.'  
The man nods, 'Love's the thing, you've spoken well.'  
He's close to the kingdom, Jesus can tell.  
Mark 12 vv 28-34

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36. She has so little to put in the box.  
Is embarrassed about the coins she's got.  
But Jesus isn't, sees faith and trust,  
What she's giving is like gold dust.  
The tiniest gift is far from worthless,  
Worth much more than a rich man's surplus.  
Mark 12 vv 41-44

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37. A rich man's work takes him away,  
So he leaves instructions until the day  
He'll return unexpectedly,  
Then he'll call his servants so he can see  
What they've done with their talents and time,  
Whatever they have, he asks them to shine.  
Mark 13 vv 34-36

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37. She's going down in history today,  
As she anoints Jesus in Bethany.  
Others complain and whine about the money  
But Jesus knows it's worth every penny.  
The house is filled with a smell so fine,  
Her worship rings down the corridors of time.  
Mark 14 vv 3-9

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38. This tale is dark, betrayal and regret,  
Abandonment by friends... and yet...  
There's a bigger scheme, a celestial plan  
Resting on the shoulders of the son of man.  
All looks spoiled, hope long gone,  
But keep your eyes on the broken one.  
Mark 14 vv 17-42

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39. Questions, questions, bullying men  
Demand he play the game with them.  
But he won't join their war of words,  
Won't clamour, beg and shriek to be heard.  
He doesn't need to prove them wrong,  
He needs to sing Golgotha's song.  
Mark 14 vv 43-65

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40. Sometimes folk get overlooked,  
Seem to be of no consequence.  
But a quiet man flees in the night  
Without his clothes, a startling sight.  
His name is Mark, take a second look,  
We're right here now, reading his book.  
Mark 14 v 52

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41. And so begins this night of change,  
The lead in this drama looks small and strange.  
Everyone thinks that power is the way,  
To chase the darkness, save the day.  
But this man chooses a different song,  
To become himself all that is wrong.  
Mark 14 vv 53-65, Isaiah 53

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42. This fisherman has no idea,  
His vision is blurred, the plan unclear.  
He thought he'd be faithful, fight to the death,  
Uttered his devotion with hot, fierce breath.  
Now look at him, wide-eyed, cowering here,  
Tears on his face, his heart full of fear.  
Mark 14 vv 66-72

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43. One man stands in the shadow of the son,  
About to be freed for the crimes he's done.  
Barabbas can't believe what's going on,  
He's walking free, thanks to the one  
Who's not only taking the place of Barabbas,  
But standing in the shoes of every one of us.  
Mark 15 vv 6-15



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44. Some of the blows come from Samaritan fists,  
Only too pleased to have a Jew in their midst.  
The Romans employed local men  
To do their soldiering for them.  
Reckon he's the king? We'll see about that,  
These wild-eyed ones hold nothing back.  
Mark 15 vv 16-20

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44. A man comes in from out of town,  
Does not realise he is going down  
In history for his part today,  
Helps the king on his suffering way.  
He'll never be the same because of Calvary  
And neither will his family.  
Mark 15 verse 21, Romans 16 v 13

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45. His friends are sickened, hold their breath,  
At so much hurt, at so much death.  
They live with crosses every day,  
They dot the skyline, sprinkle the way  
They walk and breathe and love and die.  
Now love has pinned their friend up high.  
Mark 15 vv 21-30

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46. They take him down, make some room  
For his shattered corpse in a borrowed tomb.  
This story's reached an end so dead,  
His friends can see no way ahead.  
But eternal things are ticking on  
And silently the work is done.  
Mark 15 vv 42-47

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47. Night-time shadows fade to grey  
As courageous women make their way.  
Spices clutched, and faces set,  
They haven't finished with their friend just yet.  
And suddenly their eyes burst wide,  
The cold seal of death is pushed aside...  
Mark 16 vv 1-5

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48. The stranger smiles, as he waits inside:  
Says, 'He gave you clues before he died.  
The crucified son has beaten death,  
Alive again, he's drawing breath.  
He'll see you soon, he'll be with you,  
Now quick, go and encourage the others too!'  
Mark 16 vv 5-7

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49. Mary's not sure what to do,  
She's frozen here, her heart in two.  
Hears a noise, sees a gardener there,  
Or is it... maybe... a carpenter?  
Her eyes burst wide, her heart skips a beat,  
He has the biggest smile, and scarred hands and feet.  
Mark 16 vv 9-11, John 20 vv 1-18

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50. Others see the risen son,  
The ages pass, and his life goes on.  
He's always present, bidden or not.  
Waiting for hungry hearts to spot  
His life-giving hope that never ends,  
In this broken world and his fragile friends.  
Mark 16 vv 12-14, 1 Corinthians 15 vv 3-8