

## Markan Faith

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Received: 26 November 2016 / Accepted: 3 December 2016 / Published online: 17 December 2016  
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**Abstract** According to many accounts of faith—where faith is thought of as something psychological, e.g., an attitude, state, or trait—one *cannot* have faith without belief of the relevant propositions. According to other accounts of faith, one *can* have faith without belief of the relevant propositions. Call the first sort of account doxasticism since it insists that faith requires belief; call the second nondoxasticism since it allows faith without belief. The New Testament (NT) may seem to favor doxasticism over nondoxasticism. For it may seem that, according to the NT authors, one can have faith in God, as providential, or faith that Jesus is the Messiah, or be a person of Christian faith, and the like only if one believes the relevant propositions. In this essay, I propose to assess this tension, as it pertains to the *Gospel of Mark*. The upshot of my assessment is that, while it may well appear that, according to Mark, one can have faith only if one believes the relevant propositions, appearances are deceiving. Mark said no such thing. Rather, what Mark said—by way of story—about faith fits nondoxasticism at least as well as doxasticism, arguably better. More importantly, the account of faith that emerges from Mark is that faith consists in resilience in the face of challenges to living in light of the overall positive stance to the object of faith, where that stance consists in certain conative, cognitive, and behavioral-dispositional elements.

**Keyword** Faith · Pistis · Belief · Resilience · Gospel of Mark · Jesus

“[D]oubt cannot coexist with faith...;  
faith and doubt are mutually exclusive”.  
—*The Catholic Encyclopedia*

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To live by faith and yet not to believe.

—*Saint Teresa of Calcutta*

According to many accounts of faith—where faith is thought of as something psychological, e.g., an attitude, state, or trait—one cannot have faith without belief. That is, according to these accounts, one can have, e.g., faith *in* God, as providential, only if one believes that God is providential, one can have faith *that* Jesus is the Messiah only if one believes that Jesus is the Messiah, one can be *a person of Christian faith* only if one believes the basic Christian story, and so on (Augustine, *Handbook*; Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*; Locke 1924/1690; Berkeley 1950/1732; Swinburne 1981; MacDonald 2014/1993; Plantinga 1983, 2000, 2015; Evans 1998; Mugg 2016; Malcolm and Scott forthcoming.) Naturally enough, according to other accounts of faith, one can have faith without belief (Pojman 1986; Alston 1996; Schellenberg 2005; Audi 2011; Buchak 2012; Howard-Snyder 2013, 2016, forthcoming; McKaughan 2013, 2016, forthcoming; Kvanvig 2013; Rath forthcoming). That is, according to these accounts, one can have, e.g., faith *in* God, as providential, and yet lack belief that God is providential, one can have faith *that* Jesus is the Messiah and yet lack belief that Jesus is the Messiah, one can be *a person of Christian faith* and yet lack belief of the basic Christian story, and so on. That is not to say that one can have faith and disbelieve. Lack of belief is not disbelief. Call the first sort of account *doxasticism* since it insists that faith requires belief; call the second *nodoxasticism* since it allows faith without belief.

The New Testament (NT) may seem to favor doxasticism over nodoxasticism. For it may seem that, according to the NT authors, one can have faith in God, as providential, or faith that Jesus is the Messiah, or be a person of Christian faith, and the like only if one believes the above propositions, or propositions close enough as to make no difference—call them “the relevant propositions”. So we might sense a tension between nodoxasticism and the NT authors.

## The NT objection to non-doxastic accounts of faith

This tension might ground an objection to nodoxasticism—at least for those who grant the NT authority in such matters—as follows. According to the NT authors, one can have faith in God, as providential, or faith that Jesus is the Messiah, or be a person of Christian faith only if one believes the relevant propositions. Nodoxasticism denies this. Now: either nodoxasticism speaks of what the NT authors speak of when they speak of faith, or it does not. If it does, then, since nodoxasticism is incompatible with what the NT authors say, nodoxasticism is false. If it does not, then, since what the NT authors speak of is the sort of faith without which no human is in right relationship with God on this side of the River Jordan, what nodoxasticism speaks of holds no interest. So, for Christians, either nodoxasticism is false or it holds no interest.

In this essay, I propose to assess the NT Objection. The upshot of my assessment is that, while it may well appear that, according to the NT authors, one can have

faith only if one believes the relevant propositions, appearances are deceiving. The NT authors said no such thing. Rather, what they said about faith is compatible with nondoxasticism; indeed, what they said fits nondoxasticism at least as well as doxasticism, perhaps even better.

So we must delve into the NT. But we must also delve into the Greco-Roman world surrounding the early churches. Specifically, we must understand how it used the *pistis* lexicon. (*Pistis* is the Greek noun standardly translated with the English noun *faith*.) For as Teresa Morgan says,

New communities forming themselves within an existing culture do not typically take a language in common use in the world around them and immediately assign to it radical new meanings.... This is all the more likely to be the case where the new community is a missionary one. One does not communicate effectively with potential converts by using language in a way which they will not understand. (Morgan 2015, p. 4)

Call this “basic principle of cultural historiography” *Morgan’s Maxim*. In light of Morgan’s Maxim, we must study the *pistis* lexicon outside the NT to understand the *pistis* lexicon inside the NT. We must also study the Latin *fides* lexicon since, “by the second century BCE, at least,...the two concepts [*pistis* and *fides*] were fully mutually intelligible and functioned in very similar ways in Greek- and Latin-speaking communities”; they “shared[d] almost all their meanings” (Morgan 2015, p. 7). Likewise, we must study the Hebrew *‘emunah* lexicon (which is often translated with the *faith* lexicon) since the earliest Christians were Jews immersed in the *‘emunah* lexicon, and how Jews translated it into the *pistis* lexicon (in the *Septuagint*) informs us how Jews at the time, including the early Christians, understood the *pistis* lexicon.

One more introductory matter. Greek has verbal and adjectival forms of the noun *pistis*. Modern English has no verbal or adjectival form of the noun *faith*. So if translators want a simple English verb to translate the verbal form of *pistis* in a NT writing, they have to use a different English lexicon. They nearly always use *believe*, although some use *trust*. Rarely, they ditch the simple verb, and use a verb clause: *to put/have faith*. Here’s a useful exercise: when studying faith in a NT writing, replace all uses of the *belief* lexicon with the *faith* lexicon. For *unbelief*, put *lack of faith*; for *believe that* or *believe in*, put *have faith that* or *put/have faith in*. Then we’ll have to argue, not merely assume, that each use of the *faith* lexicon entails belief; that conclusion won’t be foisted on us by a failure in modern English.

I cannot here assess the 600 uses of the *pistis* lexicon in the NT. I will focus on *The Gospel of Mark* (or *GMark* for short). Why *GMark*? Because one has to start somewhere, and I prefer the gospels to the letters and Jesus to Paul and the others. Also, I want to get as close as I can to what Jesus thought of *pistis*, and portrayals of him and his life seem to be the best NT source for that, with *GMark* the earliest we have. (In what follows, I will use “Mark” to refer to whoever produced the final story between 55-70 CE.)

## Preliminaries on the *pistis* lexicon in GMark

The *pistis* lexicon occurs 18 times in GMark: *pisteuein* (verb) ten times, eight from Jesus; *pistis* (noun) five times, four from Jesus; *apistia* (negation of noun) twice, and *apistos* (negation of adjective) once, from Jesus.<sup>1</sup> It occurs more frequently than the lexica of the rule or kingdom of God (16 times), salvation (13), and sin (12). It appears throughout the narrative, occurring in healings, exorcisms, and nature miracles, teaching material, disputes between Jesus and the authorities, and in the Passion. It includes calls to, and commendations and criticisms of, faith (Morgan 2015, p. 349). It evenly divides between material before and after the turning point in the narrative, Peter's recognition of Jesus as the Messiah and Jesus' subsequent turn toward Jerusalem.

Twelve pericopes use the *pistis* lexicon in GMark, listed here with identifiers.<sup>2</sup>

Aland number/title	Text	Identifying phrase in NRSV	Grammatical form
32. Ministry in Galilee	1.14–15	15 repent and believe in the good news	<i>pisteuein</i> (verb)
43. Healing of the paralytic	2.2.1–12	5 When Jesus saw their faith	<i>pistis</i> (noun)
136. Stilling the storm	4.35–41	40 Have you still no faith?	<i>pistis</i> (noun)
138[a]. Jairus' daughter	5.21–24a, 35–43	36 Do not fear, only believe	<i>pisteuein</i> (verb)
138[b]. Woman with a Hemorrhage	5.24b–34	34 Daughter, your faith has made you well	<i>pistis</i> (noun)
139. Jesus is rejected at Nazareth	6.1–6	6 And he was amazed at their unbelief	<i>apistia</i> (noun)
163. Jesus heals a boy possessed by a spirit	9.14–29	19 You faithless generation	<i>apistos</i> (adjective)
		23 All things can be done for the one who believes	<i>pisteuein</i> (verb)
		24 I believe; 24 help my unbelief	<i>pisteuein</i> (verb) <i>apistia</i> (noun)
168. Warning concerning temptations	9.42–48	42 little ones who believe in me	<i>pisteuein</i> (verb)
264. Healing of the blind men (Bartimaeus)	10.46–52	52 Go; your faith has made you well	<i>pistis</i> (noun)
272/275. The fig tree	11.12–24	22 Have faith in God	<i>pistis</i> (noun)
		23 but believe that what you say will come to pass	<i>pisteuein</i> (verb)
		24 believe that you have received it	<i>pisteuein</i> (verb)

<sup>1</sup> I exclude The Longer Ending (16.9–20). See Metzger (1971, pp. 122–126).

<sup>2</sup> I use the number/title/text system in Aland (1985). I exclude 14.3. It uses *pistikos* as “very”, as in “very expensive nard ointment”, or “pure” as in “expensive pure nard ointment” (cf. Morgan 349n7; Rhoads et al. 2012, p. 33).

Aland number/title	Text	Identifying phrase in NRSV	Grammatical form
276. The question of authority	11.27–33	31 Why then did you not believe him?	<i>pisteuein</i> (verb)
291. False Christs and false prophets	13.21–23	21 Look! There he is—do not believe it	<i>pisteuein</i> (verb)
345. Jesus derided on the cross	15.27–32	32 so that we may see and believe	<i>pisteuein</i> (verb)

The *pistis* pericopes comprise 20% of GMark’s material.<sup>3</sup> They fit in a narrative the main theme of which is the rule of God being established in a new way, “over all creation, over all people, over all of nature, over Israel, over all the nations, and over the Roman Empire” (Rhoads et al. 2012, p. 73; cf. Black 2011, p. 65). In the world of the narrative, Jesus is the human agent commissioned by God to establish this new way. The plot displays his struggles to complete his mission—with nonhuman forces (demons, illness, and nature), his followers, and the authorities (Judean and Roman) (Rhoads et al. 2012, p. 74).

The plot develops in earnest when, after John baptizes Jesus and Jesus endures forty days in the wilderness, Jesus arrives in Galilee preaching “the good news about God”: “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and have faith in (*pisteuete en*) the good news” (1.15). Scholars dispute the content of this good news. I will speak of it as I already have, as God’s rule being established in a new way through Jesus. While the content of the good news is disputable, the desired response to it, in the world of the story, is not: *pisteuete en* it.

But what is *that*? Mark doesn’t say. Rather, he displays what it is to *pisteuete en* the good news—to *faith in* it, to adopt an antimera—through the characters in his stories. So to answer our question, we must answer another: what feature or features of Mark’s characters are most closely associated with the *pistis* lexicon? A word of caution, however: even if some feature is closely associated with *pistis*, it might not partly constitute *pistis*. (Although *being an Earthling* is closely associated with *being human*, it does not partly constitute *being human*.) Still, a narrator can convey constitution rather than mere close association by using certain literary devices. Mark may have done as much. The literary device is commendation.

Applied to GMark, commendation works like this. Jesus is the protagonist of the story. Nothing matters more in the world of the story than his identity, his relation to God’s rule, and the right response to him and the good news he proclaims. Moreover, what he says about these things holds. Thus, when he commends someone for their faith, they are commendable for it. Now: if when commending

<sup>3</sup> Of course, faith appears in Mark’s story outside of the *pistis* pericopes. For example, 1.15 is the only place that states the content of the gospel and the desired response to it. Some see in this “summary statement” a literary device. Instead of repeatedly stating the content and desired response, Mark expects the audience to recall them when he says Jesus preached or taught. This gospel/*pistis* duet “reverberate[s] throughout the narrative” some *twenty* times (Marshall 1989, pp. 38–39; cf. Hedrick 1984; Hartvigsen 2012, p. 127); also see my comments below on Matthew’s and Luke’s treatment of the Syrophenician woman and the woman at Bethany, as well as my comments on the faith of Jesus.

someone for their faith, Jesus fastens on a feature (call it *F*), *F* is not only closely associated with faith, it is a good candidate for partly constituting faith, in the world of the story. The hypothesis that the Jesus-commended *F* partly constitutes faith increases in plausibility as more and more of the following conditions are satisfied:

- (i) In *multiple* stories in which Mark uses the *pistis* lexicon, Jesus commends someone for their faith when plausibly fastening on *F*, and in no story does Jesus commend someone for their faith when *F* is absent.
- (ii) In multiple *other* stories in which Mark uses the *pistis* lexicon, *F* is plausibly closely associated with a person's faith.
- (iii) In multiple stories where Mark does not use the *pistis* lexicon to identify a character's faith, both Matthew and Luke, who had GMark as a source, use the *pistis* lexicon to tell the same story and, when they do, they have Jesus commend the character for their faith, and when he does, he plausibly fastens on *F*.
- (iv) In multiple stories, Jesus plausibly models faith and, when seen in this way, he plausibly models *F*.
- (v) The *pistis*, *fides*, and *'emunah* lexica, as they were used in the culture surrounding the early church, point to *F* as partly constituting *pistis*, *fides*, and *'emunah*.

If a particular feature satisfies *all* of these conditions, then it is a stellar candidate for partly constituting faith in the world of Mark's story.

My hypothesis is twofold. First, *resilience*—or, more specifically, resilience in the face of challenges to living in light of one's overall positive stance toward the object of faith—is a stellar candidate. Second, belief—or, more specifically, belief that the relevant propositions are true—is *not* a stellar candidate. I aim to defend this hypothesis in what follows. I will first focus on resilience before I turn to belief.

### **Multiple stories in which Jesus commends someone's faith when fastening on resilience**

In three stories, Jesus commends someone for their faith when plausibly fastening on their resilience.

#### **The healing of Bartimaeus (10.46–52)**

Jesus, his disciples, and a large crowd have left Jericho for Jerusalem, where Jesus anticipates execution. Bartimaeus, a blind beggar, sits by the road as the noisy crowd begins to pass him by. As the crowd moves by, he overhears from his perch in the dirt that they are following Jesus. He has heard of Jesus before: his enigmatic parables and upside-down teachings. But, more importantly, he has heard of Jesus' ability to heal. Perhaps sensing an opportunity he cannot afford to miss, Bartimaeus musters all the strength his empty stomach can afford, and shouts up into the crowd, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!", directing his voice first one way and

then another, since he can't tell where Jesus is located. But the crowd is too loud. Moreover, those closest to him—"many", Mark says—silence him. But Bartimaeus is desperate. So he shouts again, this time "even more loudly": "Son of David, have mercy on me!" And this time, above the din of the crowd, Jesus hears him—and stops. The crowd stops too. Jesus asks who called him; someone says a blind beggar at the side of the road. Jesus asks them to summon him. Those nearest Bartimaeus say: "Take heart; get up, [Jesus] is calling you". Bartimaeus comes to Jesus. Jesus asks: "What do you want me to do for you?" Bartimaeus replies: "My teacher, let me see again". Jesus responds: "Go; your faith has made you well". Immediately Bartimaeus regains his sight and follows Jesus.

What is it about Bartimaeus that caught Jesus' eye, resulting in Jesus' commendation? To begin to answer that question, notice that several obstacles stood in Bartimaeus' way to Jesus.

First, Bartimaeus was blind, so he was unable to see Jesus amidst the crowd. Second, the crowd was noisy, as indicated by the ineffectiveness of Bartimaeus' initial cry. As if an inability to see and to be heard weren't enough, two more obstacles came in the form of Jewish purity law. The blind were not permitted to mix with the sighted (Neyrey 1986). Bartimaeus endorsed that system; he had to overcome his internalization of it. The crowd endorsed it too, and Bartimaeus knew violators were punished; and so he had to overcome his fear of reprisal, which would have been a huge obstacle for someone dependent on charity. Bartimaeus overcame these four obstacles, and shouted to Jesus anyway.

Fifth, after his initial cry, "many" in the crowd "sternly ordered" Bartimaeus to be quiet. Imagine how their "sternness" might have played out if he was not quiet. Might they have thrown something at him, a stone perhaps? Two? More? Nevertheless, Bartimaeus overcame a heightened fear of reprisal and cried out even *more* loudly (Collins 2007, p. 510).

Sixth, when Jesus heard Bartimaeus, Jesus had others summon him; and when they did, Bartimaeus threw off his cloak, sprang to his feet, and "came to Jesus". Get it in your mind's eye. How does an impure blind beggar come to Jesus when Jesus is far enough away to have others summon him, and between them stands a crowd given to purity laws, one that has already silenced him? We might imagine that, in his eagerness, Bartimaeus tripped and fell. We might imagine that, when he got back up, the crowd parted so as not to be defiled by his touch. We might imagine the under-the-breath snickers, the whispered threats; for, Bartimaeus had stolen Jesus' attention, and he was now complicit in Jesus' attack on the purity laws. Even so, Bartimaeus "came to Jesus"; more likely, he stumbled.

Finally, Bartimaeus stands before Jesus. According to Mark, Jesus then said, "What do you want me to do for you?" Why would Mark have Jesus ask *that* question? After all, isn't it obvious what Bartimaeus wants? Perhaps Mark was simply heightening the suspense: will Jesus heal him? But that's not on Bartimaeus' mind. It would not be the least bit surprising, however, if something like this was on his mind: "*What do you want me to do for you?* What a stupid question! Am I supposed to answer selflessly, 'Bring about world peace'? And if I don't, will you use me as a pedagogical prop on priorities, 'Seek ye first...'? Or maybe you'll just walk away. Surely you know what I want. Isn't it obvious? Is it really all that bad to

want to see? What a stupid question, Jesus”. If upon hearing Jesus’ question, Bartimaeus felt something like this, he faced yet another obstacle: Jesus himself. Even so, Bartimaeus resisted answering in kind. Instead, he spoke the unvarnished truth, “...let me see again”.

Several obstacles posed, several obstacles surmounted. That’s resilience, in my book. Christopher Marshall puts the point with panache: “Without doubt, the leading characteristic of Markan faith is sheer dogged perseverance” (1989, p. 237. Cf. Rhoads et al. 2012, p. 132; Wallis 1995, pp. 54–55; Kelber 1974, p. 13; Collins 2007, pp. 184–85). In blind Bartimaeus we see sheer dogged perseverance *in excelsis*. If the narrative audience so easily sees Bartimaeus’ resilience as the chief feature of his faith, surely Jesus plausibly saw as much too when he commended Bartimaeus’ for his faith.<sup>4</sup>

### The healing of the paralytic (2.1–12)

Jesus directly commended Bartimaeus for his faith; however, he *indirectly* commended the faith of the paralytic’s friends.

Word of Jesus’ teaching and healing precedes him as he retreats to Capernaum, where he stays in a home, undisturbed for a couple of days. Soon enough, the people learn where he is, and a crowd gathers, eventually filling the house, spilling out the door. Jesus takes the opportunity to expound on the good news and the proper response to it. Meanwhile, a paralytic’s four friends have heard Jesus is in town, and they carry their friend to the home on a stretcher, with an eye toward Jesus healing him. But the crowd prevents them from getting to Jesus. Undeterred, they decide to approach Jesus via the roof. That much Mark makes explicit. Here’s a natural development of what transpires.

The four friends have not come prepared to approach Jesus from the roof. They have no ladder, no pick to penetrate the dried mud, no saw to cut through the lattice of reeds atop the timber beams and no rope to lower the stretcher (Black 2011, p. 86; cf. Jenkins 2011). So one friend stays with the paralytic while the other three run to find the equipment. When they return, breathless, they set the ladder; three climb to the roof and drop the rope to the one on the ground, who ties it to the stretcher. They hoist their friend to the roof. The three dig through the dried mud and saw through the lattice-work. They begin to lower their friend through the ragged hole. Peering down, they see Jesus, rubbing his dust-filled eyes. He guides their friend to the floor, kneeling to land him safely. Jesus gets up, looks up at the friends, back down at the paralytic, then up again. He smiles and, “[seeing] their faith,” looks back to the paralytic and says, “Son, your sins are forgiven”.

The story continues. The authorities question Jesus’ authority to forgive sins, and Jesus confronts them: “Why do you raise such questions in your hearts? Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Stand up and take your mat and walk’? But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins, I say to you [the paralytic], stand up, take your mat and go to

<sup>4</sup> “Bartimaeus serves as a model...since he calls out with a persistent faith” (Williams 1994, pp. 152, 159).



your home”. And he stood up. Commentators focus on the confrontation. Let’s focus on what Jesus saw when he “saw their faith”.

In the world of the story, Jesus saw the *behavior* of the paralytic’s friends. With his eyes, he saw them up on the roof, lowering their friend; by inference, he saw that they were unable to get past the crowd and that they fetched the tools to access the roof and make a hole. What did these actions indicate? That they were disposed to overcome challenges to living in light of their faith in him. And when, as a result of seeing their resilient behavior, Jesus responds by forgiving the paralytic, Jesus indirectly commends them for their faith.<sup>5</sup>

### The woman with a Hemorrhage (5.24b–34)

A synagogue leader named “Jairus” begs Jesus to come to his home to heal his dying daughter. Jesus consents and, as he travels with Jairus, a “large crowd” follows. At the rear of the crowd is a woman who suffers from “a flow of blood”, unable to find a cure, and getting worse. Mark says that “she had heard about Jesus”, and indicates that she knew of his ability to heal. And so she weaves her way through the crowd, which is “pressed in on him”. When she gets close, she secretly touches his cloak from behind. Immediately, she is healed. Jesus senses that “power had gone forth from him”, stops, pivots, and asks who touched his cloak. The disciples balk at the question, given the size and nearness of the crowd. Jesus persists. Eventually, the woman approaches “in fear and trembling”, falls down before him, and tells him “the whole truth”. When she finishes, he says: “Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease”.

Once again we see Jesus directly commend someone’s faith and resilience to closely associated with it, as evidenced by several obstacles they overcame *en route* to Jesus.

First, the woman’s history. Mark says “[s]he had endured much under many physicians, and had spent all that she had; and she was no better, but rather grew worse”. Anyone who has suffered from a chronic condition or failed treatment for serious illness can relate to how this woman felt. One must often summon the will to roll aside the burden of failure to live even the least worthwhile life, one day at a time. In the woman’s case, it had been *twelve years*. The first obstacle she overcame was her feeling of hopelessness induced by years of medical failure (Williams 1994, p. 116; Black 2011, p. 149). Second, the woman’s condition (*rhysei haimatos*), i.e. “continuous or recurrent uterine bleeding” (Marshall 1989, p. 104; Black 2011, p. 104; Marcus 2000, p. 357). Mark states no cause, but one effect is anemia. Mild anemia leaves one feeling weak or tired; headaches and problems concentrating or thinking are common. As anemia worsens, so do these symptoms, and others join them: blue color to the whites of the eyes, brittle nails; desire to eat ice or other non-food things (e.g. dirt, clay, sand, and feces; cf. *pica syndrome*); pale skin color; lightheadedness; shortness of breath; sore tongue (Gerston 2016). We can easily

<sup>5</sup> Williams (1994, p. 100): the four “have a trust in Jesus that is expressed by their determination to overcome any obstacles in order to reach him”. Cf. Black (2011, p. 90); Guelich (1989, p. 85, p. 94); Marcus (2000, p. 220.)

imagine anemia as an obstacle for this woman.<sup>6</sup> Third, Mark emphasizes that she approached Jesus in a “large crowd”. So she not only overcame her hopelessness and anemia, she also struggled through the crowd, which would have been exhausting in her condition. Fourth, the purity laws: the prohibition against the impure mixing with the pure, and so her mixing with the crowd; the prohibitions against women touching non-familial men and the impure touching the pure, and so her touching Jesus. She overcame her internalization of these prohibitions, and she overcame her fear of reprisal (Kinukawa 1994, p. 45; Marshall 1989, p. 107; Black 2011, p. 141; Marcus 2000, pp. 357–358). Fifth, she overcame her fear of death since the unclean will die if they contact the holy (Lev 15), and she deemed Jesus holy; thus, she risked death to touch him (Miller 2004, p. 158).

Jesus plausibly fastened on the woman’s resilience in the face of these obstacles. He knew that she knew the purity laws, and so when she fell at his feet “in fear and trembling”, she confirmed what he already knew, her fear. Moreover, Jesus saw the crowd she struggled through, and symptoms of anemia. Furthermore, she “told him the whole truth”—presumably including her history, depression, anemia, and fear. So Jesus knew the obstacles she overcame when, as she finished her story, he directly commended her faith.

So far as I can tell, in no other story does Jesus commend someone’s faith. So the first of our five conditions is met: in multiple stories in which Mark uses the *pistis* lexicon, Jesus commends someone for their faith when plausibly fastening on resilience, and in no story does Jesus commend someone for their faith when it is absent.

### **Multiple other stories in which Mark closely associates the *pistis* lexicon with resilience**

Now consider four other occasions where Mark uses the *pistis* lexicon. On two, resilience is closely associated with a minor character’s faith. On two others, lack of resilience is closely associated with the disciples’ lack of faith.

#### **Jairus’ daughter (5.21–43)**

When Jairus first approached Jesus, he “begged him repeatedly” to come to Jairus’ home to heal his daughter. Why *repeatedly*? Presumably, because Jesus had repeatedly declined him. So, plausibly, Jairus overcame Jesus’ initial disinclination to help.

Before Jairus rose to that challenge, he overcame three others: (i) the crowd surrounding Jesus, (ii) a fear of reprisal, and (iii) a sense of social prestige. Regarding (ii), as a synagogue leader, Jairus was one of the Judean authorities who, in the world of the story, are antagonists. They have already clashed with Jesus (2.6–7, 16–22, 23–28; 3.1–5, 22–27) and they are plotting to “destroy” him (3.6).

<sup>6</sup> Soranus, *Gynecology* 3.10 “knew of physicians that prescribed bloodletting(!) for women’s hemorrhaging” (Black 2011, p. 140, citing Dowd 2000, pp. 57–58).

Jairus knew that seeking Jesus' help would be judged treasonous. Plausibly, then, Jairus overcame fear of retaliation. Regarding (iii), Jairus held a high social status. Perhaps, then, he overcame a sense of superiority to approach an itinerant preacher, a rabble-rouser who consorted with outcasts, questioned the purity laws Jairus upheld, and challenged the authorities. Perhaps he also overcame a sense of obligation or propriety that precluded approaching Jesus (Marshall 1989, p. 97).

After Jesus responded positively to Jairus' request, a fifth obstacle arose: the "tormenting delay" of Jesus' interaction with the hemorrhaging woman (Marshall 1989, p. 97; cf. Black 2011, pp. 140–141). Sixth, Mark says that as Jesus finished speaking to the woman, "some people came from [Jairus'] house to say, 'Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the teacher any further?'" The *pistis* lexicon appears here: "But overhearing what they said, Jesus said to [Jairus], 'Do not fear, only *pisteue*'". Apparently, Jairus' faith curbed his pending disappointment, for he continued to walk with Jesus (Black 2011, p. 143).

When they arrived at Jairus' house, they were met by "a commotion, people weeping and wailing loudly", indicating his daughter was dead. Moreover, after Jesus asserted she was only sleeping, the people laughed. Perhaps Jairus did not overcome this seventh obstacle. Perhaps his faith was crushed into flat out disbelief and disappointment. That wouldn't be surprising. But if it was not crushed—a possibility Mark leaves open—it is plausible that it *was* crushed when Jairus "went in where the child was". There he saw his daughter for himself: apparently dead. An eighth obstacle.

Perhaps Jairus' faith failed him at this point. But the arc of the story has him overcoming one obstacle after another, and so it would be a discordant twist if, at the climax, he lost his faith. If we imagine that his faith remained despite the testimony of his senses, we have the story of a man who was paradigmatically resilient in the face of challenges to living in light of the object of his faith. We also have a story of faith vindicated. For, in the world of the story, Jesus "took [the daughter] by the hand and said to her, 'Talitha cum,' which means, 'Little girl, get up!' And immediately the girl got up and began to walk about".

### **Jesus heals a boy possessed by a spirit: the father (9.14–29)**

It took an act of faith on the father's part to approach Jesus initially: faith in Jesus' ability as a healer, or faith that Jesus would heal his son. His faith faced an obstacle from the outset. Mark says the son was unable to speak or hear; moreover, "whenever [the demon] seizes him, it dashes him down; and he foams and grinds his teeth and becomes rigid"; furthermore, it "has often cast him into the fire and into the water, to destroy him". In addition, Mark underscores the duration of the condition, "from childhood," and the extra-ordinary measures "this kind" of demon required. Lastly, the disciples failed to exorcise it, despite their authority to do so. These things suggest that the demon's hold on the boy was nearly impregnable. So a formidable obstacle faced the father the outset: the hopelessness of a cure.

The father overcame it, however, and sought Jesus' help. But Jesus was unavailable. His disciples were available, however. Unfortunately, they could not exorcise the demon: a second obstacle. Nevertheless, the father stays. When Jesus

arrived with Peter, James, and John, fresh from the transfiguration, he found the disciples arguing with the scribes, and a crowd milling about. When Jesus asked the crowd what they were arguing about, the father answered, describing his son and the disciples' impotence. Mark says Jesus answered the crowd, including the father: "You *apistos* generation, how much longer must I be among you? How much longer must I put up with you?" Generally, when someone delivers a stinging reproach like this, they are disinclined to do favors. So the father faced a third obstacle: Jesus' frustration. But the father does not walk away.

A fourth obstacle: Jesus' disciples can't exorcise the demon—"maybe Jesus can't either", the father thought. We hear his doubt in his penultimate appeal to Jesus: "*if* you are able to do anything, have pity on us and help us". A fifth obstacle follows quickly. For in response, Jesus blasts him again, this time with "*If* you are able'!—All things can be done for the one [who] *pisteuonti*". Mark tells us that "[i]mmediately the father of the child cried out, 'I *pisteuo*; help my *apistia*!'" It would not be surprising if, in the world of the story, between Jesus' outburst and the father's cry, the father's heart dropped into his stomach. "Oh no! Now I've really made him angry. He'll never heal my son!" But instead of wilting under the heat of Jesus' outburst, the father *screams*, "I have faith! Help my lack of faith!" It is not difficult to feel his fear and frustration—and yet, he stays.<sup>7</sup>

As though overcoming five obstacles wasn't enough, Mark presents a sixth: the boy's apparent death. After the demon came out, "the boy was like a corpse, so that most of [the crowd] said, 'He is dead'." Put yourself in the father's shoes. No doubt, it never occurred to him that his faith in Jesus' ability to exorcise the demon might be vindicated while his faith that his son would be cured would be disappointed. But here it was—happening right before his eyes—confirmed by the crowd: "He is dead".

We can easily imagine that his faith collapsed at this point. But we can also easily imagine that it did not. The second picture fits better with the story's theme and the arc of Mark's narrative. I suggest, then, that the father's faith did not fail him, not entirely. And it was vindicated. For "Jesus took [the boy] by the hand and lifted him up, and he was able to stand," quite literally, as his father's faith had done metaphorically.<sup>8</sup>

### Stilling the storm (4.35–41)

At this point in Mark's narrative, the disciples have frequently witnessed Jesus exercising power over nonhuman forces. Moreover, he has chosen the twelve, "to be with him, and to be sent out to proclaim the message, and to have authority to cast out demons," all of which suggests a successful future of discipleship. Furthermore, unlike the rest of "the crowd", Jesus has shared pedagogical intimacy with them, explaining his parables to them but not others. Now, on the shore of the

<sup>7</sup> The father's cry exhibits the fact that "one of Mark's leading convictions about faith [is that] it proves its reality by perseverance under testing" (Marshall 1989, p. 121). Cf. Iverson (2007, p. 117).

<sup>8</sup> In all three stories of parents and children, "the parent perseveres in spite of the temptation to give up" (Marcus 2000, p. 365).

Sea of Galilee, once again overwhelmed by a crowd, Jesus requests that they get in a boat and make for the other shore. On the way, the wind whips up, and they begin to take water; but Jesus, apparently exhausted, “was in the stern, asleep on the cushion”. The disciples, scared spitless, wake him up and demand that he do something. Mark tells us that, once awakened, Jesus “rebuked the wind”—“Be still!”; better, “Shut up!”—and “the wind ceased, and there was dead calm”. Mark’s use of *pephimoso* (cf. 1.25) indicates that, in the world of the story, the storm is demonic, intended to drown Jesus and his mission (Black 2011, pp. 133–34; Marcus 2000, pp. 192–194, 338). Jesus then turns to the disciples and says: “Why are you afraid? Have you still no *pistin*?”

What did Jesus expect of them? Perhaps he expected faith enough in his care for them to let him deal with the storm in his own good time—even though he was asleep. Or perhaps he expected them to use their own faith to tap into God’s power to exorcise the storm (Marshall 1989, pp. 216–28). Either way, Jesus expected their faith to dampen their fear. We might plausibly infer that Jesus’ reproach indicates faith’s close association with diminished fear. Some go further: “the [demonic] attack provides an occasion for the testing of the disciples’ faith,” to see whether they can “manifest faith in times of crisis”; Jesus reproached them for their “lack of courageous perseverance” (Marshall 1989, pp. 219, 218, 237). This is also plausible. Fear can pose a challenge to living in light of one’s faith; and a lack of resilience in the face of challenges might manifest itself through incapacitating fear. So understood, Mark closely associates lack of faith with lack of resilience.

### Jesus heals a boy possessed by a spirit: the disciples (9.14–29)

Earlier we saw that, in this story, the father’s faith was closely associated with resilience. Now we focus on the disciples. Recall that their failed exorcism triggered Jesus’ outburst, “You faithless generation...,” which targeted the disciples too. What did their faithlessness consist in?

The answer resides in the allusion to Israel’s lack of faith in God. “The language of v 19...evokes a whole complex of negative associations from the [OT] which are here attributed, by implication, to the shamed disciples” (Marshall 1989, p. 221. Cf. Collins 2007, p. 437; Hooker 1991, p. 233. See Isa 6, Deut 32, Jer 5, Eze 12, and Isa 65). What did Israel’s faithlessness consist in? In the world of the story, a failure to resist the temptations afforded by the people they mixed with in their habitation of the Promised Land, resulting in breaking the “everlasting covenant” their forbearers made with God (Gen 17, 1 Chr 16). In short, Israel was not resilient in the face of temptations to live contrary to their relationship with God.

Mark doesn’t say why the disciples’ behavior elicited Jesus’ comparison with faithless Israel. Perhaps they gave up too easily when they failed to exorcise the demon. Perhaps they forgot Jesus’ example of strenuous prayer for difficult demon-possession (v 29). Whatever it was, Jesus fastened on their lack of resilience when he reproached them. The allusion to faithless Israel secures that much.

So our second of five conditions is satisfied: in multiple other stories in which Mark uses the *pistis* lexicon, resilience is closely associated with faith.

## Matthew and Luke add the *pistis* lexicon to describe Markan characters

Now consider two stories where Mark does not use the *pistis* lexicon, but when Matthew and Luke, who had GMark as a source, tell the same stories, they use the *pistis* lexicon in close association with resilience.

### The Syrophenician (Canaanite) woman (7.24–30; Matthew 15.21–28)

After confronting the Pharisees in Gennesaret on the northwestern shores of the Sea of Galilee, Jesus heads for the region of Tyre near the Mediterranean coast, some fifty miles away, to get away from the crowds. Mark says “he could not escape notice”, presumably because of the miracles he had performed earlier in the presence of Tyrians (3.8). A mother of a demon-possessed girl, “a Gentile, of Syrophenician origin”, locates the house where Jesus is staying, approaches, bows, and begs Jesus to heal her “little daughter”. His reply seems offensive: “Let the children be fed first, for it is not fair to take the children’s food and throw it to the dogs.” She answers, “Sir, even the dogs under the table eat the children’s crumbs”. In GMark, Jesus compliments the mother on her cleverness, reports the girl’s healing, and the mother finds “the demon gone”. In GMatthew, Jesus responds quite differently: “Woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish”. “And her daughter”, says Matthew, “was healed instantly”.

Perhaps it’s unseemly to use GMatthew to understand GMark. In reply, I appeal to Rhoads’ claim that Mark “does not announce that the supplicant has faith [but rather] shows the faith to the hearers through the actions and the dialogue of the characters” (1994, p. 359). The narrative audience knows that the woman exhibits faith since, first, “the coming, the kneeling, the asking, and the persisting” are actions of characters identified as people with faith and, second, Jesus’ response—“For saying that, you may go; the demon has left your daughter”—“is similar to his response to the woman with the hemorrhage,” whose faith Jesus directly commends (Rhoads 1994, p. 360). “We infer,” says Rhoads, “that Jesus interprets the request and the persistence of the Syrophenician woman as faith,” an inference that, plausibly enough, Matthew also drew.

In what did the woman’s persistence consist? The first barrier she overcame and, in the story world, the greatest, was that between Jews and Gentiles. Second, Jesus was a Galilean; the woman a Tyrian. The hostility between Galileans and Tyrians was notorious enough for Josephus to comment on it (Miller 2004, p. 91). Third, Jesus was male and the woman was female; and, she approached him alone (Marshall 1989, p. 229). Fourth, Jesus regarded his ministry as Jews first, as evidenced by the content of his initial response; she overcame that priority (Rhoads 1994, p. 354; Iverson 2007, pp. 48–54; Hartvigsen 2012, pp. 289–292). Fifth, Jesus’ ethnic slur, referring to her people as “dogs” (Black 2011, p. 181; Marcus 2000, p. 468; Collins 2007, p. 366; Hooker 1991, p. 183; Iverson 2007, pp. 48–57). Sixth, in addition to the content and offensiveness of Jesus’ response, there’s simply rejecting her (Iverson 2007, p. 56). Perhaps Jesus didn’t really reject her (Rhoads 1994, pp. 361–362; Taylor 1981; Filson 1960; Hassler 1934). If so, at least *she*

thought he rejected her. “It is in this sense,” writes Kelly Iverson, “that the woman’s response to Jesus (7.28) exemplifies her sheer determination on behalf of her daughter.... Like other Markan supplicants, her persistent faith overcomes obstacles” 2007, p. 56. Cf. Williams 1994, p. 121; Rhoads 2004, p. 79; Collins 2007, p. 366).

These obstacles posed a challenge to the woman’s living in light of her faith in Jesus, a challenge he easily recognized. And, once again, faith was vindicated.

### The anointing at Bethany (14.3–9; Luke 7.36–50)

All four canonical gospels include the anointing story. Mark does not use the *pistis* lexicon when he tells the story, but Luke does. Since he had GMark as a source, we might wonder why he saw the woman as a model of faith.

Compared to Luke—who describes the woman’s sordid history, unbridled passion, and over-the-top behavior—Mark’s description is thin: “While [Jesus] was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at the table, a woman came with an alabaster jar of very costly ointment of nard, and she broke open the jar and poured the ointment on his head”. Some guests “scolded” her for “wasting” the ointment; it “could have been sold for more than three hundred denarii, and the money given to the poor”. But Jesus defends her priorities: “you always have the poor with you, and you can show kindness to them whenever you wish; but you will not always have me”. The story ends with Jesus saying: “Truly I tell you, wherever the good news is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will be told in remembrance of her”. But Luke has the host criticize Jesus for ignoring purity laws when Jesus permitted the woman to touch him—identified three times as a “sinner,” conveying her mode of employment. Jesus defends himself and the woman, repeatedly castigating the host for demeaning her. The story ends with Jesus absolving the woman: “Your sins are forgiven.... Your faith has saved you; go in peace”.<sup>9</sup>

Perhaps Luke saw two things in Mark’s story on the basis of which he saw the woman modeling faith. First, he saw that, in GMark, the desired response to the good news is faith (1.15). Since Jesus praises her behavior in relation to the good news, Luke sees her behavior as flowing from her faith in Jesus. Hence, Luke has Jesus commend the source, not just the behavior. Second, Luke saw that Mark closely associates resilience with faith, and he saw all the obstacles that she overcame to act on her faith.

What obstacles were those? First, the usual boundaries: invited vs uninvited, male vs female, etc. (Collins 2007, p. 641). Second: her anxiety about how people would respond to her extravagant expression of devotion. Third, she anoints Jesus’ head, thereby affirming his role in God’s kingdom as prophet and king; but in her culture, only men were permitted to anoint prophets and kings (Hartvigsen 2012, pp. 450–451). Fourth, the sheer expense of the ointment, perhaps an inheritance or a

<sup>9</sup> What is the content or object of the woman’s faith? In GMark, perhaps by anointing Jesus’s head, she expressed her faith in him as her Messiah and king, symbolically prioritizing him and his message. In GLuke, perhaps her emotional display and Jesus’ response suggest that she had faith in him as one with authority to forgive sins.

life savings, nearly a year's wages for a laborer (Williams 1994, p. 180; Anderson 1976, p. 306; Cranfield 1972, p. 416; Hooker 1991, pp. 328–329). To “waste” it was risky since women depended on men for their livelihoods and often outlived their men. She overcame anxiety about “squandering” her nest egg.

Little wonder, then, that Luke has Jesus commend her faith. As with so many of Mark's minor characters, her faith is closely associated with resilience.

So the third of our five conditions is met: in multiple stories where Mark does not use the *pistis* lexicon to exhibit a character's faith, both Matthew and Luke, who had GMark as a source, use the *pistis* lexicon to tell the same stories and, when they do, they have Jesus commend the character for their faith, and when he does, he plausibly fastens on resilience.

## The faith of Jesus

I have focused on the minor characters and the disciples. Now to Jesus. We might initially resist seeing Jesus as having faith. This would be a mistake, however (O'Collins and Kendall 1992; Rhoads et al. 2012, pp. 104–115; Rath forthcoming; Tuggy forthcoming). That's because Mark presents Jesus as a role-model for the disciples, and so we rightly expect that he would be a role-model for something as important as faith (Rhoads et al. 2012, p. 108). Mark exhibits Jesus as an exemplar of faith, first, by contrasting Jesus' faith with the lack of faith of the disciples and the authorities, and, second, by exhibiting Jesus' resilience as he comes to terms with his own execution as necessary for the new way in which God's rule will be established through him. Marshall displays the first way (1989, pp. 118–120, 238–240). I offer a word on the second.

In Gethsemane (14.32–42), Jesus became so “distressed and agitated” at the prospect of what God's purposes entailed that he begged God to find another way. Nevertheless, he leaned into his faith in God, as “Abba, Father”, to overcome being “deeply grieved, even to death”, and to resolve to do God's will no matter what: “yet, not what I want, but what you want” (Hartvigsen 2012, 470–471). Notably, after awakening the disciples, he returned to pray alone and “said the same words”. Jesus' struggle to retain faith in God's plan seems not only to have been intense but recurrent.

On Golgotha (15.25–39), when nearly all was finished, Mark tells us that, “at three o'clock,” Jesus screamed, “My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?”, quoting the first words of Psalm 22, thereby appropriating the entire lament for himself. Near the end of the psalm, we find these words:

To [the LORD], indeed, shall all who sleep in the earth bow down; before him shall bow all who go down to the dust, and I shall live for him. Posterity will serve him; future generations will be told about the LORD, and proclaim his deliverance to a people yet unborn, saying that he has done it.

So in the world of the story, despite God's apparent abandonment of Jesus when Jesus needed God most, and despite Jesus' doubt of God's love, Jesus exhibited faith that, in the end, God will make all things well—even for those who “go down



to the dust”. Even they will one day “live for him” and “proclaim his deliverance”; even they will one day say, “[the LORD] has done it”.

If we see Jesus as a role-model, and if we infer that he modeled faith, then, given that Mark closely associates faith with resilience elsewhere, we should expect him to closely associate Jesus’ faith with resilience. We find this in Gethsemane and on Golgotha (Black 2011, p. 296; Rhoads 2004, pp. 53–54). Thus, the fourth of our five conditions is satisfied: in multiple stories in GMark, Jesus plausibly models faith and, seen in this way, Jesus plausibly models resilience.

## Morgan’s maxim

Let’s return to Morgan’s Maxim (which I mentioned at the outset), according to which, roughly, to understand *pistis* in the early churches we must understand *pistis* in the surrounding Greco-Roman world. Morgan argues that the *pistis/fides* lexica included these “meanings”: “Trust, trustworthiness, honesty, credibility, faithfulness, good faith, confidence, assurance, pledge, guarantee, credit, proof, argument, credence, belief, position of trust/trusteeship, legal trust, protection, security” (Morgan 2015, p. 7). This diverse lot (notably missing *faith*...gasp!) possesses a unity, says Morgan: “the concept which stands at the heart of the *pistis/fides* lexica,” she writes, is “trust” (Morgan 2015, p. 15). “At their best”, in the early Roman principate “[*pistis/fides*] help to create, develop, and mediate relationships” of trust as diverse as those between oneself and one’s cognitive faculties, those between family members and between lovers, between slaves and masters, patrons and clients, and friends; between people involved in the military, politics, law, and inter-state affairs, and between the gods and humans (Morgan 2015, p. 120). Furthermore, Morgan finds that these “relationships...are sometimes saved or transformed by [*pistis/fides*] at moments of crisis and decision-making”. As such, *pistis/fides* “coexists inescapably with fear, doubt, hope, and risk” (Morgan 2015, pp. 120, 121). In addition, they are a preeminent social virtue of the time. “*Pistis/fides*,” writes Morgan, “is understood as a basic building block of societies, emerging from the need of individuals and groups to make and maintain relationships. As such, it is hopeful, forward-looking, and productive, but also risky and open to fear and doubt” (Morgan 2015, p. 75). It is “a virtue of crisis and moments of decision” (Morgan 2015, pp. 75, 117).

As for the Hebrew ‘*emunah*’ lexicon, Morgan reports that the Septuagint never uses the *pistis* lexicon except to translate the ‘*emunah*’ lexicon and the verb *he’emin*, which is the causative form of the related verb ‘*aman*’. Sometimes, however, the Septuagint avers to the Greek *elpis* lexicon in translating these Hebrew lexica: *hope* (Morgan 2015, p. 8). Moreover, “the root of [the ‘*emunah*’ lexicon] also appears in words meaning ‘to wrap in’, ‘to carry’, ‘to nurture’, ‘to trust’, ‘firm’, ‘certain’, ‘reliable’, ‘steadfast’, [and] ‘true’” (Morgan 2015, p. 8). Experts disagree over how much of the ‘*emunah*’ lexicon transfers to the Septuagintal *pistis* lexicon; still, “Septuagintal *pistis* retains some overtones of ‘*emunah*’ such as firmness, standing firm, refuge, and ‘saying Amen to God’, but locates its centre of gravity, in religious

contexts, in trust, faithfulness, and obedience to God” (Morgan 2015, p. 9; cf. Lindsay 1993, p. 22, pp. 43–46).

Upshot: the *pistis* lexicon used in Greco-Roman culture stressed trust/reliance, on the one hand, and steadfastness/resilience, on the other. If this is right, the last of our five conditions is met: the *pistis*, *fides*, and *‘emunah* lexica used in the culture surrounding the early churches point to resilience as partly constituting *pistis*, *fides*, and *‘emunah*.

Let’s take stock. First, in three *pistis* pericopes, Jesus plausibly fastens on resilience when he commends someone’s faith. Moreover, so far as I can tell, in no pericope does he commend someone’s faith unless they were resilient. Second, on four other occasions that Mark uses the *pistis* lexicon, he twice closely associates resilience with faith, and twice closely associates lack of resilience with lack of faith. Third, according to Matthew and Luke, two *pistis*-less stories in GMark feature faith well enough for them to co-opt their characters as paradigms of faith, and in doing so closely associate faith with resilience. Fourth, when we view Jesus as a role-model, we see him as modeling a faith closely associated with resilience. Fifth, the Greco-Roman world surrounding the early churches thought *pistis* involved resilience. Thus, resilience is a stellar candidate for partly constituting Markan faith.

### **Stories in which Mark uses the *pistis* lexicon in close association with other features**

I have focused on resilience. Other features seem to be closely associated with faith, too.

#### **Positive conative orientation**

A positive conative orientation toward the object of faith consists in being for its truth, favoring its being the case, wanting it to be so, giving its truth a positive evaluation, regarding it as good or desirable, and the like. In the world of the story, Mark closely associates a positive conative orientation with faith.

First, every character who has faith has a positive conative orientation toward its object.

Second, a positive conative orientation seems implicit in resilience. Human beings are normally resilient in the face of challenges to living in light of something only when it matters to them. Thus, for example, it is easier to understand the Syrophenician woman’s resilience if it mattered to her that her daughter was healed. It is easier to understand the resilience of the friends of the paralytic if they regarded Jesus’ healing their friend as desirable. And so on.

Third, four *pistis* pericopes closely associate faith with a positive conative orientation (Marshall 1989, pp. 179–208. Cf. Marcus 2000; Hartvigsen 2012). In 15.27–32, as Jesus hung on the cross, passersby derided him and religious authorities mocked him: “Let the Messiah, the King of Israel, come down from the cross, so that we might see and have faith (*pisteusomen*)”. Mark seems to associate

their *lack* of faith with derision and mockery. In 6.1–6, when Jesus visits his hometown, “many” were “astounded by his wisdom” and “deeds of power”. But they “took offense at him” (*eskandalizonto en auto*) since they saw him as nothing more than a carpenter, or just the son of Mary. When Mark reports that Jesus “was amazed at their lack of faith (*apistian*),” he associates their lack of faith with hostility toward Jesus, perhaps dishonor or resentment (Collins 2007, pp. 290–291). In 2.1–12, Mark contrasts the faith of the paralytic’s friends with the lack of faith of the scribes, which consists in “a deep-seated contempt for Jesus” “fueled by rivalry and jealousy” (Marshall 1989, p. 185). In 11.27–33, when Jesus posed the authorities a dilemma about John the Baptist’s provenance, they stubbornly refused to concede Jesus’ authority. These four stories suggest that, in the world of Mark’s narrative, faith in Jesus is closely associated with being for him, and not against him, in contrast with those who lack faith in him, the passersby, religious authorities, and townspeople.

### Disposition to appropriate behavior

Another feature closely associated with faith shows up right after Jesus announces the oncoming rule of God and calls his audience to faith in this good news (1.14–15). “Follow me and I will make you fish for people,” he says to Simon and Andrew, who were casting their nets into the sea; “[a]nd immediately they left their nets and followed him” (1.18). Walking a bit farther, he sees James and John mending their nets. “Immediately he called them; and they...followed him” (1.20). Two points here.

First, in the world of the story, these men saw something unusually attractive about Jesus; otherwise they would not have left their prosperous livelihoods to follow him. They had a positive conative orientation toward Jesus, even if we don’t know what it was precisely, and they acted on it in a way that was appropriate in the world of the story: they “followed” Jesus. Second, this call-follow pattern is repeated in GMark, both in our *pistis* pericopes (10.52) and elsewhere (2.14, 10.21, 28; cf. 2.15, 6.1, 8.34–38). Its proximity to the initial call to faith and its repetition suggest that following Jesus is how faith in the good news is properly lived out.

Generalizing, in the world of the story, faith seems to be closely associated with a disposition to act appropriately in light of one’s positive conative orientation toward its object.

### Propositional belief?

A certain picture of faith seems to be emerging. In GMark, faith is partly constituted by resilience in the face of challenges to living in light of one’s overall positive stance toward its object, where that stance includes a positive conative orientation toward the object and a tendency to act in ways appropriate to that orientation. However, one might suspect that there’s more to it than this. In particular, one might suspect that, in GMark, faith is partly constituted by propositional belief of the relevant propositions. Two arguments might support this hypothesis. The first appeals to the contrast in 11.23 between *pisteuon* and *diakrino* (nearly always

translated “doubt”). According to the second, Mark closely associates faith with propositional belief in the *pistis* pericopes on which we have focused.

### *The fig tree (Mark 11.12–24)*

Jesus and his disciples return to Bethany after the palm-laden entry into Jerusalem. The next morning, they return to Jerusalem. On the way, says Mark, Jesus became hungry, approached a fig tree and, finding no figs, cursed it. They continue into Jerusalem, where Jesus cleanses the temple, and then go out of the city for the night. The next morning, on their way back into Jerusalem, they pass the fig tree and Peter calls Jesus’ attention to it: “Rabbi, look! The fig tree that you cursed has withered.” Mark tells us that Jesus answered:

Have faith (*pistin*) in God. Truly I tell you, if you say to this mountain, “Be taken up and thrown into the sea,” and if you do not doubt in your heart, but believe that (*pisteue hoti*) what you say will come to pass, it will be done for you. So I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that (*pisteuete hoti*) you have received it, and it will be yours.

Does Jesus’ speech suggest that Mark closely associated faith with propositional belief?

Maybe. But first, two quick observations. (i) The typical translation, as above, uses the noun “faith” for the first use of the *pistis* lexicon in Jesus’ speech but uses the verb “believe” for the second two uses, thereby masking the noun–verb parallelism in his speech. All else being equal, a better translation would preserve the parallelism. Since *pistin* is best translated as “faith” rather than “belief” (no translation uses “belief”), all else being equal, a better translation would use “have faith” for the second two uses of the *pistis* lexicon. (ii) Since the preposition *hoti* follows both the second and third uses, propositional faith is in view, faith that “what you say will come to pass,” faith that “you have received it”.

So how did Mark closely associate faith with propositional belief here? Well, Jesus seems to contrast intellectual doubt about whether what you say will come to pass with having faith that it will: “if you do not doubt..., *but* have faith that...” Thus, in the world of the story, doubt about *p* cannot coexist with faith that *p* and so, in the world of the story, belief that *p* partly constitutes faith that *p*.

Three points are relevant to this argument.

First, perhaps Jesus meant only to speak of circumstances in which faith is capable of great power over nature: shriveling fig trees, moving mountains, etc. Or maybe he meant only to speak of circumstances in which one knows what God wants one to do. Only then is faith incompatible with doubt of its object (Marshall 1989, pp. 167–168).

Second, the Greek conjunction, *alla*, typically translated *but* in v 23—“if you do not doubt..., *but* have faith that...”—has *two* functions both of which signal that the clause it marks “contains information that the speaker thinks the hearer does not expect” (DeGraaf 2005, p. 745). The first function is to say *not this but rather that*. The second is to say *not only this but also that*. Translated in this second way, we have this: “Truly I tell you, if you say to this mountain, ‘Be taken up and thrown

into the sea,’ and if you *not only* do not doubt in your heart, *but also* have faith that what you say will come to pass, it will be done for you.” So translated, Jesus does not suggest that faith cannot coexist with doubt.

Third, v 23 may well be mistranslated. The verb translated “doubt” is *diakrino*. It appears 19 times in the NT, 9 of which are nearly always translated with words/phrases expressing uncertainty. The other 10 are translated with words/phrases expressing divided loyalty and disunity. Arguably, in v 23 *diakrino* should be translated with words from the second group, not the first. That’s because, in part, 11.11–23, with a leap to 13:2, contains ten statements with parallels in Hosea 9.8–10:2, where a prophet who is a watchman encounters hostility in the house of God, compares the fathers of the house to early figs, curses them, and so on. There are too many parallels for this to be unintended. When we lay them out, v 23 corresponds to Hosea 10.2, which reads “their heart is false” (NSRV), “...deceitful” (NIV, OJB), “divided” (KJV, KJ21, ISV). Moreover, the Septuagint translates the Hebrew with, in English, “their heart is divided” (DeGraaf 2005, p. 747). Arguably, therefore, we best translate v 23 like this: “Truly I tell you, if you say to this mountain, ‘Be taken up and thrown into the sea,’ and if you are not only undivided in your heart, but also have faith that what you say will come to pass, it will be done for you.” So translated, Jesus does not suggest that faith cannot coexist with doubt.<sup>10</sup>

Mark 11.23 does not seem to support the idea that Mark closely associates faith with the absence of doubt and so the presence of belief. Rather, it seems to support the idea that wholeheartedness *plus* faith allows one to tap into God’s power.<sup>11</sup>

### *Interlude: Morgan’s maxim, again*

In the Greco-Roman world surrounding the early churches, was belief of the relevant propositions thought to partly constitute *pistis*?

Not if Morgan is right. I cannot go into the wealth of data she presents. But she concludes that “propositional belief (secular or religious) is usually marked, in Greek and Latin, by the language of thinking (*dokein, nomizein, putare, censere*, etc.) rather than that of *pistis* or *fides*”. Moreover, “[p]assages where propositional belief is explicit or dominant in *pistis/fides* language are a small minority in sources of this period” (Morgan 2015, p. 145, 30). Furthermore, she repeatedly translates the *pistis* lexicon into English with *trust/believe*, observing along the way that “[t]o trust someone we need to believe that they are trustworthy *and/or that it is worth the risk of trusting them*”.<sup>12</sup> In addition, when she represents *pistis* as involving belief, she sometimes represents the content of the belief in very thin terms: “it was worth speculating on as a hope or a wager” (Morgan 2015, 228n74). Believing that it is

<sup>10</sup> For much more on *diakrino*, see DeGraaf (2005).

<sup>11</sup> Black (2011, pp. 244–245) sees the theme of v 23 as “trust in God’s power to overcome unconquerable obstacles”.

<sup>12</sup> Morgan (2015, p. 18), my emphasis. Others suggest the *belief* lexicon is optional in translating the *pistis* lexicon in Mark, and use the *trust* and *faith* lexica instead. See Marshall (1989, p. 33); Collins (2007 *passim*); Rhoads et al. (2012, pp. 11–38, p. 108).

worth the risk to trust God, and believing that God's providence is worth speculating on as a hope or a wager, are a far cry from believing that God is providential.

If I understand Morgan correctly, the Greco-Roman culture surrounding the early churches would have been puzzled by the contention of the NT Objection that someone can have faith in God, as providential, only if they *believe* that God is providential, etc.<sup>13</sup> But then, given Morgan's Maxim—i.e. to understand *pistis* in the early churches, we must understand *pistis* in the surrounding Greco-Roman world—we have some reason to think that Mark, too, would have been puzzled by the contention of the NT Objection. With this in mind, let's turn to the second argument for concluding that Mark associates faith closely with belief of the relevant propositions.

### *Other pericopes in which Mark uses the pistis lexicon*

One might argue that in the pericopes on which I focused above, *pistis* is closely associated with belief. After all, one might think, the supplicants would not have responded to Jesus as Mark portrays unless they believed the relevant propositions. Of course, in the world of the story, people believed that Jesus was *able* to heal; word of his power had spread widely (1.28; 3.8; 5.20). However, he did not always exercise his ability (6.5); moreover, the supplicants needed faith that he would heal *for them* before he would do so. Thus, although they believed that Jesus was able to heal, our question is whether they believed that Jesus would heal for them. Before we turn to the stories to answer this question, three points need making.

First, in general, we can understand how someone who lacked belief that Jesus would heal for them might perform the same action they would perform if they believed he would. To illustrate, consider the Syrophenician woman, who asked Jesus to heal her daughter, and suppose there are exactly two alternative actions, asking and not asking, and four outcomes: (O1) she asks and he heals, (O2) she asks and he does not heal, (O3) she does not ask and he heals, and (O4) she does not ask and he does not heal. Moreover, suppose she assigned value to these outcomes as follows:  $V(O1) = 100,000$ ;  $V(O2) = 1000$ ;  $V(O3) = 99,000$ ;  $V(O4) = 0$ . This assignment of values expresses an overriding preference that her daughter be healed, and that her asking is somewhat worthwhile. Now compare two cases. In case 1, suppose she assigned a probability of .1 to Jesus healing, expressing her *mere hope* that he will. In case 2, suppose she assigned a probability of .99 to Jesus healing, expressing her *belief* that he will. Given these suppositions and standard decision

<sup>13</sup> Given that Marshall (1989, p. 33) grants that the *belief* lexicon is optional in translating the *pistis* lexicon in Mark, it is puzzling that he insists that “all Christian conceptions of faith have in common an unavoidable ‘belief that’ basis,” in addition to trusting obedience, and that “Mark sees [belief and trust] as inseparably bound together under the general conception of faith. For Mark, faith is rooted in belief” (1989, 56). However, the puzzle disappears when we see Marshall using a variety of other words/phrases as synonyms for ‘belief that’—*acceptance* (pp. 48, 49), *intellectual assent* (p. 49), *giving credence* (p. 51), *purely cognitive belief* (p. 52), *intellectual acceptance* (p. 54), *mental acceptance* (p. 54), *intellectual ‘belief that’* (pp. 54, 98), *minimum conviction* (p. 55), *a minimum of belief* (p. 56), *hope* (pp. 97, 129), *inner confidence* (pp. 98, 110, 129, 130), *cognitive perception* (p. 100), *intuitive apprehension* (p. 129)—some of which (in italics) are compatible with nondoxasticism. Note also Marshall's conflation of “intellectual” and “rational” with propositional belief (pp. 55–56).

theory, *in both cases* the expected value of her asking Jesus to heal is greater than the expected value of her not asking. So her behavior is understandable, whether she believed or merely hoped. Thus, we must consider factors other than behavior to infer that the supplicants *believed* that Jesus would heal for them.

Second, one cannot have faith without some positive cognitive attitude or other toward the relevant proposition. For example, the Syrophenician woman could not have *disbelieved* that Jesus would heal her daughter and still have had faith that he would. But we must not mistake the claim that faith involves a positive cognitive attitude toward the relevant proposition with the claim that faith involves belief of the relevant proposition. Here are two options. (i) We might have faith that *p* without believing that *p* but rather by believing that *p* is somewhat likely or more likely than not. (ii) Positive cognitive attitudes toward *p* other than belief that *p* include trusting that *p*, accepting *p*, and (beliefflessly) assuming that *p*. Pistologists explore these two options in depth elsewhere.<sup>14</sup> The present point is simply this: proponents of the NT Objection claim not only that the characters in the stories had *some* positive cognitive attitude or other toward *some* proposition or other. They claim that the characters *believed* that, e.g., *Jesus will heal my son*. It's not enough that they only believed that it was likely or more likely than not; it's not enough that they trusted, or accepted, or (beliefflessly) assumed that Jesus would heal for them. Note how remarkably specific the positive cognitive attitude and its content must be, on their view.

Third, recall the logic of the situation here. According to proponents of the NT Objection, the NT authors portray faith as *entailing* belief of the relevant propositions, in which case *none* of Mark's characters can have faith without belief. According to critics of the NT Objection, not only does that entailment fail to hold generally, the NT authors do not portray faith as entailing belief of the relevant propositions, and so we might expect to see at least some—but *not necessarily all*—of Mark's characters as having faith without belief of them.

With these three points in mind, let's consider whether at least some of Mark's characters lacked the specific belief that Jesus would heal for them, or something comparable.

Consider Jairus. He has faith that his daughter is not dead, and that Jesus will heal her, all the way to the end of the story. But he has too much counterevidence—the messengers, the crowd, and his senses—for him to believe either of these things. To ascribe these beliefs to him is to be uncharitable; it is to ascribe intellectual deficiency when there is another option provided by both the semantic space of *pistis* and the way in which the surrounding culture understood *pistis*: faith without belief that his daughter is not dead and that Jesus will heal her.

As for the father of the demon-possessed boy, the episode seems to show that one way to lack faith is to be in serious doubt. But just as one might lack money and yet not lack money altogether, one might lack faith and yet not lack faith altogether. The father, in response to Jesus' rebuke, simultaneously owns what faith he has while owning its lack too, and he seeks deliverance from an amount or kind of doubt that, should it continue in its trajectory, will undermine his faith in Jesus. If

<sup>14</sup> See the items referenced in the first paragraph of this essay.

this is right, then, far from indicating that faith cannot coexist with serious doubt, and so requires belief that Jesus will heal his son, the story seems to display, first, how faith can coexist with serious doubt, and so does *not* require belief, and second, how faith can carry one through serious doubt until faith is vindicated, as was the case for the father.<sup>15</sup> Moreover, the father had faith that Jesus would heal his son even when he had significant evidence of his son's death; after all, as Mark tells the story, when the demon left his son, he looked dead enough for the crowd to comment on the fact. To suppose that he believed his son was alive at that time is to impute stupidity to a character undeserving of such treatment when there is a semantic and culturally-attuned option available: faith without belief that Jesus healed his son.

The sheer hopelessness of the woman with a hemorrhage, as well as the perceived risk of death in touching Jesus, is counterevidence that is too great for her to believe that she will be healed by touching him. To suppose otherwise is, once again, to be uncharitable when a better option is available: faith without belief that she will be healed. Against this, one might suggest that when she said to herself, "If I but touch his clothes, I will be made well," she expressed belief that she would be healed by Jesus. I doubt it. *In her circumstances*, her words more plausibly expressed trust or hope that Jesus will heal her, not belief. Those who have experienced the repeated failure of treatment for a serious illness, and then discovered one last chance, one last shot at a cure, understand how natural it is to express mere trust or hope with her words.

For these reasons, it is much more plausible, by my lights, to suppose that these characters lacked belief than that they had belief of the relevant proposition. Proponents of the NT Objection will have none of it, however. They will say that it's not enough for Jairus to hope that Jesus will heal his daughter, as he views her lying still, pale, and cold on her bed. It's not enough for the father of the demon-possessed son to believe that it's more likely than not that Jesus will heal his son, apparently dead on the ground. It's not enough that the woman with a hemorrhage acted in desperation on the (beliefless) assumption that a mere touch of Jesus' cloak would heal her. No, no, they say. These characters had faith only if they had belief, and the object of the belief had to be the proposition that Jesus would heal for them, or something comparable. Another reason for adopting a view contrary to the proponents of the NT Objection is the sheer absurdity of the specificity of this suggestion.

What about the other characters? Did Bartimaeus and the Syrophenician woman believe that Jesus would heal for them? Although they believed that Jesus was *able* to heal, Mark says nothing to license inferring that they believed that Jesus would heal *for them*. Moreover, Jesus does not always exercise his power to heal; and, in both cases, there is some evidence that he would not heal in their case. For Bartimaeus, it was Jesus' stupid question. For the Syrophenician woman, it was

<sup>15</sup> Donahue and Harrington (2002, p. 79) describe the father's cry as "one of the most memorable and beloved statements in the NT because it captures the mixed character of faith within the experience of most people". Cf. Marshall (1989, p. 121); Nineham (1963, p. 244); Williams (1994, p. 141).



Jesus' rejection. At these moments they were plausibly in enough doubt to preclude belief that Jesus would heal for them. Still, he commends them for their faith.

As for the paralytic's friends, we have no specific reason to suppose that they were in doubt about whether Jesus would heal for them. Nor do we have reason to suppose that the woman who anointed Jesus was in doubt about whether Jesus was the Messiah, the king of God's kingdom. But remember: their behavior is compatible with positive cognitive attitudes other than belief of the relevant proposition, e.g. mere trust or hope. In addition, the semantics of *pistis*, and the Greco-Roman attitude toward it, allows for something else. Furthermore, taking the stories at face value, it is *not* more plausible to see them as believing the relevant proposition rather than trusting or even hoping that it's so. (And, obviously enough, trust or hope that *p* does not entail belief that *p*, as when I trust or hope that my boys will be home before their curfew but I lack belief that they will.) Finally, in neither of these cases is there any reason to suppose that the characters believed the relevant proposition rather than believed it more likely than not or trusted or hoped that it was so. *At worst*, the hypothesis that these two characters lacked belief of the relevant propositions is about as plausible as the hypothesis that they believed them.

Idolatry comes in many forms. What I've discovered recently is that *doxolatry* is currently a fashionable form: the word "belief", in certain circles, is a zealously guarded golden calf. What these doxolaters need, in my opinion, is a fresh look at GMark, and a recognition of the implausibility of supposing that Mark closely associated faith with belief of the relevant propositions.

## Reliance

One might think that *reliance*—or, more specifically, a tendency to rely on the object of faith for something of importance to one—is just as stellar a candidate as resilience for being a feature that partly constitutes Markan faith. After all, in the world of Mark's story, reliance meets the five conditions laid down earlier for being a stellar candidate.

First, in the stories of the minor characters, reliance on Jesus seems closely associated with faith in him. Bartimaeus prominently relied on Jesus to heal him, and so reliance is plausibly a feature Jesus fastened on when he commended Bartimaeus for his faith; likewise for the paralytic's friends and the hemorrhaging woman. Reliance on Jesus also seems closely associated with the faith of Jairus and the father of the demon-possessed son; and, we might easily see the disciples as failing to rely on Jesus and/or God when Jesus rebuked them for their lack of faith, in the storm at sea and in their failed exorcism of the father's son. As for the Syrophenian woman and the woman at Bethany, each of them prominently relied on Jesus, the first on his ability to heal her daughter, the second on his being the Messiah and king of God's kingdom. When we see Jesus as a model of faith, we see him relying on God, especially in Gethsemane as he struggled in prayer toward aligning himself with God's purposes, and even on Golgotha as he appropriated Psalm 22 to express both his doubt of God's love and his faith in God's ultimate vindication of him. Finally, in the trust register of the *pistis* lexicon in the Greco-Roman world, we easily see reliance on the object of faith.

Resilience and reliance both seem to be at the heart of Markan faith. But—*importantly!*—belief of the relevant propositions seems not to be.

## Markan faith

It is time to draw this study to a close. How shall we understand Markan faith?

Let's distinguish relational, global, and propositional faith (Audi 2011; Howard-Snyder 2016, pp. 142–146). *Relational faith* is faith that inaugurates and perpetuates a certain sort of relationship between persons, one in which a person puts and maintains faith *in* another person, to do or be thus-and-so, but not other things. In so far as faith in someone is relevantly similar to trust in them, you can put your faith in someone, to do or be thus-and-so, only if you are disposed to rely on them to do or be it (McKaughan 2016). For example, I have faith in my seventeen-year old sons, as students, but not as horticulturalists; and so I will tend to rely on them to do their studies but not to water the garden while I'm away. *Global faith*, on the other hand, is the faith involved in being a *person of faith*. A person of faith takes up or finds herself with an overall stance toward matters that govern important aspects of her life, one that structures those aspects into a unified whole, one that involves a disposition to retain that stance in the face of challenges to living it out (Audi 2011; Kvanvig 2013). Although when we speak of a person of faith, we typically think of someone who is religious, there are secular manifestations of global faith as well: witness Richard Dawkins. Relational faith is distinct from global faith because we can have the first without the second. For example, I might have faith in Christ, as my Savior, but my faith in him might be so psychically compartmentalized that it neither governs nor unifies my life, as evidenced by my failure to engage in Christian practices and Christian approaches to personal, moral, social, and political matters. *Propositional faith* is faith that some state of affairs is the case or some proposition is true. Propositional faith is distinct from relational and global faith because we can have it without the others. For example, I might have faith *that* one-year old Chloe will flourish, but I do not have faith *in* her, as anything, since I am not disposed to rely on her in any way, and I don't unify my life around her (unlike her parents!). Of course, even if we grant these differences between relational, global, and propositional faith, a person might possess and exhibit all of them at once. Think Saint Teresa of Calcutta.

With this three-fold distinction in mind, consider the following accounts of relational, global, and propositional faith, noting their distinctive Markan flavor:

Relational faith	For you to have (put, maintain) <i>faith in a person, as an x</i> , is for you to have a positive cognitive attitude toward their being an <i>x</i> , for you to have a positive conative orientation toward their being an <i>x</i> , for you to (intend to) rely on them, as an <i>x</i> , for you to be disposed to live in light of that attitude, orientation, and reliance, and for you to be resilient in the face of challenges to living in that way.
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Global faith	For you to be <i>a person of some particular faith F</i> is for there to be some worldview, grand narrative, ideal, person, etc. such that you have a positive cognitive attitude toward F, you have a positive conative orientation toward F, you unify important aspects of your life through that attitude and orientation, you are disposed to live in light of that attitude, orientation, and unification, and you are resilient in the face of challenges to living in that way.
Propositional faith	For you to have <i>faith that p</i> , for some proposition p, is for you to have a positive cognitive attitude toward p, for you to have a positive conative orientation toward the truth of p, for you to be disposed to live in light of that attitude and orientation, and for you to be resilient in the face of challenges to living in that way.

My hypothesis is that, in the world of Mark's story, what it is for someone to have faith is for them to have something quite like either relational, global, or propositional faith, so understood. Notably, the preponderance of faith in Mark's narrative seems to be relational faith, faith in Jesus, as healer, although propositional faith appears as well, e.g. Jairus' faith that his daughter is not dead. Perhaps also it is not difficult to see Mark as exhibiting Jesus' call to the disciples as a call to global faith, a faith that so thoroughly unifies one's life around Jesus and the good news that one would follow him to Gethsemane, Golgotha, and even back to Galilee (14.28; 16.7; Juel 2002, pp. 107–121).

We could go further in our theorizing. For we might hypothesize that for one to have Markan faith *just is* for one to be resilient in the face of challenges to living in light of one's overall positive stance toward the object of faith—where the stance and object will differ depending on whether one has faith *in* a person, or one is a *person of faith*, or one has faith *that* some proposition is true. This way of understanding Markan faith possesses a pleasing unity. Instead of three unrelated forms of Markan faith—relational, global, and propositional—there is just Markan faith, manifested differently depending on the particularities of stance and object.

We might go further still in our theorizing. For given what I've said so far, Markan faith might be just one among many different kinds of faith. There's Markan faith, Pauline faith, Johannine faith, Thomistic faith, Lutheran faith, Calvinist faith, Tillichian faith, and so on. This is an anti-theory move, however; a refusal to seek a unified theory of faith. That's not how we theorize about other things, at least not if we can help it. What if we pursued a unified theory of faith by hypothesizing that there is faith—full stop—and it is Markan? On this view, for one to have faith is neither more nor less than for one to be resilient in the face of challenges to living in light of one's overall positive stance toward the object of faith and, depending on the particularities of the stance and object, one will have faith in a person, be a person of faith, or have faith that a particular proposition is true. Nothing else is faith, strictly speaking. Of course, there are other things that people intend to use faith talk to refer to, but all those uses either lack a referent or, if they have one, refer to something that is aptly called *faith* only in so far as it is either reducible to faith, which is Markan, or it approximates to the genuine article. Of course, it is one thing to float the idea that faith is one and it is Markan; it is quite

another to argue for it. I will forego the pleasure of doing that here, although I suspect no contender could best it.

We began with the NT Objection to nondoxasticism, the view that one can have, e.g., faith in God, as providential, and yet lack belief that God is providential, one can have faith that Jesus is the Messiah and yet lack belief that Jesus is the Messiah, one can be a person of Christian faith and yet lack belief of the basic Christian story, and so on. A premise in the NT Objection states that, according to the NT authors, one can have faith in God, as providential, or faith that Jesus is the Messiah, or be a person of Christian faith, and the like only if one believes the relevant propositions. Mark's narrative destroys the plausibility of this premise, by my lights.

Mark's narrative also demonstrates that the faith which is the desired response to the good news bears little semblance to what passes for faith in the likes of Aquinas, Luther, Calvin, and their modern-day heirs. According to Aquinas, says Stump, faith is "assent [to a proposition] generated by the will's acting on the intellect," held "with certainty, without any hesitation or hanging back," when there is insufficient evidence for the intellect to act on its own (Stump 2003, p. 363; cf. Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* IIaIIae.1.4, 4.8). According to Luther, faith involves "confidence and knowledge of God's grace" (*Preface to Romans*). According to Calvin, faith is "a firm and sure knowledge of the divine favor toward us" (*Institutes*, Book III, chap 2). According to the *Catholic Encyclopedia*, "doubt cannot coexist with faith...in regard to any given subject; faith and doubt are mutually exclusive" (Sharpe 1909). According to Plantinga, faith is "a firm and certain knowledge of God's plan" whereby fallen humans can become rightly related to God; or, in the case of those who are "inadequately formed" and "under-developed", faith is belief that these things are "the sober truth" (Plantinga 2015, pp. 58–59). If what I have argued is correct, few words more *inadequately* describe Markan faith, faith that requires neither knowledge, nor confidence, nor certainty, nor belief, nor the absence of doubt, faith fit for intellectually honest Jesus-followers of the twenty-first century just as surely as it was fit for intellectually honest Jesus-followers of the first century—and even for Jesus himself.

Suppose faith is Markan. Of what practical consequence would that be? This is an important question, in my opinion. Unfortunately, its answer must await another occasion.

**Acknowledgements** For discussion and help with the thoughts and arguments of this paper, thanks to Steve Alves, Greg Bechtel, Steve Bilynskyj, Doug Bunnell, Austin Carlton, Nolan Cheney, Jon Fedele, Sandy Goldberg, Matthew Handy, Frances Howard-Snyder, Hud Hudson, Sara Koenig, Linda Kolody, Andrew Law, Christian Lee, Dan McKaughan, Sean Mittelstaedt, Dee Payton, Michael Rea, Georgia Senor, Terrah Short, Neal Tognazzini, Dale Tuggy, Ryan Wasserman, and Dennis Whitcomb. A grant from the Templeton Religion Trust supported this paper; the views expressed in it are my own.

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