In Mark chapters 4-6 we see Jesus perform healings and other miracles, and we hear him teach the people about the kingdom of God using parables. If you look carefully at the book of Mark, you can see a pattern begin to develop. Jesus is constantly quoting the prophets from ancient Israel, especially Isaiah. By doing this, he is sending the message that his mission is connected to the mission of the prophets: declaring to the people that the kingdom of God was coming. This means that God is about to set things right, to redeem his creation. Jesus himself is a part of this mission.

Remember the words of the prophet Isaiah?

"See, I will create
new heavens and a new earth.
The former things will not be remembered,
nor will they come to mind."

And how about the prophet Hosea?

"I spoke to the prophets,
gave them many visions
and told parables through them."

Now listen: "I will deliver you from the power of the grave;
I will redeem you from death.
Where, O death, are your plagues?
Where, O grave, is your destruction?"

Jesus the Messiah once again brought God's word to the people of Israel. Like the prophets before him, Jesus proclaimed that God was on the way; that the whole world would soon be changed and completed and filled with God's Spirit. This is a great hope that we still cling to today. And it is also a warning. It means that God is really in charge, and God expects his people to live holy lives, preparing the way for the LORD on earth. So in Mark 1 Jesus says, "Repent! Because the kingdom of God is at hand!" (And then in 1:38 he makes the point very clear: "Preaching this good news is the reason I have come.")

In these chapters, we see that Jesus performs many miracles. He heals. He restores. But he also gets annoyed with the people. He says things like "Why do you always need signs and wonders?! The message of the prophets should be enough for you. Just believe it!"

I get the distinct impression from Jesus in this book that his miracles are not his mission. They are a sign of his mission. His mission is to proclaim God's coming kingdom. And if the people won't accept it, then he will dazzle them with great acts. But the good news of God's kingdom should be enough. Just like it was for the generations before. It requires faith.

Is this enough for us today? Even without signs and wonders, are we willing to simply believe? Do we think that God will keep his word, and that one day soon this whole earth will be transformed and God will reign forever? Is this promise enough to cause us to repent and turn around and follow this Messiah with our whole lives?