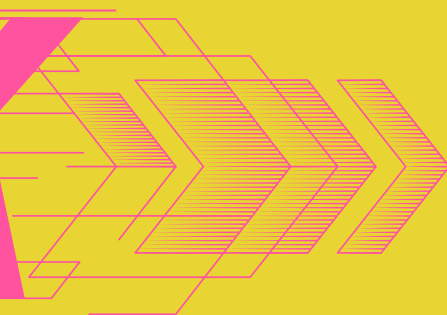




***WOMEN'S R&R BIBLE STUDY 2025-26***

***ON THE MOVE WITH***

***MARK***



# ON THE MOVE WITH MARK

## CALENDAR



### SEPTEMBER

29/30 INTRODUCTION

### OCTOBER

6/7 LESSON 1

13/14 LESSON 2

20/21 LESSON 3

27/28 LESSON 4

### NOVEMBER

3/4 KOINONIA

10/11 OFF FOR HOLIDAY (VETERAN'S DAY)

17/18 LESSON 5

24/25 LESSON 6

### DECEMBER

OFF FOR CHRISTMAS BREAK

Ladies Christmas Celebration: Saturday, Dec. 6th

### JANUARY

12/13 LESSON 7

19/20 OFF FOR HOLIDAY (MLK DAY)

26/27 LESSON 8

### FEBRUARY

2/3 LESSON 9

9/10 LESSON 10

16/17 OFF FOR HOLIDAY (PRESIDENT'S DAY)

23/24 LESSON 11

### MARCH

2/3 LESSON 12

9/10 LESSON 13

16/17 LESSON 14

23/24 LESSON 15

30/31 OFF FOR HOLIDAY: EASTER BREAK

### APRIL

6/7 OFF FOR HOLIDAY: EASTER BREAK

13/14 LESSON 16

20/21 LESSON 17

27/28 LESSON 18

### MAY

4/5 LESSON 19

11/12 LESSON 20

18/19 KOINONIA



# ON THE MOVE WITH MARK

## Study Introduction

Welcome to our study of the Gospel according to Mark. For the next 20 weeks, we will seek to learn all we can about the person of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Kent Hughes calls the Gospel of Mark the **“Go-Gospel”** because it’s full of action. Mark records more of what Jesus did rather than what Jesus said. This Gospel gives us an answer to that familiar phrase, “What Would Jesus Do?” William Barclay said, “It may be argued that Mark’s Gospel is the most important book ever written.” I’m so excited!

Our goal in studying any book of the Bible is to get to know the Lord in a deeper, more intimate way and for the truth of God’s Word to change us and conform us into the image of Jesus Christ (Romans 8:29). We want to be more like Him in how we think, in what we say, and in what we do. As we get to know Him, we can ask the Holy Spirit to point out those areas in our life that need to be changed (Psalm 139:23-24). We want to learn how to apply the truth in God’s Word, and for that truth to affect our daily living.

To reach this goal, we need to study the Bible like a detective. This is done by observing all the facts that Scripture gives us. Every book has a purpose for being written, as well as every chapter and verse. Discovering that purpose is one of the keys to understanding what the author is saying and why he’s saying it. This step is called **“Observation,”** meaning that you observe all the facts. John Wycliffe said, “It shall greatly help you to understand Scripture if you mark not only what is spoken or written, but of whom, with what words, at what time, where, to what intent, with what circumstances, considering what goes before and what follows.” As you read, ask yourself questions like: **Who** said it? **Who** did they say it to? **What** happened? **Where** did it happen? **Why** was this happening? **How** did it happen? Ask any question you can think of to gather information.

The next step is **“Interpretation.”** After you observe the text, you want to find out what those facts mean. When you observe, you are asking yourself, **“What does the text say?”** In Interpretation, you now ask, **“What does the text mean?”** You can go back and answer any questions you might have had during your observation. You can cross-reference, use Bible Encyclopedias, dictionaries, and other study helps. You can do word studies, as well as look up words in an exhaustive concordance. You want to make sure you’re finding the correct meaning, so you can apply the Word correctly.

Finally, we get to the **application** of the text. After asking **“What does it mean?”** you now ask, **“What does it mean to me?”** How does this apply to my life? How will this conform me into His image? What do I learn about God? In what way does this apply to me? Is this an encouragement? A rebuke? A correction? We need to spend time alone with the Lord, hearing His answer to the above questions. We can never neglect this step. Hopefully we can learn to think “inductively” as we go through the study together.

This **“Reasons to Rejoice”** Bible study is to be used as a tool for your study of the Gospel of Mark. Each lesson has homework for the week. Take your time and don’t rush through. Meditate and ponder each Scripture, allowing the Holy Spirit to speak to your heart personally. You don’t want to miss anything the Lord has for you! (I know I don’t!)

As you study, always have a pencil ready for recording observations. Various translations of the Bible are helpful to add color and meaning. (This study uses the New King James Version for the text.) As I mentioned before, a dictionary, a Bible dictionary, and a concordance would be very helpful. Commentaries are great, but they are only to be used after you complete your own study. You want the Holy Spirit to have a chance to speak to your own heart, before you read someone else’s comments and opinions.

Don’t forget to do the most important thing before you start. Pray! Always begin with prayer, asking the Holy Spirit to search your heart and reveal any sin that may be there (Psalm 139:23-24). Then confess those sins to Him and ask Him to forgive you. He promises to do that in 1 John 1:9. Ask Him to fill you with His Spirit (Ephesians 5:18) and give you understanding as you read His Word. The Holy Spirit is our teacher, and He will instruct us in all spiritual truths as we read the Word of God (John 14:26).

Now ... what you’ve been waiting for! Let’s begin studying and get **On The Move With Mark!**

# LESSON 1

Welcome to our study of Mark! Don't forget to begin with prayer and then buckle up. Mark is definitely on the move!

It's very important to know the background of the book you are studying. We should know who the author is, when the book was written, and why the author was writing. This week we will be doing a lot of reading, so hang in there. It's important to do this before we jump into chapter one next week.

## **Who wrote Mark?**

Almost all scholars agree that the author is John Mark himself, although he is never named. John was his Hebrew name, while his Latin surname was Mark. This may indicate that he was a Roman citizen. What do we know about this young man?

1. Read the following Scriptures, listing the facts that you learn about JohnMark.
  - a. Acts 12:12
  - b. Acts 12:25
  - c. Colossians 4:10-11
  - d. Philemon 23-24
  - e. Acts 13:5
  - f. Acts 13:13
  - g. Acts 15:36-39
  - h. 2 Timothy 4:11
  - i. 1 Peter 5:13
2. What kind of relationship do you think Peter and John Mark had? Why?

We know that Mark's mother was a believer. We assume that he was brought up in a godly home. If so, he was probably personally acquainted with Jesus and His disciples. He was most likely a witness to many of the events that he wrote about. Tradition says that the reference to a young man in Mark 14:51-52 is none other than Mark himself.

Whether or not Mark was an eyewitness, he did have connections with Barnabas, Paul, and Peter. Mark was very close to Peter's heart. Perhaps it was this relationship with Peter that gave Mark such an intimate portrait of Jesus Christ. Toward the end of the second century, there was a man named Papias who liked to obtain as much information of the early Church as possible. He tells us that Mark's Gospel is "nothing other than a record of the preaching material of Peter, the greatest of all the apostles." He goes on to say,

"Mark, who was Peter's interpreter, wrote down accurately, though not in order, all that he had recollected of what Christ had said or done. He was not a hearer of the Lord or a follower of His. He followed Peter, as I have said, at a later date, and Peter adapted his instruction to practical needs, without any attempt to give the Lord's words systematically. So that Mark was not wrong in writing down some things in this way from memory, for his one concern was neither to omit, nor to falsify anything that he had heard."

**William Barclay** says that the Gospel of Mark is the "nearest approach we will ever possess to an eyewitness account of the life of Jesus." Mark's aim was to give us the most accurate picture of Christ as possible. **A.B. Bruce** said that it was written "from the viewpoint of loving, vivid recollection."

3. Do we know why Mark left Paul's missionary team? (Acts 13:13) What could be some of the reasons?
4. Did Paul hold a grudge against John Mark? Did they reconcile?
5. Look up the word "Gospel." What does it mean?

The word Gospel is an old English word that means “good news.” It came from a classical Greek word that first meant “a reward given to the bearers of good news; that it subsequently came to mean the sacrifice offered in thankfulness for good news; until finally it was used of the good news itself.” (G. Campbell Morgan) The Gospel of Jesus Christ is the good news that Jesus came into the world and died for our sins. It certainly is good news that we can be forgiven of our sins because of the blood of Jesus Christ and that we can spend our eternity with Him in Heaven because He rose from the dead. (1 Corinthians 15:3-4)

The Gospel of Mark is similar to the Gospel of Matthew and Luke. Because of this, they are called the “synoptic” Gospels. The word “synoptic” is from the Greek word meaning **“to see together.”** John’s Gospel is not included in the synoptics, because he wrote his work from a different perspective.

Mark is the shortest of all the Gospels. Despite the length, it records more miracles than the others. It is a systematic account of the life and words of Jesus. He records a **“busy Jesus”** who is full of action and movement. It reads fast, as well as brief, but to the point. Mark uses the words **“immediately”** and **“straightway”** about 42 times, as compared to 7 times in Matthew, and 1 in Luke. The Greek word he uses for both these words translates the same, and it conveys the idea of action. Mark also uses the conjunction “and” often, which gives the reader a rushed feeling. I happen to love the way Mark writes ... busy! I can relate to that!

### **Who was this book written to?**

Each of the 4 Gospels paints us a different picture of Christ, depending on the purpose of their message and the audience they were writing to. They all wrote from a different perspective. When you put the four together, we get a very complete picture of Jesus’ ministry here on earth. Let’s take a look ...



## **Matthew**

This book was written to a **Jewish** audience. He portrayed Jesus as the King of Kings, coming with full strength and authority. He begins his Gospel with the genealogy of Christ to prove that Jesus was the rightful heir to David's throne.

## **Luke**

The Gospel of Luke was written by a Gentile, to a Gentile audience. His aim was to stress the humanity of Jesus, calling Him the "Son of Man." He shows us how much compassion and love for the world Jesus had. This Gospel is sometimes called the "Gospel for women" because Luke shows us how much Jesus loved them.

## **John**

John writes his Gospel to the world, seeking to prove to them that Jesus was the Son of God! He has a heart for the world, and his purpose for writing is stated very clearly in John 20:31.

## **Mark**

This Gospel was written to Roman citizens, probably from Rome. Mark portrays Jesus as a servant and a sacrifice. The theme verse of this Gospel is Mark 10:45, "For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many." In this Gospel, we can follow Christ's steps and see how He took care of the physical and spiritual needs of others.

One way we can tell that Mark is writing to a Gentile audience is that he explains certain Jewish practices to the readers because they were unfamiliar with them. (7:3-4, 15:42)

## **When and why was it written?**

It is thought that Mark wrote this book while living in Rome. Although there are two views as to the date of the writing, many scholars believe that the Gospel was finished around A.D. 68, soon after Peter's death and before the fall of Jerusalem (A.D. 70).

Perhaps Mark wanted to encourage the believers in Rome. In A.D. 64, the great fire in Rome occurred as part of the Neronian persecution. Nero had set fire to the city and accused the Christians. They became the

scapegoat for Nero's crime. Christians were arrested, tortured, crucified, thrown to wild beasts, and other cruel punishments. Mark emphasized Christ as the Suffering-Servant who could deliver and heal them in the middle of their crisis.

There is no record of the birth of Christ, or His genealogy. The Gospel of Mark deals mainly with the public ministry of Jesus Christ.

## 6. Why would a genealogy not be necessary in this Gospel?

David Hewitt describes the Gospel of Mark as a “passion narrative with an introduction.” Half of the chapters deal with the events of the last period of Jesus' ministry. It's interesting to watch His ministry develop, and then how His ministry on this earth draws to a close. Mark makes sure that his readers know that Christ's death is not the end of His ministry ... **“He is risen! He is not here!”** (16:6)

### **William Barclay gives us a few characteristics of this book that are quite interesting:**

- A.** Mark tells the facts of Jesus' life in the simplest and most dramatic way.
- B.** Mark never forgot the divine side of Jesus. He begins his Gospel declaring Jesus to be the Son of God. Again and again he speaks of the impact Jesus made on the mind and the heart of those who heard Him. Such phrases as “They were astonished at His teaching” (1:22) and “They were amazed” (1:27) are repeated often.
- C.** At the same time, no Gospel gives such a human picture of Jesus. To Mark, Jesus is simply “the carpenter.” (6:3) No one tells us so much about the emotions of Jesus as Mark does. Jesus sighed deeply in His Spirit (7:34, 8:12). He was moved with compassion (6:34). He marveled at their unbelief (6:6). Jesus could feel pangs of hunger (11:12). He could be tired and want to rest (6:31).
- D.** Over and over again Mark inserts the little vivid details into the narrative which is the hallmark of an eyewitness. Both Matthew and Mark tell of Jesus taking the little child and setting him in the midst. Matthew 18:2 says, “And calling to Him a child, He put him in the midst of them.” Mark adds something that lights up the whole picture (9:36).

“And He took a child and put him in the midst of them; **and taking him in His arms**, He said to them ...” When Mark tells the story of the stilling of the storm, he has one little sentence that none of the other Gospel writers have. “And He was in the hinder part of the ship **asleep on a pillow.**” (4:38) That one touch makes the picture come alive before our eyes.

E. Mark’s simplicity comes out in his Greek style. His style is not polished. He tells the story as a child might tell it. He adds statement to statement, connecting them simply with the word “and.” In the third chapter, in the Greek, there are 34 clauses or sentences one after another introduced by “and” after one principal verb. It is the way in which an eager child would tell the story. He also is very fond of the historic present. That means that in the Greek, he talks of events in the present tense instead of in the past. It’s as if the events were happening before his very eyes. He also gives us the very Aramaic words which Jesus used. To Jairus’s daughter, Jesus said, “Talitha cumi.” (5:41) To the deaf man with the impediment in his speech he said, “Ephphatha.” (7:34) It seems like there were times when Peter could hear again the very sound of Jesus’ voice and could not help giving the thing to Mark in the very words that Jesus spoke.

7. Read the last chapter of each Gospel. What are the similarities? What are the differences? Write your thoughts.
8. Read through the Gospel of Mark this week, all 16 chapters. You can do it! This is the most reading that you’ll have all year. You don’t have to take notes or anything, just let His word soak in ...
9. Why do you think that Jesus is considered a “servant”? Why is this so important to us?

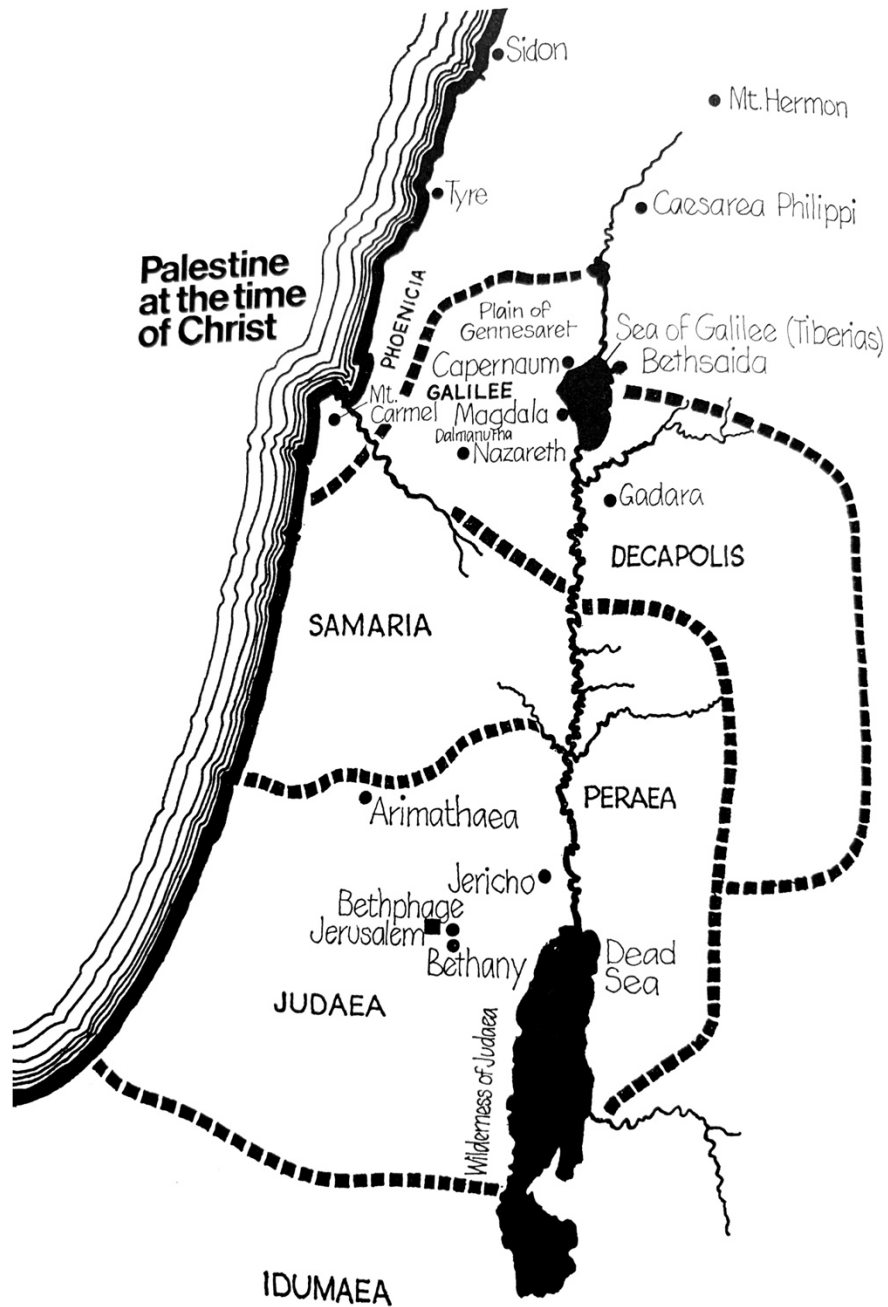
10. The Gospel of Mark tells us that Jesus was also our “sacrifice.” Why, how, and what does he mean?
11. Mark 10:45 is considered the theme verse of the entire book. Why?
12. Describe the God-Man Jesus Christ from your reading. What was He like? What characteristics impressed you the most? List some adjectives that would describe Him.

On the next page is a map titled, “Palestine at the Time of Christ.” It is a basic map that shows some important places where Jesus ministered. (Mark’s Sketchbook of Christ, written by Helen Tenney, Copyright 1956 by WM B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.) We have also included a map specifically of His Galilean Ministry, as well as a brief chart of the basic differences between the Gospels. You will also find a brief outline of the Gospel of Mark, called “Mark at a Glance.” They are from Nelson’s Complete Book of Bible Maps and Charts. I hope that they will be helpful in your study.

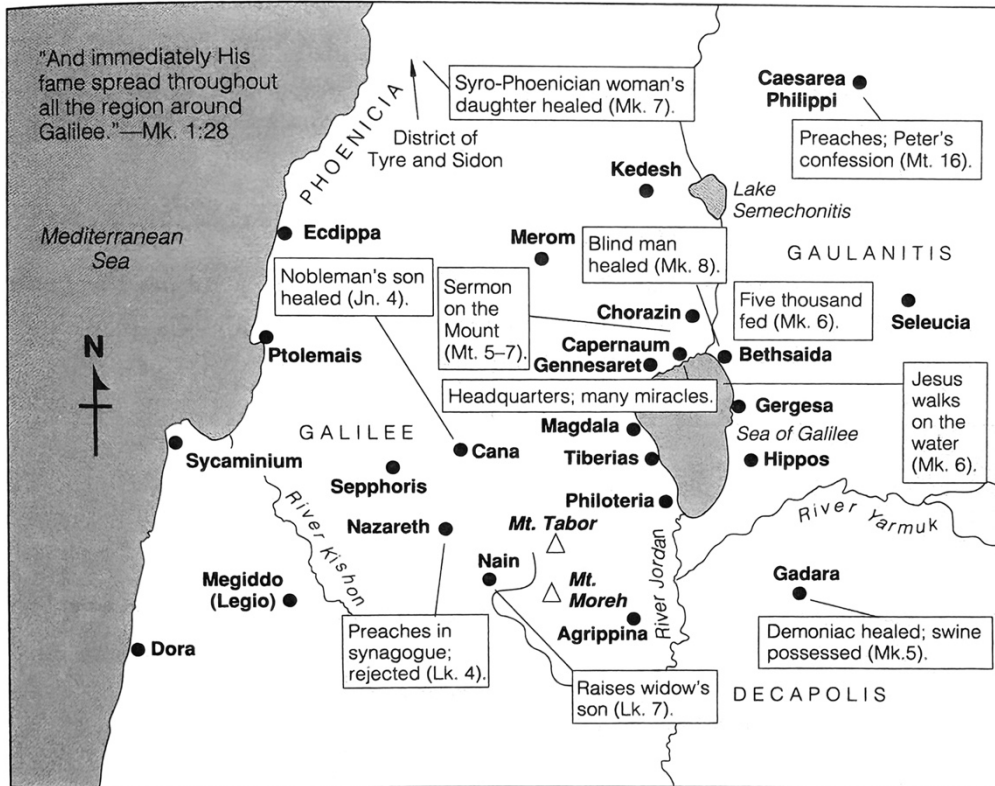
Taken from **Mark**, by R. Kent Hughes:

“Some years ago, one of the world’s renowned scholars of the classics, Dr. E. V. Rieu, completed a great translation of Homer into modern English for the Penguin Classics series. He was sixty years old, and he had been an agnostic all his life. The publisher soon approached him once again and asked him to translate the Gospels. When Rieu’s son heard this, he said, “It will be interesting to see what Father will make of the four Gospels. It will even be more interesting to see what the four Gospels make of Father.” He did not have to wonder for very long. Within a year’s time, E.V. Rieu, the lifelong agnostic, responded to the Gospels he was translating and became a committed Christian. His story is a powerful testimony to the transforming power of God’s Word.”

**Ladies, what will this study make of you? Will you let God's Word transform you? Will you be the same person as when you began?**



# Galilean Ministry



Nelson's Complete Book of Bible Maps and Charts © 1993 by Thomas Nelson, Inc.

## Why Four Gospels?

Gospel	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
<b>Audience</b>	Jews	Romans	Hellenists	Greek World
<b>Portrait of Jesus</b>	Jesus is the <b>Messiah/King</b> who fulfills Old Testament prophecy and expectations	Jesus is the authoritative Son of God	Jesus is the perfect Son of Man who came to save and minister to all people through the power of the Holy Spirit and prayer	Jesus is the fully divine Son of God in whom we should believe to receive eternal life (the "I AM" of God)
<b>Key Verses</b>	Matthew 1:1; 16:16; 20:28	Mark 1:1; 8:27; 10:45; 15:34	Luke 19:10	John 20:31
<b>Key Words</b>	Fulfilled	Immediately	Son of Man	Believe; Eternal Life

Nelson's Complete Book of Bible Maps and Charts © 1993 by Thomas Nelson, Inc.



# LESSON 2

Can you possibly be as excited as I am to start this study? I'm already encouraged and challenged after briefly reading through this book. I am confident that God has some awesome things in store for us as we study His Word.

In Mark chapter 1, instead of beginning with the birth of Christ, we begin with the birth of our Lord's public ministry. Let's begin with prayer, asking Him to prepare our hearts before we go any further. Then let us join Samuel in saying ... "Speak, Lord, for Your servant hears!" (1 Samuel 3:9)

**Memory Verse of the Week:** "Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men." Mark 1:17

1. Read Mark chapter 1. Read verses 1-8 again carefully. In the space below, write all your observations of this first section. Remember to ask yourself the questions: Who? What? Where? When? Why? and How?
2. Are there any key words or phrases in this section?
3. What ministered to you the most as you read this section?

Mark began this chapter by introducing us to the main point, person, and theme of this entire book. His name is Jesus Christ, the Son of God.



4. Mark gives us some witnesses that testify of who Jesus is. Who does he call first to the stand?
5. Who was the second witness Mark introduced? Who was the “voice”?
6. Read Mark 1:4-8, Matthew 3:1-17, Luke 3:1-20, and John 1:19-34. Answer the following questions regarding John the Baptist:
  - a. What did he wear?
  - b. What did he eat?
  - c. Describe his character and personality.

This “voice” was indeed John the Baptist, or John the Baptizer, as called by some. John made this claim himself (John 1:23) and Jesus confirmed it (Matthew 11:7-14).

7. What was John was called to do?

8. Read Matthew 11:7-14. What does Jesus have to say about John?

John was the son of Zacharias and Mary’s cousin, Elizabeth, making him the cousin of Jesus. John’s lifestyle was that of one who was committed to live a life separated unto God. John was filled with the Holy Spirit while he was yet in his mother’s womb. He was called to be set apart, drinking neither wine nor strong drink, and keeping himself holy before the Lord (Luke 1:11-17). John spent most of his early years in the wilderness, which was a region around the Jordan River (Luke 1:67-80). John was the New Testament counterpart of Elijah, coming in Elijah’s spirit and power (2 Kings 1:8). John was considered fearless, holy, and faithful. What wonderful, godly qualities!

In those days, it was the slave’s job to untie your sandals and wash your feet. John understood his unworthiness compared to the worthiness of the one who was to come.

9. Is your life characterized by humility? What does it mean to **“decrease so He may increase”**? Are you doing that? What areas in your life do **you** need to decrease?
10. John was highly honored because he obeyed God and did exactly what he was called to do. He finished his course faithfully, proclaiming Jesus until the end (Acts 13:25). How about you? Are you doing what God has called you to do, no matter what?
11. Are you faithfully proclaiming the Good News of Jesus to the people God brings your way? Are you a “voice” in your sphere of influence, preparing the way for the Lord?
12. What was John’s message? Explain the difference between John’s baptism and the baptism that Jesus would bring.

The word **“repentance”** means more than a state of mind, in grief and sorrow. It has the responsive connotation of change of conduct, direction, and purpose. It means to turn from your sin. Remission means the forgiveness of sins (Matthew 26:28). The voices of the prophets had been silent in Israel for over 400 years, since the days of Malachi. John was being used as an instrument to arouse the Jews from their dead worship and to clear away any obstacles in their hearts that would keep people from hearing the voice of Jesus when He came.

Notice in verse 5 that many came to the wilderness to be baptized by John. Some say that there may have been as many as 300,000! Wow! I’d say that his ministry was definitely fruitful!

Ted Dorman writes: “During John’s time, the Jews often administered baptism as a rite of purification for Gentiles who were converting to Judaism. John went one step further, preaching that Jews as well as Gentiles needed to be baptized as a sign of their turning away from sin, in order to prepare for the coming Messiah.” In ancient times,

a messenger was always sent before a king to prepare his way. John was this messenger, sent to prepare the hearts of Israel, calling them to repentance.

**13.** Read Mark 1:9-11. In your own words, describe what is happening. (Also read Matthew 3:13-17 and Luke 3:1-23.)

**14.** Did John think that he should be the one to baptize Jesus? Why or why not?

You may be asking yourself, “If Jesus was sinless, why did He need to be baptized? If John’s baptism was all about repentance, what did that have to do with Jesus?”

Well, we know that Christ was indeed sinless. **Hebrews 4:15** tells us that He was “in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.” In His baptism, Jesus identified with each one of us as sinners (2 Corinthians 5:21). **Hebrews 2:17-18** say, “Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted.” It also was a sign of approval from His Father, as well as a moment of equipment, as William Barclay would say. He was empowered as the Holy Spirit descended upon Him. We also need to be empowered by the Holy Spirit for our ministry here on earth.

Immediately after Jesus is commissioned and empowered for ministry, His calling is tested. The battle begins! It is significant that Jesus was tested this way in the very beginning of His ministry. Tested, yet coming forth victoriously.

**15.** Read Mark 1:12-13, Matthew 4:1-11, and Luke 4:1-13 and answer the following questions:

- a. What verb does Mark use in verse 12 that Matthew and Luke don’t?

**b.** For what purpose was Jesus led into the wilderness?

**c.** How long was He there, and what was the outcome?

In Jewish thought, the “wilderness” was a place of danger, gloom, and a place of demons (Matthew 12:43, Luke 8:29). Mark doesn’t tell us much about the temptations that were set before Jesus, but I thought it would be very worthwhile to take some time to look at them. Read the different accounts, piecing together the whole event.

**16.** Briefly describe the three temptations of our Lord. How did Jesus respond to each of them?

**17.** What can we learn from this section about dealing with our own temptations? What should we do? What shouldn’t we do?

**18.** Who was in control of tempting Jesus? God or Satan? What lessons can we learn from this?

In our life, we will all experience trials and temptations ... that’s a promise! (1 Peter 4:12, John 16:33) But these temptations are not sent to harm us or make us fall. They are sent to strengthen us, refine us, and cause us to grow (Romans 5:3-4, Job 23:10, 2 Peter 3:18). They are always meant for our good (Romans 8:28-29) and His glory.

**19.** What trial or temptation are you experiencing right now? Are you allowing it to strengthen you, or ruin you? Are you a better warrior for it? If not, what changes can you make?

We can rejoice in the power that is available to us through the Holy Spirit. We don’t have to fight our battles alone, but we can rely on the Holy Spirit to bring us to victory. We are over-comers through Jesus Christ (1 John 5:5)! As Jesus was tempted in the wilderness, we, too, will be tempted as we seek to do God’s will. The devil will tempt us with

prestige, power, and success, among other things. Will you choose to depend on God's Word, like Jesus did? Will you use spiritual weapons to fight the battles (Ephesians 6:10-20)? May we not fall to the twisted lies and temptations of the enemy.

**20.** Read Mark 1:14-20. Who are the main characters? Any key words?

Repentance was an essential part of Christ's message. It is said that **repentance** and **faith** are like 2 sides of a coin. **Romans 3:23** tells us that we "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." **Romans 3:10** says, "There is none righteous, no not one." Paul taught "repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." (Acts 20:21) To repent means to change one's mind, and the word "believe" means "moving in the direction of." Believing in someone is making a commitment to that person. You can't turn towards Christ unless you first turn from your sin. The modern-day Gospel that is preached seldom deals with the repentance of our sin, yet the Bible clearly teaches repentance as a key element in our conversion. John the Baptist preached it (Matthew 3:8), Peter preached it (Acts 2:38), Paul preached it, and here in our text, Jesus Himself calls people to repent. To receive the forgiveness that Jesus offers to us, we must confess our sins to Him, turn away from them, and then we are cleansed by His blood and forgiven (1 John 1:9).

Jesus says not only to believe the Gospel, but to "**believe in**" the Gospel. Salvation is not the result of only an intellectual belief; it is a heart acceptance of the person of Jesus Christ. Paul said it so simply; "**If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes to righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made to salvation.**" (Romans 10:9-10) Repentance and belief was what Jesus was heralding.

Have you repented of your sins and confessed them to the Lord? Have you made a personal commitment to Jesus Christ by asking Him to forgive you of all your sins, and then accepted Him as your Savior? This is the most important decision you'll ever make. When you receive Him as your Savior, you become a child of God and gain eternal life (John 3:16). Don't go another day without receiving Him into your heart. If you have any questions, please talk to one of your group leaders. They

would love to answer any questions you may have and pray with you to receive Christ.

- 21.** When you share the Good News of Jesus Christ with someone, do you share with them their need for repentance, or do you shy away from it because it may offend? What are the dangers of neglecting to explain repentance to someone?

It's important to understand what is meant by the term "Kingdom of God" in verse 15. This phrase is used 14 times in the Gospel of Mark and over 100 times in all four Gospels. Is He speaking about a future kingdom, the church, or what?

David Hewitt, in his book, **Free to Follow Jesus**, explains it this way: "At the time of Jesus, the idea of the Kingdom was common in Jewish thinking. Scholars looked forward to a new age of peace and material well-being when Israel would be free from the oppression of Rome. Increasingly, the Kingdom of God had taken on a highly political tone. But Jesus' understanding was different in a number of ways:

- 1.** Firstly, for Jesus, the Kingdom was not national but personal. It was about God's rule in a person's heart. The Kingdom was not a territory to be found on a map, but God's reign as King in an individual's life (John 18:36).
- 2.** Secondly, for Jesus, the Kingdom was not material but spiritual. It is not a place of earthly prosperity but of spiritual blessing. (Luke 17:21, Romans 14:17).
- 3.** Thirdly, for Jesus, the Kingdom was not only future but here and now. With the coming of Jesus, God's rule among men had begun. The day the prophets had dreamed of was here. The Kingdom was here because Jesus was here! Undoubtedly, there is a future element to the Kingdom of God. The Bible looks forward to a time when the "kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ (Revelation 11:15)."

"In a sense, the end has already come. But in another sense, the end has not yet fully come. Thus, it was **already** but **not yet**. The key to understanding Jesus' ministry and teaching is this tension between **already** and **not yet**. The Kingdom of God -- the time of God's rule on earth -- has come, but it has not fully come. The King has come, but He will come again." (Ted Dorman)

22. Who were the four men Jesus met in verses 16-20? What were they doing?
23. Why is the fact that these men were “just fishermen” so significant? See Acts 4:13 and 1 Corinthians 1:26-29. How does that encourage you?

Fishermen were common in Galilee. It was said that as many as 330 fishing boats sailed the lake. Fishermen were usually brave, strong, and not afraid of hard, strenuous work.

24. Did God ask you to leave something behind when He first called you? Has He asked you to leave something else behind recently? Have you obeyed?

It's important to note that Jesus said **He** would make them become fishers of men. He is the one who changes us and conforms us into His image. We can't do anything on our own. “Apart from Him, we can do nothing” (John 15:5). We are called to obey.

25. What other lessons or insights do you find in verses 16-20? In what way did God minister to you through this section?

**Proverbs 11:30 says that “He who wins souls is wise.”** Jesus was in the business of “soul winning,” and He called the four guys to join Him. God has definitely gifted some with the gift of evangelism, but He also calls each of us to do our part in fulfilling the Great Commission (Mark 16:15). Let's follow Jesus and ask Him to make us  
**“Fishers of Men!”**

# LESSON 3

This week we will continue to walk with Jesus as He travels into Capernaum. Jesus, His mother, and His brethren moved from Nazareth to this fishing town of Capernaum, making this their “home city.” (Matthew 4:13, 9:1, John 2:12) Capernaum was a small, but busy town on the northwest shore of the Sea of Galilee, about 2 miles from where the Jordan flowed into the lake. It was on the main road between Egypt and Damascus and was the Jewish capital of the region. This town became the center of operations, so to speak. Although this became His home, Jesus was very grieved at the state of their hearts and eventually pronounced a curse on the city (Matthew 11:23-24).

Jesus ministered to many people as He walked through the city. In this week’s lesson, Jesus performed a miracle in a synagogue, in a home, and on a highway. Let’s take a look!

**Memory Verse of the Week:** “Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed.” Mark 1:35

1. Read Mark 1:21-28. Read Luke’s account in Luke 4:31-37.  
Describe the situation. Who is present? What’s the problem?  
Where and when is the story taking place?

We see here that Jesus observed the Sabbath. The word “Sabbath” is from the Hebrew word “Shabat,” meaning “seven.” “This was the seventh day of the Jewish week, which began at sundown Friday and ended at sundown Saturday. On the Sabbath, the Jews were not supposed to do any work (Exodus 20:8) and reflect on the things of God.” (Ted Dorman)

“Synagogue” comes from the Greek word that means “to come together,” which is exactly what they did. The synagogue became the center for worship, as well as education. Synagogues were formed after the destruction of the temple while the people were in Babylon. A



synagogue could be established wherever there were 10 adult men (over the age of 12). The service included prayer, the reading of the Scriptures, and its exposition. The ministry was overseen by the “ruler of the synagogue,” who was not a priest (Mark 5:22). An “attendant” was responsible for taking out and storing away the sacred rolls of Scripture (Luke 4:20). Visiting rabbis were allowed to read Scriptures and teach, but it is said that they rarely gave personal views or independent judgments. Instead, they would pass down “oral traditions,” which spoke of many rules, regulations, and quoting rabbis of the past.

2. What did Jesus do in the synagogue? What did the people notice that was different about Him?

3. How did people respond to Him?

The word “**astonished**” means to strike with panic or shock, or to be “thunderstruck.”

4. How do you think the unclean spirit, or the demon, knew who Jesus was? (James 2:19)

5. Jesus told the demon to be quiet, or literally, “to be muzzled.” Why didn’t Jesus want the unclean spirit to speak?

It’s interesting to note that the unclean spirit recognized the humanity of Jesus (Jesus of Nazareth), as well as His divinity (Holy One of God). Hewitt says, “Evil spirits were very much part of the world view of first century Jews. They were thought to live in unclean places like the desert or among the tombs.” Jesus addressed “evil spirits” many times throughout the Gospels. Although there really were “evil spirits,” the Jewish people were very superstitious and used many magical ways to drive them out of people.

6. Did the spirit obey Jesus? How did the people respond to this? Why?

7. What does Luke add in his account in Luke 4:35? Why do you think this point was important to the story?
8. Are you still amazed at what Jesus does in your life? Do you ever doubt God's power, or forget His ability to work miracles? How does Jeremiah 32:17 encourage you?
9. What is the greatest lesson you learned from this section?

Imagine that you are the man in the story. How do you think you would feel before you met Jesus? Hopeless? Scared? Freaked out? Now imagine you are the man after Jesus delivered you from the evil spirit. Are you ecstatic? Elated? Joyful? Or is there even a word to describe the freedom you feel? This story excited me because it reminds me that there is nothing that our Jesus cannot do! Whether it be 2,000 years ago, calling out evil spirits, or it is 2025 and He heals a marriage, our Jesus still can do all things. What a God we serve! That's a **"Reason to Rejoice!"**

Now we find Jesus ministering in a home. He didn't need a huge audience. (I like this picture, don't you?) Peter was most likely taking them home for the Sabbath meal, which was immediately served after synagogue, which was the sixth hour (noon). Peter probably didn't know that anyone in his house was sick.

10. Read Mark 1:29-31, Luke 4:38-39, Matthew 8:14-15. Using all three accounts, describe this event. Whose home were they in? Who did Jesus heal? How was she healed? What do we learn about Peter?

Remember that Simon, Andrew, James, and John had been with Jesus. They had just witnessed the power of Jesus in casting out demons. Some say that this miracle was performed for their sake. We don't know that for sure, but we do know that when they found this woman sick,

they knew just what to do. They went right to Jesus, who could do something about it. They knew who to take their troubles to.

- 11.** When you are sick, depressed, scared, or troubled in any way, do you take those troubles to the One who cares and can do something about it? Is Jesus the first one you run to? Read Psalm 145:18-19. How does this encourage you?
- 12.** What does Peter's mother-in-law do as soon as she's healed? What does this tell us about her character?
- 13.** Read Mark 1:32-34. Sabbath ended when three stars came out in the night sky. Verses 32 and 33 tell us that in the evening, after the sun had set, people began to come to Him. Who came to Peter and Andrew's house? How did everyone know Jesus was there?

Picture this for a minute, won't you? What a night! Can you imagine all the people in Capernaum who were being healed and delivered? There must have been shouts of joy, screaming, laughter, and a lot of 'hootin and hollerin'. The whole city was probably there. Unfortunately, the people were probably not interested in spiritual healing. Most of them probably were there out of curiosity or because they needed something. They weren't interested in what He had to say, but what He could do for them. Sadly, the same thing applies to people today, even Christians. Often, we are looking for a "magic Jesus," who can take all our problems away and meet our every need.

- 14.** Do you only come to Jesus when you need something? Do you spend as much time in praise and thanksgiving to Him, as in supplication? Think about it. We want to make sure that we are not coming to Jesus just because of what He can "do" for us.
- 15.** How do you respond when Jesus doesn't meet a need the way you want Him to, or answer a prayer in the way you think He should? How are we supposed to respond? What does 1 John 5:14 tell us about how to pray?

- 16.** How did Job respond after he was stripped of everything he had?  
Read Job 1:21. How does this verse challenge you or encourage you in a situation you may be in?

Jesus cast out a demon in the synagogue, healed a woman in her home, and now He is healing diseases and casting out demons on the street! Jesus still doesn't allow the demons to speak (Mark 1:34). The demons are the devil's agents. Jesus didn't want them to have any part of spreading the Gospel by telling others who He was. G. Campbell Morgan said it this way: "Admit the devil into the fellowship of this propaganda of the Gospel, and ere long he will twist his fingers 'round the Gospel and distort it, until it becomes a deadly and damnable heresy."

- 17.** Read Mark 1:35-39 and Luke 4:40-44. Where did Jesus go to be alone? Who went to find Him? What do you think they wanted Him to do?
- 18.** If Jesus was God, why do you think He needed to pray? Can you give Scriptures for your answer?
- 19.** Mark records Jesus praying three times. The first is here in verse 35, the others are 6:46 and 14:32-34. Explain the other two occasions of Jesus' recorded prayers.
- 20.** What lessons can you learn from verse 35?
- 21.** Do you spend quiet time alone with the Lord daily? The busier you get, do you spend more time or less time with Him? Is there anything you need to change to make sure you have time with Him daily?

We need to set aside time alone with Jesus each day. That should be the most important time of the day. That's when we get close to the heart of God, listen to His voice, learn about Him, and get to know Him. Jesus wanted that communion time with His Father. Jesus also wasn't living a life apart from His Father, but one of complete dependence on Him (John 5:19, 14:10). Jesus also went to the Father in prayer for power for service (Acts 10:38). How much more do we need to go to the Father for strength, power, and the anointing of the Holy Spirit? How much more do we NEED to depend on God to empower us, lead us, and guide us? Jesus shows us that we can't live a life apart from the Father.

22. The disciples asked Jesus to show them how to pray in Luke 11:1-4. Read these verses. What do you notice about how Jesus prays? What can we learn from Him?

Our prayer time should include **Adoration** (Psalm 108:4-5), **Confession** (1 John 1:9), **Supplication**, and **Thanksgiving** (Philippians 4:6, Psalm 136:1).

23. Write out one or two Scriptures for each step. (It can be one of your favorites or you can find a new one!)

A. Adoration:

B. Confession:

C. Thanksgiving:

D. Supplication:

24. What do the following verses say about prayer?

- a. 1Thessalonians 5:17
- b. Psalm 66:18-19
- c. Matthew 6:5-6
- d. Matthew 18:20
- e. Luke 18:1
- f. James 5:16

Mark tells us in 1:39 that Jesus preached all throughout Galilee. This may have taken weeks or perhaps months. Crowds were coming from everywhere to see Jesus. According to Matthew's account, Jesus went into the mountains with His disciples and taught them (Matthew 4:25-8:4). He then came down the mountain and a leper approached Him.

25. Read Mark 1:40-45, Luke 5:12-15, Matthew 8:1-4. Jesus meets a leper who will never be the same again. What did the leper want from Jesus? How did he approach Him?
26. What description of the leper does Dr. Luke add in his account? Why?
27. How did Jesus respond to the leper?
28. What was Jesus motivated by?
29. What was the result? (Note Mark's favorite word in verse 42.) What did Jesus tell the leper to do? Did the leper obey?
30. How did this affect Jesus and His ministry?
31. What do we learn about Jesus from this section?

Leprosy was a term used in Bible times to describe a wide variety of creeping-skin diseases. It was thought to be very contagious and incurable. Today, modern medicine knows much more about leprosy, but at that time, almost any skin disease fell into this category.

The leper became a social, emotional, and religious outcast. They were made to dwell alone outside the camp, wear torn clothes, let their hair be unkept, cover the lower part of their face, and cry out "Unclean!"

Unclean!" when anyone came by (Leviticus 13:4-46). The leper couldn't go into any home or it would be considered unclean. During church service, they had to peer through the leper "squint" cut in the walls. The leper was completely shunned from society. Many thought that this dreadful disease was a punishment for their sin. The person afflicted with leprosy not only suffered with the physical pain of the disease, but the loneliness along with it. I heard it described like they were the "living dead."

Jesus touched this man, who probably had not had any physical contact for many years. Yes, Jesus touched him, and no one was ever, and I mean ever, supposed to touch a leper. **(Read Leviticus 13 and 14 to understand better the Mosaic Law regarding the "Laws of Leprosy," and how they were to be restored back into the community once, (or "if") the leprosy was gone.)**

32. Jesus touched the untouchables, and He loved the unlovely. Who would be considered the lepers or the unlovely in today's world? How about in your world?
33. Do you ever feel like a leper or a "social outcast"? In what ways? Have you asked Jesus to touch you and heal your pain? What does Proverbs 18:24 say?

What a wonderful picture of Jesus to end our lesson with. The compassion and love He showed for those in our chapter was incredible. I know that Jesus told the leper not to tell anyone, but I really can't blame him. I'm sure I would feel like running and telling everyone if it happened to me, wouldn't you? He must have been ecstatic! Has God ever showed you something and asked you to keep it to yourself? Did you?

Many believe that leprosy is a picture of sin. Apart from Christ, we, like a leper, are dying. Our flesh is rotting, and our sin is incurable. **"But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ!"** (Ephesians 2:4) It's only through the blood of Jesus that we can be made clean and be cured (1 John 1:7). What a **"Reason to Rejoice!"**

# LESSON 4

In our lesson last week, Jesus hadn't yet faced any human opposition. His fame was spreading throughout all the regions around Galilee (1:28). Now, in chapter two, His ministry begins to be challenged. Jesus returns to Capernaum, ("His city") after several days, to continue doing His Father's will. We meet the Pharisees and the Scribes, and, boy, do we have a lot to learn from them!

Begin your study with prayer, asking the Holy Spirit to give you understanding and insight into the text at hand. Ask Him to continually show you how His Word relates to you and how you can apply this chapter to your life.

**Memory Verse of the Week:** "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance." Mark 2:17

1. Read Mark 2:1-12, Matthew 9:1-8, and Luke 5:17-26. Observe the text and list the facts you find. Write any questions you have Define any new words. Are there any repeated words or phrases?
2. Where did this story take place? Do you know whose house it was?
3. Why was the house so crowded? What was Jesus doing?
4. What do we know about the paralytic man?
5. Explain the problem that the 4 men and the paralytic friend faced.
6. William Barclay calls these four guys "**men of resource.**" What do we know about these four guys? From what you can tell, describe their character, using descriptive words. How are they an example of James 2:14-26.



- 7.** How did Jesus respond? What motivated His response? Explain Jesus' answer in verses 8-10.

Imagine this taking place in our day. Would someone tear apart our roof? In those days, most houses had roofs that were flat, made with wood beams that were covered with brushwood and clay. Many had a stairway that led from the side of the house to the roof. These roofs were easy to make holes in or rip apart. I wonder if clay particles and wood chips fell on the people in the house as the men disassembled the roof.

- 8.** What kind of obstacles do you come against when trying to bring others to Christ?
- 9.** How determined are you to push through the barriers? Do you see obstacles as “closed doors” and give up, or roadblocks from the enemy needing to be pushed through? How do you know which one it is?

Jesus knew that He had the authority to forgive sins, but the people wouldn't believe it unless they saw a sign. In the Living Bible Paraphrased Translation, Mark 2:8 reads like this: “I, the Messiah, have the authority on earth to forgive sins. But talk is cheap -- anybody could say that. So, I'll prove it to you by healing this man.” That sums it up well, doesn't it?

- 10.** Read Mark 2:1-12 again. According to verse 10, what was Jesus' purpose for all this?
- 11.** Why were the scribes so angry? What did they accuse Jesus of?

The scribes were part of what was considered the “religious leaders” of the day. They were experts in legal matters. They transcribed legal documents (Jeremiah 32:12) and kept records (Jeremiah 36:25-26). They were also considered “Teachers of the Law.” Unger's Bible Dictionary tells us that “Scribes formed a finely compacted class, holding undisputed supremacy over the people. Everywhere he

appears as the mouthpiece and representative of the people; he pushes to the front, the crowd respectfully giving way and eagerly hanging on his utterances as those of a recognized authority.” They developed the law, taught the law, and passed sentences in the court of justice.

Jesus, on the other hand, condemns them, calling them hypocrites (Luke 20:46-47, Matthew 15:19).

12. Did the scribes look to the “Law” for answers to their questions in our story?
13. Do you look to the Word when you have questions? What are the dangers of reasoning “within yourself”? (See Jeremiah 17:9-10) Are you reasoning “within yourself” right now about some issue?
14. What was the response of the people in Mark 2:12?
15. What does Luke add in his account (Luke 5:17-26):
  - a. about the paralytic?
  - b. about Jesus?
  - c. about the response of the crowd?
16. How is the determination and perseverance of these four men a great example to us in regard to our prayer life? Give Scriptures to support your answer.
17. When you pray, do you pray with an expectancy, believing that God can do all things? How does believing God “**can**” do all things differ from believing that God “**will**” do all things? How do Mark 11:22-24 and 1 John 5:14 balance together? What other Scriptures can you use to illustrate this point?

These four friends came to Jesus, believing that Jesus could heal their friend. They believed that Jesus was their only hope. He was their only way (John 14:6). They had faith in Jesus Christ. We know that Jesus can heal any disease if it’s His will (Jeremiah 32:17), but His greatest miracle is doing the eternal ... forgiving sins! Before Christ, we are all like the paralytic: hopeless and dying. When Jesus forgives our sins, we

are changed forever (2 Corinthians 5:17). We were all crippled by sin, yet Jesus died for us (Romans 5:8).

The men thought that the greatest need their friend had was a physical healing, but Jesus knew his deepest need. He knows your deepest need, too, even when you don't realize it. That's why we can trust Him as He works in our life. He knows everything and works all things together for good (Romans 8:28). And because we know His thoughts that He thinks toward us are of peace and not evil (Jeremiah 29:11), then we know He's working for our best, too. Even if He doesn't heal us when we ask.

**18.** Define "faith." What are we supposed to have faith in? What are the dangers of putting our faith in other people? In education? In our jobs? Or in ourselves?

Faith can mean "putting one's confidence in another." Unger says, "Faith is not simply the assent of the intellect to revealed truth; it is the practical submission of the entire man to the guidance and control of such truth." It has also been said, "Faith, in its essential temper, is that elevation of soul by which it aspires to the good, the truth, and the divine."

"Faith is also the condition of salvation (John 6:29). It is frequently associated in the Scriptures with repentance; and thus the conditions of salvation are repentance and faith. Faith is fundamental. Repentance implies faith. Faith is not real saving faith unless it includes repentance. Saving faith may therefore be properly defined as such belief in the Lord Jesus Christ as leads one to submit completely to the authority of Christ, and to put complete and exclusive trust in Him for salvation. Faith is also one of the results of salvation. In the justified and regenerated soul, faith is deepened and developed by the influence of the Holy Spirit. As the Word of God is studied and its contents spiritually apprehended, faith becomes broader and richer in the truths and facts which it grasps (Galatians 5:22, Ephesians 2:8, Romans 10:17)."

**19.** Are there any sins that have "paralyzed" you, in some sense? After studying this chapter, what do you need to do?

20. What is the biggest lesson you learned from this section? How do you plan to apply this to your own life?

21. Read Mark 2:13-17, Matthew 9:9-13, and Luke 5:27-32. Observe the facts. Where was Jesus? What is the main point of the section?

22. What was Jesus doing that caused a crowd to gather?

23. Who became one of His disciples in verse 14? What was his other name? What was his occupation?

The name Matthew means, “Gift of Jehovah.” He might have changed his name after he became a disciple. Tax collectors or publicans were not very popular guys! They were local men who were hired by the Romans to collect the taxes. They were under contract, so to speak, to pay Rome a certain quota. Anything they collected above this quota was theirs to keep. This made many tax collectors greedy and dishonest (Luke 3:12-13, Matthew 18:17). The Jews saw any man who chose this profession as a traitor. They were considered social outcasts. According to the Jewish Talmud (an ancient collection of Jewish writings), tax collectors were considered as low as “murderers and robbers.” Because of their contract with the Gentile Romans, they were ritually unclean and could not enter the synagogue. Needless to say, Matthew must not have been a very popular guy!

24. Jesus told Levi to “**follow Him.**” What does that mean?

25. Why were the religious leaders mad this time?

The Pharisees called just about anybody a “sinner” who didn’t follow their strict religious laws and traditions. A Pharisee was a member of the Jewish party that believed “strict obedience to the Law of Moses was the key to spiritual renewal for Israel.” In their zeal to obey the Law of Moses, they came up with their own interpretation that explained (with much detail) what was lawful and what was not. They believed these interpretations to have as much authority as the Law of Moses. The Pharisees came from the scribes and are characterized by

their legal tendencies. (The Sadducees, on the other hand, were religious leaders that came from the ranks of the priests and are characterized by their social position.) The Pharisees were considered the “separate ones,” and wanted as little as possible to do with anyone who wasn’t a Pharisee. They saw themselves as a superior and exclusive group. They were very careful in the outward details but ignored the condition of their own hearts (Matthew 23:23, Luke 7:36-50).

**26.** Explain Jesus’ answer in verse 17. What was His attitude toward sinners? Read John 3:17 and Luke 9:56.

We get so comfortable in our own Christian world; Christian schools, our church, our friends ... we even shop in Christian stores. We know that we are supposed to fellowship with other Christians, and we know the dangers of “yoking” ourselves with unbelievers. But it’s impossible for us to fulfill the Great Commission if we are never around the unbelieving world. What’s the balance?

**27.** How can we be a part of the world, but be separate from the world at the same time?

**28.** Have you been sharing with the “publicans and sinners” in your life? What have you been doing to help fulfill the “Great Commission”?

**29.** Read Luke 19:1-10. What other tax collector did Jesus save? What changes did the man make in his life as a result?

I’m so glad that Jesus came to save the sinners. Paul calls himself the chief of sinners (1 Timothy 1:15), but I think I’ve got him beat! We needed a doctor, and He came to save us.

In our last section, Jesus was eating with Matthew and other sinners and publicans. Kind of sounds like Matthew had a big dinner and invited all his friends over. Could this be Matthew’s first attempt at evangelism? Way to go Matthew. But while Jesus is dining, the Pharisees were getting ready to eat Him for dinner!

- 30.** In verses 2:18-22, Matthew 9:14-17, and Luke 5:33-39, what was Jesus being accused of now?
- 31.** In your own words, explain the answer Jesus gave to the religious leaders. Why weren't they fasting? Why is He using this analogy?

In the Old Testament, God is pictured as the Bridegroom to His people Israel. They “belonged” to Him (Isaiah 54:5-8, Jeremiah 31:32, Ezekiel 16:1-13, Hosea 2:18-20). In the New Testament, John the Baptist called Jesus the Bridegroom (John 3:29), and the church is considered the “Bride of Christ” (Revelation 21:2,9 and 19:7-10), who is waiting for Christ’s return. We are sealed with the “Holy Spirit of Promise,” who guarantees His return for us, His “purchased possession” (Ephesians 1:13-14).

In the ancient Jewish weddings, the couple stayed home for a week of celebration and feasting. Their close friends were considered the “guests of the bridegroom,” and were exempt from the fasting rules. It was said that “all in attendance of the bridegroom are relieved of all religious observances which would lessen their joy.”

- 32.** Read Isaiah 61:10 and 62:5. How do these verses add color and understanding to this analogy?
- 33.** Read Matthew 25:1-6. What does it tell us about Christ’s return? About our preparation?
- 34.** Are you preparing for His return? In what ways? How can you be better prepared? (Search your hearts on this one!)
- 35.** Was Jesus coming against the principle of fasting? Read Matthew 6:16-18 and 17:19-21. How was His view different?

“Fasting” is deliberate abstinence from all food for a specific period of time. Scripture commanded the people to fast once a year on the Day of Atonement, which was the National Day of Repentance and forgiveness (Leviticus 23:27-29). The Rabbis ruled that the people should fast twice a week (Luke 18:12), Mondays and Thursdays. They

believed this made them more “holy.” Fasting to them was a solemn occasion and was sometimes regarded as periods of penance or mourning. They actually made themselves look like they were fasting, putting ashes on their heads, not washing, etc. They wanted to look miserable! Jesus, on the other hand, said that no one should even be able to tell by looking at you that you are fasting! Fasting is no longer a “complicated have-to.” It should now be spontaneous and voluntary to have any spiritual value.

It is important to note that when Jesus addressed His disciples on the Mount of Beatitudes (Matthew 6), He did assume that they would be fasting, as well as praying, giving, etc. Many of the Old Testament heroes fasted (Daniel, Moses, David, etc.), as well as people in the New Testament, such as Paul, Anna, and most importantly, Jesus Himself (2 Corinthians 11:27, Luke 2:36-38, Matthew 4:2). So, fasting is definitely still for today, as the Lord leads you.

**36.** Jesus uses two different examples to illustrate one point (Mark 2:21-22). What point is that? Did Jesus come to “patch up the old” in Judaism, or to begin a new work? You may read Hebrews 8-10 for a better understanding of the old and the new covenant. Jesus didn’t come to abolish the law, but to fulfill it, and He did this through His blood (Matthew 5:17, Luke 22:19-20).

In the beginning of this chapter, the Pharisees were angry at the claims that Jesus made. Then they were upset about the company He kept. Now, in verses 23-28, they are outraged at the customs that He seemed to disregard. We are going to take verses 23-28 together with chapter 3:1-5 next week because they both deal with the controversy of working and healing on the Sabbath.

**38.** What main point did God drive home to your heart this week? Did God show you anything specific that relates to your life as a wife, mother, or as a single woman?

# LESSON 5

In Mark chapter 1, we read about some incredible, mighty acts that Jesus performed. In chapter 2, we began to see the real meaning and purpose behind those acts. Jesus' primary ministry was not to heal physically, but He came to forgive men of their sins and heal them spiritually.

In this week's lesson, Jesus and His disciples are headed to the synagogue to celebrate the Sabbath. The religious leaders are still watching Jesus, ready to criticize Him for whatever He does, or doesn't do. On the way to the synagogue, Jesus made two big mistakes, according to the Pharisees, and, boy, was He going to hear about it!

**Memory Verse of the Week:** "And He went up on the mountain and called to Him those He Himself wanted. And they came to Him." Mark 3:13

1. Read Mark 2:23-3:5. Also read Matthew 12:1-13, Luke 6:1-11. Record your observations. (Who, What, Where, When, Why, How)  
What application do you see?
2. In Mark 2:23-28, what justification does Jesus give for the disciples' actions? Why? Read 1 Samuel 21:1-6, Leviticus 24:5-9 and Deuteronomy 23:25.

God gave Israel the Sabbath after they came out of Egypt (Nehemiah 9:14, Exodus 20:8-11). It was a sign between the people of Israel and Jehovah (Exodus 31:13-17). The Sabbath was originally intended as a gift for the people. It was designed for the benefit of man, not to be a burden to him. It was a day of rest, worship, and deeds of mercy. The Sabbath was never to deprive man of necessity or rob him of any benefit. The Pharisees had taken the Law of Moses and made it



extremely burdensome and almost impossible to keep. **“There were thirty-nine classes of forbidden work with endless subdivisions and qualifications. Fingernails were not to be cut; only one letter was to be written, a bucket could be tied to a belt but not a rope. If you wore heavy shoes, every time you lifted your foot, you would be guilty of carrying a burden. It was even forbidden to eat an egg that had been laid on the Sabbath for that would be encouraging hens to break the fourth commandment!”** (Mark, By David Hewitt) The Pharisees also said that any healing had to wait until the next day unless there was a life-or-death situation.

The scribe’s interpretation of the law said that plucking heads of grain was “reaping,” rubbing them together with their hands was “threshing” and blowing away the chaff was “winnowing,” all of which were forbidden on the Sabbath.

It was a great idea for Jesus to use the story of David and the showbread in defense of their actions. If David wasn’t punished for breaking the law, why should they be? David’s example showed that human needs were supposed to take priority over rituals and laws.

3. What did the Pharisees think Jesus did wrong in Mark 3:1-5?
4. What two emotions did Jesus feel in verse 5? (It’s interesting to note that we don’t see Jesus getting mad at the sinners, but at the Pharisees.)

The word **hardening** in verse 5 suggests “moral insensibility” or callousness. The Greek word used here is the equivalent of the Latin **callus**. Both terms were used in medical language of that day for a hardening substance on a broken leg.” (Mark, by Ralph Earle)

Jewish law said that if a man transgressed once, he should be warned, but if it happened a second time, he was to be punished. For this reason, some believe that the man with the withered hand may have been planted to trap Jesus. (Two strikes ... you’re out!)

5. What was the punishment for breaking the Sabbath? Read Exodus 31:14-17.

**6.** What rules and regulations do we sometimes expect people to follow after they accept Christ that even God doesn't require of them? What's the difference between legalism and the pursuit of holiness?

**7.** Read Mark 3:6-12, Matthew 12:14-16, Luke 6:11. What facts do you find? Any interesting points?

In this section we encounter the first plot to kill Jesus. What's interesting is that the Jews and the Herodians (vs 6) did not usually get along. In fact, they wanted nothing to do with each other. The Herodians are named three times in the New Testament (Mark 12:13, Matthew 22:16). They were most likely Jews who supported Herod Antipas, the ruler of Galilee. They were in favor of the rule of the Roman Government, whereas the Pharisees were nationalists.

**8.** Why was Jesus a threat to the Pharisees?

Mark sums up Jesus' activity in this section, very vividly describing the people "pressing in on Him." He moves right into Jesus' next task.

**9.** Read Mark 3:13-19 and Luke 6:12-16. Compare Mark 3:13 with Luke 6:12. What important fact does Luke add in his account?

**10.** What does this teach us about making decisions? What does it teach us about Jesus?

**11.** Are you in the middle of making some decisions? How much time have you spent with the Lord in prayer? Why is this so important?

There was a lot of pressure on Jesus. People were bombarding Him from all directions, needing Him for many reasons. He was leading an extremely busy life. How did Jesus handle the demands? What did

Jesus do? He got alone with the Father and prayed. Vance Havner said, **“If we do not follow Christ’s example to “come apart,” we may indeed just “come apart.”**

- 12.** Is your life getting busier and busier? Do you feel pressured by anything, or like someone always needs you? How are you handling it? Do you take Christ’s example and steal away to be alone with the Father, or does the busyness seem to make that impossible?

Jesus wants you and has called you to Himself. Have you come to Him? Not only for salvation, but as a disciple (follower)? Are you willing to climb the mountain with Him? I love the picture that Mark 3:13 paints in our mind, Jesus choosing us and giving us power through the Holy Spirit (John 14:16-18). Are you willing to go with Him, wherever He takes you?

Now we are going to look at the apostles a little closer. They are an interesting bunch of characters, aren’t they? Let’s get to know them a little better.

The number twelve is very significant. There were twelve tribes that made up the nation of Israel. In choosing twelve apostles, Jesus was laying the foundation for the Church, or a new “spiritual Israel.” (Matthew 19:28, Galatians 6:16) Mark refers to this group of men as the “Twelve” ten times in his Gospel.

The word “apostle” comes from the Greek word “apostello,” which means “to send.” Here it means one who is sent out with full authority to act on behalf of another. Ted Dorman wrote, in the Lifechanges Series of Mark, “Following Jesus’ resurrection and ascension, the term apostle took on a more specialized meaning, i.e., one who was both an eyewitness to the risen Jesus and specifically commissioned by Jesus as an agent of divine revelation.” (Matthew 28:19, Acts 1:21-22, 1 Corinthians 9:1, Galatians 1:15-17).”

- 13.** Read Mark 3:13-19, Matthew 10:2-4, Luke 6:14-16 and Acts 1:13. Who were the twelve and what were they called to do?

- 14.** Name the two groups of brothers. Whose name was listed first in every list? Why? What do you know about him?

- 15.** Mark gives the Hebrew meaning of the word “Boanerges” (vs 17) for the benefit of the Roman reader. Why were James and John called the “**sons of thunder**”? Read Luke 9:51-56 and Mark 10:35-37 for help.

Bartholomew was also known as Nathaniel in John 1:45. James the son of Alphaeus was also referred to as “James the Less” (Mark 15:40). Thaddaeus was also known as Judas, the son of James (Acts 1:13). Mark called Simon the Canaanite, or some Bibles translate it as Zealot. The Zealots were a radical religious party of Jewish patriots who were secretly working to overthrow the Roman government. They were known to use extreme methods, such as murder. Josephus, a Jewish historian at the time, called them the “daggersmen.”

Judas the betrayer is left for last. Iscariot is considered to be the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew Ish-Kerioth, or the man from Kerioth. Kerioth is a town in southern Judah.

Jesus chose a very different set of men to be apostles. Can you imagine Simon the Zealot getting along with Matthew the publican, if it wasn't for Jesus?

- 16.** What does the variety of men chosen as apostles tell you about Jesus? How does it encourage you?

- 17.** The apostles were called to “**be with Him**” and to be “**sent out by Him.**” What does that tell you about preparation for service?

- 18.** Spend some time looking at your own ministry. Do you have a good balance of “being with” and “going out”? Are there any changes you need to make?

According to Luke, Jesus gave the Sermon on the Mount (Luke 7:1-8:3) right here in Mark 3, between verses 19 and 20. Mark doesn't record this most likely because he was concentrating on showing the reader what Jesus did, more than what He said.

**19.** Read Mark 3:20-21. What's happening?

Many think that Jesus and the disciples went back to Peter's house in Capernaum. They were so busy they couldn't even get a bite to eat.

**20.** His family thought He had gone crazy. Name some reasons they may have thought this.

**21.** When you accepted Christ, did your family think you were nuts? Do they still? Why do they think so? How did you handle it?

Jesus' family left for Capernaum in verses 20-21. It appears that while they were traveling, verses 25-30 take place, and then in verse 31, His family has arrived.

**22.** Read Mark 3:22-27, Matthew 12:22-24. Jesus was accused of being crazy in the section above. Now what is Jesus accused of in this section? According to Matthew 12:22-24, what had just happened?

Jerusalem was their sacred capital. Its elevation was 2500 above sea level, so whenever Jerusalem is talked about, you'll notice it always says, "**going up to Jerusalem.**" The phrase "going up" are also words that expressed honor. In our text, the scribes, who were the highly trained legal specialists of the day, "came down" about 100 miles northward to assess the situation.

A **parable** (vs 23) is from 2 Greek words meaning "to cast alongside." It is a story or figure placed alongside a teaching to help us understand its meaning. Warren Wiersbe said, "The goal of a parable is to get the listener deeply involved and compel them to make a personal decision about God's truth or their own life." (Mark 4:10-12, Matthew 13:10-17)

The name Beelzebub refers to the Philistine god of the flies. It sometimes is changed to Beelzebub, or the god of dung. It can also mean

“lord of the dwelling,” or “master.” These terms are often used as a name for the devil.

In verse 27, Jesus explains that satan is the strong man. To plunder his house, you must first overcome that strong man. Jesus is saying that He not only is opposed to the strong man (satan), He is also stronger. Think about it ... before someone can steal your “goods,” they have to tie up the owner. This is why the fact that Jesus can cast out demons is so significant. **1 John 4:4** says, “He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.” **1 John 3:8** tells us that Jesus “was manifested that He might destroy the works of the devil.” **Colossians 2:15** says that “having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them.” Jesus defeated satan on the cross. He tied up that strong man and set the captives free. (Luke 4:18) Halleluiah! He is victorious!

**23.** How do the above Scriptures bring you comfort? Encouragement? Security? Why is this so significant for us?

**24.** Read Luke 8:26-33. What does this passage tell us about demons?

**25.** What is satan’s ultimate destiny? Read Revelation 20:10.

Jesus finishes this parable with a warning to the Pharisees. There are many questions about the doctrine of the “unforgivable sin,” or the “blasphemy of the Holy Spirit.” We know that it is not just committing a “really bad” sin. Many people in Scripture committed “really bad” sins and God forgave them as they repented. This act of blasphemy is from an attitude of the heart. It is defined in the Wycliffe Bible Commentary as “an attitude that can only be a fixed, unrepentant state of mind that persists in defiant rejection of the overtures of the Holy Spirit.” It is “the ongoing, continual rejection of the witness of the Holy Spirit to the Divinity and Saviorhood of Christ.” (Hughes) In my words, it is the willingly, final rejection of Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior! One can hear the Gospel over and over, even know the Scriptures, and continue to reject the Lord. That is the only sin that cannot be forgiven. The Jewish nation rejected God the Father, the testimony of the Son, and now they rejected their final call, the Holy Spirit.

- 26.** Can a Christian commit this sin? Why or why not? (What does it most likely mean if you're worried that you've done it?)
- 27.** Read Mark 3:31-35, Matthew 12:46-50, Luke 8:19-21. Jesus' family traveled about 30 miles from Nazareth to see Him. Do you think they fully understood His mission?
- 28.** Does Jesus' response to His family seem harsh to you? Also read Luke 14:26. How do you balance this with Exodus 20:12? What point is Jesus making?

Mark 6:3 tells us that Jesus had other half brothers and sisters. We know that they were not believers (John 7:1-15) at this time. James became a believer after the resurrection of Christ and became a leader in the church at Jerusalem (1 Corinthians 15:7, Acts 15). We never hear about Jesus' father Joseph being alive during His ministry. In Mark 6:3, Jesus is referred to as "Mary's son" which is very unusual in the Jewish culture. The family unit was sacred in the Jewish culture. Most scholars believe that Joseph died before Jesus began His public ministry.

- 29.** Was Jesus saying to cut off all family ties? (Read John 19:26-27)

When we accept Christ, we enter a new spiritual family (John 3:1-7, 1 Peter 1:22-25), the family of God. We have many new brothers and sisters in Christ. We share an eternal hope and faith in Jesus Christ. Isn't that awesome? (I've always wanted a big family!) Jesus doesn't mean that we should sever our natural family ties but is emphasizing that our relationship with Him needs to come first, before anyone or anything ... even family.

- 30.** How did this chapter challenge you as a wife, mother, friend, or simply a Christian?

# LESSON 6

Jesus is having one busy day. He still doesn't rest ... there's work to be done! In chapter 4, Jesus makes His way to the Sea of Galilee to do some teaching. I wish we all could take a trip together to Israel and take a fishing boat out on the Sea of Galilee. It's an absolutely breathtaking experience. The Sea had a sloping bank, which created a natural open-air theater that carried His voice up the hill. As Jesus addresses the people on the shore, you can picture a farmer over to the side, sowing seeds of wheat. Maybe Jesus pointed to the man ... "Look! Behold!" ... then went on to talk to them in parables, using a sower as a springboard to teach them about the condition of their hearts. Can't you just see it?

Because Mark was more concerned with what Jesus **did** than with what He said, he recorded more miracles than parables. The Parable of the Sower, however, is recorded in each of the synoptic Gospels.

**Memory Verse of the Week:** "But the ones that fell on the good ground are those who, having heard the word with a noble and good heart, keep it and bear fruit with patience." Luke 8:15

1. Read through Mark 4:1-20 a few times. What facts do you find?  
Where is the story taking place? Who was He talking to?
2. Read Luke 8:4-15 and Matthew 13:1-23. What additional facts do you find in these accounts?
3. What do you think is the main thought, or point, in this section?
4. Jesus first used a parable in our lesson last week. He now begins to use them more frequently as teaching tools. Why do you think Jesus spoke in parables? Explain Mark 4:11-12 in your own words.



The word “mystery” in verse 11 is from the Greek word “mysterion.” Paul used this word twenty-one times in his writings. It doesn’t refer to a doctrine that only a few are able to understand, but a truth that is concealed by God but now revealed to His people through the Gospel. Something previously unknown that has now been revealed.

In Mark 4:12, Jesus is quoting from Isaiah 6:9-10, where God is telling Isaiah to preach judgment against Israel. He says to give them an opportunity to repent but knows that they wouldn’t. Jesus is responding to a question posed by His disciples, not to the crowd. Jesus knew the Gospel would be received by some, but not by all. He also knew it was beyond human discovery. By speaking in parables, He would sort out those who really wanted to know the truth. If they had eyes to see, they would respond, and He would give them more revelation.

We defined the word “parable” in last week’s lesson. Today I would like to give some additional information on how to interpret parables. This is taken from a book called Mark (LifeChange Series), written by Ted Dorman:

“Remember, a parable is something which is “set alongside something else in order to make a comparison between the two.” The parables of Jesus come in many forms, including stories, riddles, and even jokes. In each case, Jesus talks about something with which His listeners are familiar, then “sets it alongside” the spiritual truth He seeks to communicate. Keep in mind the following points as you read any parable:

**A.** A parable is designed to communicate one central truth. It differs from an allegory in that not every detail of the parable needs to have a “spiritual” meaning. For example, in the parable of the mustard seed (Mark 4:30-32) one ought not to seek a “spiritual meaning for details such as tree branches and the birds. Such details are “window dressing” to enliven the parable, so that the main point will be driven home with greater impact. **Don’t press every detail too far, unless the meaning is clear from the immediate context, or Jesus Himself interprets the details.**

**B.** The one central truth of the parable often calls for a response. Maybe a question will be asked. (i.e. “What sort of soil are you?”)

**C.** Since a parable refers to events and experiences familiar to its original audience, the modern-day interpreter must know something of the culture back then to grasp the full impact of the message.

**D.** The parables are not “eternal truths” dropped down from Heaven, but rather teaching devices addressed to specific situations.

**E.** A parable seeks to communicate truth indirectly. In doing so it requires the listener to ponder the meaning of the story, rather than giving the meaning directly.

At times, Jesus’ disciples could understand a parable only by asking Jesus for its meaning (Mark 4:10). Many other listeners did not bother to ask Jesus about the parables, however. Thus, Jesus used parables not only as a device to communicate a message, but also as a catalyst to draw people to Himself. To those who responded by following Him, He gave further insight. To those who did not inquire further into the meaning of the parables of the Kingdom, Jesus’ words remained clever stories, but little more (Mark 4:11).

**5.** What do you think is the central truth in the Parable of the Soils?

**6.** How did the people closest to Him respond? (Mark 4:10)

**7.** What immediate applications do you see for your own life?

**8.** Now let’s dig a little deeper. Read Mark 4:1-20 again. Explain in your own words the four kinds of soils, the different types of hearers, and what happened to the seed.

### **Soil #1**

### **Soil #2**

### **Soil #3**

### **Soil #4**

9. What does the seed represent? (Luke 8:11)

10. Who is the Sower? (1 Corinthians 3:5-9)

11. What does the soil represent?

**Notice that the sower and the seed stay the same. It's the condition of the soil that accounts for the different results.**

12. Physically speaking, how do you get "good ground"? What needs to be done to break up hard ground?

13. Describe a person with a "wayside," or a hard heart.

**"Stony ground"** represents the thin soil on top of a ledge of solid limestone bedrock that lays close to the surface, creating a natural "hot bed." This would cause the seed to spring up quickly, but without much root. When the sun came, it would dry out the soil because it was so thin.

This soil represents an "emotional" hearer of the Gospel. Often, they are quick to respond to the message, but just as quickly they turn away when problems arise. Their roots are not "grounded" in the Word, giving them no depth or stability.

14. How deep are your roots? Do you respond to the difficulties of life emotionally, or do you make your decisions according to the Word of God?

The **“thorny”** soil represents those who receive the Gospel, but their desire for wealth and other things of the world crowds out the good seed. It could be considered a “crowded” heart because the hearer makes room for many “seeds.” They want the best of both worlds, but their desires for the world kill the good seed.

- 15.** What types of things today can “choke out” the fruit in our life? Are there any “seeds of the world” that are trying to keep you from growing spiritually? What should you do?
- 16.** The seed that fell on the good ground produced fruit. (None of the other soils did.) Did it all produce the same amount? Why does some produce more fruit?
- 17.** Is there fruit in your life? Do you have the inward fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5) and the outward fruit of winning souls to Christ (Proverbs 11:30)?
- 18.** Although the good soil represents the regenerated life, figuratively speaking, which soil describes the condition of your heart right now? Why?

It is very interesting to note that all 4 soils were influenced by different enemies. The seed was stolen by the devil in the wayside soil, influenced by the flesh in the stony soil, and the things of the world crowded out the seed in the thorny soil.

- 19.** Read Ephesians 2:1-3. How are we influenced by the same things today?
- 20.** Now Jesus uses another very common object to illustrate His point. Read Mark 4:21-25 and Luke 8:16-18. What do you think is the main point of this parable?

In the Parable of the Soils, Jesus shows them that the good soil will produce fruit. It will be seen and enjoyed by others. The sower will reap a Harvest! The Gospel of Jesus Christ is the same. It is not to be hidden away so others can't see. It is to be shared with others so they, too, can benefit and reap the blessings of a relationship with Jesus Christ!

**21.** Why would it be ridiculous to hide a lamp under the bed? Isn't it ridiculous to hide the truth from people we love? What, if anything, is keeping you from sharing the truth with those around you?

**22.** How do Christians today hide their light under a basket?

**23.** Is the light of the Lord "blazing brightly" from your life, or is it "barely burning"? What changes need to be made, if any? How can you shine brighter??

**William Barclay said,  
"A lamp is meant to be seen, and to make men able to see."  
Does that describe your life?**

**24.** Read Matthew 5:14-16 and fill in the blanks:

"You are the \_\_\_\_ of the world. A \_\_\_\_ that is set on a hill cannot be \_\_\_\_\_. Nor do they \_\_\_\_ a \_\_\_\_ and put it under a \_\_\_\_\_, but on a lampstand, and it gives \_\_\_\_\_ to all who are in the house. \_\_\_\_ your \_\_\_\_\_ shine before \_\_\_, that they may see your good \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ your \_\_\_\_\_ in Heaven."

**25.** How is it possible to glorify ourselves in our works, rather than God? Be specific.

Verses 24-25 are interesting. Jesus is warning the disciples to be careful how well they hear and how they judge (Matthew 7:2), because they will be dealt with like they deal with others. Jesus also said that as

the disciples share the light they have received, they will receive more light from the Lord. Ironside said that “It is the law of the kingdom that to him who uses well what he has, more will be imparted, and he who has nothing but an empty profession will, at the last, be stripped even of that.”

- 26.** Now let’s read Mark 4:26-29. This parable is only found in the Gospel of Mark. What would you title this parable? What do you think is the central truth?
- 27.** According to this parable, can a farmer “make” a seed grow? Can they really even understand how it grows? Who is responsible for the growth? (1 Corinthians 3:7)
- 28.** According to verse 28, will the growth be gradual or fast? What does this teach us about patience?
- 29.** How does this example from nature parallel to the Kingdom of God?
- 30.** Read Mark 4:30-32 and Matthew 13:31-32. What is the central truth of this parable?

A mustard seed is the smallest seed known to the farmers in Galilee, although it could grow into a plant as high as ten feet! In an herb garden, the mustard seed is considered the “least of all.”

- 31.** Why does Jesus compare the Kingdom of God to a small seed that grows tremendously? What does this tell us about the size and the influence of the church?

**32.** What encouragement do you find in these parables? What challenges?

Jesus said that the growth of the church would be gradual and mysterious, as well as invisible at times. This description was very different from what the Jews were expecting. They expected the Messiah to come as a King who would establish His rule of righteousness here on earth.

Scholars differ in their interpretation of the “birds of the air” in verse 32. Some believe that they represent satan and his demons, who first devoured the good seed in the parable of the soils, and are now waiting to invade the church, ready to rip it off. Others see the birds as a reference to the Gentiles finding their place in the Kingdom. Birds liked to eat the little black seeds of a mustard tree and would often gather in its branches.

**33.** Read Mark 4:33-34. What does this tell us about Jesus?

**34.** Why do you think Mark put these parables in this order? Is there a connection, or a flow of thought?

**35.** How does Jesus’ use of parables as a teaching method challenge you in how you share with others? What did you learn?

# LESSON 7

In last week's lesson, Jesus explained the Kingdom of God to His disciples using parables. Now, beginning in Mark 4:35, Jesus' words are followed up by His works. He performed many miracles during His time in Galilee.

This first section we will be studying (Mark 4:35-41) happens to be one of my very favorite stories in the New Testament. It reveals so much to us about Jesus, as well as about our own hearts. May God speak to your heart this week as you read about the many miracles Jesus did, knowing that Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever. He can still calm any storm that blows your way.

**Memory Verse of the Week:** "Who can this be, that even the wind and the sea obey Him!" Mark 4:41

1. Read Mark 4:35-41, Matthew 8:23-27, and Luke 8:22-25. Using all three accounts, write your observations. What is happening? Who is involved in the story? Where did it happen? What time of day is it?
2. Why do you think Mark mentions the pillow?
3. What does this story teach us about Jesus' humanity? His divinity?
4. Why were the disciples upset?
5. How did Jesus respond to them? How did they react to that response?



It was about a six-to-eight-mile boat ride to the “other side.” The storm must have been very violent because the seasoned fishermen aboard would have been used to experiencing storms when out at sea. They had already seen Jesus do many miracles, yet they still lacked faith. His apparent “lack of involvement” in their situation caused them to be afraid. (This is the only time in the Gospels that it says Jesus slept.) They temporarily “forgot” to trust Him. (Sound familiar?) In verse 35, Jesus had told them to go to the other side. Did they doubt His Word?

6. Does it ever seem like Jesus is “sleeping” when storms are raging in your life? What can you learn from this section? In what ways can you identify with the fearful disciples?
7. Who else said these same words ... “Lord, don’t you care?” Read Luke 10:38-42. What was Jesus’ counsel to her? Have you ever felt the same way? What does it mean to “choose the better part”? Are you doing it?
8. Did the fact that they were hit by a storm mean that they were being disobedient? Why or why not?
9. Are you in the middle of a storm today? Read John 14:27 and Psalm 46:10. Can you “be still” like the waves, knowing that He’s with you, and His presence is what brings the peace in the middle of the storm? The HOPE is in the boat!
10. What woke Jesus up from His sleep? How does that encourage you? How has God proven Himself faithful to you during a difficult time?

Don’t you love this section? Can you just imagine what it would’ve been like to see Jesus calm the storm? Can you hear the sound of the waves dying down to a low hush? How would you have reacted? What would you have done? I’m sure I would’ve been as afraid as the disciples. I rejoice because the God I serve can still command the wind and the sea to obey Him. **Jeremy Taylor** said, “We are far safer in the

middle of the storm with God than anywhere else without Him.” Amen to that.

“The rush of the storm and the sweep of the wind did not wake Him; but the touch of the trembling hand and the cry of men in trouble, did.” (G. Campbell Morgan)

We end this section with the disciples saying, “Who can this be?” Think about it. They saw an exhausted man, desperate for sleep. Then they saw Him wake up with enough power to calm a violent storm with a single word. I’m sure they were truly amazed. They saw a man with power over nature, and now they were going to see a man with power over demons. Who could this be ... except God?

- 11.** Read Mark 5:1-20, Matthew 8:28-34, and Luke 8:26-39. Notice how much more detailed Mark’s account is. Why do you think so? Write down your observations of the story. Notice that Matthew mentions two men instead of one. This is not a discrepancy. Mark simply chose to talk about the one who was probably being demonized the most.

The name Gadarenes, or Gergesenes, is given to the territory to the east of the Sea of Galilee. The city Gadara was the capital of the Roman province of Perara, six miles from the Sea of Galilee. Some commentators believe this to be Gentile territory, while others believe this to be a place where there was a mix of both Jew and Gentile. This would account for the large number of swine that were there. Pigs were unclean animals as far as the Jews were concerned but could be eaten by Gentiles.

I don’t know about you, but if this is what I encountered the minute I stepped off a boat, I would probably jump right back on and set sail as fast as I could! But not Jesus. Jesus shows His tremendous power by delivering this poor man.

- 12.** Why do you think Mark elaborates on the fact that this man could not be bound? What does this say about Jesus? About demons?

- 13.** Describe the man’s physical condition and his home.

- 14.** Did he recognize Jesus? (Read James 2:19.) What name does the demon call himself?

The man had been living in old tombs that were cut out of limestone, amidst many bones and the smell of decay. In those days, it was believed that these tombs were the place that demons “hung out.” This story gives us a gruesome picture of this demonized man who was crying out for help. No one could help him. No one, but One ...

The word “legion” is used for a group of Roman soldiers consisting of about 6,000. This is used to show that there were many demons inside this man, rather than only one.

- 15.** Why do you think the demons asked to enter the swine? (It’s important to note that the demons had to have permission from Jesus.)
- 16.** What could be some of the reasons that Jesus allowed the demons to have their wish? (Did He just hate pigs?)
- 17.** As a result, how did that affect:
- a.** the man?
  - b.** the demons?
  - c.** the swine?
  - d.** the swine feeders?
  - e.** Jesus?
- 18.** What was the reaction of:
- a.** the swine feeders?
  - b.** the country people?
- 19.** Why do you think they wanted Jesus to leave? How would His presence affect their business?
- 20.** According to Luke 8:35, what did the man do after he was delivered? How did his physical appearance change?

**21.** In previous chapters, Jesus didn't want the people to make Him known. Now He wants this man to go and tell everyone in his hometown what happened. Why the difference? Why would he be so effective in his own town?

The townspeople didn't want Jesus to interfere with their lives. People today often don't want to accept Jesus because they don't want Him to interfere in their lives either. He might require them to give up something, move somewhere, or change a bad habit. Even Christians today sometimes like to keep Jesus at arm's length, only letting Him in when they need help.

**22.** Are you keeping Jesus out of a certain area of your life? Why? Has He asked something of you that you aren't willing to give? Have you asked Him not to be involved in your work? Schooling? Etc.?

The word "Decapolis" in verse 20 means "ten cities." This name referred to a league of cities that were east of the Jordan Valley and the Sea of Galilee, except for Scythopolis, which is on the west side of the river. The man who was healed actually prepared the way for Jesus' later ministry in the Decapolis (Mark 7:31).

Why did the swine have to die? Many believe that this was a testimony to the ex-demonized man that God had really delivered him, and he was set free! He was a testimony of Jesus' healing power to everyone who knew him, as well as to us today. Jesus defeated the work of the demons, making a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them (Colossian 2:15). Jesus can heal anyone, of anything, at any time. Whether it's your marriage, your finances, or your health, Jesus can still set you free and put the pieces of your life back together. Are you running to Him with your shackles and chains?

So far, we've seen Jesus' power over nature and His power over demons. Now we will read about His power over disease.

**23.** Read Mark 5:21-24, Matthew 9:18-19, and Luke 8:41-42. Whose daughter was sick? How old was she?

**24.** What did he want from Jesus?

A Synagogue ruler was a layman that had certain administrative responsibilities to the building. He was well known as a very important person. As Jesus makes His way towards Jairus' home, Mark adds a parenthesis from verses 25-34, telling us what happened on the way.

**25.** Now read Mark 5:21-34, Matthew 9:20-22, and Luke 8:43-48. Describe the situation.

**26.** How was the woman healed? Why do you think she hesitated to tell Jesus who she was? Why did Jesus make it public?

Not only was this woman's bleeding uncomfortable, it made her ceremonial unclean (Leviticus 15:25-27), which would make her unable to worship God publicly. She also would have been cut off from fellowshiping with her friends. The woman in our story had heard about Jesus (vs 27). She believed that if she touched His garment, He could heal her. She had faith. Jesus wanted her to be sure to know that it wasn't her faith in His garment that healed her, but Jesus Himself (vs 34). Her situation must have seemed hopeless to her, but Jesus offered her hope. He offers us the same hope today.

**27.** Are you in a hopeless situation? Does it seem like there's no way to fix the problem? Whom should you trust? Do you believe that the Lord can do anything? Do you go to Him and touch His garment when you're in need? Read Hebrews 4:16, Psalm 34:15, and Psalm 121:1-2. How do these verses encourage you?

**28.** What did Jesus call her in Mark 5:34? What does this seem to imply?

God is not a respecter of persons. No matter what your social class, race, age, or marital status, Jesus is there for anyone who asks. Whether you're well known or feel like an outcast, Jesus loves you and cares about your needs.

**29.** Have you ever felt like an “outcast,” or not “good” enough to come to Christ with your problems? Read Acts 10:34, 1 Peter 1:17, and Romans 2:11. What do these verses say?

**30.** Read James 2:1-13. What are we supposed to be careful of? Why?

Jesus made a short stop on the way to Jairus’ house to heal this woman with the issue of blood. Before He started on His way, the news of the daughter’s death was brought to Him. I wonder what Jairus was thinking. What if we hadn’t stopped ...

In our section we see a desperate request, a devastating report, and a delightful result! Let’s keep reading, shall we?

**31.** Read Mark 5:35-43, Matthew 9:23-26 and Luke 8:49-56. Describe the scene at the house. Who was there? What was happening? How old was the child? What detail does Matthew add for color?

**32.** How do you think Jairus felt when Jesus stopped to minister to the woman? How do you think he felt when he heard about the death of his daughter? (How would you feel?)

In verse 36, the word “heard” is better translated as “ignored” or “neglected to hear.” Jesus basically paid no attention to the comment of the messenger. He spoke directly to Jairus.

**33.** Why do you think Jesus waited until the child was dead?

**34.** Who did Jesus allow to go with Him into the child’s room? Why do you think He took just three, instead of doing it in front of the whole crowd? When were those three also together? Read Mark 9:2 and 14:32-33.

Jesus spoke to the girl in Aramaic, which was probably the common spoken language of His day. The word “I” in His statement is important, emphasizing that it was Jesus who had the power over death. It’s interesting to also note that Jesus made sure she had something to eat when she awoke. It’s obvious by this how much Jesus also cares about our physical health.

**35. How did the news get out? (Matthew 9:26)**

These two miracles symbolize two kinds of sinners. The woman came to Jesus out of a sense of need, while Jairus came to Jesus with a sense of helplessness. Jesus is there for us, no matter why we come.

**36. Are you feeling a sense of “helplessness”? Are you ready to come to Jesus for help? Can you be patient, like Jairus was forced to be? What do you learn from the healing of Jairus’ daughter?**

In this chapter, we bore witness to the deity of Christ by His power over nature, satan, disease, and now death. All the people involved were beyond any human help. God was, and is, the only one who is sufficient for all. 1 Corinthians 15:28 says that God is **“all in all.”** Paul also says in 2 Corinthians 4:5 “... not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as being from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God.”

**37. Define the statement, “God is sufficient.” Give some true examples from your own life where you’ve been a witness to this truth.**

Jesus wanted to keep this miracle quiet. He didn’t want to be known for His miracles instead of His message. But He always had a compassionate heart toward people.

We don’t hear any more in Scripture about Jairus, his wife, or his daughter. Although we’d like to believe that they all became believers, we honestly don’t know. We know that Jesus gave a word of hope to this man with a dying daughter. What word of hope has He given to you this week?

# LESSON 8

In our lesson this week, Jesus returns to His hometown of Nazareth, which is about a 20-mile walk. Jesus had returned to Nazareth once before but had been thrown out of the city (Luke 4:16-30). Jesus had a lot of guts, wouldn't you say? I sure wouldn't have gone back to a place where the people tried to throw me over a cliff (Luke 4:29)! But Jesus had grown up with these people for 30 years, and He loved them. It was time to give them another opportunity to hear the Word. Let's see how they respond to Him this time.

**Memory Verse of the Week:** "And Jesus, when He came out, saw a great multitude and was moved with compassion for them, because they were like sheep not having a shepherd." Mark 6:34

1. Read Mark 6:1-6 and Matthew 13:54-58. Write your observations. (Who? What? Where? When? Why?)
2. Explain the reaction of the people. Why did they feel this way?
3. What had been Jesus' occupation before His public ministry? (This is the only reference to His occupation.)
4. The word "offended" meant "to stumble over." Jesus became a rock that caused many to stumble. Read Isaiah 8:14, 1 Peter 2:7-8, and Romans 9:32-33. In your own words, explain what is meant by this.

Here we notice again the reference to Jesus' brothers and sisters. James later became a "pillar" in the church of Jerusalem (Acts 15:13-21), and Judas became the author of the New Testament Epistle, "Jude." Also notice that Jesus is referred to as the "son of Mary." This was most likely an insult, because you were usually identified by calling you "the son of your father," even if he was deceased.



5. Why was it so difficult for them to believe that Jesus could be the Messiah? What does Jesus mean by His statement in verse 4? (Also John 4:44, John 1:11)

You may be familiar with the old saying, “**Familiarity breeds contempt.**” Jesus had grown up with these people. He was a carpenter, which was usually a very integral part of the community, so He was probably well-known. They knew His family; they knew He hadn’t gone to school to obtain all this knowledge; they thought they knew Him well. But they didn’t. They had an inadequate view of Jesus -- they knew Him so well, yet not at all. Because He was so familiar to them, they couldn’t believe that He, a working man, one of them, could actually be the Messiah. After all, this man came from a little country town of Nazareth, a Podunk place in the hills of Galilee. We remember the popular words spoken by Nathanael in John 1:46, “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?”

The phrase, “**Familiarity breeds contempt**” holds true today. After we’re saved, many people that know us well have a hard time believing that we have changed and are no longer the same person they once knew. They don’t understand why we think differently and act differently. They think they know us, yet they don’t at all.

6. Have you seen an example of this in your own life? Have you ever shared with a family member and received the same response?

How sad Jesus must have been. Mark 6:6 says that He marveled. Jesus only marveled one other time in Scripture, in Matthew 8:10-12. In Mark, Jesus is amazed at the unbelief of the people, and in Matthew, He is amazed at the faith of a Gentile Centurion.

I like what Kent Hughes said in his commentary on Mark. He states, “Let me make it clear: Jesus **could** not do miracles because He **would** not. Omnipotence is not omnipotence if it is bound by anything but its own will. Jesus was morally compelled not to show His power. Unbelief freezes the exercise of God’s power.”

7. What can you learn from Jesus in regard to ministering to your family?

Remember in Mark 3:14, Jesus appointed the twelve to be with Him, and to go out from Him. It was now time for them to be commissioned to go out into the world. They were now going to receive some on-the-job training!

**8.** Read Mark 6:7-13. Also read Matthew 10:1-42 and Luke 9:1-6.

Record your observations. What facts do you notice?

**9.** Why do you think Jesus sent the disciples out by twos? Read Deuteronomy 17:6, 19:15, Numbers 35:30 and Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 to help with your answer.

John the Baptist sent his disciples out by twos (Luke 7:18-19), as well as the leaders of the early church (Acts 13:2-3, 15:39-41, 19:22). I believe it's still a good practice for the church today.

**10.** What commands were they given for the journey? Why do you think they were being told to "travel light"?

This was definitely not a "pleasure cruise." There was a sense of urgency; there was no time to waste. They were called to depend on Him alone for their provisions and not to change houses for self-comfort. They were to depend on Christ for all!

In reference to verse 11, G. Campbell Morgan said, "... this was not done as a personal animosity, but as a testimony to show the seriousness of rejecting the message of the Son of God."

Jesus basically shook the dust off His feet when He left Nazareth. Paul and Barnabas did the same in Acts 13:51 when they were expelled from Antioch.

**11.** What does this mean to us today? How do you react when your message is not received?

Jesus gave them the authority to do His work, as well as the ability (Mark 6:13). We can do great things in His name and in His strength. (2 Corinthians 3:5, John 15:5).

**12.** Read Mark 6:14-31. Mark puts verses 17-29 in parenthesis to explain what happened. Read this section and record your observations. What interesting facts do you find? Who are the main characters? Why is this inserted here? Where did this happen? Also read Matthew 14:1-12, Luke 9:7-9.

**13.** As you read this section through, do you see any immediate application for yourself? How does it apply to you?

The work of the disciples was causing a stir. The news of all that was happening reached Herod's ears and made him curious, as well as scared! (He must have believed in ghosts!)

**14.** Read through Mark 6:14-29 again. Why did Herod think Jesus was John the Baptist?

**15.** Why did some think Jesus was Elijah? Read Malachi 4:5-6 for help.

This may be the only passage in the Gospel of Mark that doesn't focus on Jesus. It does, however, give us some insight to whom the people thought Jesus was. The disciples used the same three examples when Jesus asked them whom the people were saying He was (Mark 8:27-28).

**16.** After reading this story, what kind of man do you think Herod was? How would you describe him? How would you describe Herodias?

There are various "Herods" in the Bible. In our chapter, we meet Herod Antipas, son of Herod the Great. He was the one who attempted to kill the baby Jesus (Matthew 2:16). When Herod the Great died, his kingdom was divided between his three sons. Judea and Samaria were given to Archelaus; Philip, (the husband of Herodias) received the northeastern territory; and Antipas governed Galilee and Perea. Even

though Mark refers to him as king, that was really not his role. Herod Antipas was actually a tetrarch, which is a ruler over a fourth part of the kingdom (Matthew 14:1). It was the custom in Rome to refer to all native rulers in the East as kings. (Remember that Mark is writing his Gospel to the Romans)

Herodias was the daughter of Aristobulos, son of Herod the Great and half brother of Antipas. Herodias was Herod Antipas' niece. The Law of Moses allowed marriage to one's niece, but not marriage to the wife of one's living brother (Leviticus 18:16). Herod's family was part Jewish and was, politically speaking, the royal house of Israel. Because of this, John believed they were to be subject to the Mosaic Law. (Mark, LifeChange Series)

**17.** What does Jesus call Herod in Luke 13:31-32? Describe Jesus' one and only meeting with Herod (Luke 23:6-12).

**18.** Who, or what, did Herod have a fear of? Did John the Baptist have the same fears? How do we know?

Herodias' daughter's name was Salome, according to Josephus, a Jewish historian of the time. It was unheard of for members of the royal family to dance at this type of feast. Herodias had nursed such an awful grudge that she stooped so low as to use her daughter to get even with this man. Herod had tried his best to protect John the Baptist, but Herodias outsmarted him. He may have wanted to do what was right, but he feared the people and the consequences more. (I wonder whose idea it was to put the head on the platter, Herodias' or the daughter?)

**19.** Do you ever find yourself in a situation where you know what the right thing to do is, but you are too scared of the consequences, or what others may think?

**20.** How did Herod feel about this whole mess, in Mark 6:26? (This is the same word used in Mark 14:34)

You have to admire John the Baptist. He certainly was truthful, bold, honest, straightforward, and unafraid of the consequences that

came with speaking the truth. John was outspoken about things that mattered. Are we? I pray that each of us would live our lives doing as Jesus would do, rather than worrying about what man might think of us.

**21.** Read Mark 6:30-31. Also read Luke 9:10. Where did Jesus take the disciples? Why?

**22.** Why is being “by yourself and resting awhile” still an important principle for us today? How is work and rest related in Christian service? Is it admirable to “work yourself to death”?

**“If you don’t come apart and rest, you will come apart.”**

(Vance Havner)

**23.** Have you been getting the rest you need, or are you coming apart? What changes can you make to find the right balance? (Yikes! This one hits home!)

Although the word “apostle” is used over 80 times in the New Testament, this is the only time Mark uses this term.

Jesus had compassion on the disciples and made them take a rest. He knew when they were tired. He knows when you need a rest, too! He knows every one of our needs, and He wants to be the need-meeter for each of us.

I’m saddened when I read about the death of John the Baptist, but at the same time I am thankful for the example he is to us. Jesus was so right when He said, “There has been no prophet greater than he!” May the Lord fill us with His Spirit and give us the boldness to proclaim His truth wherever we go!

**24.** Read Mark 6:32-44, Matthew 14:13-21, Luke 9:11-17, and John 6:1-14. Record the facts and details you find. Specifically note any details the other Gospel accounts add.

Mark tells us the grass was green, telling us that it was spring time, probably mid-April. John tells us the “the Jewish Passover was near” (John 6:4).

25. Explain the problem. What solution did the apostles offer? What solution did Jesus offer? Was Jesus surprised by the problem? (John 6:6) What does this tell you about His knowledge of what you’re going through?

\*\*\*One denarii was usually a daily wage for a hired hand. 200 denarii was about 8 months’ wages.\*\*\*

26. Where did they find this fish? Who found them? (John 6:9) How many people were fed? (Matthew 14:21)

27. What was the difference between how Jesus saw the people, and how the disciples saw them?

The apostles came up against a seemingly impossible situation. They still hadn’t learned that Jesus could do anything. They were focused on the problem, not on the problem solver. Warren Wiersbe said, **“Jesus looked at the situation as an opportunity to trust the Father and glorify His name. The first step is not to measure our resources, but to determine God’s will and trust Him to meet the need.”** How true! How often we forget that it’s God who meets the need, not us. I can’t fault the apostles for the way they handled the situation. I truly believe that I would have panicked as much as they did and tried to figure out how I could fix the problem. What do you think you would have done?

28. How do you look at situations that seem impossible? (Maybe you’re in one right now!) Have you been looking for God’s will, or looking to your own resources for the solutions?

Although Jesus and the disciples were planning on resting, Jesus didn't see the interruption as a problem. Often, our rest, even though we may need it, has to be sacrificed to minister to the people God brings to us. Jesus had no resentment for the people but saw them as "sheep without a shepherd." Ralph Earle said, **"Jesus did not look at a crowd as a mass or a mob. He saw them as individuals needing help."**

**29.** How do you see people? Do you see them with compassion as Jesus did, or as interruptions in your schedule? Ask the Lord to give you eyes that see others as He does.

John tells us that the loaves were made of barley (John 6:9). The loaves were usually more of a small, flat bun, and many could be eaten at one meal.

According to Irving Jensen, the tense of the Greek verb for "gave" in Mark 6:41 means "kept giving." This would mean that the miracle of multiplication took place in the hands of Jesus, not the hands of the apostles. This shows us that **"little is much"** in the hands of Jesus! The boy was willing to give what he had, however small it was, to Jesus.

**30.** Have you committed what you have to the Savior? How is this boy an example to us of what we give to the Lord to use for His service? Are you using your gifts to glorify Him? Be specific. Do you ever fall into the trap of thinking you have nothing to give? Remember ... if you have little, He can do much. The power is in His hands!

Notice that Jesus gave the command and the apostles obeyed. God works the same way today. The command and the power come from Him, we are merely the instruments He uses to accomplish His will. But, boy, does He love us instruments!

**31.** What's your biggest take-away from this week's lesson?

# LESSON 9

In our study last week, we left the disciples collecting the leftovers from the 5,000 people that were fed by Jesus. Not only were all the people fed, they were also satisfied. And not only were they satisfied, there was left-overs! Amazing!

I'm sure the disciples were on a spiritual high, totally excited about what they had just seen. And in the midst of their excitement, Jesus decides that it's time to go. Let's read about another miracle on the sea.

**Memory Verse of the Week:** "Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid." Mark 6:50b

1. Read Mark 6:45-52, Matthew 14:22-33, and John 6:15-21. Record all your observations.

Mark tells us that Jesus "compelled" the disciples to go, suggesting they may have been a little reluctant. We sense an urgency from Jesus here. He sends them off towards Bethsaida, a village on the northern shore of the Sea of Galilee, east of Capernaum. Mark 6:48 says that it was about the "fourth watch" of the night. According to Roman custom, the night was divided into four "watches" of about three hours each. The fourth watch would be sometime between 3:00 a.m. and 6:00 a.m.

2. According to John 6:15, why did Jesus send them away? What was Jesus going to do?
3. When the disciples saw Jesus walking on the water, what was their reaction? Did they handle the situation calmly?
4. Why do you think Jesus was going to pass them by?



5. When did Peter begin to sink? Where was his focus?

Peter is often given a bad rap because he sank due to his unbelief. But I tell you what, he made it farther than I ever have! He did take a few steps of faith. People are very quick to judge Peter, but let's put ourselves in his position. After all, have you ever walked on water? Have you ever taken your eyes off the Lord?

It's very important to remember that it was **Jesus** who sent the disciples straight into the storm. They were obeying His will for them. So often when storms hit our lives, we automatically believe that either we've sinned or that we are out of God's will and we're going the wrong way. Jesus wanted to teach His disciples to trust Him. I believe we have the same lesson to learn, don't you?

The disciples were "**straining**" or "**toiling**" as they rowed. They were fighting hard against the storm. This was very hard work! It's not always easy to follow God's will. Sometimes the rowing gets very difficult. But the words Jesus used to comfort His disciples are for you and me today.

6. What was Jesus' response? How do His words bring you comfort today in whatever situation you're in? How does this story minister to you?

In verse 52, Mark says that they "had not understood about the loaves, because their heart was hardened." Mark was saying that if the disciples had really understood the significance of the feeding of the 5,000 and understood who Jesus was, they wouldn't have been so surprised that Jesus was able to walk on water or that the wind immediately stopped when He got on the boat. They just didn't quite get it yet.

7. Read Mark 6:53-56. Describe the kind of welcome Jesus encountered when He came to Gennesaret. Why did they react like that?

The plain of Gennesaret was located on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee, not far south of Capernaum. This place was one of the most fertile places in Palestine.

Remember back in Mark chapter 2 and 3, Jesus encountered some controversy with the Pharisees over some healing on the Sabbath. Well, guess what? The Pharisees are back, but now they're ready with a new attack approach ... eating with defiled hands. They traveled about 100 miles from Jerusalem to find out what was going on. The enemies are now beginning to close in on Him.

8. Read Mark 7:1-23. Record your observations.

9. What accusations did the Pharisees bring? What was Jesus' response? What does He accuse them of?

The washing of hands wasn't a hygiene issue to the Pharisees, but a matter of religious ritual. The phrase "tradition of the elders" refers to spoken teachings or oral traditions handed down over the years by the rabbis. In his commentary on Mark, David Hewitt writes:

"During the late second century AD, these oral teachings were written down in what was called the Mishnah, a book of six divisions – agriculture, festivals, marriage, civil life, crime and ceremonies. To this was added a commentary called the Gemara. The Mishnah and the Gemara together formed the Talmud. This vast collection of teaching contained 248 commandments (thou shalts!) and 365 ('thou shalt nots!'). It was handed down from generation to generation, and the Pharisees came to believe that it had been given to Moses at Sinai along with the written law of the Old Testament. They were placed alongside one another and considered equally important and equally authoritative. In practice, the Talmud with its many details tended to smother the Scriptures and outweigh them in value."

How did this happen, you may ask? **William Barclay** writes, "Originally, for the Jew, the Law meant two things; it meant, first and foremost, the Ten Commandments; and second, the first five books of the Old Testament, or, as they are called, the Pentateuch. Now it is true that the Pentateuch contains a certain number of detailed regulations and instructions; but, in a matter of moral question, what is laid down is a series of great moral principles which a man must interpret and apply for himself. A class of legal experts, known as the Scribes, were not content with moral principles. They had a passion for definition. They wanted these great principles amplified, expanded, broken down until

they were thousands and thousands of little rules and regulations governing every possible action and every possible situation in life. These rules and regulations were not written down until long after the time of Christ.”

**Even though the rabbis originally intended to protect the law of Moses by guarding it with rules to govern every detail of their lives, it became a burden too heavy for anyone to bear (Acts 15:10).**

If their hands were not washed, they would be considered “ceremonially unclean.” They were required to wash them, as well as the vessels, in a very specific way, with a specific amount of water, hand position, etc. The Mishnah contained over 30 chapters on the cleansing of vessels.

Jesus quotes the prophet Isaiah (Isaiah 29:13) and the Law of Moses (Exodus 20:12, 21:17, Leviticus 20:9). How could they argue with the two? He then goes on to show them how they were breaking what God meant by the Fifth Commandment.

In verse 11, Mark explains to his Gentile readers the meaning of the Hebrew word “Corban.” It is a technical term meaning “devoted to God” or “something vowed to God.” The Jewish people had a custom that enabled them to get out of their obligation of taking care of their mother and father. All they had to do was say that their money or property was “Corban,” which meant the money was going to the temple, and they were free. It was as if it had already been laid on the altar and had become the property of God. The money was rarely actually given, and the oath was considered binding, even if said in a rash way. It could never again be used for any ordinary purpose. This was a man-made tradition to get out of their God-given responsibility.

**10. How can we be guilty of the same thing today? Do we look for loop holes to get out of our God-given responsibilities? Be honest ...**

Personal holiness has always been more than obeying some external rules. Warren Wiersbe puts it this way: “In every period of history, true holiness has always been a matter of the heart, a right relationship with God by faith. Ceremonial purity was a matter of external obedience to a law as evidence of that faith (Psalm 51:6, 10, 16-17). Moses made it clear in Deuteronomy that God wanted love and obedience to come from the heart, and not merely outward obedience to rules (Deut. 6:4-5, 10:12, 30:6, 20).

Traditions are not necessarily bad. Traditions can be very helpful in many ways. But traditions should never replace what is Biblical. We need to make sure our beliefs and ideas come from God's Word, and not the traditions we've grown up with. David Hewitt said, **"Scripture is primary and authoritative, whereas tradition is secondary and must remain flexible."** I like the example of Sunday worship. Scripture tells us to meet together, but not specifically what time, what type of songs to sing, etc. That is governed more by tradition. Here at Calvary, we traditionally sing more contemporary praise songs, instead of hymns. That is tradition and is flexible from church to church.

11. Think of any traditions you have or your views on various issues in the church. Are they based on Biblical truth or inherited tradition? Do you "teach as doctrine your traditions"? (Mark 7:7)
12. What does it mean to be free in Christ? Does it mean that we no longer have any rules and can do whatever we want? What are we governed by? List the pros and cons of rules.
13. Read Mark 7:6. Do these words describe any area of your life? Is your heart far from Him, yet, by appearance, you're saying and doing the "right" things? Time to confess and repent.

It is very dangerous to classify the depth of one's Christianity by their outward observances and actions. Church going, Bible reading, and consistent giving does not make a man good and holy. The real question is, where is one's heart toward God, and others? If his heart is full of bitterness, hate, strife, or pride, yet he does all the "right" things, he is a hypocrite.

Notice the progression of sin that can happen when we begin to teach our doctrine instead of His Word. Verse 7 talks about "teaching" man's doctrine like God's Word; next comes laying aside God's Word (vs 8), which leads to rejecting God's Word (vs 9) which results in loss of the power of God's Word in one's life (vs 13).

Now we'll continue to look at this topic of defilement. (We could spend weeks studying and discussing this issue.) The disciples didn't

seem to quite understand the full meaning of what Jesus was saying. I wonder how much the Pharisees did.

**14.** Read Mark 7:17-23. When they left the crowd, the disciples asked Him about the parable. In your own words, explain the answer Jesus gives.

**15.** List the 13 things that Jesus says defile a person (vs 21-23). Any of these a problem for you?

The Jewish Dietary Code categorized all food “clean” or “unclean.” Jesus was basically coming against that, saying that it is what’s inside your heart that makes you holy, not what you are putting in your stomach. “Things” do not defile a person. What defiles a man is the actions that stem from his own heart.

Jesus explains that after your food is digested, it will be eliminated. But sin, if not dealt with, stays in your heart, producing more sin, resulting in defilement, and ultimately, spiritual death. (James 1:15)

The disciples had a hard time understanding this. They had been brought up to observe these laws their entire life. We know Peter had a hard time with it until he received a vision from the Lord, declaring all food clean, as well as the Gentile people (Acts 10:10-16). It was a hard saying for the Jewish mind.

**16.** If you are a parent, are you teaching your kids the principles that are laid out in Scripture, or simply giving them a list of do’s and don’ts? Why is it so important to understand the principle behind our decisions?

**17.** Okay, let’s look at this from a slightly different perspective. Do you spend more time worrying about what you “put in” or “put on” your body than what’s in your heart? (food, drink, clothes, etc.) What about the things you’re “putting in” to your heart? (Movies, books, TV, etc) How can watching, reading, or listening to certain things defile us?

Let's discuss for a moment the issue of watching certain movies. I believe that Jesus is saying that simply abstaining from certain things doesn't necessarily "make" you holy. At the same time, if our heart's desire is to please Him, we will seriously consider all that we do before we do it. We would desire to please Him because we "want" to, not because we "have" to, if our heart is right before Him. That's where our heart's attitude comes in.

**18.** Read Mark 7:24-30 and Matthew 15:21-28. Observe the facts in this section.

**19.** What nationality is this woman? Is she Jewish?

This is the only time recorded in all 4 Gospels that Jesus goes to Gentile cities outside of Israel. The coastal cities of Tyre and Sidon were busy commercial centers of the day. Tyre was located in Phoenicia, which bordered Galilee to the northwest, about 40 miles from Capernaum. Sidon was 20 miles north of Tyre. It is the oldest capital of the Phoenicians. These cities were both part of Syria but were independently run. They were rivals as well.

When you read this section, what was your initial reaction? It appears that Jesus speaks to this woman in a very harsh way, totally uncharacteristic of Him. I must admit, when I read this for the first time years ago, I had a very difficult time with it. (My Jesus **would not** call someone a dog!) But as we continue to read a little closer, as well as looking at additional Scriptures, it makes a lot more sense. Let's take a look.

**20.** Read Matthew 15:24 and John 10:16. What insights do these verses give us?

**21.** According to Mark 7:24, why did Jesus go there?

It's interesting that Jesus goes into Gentile territory right after He explains to His disciples that things they have always thought were unclean were not. Maybe He was beginning to break down the distinctions between clean and unclean people. Here He is not only speaking to a Gentile woman but healing her daughter. Remember that the Jews thought the Gentiles were definitely "unclean." Matthew tells

us that she was a Canaanite (15:22), which is a descendant of the ancient race hated by Israel. She also was influenced by the Greek culture of the day, Mark points out (7:26).

- 22.** Describe the attitude of the woman when she came for help. What problem did she bring to Jesus?
- 23.** What was the disciples' reaction? (Matthew 15:23) What was Jesus' first response? Why? Do you think He was being indifferent?
- 24.** What two titles did the woman use when addressing Jesus? (Matthew 15:22, 25) What does Jesus commend her for?

The Greeks used the word “dog” to describe a shameless woman. The Jews also used it as a term of contempt (Philippians 3:2, Matthew 7:6), especially for the Gentiles. It was definitely a symbol of dishonor. Jesus calls the Jews “the children,” and is referring to the Gentiles as “the little dogs”. What’s interesting is the word Jesus uses is “kunaria,” which refers to household dogs rather than the despised scavenger dogs that roamed the streets. These house dogs, or pets, would wait under the table to receive scraps fed to them. (Sounds like home, doesn’t it?) Some commentators believe this to be a term of affection. Some also believe that Jesus is simply using these terms for her to better understand what He was trying to say. Could He have been smiling when He said this?

Jesus was using this illustration to explain to her that His mission was first to the Jews, who would then be responsible to share the Gospel with the whole world.

- 25.** How would you describe the woman’s faith?
- 26.** Was the woman offended by what Jesus said? Did she argue that she was “better than a dog”?
- 27.** What can we learn from this woman regarding our prayer life? Her humility?
- 28.** What encouraged you in Mark chapter 7? Challenged you?

# LESSON 10

This week we will continue our journey through Mark by following Jesus as He walked towards the Sea of Galilee. Last week we found Jesus ministering in Gentile territory, healing the Syro-Phoenician's daughter. He now meets a man with a big need. We again see the compassion that Jesus has for an individual. This act is only recorded in Mark's account. Notice the details that Mark gives us while you read this first section.

**Memory Verse of the Week:** "And they were astonished beyond measure, saying, "He has done well. He makes both the deaf to hear and the mute to speak." Mark 7:37

1. Read Mark 7:31-37. Record your observations. What details does Mark add that gives color to this story? What is the main point?
2. Locate on a map the cities that are mentioned. When was the last time he visited this area? (Mark 5:1-20) What was the response of the people the first time Jesus was there?
3. Why do you think they responded so differently? (Could Mark 5:20 have anything to do with it?)
4. Why do you think Jesus took the man away from the crowd? Why do you think Jesus healed the man the way He did?

This man obviously had some people that loved him. His friends brought him to Jesus and "begged" Him to touch him. This man was deaf and spoke with much difficulty. This phrase literally means that he "couldn't speak straight." Some speculate that his inability to hear is what possibly made his speech so bad. We don't know about that, but



we do know that Jesus saw this man as an individual with a unique problem. Jesus used many different methods to heal people, showing us His care and concern for us as individuals. Perhaps the man's friends had heard about him from the man of Gadera.

5. What word does Mark use that shows us how compassionate Jesus was?

I love to read Scriptures that show us how Jesus "felt." His humanity is important for us to see. John 11:33 tells us that Jesus "groaned in the spirit and was troubled" when Mary fell at His feet, weeping over the death of her brother Lazarus. Then Jesus cried Himself. Luke tells us about the time Jesus was in the city of Nain and saw a mother crying over the death of her only son. He had compassion on her and healed the young man (Luke 7:11-16). We remember the compassion Jesus showed towards the leper (Mark 1:41) and the compassion He had for the 5,000 before feeding them (Mark 6:34). In our section today, He sighs, which is an "inward groan of compassion." People moved Him because He loved them so much. Are you hurting today? Jesus is feeling your pain because of the great love He has for you.

6. Why do you think Jesus looked to Heaven?

Jesus uses an Aramaic word, "**Ephphatha**," which is translated "**be opened**." (This word is said to be easy for lip reading.) Imagine how this man must have felt. I'm sure he was ecstatic!

7. Does Jesus want people to know about this miracle? Did they honor His wishes? Do you think you would have?

In Mark 7:37, the phrase "beyond measure" means "above exceedingly." Jesus "has done all things well," according to the people. This certainly is a true statement, but not only in times of miracles and healing. He "does well" in all that He does.

I believe that Jesus "spoke" deaf and dumb" that day. Jesus "speaks" to each one of us wherever we're at. He speaks truth and love in the midst of our circumstances in a way we can hear Him. Jesus spoke "freedom" to me about 45 years ago while I was battling eating

disorders. I repented and responded to His invitation and experienced true freedom. How did Jesus speak to you when He set you free?

Now let's read about the second time Jesus miraculously feeds a great multitude of people. Some critics have tried to say that this incident is talking about the event in Mark 6:32-44. As you read, you will notice similarities, but also many differences between the two.

**8.** Read Mark 8:1-10 and Matthew 15:32-38. Record your observations. Who are the main characters? Where is the story taking place? What is the main point or thought? What details does Matthew add?

**9.** Why did Jesus want to feed them? How did the disciples respond?

**10.** What moved Jesus with compassion in Mark 8? What moved Him in Mark 6:34?

**11.** Discuss the response of the disciples. Hadn't they already seen Jesus multiply fish and bread? Did they forget? Was their faith lacking? Were they confused? Did they just not completely understand? What do you think?

Before we are too critical, ask yourself: Have you ever doubted God's provision, even after He's provided before? How many times has God had to teach you the same lesson over and over again? Have you ever been confused on how to respond in a situation? In other words ... Do you think you may have responded **EXACTLY** like the disciples?

**12.** Consider this quote: **"Yesterday's miracles do not necessarily guarantee today's faith."** (David Hewitt) Explain what he means. Do you agree? Can you give any examples from your own life?

Many ask why Jesus would perform this miracle twice. We don't know that answer for sure, but it is interesting to note that the first group He fed were Jews, and this group would have been predominantly Gentiles. Many suggest that this was symbolic of Jesus coming as the

Bread of Life to satisfy the Jews, as well as the Gentiles. Some believe that Jesus simply saw another human need and was moved with compassion. Others believe it was more of a teaching lesson for the disciples. I think it was “all of the above.” I believe that Jesus didn’t just “stumble” upon another group of people, but this was divinely planned before the foundations of the world.

One difference between the two miracles that I found very interesting was the two different words used for the baskets. In Mark 6:43, the word for basket is “kophinos,” which describes the basket that was most common for the Jews to carry their food in. It was a small, wicker basket, about the size of a lunch bag. Here in Mark 8:8, the word for basket is “sphuris,” which describes a basket that was more like a large hamper. The Gentiles made these baskets out of rope or matting. The apostle Paul was let down over the wall of Damascus in a basket like this (Acts 9:25). That’s a big basket!

**13.** There are many arguments proving these two miracles to be individual incidents, but the best one is in Mark 8:17-21. What is it?

**14.** After the people had eaten, where did Jesus and the disciples go?

The identity of the city of Dalmanutha is unknown. Matthew says they went to Magadan (Matthew 15:39), which was located on the western shore of Galilee. These may be two names for the same town, or two cities that were very close together. Ted Dorman states, “Mark is indicating here that Jesus has now gone back to Jewish territory. The fact that He again encounters the Pharisees in the following section (8:11) supports this theory.”

**15.** The answer to the disciples’ question in Mark 8:4 is that Jesus can satisfy us -- anytime, anywhere. He is truly the Bread of Life who can fill our every need. Jehovah God is “**El Shaddai**,” the “all-sufficient God”! What does “all-sufficient” mean? Do you believe God is? How does, or should, that knowledge affect your life?

**16.** Read Mark 8:11-13 and Matthew 16:1-4. What did the Pharisees want from Jesus now? What did His “sigh” mean this time?

The Pharisees always seemed to harass Jesus when He was on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee, and we see that He doesn't stay there very long (vs 13).

Why does Mark say that no sign will be given, but Matthew says that the one sign will be Jonah? Mark means that there will not be the kind of sign they are looking for. Also, remember that Mark is not writing to a Jewish audience like Matthew is.

The Pharisees were not looking for another earthly miracle as a sign. Ted Dorman puts it like this: "They wanted the sort of 'sign from Heaven' that would accompany the Son of Man promised in Daniel 7:13. They were still looking for the messianic Kingdom of God to break into human history in spectacular fashion, as opposed to the hidden 'secret' of the Kingdom described by Jesus in His parables (Mark 4)."

**17.** What is the sign of Jonah? Read Matthew 12:38-41 for your answer.

Now it's time for the quick get-away. You can tell Jesus didn't want to spend time hanging out with these Pharisees!

**18.** Read Mark 8:14-21 and Matthew 16:5-12. Describe the problem.

**19.** In the Bible, leaven is a common symbol for evil. Read the following verses. What do you learn about leaven?

- a. Luke 12:1
- b. Galatians 5:1-9
- c. 1 Corinthians 5:6-8

**20.** What do you think Jesus meant by the phrase the "leaven of the Pharisees"?

**21.** From what we've read about Herod, what do you think is meant by the phrase the "leaven of Herod"?

**22.** Why are both types of leaven so dangerous? How can you guard your heart against it?

When sin enters, your heart, it destroys. What may start small grows like wildfire. A little sin that goes unnoticed can ruin an entire church. We see how sin can spread like cancer. When Jesus says “beware,” He means it. Don’t allow hypocrisy, self-righteousness, worldliness, or a desire for power and fame to enter your heart. It will destroy. **It’s time for a heart check. Ask the Spirit to search your heart for any “Pharisee or Herod” leaven. You know what to do if you find it!**

The disciples knew the answers to Jesus’ questions, but they didn’t understand. They also didn’t remember (vs 18). They had already forgotten what they had seen Christ do. Let’s talk about that for a minute.

**23.** Why is remembering what God has done for us so important? Think about each one of these stories. (You can read them if you don’t remember them.) Why are they so significant? What does He want you to remember about each? How have they impacted your life?

- a. The Parting of the Red Sea (Exodus 14:17-30)
- b. When the sun stood still for Joshua (Joshua 10:11-14)
- c. When Lazarus was raised from the dead (John 11:1-44)
- d. When the walls of Jericho fell down (Joshua 6:1-27)

**24.** What’s the ultimate story we are called to remember? Read Luke 22:19-20. Why is this so important?

Let’s continue our study in chapter 8. Jesus heals another man, with another method. Have you heard of something called **“Compassion Fatigue?”** It describes the feeling people get when they have been trying to meet so many needs, they get “burned out,” so to speak. I’m so glad that Jesus **NEVER** got that, aren’t you?

**25.** Read Mark 8:22-26. This is the only Gospel that records this miracle. List the facts you find. What do you find most interesting about this miracle?

Remember that there are two cities called Bethsaida. One was located on the western side of the Sea of Galilee (John 1:44, 12:21). Peter, Andrew, and Philip were from this city, and it was a frequent resort of Jesus. The other city of Bethsaida was on the northern side of the Sea of Galilee and was referred to as Bethsaida Julias. It was located on the east bank of the Jordan River where it flows into the north end of the Sea of Galilee.

26. Describe the method Jesus used to heal this man. What's different about this miracle compared to some others' we've seen?
27. Why do you think Jesus led him out of town, and then told him not to go back into that town?
28. Did this man live in Bethsaida? Where did Jesus tell him to go? Was he supposed to keep this a secret?

Mark 8:23 tells us that Jesus took the man by the hand and led him out of town. Can you picture that? I may be spiritualizing this text just a tad, but isn't that what Jesus did for each of us when we were saved? He took us by the hand and spiritually opened our eyes. He led us out of this world, telling us not to go back. Paul said, **"Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind ..."** (Romans 12:2).

29. When Jesus took you by the hand and opened your eyes, did you leave "this world"? Are you struggling with knowing how to live **"in this world,"** but not be **"of this world"**? Is the world pulling you back? Ask the Holy Spirit to search your heart and reveal any areas that still need some "transforming."

Now let's study the pivotal point in the book of Mark concerning Jesus' ministry on earth. It's been about 2 1/2 years since the disciples began their journey with Christ and it's time for Jesus to fully reveal Himself to them. This is the midpoint, as well as the turning point, in Mark's Gospel. Barclay calls this the Gospel's "peak moment..."

30. Read Mark 8:27-30. Also read Matthew 16:13-20 and Luke 9:18-22. Record your observations. Who are the main speakers? What is the key statement?

Caesarea Philippi was 25 miles north of Bethsaida and about 120 miles from Jerusalem. Philip the tetrarch (Luke 3:1) built this beautiful city in honor of Tiberius Caesar, distinguishing it from the Caesarea that his father, Herod the Great, had built in honor of Augustus Caesar. It was located at the foot of Mount Hermon, and the population included both Jews and Gentiles.

31. Compare Mark's account of Peter's confession with Matthew's. What does Matthew add? What else does Mark omit? Why?

The term "Messiah" is found seven times in the Gospel of Mark, but only three times in the sayings of Jesus (9:41, 12:35, 13:21). The word "Messiah" (Hebrew) and the word "Christ" (Greek) both mean "The Anointed One." Remember that "Christ" is a title, not a name.

The Jews were expecting a different type of Messiah. They believed in a Messiah King that would make them great in righteousness and power. The Messiah would be preceded by Elijah, who would herald His coming. The Messiah would vindicate God's people, making them great! This was quite the opposite than the suffering Messiah that had actually come.

Jesus goes from a general question to a specific ... **"Who do you say that I am?"** That is one question that everyone in the world will have to answer one day. Read Philippians 2:9-11. Who do you say Jesus is?

Next week we will continue studying this important section. The question that Jesus asks Peter is one that we can use when we are sharing with people. How they answer it gives us a great clue where they are spiritually. When we understand who He is, we have every **"Reason to Rejoice!"** God bless you as you walk with Jesus!

# LESSON 11

We ended our lesson last week with Peter's great confession of faith. He and the other disciples now realized that Jesus was the Messiah. At this point, Jesus begins to explain very clearly to them the road that was ahead. He now gives them the first of three announcements of His coming death and resurrection (Mark 8:31, 9:31, and 10:32-34). Because of Peter's great confession, you would think they would finally understand what the cross was all about. Let's see if they do.

**Memory Verse of the Week:** "Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me." Mark 8:34b

1. Read Mark 8:27-9:1. Also read Luke 9:18-27 and Matthew 16:13-28. Let's concentrate first on verses 31-33. Write any interesting facts you find in these verses. What's happening? Where were they?
2. What word in verse 31 shows us that this is a turning point in His ministry?

The term "elders" was most likely a general term for the Sanhedrin Council. The "chief priests" were mainly the Sadducees, who were in charge of the temple, and the "scribes" were mainly the Pharisees, who taught the Law in the synagogue.

3. What were the main points of Jesus' message in verse 3?

It's important to notice the word "must" in verse 31. Jesus came to do His Father's will (John 17:1-5, Hebrews 10:9), which was to put away sin by sacrificing Himself (Hebrews 9:26). This act was predetermined by God (Acts 2:23). Jesus went to the cross voluntarily (John 14:31, John 10:18). Matthew 20:28 says that He came to "give His life as a ransom for many." If Jesus hadn't gone to the cross, there would be no hope, no



forgiveness of sins, and no eternal life. He is the “living message” of the Scriptures (1 Corinthians 15:3).

4. By what title did Jesus refer to Himself in Mark 8:31? Why?

This title was commonly used to describe Jesus in the Gospels, but it is used only once in the rest of the New Testament (Acts 7:56). It is used 81 times in the Gospels, always referring to Christ.

5. Why did Peter react this way? Why did Jesus respond so harshly?

6. Why did Jesus call Peter “satan”? Read over the temptations of Jesus in the wilderness (Matthew 4:3-11) to help with your answer.

The word “rebuked” means to “admonish strongly.” Peter and the disciples didn’t seem to understand why the road that Jesus was on had to be a path of suffering. Why did He have to be rejected? Why would He have to die? Surely, He could avoid the cross and choose an easier path. Couldn’t God have designed a method of saving the world that didn’t include disaster, despair, and death?

They still didn’t fully understand the relationship between suffering and glory, or the cross and the crown. They were yet to see that to have life, there must be death. Because he didn’t understand, Peter argued with Christ. Have you ever argued with God’s Word? God’s way doesn’t always seem like the easy way, or the best way, does it?

7. What does Jesus mean by saying Peter was “mindful of the things of men”? What are men mindful of?

8. Have you ever felt like you were “rebuked” by the Lord? Read Hebrews 12:5-13. What do these verses tell us about God’s chastisement? Is it a good thing or a bad thing?

9. Did Peter eventually learn his lesson? Read 1 Peter 4:1-2, 12-14, and 2:21-24.

**10.** Can you explain the relationship between the cross and glory? Why must there be a cross before a crown?

**11.** Now read Mark 8:34-9:1 again, as well as the other accounts. What is the main thought in this section? Are there any key words?

Many commentators believe that chapter 9, verse 1 should be included in this section. We will discuss why a little later.

**12.** Why do you think Jesus included all the disciples who were around, not just the “twelve”?

**13.** Explain the cost of discipleship. Why does there have to be a cost?

**14.** What two things should be the true motivation for losing our life? (vs 35) What are the rewards of “losing your life”?

**15.** What did Paul say about death to self? Read Galatians 2:20 and 1 Corinthians 15:31.

The word “soul” in verse 36 is the same Greek word as “psyche,” which is translated as “life” in verse 35.

**16.** In a practical way, how can we “take up our cross” in our daily life?

Jesus is telling us how to “make our life count,” eternally speaking. The “losers” are the “keepers.” We have the power to either waste our lives or invest our lives. When we stand before the Lord, it won’t matter how much money we made, how successful we were in business, how perfect our house always looked, or how well our kid did in sports. The only issue will be what we did with Jesus Christ. I read a quote that said, “Christ is the touch-tone that will be used to test all hearts.”

The word “follow” is in the present tense. It is a lifelong pursuit and lifestyle. Is it yours?

This section of Scripture is said to be the “**center of our Christian faith.**” Is this your philosophy for life? Can others tell that by how you live? Can your family?

**17.** Examine your lifestyle. Have you chosen to “take the easier path and avoid the cross” in any areas of your life? What changes can you make?

**18.** Explain how this teaching is exactly opposite from the world’s view on what’s important in life. What kinds of things will man “give in exchange for his soul”?

There are different ideas about what Jesus meant when He talked about “power” in Mark 9:1. The three most popular views are the following:

- a. The power Jesus is referring to is the power of the cross, His resurrection, and His ascension (1 Corinthians 1:18-25).
- b. The power refers to the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost and the birth of the early church (Acts 1:8).
- c. Those who think this verse belongs with chapter 10 believe Jesus is speaking about the transfiguration.

What do you think would happen if every Christian in the world diligently practiced the idea of “dying to self”? What would be different? Do you think the world would be able to tell? What would be different in your home? What about if you were the only one in your home that decided to “die to self” consistently? What difference would it make?

Now let’s read about the awesome “transfiguration.” Wouldn’t it have been great to be there?

**19.** Read Mark 9:2-13, Matthew 17:1-13, and Luke 9:28-36. What details do Matthew and Luke give that add color to this story?

**20.** Describe Jesus’ clothes during the transfiguration. Describe His face.

21. What did they talk about? (Luke 9:31)

22. Why did God choose Moses and Elijah to meet with Jesus?

23. Peter didn't know what to say, so he said something silly. Why was this suggestion wrong, and why did God speak immediately following Peter's statement?

The mountain they were on was traditionally thought to be Mount Tabor, but now most believe it was Mount Hermon. The peak of Mount Hermon rises about 9,000 feet above sea level and 11,000 feet above the Jordan Valley. It is said that on a clear day, you can see the snow covered slopes all the way from Jerusalem to Tyre.

The word "transfigure" means to change the form or outward appearance of. Marvin Vincent writes, "The compound Greek word used here suggests a change of the essential form of Jesus, rather than mere outward appearance." Ironside said, **"The transcendent glory of His deity shone out through the veil of His flesh."** What a sight that must've been! Can you imagine seeing it?

24. Why do you suppose the apostles needed encouragement?

Moses represented the Law, being the supreme lawgiver of Israel. Elijah represented the Prophets of the Old Testament. **"Always men looked back to him as the prophet who brought to men the very voice of God."** (Barclay) The law and the prophets were the two main divisions in Jewish Scripture. When Moses died, he was buried by the Lord in a place that no one knew (Deuteronomy 34:5-6). Elijah, on the other hand, was taken up to Heaven in a chariot of fire (2 Kings 2:11). Because of this, it is also thought that they represented the two classes of Christians. Moses represents all those who will die before Christ's return, but who will hear His voice and be raised incorruptible bodies when He descends from Heaven (1 Corinthians 15:52). Since Elijah was taken up to Heaven without passing death, he represents all those who will be "alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord" (1 Thessalonians

4:15). These people will never die but will be changed in a moment and caught up to meet the Lord in the air.

**25.** Why was it significant that Jesus was all alone when the disciples looked up?

Seeing Jesus surrounded in glory gave them a picture of who this Christ really was. David Hewitt made this beautiful statement: **“It was a moment of spiritual illumination. The veil of Jesus’ humanity was briefly drawn back, and they see Jesus in a way they have not done before.”** I’m sure this experience strengthened them for the hard days to come.

God the Father used to speak through the law and the prophets, but now He was speaking through His own Son, and they were to listen to Him (Hebrews 1:1-2). Jesus was the fulfillment of the law and the prophets.

**26.** Do you think Peter ever forgot about what he saw? Read 2 Peter 1:16-18.

**27.** Read Mark 9:2-13 again. In verse 11, why do you think the men were asking about Elijah?

**28.** Who was Jesus referring to when He said that Elijah had already come? What did He mean? (Matthew 17:13)

**29.** How do you think this experience was encouraging for Jesus?

**30.** Peter made an attempt to put Jesus on the same plane as Moses and Elijah. (I believe he did it innocently because he didn’t know what he was doing!) But Jesus stands alone. How do people do the same today?

The three guys definitely had a mountain-top experience. But when the glory seems to fade, Jesus is still there. We can't only look for Jesus in the glory moments, but He's there in our everyday life.

**31.** Have you ever had what people call a "mountain-top" experience with the Lord, where you felt that the Lord revealed Himself to you in a special way? Can you share it with your group?

**32.** Why is it dangerous to only look for God in the seemingly "miraculous"? How does God speak to us today?

**33.** Jesus wants to meet with you today. Close your Bible, put your lesson away and sit before Him quietly. Don't talk much, just listen. He has a lot to say to us, especially after thinking about His glory.

Jesus told the disciples that Elijah had already come (vs 13). He was referring to John the Baptist. John's ministry was quite similar to Elijah's. They both denounced sin, calling people to repentance to prepare themselves for the coming of the Messiah. But the Jews believed that Elijah would come before the Messiah, heralding His coming. The disciples couldn't help but wonder, "If this is the Messiah, what happened to Elijah?" (not a silly question) Jesus adds that men did "what they willed" to John, and they were soon to do "what they willed" to Him also.

There will be a fulfillment of Malachi's prophecy (Malachi 4:5-6) when Elijah returns in the days of the Great Tribulation. Many scholars believe that Elijah is one of the witnesses referred to in Revelation 11:2-12?

Now Jesus and His three buddies come down from the mountain. Uh oh, what's up now?

**34.** Read Mark 9:14-29, Matthew 17:14-21 and Luke 9:37-42. List the facts from this section. Who are the main characters? What's the main thought? Explain the problem. Are there any key words?

35. Why do you think the people were amazed when they saw Him? Does it have anything to do with Exodus 34:29? What about His command to keep what just happened a secret?
36. With what attitude did the man approach Jesus? What can you learn from this?
37. The disciples were given the power to cast out demons (Mark 6:7,13). According to Jesus, why couldn't the disciples heal the boy? (Mark 9: 19- 29)
38. What did the man mean by his statement in Mark 9:24? How can you identify with this man?
39. Describe the man's prayer. Was it bold and courageous? Was it desperate and honest? Why did the Lord answer his prayer?
40. **"The authority Jesus gave them was only effective if exercised by faith."** Explain this statement. What is the relationship between faith and prayer? Use Scriptures for your answer.
41. What ministered to you the most this week from this chapter? How can you apply what you've learned?

Seeing the disciples' inability to cast out the demons was probably a victory for the scribes. But they didn't understand that **"the power is not in the prayer, but it's in the One who hears it."** (Max Lucado) When our faith is strong, it brings glory to God (Romans 4:20). But it's not about having **"great faith,"** but having faith in a **"Great God!"** Our God is an incredible **"Reason to Rejoice!"**

# LESSON 12

This week we will be finishing Mark chapter 9. In our lesson last week, we studied the amazing Transfiguration and then the deliverance of the demon possessed little boy. We saw the desperate faith of a father, and the failing faith of the disciples. Jesus has another major lesson to teach His disciples.

Jesus now leaves this area, leaving most of His public ministry behind, and begins His final trip to Jerusalem. As we study this week, don't forget to ask the Holy Spirit to give you understanding of His Word, as well as the wisdom to apply the truths you learn.

**Memory Verse of the Week:** "If anyone desires to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all." Mark 9:35b

Today the disciples learn what true greatness is. I pray that we each have "ears to hear" this very important principle of Christianity.

1. Read Mark 9:30-41, Matthew 18:1-5, and Luke 9:43-50. Write the facts. What's happening? What's the main point?
2. Why do you think the disciples were afraid to ask what Jesus meant?
3. What were the disciples disputing over? What events may have led to this discussion?
4. Why do you think they "kept silent" when Jesus asked them what they were talking about?

While Jesus was talking to them about His death and resurrection, they were discussing self-glory and self-greatness. Jesus sat down, assuming the official rabbinical position of teaching. To me, this says that something really important is about to be said.



5. Explain the principle of true greatness, as defined by Jesus. Do you know any other Scriptures that reinforce this teaching?
6. How is this different than the philosophy of the world? How does the world measure success? How does God measure success?
7. Is Jesus against “ambition”? Explain how ambition and humility go together.
8. Ask the Holy Spirit to search your heart on this. Are you “seeking to be great” in any area of your life? Are you striving to be well-known, make a lot of money, advance in the world, or be a better mom than so and so? How do you measure your “success”?

We’re going to cover this section again, focusing on the examples Jesus gives to illustrate the truth He taught them (and us!).

9. Read Mark 9:30-41 again. Why do you think Jesus uses a little child to illustrate His point?

There are a few different opinions on why Jesus used a child for this illustration. Some say that children were the picture of submission and humility because they were not afraid to come to Jesus. Some say that this was an example to the disciples in how they were to receive others. One commentator explained that children were not given much recognition in those days, and the test of greatness is being ready to serve other people, even if they are as “unimportant” as a little child.

10. What problem does John bring up in verse 38?

John is only mentioned by name twice in the Gospel of Mark (1:19). People disagree on John’s motive in bringing up this issue. Some say that he was trying to prove their loyalty to Jesus, defending themselves, so to speak. Others feel that he was most likely feeling

convicted and confessing to Jesus what they had done. I have no idea what was in John's heart, but I'm glad he said it, because it provides a great teaching opportunity for us.

- 11.** In your own words, explain what Jesus meant in verses 39-41.
- 12.** How does this saying of Jesus come against denominational walls? What matters most?
- 13.** According to verse 41, who should you belong to? A certain group?
- 14.** How should we apply Jesus' words in Mark 9:40, in light of the many denominations that we have?
- 15.** Do you ever exclude someone because they are not "like you"? (Be honest)
- 16.** Does it mean that everyone who does work in the name of Jesus is a Christian? Read Matthew 7:21-23, Acts 16:16-18, and Acts 19:13-16.

The disciples had offended a brother by forbidding him to cast out demons in Jesus' name. Jesus proceeded to let the disciples know how serious an offense it was to cause someone to stumble.

- 17.** Read Mark 9:42-50. Write any facts you find. List any questions you have, or any words you don't understand.
- 18.** "Little ones" in verse 42, is thought to mean children, or new believers. How serious is it to stumble one of "these"?

There were two types of millstones at that time. There were small "hand mills" that women used in their homes, and there were millstones

that the stone was so great, it took a donkey to turn it. Jesus was talking about the large stone ... ouch!

**19.** Why do you think it's so serious to stumble someone? Name some ways that we can cause a brother to stumble.

**“How many have been turned off by an unforgiving spirit, or by a dishonest business transaction of a church member, or by the worthless, crude street language that sometimes falls from a believer's mouth, or by the sarcasm of a malignant gossip.”** (Kent Hughes)

Jesus talked about their responsibility of not stumbling others, and now He reminds them of their responsibility to keep their own life free from sin. The issue ... personal holiness. Jesus also gives us perhaps the most solemn teaching on hell in the New Testament.

**20.** Is Jesus talking about cutting off their limbs literally?

Jesus tells the disciples how important it is to keep themselves free from sin. We are called to “cut off” all harmful and sinful practices that pollute our life. Our hand symbolizes “what we do;” our foot symbolizes “where we go;” and our eyes symbolize “what we see.”

**21.** What do you need to “cut off” to keep your walk with the Lord pure? Is there anything you **do** that leads you into sin? Is there anywhere you **go** that you shouldn't be going? Is there anything you're **watching** or **reading** that should be removed? Think about it ....

The “cutting off” of a limb shows us that we need to be willing to endure pain to conquer our sinful habits. “Cutting” always hurts. To walk in holiness may cost us something. Holiness usually involves sacrifice. What are some examples of things we may be called to remove from our life that can hurt. What sacrifices have you had to make?

Jesus says that it's better to cut something off than to go to hell. The word Jesus uses for “hell” is Gehenna, which is a Greek translation of the Old Testament phrase “Valley of Hinnom.” David Hewitt describes this Valley for us ... “This was a steep-sided valley on the south side of

Jerusalem. In Israel's darkest days it was a center for idol worship. Children were sacrificed to the god Molech (2 Kings 23:10). Jeremiah calls it the 'valley of slaughter' (Jeremiah 7:31-32, 19:6). By the time of Jesus, it had become the rubbish dump of Jerusalem. A fire consuming rubbish burned continually. The corpses of crucified criminals were literally 'thrown into Gehenna.' It was a disgrace for Jews to remain unburied. It was, therefore, a natural image for Jesus to use to convey a place of suffering and punishment. A place to be avoided at all costs." This was a gross, unclean place where loathsome worms would breed on the refuse. This place would smoke and smolder at all times.

These fires of Hinnom never went out and became a symbol of the place for divine punishment (Isaiah 66:24), as well as a description of the fate of Israel's enemies. (William Barclay)

Why does Jesus repeat the phrase, "where their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched"? Some believe that this phrase suggests the gnawing of the conscience and the everlasting memory of their wrong choice. It represents the "forever" aspect of hell.

## **22. What do you think verse 49 is talking about?**

This is a very difficult passage to interpret. Most scholars readily admit they are not sure what Jesus is speaking about. What they do know is that every Temple sacrifice in the Old Testament had to be accompanied by salt (Leviticus 2:13, Ezekiel 43:24). Salt was used as a form of purification. Some believe Jesus was referring to the people in hell, saying that everyone in hell will be salted or preserved with unquenchable fire that preserves like salt, instead of destroying. Others believe that He's speaking about the fire of purification of the believer. Some say that because salt speaks of sacrifice, everyone who follows Christ is to be a willing sacrifice. Or maybe He's saying that we "should" be salted with the preserving fire of the Lord if we want to escape the fires of Gehenna.

## **23. Jesus is now speaking to the disciples in verse 50. It sounds like He may be referring back to the disciples' argument. Read Matthew 5:13. Why is a Christian the "salt of the earth"? How does a Christian lose their "saltiness"?**

Salt was commonly used in the east as a sign of the covenant of friendship. There is a saying among the Arabs, “There is salt between us.” This may be why salt and peace are linked together. “The salt of God’s grace will help us live in peace with each other, instead of quarreling as the disciples were doing (9:33-34).” (Ralph Earle)

**24.** Are you a “salty” Christian or have you lost your flavor? Are you making others “thirsty” for Him?

Jesus now leaves the Galilee area and continues forward on His journey towards Jerusalem. He came to a “region of Judea” known as “Perea,” which means “across” (across the Jordan River on the east side). This region was ruled by Herod Antipas, who was guilty of marrying his brother’s wife. We remember from Mark 6:14-29 what happened to John the Baptist when he confronted Herod on this issue. I wonder if this had anything to do with the question that was posed to Him by the Pharisees.

**25.** Read Mark 10:1-12 and Matthew 19:1-9. List the facts. Who’s speaking? What’s the main thought of this section?

**26.** What may have been the Pharisees’ motives for bringing this question to Jesus? Were they just curious?

**27.** How was Jesus in a “no-win” situation any way He answered?

Notice that instead of focusing on the grounds for divorce, Jesus turns the issue to God’s Word. He reminds them about the principles of marriage that God originally established.

**28.** Explain Jesus’ view on marriage. What was God’s original intention for marriage?

**29.** Read about the “bill of divorcement” in Deuteronomy 24:1-4. According to Jesus, why did Moses write it?

Divorce was a hot topic, even in those days. There were two schools of thought in the Jewish mind regarding divorce. Some followed the teaching of Rabbi Shammai, who believed that adultery was the only possible grounds for divorce. Many Jews followed the teaching of Rabbi Hillel, who allowed divorce for many, many reasons. He taught that a man could divorce his wife if he found another woman he was more attracted to! (The difference was in how they interpreted Deuteronomy 24:1.) Unfortunately, the liberal view was the most common.

To understand why the bill was written, we must understand the status of women of that day. In the Jewish culture, the woman was simply a “thing” without any legal rights. Because the man could divorce the woman for any reason, Moses wrote this bill in an attempt to try to control what was happening. He wasn’t trying to “allow” it, but to discourage it by making it harder to obtain. The bill was given to the woman to prove that she was able to remarry. Without this bill, she was usually treated like “trash.”

Jesus said that Moses had allowed it because of the hardness of men’s hearts. It was a concession because of human weakness and failure, but not God’s original plan for marriage.

- 30.** The word “joined” in Mark 10:7 can be translated “cleave,” which means “shall be glued.” The word “joined” in verse 9 means “yoked together.” What do these phrases tell us about marriage?
- 31.** Jesus spoke to His disciples rather bluntly in verses 10-12. What did He say? How were these words revolutionary in terms of the rights of the Jewish women? (Although Jewish women could not divorce, for Greek and Roman women, it was allowed.)
- 32.** Read the following Scriptures and write what else God says about marriage and divorce. Malachi 2:14-16, Matthew 19:1-12, and 1 Corinthians 7:10-15.
- 33.** How would you account for so many divorces today? Explain the world’s view on divorce, and what effect you think it’s had on the position of the church.

**34.** Does God's Word give permission for divorce if you "fall out of love"? How about incompatibility? What about "growing apart"?

Even though in rare cases divorce is permissible, it is never essential. It is never encouraged or commended in Scripture and is always a tragedy for all involved.

Divorce and remarriage are very sensitive subjects. There are many questions on this issue, and each situation must be taken individually and judged by Biblical principles in light of Scripture. If you have specific questions regarding your own situation, it would be best to seek out the counsel of your pastor. I'm sure he would be willing to help you see your situation through the light of the Scriptures.

We do need to remember that divorce is not the "unforgivable sin." 1 John 1:9 tells us that God is faithful and just to forgive us of our sins if we confess them to Him. He always wants to forgive us and restore us. I praise Him for His heart that is so ready to forgive.

**35.** Read 1 Peter 3:1-6, Titus 2:3-5, Proverbs 31:10-31. If you are a wife (but please answer even if you're not!), what does God's Word say about our:

- a. Behavior?
- b. Attitude?
- c. Appearance?

**36.** Proverbs 12:4 says that an "excellent wife is the crown of her husband, but she who causes shame is like rottenness in his bones." Are you a living crown for your husband? Are there any areas where you need to be "shined up"?

**37.** Look at this week's memory verse. How can you apply this as a:

- a. Wife?
- b. Mother?
- c. Single woman?
- d. Friend?

**38.** What challenged you the most in this week's lesson? What changes need to be made? Are you willing to make them?

# LESSON 13

We ended our lesson last week with Jesus discussing the issue of divorce and remarriage. The discussion now turns toward children, which seems to be a natural progression. While Jesus was speaking, people began bringing their young children to Him. In the surrounding cultures, children held a very low position in the family. “Roman law gave the father the absolute power over his family, which extended to life and death. As late as A.D. 60, a son was put to death by the simple order of his father.” (Mark, Kent Hughes)

Things were different in the Jewish culture. Children were seen as a blessing. It was typical of their culture to bring their young children to the rabbi to be blessed. Jesus elevates the position of children even more by how He responds to them.

**Memory Verse of the Week:** “For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.” Mark 10:45

1. Read Mark 10:13-16, Matthew 19:13-15, and Luke 18:15-17. What facts do you find? What’s the main point?
2. Why did the disciples rebuke the people?
3. How does Jesus’ response reveal His heart toward children? (The phrase “much displeased” is better translated “indignant.”)

The exact age of the children that were brought to Jesus is unknown. Luke uses the term “infants,” while the word Mark uses is the same word he uses for a 12-year-old girl in Mark 5:42. Most likely, children from the ages of 12 and under came to be blessed.

There are many interpretations on what it means to come to Jesus as “a little child.” Many think it refers to the “innocence” of a child, or



their receptiveness. Most believe that Jesus is talking about the “utter dependence” a child has on his parents. Young children depend on their parents to take care of everything. They are not yet self-sufficient and are ready and willing to trust their parents to meet all their needs. (Of course, there are exceptions to this!)

4. After reading the above paragraph, explain why Jesus would say “come as a little child.”

5. In what ways can you be more like “a little child” in your faith?

Jesus teaches us here about the spiritual sensitivity that is present in children. They are capable of understanding the simple truths of the Gospel at a young age and we are accountable for training them. Jesus loved them, cared for them, and believed that children could give their hearts to Him. On this topic, Charles Spurgeon said, **“I will say broadly that I have more confidence in the spiritual life of the children that I have received into this church than I have in the spiritual condition of the adults thus received. I will go even further than that and say that I have usually found a clearer knowledge of the Gospel and a warmer love to Christ in the child-converts than in the man-converts. I will even astonish you by saying that I have sometimes met with a deeper spiritual experience in children of 10 and 12 than I have in certain persons of 50 and 60.”**

I read some interesting statistics from a Gallup Survey this week. Listen to this: “Nineteen out of 20 people who became Christians did so before the age of 25. At age 25, one in 10,000 will become believers; at 35, one in 50,000; at 45, one in 200,000; at 55, one in 300,000; at 75, one in 700,000.”

6. What is the significance of the above statistics?

7. Have you been “spiritually training” your kids to the best of your ability? Have you been guilty of thinking they’re too young to understand? Are you letting the burden fall on their Sunday School teachers? Ask the Lord to search your heart and see if there are any changes that need to be made.

- 8.** Take some time today to pray for your child's Sunday School teacher. If you can, write them a note to express how thankful you are for them. The Sunday School teachers are often "forgotten" servants! School teachers usually receive a lot of support from parents in the way of gifts, notes, and other expressions of love. How about the teachers who are coming alongside you in "training your kids up in the ways of the Lord"? Pray for them often, asking God to fill them with His Spirit, His grace, and His love for all their kids

We now come to the story of the rich young ruler, which is a major contrast to the story we just read. (As you study, notice the comparisons.) He is called this because Luke refers to him as a ruler, and Matthew tells us that he is a young man.

- 9.** Read Mark 10:17-31, Matthew 19:16-26 and Luke 18:18-27. Write your observations.

- 10.** Describe the attitude of the rich young ruler as he came to Jesus. Was he, like the Pharisees, trying to trap Him?

Jewish rabbis never allowed the word "good" to be used in regard to themselves. God was the only "good" One. By His answer, Jesus was not denying His deity, but was asking more of a question, or giving a challenge. "Do you know who I really am, and are you willing to accept it?"

- 11.** Why do you think Jesus answered him the way He did in verse 19? What was His point concerning the law?

- 12.** What was this man lacking? How does it relate to Exodus 20:3?

- 13.** What did he not understand about salvation? (Ephesians 2:8-9)

- 14.** How did Jesus feel about the young man?

**15. Why did this fellow leave so sad?**

This man was rich, yet he was unwilling to become poor. He was a ruler but was not willing to follow another. He believed that he could “do” something to inherit the Kingdom of God. He wanted to earn his acceptance from God. He wanted eternal life on his terms, like many today. Although Jesus loved him, He made no exceptions. There is one, and only one way to enter the Kingdom of God, which is by faith in Jesus Christ.

**16. Why is it so hard for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God? List some of the obstacles. (Read Matthew 13:22 for help.)**

**17. Is being rich sinful? Explain your answer, using Scripture if possible.**

**18. Read the following Scriptures and write what each has to say about money, or being rich.**

- a.** 1 Timothy 6:6-10
- b.** 1 Timothy 6:17-19
- c.** Psalm 62:10
- d.** Proverbs 27:24
- e.** Proverbs 23:5

Jesus says that it is humanly impossible for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God on his own merit, but not with God. He uses the picture of the camel going through a needle as a “ridiculous picture to stamp the truth permanently on the memories of the hearers.” (Ralph Earle) In his account, Luke uses the word for a physician’s needle.

**19. Has God given you many material blessings? Are you using them for His glory? Are you using them to help others and to further the Gospel? Do you realize that they are a gift from God (James 1:17) and that you are accountable for how you use them? Ask the Lord to show you more ways to glorify Him with your money and possessions.**

- 20.** Read Mark 10:17-31 again. Circle all the action words Jesus uses in verse 21.
- 21.** Is this command for all believers today?
- 22.** Why do you think the disciples were so astonished at the words of Jesus? (They were double astonished ... verses 24 and 26.)
- 23.** Do you think that Jesus' words in verse 27 only apply to this situation? How does this verse encourage you in whatever you're going through right now?
- 24.** How did the rich young ruler lack "childlike" faith? Contrast the two stories.
- 25.** What would happen if salvation was something we could earn? What would be the problem?
- 26.** Why can't we be saved by keeping the law? Read Galatians 2:16-21. What, then, is the purpose of the law? Read Galatians 3:24-27.
- 27.** The rich young ruler thought he was "doing pretty good!" No matter how many good deeds we do or commandments we keep, what is still true? Read Isaiah 64:6
- 28.** Are you still trying to "earn" your way to Heaven? Sometimes we know in our hearts that it's not possible, but we still find ourselves trying to "do more" and "be better." Pinpoint any areas in your life where this may be a problem.

The Jewish people looked on material prosperity as a sign of God's favor. That's why it was such a hard thing for the disciples to understand. Many people still think like that today. Being "rich" in God's Kingdom means a lot more than having wealth.

Jesus said that if salvation depended on our own efforts, it would be impossible for anyone. Praise God that salvation is a gift to us, from Him! We can never be saved by trusting in ourselves, our wealth, or our power. Salvation only comes by trusting in the saving power and redeeming love of God.

**29.** Read Mark 10:28-31 again.

Peter saw a man deliberately choose "not" to follow Christ. He understood that this man had just shut himself out of the Kingdom of God. Peter attempts to make a contrast between himself and the disciples, and the rich young ruler. Did he wonder if they would be rewarded for their sacrifice? Was he just boasting in their choice? Or was he simply stating a fact? What do you think?

**30.** Even if there was self-righteousness in Peter, Jesus seems to overlook it. How did Jesus reassure Peter? Explain Jesus' response.

**31.** Do you think the "world" would agree with verse 31? What is the philosophy of the world today?

**32.** Read Mark 10:32-34, Matthew 20:17-19 and Luke 18:31-34. Write your observations. What's happening? Where are they?

Jesus continues to make His way toward Jerusalem. He steadfastly moves forward with remarkable courage. He knows what's ahead, yet He proceeds anyway.

**33.** Why are the disciples afraid?

- 34.** Jesus predicts His death the third time in verses 33-34. Read the other two predictions in Mark 8:31 and 9:31. What does He add this time? Why do you think He does this?
- 35.** What promise does He give them in verse 34?
- 36.** Notice Jesus' style of evangelism in the last few sections. Does He offer an easy way, or a painless journey? How about material blessings? Does He bribe them to follow Him?
- 37.** How do you evangelize others? Do you honestly explain the cost that's involved in following Jesus? Evaluate your "approach" in the light of what we've been reading.

Though our families may not agree with our decisions to follow Christ, and may be very opposed to it, we receive many new brothers and sisters in Christ. We also receive "treasures in Heaven!" (Mark 10:21) William Barclay said, "Jesus never promised that within this world of space and time there would be a kind of squaring up of the balance sheet and settlement of accounts. He did not call men to win the rewards of time. He called men to earn the blessings of eternity. God does not only have this world in which to repay!"

- 38.** How do verses 29-30 encourage you? How do they challenge you?

In our next section, we read about an interesting question that two of the disciples bring to Jesus. What's REALLY interesting is that they ask this immediately after Jesus talks about the "last being first." He also just finished sharing about His soon approaching death. I almost thought it was humorous, until one commentator, in reference to this section, made this statement: "Before pointing fingers at their insensitivity, have you grasped these principles of servanthood?" Ouch ... Not so funny after all!

- 39.** Read Mark 10:35-45 and Matthew 20:20-28. What are your observations? List the facts you find, key words, phrases, etc.

**40.** What did James and John ask Jesus? What do you think prompted this question?

These guys asked Jesus if they could share in His glory. Jesus asks them if they are willing to share in His suffering.

**41.** What is Jesus referring to by the “cup” and the “baptism”? (Mark 14:36 and Luke 12:50)

**42.** Why do you think the other disciples were angry with James and John?

The word “servant” in verse 43 is “diakomos” which can be translated deacon or minister. The word “servant” in verse 44 is translated as “bondslave.” The word “ransom” in the Greek refers to the price that was paid to free a slave.

**43.** In your own words, explain the principle Jesus was teaching in verses 42-45.

**44.** Read the following verses referring to Jesus as our “ransom.” What does that mean? Isaiah 53:5-6, Romans 5:6-8, 15-19, 2 Corinthians 5:21, and Hebrews 9:15.

**45.** How can we lay down our life for others? (Give practical suggestions.)

James and John eventually did give their lives for Christ. James is thought to be the first of the twelve to die for Christ (Acts 12:2), and John is thought to have been the last.

**46.** Jesus was the greatest example of a servant-leader. Are you? If you are in any type of leadership (even in your home), are you more of a “servant-leader,” or a “power-model”?

# LESSON 14

In last week's lesson, we studied the theme verse of this entire Gospel. Jesus said, "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many." (Mark 10:45) Now we find Jesus doing just that; serving a blind beggar He meets on the road to Jerusalem. Jesus was on His way to the Passover, according to the Jewish custom. The main road ran right through Jericho, which was probably lined with people who were unable to make the trip. William Barclay said, "It was the law that every male Jew over the age of twelve years of age who lived within 15 miles of Jerusalem must attend the Passover. It was clearly impossible that such a law should be fulfilled and that everyone should go. Those who were unable to go were in the habit of lining the streets of towns and villages through which groups of Passover pilgrims must pass to bid them Godspeed on their way."

Picture this busy, bustling road. People everywhere, perhaps trying to get a look at the miracle man as He walked by. And in the midst of it all, Jesus heard the cry of one blind, desperate man. A man who once begged for money was now begging for mercy!

**Memory Verse of the Week:** "Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!" Mark 11:9

1. Read Mark 10:46-52, Matthew 20:29-34, and Luke 18:35-43. List your observations. Who are the main characters? What's happening?

There seems to be a contradiction between Mark 10:46 and Luke 18:35. Mark tells us that Jesus was going out of town, while Luke says that Jesus was approaching Jericho. Actually, there are two cities with the name of Jericho. One was a city about 15 miles from Jerusalem that was built during the Maccabean times, down in the Jordan Valley. The other Jericho was a modern town built by Herod the Great in Graeco-Roman style. Most scholars believe that this healing took place somewhere between the two towns.

Matthew tells us that there were two beggars sitting on the side of the road. Most think that Matthew and Mark both just talk about



Bartimaeus because he was the more vocal of the two. “Bar” means “son of,” making Bartimaeus the “son of Timaeus.”

2. How would you describe Bartimaeus? What was he like? What did he want from Jesus?
3. Jesus knew what the blind man wanted. Why did He ask him publicly?
4. Why were the people trying to keep him quiet?
5. By what title did Bartimaeus refer to Jesus?

The Jews believed that the Messiah would come from David’s kingly line and would be a warrior king like David. They expected the Messiah to overthrow the Roman forces that ruled Israel at that time.

It was highly unusual for a blind man to throw his garment away where he could not feel it. The Greek tense that’s used in this phrasing reveals the eagerness with which the blind man came to Jesus. He then calls Him “Rabboni,” which means “My Master.”

6. After Bartimaeus was healed, what did he do?
7. Jesus knew this man had a need. He called the beggar to Himself and then He healed him. What are the parallels between Bartimaeus and each of us before, and after, we came to Christ?
8. What lessons can we learn from this story in regard to our prayer life?

The story of Bartimaeus is absolutely beautiful! This blind beggar had a lot of faith. He may not have understood exactly who Jesus was, or why He was on His way towards Jerusalem, but He knew this Jesus could give him sight. God reached out His hand of grace, and Bartimaeus reached out his hand in faith (Ephesians 2:8). Bartimaeus not only received a physical healing, but more importantly, a spiritual one! God’s mercies are new every morning (Lamentations 3:22-23).

As we now move into chapter 11, we come to what is called the “Triumphal Entry,” or what we call Palm Sunday. This section begins what is known as “Passion Week,” or the last week of Jesus’ life before His crucifixion. The Biblical record of Passion Week, up to the crucifixion, takes up about one-third of both Matthew and John, one-fourth of Mark, and one-seventh of Luke. This week was extremely important. **“This was the week for which Jesus was born.**

**Everything else He did and said led up to this and found its meaning in it. The cross was the crucial experience for Christ, because death and Satan were conquered in it. Jesus’ crown was made possible by the cross.” (Irving Jensen)**

Jesus was at the end of His journey, which had begun about nine months before. He had specifically planned to reach Jerusalem for Passover. We are again reminded that God’s timing is perfect. He has prepared the way. The stage is set. The time is right to reveal who He is.

As you read these next sections, consider the importance and the significance of each event. We will begin with Sunday, the first day of Jesus’ week of passion.

**9.** Read Mark 11:1-11, Matthew 21:1-11, Luke 19:28-40 and John 12:12-19. Briefly write what is happening in your own words. Why is this event so important? What facts are noted in the other Gospels that aren’t in Mark’s? Does the fact that Mark was writing to Gentiles explain why he omits certain things?

**10.** What prophecies did Jesus make before He entered Jerusalem?

**11.** Read Zechariah 9:9 and Psalm 118:25-26. What prophecies were fulfilled, and how?

From Jericho, Jesus and His disciples took the winding road that brings you to Bethany, on the slopes of the Mount of Olives. Jesus waited at the bend between Bethany and Bethphage, while He sent His disciples to get the colt. He then would come down the hill and enter the holy city.

**12.** What were His instructions concerning the colt? How did He know it would be there?

During King David's reign, the donkey was considered a royal animal. In those days, an animal devoted to a sacred task had to be one that had not been put to ordinary use (Numbers 19:2, Deuteronomy 21:3, 1 Samuel 6:7). Jesus' entry on a donkey was an act that identified Him with the royal line of David. (After David's time, Hebrew kings began to use horses instead of donkeys.)

**13.** What do you think the disciples were thinking as this was happening? Did they fully understand yet? Read John 12:16.

**14.** How did all the people pay homage to Jesus?

**15.** What was Jesus demonstrating publicly that He hadn't before?

The people who had seen Jesus heal Bartimaeus were probably there. Jesus had just raised Lazarus from the dead, and all those who were witnesses to that miracle were also there (John 12:17). There were people everywhere, and they gave Jesus a royal welcome. They believed that the Messiah was here to save them from the Romans. **"Hosanna"** means **"save now!"** The phrase that they were saying came from Psalm 118:25-26. This was one of the Hallel Psalms, which was recited at Jewish festivals. They were saying that He was the rightful heir to the throne of David. Although they were wrong in their understanding of what Jesus was there to do, they were right in paying Him homage, because He really was, and is, the King of Kings!

**16.** Who was opposed to what was happening? Why? Read Luke 19:39 and John 12:19.

Jesus is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords (Revelation 19:16). God is the sovereign ruler of the universe. Psalm 103:19 says, "The Lord has established His throne in Heaven, and His Kingdom rules over all." **How can you pay Him the homage that He deserves? He rules the**

### **universe ... does He rule your life?**

Now let's continue learning about the Triumphal Entry of Jesus. We're going to read a section in Luke's account that gives us a glimpse of Jesus' heart.

**17.** Read Luke 19:37-44. How did Jesus respond to the Pharisees? What did He mean?

**18.** As Jesus moved forward, He got a view of the whole city. How did He react? Why?

Jesus was filled with sorrow as He looked over the holy city, knowing that soon, because of the hardness of their own hearts, the city would be demolished. This prophecy was fulfilled 40 years later under the rule of Titus. **"Jesus' sorrow indicated His humanity, but it was also a revelation of the heart of God."** (Kent Hughes)

**19.** Go back to Mark 11:11 and Matthew 21:10-17. Did He spend the night in Jerusalem?

Jesus entered the Temple as predicted in Malachi 3:1. G. Campbell Morgan calls this the **"look of investigation, the look of inquisition, the look of One who had the right to look, the look of the supreme and final authority; it was also the look of the heart of an infinite compassion, the look of the eyes bedewed with tears."**

**20.** Read Mark 11:12-14. Write your observations. What's happening?

Now we move into Day 2 of Passion Week. Jesus shows us His humanity again and gets hungry. He sees a tree and decides to go fig picking.

Fig trees characteristically display their leaves before their fruit. Fig trees in Jerusalem typically leaf out in March or April, then bear fruit in June. This fig tree looked good from afar, but when you got closer, there was no fruit. In the Old Testament, the fig tree was sometimes used to represent Israel (Nahum 3:12, Hosea 9:10).

21. How was Israel like this fig tree?

22. Are you like this fig tree in any way? This tree was a hypocrite, looking good from a distance yet bearing no fruit. Is there any area of your life that looks good from far away, but is lacking fruit?

23. Why do you think Jesus cursed the fig tree? Did He do it just because He was hungry?

Jesus used this tree as a visual parable for the disciples. Jesus had just come from the Temple where it was business as usual. He saw the tree as a perfect teaching tool to show them the spiritual state of their nation Israel. Lots of religion, but no fruit (Jeremiah 8:13).

This is the only incident, besides the drowning of the pigs in Mark 5:13, that Jesus destroyed something in nature. The lessons that are taught from this were not only perfect for Israel but still are for the church today.

24. God still desires His kids to bear fruit (Read John 15:1-17). **Are you bearing fruit?** Jesus is the vine, and we are the branches. The branch's purpose is to bear fruit for the Vine. That fruit is for others to enjoy, and to be the glory of the Vine. **Are others enjoying your fruit? Is God being glorified?** Meditate on these questions today ...

25. Read Mark 11:15-19, Matthew 21:12-13, and Luke 19:45-46. Write your observations. What would you title this section?

26. Why did Jesus do this? (This is the second time Jesus cleansed the Temple, the first being in John 2:13-16, shortly after His public ministry began.)

27. In light of Isaiah 56:7 and Jeremiah 7:11, who is Jesus claiming to be in Mark 11:17?

**28.** What were the two different reactions to Jesus' actions? (vs 18)

**29.** Why didn't the religious leaders do what they wanted to do?

The buying and selling was happening in the "Court of the Gentiles." This was an area just outside the Temple where the Gentiles were allowed to go. It was supposed to be the place where Gentiles could come and meet the one true and living God (1 Kings 8:41-43). It was in this court that animals were being sold to use for Temple sacrifices. Many Jews came from all over for the Passover, and some couldn't bring their sacrifices. Some may have learned upon arrival that their animal was blemished and couldn't be used. The moneychangers were also supposedly there as a courtesy. Their job was to exchange the Roman money that people brought for the local currency that could be used to pay their Temple Tax. Both practices probably started out innocently enough, but soon a lot of profit was being made on these transactions and the Temple became a place of business rather than a place of worship. I wonder what kind of witness these practices were to the Gentiles.

Wiersbe points out that Mark specifically mentions the people who sold doves. The dove was about the only animal a poor person could afford (Leviticus 14:22). Even the poor were being exploited! This, like the cursed fig tree, was another sign of the spiritual condition of the people of Israel.

**30.** In what ways do Christians still make His house a marketplace?  
Also, how can Christians use their faith for various kinds of gain?  
How can unbelievers be stumbled by all this?

**31.** Our bodies are a temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19).  
What kinds of things do we allow in our temple that could defile it?

**32.** Jesus wants our temple to be clean. What needs to be overturned or driven out of your heart? How can you be a cleaner "house of prayer"?

- 33.** Did Jesus sin when He got angry? Is it possible to be angry, but not sin?
- 34.** Read the following Scriptures. What do they say about anger?
- a.** Ephesians 4:26
  - b.** Psalm 4:4-5
  - c.** Psalm 37:8
  - d.** Proverbs 14:16-17
  - e.** Proverbs 19:19
  - f.** Proverbs 15:1
- 35.** Let's begin our third day of Passion Week in Mark 11:20-26 and Matthew 21:20-22. Notice that the cleansing of the Temple was placed right between the two fig tree illustrations. Why do you think the Holy Spirit did this? Write your thoughts on this section.
- 36.** Jesus now uses the dried-up fig tree as an object lesson. What do we learn about faith?
- 37.** How necessary is it for us to forgive others? Why? Read Psalm 66:18.
- 38.** Are you holding any grudges? Is there anyone that you need to forgive?
- 39.** What do we learn about prayer? Compare John 15:7, James 4:3, and 1 John 5:14-15. Is Jesus saying that we can have anything we want if we believe hard enough?
- 40.** What is the most important truth you learned in this week's lesson? How do you plan to apply it to your life?

# LESSON 15

We ended last week's lesson with the cleansing of the Temple and the cursing of the fig tree. Now Jesus is back in Jerusalem and He has a whole lot of people waiting for Him. Are they His followers? I don't think so ...

**Memory Verse of the Week:** "And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.' This is the first commandment. And the second, like it, is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these." Mark 12:30-31

1. Let's begin by reading Mark 11:27-33, Matthew 21:23-27, and Luke 20:1-8. Record your observations.

2. What were their motives? Read Mark 11:18.

When Jesus entered Jerusalem, He went immediately to the Temple. He was confronted by a group of people known as the Sanhedrin. The Sanhedrin was a ruling body of 70 men, comprised of members from all three religious groups that were present. They thought they were clever, but it looks like it was Jesus who outsmarted them.

3. What were the religious leaders referring to in verse 28 by the phrase "these things"?

The word "Heaven" (vs 30-31) is a Jewish euphemism for God, used out of respect for His divine name.

4. Why do you think Jesus didn't answer their question directly?

5. Explain the predicament the religious leaders found themselves in.



**6.** Read 1 Peter 3:15. How do you reconcile this with Jesus' answer?

Those who were opposing Him were not people who had honest questions, but they were hypocritical objectors. Jesus was challenging the motives that lay behind their questions. His point was not to be evasive, but to be honest.

We have already seen the authority that Jesus had over the demons, as well as over nature. He has authority to forgive sins and to judge. Jesus had the authority "over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him" (John 17:2). Does He have authority over you?

**7.** How can you apply this section of Scripture to your life?

**8.** Read Mark 12:1-12, Matthew 21:33-46, and Luke 20:9-19. What's happening? How would you title this parable? What do you think it means? Write your observation.

**9.** Who was Jesus speaking to? (vs 12) What was their reaction? Why?

**10.** In this parable, who is represented by:

- a.** The owner?
- b.** The vineyard?
- c.** The vinedressers?
- d.** The servants?
- e.** The owner's son?
- f.** Others?

**11.** Why did the vinedressers want to get rid of the heir?

It was common in Israel for landowners to be away from their property, and they were often resented for it. Rent collectors were commonly treated badly.

This parable illustrates the sad truth of what was soon going to happen. Jesus hadn't answered their question, but this parable sure pointed to the answer!

The nation of Israel is often likened to a vineyard (Isaiah 5:1-2, Psalm 80:8-16). Israel continually rejected the prophets, who were God's messengers. They were also about to reject God's Son as well. The "hedge" was probably a stone fence, the wine vat was a winepress, and the tower was a watchtower for those guarding the vineyard.

Jesus uses the term "beloved son" in verse 6, which often meant "only." We know that He was also referring to Himself in verses 10-11 as the "chief cornerstone." Jesus quotes here from Psalm 118:22-23, which was the same Psalm He quoted from during His Triumphal Entry (Mark 11:9-10). The "stone" was a common symbol for the Messiah (Exodus 17:6, Zechariah 4:7, Romans 9:32-33, 1 Peter 2:6-8).

**12.** Do you know what a "cornerstone" or a "capstone" is? Why shouldn't it be thrown away? Why is it so important?

**13.** What does Matthew add in his account? What does Jesus mean in verses 43-44?

**14.** Did the owner care about the vineyard? How do we know?

**15.** What does this parable show us about:

- a. the grace and patience of God?
- b. humanity?
- c. Jesus?

**16.** People resent God today just like the vinedressers resented the owner in the parable. Why?

Are you, perhaps, someone who resents God for some reason? Have you thrown away the cornerstone, which holds everything together? Don't make the same mistake that the religious leaders did. I believe that they were convicted. They knew that Jesus was talking to them, yet they were not willing to repent. Is Jesus talking to you? Are you willing to repent, and place the cornerstone in its proper place?

**17.** How does this parable speak to you? How can you apply it to your own life?

The religious leaders couldn't catch Jesus with the authority question, so they decided to try another trick. How about a question on taxes? That'll get Him for sure! (Right!)

**18.** Read Mark 12:13-17, Matthew 22:15-22, and Luke 20:20-26. What are the facts?

In Jerusalem, Temple Tax was a hot issue. The Jews were required to pay this tax to the Roman government, which was a constant reminder that the Jews were under Roman rule. Many Jews protested that they should pay it at all. The Herodians believed that the tax should be paid, while the Pharisees strongly opposed it. The Herodians were strong supporters of the Herod family and the Romans, while the Pharisees were not. These two groups were enemies, but this was not the first time they teamed up together to oppose Jesus (Mark 3:6).

**19.** What was the motive behind the asking of these questions?

**20.** Explain their strategy. What was Jesus' apparent predicament?

This is the only time in the New Testament that this word "catch" is used (Mark 12:13). It means to "catch or take by hunting or fishing."

**21.** Explain Jesus' answer. Why was it so perfect?

**22.** How do you reconcile Mark 12:17, Romans 13:1-7, and 1 Peter 2:13-17, with Acts 5:29?

**23.** What should be the Christian's attitude towards paying taxes? Read Matthew 17:24-27. What is your attitude towards civil responsibility?

The denarius is a small, silver coin that had a picture of the emperor Tiberius on one side and the inscription “Augustus, son of the divine Augustus” on the other. The denarius is the amount of a typical day’s wage. This coin is the only one that could be used to pay the Temple Tax.

Everyone has a responsibility, both to the government and to God. Jesus said that we should give each of them what is due.

24. What “things” do you think belong to God?
25. Think about your life for a minute. Have you given over everything to the Lord that belongs to Him? (Read your memory verse.) Does He own your heart? Your mind? Your body?
26. Even though they were trying to butter Jesus up with their flattering words in verse 14, what they were saying was the truth. Jesus was not a man pleaser. He cared about God’s will, not about what others thought of Him. How do you respond when you are asked questions that are controversial? Do you worry more about being “**politically correct**” or about being “**Biblically accurate**”?
27. Have you ever felt that someone was trying to “catch” you while you were sharing with them? What can you learn from Jesus’ response?
28. Read Mark 12:18-27, Matthew 22:23-32, and Luke 20:27-40. What’s going on? Who is challenging Him now?
29. If the Sadducees didn’t believe in the resurrection, why were they asking Jesus that question? What were they hoping to accomplish?
30. What does Acts 23:8 tell us about the doctrine of the Sadducees?

The Sadducees were referring to the law that was written in Deuteronomy 25:5-10 that allowed a widow to marry the brother of the deceased in order to continue the family line.

The Sadducees held the majority of seats on the Sanhedrin Council and were very influential. The high priest was usually chosen from this party (Acts 5:17). They believed in nothing supernatural and did not accept the oral traditions passed down from the Jews.

**31.** What does Jesus accuse them of forgetting about in Mark 12:24?

**32.** Are you lacking faith in the Scriptures? What does that mean? What's your attitude as you approach God's Word? Belief? Doubt? Indifference?

**33.** Why does Jesus say that they lack the power of God? Is that ever true for you?

**34.** What do we learn from Jesus in this section about life after death?

**35.** Read the burning bush passage in Exodus 3:1-6. What does Jesus mean by His statement in Mark 12:26-27?

God says that He is the **"I AM"** in Exodus 3:14. Jesus also claimed to be the **"I AM"** in John 8:58. Again, we see that Jesus is claiming to be God. That made the Jews pretty mad! In fact, in John 8:59, they began to throw stones at Him. To me, the claim to be the **"I AM"** is a very big deal! This tells me that God is the eternal, existing God. He is not the **"I WAS"** or the **"I WILL BE,"** but He is the **"I AM"**! He didn't say that He **was** the God of the patriarchs, but that He **is**! He was showing that there was life after death.

**36.** Meditate on the name **"I AM."** What does that mean to you? How should that affect your life? (Aren't you glad that He is not the **"I WAS"**?)

These Sadducees almost seemed to be making fun of Jesus because they were debating a doctrine that they didn't even agree with. I sense a sarcastic tone, don't you? Some think that this exaggerated story may have been a standing joke, used to embarrass their rivals, the Pharisees. Their ploy didn't work, of course. (How can you outsmart God?) Matthew 22:33 tells us that the multitudes were astonished at His teaching. Sorry, Sadducees, foiled again!

**37.** Read Mark 12:28-34 and Matthew 22:33-40. Describe what's happening. What new character has entered? Why?

**38.** Why did the scribe come to Jesus to ask this question?

The Jews had divided the law that was given in the Pentateuch (first 5 books of the Old Testament) into 613 precepts. 365 of them were prohibitions (one for each day of the year) and 248 commandments (as many as the parts of the body). Some of them were considered "weightier" while others were thought of as "light." One of the rabbis' favorite pastimes was to discuss which ones were the most important.

**39.** What did the scribe think of Jesus' answer? (Read Deuteronomy 6:4-9) How did Jesus respond to the man's answer?

Jesus began His answer with what is known by the "Shema," which is the Hebrew word for "hear." The "Shema" is the first verse of Hebrew liturgy. This verse is from Deuteronomy 6:4-5. Devout Jews repeated this prayer twice a day, and each synagogue service began with the "Shema." **"Hear, O Israel. the Lord our God, the Lord is one,"** emphasizes the unity of the Scriptures, and **"loving God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength"** focuses on man's chief obligation.

Many devout Jews kept this Scripture in a small leather box called a phylactery (Matthew 23:5). They would bind this on their wrists and on their foreheads, obeying their interpretation of Deuteronomy 6:8. They also would put it in a box called the "Mezuzah" and fix it to their

doorposts (Deuteronomy 6:9). This verse expressed the very heart of the Jewish faith; that the Lord was the one and true God.

Jesus then added “to love your neighbor” from Leviticus 19:18. He was the first Rabbi to bring the two thoughts together. The 10 commandments were summarized in these two. Jesus’ first commandment summarized the first four (Exodus 20:2-11) and dealt with our love for God. The second encompassed the final six (Exodus 20:12-17), our love for mankind.

**40.** Can these two commandments be divided? Why or why not? Read 1 John 4:20-21, Romans 13:8-10, James 2:8 and John 13:35.

**41.** According to Jesus, (not Mr. Rogers), who is your neighbor? Read Luke 10:25-37.

**42.** Why is loving others proof of your love for Christ? What are some ways that you can love your neighbor as yourself?

**43.** Give examples of loving God with your whole:

- a. heart
- b. soul
- c. mind
- d. strength

We are going to end our lesson here for today. Because this section is so important, we will take another look at it next week. I pray that you are continuing to look for **“Reasons to Rejoice”** every single day. And remember:

**“Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one!”**

# LESSON 16

Today we will begin by taking another look at Jesus' response to the scribe in Mark 12:28-34. Let's remember to pray and ask the Lord to show us even more new and life-changing truths today. Because His Word is alive, we are always learning and growing. What a **"Reason to Rejoice"**!

**Memory Verse of the Week:** "... for they all put in out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty put in all that she had, her whole livelihood." Mark 12:44

1. Read Mark 12:28-34 and Matthew 22:34-40 again. What do you notice about the scribe's response?
2. What kind of man was this scribe?
3. What did Jesus say to him in Mark 12:34?

Mark is the only Gospel that records Jesus' response to this man. Jesus seemed to be impressed with his answer. He obviously was a thinker. He appears, at least from this short text, to be sincere in his response. I don't think we can know his exact motives for confronting Jesus. Here, in Mark, it appears that he was impressed with how Jesus was answering all the questions that were being thrown at Him. Matthew's account, however, says that he was "testing" Jesus (Matthew 22:35). It seems that whatever his motives were, he was taken with Jesus and His insight. It took courage for this man to even approach Him and then to respond the way he did. We know that Jesus knew what was going on in this man's heart, and He answered his question a lot clearer than He had the previous questions.

4. Although Jesus told him that he was "not far from the Kingdom of God," He did not say he was "in" the Kingdom. What final step did he need to take?



Many of us know what the Scripture says. We can grow up in a Christian home and know all about what it means to follow the Lord. We can even understand the Gospel intellectually. But that's not enough. You can be very religious but not be a Christian. We can stand outside the Kingdom of God for our whole life ... but that's not good enough. We have to take the final step.

5. Read Revelation 3:20. Explain the step that needs to be taken to become one of His. Use other Scriptures to explain your answer.
6. Have you taken this step, or are you still standing outside? What's keeping you from accepting Jesus as your Savior?
7. Explain the following statement: **"You can be sincere, but be sincerely wrong."**
8. Now read Mark 12:35-37, Matthew 22:41-46, and Luke 20:41-44. What are your observations? Where was He?
9. Now it's time for Jesus to ask a question. What does He ask?

The scribes believed that the Messiah would be a descendant of David (Matthew 22:42). But if David called the Messiah his Lord, how could he also be his son? Jesus quotes Psalm 110:1, a very popular Psalm in which David predicts the coming of the Messiah.

10. What's the answer to Jesus' question? Read Luke 1:30-33 and Romans 1:3-4. How did the people respond?
11. Read Mark 12:38-44, Matthew 23:1-14, and Luke 20:45-21:4. Record your observations. Whom is He speaking to?

12. Explain the two accusations Jesus makes concerning the religious leaders.
13. Why are these sins such a “big deal” to Jesus?
14. Give some present-day examples of how religion can become merely an outward show.

The leaders would wear long, flowing, white robes, which symbolized wealth and nobility. They obviously stood out in a crowd. They liked to draw attention to themselves ... that was their point!

**“Since the teachers of the law were not allowed to be paid for their services, they were dependent on the gifts of patrons for their livelihood. Such a system was vulnerable to abuses. Wealthy widows especially were preyed on by the greedy and unscrupulous among these men.” (Wessel, Mark)**

15. What did Jesus promise these religious leaders?

Jesus now draws the disciples’ attention to a poor widow putting her Temple Tax in the treasury. This is happening in the Court of Women, which held about 15,000 people. She put two copper coins, or “lepta,” which is the plural for lepton. This lepton was the smallest coin in Palestine and was the smallest offering allowed to be given in the treasury. It was worth about one-fourth of a cent. A “quadran” (vs 42) is a Roman copper coin worth the same as a lepton. Because Mark is writing to Romans, he points out the coin that is the Roman equivalent.

16. What commendation does Jesus give this widow? Why?
17. Did the amount of the offering matter to Jesus? What did?
18. What can we learn about giving from this widow?

- 19.** If someone doesn't have much, does God still want them to give?  
Should they wait until they have more?
- 20.** Read the following Scriptures. What do they say about giving?
- a.** 1 Corinthians 16:1-2
  - b.** 1 Chronicles 29:3-9
  - c.** 2 Corinthians 9:6-15
  - d.** 2 Corinthians 9:7
  - e.** Malachi 3:10
- 21.** Which of these Scriptures speaks to your heart on this issue?
- 22.** What other lessons can we learn from this poor widow?
- 23.** Read Mark 13:1-4, Matthew 24:1-3, and Luke 21:5-7. Record your observations.
- 24.** What questions (from all the accounts) did the disciples ask Jesus?  
(Keep these questions in mind as we later read Jesus' answer.)  
Which disciples did the asking?

The Temple that stood during the time of Jesus was built by Herod the Great. It was larger than the Temple built by the Jews in 538 BC, when they returned from the exile in Babylon, but not as large as the first Temple that was built by Solomon. (This Temple was destroyed by the Babylonians.) This temple was beautiful! "Some of the huge, white marble stones were more than sixty feet long, seven feet high, and eight feet deep." (Irving Jensen) The stones were thought to weigh about 150 tons. The building covered about one-sixth of the city and was decorated in gold. There was a rabbinical saying of the time: "He who has not seen the Temple of Herod has never seen a beautiful building."

As they leave the Temple, the disciples are very impressed by the elaborate building. Jesus shocks them all by His response. He announces that no stone would be left standing. This prediction was literally

fulfilled less than 40 years later, in AD 70, when the Roman armies under Titus destroyed Jerusalem. Titus invaded the city, setting the Temple on fire and ordering all the buildings to be leveled.

The disciples wanted to know when this would be and would that event mark the end of the age, as well as His return. Jesus uses this as a springboard to teach them about the events that would be happening in the future, which would be much more impressive than these large stones.

This chapter may seem difficult at first. It's important to understand that Jesus was sharing a "double perspective," if you will. He was focusing on two events with one prophecy. He was anticipating the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus (AD 70) that was ahead of them and giving them (and us!) a vision of His second coming at the same time. Let's read the chapter together. Don't get overwhelmed like I did the first time I read it! We'll walk through it together.

**25.** Read Mark 13:1-37 in one sitting. Also read Matthew 24:4-35 and Luke 21:8-36. Record your observations.

**26.** Do you see any key words or phrases? What are some of the main thoughts? Do you see a "double perspective"?

Jesus describes the "Tribulation" period. It is also called "the time of Jacob's trouble" (Jeremiah 30:7), "a time of wrath" (Zephaniah 1:15-18), and a time of "indignation and punishment" (Isaiah 26:20-21). In Mark chapter 13, the Tribulation period is broken down into three stages: the beginning (vs 5-13), the middle (vs 14-18), and the events that lead to the end (vs 19-27). Jesus' opening words (13:5-8) can really be an introduction to both prophecies, the fall of Jerusalem and His Second Coming.

**27.** Please read Mark 13:1-13, Matthew 24:1-14, and Luke 21:5-19. What does Jesus call the beginning, from verse 8? Why?

28. What were the disciples to expect from the world, in verses 5-8?

29. What were they to expect as witnesses of the Gospel, in verses 9-13?

The “beginnings of sorrows” is also translated as “birth pangs.” This suggests that the world will become like a woman in labor, with pains creeping up suddenly, gradually, and growing in intensity (Isaiah 13:6-8, Jeremiah 4:31, 6:24, 13:21, Micah 4:9-10). In Jesus’ day, the rabbis spoke of “birth pangs of the Messiah,” the period of tribulation immediately preceding the Messianic Age. (D.A. Carson, The Expositor’s Bible Commentary)

30. What will be the reason for the persecution? (13:13)

31. When they see these things happening, does it mean that it’s “the end”? (vs 7)

32. Jesus was reminding the disciples that the persecutions should be used as opportunities to share the Gospel. How do you view persecution? Do you look at “sorrows” in the world, or “sorrows” in your life, as opportunities to share the Good News? What encouragement does Jesus give them, in verse 11?

33. Jesus tells them to “**take heed, watch out, don’t be troubled, and don’t worry.**” These words are for us too! Is God speaking to your heart in any of these areas?

Scholars differ on their interpretation of verse 10. Some believe that there was a partial fulfillment of this prophesy in the Gospel in the first century, as the Gospel was spread throughout the Roman world. Some say it has been preached to all the nations, but not necessarily every tribe. Some believe it has been done, but the beginnings of each tribe abandoned the truth for something else or never accepted it.

Warren Wiersbe says, “Taking the Gospel to all the nations is not a condition for our Lord’s return, but it is certainly Christ’s commission to His people (Matthew 28:19-20).”

Jesus gave them many warnings in this section. We need to remember that the Christians at the time were already suffering persecution, and Jesus’ words were a great encouragement to them not to give up. When the persecution became more intense, they would clearly remember His words, and that, all the more, would increase their faith, knowing that He would bring them through.

**34.** Jesus warns us with the same words. Let’s take a look:

- a.** How are we in danger of being deceived by false prophets? Is this happening today? Are there any persuasive leaders today who are making false claims, or teaching heresies?
- b.** Will Christians suffer persecutions today? Read 2 Timothy 3:12 and 1 Peter 4:12-19. What should our attitude be when we meet opposition because of what we believe?

Jesus warned them about the possibility of delay. Just because all this was happening, it was not the end. Jesus says not to panic or get distracted. Keep serving until He comes. We are not to get caught up in watching for signs, but in being ready for Him!

Some scholars believe verses 5-13 speak about what would happen before the fall of Rome; others believe it speaks about the first half (3 1/2 years) of the 7-year Tribulation period; while others believe that this speaks of both (double prophesy).

Although there are three main views on what will be happening to the church during the Tribulation period, I personally hold the “Pre-Tribulation” view. Those who are “Pre-Tribbers” (as I call them) believe that the church will be taken out, or “raptured” by Christ and taken to Heaven before the Tribulation begins (1 Thessalonians 4:13-5:11, Revelation 3:10-11). **1 Thessalonians 4:17** says that we shall be “caught up in the clouds with Him.” This word is from the Greek word “harpazo,” meaning to “be snatched away.” The verb tense conveys the idea of very suddenly, or quickly! This is why the church refers to the return of Christ for His church as the “rapture.”

At the end of the Tribulation, they will return to earth with Christ and reign with Him (Revelation 19:11-20:6). I invite you to explore the

different views on your own. (People differ on exactly when they believe Christ will return for His Church, but we all believe He is coming back, and that's what's important!)

Verse 13 is speaking about the believers who accept the Lord during the Tribulation. This verse is not speaking about the condition for their salvation but says that those who are true believers will prove their faith by their faithfulness.

This Great Tribulation period will begin when the nation of Israel signs a covenant with the “prince that shall come”(Daniel 9:26), who we call the “antichrist.” He will be the world dictator, or the “beast” from Revelation 13-14. This antichrist will agree to protect Israel from many enemies for seven years. He will even allow the Jews to begin to rebuild their Temple, as well as restore all their sacrificial practices. But after 3 1/2 years, the anti-christ will break his agreement, invade their Temple, set up his own image, and force the world to worship him (Revelation 13, 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12). This is what is called the “abomination of desolation” and it will mark the last half of the Great Tribulation period.

**35.** Read Mark 13:14-23, Matthew 24:15-26, and Luke 21:20-24.

**36.** What event, according to Mark 13:14, will mark the middle of the Tribulation?

**37.** List some of the events (from all three accounts) that were going to happen. Where were they supposed to go? Why the “woe” in verse 17? Why would cold weather be a problem?

The phrase “**abomination of desolation**” literally means the “abomination of making desolate.” This phrase is taken from Daniel 8:13, 9:27, 11:31, 12:11. The primary reference in Daniel was to the desecration of the temple by Antiochus Epiphanes in 168 BC. He was a Syrian ruler who built an altar to the god Zeus over the altar of burnt offerings in the Temple and sacrificed a swine on it. This was an abomination to the Jews. He also made it a crime to practice Judaism. In AD 70, the Temple was again profaned and defiled when it was captured by the Romans. Prior to that, the Jews killed each other while fighting for supremacy and the right to defend their city and their Temple from the invading Romans. They defiled it themselves by killing each other

right inside the Temple. There will be a final fulfillment of this in the middle of the Tribulation, when the anti-Christ will once again profane and defile the Temple (2 Thessalonians 2:3-4, Revelation 13:14-18).

When they saw the “abomination of desolation,” they were supposed to get out as soon as they could. This also was a warning to the believers before Rome invaded their city in AD 70. It is thought that many Christians heeded these warnings, and fled to Pella, east of the Jordan River. It is also said that very few Jews took the advice and crowded into the city instead, looking for safety. According to Josephus, a terrible siege took place, and over a million people were killed, mostly through starvation, and nearly 100,000 were taken captive. Only those who listened to the words of Jesus and fled to the hills survived.

**38.** Read Mark 13:19-27, Matthew 24:21-31, Luke 21:25-28. This section is speaking about the last half of the Tribulation. Record your observations.

You may be wondering who are “the elect,” and what does He mean that “the days will be shortened.” The elect are the Jews and the Gentiles who become believers (Revelation 14) during the Tribulation. And for their sake, He “shortens the days,” or limits them to only three-and-a-half years. Because of His mercy, there is a determined ending. This time is also called the “wrath of God” (Revelation 14:10, 19, 15:1, 7, 16:1, 19:15). During this time God will judge the world and prepare Israel for the coming of her Messiah. Wiersbe says, “God will be working out His purposes and setting the stage for the coming of the Conqueror (Revelation 19).”

**39.** Will there still be satanic deception taking place? (Mark 13:21-22)

**40.** According to Mark 13:24-25, what signs will precede Jesus’ coming?

**41.** Mark 13:26 tells us that Jesus will come in the clouds with Greg Laurie (I mean, great glory! Sorry, old joke ...) What else do we know about His coming? Read Revelation 1:7, Matthew 24:27 and Revelation 19:11-16.



Right before our Lord returns, the battle of all the nations, referred to as the Battle of Armageddon, will take place. This battle will take place in the valley of Megiddo. It was a very strategic city in Palestine, with many exciting events occurring here (Joshua 12:21, Judges 5:19, 1 Kings 9:15-19). Zechariah prophesied that great mourning would take place in the “plain of Megiddo” (Zechariah 12:11). The word “Armageddon” means “mountain of Megiddo” in Hebrew. At the end of time, our Lord will return and will destroy the armies of the Beast and the False Prophet (Revelation 16:13-16, Revelation 19:11-21) and He will reign forever (Revelation 11:15, 19:16). This will be the beginning of the Millennial Age (Revelation 20:1-6).

Following this, two judgements will take place. Matthew 25:31-46 tells us about the judgement of all the nations. In Ezekiel 20:33-38, it deals with the judgement of the nation of Israel.

**42.** Mark 13:27 refers to the re-gathering of Israel from all the nations to which they had been scattered, preparing for the judging of the nation of Israel. Who will do the gathering?

Jesus now ends His discourse with two parables (Matthew adds a few more in his account). He wants to bring the disciples back to the reality of their present responsibilities. He wants them, and us, to be prepared.

**43.** Read Mark 13:28-31 and Matthew 24:32-35. What do you think is the main point of this parable? (Note that when the leaves on a fig tree appear, it means summer is on the way.)

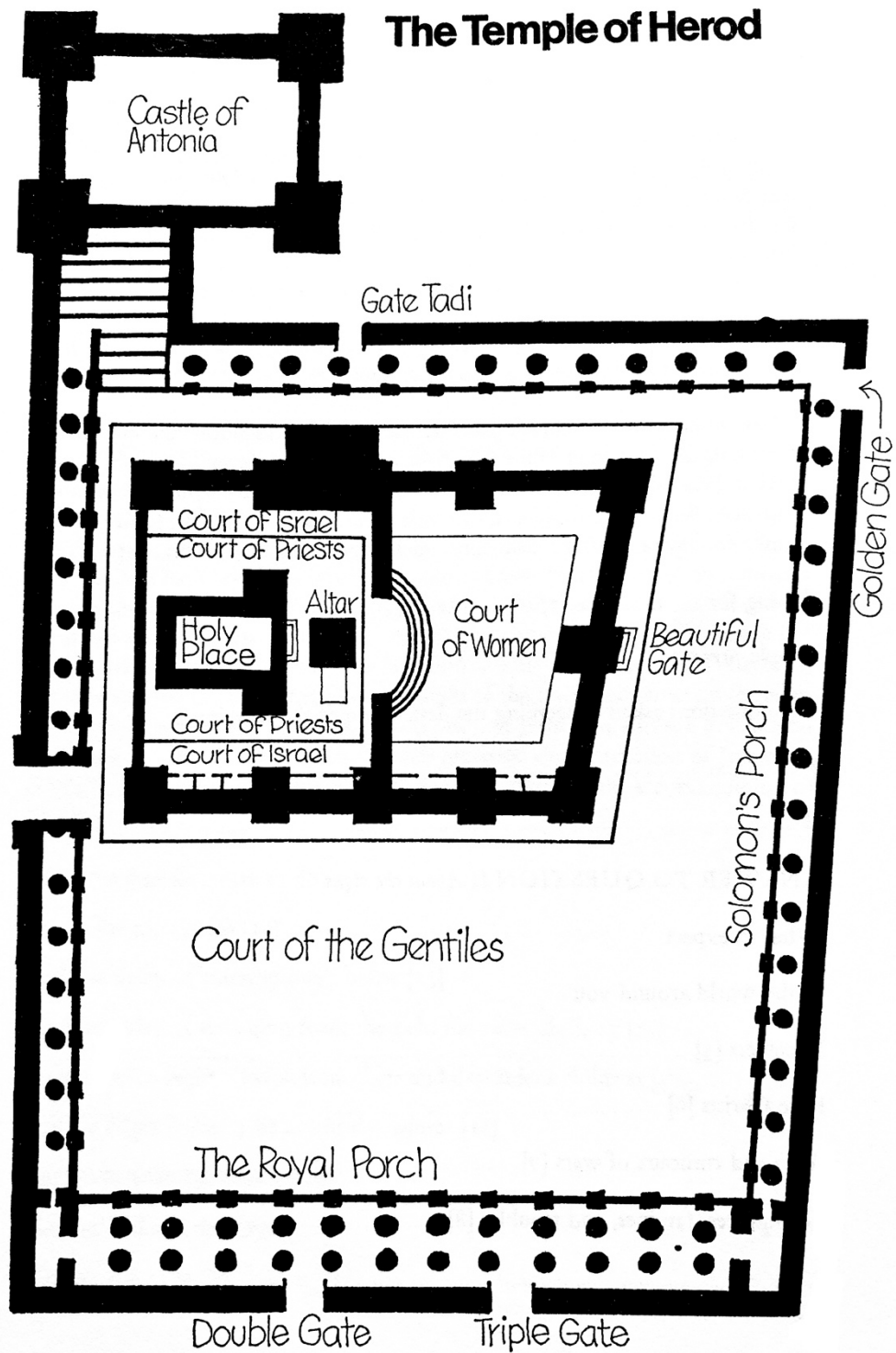
**44.** Read Mark 13:32-37 and Matthew 24:36-51, and Luke 21:34-36. I believe Jesus now speaks directly to the disciples (and us). What is He exhorting us to do?

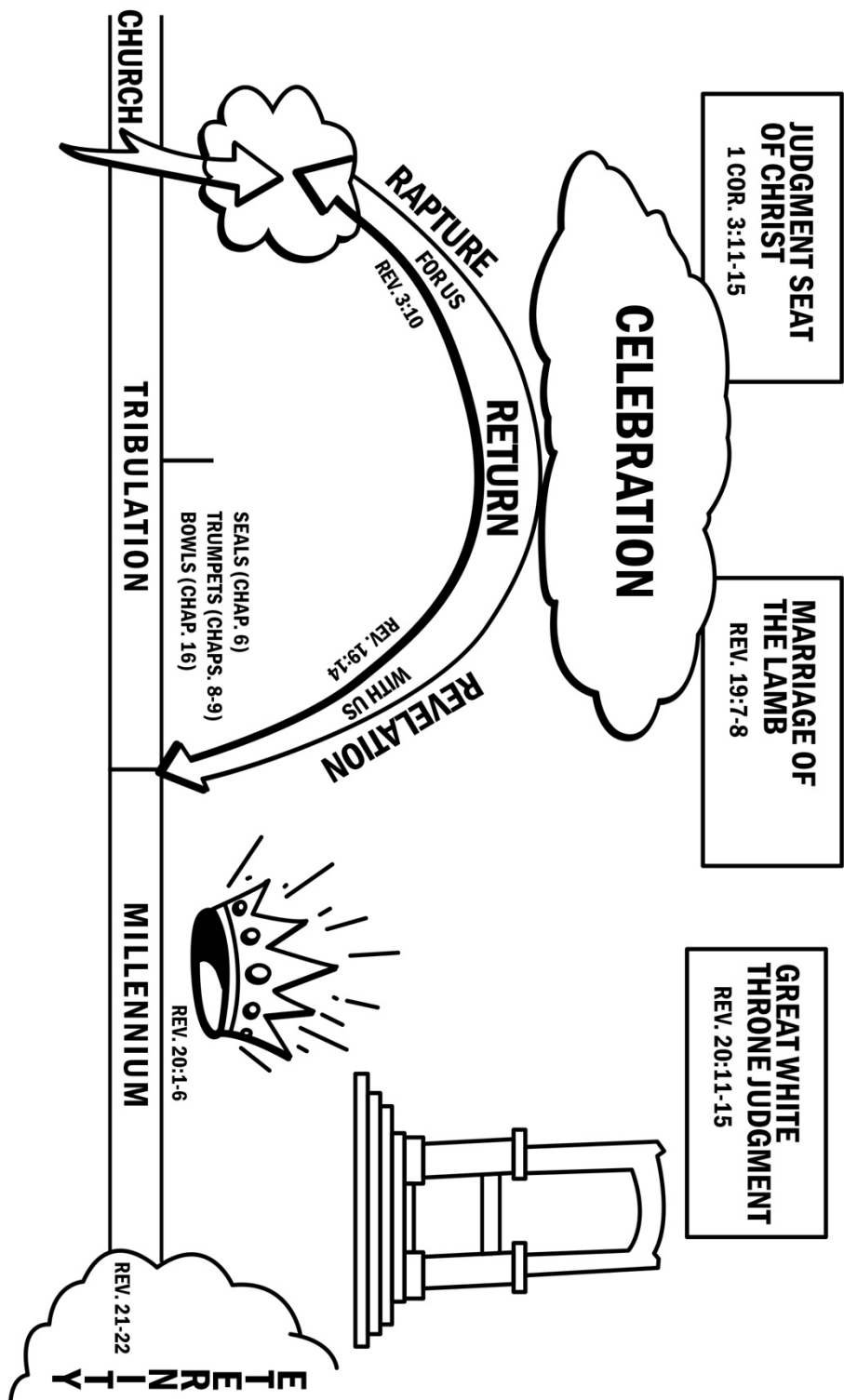
**45.** Why doesn't Jesus know when He will return for His church? (Read Mark 13:32 and Philippians 2:5-8 for help.)

**46.** Jesus tells us to watch and pray. He doesn't want to find us sleeping. What does He mean? (Also read James 5:7-8, 2 Peter 3:8-15.) How should knowing that Christ could return any minute affect our life?

**47.** How can you, as a believer, prepare yourself for His coming? Be specific. Are you?

The next two pages consist of a map of the temple of Herod and a time-line regarding the end times. I pray that both will be of help to you as you continue to study. **Maranatha!** (Lord, come quickly!)







# LESSON 17

In our lesson last week, Jesus talked about what would be happening in the future. Now, in Mark chapter 14, we come back to the present. Sandwiched between two acts of treachery is one of the most beautiful examples of worship in the Gospel. This story is recorded in three of the Gospels and has spoken a great deal to my own heart. I find it both challenging and convicting at the same time. I pray that your heart will also be moved to action by the example of Mary's act of love.

**Memory Verse of the Week:** "And the house was filled with the fragrance of the oil." John 12:3

1. Read Mark 14:1-9, Matthew 26:1-13, and John 12:2-8. Record your observations. Where is Jesus? Who are the main characters?
2. What were the religious leaders planning to do? Why were they hesitant?

Remember that the Feast of Passover was a historical celebration of the Jews' deliverance from their bondage in Egypt. It commemorated the night when God sent the angel of death to walk through Egypt and slay the firstborn son in each home that was not marked with the blood of the lamb on the doorposts. The angel would "pass over" the houses that were marked, and the people would be safe, but all the firstborn Egyptians would be killed (Exodus 12). Passover was celebrated on the 14th day of Nisan (our April). It also marked the ingathering of the barley harvest (Leviticus 23:10-11). Passover was one of the three compulsory feasts that every male adult Jew who lived within 15 miles of Jerusalem was required to attend.

The Feast of Unleavened Bread was celebrated the seven days following Passover. Although Passover was considered a "major" feast and kept like a Sabbath, this feast was only a minor festival.

Because many Jews flocked to Jerusalem and the neighboring cities during the time of Passover, the town was crowded. Because of the importance of what was being celebrated, the Jews were very emotional and intense. William Barclay notes, “During the Passover time special detachments of troops were drafted into Jerusalem and quartered in the Tower of Antonia which overlooked the Temple. The Romans knew that at Passover anything might happen, and they were taking no chances.”

The religious leaders knew that there were many Galileans around that would defend Jesus. They decided to wait for a more convenient time. Later in our chapter, Judas provides them with the solution.

Now that the motives of the religious leaders have been revealed to us, let’s spend some time looking at the pure motives of a special lady.

**3. Using all three accounts, answer the following questions:**

- a. Who was the woman?**
- b. Which disciples spoke up?**
- c. What did she use to anoint Jesus?**
- d. How much was it worth?**

Simon was a very common name during the time of Jesus. The only thing we know about “this” Simon is that he was a leper and he lived in Bethany, about 2 miles from Jerusalem. Many speculate that Jesus had healed him, and this was a “thank-you” dinner, so to speak.

**4. Why was Mary’s action challenged?**

**5. Contrast Mary’s motives with those of Judas and the religious leaders.**

**6. How did Jesus defend Mary?**

Spikenard was usually imported from India. It was genuine nard, which was an Eastern Indian aromatic herb. It was very costly oil, costing almost an entire year’s wages (one denarii was about one day’s wage). Mary simply broke off the neck of the flask. It was an Eastern custom to break a vessel that was used to serve a distinguished guest so

it wouldn't be used by anybody of less importance. I think Mary knew that this flask should "never" be used again!

For Mary to come with a gift was not unusual. It was a common practice to give gifts to the poor during Passover time. It was also normal to anoint bodies for burial, except in the case of a criminal. Did Mary know that Jesus was about to die a criminal's death? Did she not only understand exactly who He was, but what He was going to do?

7. Mary was willing to "waste" her precious "possession" on Jesus. Describe this act of worship.
8. Do you think it is possible to give too much to Jesus? Was she too extravagant? What is most valuable to you? Would you be willing to give it to the Lord? How extravagant are you?
9. Mary's act of worship came from a heart of love. She was criticized for it. Have you ever been criticized for your own act of worship and love? How should we respond? How did Jesus view her sacrifice? Whose heart are we seeking to please?

Mary's action was a "complete" act of worship. Jesus said, "She has done what she could." This act showed that Jesus was her first priority, and she gave her all to Him. Are you "doing what you can do," or are you holding back in some area?

Mary became a broken vessel for her Lord. She poured herself at His feet as an offering. She saw herself as a living sacrifice, ready to be consumed (Romans 12:1), rather than a life to be preserved. She is found three times in Scripture, sitting at His feet (Luke 10:38-42, John 11:31-32, 12:1-8). Mary wasn't being extravagant just to be extravagant; she was consumed with her love for Him!

10. Have you been sitting at His feet? Are you trying to hold on to your life or pour it out as an offering? Spend some time meditating on this beautiful story. How does Mary's act challenge you in regard to worship?



(This story must not be confused with the story in Luke 7:36-50. If you have the time, compare the two. Note the differences in location, the part of Jesus' body that was anointed, the type of woman who did the anointing, etc.)

**11.** Read Mark 14:10-11, Matthew 26:14-16, and Luke 22:3-6.

- a. How much would Judas receive for betraying Jesus?
- b. Who entered the heart of Judas?
- c. What did he do from that point on?

Did Judas betray Jesus for the money? Was he jealous or fearful? Was it because of selfish ambition or covetousness? And why would Jesus choose Judas as one of the twelve if He knew that he would betray Him? We don't know these answers, and sometimes God's sovereignty and man's free will are hard to understand, let alone accept. I pray that the life of Judas would be a warning to all of us that a person can say they are one of His, yet not be one with Him. Judas didn't stick out like a sore thumb as the rebellious disciple. He appeared to be one of them. No one knew that he was the one who would betray Jesus.

**12.** Read Mark 14:12-21, Matthew 26:17-25, Luke 22:7-16, and John 13:21-30. Who were the two disciples that were sent to "make ready" the meal?

The lamb was slain on the 14th (Exodus 12:3-6) day of the Jewish month of Nisan. The meal was then eaten that evening after sundown, which would make it the 15th, or Friday. (The Jews began a new day with sundown. In other words, Friday, the 14th began at 6 p.m. on Thursday the 13th.) The Last Supper was therefore a Passover meal.

**13.** What instructions were the disciples given?

It would have been very unusual to find a man carrying water in a pitcher, for it was the woman who carried water that way. If men carried water, it was usually in a large wineskin. David Hewitt tells us a little about their homes: "Larger Jewish houses would have upper rooms that were approached via an outside staircase. These were often used as

storerooms or guest rooms, or, more significantly, as a quiet place where a rabbi could teach his disciples.”

Jesus and His disciples were about to celebrate His last Passover, which would be the most important meal ever eaten in the history of the world. This meal would identify Jesus as the Passover Lamb that would be slain for the sins of the world. (John 1:29) It’s so important to remember that Jesus was the master of His own death. They didn’t “kill” Him; He died willingly, offering His life as a sacrifice for sins forever (John 10:18, Hebrews 8:1 through 10:18).

**14.** Jesus stated a fact in Mark 14:18. What was the disciples’ reaction? (Jesus had just washed the disciples’ feet before the meal; John 13:1-20)

**15.** According to John 13:21-30, why didn’t the disciples understand that Jesus was talking about Judas?

Judas sealed his fate by receiving the piece of bread, instead of the Bread of Life. Immediately he went out into the night. Judas was walking in spiritual darkness, as well as physically. Judas had been present when Jesus washed the disciples’ feet. Jesus, the King, bowed to wash His servants’ feet. How could Judas just sit there? How could Jesus actually wash his feet? **Jesus** -- what an example of humility and servanthood! **Judas** -- what an example of deceitfulness!

**16.** Do you think you could have washed Judas’ feet if you were Jesus? Are you willing to follow His example by treating those you don’t like with love?

I know that none of us want to be compared to Judas, but we all face the same temptations that he did. Will we sell out the Lord for money, selfish desires, or high ambitions? Will we receive the bread that the world is offering us, or will we receive the Bread of Life? Examine your heart ... is there any selfishness, covetousness, or greed?

**17.** What does Jesus say about Judas in Mark 14:21?

- 18.** Let's read Mark 14:22-25, Matthew 26:26-29, and Luke 22:17-23.  
Also read 1 Corinthians 11:23-26. Write your observations.  
What is most significant to you about this section?

There were certain things that were necessary for a Passover meal. The **roasted lamb**, to remind them of how their houses had been protected from the angel of death; **unleavened bread** to remind them of the bread they ate in haste while escaping from Egypt; **a bowl of salt water** to remind them of the tears they shed in Egypt and the waters of the Red Sea which opened for them; **bitter herbs** to remind them of the bitterness of slavery in Egypt; and **four cups of wine** to remind them of the four promises of God in Exodus 6:6-7.

After Judas left, Jesus instituted what is called "The Lord's Supper" or "the Eucharist." (which means "the giving of thanks") We hold the Memorial view of communion. This means that we believe that the elements are both a memorial and a symbol of the body and blood of Jesus Christ. He did not transform the bread and wine into anything else. They were symbols to represent a spiritual truth. He didn't want them to literally eat His flesh and drink His blood. He was speaking figuratively.

Communion is a sacred time of confession of sin and a time of restoration. It's also a time to thank Him for all He has done for us. It's a proclamation of His death and what it means to us. Just as the Passover Feast was a remembrance of Israel's deliverance, the Lord's Supper is a remembrance of the work of Jesus as our deliverer.

- 19.** Jesus said to "do this in remembrance of Me." Why?

- 20.** How often can we take communion? When do we stop?  
(1 Corinthians 11:24-26) Why?

"In the Passover, it was the 'poured out' blood of a sacrificed lamb sprinkled on the doorway that saved a family from death. It was the body of the same lamb that was eaten by the family as they celebrated their deliverance." (David Hewitt)

Jesus makes a new covenant (pact, treaty, or agreement) between God and man -- deliverance from death through His sacrificed body and shed blood. The old covenant was between God and Israel and was dependant on Israel keeping the law (Exodus 24:3-8). If Israel broke the law, their relationship with God was shattered. This covenant was totally dependant on man's obedience to the law. It was sealed with the blood of sacrificed animals. Jesus brings a new covenant, a new relationship between God and man. This relationship is not dependant on the law, but on the blood that was shed. This was done because of God's love for us (John 3:16, Romans 5:8). Now men are no longer under the law. Because of what Jesus did, we are "within the love of God." (William Barclay) We are sealed by the blood of Jesus.

- 21.** How does it make you feel to know that the body of Jesus was broken for you, personally?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 22.** Let's take a moment and rejoice in what Jesus did for us. Write a prayer of thanksgiving to Him. How about a poem?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 23.** It is a privilege to come together as believers and take communion. But sometimes it can become just a "ritual." How can you guard against this?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  

Jesus ends this supper reminding them of His Second Coming (vs 25). This left them with hope, knowing that even though death was coming, they would be with each other again.

- 24.** Read Mark 14:26-31, Matthew 26:30-35, Luke 22:31-39, and John 13:36-38. What's the main thought of this section?

It was traditional to end the Passover celebration by singing the latter part of what is known as The Great Hallel (praise), which consisted of Psalms 115-118. (I don't think I would have been singing if I knew I was going to die!) Then they left the Upper Room and went out to the Mount of Olives.

**25.** How did Jesus mix prophecy with hope in Mark 14:27-28?

**26.** What claim did Peter make? How did Jesus respond?

**27.** What motivated Peter's response? Where was Peter's confidence?

Jesus quotes from Zechariah 13:7, telling them that He would be smitten, and they would scatter. Peter just can't believe that He would deny His Lord. No way, not him! Peter loved the Lord, but he seemed to be very self-confident. Jesus needed him to understand his own weakness, so He pointed out the facts on how Peter would deny Him. Not once, not twice, but three times. Peter still held his ground, and the other disciples chimed in.

**28.** Read Mark 14:32-42, Matthew 26:36-46, Luke 22:39-46. Write your thoughts. What's happening? Who are the main characters?

The Garden was on the lower slopes of the Mount of Olives. This seemed to be one of Jesus' favorite places (Luke 22:39). This is the third time that Mark records Jesus praying (1:35, 6:46).

**29.** What did Jesus tell the disciples to do? Who did He take a little farther? Why?

**30.** Describe Jesus' emotions at the time.

Jesus fell on the ground to pray (Mark 14:35). He soon would fall under the weight of the sins of the world. Although Jesus was dreading

the moment when His Father would look away from Him as He became sin for us, He humbly submitted to the will of the Father.

**31.** What is so significant in Jesus' prayer in Mark 14:36? How is this an example for us?

**32.** What important details do we get from Luke's account (Luke 22:39-46)

Jesus calls God the Father **"Abba"** in Mark 14:36. This is an Aramaic word for Father, or Daddy. Jews did not refer to God the Father in such a personal way. They would have thought it disrespectful to refer to God in such a way, perhaps even blasphemous. Jesus had a special relationship with God, and this was a very endearing term. This relationship is possible for us as believers in Jesus Christ (Matthew 6:9, Romans 8:15, Galatians 4:6).

**33.** Do you see God as your "Abba"? What does this endearing term tell us about the kind of relationship we can have with God?

**34.** What did Jesus tell them to pray for?

**35.** Why do you think Jesus called Peter "Simon"?

**36.** How did the disciples respond when they were found sleeping?

**37.** In your own words, what was Jesus saying in Mark 14:41-42?

**38.** Do you think Jesus was mad at them?

**39.** How do the words of Jesus in this section apply to us today (Mark 14:41-42)? How can we be guilty of “falling asleep”? Are we “watching”?

I recently had the opportunity to go to Israel and spend some time in the Garden of Gethsemane. The Lord used these words to speak to my heart concerning complacency. In Mark 14:41, He said, **“It is enough!”** The time for sleeping is over. We, as a church, are in grave danger of “falling sleep” in our Christianity. We are desensitized by the things and attitudes of the world. We often get caught up in things that have no eternal value. We begin to compromise for convenience or laziness. Jesus tells us to **“Wake up!”** It’s time to get serious about the things of God! He’s coming back soon ... are we ready?

**40.** Read Mark 14:43-52, Matthew 26:47-56, Luke 22:47-53, and John 18:1-11. Describe the scene that took place.

**41.** Answer the following questions, using all four accounts:

- a. How did Judas know where to go?
- b. How did Judas betray Jesus?
- c. What, and whom, did Judas bring with him?
- d. Whose ear was cut off? Who did it?
- e. Why did Jesus heal the ear?
- f. Did Jesus run away?
- g. What happened when Jesus said who He was?
- h. What did Jesus call Judas?
- i. What did the disciples do?

**42.** The most important question: Who exactly was in charge? Can anyone really arrest God? What does Mark 14:48-49 teach us about the sovereignty of God?

According to J.H. Thayer, the word “kissed” in verse 45 means “to kiss much, kiss again and again, kiss tenderly.” Judas’ continual “kissing” was actually a “kiss of death.”

Mark doesn't identify the man who cut off the high priest's ear, but John tells us it was Peter. If the Gospel of Mark was written while Peter was still alive, it is easy to understand why Mark omitted Peter's name.

Remember from Lesson 1, many believe the young man in Mark 14:52 was John Mark, the writer of this Gospel. Some think that the Last Supper may have taken place in Mark's mother's home (Acts 12:12), and that Mark was awakened by all the commotion. We know that Peter and Mark were close (1 Peter 5:13), and tradition tells us that Mark wrote His Gospel based upon the preaching of Peter.

Ted Dorman writes, "The fact that John Mark was a native of Jerusalem and knew Peter so well makes it eminently reasonable (though not an established fact) that Mark and his family were part of the Jerusalem circle of disciples who believed in Jesus during His earthly ministry. Furthermore, the incident recorded in 14:51-52 is totally irrelevant to the flow of Mark's narrative, unless the author is saying, 'I was there!'"

**43.** Notice that just before they came to arrest Him, Jesus had been "overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death." How were His emotions now? What does that tell you about Jesus?

**44.** What can we learn from Jesus in handling times of crisis?

Kent Hughes says, "If we truly follow Christ, we will experience our own personal Gethsemanes (John 15:18-20). They are the inevitable lot of those who follow Christ."

**45.** What does the above quote mean? What would you consider your "Gethsemane"? How are we supposed to go through it? What did Jesus do?

I believe that Peter really thought he was doing the right thing by cutting off the man's ear. How often we also react in the flesh, doing what "we" think is right, rather than what God's Word says.



**46.** Are you “reacting” to a situation right now instead of waiting on the Lord? Are you using carnal or physical weapons to fight a spiritual battle (2 Corinthians 10:3-5)? The result can be very painful.

Jesus submitted Himself to the will of the Father. He didn’t take the easy, or the painless way out. Jesus didn’t depend on His disciples for His strength; He depended on His Father. He didn’t punch Judas in the face or tell Him about sweet revenge, He called him “friend.” What an incredible night in the Garden of Gethsemane.

**46.** What is the most important, exciting, or challenging thing you learned from this week’s section in the Gospel of Mark?

Below is a chart explaining the events that took place during the final week of Jesus’ earthly ministry. This is known as the “**Week of Passion.**” This chart should be helpful as you try to piece it all together. Please forgive me for not including this a few lessons back. (Better late than never!) This is the traditional view, though there are others.

<b>Day</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Biblical Reference</b>
Sunday	The triumphal entry into Jerusalem	Mark 11:1-11
Monday	Cleanses the temple in Jerusalem	Mark 11:15-19
Tuesday	The Sanhedrin challenges Jesus' authority Jesus foretells the destruction of Jerusalem and His Second Coming Mary anoints Jesus at Bethany Judas bargains with the Jewish rulers to betray Jesus	Luke 20:1-8 Matt. 24; 25 John 12:2-8 Luke 22:3-6
Thursday	Jesus eats the Passover meal with His disciples and institutes the Memorial Supper Prays in Gethsemane for His disciples	John 13:1-30 Mark 14:22-26 John 17
Friday	His betrayal and arrest in the Garden of Gethsemane Jesus questioned by Annas, the former high priest Condemned by Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin Peter denies Jesus three times Jesus is formally condemned by the Sanhedrin Judas commits suicide The trial of Jesus before Pilate Jesus' appearance before Herod Antipas Formally sentenced to death by Pilate Jesus is mocked and crucified between two thieves The veil of the temple is torn as Jesus dies His burial in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea	Mark 14:43-50 John 18:12-24 Mark 14:53-65 John 18:15-27 Luke 22:66-71 Matt 27:3-10 Luke 23:1-5 Luke 23:6-12 Luke 23:13-25 Mark 15:16-27 Matt. 27:51-56 John 19:31-42
Sunday	Jesus is raised from the dead	Luke 24:1-9



# LESSON 18

In our lesson last week, we read that Jesus was betrayed by a close friend, with a kiss. Our hearts break as we think about the pain that Jesus must have felt as His friend betrayed Him, His disciples left Him, and He was left alone in His hour of despair. We read about Peter, who jumped in to defend Jesus with his sword, reacting hastily. Jesus fixes the mistake, healing the man's ear. This week we also begin on a sad note with the arrest and beating of Jesus. Keep in mind that Jesus "willingly" endured this pain and humiliation for you ... and for me.

**Memory Verse of the Week:** "And Jesus said, 'I am. And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power and coming with the clouds of Heaven.'" Mark 14:62

1. Read Mark 14:53-65, Matthew 26:57-68, Luke 22:54-55, 63-65, and John 18:12, 18, 24. Record your observations. List the facts you find.
2. Using all accounts, answer the following questions:
  - a. What was the high priest's name?
  - b. What were they seeking to do?
  - c. Where was Peter? Who was with him?
  - d. Why were they doing this? (Read Mark 15:10)
3. Describe the "kangaroo" trial that Jesus had. Was it fair?

The Jews did not have authority under the Roman law to carry out the death sentence. They could pass a verdict, but the case had to be tried in a Roman court for the death sentence to be put into action. This trial was held illegally for a number of reasons. It was a feeble attempt to piece together a case that would stand up in a Roman court.

Under the Jewish law, a trial like this was to be held in the Hall of Stones in the Temple. Instead, they took Jesus first to the home of Annas (John 18:13), the ex-high priest who held office from AD 6-15. They

then took Jesus to the home of Annas' son-in-law, Caiaphas, who was the current high priest, who actually held office for 19 years, much longer than the usual 2-4 year term. This tells us what type of authority he had. Then they put Jesus in a hall where the Sanhedrin could be present.

They were not supposed to hold trials at night, or on feast days. They arrested Jesus at night, on the Passover. They were required to have unanimous evidence of at least two witnesses (Deuteronomy 17:6, 19:15, Numbers 35:30), which they did not. Jerry Vines writes, "If a man had been condemned to die, they were supposed to wait a day in order to give the members of the Sanhedrin time to look for some possible way to extend mercy to the accused. Jesus was condemned, yet He was rushed right on through to crucifixion. Also, the condemned had to have someone testify on his behalf. No one was allowed to come forth and speak on behalf of the Lord Jesus Christ."

4. What did they accuse Jesus of? (Mark 14:58) What could they have been referring to? Read John 2:19. What was He talking about?

Even though it appears to be a strange accusation, the destruction of a place of worship was a capital offense.

5. Why was Jesus silent for so long? Why did He finally answer?
6. After Jesus answered, how did the high priest respond? What was Jesus then accused of? What was the penalty for it? Read Leviticus 24:16.

Caiaphas puts Jesus under oath, basically, ordering Him to answer (Matthew 26:63). Jesus uses Scripture to answer him, quoting from Psalm 110:1 and Daniel 7:13. His answer was both a confession of who He was and a warning of what He would come back to do. They may be sitting in judgement of Him now, but He would be the final judge over all, including them!

7. Describe the beating. What game were they playing? (Matthew 26:68)

**8.** Read Isaiah 50:6, 53:7, and 1 Peter 2:22-23. How did Jesus' response fulfill prophecy?

**9.** What does Jesus call Himself in Mark 14:62? What title does He give His Father?

While Jesus was being tried, Peter was warming himself by the fire. Even though he followed at a distance, he didn't flee like the rest. It's interesting that Mark makes a point to let the readers know what Peter is doing while Jesus is being tried, beaten, and spit on. We read about Jesus' uncompromising stand, and then, in our next section, Mark again returns to Peter, pointing out his failure. Jesus stands as a beacon of light, strength, and victory, in sharp contrast to human failure.

Imagine our Lord being spit on, one of the most humiliating things possible. How does that make you feel? (I'm not into "feelings," but I think it is important to really understand what was happening in order to understand the depth of God's love for us.) What response does this picture invoke in you? (Sadness? Thankfulness? Humility?)

**10.** What do you learn about Jesus from this section? What lessons did you learn for yourself?

**11.** Let's begin today by reading Mark 14:66-72, Matthew 26:69-75, Luke 22:55-62, and John 18:15-18, 25-27. Record your observations. What do you think is the most significant fact in this section?

**12.** What was Peter doing? Who recognized him? How?

**13.** Why didn't Peter want anyone to know who he was?

**14.** When Peter heard the rooster crow, what did he remember?

**15.** From Luke's account, what did Jesus do when He heard the rooster crow? Then what did Peter do?

Verse 71 tells us that Peter began to “curse and swear.” This doesn’t refer to what we commonly think of as cursing and swearing. The first verb simply means that he was saying “Let me be under a curse if I am not telling you the truth.” The second verb means to swear an oath, as one does in court. (Ralph Earle; Mark, The Gospel of Action)

- 16.** What lessons do you think Peter learned from all this?
- 17.** Do you think Jesus was mad at Peter? Why or why not? Can you back up your argument with Scripture?
- 18.** How do we, as Christians, also deny the Lord? Be specific. Have you ever denied the Lord like Peter? Did you respond like Peter?
- 19.** How does “following Jesus at a distance” often cause us to deny Him? How close are you following Him? Can you see where He’s going? Can you hear His footsteps? Can you hear His heartbeat? What steps can you take to make yourself closer to Him?

Often, we have mixed emotions, just like Peter. We follow Jesus into the courtyard, but yet something keeps us from acknowledging Him as our Lord. We love Him, but are ashamed of Jesus at the same time. Why is this?

- 20.** How is Judas’ betrayal of Jesus different from Peter’s?
- 21.** Why are we able to identify with Peter so much?
- 22.** We will mess up. We will deny the Lord. But what promise do we have from God that gives us hope and renews our spirit? Read 1 John 1:9. Can you give other Scriptures for this answer?

“It is a mixture of courage and cowardice, of success and failure, which makes Peter so attractive to us. We can readily identify with him. It is a tribute to Peter’s honesty that he insists on Mark recording these events that can only have been spoken of by Peter himself. Peter was not too proud to let the world know about his failure. Peter fell despite years of being with Jesus and being told exactly what dangers he would face, and how to avoid them. He failed because he was too sure of himself, too careless, and perhaps too fond of his own comfort. He remains as a warning to us.”

**23.** Read Mark 15:1-15, Matthew 27:1,2,11-23, Luke 23:1-5, 13-23, and John 18:28-19:15. Write the facts. What would you title this section?

On this Friday morning of Passion Week, the Jews got together and officially sentenced Jesus. They bound Him and brought Him to Pilate. Pontius Pilate was the governor of Judea at the time (AD 26-36). Pilate usually would have been in Caesarea, but because of the many riots during Passover, he stayed in Jerusalem to help keep the peace. Pilate had no great love for the Jews, so he wasn’t looking to award them any favors.

**24.** Piece the Gospel accounts together and answer the following questions:

- a. What accusations were the Jews trying to bring against Jesus?
- b. What questions did Jesus answer? When was He silent?
- c. Did Pilate think Jesus was guilty? How do we know?
- d. Who did Pilate send Jesus to? Why? How did this affect the two leaders’ relationship?
- e. What other ways did Pilate try to get Jesus released?

**25.** Who did the Jews want Pilate to release? What do we know about him?



- 26.** What does this tell us about the hatred they had for Jesus?
- 27.** What counsel did Pilate's wife give him? (Wives are so smart!)
- 28.** Why didn't Pilate release Jesus? What kind of man was Pilate? How would you describe him?

Verse 15 tells us that Pilate "delivered" Jesus over to be crucified. I quote, "The word Mark uses here appears regularly in his Gospel (1:14; 9:31; 10:33; 14:10, 11, 18, 21, 41, 42, 44, 15:1) and recognizes that these events are not just the acts of sinful men, but the working out of the purposes of God." The background is found in Isaiah 53:12, which in the Greek version reads, 'He bore the sins of many and was delivered because of their iniquities.'" (David Hewitt)

- 29.** What can we learn from the man Pilate?
- 30.** What do we learn about the sin of envy and hatred?
- 31.** Read Proverbs 6:16-19. How many of these sins were present in the hearts of the people that morning? Are any of them present in your heart? What do you need to do?

The time has come. The hour is at hand. We move now to Golgotha, the place of crucifixion.

- 32.** Read Mark 15:15-23, Matthew 27:26-34, Luke 23:24-32, and John 19:16-22. Write your observations.

Mark 15:15 tells us that Jesus was "scourged" or "flogged." This was done with a whip consisting of several pieces of leather. Pieces of metal and bone were tied on to the leather. This practice was nicknamed "the halfway death," and was intended to rip skin away from

the bone. The Jews limited their floggings to 40 stripes, but the Romans had no limit.

The “Praetorium” is a Latin word meaning hall, or courtyard. It was the official headquarters of the governor. Where exactly this place is located is unknown. Some think it was Herod’s palace, near the present-day Jaffa gate. The traditional site is the Tower of Antonia, at the northwest corner of the temple area on the east side of the city. A large, paved area has been discovered there, which may have been the courtyard.

**33.** Why did the soldiers clothe Jesus in purple, use a crown of thorns, etc.? What point were they trying to make? What were they trying to do to Him physically and emotionally?

**34.** Who did the soldiers “compel” to help carry Jesus’ cross?

**35.** Where did they take Jesus to be crucified?

Simon was from Cyrene, which was the capital city in North Africa, which was a province of Rome. There was a large Jewish population that lived in Cyrene. We don’t know why Mark lets his readers know the names of his two sons. Perhaps they were well-known figures of the Roman church.

Most people who had been condemned to crucifixion carried their own crossbeam, which may have weighed close to 100 pounds. I imagine that because of all the torturous acts that Jesus went through, He was unable to carry it.

“Golgotha” is an Aramaic word that means “skull.” The word “Calvary” is from the Latin word for skull. Many crucifixions took place at Golgotha, making it sometimes referred to as Jerusalem’s “killing field.” Crucifixions took place outside of the city and was one of the cruelest ways of being killed. It was reserved for the worst criminals. A mix of wine and myrrh was a traditional way of easing pain, producing a narcotic effect (Proverbs 31:6). Jesus refused it.

**36.** Why do you think Jesus refused the wine?

You'll notice that none of the Gospels give much detail about the crucifixion itself. Most of the readers at the time would have been quite familiar with the scene and wouldn't need to know the details. They knew how awful it was ... they saw it. I read that most "cultured Gentiles" refrained as much as possible from even mentioning the word "cross."

37. What other reasons do you think the Gospel writers may not have elaborated on the physical details of the crucifixion?
38. According to Isaiah 52:14, how did Jesus look when they were done with Him?
39. The cross was not an endearing symbol to them, like it is to us. Why do we wear crosses? What do they mean to us?
40. Read Philippians 2:5-11. Write your thoughts.
41. First of all, read Psalm 22. This is a Messianic Psalm prophesying Jesus' crucifixion. It describes Jesus' painful experience on the cross. Describe the different feelings that Jesus went through.
42. We've now walked down the Via Dolorosa (path of sorrows) with Jesus (Mark 15:16-23). What impact has this made on you this week?

# LESSON 19

We ended our lesson last week in Mark 15:23. Jesus had been offered sour wine to drink but refused it. This week we will continue studying and meditating on what happened on that “Good Friday.” Some ask how it can be called “Good Friday,” when our Lord experienced such a painful death on that very day. It’s called “Good” because it is that very day that Jesus died for our sins. We would still be under the bondage of sin and death if it wasn’t for what happened on that day. Jesus came, not only to die, but to rise again. The Gospel doesn’t end with His death ... praise the Lord for that. We’ll read of His ultimate triumph over death in Mark chapter 16. Ask the Lord to prepare your heart as you study this chapter. It is so significant and meaningful. I pray that we soak in every detail and what that detail means to us personally.

**Memory Verse of the Week:** “Then the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom.” Mark 15:38

1. Read Mark 15:24-41, Matthew 27:35-56, Luke 23:33-49 and John 19:18-37. Record the events that led up to Jesus’ death on the cross. Make notes from each account as you read them, noting any details that are given. **The answers to all the following questions are taken from all the accounts, not only Mark’s.**
2. What were the soldiers doing with Jesus’ clothes? Why?
3. What did Jesus say while everything was happening? (Luke 23:34) What is incredible about His response? What do you learn from it? How quick are you to forgive those who treat you unfairly?
4. How did Jesus “practice what He preached”? Read Matthew 18:21-35. What did Jesus teach on the subject of forgiveness?

According to Mark 15:25, Jesus was crucified at the “third” hour. This would be 9:00 a.m. according to Jewish time, because their days began at dawn, or 6:00 a.m. In his Gospel, John uses Roman time, when the days began at midnight. This helps us understand why John 19:14 says that Pilate sentenced Jesus in the sixth hour, or at 6:00 a.m.

It was a common practice for soldiers to divide a criminal’s clothes. It also was typical for criminals to be made to carry a board indicating what crime they were being punished for.

5. What was written on Jesus’ sign? Why is this significant?
6. Why were the chief priests upset? What did they want it to say? (John 19:21) What decision did Pilate make? (Finally, he made one!)

The fact that the inscription referred to Jesus as the “king” would have insulted the Romans, making Him a revolutionary. The reference to “king of the Jews” would have angered the Jews, for they believed Him to be a false Messiah.

7. Mark talks more about the ridicule from the crowd and the religious leaders than he does about the crucifixion itself. Why do you think?
8. What did the people who were passing by say to Jesus? What about the chief priests and the soldiers?

It’s hard to even imagine what Jesus must have felt as He hung there on the cross, listening to the jeers of the people, knowing that what they were saying was really true! Did He want to cry out, “I am the King of the Jews! I am the Son of God! I am the I AM!”? How painful to listen to the truth, yet not do anything to stop their accusations. Not that He couldn’t, mind you, but He chose not to. He chose to go all the way to the cross, bearing the shame and the suffering. He was going all the way ... for me, and for you. It was our sin that He bore that day.

9. Notice the accusing words spoken by the chief priests in Mark 15:31. Why are they so ironic?

**10.** Is there someone in your life that is asking you to forgive them? Will you follow the example of Jesus?

**11.** Who was hanging on either side of Jesus? (Read Luke 23:39-43)

Many believe that these two were the fellow “insurrectionists” mentioned in Mark 15:7 instead of common robbers, because robbery was not a capital offense. Many also think that it’s possible that the cross that Jesus was crucified on had been prepared for Barabbas, with his two cohorts on either side. If that’s true, what a great example of Jesus taking the place of sinners.

**12.** At first, both criminals were mocking Jesus (Mark 15:32). Then one robber does an about-face. Why do you think?

**13.** Did the one robber believe that his own punishment was warranted?

**14.** What did the one robber ask of Jesus? How did Jesus answer?

**15.** Did Jesus hesitate when He forgave him? Did He give the robber any other “work” to do before He forgave him?

**16.** Do you think there are any sins that can’t be forgiven? Think about it. This man was actually ridiculing our Lord as He died on the cross, and Jesus told him he would be going to Paradise. What one word explains what is required of us for salvation? (John 6:29)

**17.** Is it ever too late to repent? Can “deathbed” conversions be real?

**18.** According to Mark 15:33, what happened for three hours? (What time was it?) Why is this significant?

**19.** What did Jesus call out at the “ninth” hour? Why did He want everyone to hear it? What actually happened during those three hours? Read Isaiah 53:3-6, 2 Corinthians 5:21, 1 Peter 2:24, and Psalm 22:1.

Darkness fell on the earth for three hours. In Exodus 10:21-29, a plague of darkness was recorded as a sign of God's judgement. "Outer Darkness" is also a term that Jesus used to describe hell, which was total separation from God. Jesus Himself calls out "Why have you forsaken Me!" as the Father looked away from Him for a time. Jesus bore our sins alone on that cross, experiencing God's judgement for the sins of the world.

Not only did Jesus take the place of Barabbas, He took our place as well. Write your thoughts ...

Jesus called out to the Father in Mark 15:34, quoting Psalm 22:1. The people thought he was calling Elijah. "Eloi" is the Aramaic word for God, and they may have confused that with the name Elias, which sounded similar.

**20.** Mark 15:36 tells us that they offered Jesus a drink again. Why did they do this? Read John 19:28.

**21.** Who else was present at the crucifixion? Mark 15:40 and John 19:25-28.

**22.** What did Jesus do when He saw His mother?

**23.** What does that tell us about Jesus?

**24.** Did John obey Jesus' request?

We know that John is often referred to as the "disciple whom Jesus loved" (John 13:23, 20:2, 21:7). I think it's sort of cute that he refers to himself that way, don't you?

Jesus makes sure His mother is taken care of before He takes His last breath. Jesus is a God of love. My heart is broken as I think of Mary standing there, watching all this happen to her son. A mother's heart was breaking as she watched her son in agony. I don't think Mary could've understood the pain that would accompany being the mother

of God, do you? When the angel appeared to her, she said, “Let it be to me according to Your word.” (Luke 1:38) Here it was being done.

**25.** Are you willing, as Mary, to accept God’s will in your life, no matter how painful, no matter whether you even understand what’s happening? Can you say, with Mary, “Let it be to me according to Your Word!”

**26.** After Jesus receives the drink, what does He say? (John 19:30)  
What is the significance of these words? What is finished?

**27.** What did the soldiers do to Jesus’ body after He died? Why? (John 19:31-37)

**28.** What happened when Jesus “breathed His last”? (Mark 15:38, Matthew 27:51)

**29.** What was the reaction of the people who were there? Mark 15:39 and Luke 23:47-49. Why would it be significant to Mark’s readers that the Roman centurion responded the way he did?

All three Synoptic Gospels record the fact that the veil of the Temple was torn in two. Why? The Old Testament tabernacle symbolized God’s dwelling place with Israel. The tabernacle had an area called “The Holy Place” which had a curtain that separated it from the outer area. There was also another area called “The Most Holy Place.” There was also a curtain separating the two. Only the high priest could enter the “Most Holy Place” once a year, on the Day of Atonement, or Yom Kippur. On that day, the high priest would take the blood of the animal that was sacrificed for the sins of Israel and sprinkle it on the Ark of the Covenant for atonement (Leviticus 16:17, Hebrews 9:7). When Israel built the Temple to replace the tabernacle, they followed the same pattern.



I read that “the veil was made from very heavy material, tightly woven, and virtually impossible to tear. The fact that it was torn from top to bottom suggests the imagery of an invisible sword cutting it in two, which clearly shows that this was an act of God, not of man.” (Mark, Life-Change Series)

**30.** Read Hebrews 10:12-22. (Especially verses 19-20) Why is it important for you and me that this veil was torn? What did it symbolize? Also read John 14:6.

**31.** Why do you think it’s important that it was torn from top to bottom?

Through His death on the cross, Jesus opened the way for all of us to be able to enter the “Holy of Holies.” No longer is it only the high priest that can come before Him, but Jesus became the door through which we can all enter. His body became the veil that stands between God and man. That veil was opened so we might have a relationship with God. 1 Timothy 2:5-6 says, **“For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Jesus Christ, who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.”**

**32.** Jesus made seven statements from the cross. Look up the following Scriptures and write His Words, along with your thoughts on each:

a. Luke 23:34

b. Luke 23:43

c. John 19:26-27

d. Mark 15:34

e. John 19:28

f. John 19:30

g. Luke 23:46

Sometimes it took many days for those who were crucified to die. They spent many long hours exhausted and unconscious. The fact that Jesus gave out His last two cries before He died tells us something about His death. David Hewitt said, "Jesus' death was different. He remained conscious and in control throughout the whole ordeal and died with a cry of triumph on His lips."

33. Read Mark 15:42-47, Matthew 27:57-61, Luke 23:50-56, and John 19:38-42. Describe what's happening.
34. Who approached Pilate for the body? How was he described? Why was he a "secret" disciple? (John 19:38)
35. It took courage to stand up for the Lord, even just to claim His body. What lesson do you see for your own life from this man, Joseph?
36. Whose tomb was Jesus laid in?
37. Who else was there? What else did they do to the body?
38. Read Matthew 27:62-66. What were the Jews worried about? What was their solution?

They actually thought that a stone would keep Jesus' body in the tomb. Wrong! Foiled again! Are these guys in for a big surprise, or what?

We should be so excited that Mark's Gospel doesn't end here in chapter 15:47 with the words, "where He was laid." If that was the end of the story, we would be sunk. Paul said it best in 1 Corinthians 15:14, "And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is also in vain." He also says in verse 19, "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of men the most pitiable." We have an incredible hope in a risen God! What a **"Reason to Rejoice!"**

39. Now let's read Mark 16:1-8, Matthew 28:1-8, and Luke 24:1-9. Write your observations.

We find the women are the last ones to leave the cross, and they are the first at the tomb. I wonder where the disciples were ...

- 40. What day did the women come to the tomb? Where was the stone? Who opened the tomb?
- 41. What was the guard's reaction?
- 42. What did the angel say to the ladies? (Luke mentions two angels, while Mark focuses on only one.)
- 43. Notice that the angel specifically said to tell Peter. Why is this so special? What was Peter doing the last time we read about him? (Mark 14:72)
- 44. What was the initial reaction of the women? (Mark 16:8) Then what? (Matthew 28:8)
- 45. Do you think the women expected Jesus' body to be in the tomb? Why or why not? Did they understand that He was going to rise again?
- 46. What three words in Mark 16:6 tell us about the greatest miracle in history?
- 47. Mark 16:6-7 says, "He is risen, He is not here," and then he says, "Go and tell." Does the message of the Resurrection motivate you to "Go and tell"?

**The Resurrection has changed human history forever! Has it changed yours?**

# LESSON 20

We have reached our final lesson in the Gospel of Mark. (I can't believe it!) Mark has become a good friend, hasn't he? I'm always happy to finish a book, but I'm sad as well. Following the footsteps of Christ through this Gospel has been great fun. I have learned a lot! My life has been changed and I pray that yours has too. A changed heart and a changed life are the goal of any Bible Study. Did the Lord change you?

This week we will finish up chapter 16, beginning in verse 9. It's important to point out that these last 12 verses are not found in the two oldest Greek manuscripts of the New Testament. "The earliest commentary on Mark (sixth century) stops at 16:8. It is almost universally agreed that verses 9-20 were added centuries after the Gospel was written, in order to complete it with a summary account of the post-resurrection appearances of Jesus." (Ralph Earle) Many scholars believe that perhaps Mark did write an ending to his Gospel, but that it was lost in the early transmission of the text. "The endings we now possess may therefore represent attempts by the Church (perhaps from a first-century Christian's somewhat fading memory of the original ending) to supply what was obviously lacking." (Mark, LifeChange Series) The last 12 verses are obviously very different from the rest of this Gospel but are still recognized as part of the inherently holy Scriptures.

**Memory Verse of the Week:** "Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature." Mark 16:15

1. Read Mark 16:9-20, Luke 24:13-48 and John 20:1-10. Write your observations. What is the main thought of this section?
2. Jesus appeared to five groups of people on the day of His resurrection. To whom did He appear first? What do we know about her? Read Luke 8:2.
3. Why was she so upset? Did she understand what was going on? For whom did she mistake Jesus?

4. Why do you think Jesus appeared to this woman first, before His disciples?
5. What was the first thing Mary did after she met with the Lord? (John 20:18) Was she believed? Why or why not?
6. Matthew 28:9 tells us who He appeared to next. Who was it? How did they react?
7. If you had been there, do you think you would've believed? Can we fault them?
8. Who, in Mark 16:12-13 and Luke 24:13-35, did Jesus appear to next?
9. To where were they traveling? What were they discussing?
10. Why were they disappointed? What were they hoping Jesus would do?
11. How long did it take for them to realize who He was?
12. How did they describe the feeling they had as He shared with them?
13. Do you ever feel the same way when you are reading the Scriptures? These guys kept Him there as long as they could because they were enjoying Him so much. Is your heart "burning" to know Him? Do you spend as much time as you can with Him because you enjoy being in His presence so much? Think about it!
14. Read Luke 24:34. To whom did He appear next?
15. Now read Mark 16:14, Luke 24:33-43 and John 20:19-29. On Sunday night, to whom did Jesus show Himself? Why were they behind closed doors?

16. What made them believe Jesus? What was His message to them?
17. Who was missing from the group? What kept him from believing?
18. Jesus appeared to the disciples after eight days. This time the “doubter” was present. What changed his mind?
19. Thomas needed to “**see**” the Lord in order to believe what they were saying. Are you like Thomas? Do you have to “**see**” God do things before you’ll believe Him? What kind of faith do we have if we have to totally “see” it first? What does Jesus say about that in John 20:29?

Thomas is often known as the “doubter,” although Jesus doesn’t rebuke him because of doubt, but because of unbelief. The verb for “said” in the Greek (John 20:25) suggests that “they **kept** saying to him.” The disciples were telling Thomas over and over what they had seen. But Thomas took the “scientific approach,” as Warren Wiersbe calls it, where you won’t believe something until it can be proven.

I can identify with Thomas. I like to know things. I like to be sure of things and understand things. I like to see it for myself. Often this causes me to depend on my own understanding, instead of relying on the Holy Spirit and accepting His Word by faith. There is a difference between doubt and unbelief. Doubt has a difficult time believing, often because of circumstances. Unbelief is more of a choice to not believe. I think we often “choose” not to believe something in His Word until we can personally “experience” it like Thomas, instead of trusting in the faithfulness of God’s Word. The name “Thomas” means “twin.” We don’t know anything about his twin, but couldn’t you and I both fill those shoes?

20. Thomas went for a week without the joy that the rest of the disciples were experiencing. How does unbelief rob us of opportunities and blessings?

**21.** Luke's account (24:33-48) tells us what Jesus did when He first appeared to the disciples. (Notice that the apostles were not the only ones present.) Answer the following questions:

- a. What did Jesus first offer to them? (vs 36)
- b. Jesus showed them His hands and feet. Why?  
(The Gospels don't tell us about His feet being wounded, but Psalm 22:16 does.)
- c. Does Jesus still have the marks? (Revelation 5:6, 9,12)
- d. Then Jesus ate in their presence. Why do you think He did that?
- e. Finally, Jesus opened up the Scriptures to them. What did He explain? (vs 44-48)

Wiersbe said, **"The key to understanding the Bible is to see Jesus Christ on every page."** Jesus taught the two on the road to Emmaus about Himself (Luke 24:27), and now He does it again.

**22.** Jesus wants to do the same for us. He wants to teach us all things concerning Himself. Are you looking for Him on every page?

**23.** Now read Matthew 28:11-15. What was happening while Jesus was appearing to people? How were they going to explain the empty tomb?

**24.** Read Mark 16:15-18, Luke 24:44-53, and Matthew 28:16-20. Many believe that this is part of the Great Commission that Jesus gave on a mountain in Galilee. What does Jesus tell His disciples to do?

**25.** What is supposed to be included in their preaching, according to Luke 24:47? Why?

**26.** What is the “power” that Jesus refers to in Luke 24:49? Read Acts 1:8. When did they receive that power? Read Acts 2:1-4.

The word “endued” in Luke 24:49 means to “sink into as a garment.” We can be “clothed” by the power of the Holy Spirit, so to speak. The word “power” is from the Greek word “dunamis” meaning dynamite!

**27.** After we receive His power, what can we, and should we, be doing (Acts 1:8)?

**28.** Read Mark 16:15-18 again. Is Jesus saying that you have to be baptized to be saved? (Hint: Did Jesus tell the criminal next to Him on the cross to get baptized?) Again, what must we do to be saved (John 3:18, 36)?

Baptism is an outward sign of an inward confession of faith. In the early church, the act of baptism brought about much persecution and ridicule. This act visibly marked them as one of Christ’s followers. By doing this, they were openly confessing and proclaiming their faith for all to see. It was expected that they do so (Acts 2:41, 10:44-48). Jesus also tells us to be baptized, but not as a condition for salvation. The fact that Jesus tells us to, though, should be reason enough to be baptized.

**29.** Have you been baptized? If not, why not? What keeps you from making this public confession of faith?

**30.** Many people today think that their relationship with the Lord is simply a “personal matter” between them and God, and is no one’s business. What do you think about this, especially regarding the “public” confession of baptism and the commission to be witnesses?



Many of the signs that Jesus refers to in Mark 16:17-18 took place in the Book of Acts, although we saw many demons cast out in the Book of Mark. Acts 28:8 talks about healing by laying on of hands. Mark 6:13 mentions anointing the sick with oil, as well as James 5:14. Speaking with tongues is spoken of in Acts 2, 10 and 19, and 1 Corinthians 12 and 14. Nowhere in the New Testament do we find mentioned someone drinking poison and surviving. (Although in Acts 28:2-6, Paul is bitten by a poisonous snake but has no effects.)

- 31.** What promise do we find in the Great Commission? Is it for believers today (Matthew 28:20)?
- 32.** In what way does the Great Commission encourage you? Challenge you? I know you've been asked this question before, but ... are you doing your part?

Jesus ascended 40 days after His resurrection. Peter's restoration took place during that time, although I believe he had already been forgiven. I'm sure Peter and Jesus had already met privately, but Peter had denied Him publicly, and perhaps also needed to be restored publicly. This may be especially true because Peter is so active and visible in the first 12 chapters of Acts.

- 33.** Let's go on to Mark 16:19-20, Luke 24:49-53, and Acts 1:9-11. Describe His Ascension.
- 34.** What did Jesus do before He was taken up? (Luke 24:51)
- 35.** What emotion did this stir in the disciples?
- 36.** Can you imagine being there? What emotion do you feel as you simply read about it?

**37.** Where is Jesus seated? Read Mark 16:19, Ephesians 1:20, Hebrews 1:3, Acts 5:29-32, Colossians 3:1 and 1 Peter 3:22.

**38.** What is Jesus doing for us right now? Read Romans 8:34, John 14:2, and 1 John 2:1-2.

**39.** Mark 16:20 seems to be a one-sentence summary of the Book of Acts. Why is this significant? (Is the story over?)

Let's recap and highlight some of the main points of our study. Do you remember all that you learned?

**40.** Let's start with this week's memory verse. How does it tie in with the key verse in Mark, which is Mark 10:45?

**41.** What are some lessons that you learned from Jesus about being a servant?

**42.** What challenged you most from this book?

**43.** What encouraged you the most?

**44.** What did you learn about your role as a:

**a.** Wife?

**b.** Single?

**c.** Parent?

**d.** Friend?

**e.** Christian?

**45.** The disciples needed the power of the Holy Spirit to be bold witnesses for Jesus. Have you been baptized in the Holy Spirit? Are you boldly proclaiming the Gospel?

**46.** Have you developed more of a servant's heart through your study of Mark?

**47.** Sometimes our ears and hearts are dulled to the story of the resurrection. How can we keep the reality of what the resurrection means fresh in our minds? Why is this so important?

**48.** How has your relationship with Christ grown through your study of Mark? Did you have to make any life changes?

**Ladies, thank you for studying with us! May you always love the Lord with all of your heart, soul, mind and strength, and others as yourself. And may you have a deep desire to serve Him, as evidence of that love!**

