MARK

BIBLE STUDY

A Verse-by-Verse Study



The Servant who came to serve and to give His life:
the fast-moving Gospel of the Son of God

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A Note on the Bible Translation Used in This Study

My preferred Bible for personal study, teaching, and research is the Steadfast Literal Bible (SLB). I chose it because it is a word-for-word translation in today's language, built on the ancient Scripture sources: the Hebrew and Aramaic of the Old Testament and the Greek of the New Testament. I prepared the SLB myself, and the Scripture in this book is taken from it.

Where a literal phrase would mislead an English reader, the SLB gives the writer's meaning in plain words. Words added for sense are set in bold italics so you can see what is in the original and what is not.

The complete Steadfast Literal Bible is free to read, search, download, and print at trinfinityenterprises.com/slb. If you want to check a verse in its full setting or read the translation's preface and principles, that is the place to go.

Above all, my desire is not to promote one translation over another, but to faithfully teach the Word of God, encourage careful examination of the Scriptures, and help readers grow in their knowledge, understanding, and relationship with the Lord.

May every page of this study direct attention not to the translation itself, but to the truth of God's Word and the One whom it reveals.

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Introduction

Welcome, and thank you for taking the time to work through this verse-by-verse study of the Gospel of Mark. My purpose in writing this study guide is the same as it was for my study of Revelation: to bring you closer to our Creator and to give you a way to grow in your Christian walk.

I first saw how Jesus served people by reading the words of the Bible. Later, leading youth mission trips to Baja, Mexico, for five years, I saw what serving looks like with my own hands. Mark shows Jesus as the Servant who came to give His life. That is still the model.

Mark is the shortest of the four Gospels, and it moves fast. In sixteen chapters Mark shows us Jesus at work: teaching, healing, casting out demons, calming storms, and then setting His face toward Jerusalem and the cross. I do not claim to be an authority on the Bible or on Mark. I am simply someone like you who wants to grow closer to God and understand what He has given us in His Son. Before you read any part of this book, or any part of Scripture, I ask that you pray, asking God:

- For the Holy Spirit to be present, to help open your eyes and your heart (Psalm 119:18, 119:105)
- For discernment and knowledge (Psalm 119:66, James 1:5)

2 Timothy 2:15 (SLB)

"Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker not needing to be ashamed, cutting straight the word of truth."

The Bible is God's Word to us (2 Timothy 3:16), given for training in righteousness. If we cannot understand what it says, we cannot apply it to our lives or help build God's kingdom.

So how do we go about understanding God's Word?

The first rule is context. You may have heard the saying "Context is King," but what does that mean? Every word, sentence, and passage helps explain the ones around it. Before we read any passage, we should ask a few simple questions: Who wrote it? Who was it written to? What came right before it? Knowing the answers gives us a clearer picture of what God is saying, both in general and to each of us personally.

Context matters a great deal in Mark. It is a real account of real events, told in order, and it has a clear turning point. In the first eight chapters, people keep asking who Jesus is. In chapter 8, Peter answers, "You are the Christ" (8:29). From that moment on, Jesus teaches His disciples plainly that He must suffer, die, and rise again, and the rest of the book follows Him on the road to the cross. If we read the miracles without the cross, we turn Jesus into a wonder-worker. If we read the cross without the miracles, we miss the power and authority of the One who chose to die.

Exegesis, Eisegesis, and Hermeneutics

People typically interpret the Bible using one of two methods, Exegesis or Eisegesis. Both are explained below, along with a third word, Hermeneutics. Sometimes people use both methods to "make their case" for the interpretation they want. These definitions are based on www.merriam-webster.com, with my own notes added.

Exegesis means explaining a text, especially a passage of Scripture. Exegesis is reading and interpreting the full text of a passage, and drawing out what it is actually saying.

Eisegesis means reading your own ideas into a text. This happens when we try to find something in the text that really isn't there. It can lead to many errors, especially when we bring assumptions to a passage that aren't actually in it. This method can be used to justify a behavior, position, or belief that goes against what the text originally meant.

Hermeneutics is the study of the principles used to interpret a text, such as the Bible. "Hermeneutics" and "Exegesis" are sometimes used to mean the same thing. The difference is that Exegesis is the work of explaining a passage, while Hermeneutics is the set of principles that guides that work. In Biblical Hermeneutics, the Bible should be read literally unless the text itself gives us a different meaning.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 (SLB)

"16 Every Scripture ***is*** God-breathed and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training which ***is*** in righteousness, 17 so that the man of God may be complete, fully equipped for every good work."

This passage tells us plainly that the writers of Scripture were inspired by God. Every passage in the Bible came from God and was written down by man. These are not fairy tales or made-up stories. They are God's own breath, given to us so we can be equipped and ready to do good work.

Because every word was inspired and breathed by God, I believe we must let God's Word interpret itself. We must study the Bible using Exegesis, drawing out what the text says, guided by sound Biblical Hermeneutics.

We should study God's Word using the Golden Rule of Interpretation, as Dr. David L. Cooper stated it:

"When the plain sense of Scripture makes common sense, seek no other sense; therefore, take every word at its primary, ordinary, usual, literal meaning unless the facts of the immediate context, studied in the light of related passages and axiomatic and fundamental truths, indicate clearly otherwise."

(http://www.biblicalresearch.info/page55.html)

I read the Bible as it is written. Mark tells us real history, and this study takes him at his word: Jesus really did heal the sick, cast out demons, walk on the sea, and feed thousands with a few

loaves. He really did die on a Roman cross, and He really did rise from the dead on the third day. Where Jesus teaches in parables, the text tells us so, and Jesus Himself explains what the pictures mean. Mark wrote so that we would know who Jesus is and follow Him.

This study uses the Steadfast Literal Bible (SLB) unless I note otherwise. To better understand the original Greek, I also used The Interlinear Bible (Jay P. Green Sr., ISBN 1-56563-977-4).

How This Study Is Laid Out

Each chapter of this study follows the same pattern as my study of Revelation:

- Scripture: the full text of the chapter, broken into sections, so you can read it straight through first.
- Preview: a short look at what the chapter covers.
- Study: the chapter again, verse by verse, with my notes on what each verse says and what it means for us.
- Summary: the main points of the chapter in a few lines.
- Study Questions: questions for personal study or a small group, from simple fact questions to questions about how we live. Some of them are personal. In a group, no one should ever have to answer one aloud, and what is shared in the group stays there.
- Old and New Testament links: after many verses you will find a short line in small type that lists the places where the other Testament quotes, fulfills, pictures, or echoes that passage. "Quoted" means the New Testament quotes the Old Testament words. "Fulfilled" means the New Testament tells us a prophecy or promise came true. "Pictured" means the New Testament itself points to an Old Testament person, event, or object as a picture of Christ. "Alluded to" means a clear echo in shared words or pictures. Every link is listed again in a table at the back of the book.

Using This Study With a Group

This study works for one person or for a group. Here are two ways a group can pace it:

- One chapter a week: sixteen weeks. If you like, add a first meeting to read the Introduction and the Background together.
- Two chapters a week: eight weeks. This works well for a group that meets for a longer time or that has already studied a Gospel together. Chapters 14 and 15 are long and heavy, and some groups may want to give each of them a week of its own.

For each meeting, I suggest reading the Scripture out loud together first, straight through, before anyone comments. Then walk through the Study section, stopping where the group has questions, and finish with the Study Questions and prayer. The first questions in each list can be answered from the text. The later ones are more personal, and no one should feel pressed to answer them aloud.

Some parts of Mark touch painful subjects: demons and the harm they do (5:1-20; 9:14-29), sickness and the death of a child (5:21-43), the cruel death of John the Baptist (6:14-29), marriage

and divorce (10:1-12), and the suffering and death of Jesus (chapters 14 and 15). Chapter 16 also includes a passage that many modern Bibles set apart with a note (16:9-20), and the study explains why. If you lead a group, read those sections ahead of time and be ready to listen. If someone shares something that puts them or another person in danger, help them get help right away.

I look forward to walking with you through the Gospel of Mark. If you'd like to share feedback, please email me at andrew@trinfinityenterprises.com.

May God bless you and your time studying and getting to know Him better.

Overview of Mark

Mark is the second book of the New Testament. It sits between Matthew and Luke. It is one of the four Gospels, the books that tell the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. The word gospel means good news, and Mark uses it in his very first verse: "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God" (1:1). Matthew, Mark and Luke are often called the Synoptic Gospels, which means they see the life of Jesus together, from a similar point of view, and tell many of the same events. John tells the story in a different way.

Mark is the Gospel of action. He spends less time on long sermons and more on what Jesus did. The word "immediately" appears more than forty times in the SLB text of Mark. Mark tells us almost nothing about Jesus' birth or childhood. He starts with John the Baptist and moves quickly to Jesus at work. And he gives more than a third of his book to the last week of Jesus' life.

Mark shows us Jesus as the Son of God and as the Servant of the Lord. He has power over sickness, demons, the wind and the sea, and even death. Yet He did not come to be served. Jesus gives us the theme of the whole book in one verse:

Mark 10:45 (SLB)

"For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many."

The first half of the book shows the Servant serving. The second half shows Him giving His life. At the cross, a Roman centurion, a Gentile soldier who had seen many men die, says what Mark wanted every reader to see: "Truly this man was God's Son" (15:39).

Mark has 16 chapters and 678 verses. Here is its structure:

Part One: The Servant at Work in Galilee (chapters 1 to 7)

- Chapter 1: The Servant Begins His Work
- Chapter 2: Authority to Forgive and Lord of the Sabbath
- Chapter 3: The Twelve Chosen and a House Divided
- Chapter 4: Parables and the Storm
- Chapter 5: Power Over Demons, Disease, and Death
- Chapter 6: Rejected at Home, Sent Out, and Five Thousand Fed
- Chapter 7: Clean Hearts and Opened Ears

Part Two: The Road to the Cross (chapters 8 to 10)

- Chapter 8: Who Do You Say That I Am?
- Chapter 9: The Transfiguration and True Greatness
- Chapter 10: Marriage, Riches, and the Servant Who Gives His Life

Part Three: The Last Week in Jerusalem (chapters 11 to 15)

- Chapter 11: The King Comes to Jerusalem
- Chapter 12: Questions in the Temple
- Chapter 13: Signs of His Coming
- Chapter 14: The Last Supper, Gethsemane, and the Trial
- Chapter 15: The Crucifixion

Part Four: The Risen Servant (chapter 16)

- Chapter 16: He Is Risen

Background of the Book

Author: The book itself does not name its author, but the early church agreed from the start that John Mark wrote it. His Hebrew name was John and his Roman name was Mark. His mother, Mary, had a house in Jerusalem where the believers met to pray (Acts 12:12). He was the cousin of Barnabas (Colossians 4:10), and he set out with Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey, but turned back partway through (Acts 13:13). Paul refused to take him on the next trip, and that led to a sharp disagreement between Paul and Barnabas (Acts 15:37-39). But that was not the end of Mark's story. Years later Paul called him "useful to me for ministry" (2 Timothy 4:11), and Peter called him "Mark my son" (1 Peter 5:13). Mark is proof that a person who fails can be restored and used by God.

Peter's preaching behind it: Early Christian writers tell us that Mark worked closely with Peter and wrote down what Peter preached about Jesus. One of the earliest, a church leader named Papias, writing in the early second century, said Mark had been Peter's interpreter and wrote down carefully what Peter remembered of the Lord's words and deeds. That fits what we find in the book. Mark is full of eyewitness details: the green grass at the feeding of the five thousand (6:39), Jesus asleep on a cushion in the stern of the boat (4:38), the very Aramaic words Jesus spoke (5:41; 7:34). And Mark does not spare Peter. Peter's failures, his rebuke from Jesus (8:33), and his three denials (14:66-72) are told plainly. Some modern scholars doubt the link to Peter, but I see no good reason to set aside what the early church said, and the book itself reads like the memories of a man who was there.

Who it was written to: Mark wrote mainly for Gentile readers, and most likely for believers in Rome. He explains Jewish customs that Jews would not need explained (7:3-4). He translates Aramaic words for his readers, such as Boanerges (3:17), Talitha koumi (5:41), Corban (7:11), and Ephphatha (7:34). He uses several Latin words written in Greek letters, such as the word for centurion (15:39), that would be familiar to Romans. And he names Rufus, the son of the man who carried Jesus' cross (15:21), as if his readers knew him. Paul greets a Rufus in his letter to the church in Rome (Romans 16:13), and it may be the same man. Peter's letter, sent from "Babylon," a name many believe stood for Rome, also says Mark was with him there (1 Peter 5:13).

The setting: The events of Mark take place in the land of Israel under Roman rule, during the governorship of Pontius Pilate in Judea. Most of Jesus' work in the first half of the book happens around the Sea of Galilee, with the fishing town of Capernaum as His home base. He also travels into Gentile areas: the Decapolis east of the lake, the coast near Tyre and Sidon, and Caesarea Philippi in the far north. Herod Antipas, a son of Herod the Great, ruled Galilee for Rome. In the last part of the book, Jesus goes south to Jerusalem, where the temple stood and where the chief priests, scribes and elders held power through the Sanhedrin, the ruling council of the Jews. I will explain each group the first time it appears.

When and where it was written: Mark does not tell us when he wrote. Most scholars date the book about A.D. 50 to 65, and many place it in Rome in the 60s. Early writers say it was written in Rome, either near the end of Peter's life or soon after his death. That was a hard time for believers there. After a great fire in Rome in A.D. 64, the emperor Nero blamed the Christians and put many

of them to death. A book about a Servant who suffered, and a call to take up the cross and follow Him (8:34-38), would have meant a great deal to those readers. Jesus' words about the temple's coming fall (13:1-2) read as a prophecy still waiting to happen, so most date the book before the Romans destroyed the temple in A.D. 70.

Mark and the other Gospels: Many scholars believe Mark was the first Gospel to be written and that Matthew and Luke used it alongside other sources. Others follow the early church writers who placed Matthew first. Scripture does not tell us, and nothing in the faith depends on it. All four Gospels are God's Word, and each one shows us Jesus from its own angle. Matthew shows Him as the King, Mark as the Servant, Luke as the Son of Man who came to seek and save the lost, and John as the eternal Son of God.

The "messianic secret": Again and again in Mark, Jesus tells demons, people He has healed, and even His disciples to keep quiet about who He is (1:34, 44; 3:12; 5:43; 7:36; 8:30). Bible teachers call this the messianic secret. It is not as mysterious as it sounds. Most people in Jesus' day expected a Messiah who would be a warrior king and drive out Rome. If the title had been shouted too soon, the crowds would have tried to make Him that kind of king (John 6:15), and the leaders would have moved against Him before His time. Jesus also would not take His testimony from demons. Most of all, no one could understand what kind of Messiah He is until they saw Him die and rise again. That is why Jesus told His disciples to tell no one about the transfiguration "except when the Son of Man has risen out of the dead" (9:9). After the resurrection, the secret is out, and the message is meant for the whole world (13:10; 16:15).

Purpose: Mark writes to show that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God (1:1), and that He came as the Servant who gives His life as a ransom for many (10:45). He shows the power and authority of Jesus, and he shows that the way to glory goes through the cross. He also calls every reader to follow Jesus on that road: to deny himself, take up his cross, and follow Him (8:34), and to tell the good news to the whole world.

Chapter 1: The Servant Begins His Work

Scripture

1:1-13 ***The*** beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, ***the*** Son of God. As it has been written in the prophets, "Look, I send My messenger before Your face, who will prepare Your way before You." "***The*** voice of ***one*** crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of ***the*** Lord; make His paths straight.'" John came baptizing in the wilderness and preaching a baptism of repentance for forgiveness of sins. And all the region of Judea and the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and they were all being baptized by him in the Jordan River, confessing their sins. Now John was clothed ***in*** camel's hair and a leather belt around his waist, and eating locusts and wild honey. And he was preaching, saying, "After me comes the ***One*** mightier than I, of whom I am not fit, having stooped down, to untie the strap of His sandals. I indeed baptized you with water, but He Himself will baptize you with ***the*** Holy Spirit." And it came to pass in those days ***that*** Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And immediately, coming up from the water, He saw the heavens being torn open, and the Spirit like a dove descending on Him. And a voice came out of the heavens: "You are My Son, the beloved, in whom I was well pleased." And immediately the Spirit drives Him out into the wilderness. And He was there in the wilderness forty days, being tempted by Satan; and He was with the wild animals, and the angels were ministering to Him.

1:14-28 And after John was delivered up, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, "The time has been fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has drawn near; repent and believe in the gospel." Now walking beside the Sea of Galilee, He saw Simon and Andrew his brother casting a net into the sea; for they were fishers. And Jesus said to them, "Come after Me, and I will make you become fishers of men." And immediately, having left their nets, they followed Him. And having gone on from there a little, He saw James the ***son*** of Zebedee and John his brother, and they ***were*** in the boat mending the nets. And immediately He called them; and having left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants, they went away after Him. And they go into Capernaum; and immediately on the Sabbaths, having entered into the synagogue, He was teaching. And they were astonished at His teaching; for He was teaching them as having authority, and not as the scribes. And there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit, and he cried out, saying, "Ha! What ***is there*** to us and to You, Jesus ***the*** Nazarene? Did You come to destroy us? I know You, who You are: the Holy ***One*** of God." And Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Be silenced, and come out of him!" And the unclean spirit, having thrown him into convulsions and having cried out with a loud voice, came out of him. And they were all astonished, so as to question among themselves, saying, "What is this? What new teaching ***is*** this, that with authority He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey Him?" Now the news of Him went out immediately into all the surrounding region of Galilee.

1:29-45 And immediately, having gone out of the synagogue, they came into the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. And the mother-in-law of Simon was lying down, feverish, and immediately they speak to Him about her. And having come to ***her***, He raised her up, having taken hold of her hand; and the fever left her immediately, and she was ministering to them. Now evening having come, when the sun set, they were bringing to Him all who were ill and those

being demonized. And the whole city was gathered at the door. And He healed many who were ill with various diseases, and He cast out many demons; and He was not allowing the demons to speak, because they knew Him. And early, ***while it was*** very much night, having risen up, He went out and departed into a deserted place, and there He was praying. And Simon and those with him pursued Him, and having found Him, they say to Him, "Everyone is seeking You." And He says to them, "Let us go into the neighboring towns, so that I may preach there also; for to this end I have come forth." And He was preaching in their synagogues throughout all Galilee, and casting out the demons. And a leper comes to Him, imploring Him and kneeling down to Him and saying to Him, "If You are willing, You are able to cleanse me." And Jesus, having been moved with compassion, having stretched out His hand, touched him and says to him, "I am willing; be cleansed." And when He had spoken, immediately the leprosy departed from him, and he was cleansed. And having sternly warned him, He immediately sent him away, and He says to him, "See ***that*** you say nothing to anyone; but go, show yourself to the priest, and offer for your cleansing the things which Moses commanded, for a testimony to them." But he, having gone out, began to preach much and to spread abroad the matter, so that He was no longer able to enter openly into a city, but He was outside in deserted places; and they were coming to Him from every direction.

Chapter 1 Preview

Mark does not start with a birth story or a family tree. He starts with a grown man stepping into the river. In thirteen short verses we meet John the Baptist, see Jesus baptized, hear the Father speak from heaven, and watch the Spirit drive Jesus into the wilderness to be tempted by Satan. Then Jesus comes into Galilee preaching that the kingdom of God has drawn near.

The rest of the chapter feels like one long, busy day. Jesus calls four fishermen, teaches in the synagogue at Capernaum, casts out an unclean spirit, heals Peter's mother-in-law, and heals crowds at the door after sunset. Early the next morning He slips away to pray, and then He moves on to preach in other towns. The chapter ends with a leper made clean by the touch of Jesus' hand. Watch for the word "immediately." Mark uses it again and again. The Servant has come, and He is already at work.

Chapter 1 Study

1:1 ***The*** *beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ,* ***the*** *Son of God.*

This first verse works like a title for the whole book. Mark tells us what he is writing: "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God." The word gospel means good news. Mark is not writing a biography for the history shelf. He is announcing news that changes everything.

The name Jesus was His human name, the Greek form of Joshua, which means the Lord saves. Christ is a title, not a last name. It means the Anointed One, the same as the Hebrew word Messiah. The Son of God tells us who He really is. Mark will spend sixteen chapters showing it, and near the end a Roman soldier at the cross will say it out loud (15:39). From the very first line, Mark wants us to know that the Servant we are about to watch is God's own Son.

1:2-3 *As it has been written in the prophets, "Look, I send My messenger before Your face, who will prepare Your way before You." "**The** voice of **one** crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of **the** Lord; make His paths straight.'"*

Mark quotes two prophets together. The first part comes from Malachi 3:1, where God promised to send His messenger ahead to prepare the way. The second part comes from Isaiah 40:3, the "voice of one crying out in the wilderness." Mark opens with the Old Testament because the gospel did not come out of nowhere. God had promised it hundreds of years before.

In the ancient world, when a king was coming to visit a town, a messenger went ahead to tell the people to get ready. Roads were repaired and the way was cleared. John the Baptist was that messenger. The King was coming, and the people needed to get their hearts ready.

Notice the words "Your face" and "Your way." The Father is speaking to the Son. And in Isaiah, the way being prepared is the way of the LORD Himself. Mark is quietly telling us that Jesus is the Lord whose coming the prophets announced.

Old Testament links: Malachi 3:1 (quoted); Isaiah 40:3 (quoted)

1:4-5 *John came baptizing in the wilderness and preaching a baptism of repentance for forgiveness of sins. And all the region of Judea and the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and they were all being baptized by him in the Jordan River, confessing their sins.*

John "came baptizing in the wilderness and preaching a baptism of repentance for forgiveness of sins." Repentance means a change of mind that leads to a change of direction. John's baptism was an outward sign that a person was turning from sin and getting ready for the coming Messiah. The water did not wash away sin. It showed that the person was sorry for sin and was turning back to God.

The crowds came from all over Judea and from Jerusalem. They were "confessing their sins." That is where every real meeting with God begins. We cannot be ready for the Savior until we admit we need saving.

1:6 *Now John was clothed **in** camel's hair and a leather belt around his waist, and eating locusts and wild honey.*

John looked like the prophets of old. Elijah was known as a hairy man wearing a leather belt around his waist (2 Kings 1:8). Malachi had promised that God would send Elijah the prophet before the great day of the Lord (Malachi 4:5), and Jesus later told His disciples that John came in that role (Mark 9:11-13; Matthew 11:14).

Locusts were a clean food under the Law (Leviticus 11:22), and poor people in the desert still ate them. John was not dressing up for show. He lived a plain life in the wilderness, and his whole life said that God's message mattered more than comfort.

Old Testament links: 2 Kings 1:8 (alluded to)

1:7-8 *And he was preaching, saying, "After me comes the **One** mightier than I, of whom I am not fit, having stooped down, to untie the strap of His sandals. I indeed baptized you with water, but He Himself will baptize you with **the** Holy Spirit."*

John was popular. Crowds came from everywhere to hear him. Yet he pointed away from himself. Untying a man's sandals was the job of the lowest slave in a household. John said he was not even fit to do that for the One coming after him. If the greatest prophet of his day felt that way about Jesus, how should we think of Him?

John baptized with water. Jesus would baptize "with the Holy Spirit." John could only point to the need for a clean heart. Jesus would give the Spirit Himself to live in His people. That promise came true at Pentecost (Acts 1:5; 2:1-4), and every believer receives the Spirit today when they trust in Christ (Ephesians 1:13).

1:9 *And it came to pass in those days **that** Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan.*

Nazareth was a small village in the hills of Galilee, a place no one expected much from (John 1:46). Jesus had lived there quietly for about thirty years (Luke 3:23). Now He came south to the Jordan and was baptized by John.

Why would the sinless Son of God be baptized with a baptism of repentance? He had no sin to confess. Matthew tells us John asked the same question, and Jesus answered that it was fitting for them to fulfill all righteousness (Matthew 3:13-15). I believe Jesus was standing with the people He came to save. He stepped into the water with sinners because He came to carry their sin. His baptism pointed ahead to the cross.

1:10-11 *And immediately, coming up from the water, He saw the heavens being torn open, and the Spirit like a dove descending on Him. And a voice came out of the heavens: "You are My Son, the beloved, in whom I was well pleased."*

Here is the first "immediately" in Mark, and the book will be full of them. The heavens were "being torn open." Mark uses the same word for tearing that he uses at the end of his book, when the veil of the temple is torn in two (15:38). At the start and at the end of Jesus' ministry, God tears something open to show He is coming near.

Here we see the whole Trinity at once. The Son stands in the water. The Spirit comes down on Him like a dove. The Father speaks from heaven: "You are My Son, the beloved, in whom I was well pleased." Jesus had not yet preached a sermon or done a miracle. The Father was already pleased with Him. The words echo Psalm 2:7, about God's King, and Isaiah 42:1, about God's chosen Servant. In one sentence the Father calls Jesus both the King and the Servant. That is the Jesus Mark wants us to see.

Old Testament links: Psalm 2:7 (alluded to); Isaiah 42:1 (alluded to)

1:12-13 *And immediately the Spirit drives Him out into the wilderness. And He was there in the wilderness forty days, being tempted by Satan; and He was with the wild animals, and the angels were ministering to Him.*

"Immediately the Spirit drives Him out into the wilderness." The word "drives" is strong. It is the same word Mark uses for casting out demons. The Spirit sent Jesus straight from the river into the desert. The high point of the baptism was followed right away by a hard test.

Mark tells the temptation in two verses. Matthew and Luke give us the details (Matthew 4:1-11; Luke 4:1-13). Mark adds one detail the others do not: "He was with the wild animals." The wilderness of Judea was a lonely, dangerous place. Jesus was alone, hungry, and under attack, yet the Father did not leave Him. "The angels were ministering to Him."

Adam was tested in a garden with everything he needed, and he fell. Jesus was tested in a wilderness with nothing, and He stood firm. Because He was tempted, He is able to help us when we are tempted (Hebrews 2:18).

1:14-15 *And after John was delivered up, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, "The time has been fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has drawn near; repent and believe in the gospel."*

John was "delivered up," that is, arrested and put in prison by Herod. Mark will tell that story in chapter 6. When John's voice was silenced, Jesus began to preach in Galilee, the region in the north of Israel around the Sea of Galilee.

His message had four parts. "The time has been fulfilled." God's clock had reached the hour He had planned. "The kingdom of God has drawn near." The King Himself was standing in front of them. "Repent and believe in the gospel." Repent means turn from sin. Believe means trust. The two belong together, like two sides of one coin. You cannot turn to Christ without turning from sin, and you cannot truly turn from sin without trusting Christ. That is still the message today.

1:16-18 *Now walking beside the Sea of Galilee, He saw Simon and Andrew his brother casting a net into the sea; for they were fishers. And Jesus said to them, "Come after Me, and I will make you become fishers of men." And immediately, having left their nets, they followed Him.*

Simon and Andrew were brothers who fished for a living. John 1:35-42 tells us they had already met Jesus earlier, when Andrew had followed Him and brought Simon to Him. So this was not their first meeting. This was the call to leave everything and follow.

"Come after Me, and I will make you become fishers of men." Jesus spoke to them in words they understood. They knew how to catch fish. He would teach them how to bring people into His kingdom. Notice who does the work: "I will make you." We don't make ourselves into fishers of men. Jesus does it as we follow Him.

"Immediately, having left their nets, they followed Him." Their nets were their living. They left them on the shore. Following Jesus always costs something.

1:19-20 *And having gone on from there a little, He saw James the **son** of Zebedee and John his brother, and they **were** in the boat mending the nets. And immediately He called them; and having left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants, they went away after Him.*

A little farther down the shore, Jesus called two more brothers, James and John, the sons of Zebedee. They were mending their nets in the boat. Mark mentions "the hired servants." Zebedee's family business was big enough to have workers, so these men were not leaving because they had nothing better to do. They left a good living and their own father to follow Jesus.

These four, Peter, Andrew, James and John, will be with Jesus from start to finish. Three of them, Peter, James and John, will become His closest friends. It all started on an ordinary workday by the lake. Jesus still calls people in the middle of ordinary days.

1:21-22 *And they go into Capernaum; and immediately on the Sabbaths, having entered into the synagogue, He was teaching. And they were astonished at His teaching; for He was teaching them as having authority, and not as the scribes.*

Capernaum was a fishing town on the north shore of the Sea of Galilee. It became Jesus' home base in Galilee. A synagogue was a local meeting place where Jews gathered on the Sabbath to pray, read the Scriptures, and hear them explained. Any qualified man could be asked to teach, so Jesus often taught in synagogues.

The people "were astonished at His teaching." The scribes were the experts in the Law of Moses. They taught by quoting other teachers and the traditions of the elders. Jesus did not need to quote anyone. He spoke "as having authority." He did not just tell them what others thought God meant. He told them what God meant, because He is God.

1:23-26 *And there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit, and he cried out, saying, "Ha! What **is there** to us and to You, Jesus **the** Nazarene? Did You come to destroy us? I know You, who You are: the Holy **One** of God." And Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Be silenced, and come out of him!" And the unclean spirit, having thrown him into convulsions and having cried out with a loud voice, came out of him.*

Right there in the synagogue, in the middle of worship, was "a man with an unclean spirit." An unclean spirit is a demon, an evil spirit that serves Satan. The demon knew exactly who Jesus was: "the Holy One of God." Notice the question, "Did You come to destroy us?" The demons knew their time was short.

Jesus did not have a long talk with the spirit, and He did not use chants or rituals. He rebuked it with two commands: "Be silenced, and come out of him!" The spirit threw the man into convulsions and came out with a loud cry.

Why did Jesus silence the demon when it was telling the truth? Jesus did not want His identity announced by demons. He would not accept praise from the enemy, and He would not let the people get the wrong idea about what kind of Messiah He was. We will see this pattern many times in Mark, and I will explain it more as we go.

1:27-28 *And they were all astonished, so as to question among themselves, saying, "What is this? What new teaching **is** this, that with authority He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey Him?" Now the news of Him went out immediately into all the surrounding region of Galilee.*

The crowd was astonished again. They had seen two kinds of authority in one morning: authority in His teaching and authority over the unclean spirits. "What new teaching is this?" They had never seen anything like Him.

"The news of Him went out immediately." In a small region without newspapers or phones, word still spread fast. A man set free in the synagogue is the kind of story people tell everyone they meet.

1:29-31 *And immediately, having gone out of the synagogue, they came into the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. And the mother-in-law of Simon was lying down, feverish, and immediately they speak to Him about her. And having come to **her**, He raised her up, having taken hold of her hand; and the fever left her immediately, and she was ministering to them.*

From the synagogue they walked to "the house of Simon and Andrew." Yes, Peter was married (1 Corinthians 9:5). His wife's mother was in bed with a fever. "Immediately they speak to Him about her." That is a good picture of prayer. When someone we love is hurting, we tell Jesus.

Jesus took her by the hand and raised her up, and the fever left her at once. There was no time to get her strength back. She got up "and she was ministering to them." Her first act after being healed was to serve. That is the right response to what Jesus does for us. He serves us, and then we serve Him and others.

1:32-34 *Now evening having come, when the sun set, they were bringing to Him all who were ill and those being demonized. And the whole city was gathered at the door. And He healed many who were ill with various diseases, and He cast out many demons; and He was not allowing the demons to speak, because they knew Him.*

The Sabbath ended at sunset. Under Jewish custom, carrying a burden or traveling far on the Sabbath was not allowed, so the people waited until the sun went down. Then they came. "The whole city was gathered at the door." Picture that scene: the sick, the lame, and those troubled by demons, filling the street outside Peter's house.

Jesus "healed many who were ill with various diseases, and He cast out many demons." Again, He did not let the demons speak, "because they knew Him." Jesus chose who would tell His story, and it would not be the forces of darkness.

1:35-39 *And early, **while it was** very much night, having risen up, He went out and departed into a deserted place, and there He was praying. And Simon and those with him pursued Him, and having found Him, they say to Him, "Everyone is seeking You." And He says to them, "Let us go into the neighboring towns, so that I may preach there also; for to this end I have come forth." And He was preaching in their synagogues throughout all Galilee, and casting out the demons.*

After a long day and a late night, Jesus got up while it was still dark and went to a lonely place to pray. If the Son of God needed time alone with the Father, how much more do we? Mark shows Jesus praying at three key moments: here at the start of His work, after feeding the five thousand (6:46), and in Gethsemane before the cross (14:32-39). The busier He got, the more He prayed.

Peter and the others hunted Him down. "Everyone is seeking You." They thought Jesus should go back to Capernaum, where the crowds were waiting. But Jesus had a different plan. "Let us go into the neighboring towns, so that I may preach there also." Healing was good, but preaching was His main purpose. The people needed to hear the good news of the kingdom. Jesus would not let a crowd's demands set His agenda. He let the Father's will set it.

1:40-42 *And a leper comes to Him, imploring Him and kneeling down to Him and saying to Him, "If You are willing, You are able to cleanse me." And Jesus, having been moved with compassion, having stretched out His hand, touched him and says to him, "I am willing; be cleansed." And when He had spoken, immediately the leprosy departed from him, and he was cleansed.*

Leprosy in the Bible covered a range of skin diseases, some of them serious. Under the Law a leper was unclean. He had to live outside the town, tear his clothes, and cry out "Unclean" so people would stay away (Leviticus 13:45-46). Lepers lost their homes, their jobs, and every kind of human touch.

This man came to Jesus anyway and knelt. "If You are willing, You are able to cleanse me." He did not doubt Jesus' power. He wondered if Jesus cared. Jesus answered both questions. He was "moved with compassion." He "touched him." No one had touched this man in who knows how long. Under the Law, touching a leper made a person unclean. But when Jesus touched the leper, the uncleanness did not pass to Jesus. His cleanness passed to the leper. "I am willing; be cleansed." Jesus still says that to every sinner who comes to Him.

1:43-45 *And having sternly warned him, He immediately sent him away, and He says to him, "See **that** you say nothing to anyone; but go, show yourself to the priest, and offer for your cleansing the things which Moses commanded, for a testimony to them." But he, having gone out, began to preach much and to spread abroad the matter, so that He was no longer able to enter openly into a city, but He was outside in deserted places; and they were coming to Him from every direction.*

Jesus sent him away with a stern warning: tell no one, but go show yourself to the priest. Leviticus 14 gave the steps a healed leper had to take. The priest had to look him over and declare him clean, and offerings were brought. That would give the man his life back. It would also be "a testimony to them," the priests, that Someone had come who could cleanse lepers.

Why tell him to keep quiet? Jesus knew that if word spread of His miracles, the crowds would come for healing and not for the message. That is exactly what happened. The man told everyone, and Jesus "was no longer able to enter openly into a city." The man's excitement is easy to understand, but his disobedience made Jesus' work harder. Sometimes we think we know better than the Lord how to serve Him. It is always best to simply do what He says.

Old Testament links: Leviticus 14:2 (alluded to)

Chapter 1 Summary

Mark opens with the beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. John the Baptist prepares the way, as Malachi and Isaiah foretold, by preaching repentance and baptizing in the Jordan. Jesus is baptized, the Spirit comes down on Him, and the Father declares Him His beloved Son. The Spirit drives Him into the wilderness, where He is tempted by Satan for forty days. Jesus then preaches in Galilee that the kingdom of God has drawn near and calls people to repent and believe. He calls four fishermen to follow Him, teaches with authority in the synagogue at Capernaum, casts out an unclean spirit, heals Peter's mother-in-law and many others, prays alone before dawn, and moves on to preach in other towns. He touches and cleanses a leper, and the news spreads so far that He can no longer enter a city openly.

Chapter 1 Study Questions

1. How does Mark describe Jesus in the very first verse of his book? (1:1)

2. Which two prophets does Mark quote, and what did they promise? (1:2-3)

3. What did John say about the One who would come after him? (1:7-8)

4. What did the Father say about Jesus at His baptism, and what had Jesus done yet to earn it? (1:11)

5. What four parts of Jesus' first message do you see in 1:15?

6. What did the four fishermen leave behind to follow Jesus? (1:16-20)

7. What was different about the way Jesus taught compared to the scribes? (1:22)

8. What did Peter's mother-in-law do right after she was healed, and what does that teach us? (1:31)

9. Jesus got up early to pray even after a long, busy day (1:35). What keeps you from time alone with God, and what could you change this week?

10. The leper asked, "If You are willing." Is there something you have been afraid to bring to Jesus because you doubt He cares? (1:40-41)

Chapter 2: Authority to Forgive and Lord of the Sabbath

Scripture

2:1-12 And again He entered into Capernaum after ***some*** days, and it was heard that He is in ***the*** house. And immediately many were gathered together, so that ***there was*** no longer room, not even the ***space*** at the door; and He was speaking the word to them. And they come to Him, bringing a paralytic being carried by four. And not being able to come near to Him because of the crowd, they removed the roof where He was; and having dug ***it*** out, they let down the mat on which the paralytic was lying. Now Jesus, having seen their faith, says to the paralytic, "Child, your sins have been forgiven you." Now some of the scribes were sitting there and reasoning in their hearts, "Why does this ***man*** speak blasphemies thus? Who is able to forgive sins except One, God?" And immediately Jesus, having known in His spirit that they are reasoning thus within themselves, said to them, "Why do you reason these things in your hearts? Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, '***Your*** sins have been forgiven you,' or to say, 'Rise, and take up your mat and walk'? But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on the earth to forgive sins" (He says to the paralytic), "I say to you, rise, and take up your mat and go to your house." And immediately he arose, and having taken up the mat, he went out before all, so that all were amazed and glorified God, saying, "We never saw ***it*** thus!"

2:13-28 And He went out again beside the sea; and all the crowd was coming to Him, and He was teaching them. And passing by, He saw Levi the ***son*** of Alphaeus sitting at the tax booth, and He says to him, "Follow Me." And having arisen, he followed Him. And it came to pass, as He was reclining in his house, that many tax collectors and sinners were reclining with Jesus and His disciples; for there were many, and they followed Him. And the scribes and the Pharisees, having seen Him eating with the tax collectors and sinners, were saying to His disciples, "Why ***is it*** that He eats and drinks with the tax collectors and sinners?" And having heard, Jesus says to them, "Those who are strong have no need of a physician, but those who are ill. I did not come to call ***the*** righteous, but sinners to repentance." And the disciples of John and those of the Pharisees were fasting. And they come and say to Him, "Why do the disciples of John and those of the Pharisees fast, but Your disciples do not fast?" And Jesus said to them, "The sons of the bridechamber are not able to fast while the bridegroom is with them, are they? As long as they have the bridegroom with them, they are not able to fast. But days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast in those days. And no one sews a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment; but if not, its new patch takes away from the old, and a worse tear comes about. And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; but if not, the new wine bursts the wineskins, and the wine is poured out, and the wineskins will perish; but new wine must be put into new wineskins." And it came to pass ***that*** He was passing through the grainfields on the Sabbaths, and His disciples began to make ***their*** way, plucking the heads of grain. And the Pharisees were saying to Him, "Look, why are they doing on the Sabbaths what is not lawful?" And He Himself was saying to them, "Did you never read what David did when he had need and was hungry, he and those with him? How he entered into the house of God in ***the days of*** Abiathar the high priest, and ate the loaves of the presentation, which it is not lawful to eat except for the priests, and he gave also to

those who were with him?" And He was saying to them, "The Sabbath was made for the sake of man, not man for the sake of the Sabbath. So then the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath."

Chapter 2 Preview

In chapter 1, the crowds loved Jesus. In chapter 2, the questions begin. Mark gives us five short scenes, and in each one someone objects to what Jesus does. First, four friends dig through a roof to bring a paralyzed man to Jesus. Jesus forgives the man's sins, and the scribes call it blasphemy. So Jesus heals the man to prove He has the authority to forgive. Then He calls a tax collector named Levi to follow Him and eats at his house with tax collectors and sinners, and the religious leaders complain.

Next they ask why His disciples do not fast. Jesus answers with pictures of a wedding, a patch on a garment, and new wine in new wineskins. Finally, the Pharisees accuse His disciples of breaking the Sabbath by picking grain. Jesus points them to David and makes a claim that shocks them: the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath. Each scene tells us something about who Jesus is and why He came.

Chapter 2 Study

2:1-2 *And again He entered into Capernaum after **some** days, and it was heard that He is in **the** house. And immediately many were gathered together, so that **there was** no longer room, not even the **space** at the door; and He was speaking the word to them.*

Jesus came back to Capernaum, most likely to Peter's house (1:29). Word got out fast. Soon the house was packed and people were standing outside the door. Houses in that town were small, often with one main room, so it did not take long to fill one.

Notice what Jesus was doing: "He was speaking the word to them." The people may have come hoping for miracles, but Jesus gave them the word of God first. That was His priority in 1:38, and it still was. The greatest need of every person is not a healed body. It is a right relationship with God, and that comes through His word.

2:3-4 *And they come to Him, bringing a paralytic being carried by four. And not being able to come near to Him because of the crowd, they removed the roof where He was; and having dug **it** out, they let down the mat on which the paralytic was lying.*

Four men came carrying a friend who could not walk. When they could not get through the crowd, they did not give up. Houses in Israel had flat roofs made of wooden beams covered with branches and packed clay, with an outside stairway leading up. These men climbed up, dug through the roof, and lowered their friend down on his mat, right in front of Jesus.

Can you picture it? Dirt falling on the crowd, sunlight pouring in, and a man on a mat coming down through the ceiling. These friends were willing to do something messy and costly to get their friend to Jesus. Do we care that much about bringing people to Him?

2:5 *Now Jesus, having seen their faith, says to the paralytic, "Child, your sins have been forgiven you."*

"Now Jesus, having seen their faith." Faith can be seen. It shows up in what we do. These men believed that if they could get their friend to Jesus, He would help. The faith of the friends mattered here, and Jesus honored it.

Then Jesus said something no one expected: "Child, your sins have been forgiven you." The man came for healing. Jesus started with forgiveness. He went to the deeper need first. Scripture does not say this man's sickness was caused by a certain sin. But every one of us has the same deeper problem, and Jesus came to deal with it.

2:6-7 *Now some of the scribes were sitting there and reasoning in their hearts, "Why does this **man** speak blasphemies thus? Who is able to forgive sins except One, God?"*

The scribes did not say anything out loud. They were "reasoning in their hearts." Blasphemy means speaking against God or claiming for yourself what belongs to God alone. Under the Law it was punished by death (Leviticus 24:16).

And here is the thing: the scribes were right about one point. "Who is able to forgive sins except One, God?" If I sin against you, I can forgive what I did to you. But only God can forgive sin as sin, because every sin is first against Him (Psalm 51:4). So when Jesus forgave this man, He was either a blasphemer or He was God. There is no middle ground. The scribes chose the first answer. Mark wants us to see the second.

2:8-9 *And immediately Jesus, having known in His spirit that they are reasoning thus within themselves, said to them, "Why do you reason these things in your hearts? Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins have been forgiven you,' or to say, 'Rise, and take up your mat and walk'?*

Jesus knew what they were thinking. Mark says He knew it "in His spirit." No one told Him. This is another quiet sign that He is more than a man.

Then He asked them a question. Which is easier to say: "Your sins have been forgiven you," or "Rise, and take up your mat and walk"? Saying the first is easy, because no one can see whether it happened. Saying the second is harder, because everyone will know at once if it does not happen. So Jesus would do the thing that could be seen to prove the thing that could not be seen.

2:10-12 *But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on the earth to forgive sins" (He says to the paralytic), "I say to you, rise, and take up your mat and go to your house." And immediately he arose, and having taken up the mat, he went out before all, so that all were amazed and glorified God, saying, "We never saw **it** thus!"*

"So that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on the earth to forgive sins." This is the first time Mark uses Jesus' favorite name for Himself, the Son of Man. It comes from Daniel 7:13-14, where one like a son of man comes with the clouds of heaven and is given authority, glory and a kingdom that will never end. Jesus chose a title that sounded humble but pointed to heaven's throne.

Then He spoke to the man: "Rise, and take up your mat and go to your house." And he did, immediately, in front of everyone. The mat that had carried him now was carried by him. The crowd "glorified God, saying, We never saw it thus!" The healing proved the forgiveness was real. Jesus has authority to forgive sins, and He still uses it today for anyone who comes to Him.

2:13-14 *And He went out again beside the sea; and all the crowd was coming to Him, and He was teaching them. And passing by, He saw Levi the* ***son*** *of Alphaeus sitting at the tax booth, and He says to him, "Follow Me." And having arisen, he followed Him.*

Jesus went back out to the lakeshore and taught the crowds. On the way He passed "Levi the son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax booth." Levi is the same man as Matthew, who later wrote the first Gospel (Matthew 9:9; 10:3).

Tax collectors were hated in Israel. They worked for Rome or for Herod, collecting taxes from their own people, and many of them took far more than was owed and kept the extra. Capernaum sat on a trade road, so Levi likely taxed goods and travelers passing through. To most Jews, he was a traitor and a thief.

Jesus said two words: "Follow Me." Levi got up and followed. A fisherman could always go back to fishing, but a tax collector who walked away from his booth would not get it back. Levi gave up a lot of money that day. He never regretted it.

2:15-17 *And it came to pass, as He was reclining in his house, that many tax collectors and sinners were reclining with Jesus and His disciples; for there were many, and they followed Him. And the scribes and the Pharisees, having seen Him eating with the tax collectors and sinners, were saying to His disciples, "Why* ***is it*** *that He eats and drinks with the tax collectors and sinners?" And having heard, Jesus says to them, "Those who are strong have no need of a physician, but those who are ill. I did not come to call* ***the*** *righteous, but sinners to repentance."*

Luke tells us Levi threw a big feast for Jesus at his house (Luke 5:29). His guests were people like him, "many tax collectors and sinners." Sinners here meant people the religious leaders saw as outsiders, those who did not keep the Law or the traditions. Levi wanted his friends to meet Jesus.

The scribes and Pharisees were shocked. The Pharisees were a strict religious group who worked hard to keep the Law of Moses and the many traditions added to it. They kept themselves separate from anyone they saw as unclean. In that culture, eating with someone meant you accepted them.

Jesus answered with a simple picture. "Those who are strong have no need of a physician, but those who are ill." Doctors go where the sick people are. Jesus "did not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." Notice the word repentance. Jesus did not eat with sinners to approve of their sin. He ate with them to call them out of it.

There is a little irony in His words too. The Pharisees thought they were well. They were not. The difference between them and the tax collectors was not that one group needed Jesus and the other did not. The difference was that one group knew it. Which group would you be in?

2:18 *And the disciples of John and those of the Pharisees were fasting. And they come and say to Him, "Why do the disciples of John and those of the Pharisees fast, but Your disciples do not fast?"*

Next came a question about fasting. Fasting means going without food for a time to seek God. The Law commanded only one fast a year, on the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16:29). But the Pharisees fasted twice a week (Luke 18:12), and the disciples of John the Baptist fasted too. Jesus' disciples did not. People wanted to know why.

2:19-20 *And Jesus said to them, "The sons of the bridechamber are not able to fast while the bridegroom is with them, are they? As long as they have the bridegroom with them, they are not able to fast. But days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast in those days.*

Jesus compared Himself to a bridegroom. A Jewish wedding was a week-long celebration. "The sons of the bridechamber" were the groom's closest friends, like groomsmen. No one fasts at a wedding while the groom is there. It would be like showing up to a party dressed for a funeral. Jesus' coming was a time of joy.

Then Jesus said something that must have puzzled them. "Days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them." The words "taken away" point to a violent removal. This is the first hint in Mark of the cross. Jesus knew from the start where His road was going. After He was gone, His disciples would fast. And many believers today still fast as they pray and wait for His return.

2:21-22 *And no one sews a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment; but if not, its new patch takes away from the old, and a worse tear comes about. And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; but if not, the new wine bursts the wineskins, and the wine is poured out, and the wineskins will perish; but new wine must be put into new wineskins."*

Jesus gave two more pictures. You don't sew a patch of new, unshrunk cloth onto an old garment. When it gets wet, the new patch shrinks and tears the old cloth worse than before. And you don't pour new wine into old wineskins. In that day, wine was stored in skins made from goats. As new wine ferments, it gives off gas and expands. A new skin stretches with it. An old skin is already stretched and stiff, so it bursts, and both the wine and the skin are lost.

What did Jesus mean? He did not come to patch up the old religious system with a few new ideas. What He was bringing was new, and it needed a new container. The traditions of the Pharisees could not hold it. God's grace in Christ is not an add-on to man-made religion. It calls for a whole new life.

2:23-24 *And it came to pass **that** He was passing through the grainfields on the Sabbaths, and His disciples began to make **their** way, plucking the heads of grain. And the Pharisees were saying to Him, "Look, why are they doing on the Sabbaths what is not lawful?"*

The fifth scene happens on a Sabbath. The Sabbath was the seventh day of the week, Saturday, which God set apart as a day of rest (Exodus 20:8-11). The disciples were walking through a grainfield and picking heads of grain to eat. The Law allowed this. A hungry traveler could pick grain by hand from his neighbor's field, as long as he did not use a sickle (Deuteronomy 23:25).

So what was the problem? The Pharisees had built a long list of rules about what counted as work on the Sabbath. To them, picking grain was harvesting, and rubbing it in your hands was threshing. The disciples were not breaking God's Law. They were breaking the Pharisees' traditions.

2:25-26 *And He Himself was saying to them, "Did you never read what David did when he had need and was hungry, he and those with him? How he entered into the house of God in* ***the days of*** *Abiathar the high priest, and ate the loaves of the presentation, which it is not lawful to eat except for the priests, and he gave also to those who were with him?"*

Jesus answered with Scripture. In 1 Samuel 21:1-6, David was running from King Saul. He and his men were hungry, and the priest gave them the holy bread from the tabernacle. "The loaves of the presentation" were twelve loaves set out before the Lord each week, and only the priests were allowed to eat them (Leviticus 24:5-9). Yet God did not condemn David for eating them when he and his men were in need.

Jesus' point was simple. God's laws were never meant to keep people hungry when they were in real need. Mercy matters to God (Hosea 6:6).

Mark says this happened "in the days of Abiathar the high priest." In 1 Samuel 21, the priest who gave David the bread was Ahimelech, Abiathar's father. Abiathar was there at the time and became the best-known high priest of David's reign. The phrase can simply mean during the time of Abiathar, the way we might name a famous leader to mark a time period, even for something that happened before he took office.

Old Testament links: 1 Samuel 21:3-6 (alluded to); Leviticus 24:9 (alluded to)

2:27-28 *And He was saying to them, "The Sabbath was made for the sake of man, not man for the sake of the Sabbath. So then the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath."*

"The Sabbath was made for the sake of man, not man for the sake of the Sabbath." God gave the Sabbath as a gift, a day of rest for people who needed it. The Pharisees had turned the gift into a burden. They acted as if people existed to serve the rules.

Then Jesus made His biggest claim of the chapter: "the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath." God gave the Sabbath. Only God could be its Lord. Jesus was saying that He has the right to say what the Sabbath is for, because He made it.

What does this mean for us? Hebrews 4:9-10 says that a Sabbath rest remains for God's people, and we enter it by trusting Christ and resting from our own works. Paul says no one should judge us about Sabbath days (Colossians 2:16-17). Christians differ on how to keep a day of rest today. But Jesus is Lord of our days, and He still gives rest to everyone who comes to Him (Matthew 11:28).

Chapter 2 Summary

Jesus returns to Capernaum, and four men lower a paralyzed friend through the roof. Jesus forgives his sins and then heals him to prove that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins. He calls Levi the tax collector to follow Him and eats with tax collectors and sinners, saying He came to call sinners to repentance. Asked why His disciples do not fast, He calls Himself the bridegroom, hints that He will be taken away, and teaches that His new work cannot be patched onto old traditions. When the Pharisees accuse His disciples of breaking the Sabbath, He points to David eating the holy bread and declares that the Sabbath was made for man and that the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath.

Chapter 2 Study Questions

1. What did the four friends do to bring the paralyzed man to Jesus? (2:3-4)

2. What did Jesus say to the man first, and why did the scribes object? (2:5-7)

3. How did Jesus prove He had authority to forgive sins? (2:10-12)

4. Who was Levi, and what did following Jesus cost him? (2:14)

5. What did Jesus say about why He came, in answer to the Pharisees? (2:17)

6. What did Jesus mean when He said the bridegroom would be taken away? (2:19-20)

7. What do the pictures of the patch and the wineskins teach? (2:21-22)

8. How did Jesus use the story of David to answer the Pharisees? (2:25-26)

9. The four friends worked hard to get their friend to Jesus. Who is someone you could help bring to Him, and what might it cost you?

10. Do you ever see yourself more like the Pharisees, who thought they were well, or like the sinners at Levi's table? Why? (2:17)

Chapter 3: The Twelve Chosen and a House Divided

Scripture

3:1-12 And He entered again into the synagogue, and there was a man there having a withered hand. And they were watching Him closely, whether He will heal him on the Sabbaths, so that they might accuse Him. And He says to the man having the withered hand, "Rise into the midst." And He says to them, "Is it lawful on the Sabbaths to do good or to do evil, to save a life or to kill?" But they were silent. And having looked around at them with anger, being grieved at the hardness of their heart, He says to the man, "Stretch out your hand." And he stretched ***it*** out, and his hand was restored sound as the other. And the Pharisees, having gone out, immediately were holding counsel with the Herodians against Him, how they might destroy Him. And Jesus withdrew with His disciples to the sea; and a great multitude from Galilee followed Him, and from Judea, and from Jerusalem, and from Idumea, and beyond the Jordan; and those around Tyre and Sidon, a great multitude, having heard how many things He was doing, came to Him. And He spoke to His disciples that a small boat should wait on Him because of the crowd, so that they would not crush Him. For He healed many, so that they were falling upon Him in order that they might touch Him, as many as had afflictions. And the unclean spirits, whenever they saw Him, were falling down before Him and crying out, saying, "You are the Son of God." And He was rebuking them much, so that they would not make Him known.

3:13-19 And He goes up on the mountain and summons those whom He Himself wanted; and they went to Him. And He appointed twelve, so that they might be with Him, and so that He might send them out to preach, and to have authority to heal the diseases and to cast out the demons. And He put ***the*** name Peter on Simon; and James the ***son*** of Zebedee, and John the brother of James, and He put on them ***the*** names Boanerges, which is, "Sons of thunder"; and Andrew, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James the ***son*** of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus, and Simon the Cananite, and Judas Iscariot, who also delivered Him up. And they come into a house.

3:20-35 And a crowd comes together again, so that they are not able even to eat bread. And those belonging to Him, having heard, went out to seize Him; for they were saying, "He is beside Himself." And the scribes who had come down from Jerusalem were saying, "He has Beelzebul," and, "By the ruler of the demons He casts out the demons." And having summoned them, He was speaking to them in parables: "How is Satan able to cast out Satan? And if a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom is not able to stand. And if a house is divided against itself, that house is not able to stand. And if Satan has risen up against himself and has been divided, he is not able to stand, but has an end. No one is able, having entered into the house of the strong man, to plunder his goods unless he first binds the strong man; and then he will plunder his house. Truly I say to you that all the sins will be forgiven to the sons of men, and the blasphemies, whatever they may blaspheme; but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit does not have forgiveness to the age, but is liable to eternal judgment," because they were saying, "He has an unclean spirit." Then His brothers and His mother come, and standing outside, they sent to Him, calling Him. And a crowd was sitting around Him; and they said to Him, "Look, Your mother and Your brothers outside are seeking You." And He answered them, saying, "Who is My mother, or My brothers?"

And having looked around at those sitting around Him in a circle, He says, "Look, My mother and My brothers! For whoever does the will of God, he is My brother and My sister and mother."

Chapter 3 Preview

Chapter 3 opens with one more Sabbath fight. Jesus heals a man with a withered hand in the synagogue while His enemies watch, waiting to accuse Him. The healing is so plain and so good that the only answer they have is to plot His death. Then huge crowds come to Jesus from all over the land, and even the unclean spirits fall down before Him.

Jesus goes up on a mountain and appoints twelve men to be with Him and to be sent out to preach. Then the opposition gets louder. His own family thinks He has lost His mind, and scribes from Jerusalem say He casts out demons by the power of Satan. Jesus answers with a picture of a house divided, a warning about blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, and a new definition of family: whoever does the will of God.

Chapter 3 Study

3:1-2 *And He entered again into the synagogue, and there was a man there having a withered hand. And they were watching Him closely, whether He will heal him on the Sabbaths, so that they might accuse Him.*

Jesus went into the synagogue again, and "there was a man there having a withered hand." Luke, the doctor, tells us it was his right hand (Luke 6:6), the one a working man needed most.

But look at the second verse. The Pharisees were not there to worship. "They were watching Him closely." They were not hoping He would help the man for the man's sake. They were hoping He would heal him, so they could accuse Him of working on the Sabbath. Their traditions allowed help on the Sabbath only when a life was in danger, and a withered hand could wait until tomorrow. It is a sad thing when people go to worship only to find fault.

3:3-4 *And He says to the man having the withered hand, "Rise into the midst." And He says to them, "Is it lawful on the Sabbaths to do good or to do evil, to save a life or to kill?" But they were silent.*

Jesus did not heal in secret. He told the man, "Rise into the midst." He brought the man out where everyone could see. Then He asked the leaders a question: "Is it lawful on the Sabbaths to do good or to do evil, to save a life or to kill?"

The question cut two ways. Jesus was about to do good and give a man his hand back. They were sitting in the synagogue on the Sabbath planning how to kill Him (3:6). Who was really breaking the Sabbath? "But they were silent." They had no answer, because there was none.

3:5 *And having looked around at them with anger, being grieved at the hardness of their heart, He says to the man, "Stretch out your hand." And he stretched* ***it*** *out, and his hand was restored sound as the other.*

This is one of the few places where the Gospels tell us Jesus was angry. "Having looked around at them with anger, being grieved at the hardness of their heart." His anger was mixed with grief. He was not angry because they had hurt His pride. He was angry because their hard hearts cared more about rules than about a hurting man. That is righteous anger. It is aimed at sin, and it is full of sorrow for the sinner.

"Stretch out your hand." The man could not do it by himself, but he obeyed, and as he did, "his hand was restored sound as the other." Jesus often asks us to do what we cannot do, and then He gives the power as we obey.

3:6 *And the Pharisees, having gone out, immediately were holding counsel with the Herodians against Him, how they might destroy Him.*

The Pharisees walked out and "immediately were holding counsel with the Herodians against Him, how they might destroy Him." The Herodians were Jews who supported the family of King Herod and, through Herod, the rule of Rome. The Pharisees and the Herodians normally could not stand each other. But they agreed on one thing: Jesus had to go.

This is only chapter 3, and already the plot to kill Jesus has started. Mark wants us to see the shadow of the cross early. Notice the contrast too. Jesus spent the Sabbath giving life. His enemies spent it planning death.

3:7-8 *And Jesus withdrew with His disciples to the sea; and a great multitude from Galilee followed Him, and from Judea, and from Jerusalem, and from Idumea, and beyond the Jordan; and those around Tyre and Sidon, a great multitude, having heard how many things He was doing, came to Him.*

Jesus withdrew to the lakeshore, and the crowds followed. Look at where they came from. Galilee was the north. Judea and Jerusalem were the south. Idumea was far to the south, the old land of Edom. "Beyond the Jordan" was the land east of the river. Tyre and Sidon were Gentile cities on the coast to the northwest. People came from every direction, Jews and some Gentiles too. In three chapters, Jesus' name had spread through the whole land.

3:9-10 *And He spoke to His disciples that a small boat should wait on Him because of the crowd, so that they would not crush Him. For He healed many, so that they were falling upon Him in order that they might touch Him, as many as had afflictions.*

The crowd was so big that Jesus asked for a small boat to be kept ready, so He would not be crushed. People with "afflictions" were pushing forward to touch Him. The word for afflictions is the word for a whip or a scourge, a picture of the pain of sickness.

I can understand why they pushed. When you are sick and hurting and there is Someone who can heal you, you push. But notice that Jesus made room to teach. He would not let Himself become only a healer people used and then forgot.

3:11-12 *And the unclean spirits, whenever they saw Him, were falling down before Him and crying out, saying, "You are the Son of God." And He was rebuking them much, so that they would not make Him known.*

The unclean spirits fell down before Him and cried out, "You are the Son of God." They were right, and again Jesus rebuked them "so that they would not make Him known."

This is part of what Bible teachers call the messianic secret, and I want to explain it simply, because we will see it all through Mark. Again and again Jesus tells demons, people He has healed, and even His disciples to keep quiet about who He is. Why? I see three plain reasons in Mark. First, He would not take His testimony from demons. Second, most people expected a Messiah who would be a warrior king and drive out Rome. If they heard the title too soon, they would try to make Him that kind of king (John 6:15), and the crowds would come for the wrong reasons. Third, Jesus was going to the cross, and no one could understand who the Messiah really is until they saw Him die and rise again. That is why Jesus later tells the disciples to keep quiet until He has risen from the dead (9:9). The secret was not a trick. It was a matter of timing. After the resurrection, the secret is out, and the job of every believer is to tell it.

3:13-15 *And He goes up on the mountain and summons those whom He Himself wanted; and they went to Him. And He appointed twelve, so that they might be with Him, and so that He might send them out to preach, and to have authority to heal the diseases and to cast out the demons.*

Jesus went up on the mountain and "summons those whom He Himself wanted." The choice was His. Luke tells us He spent the whole night before in prayer (Luke 6:12).

Look at the two reasons He appointed the twelve. First, "so that they might be with Him." Second, so that He could "send them out to preach" with authority to heal and cast out demons. Being with Jesus comes first, and being sent comes second. We cannot give out what we have not first received by spending time with Him. Many of us want to skip straight to the work. Jesus starts with the walk.

Why twelve? Israel had twelve tribes. Jesus was forming the core of a new people around Himself, and in the future kingdom these men will sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel (Matthew 19:28). That promise is for Israel, and God will keep it.

3:16-17 *And He put **the** name Peter on Simon; and James the **son** of Zebedee, and John the brother of James, and He put on them **the** names Boanerges, which is, "Sons of thunder";*

Mark lists the twelve, and he starts with Simon, to whom Jesus "put the name Peter." Peter means rock. When Jesus met him, Simon was anything but steady. Jesus named him for what He would make him.

James and John, the sons of Zebedee, were given the name "Boanerges," an Aramaic word, which Mark explains for his readers: "Sons of thunder." Mark often explains Aramaic words and Jewish customs, which tells us he was writing for readers outside Israel. The name may have fit their temper. Later these two wanted to call down fire on a Samaritan village (Luke 9:54). John, one of the sons of thunder, became the apostle of love who wrote 1 John. Jesus can change anyone.

3:18-19 *and Andrew, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James the* ***son*** *of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus, and Simon the Cananite, and Judas Iscariot, who also delivered Him up. And they come into a house.*

Here are the rest. Andrew was Peter's brother. Philip was from Bethsaida (John 1:44). Bartholomew is most likely the same man John calls Nathanael (John 1:45-49), though Scripture does not say so directly. Matthew is Levi the tax collector (2:14). Thomas is the one we remember for doubting, but he also said he was willing to die with Jesus (John 11:16). James the son of Alphaeus is sometimes called James the Less. Thaddaeus is the same man Luke calls Judas of James (Luke 6:16). "Simon the Cananite" does not mean he was from Canaan. The word comes from an Aramaic word for zeal, and Luke calls him the Zealot (Luke 6:15). The Zealots wanted to throw off Rome by force.

Think about this group. Matthew had worked for Rome. Simon had wanted to fight Rome. Jesus put them on the same team. Only Jesus can do that.

And last, "Judas Iscariot, who also delivered Him up." Mark tells us the end of Judas' story right at the start. Judas was chosen, sent out, and saw every miracle, and he still betrayed Jesus. Being close to Jesus is not the same as belonging to Him.

3:20-21 *And a crowd comes together again, so that they are not able even to eat bread. And those belonging to Him, having heard, went out to seize Him; for they were saying, "He is beside Himself."*

Jesus went into a house, and the crowd came again, so many that He and His disciples could not even eat. Then "those belonging to Him" heard about it and came to "seize Him." This means His family, as we see in 3:31. They were saying, "He is beside Himself." In plain words, they thought He had lost His mind.

His own family did not understand Him yet. John tells us that even His brothers did not believe in Him (John 7:5). If you are following Jesus and your family does not understand, you are in good company. And there is hope. After the resurrection, His brothers believed (Acts 1:14), and His brother James became a leader in the church in Jerusalem.

3:22 *And the scribes who had come down from Jerusalem were saying, "He has Beelzebul," and, "By the ruler of the demons He casts out the demons."*

Things got worse. Scribes came down from Jerusalem, the official experts, sent to look into this new teacher. They could not deny the miracles. Too many people had seen them. So they said, "He has Beelzebul," and, "By the ruler of the demons He casts out the demons." Beelzebul was a name for Satan. It may come from an old name for a false god of the Philistines (2 Kings 1:2). They were saying that Jesus' power came from hell.

3:23-26 *And having summoned them, He was speaking to them in parables: "How is Satan able to cast out Satan? And if a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom is not able to stand. And if a house is divided against itself, that house is not able to stand. And if Satan has risen up against himself and has been divided, he is not able to stand, but has an end.*

Jesus called them over and answered calmly with plain logic. "How is Satan able to cast out Satan?" If a kingdom fights itself, it falls. If a family fights itself, it breaks apart. If Satan were casting out his own demons, he would be destroying his own work. That makes no sense. Satan is evil, but he is not stupid.

Jesus spoke of a house divided. We know how true this is. A church divided by fighting, or a family torn by bitterness, cannot stand for long.

3:27 *No one is able, having entered into the house of the strong man, to plunder his goods unless he first binds the strong man; and then he will plunder his house.*

Then Jesus told them what was really going on. "No one is able, having entered into the house of the strong man, to plunder his goods unless he first binds the strong man." Satan is the strong man. The people he holds captive are his goods. Jesus is the One stronger than Satan who has come into his house, tied him up, and is taking back what he stole. Every demon cast out was proof that the strong man had met his match. Jesus won that battle in the wilderness (1:12-13), and He won it once for all at the cross (Colossians 2:15; Hebrews 2:14).

3:28-30 *Truly I say to you that all the sins will be forgiven to the sons of men, and the blasphemies, whatever they may blaspheme; but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit does not have forgiveness to the age, but is liable to eternal judgment," because they were saying, "He has an unclean spirit."*

"Truly I say to you." This is the first time in Mark that Jesus says these words. The word for "truly" is amen. Jesus puts it at the front of a statement to stress that it is true and important.

First the good news: "all the sins will be forgiven to the sons of men, and the blasphemies, whatever they may blaspheme." That is a huge promise. There is no sin too big for God's forgiveness.

Then the warning: "whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit does not have forgiveness to the age, but is liable to eternal judgment." What is this sin? Mark tells us plainly in verse 30: "because they were saying, He has an unclean spirit." These scribes saw the clear work of the Holy Spirit through Jesus, and they called it the work of Satan. They looked at the light and called it darkness. A heart that does that has hardened itself against the only One who can lead it to repentance.

Many people have worried that they committed this sin. Here is what I believe: if you are worried about it, you have not committed it. The person who has committed it does not care. He has set himself against God's Spirit for good. Anyone who wants to come to Jesus can come, and He will not turn them away (John 6:37).

3:31-32 *Then His brothers and His mother come, and standing outside, they sent to Him, calling Him. And a crowd was sitting around Him; and they said to Him, "Look, Your mother and Your brothers outside are seeking You."*

Now His mother and brothers arrived. This ties back to verse 21. They had come to take Him home. They stood outside and sent word in, calling Him.

Who were His brothers? Matthew 13:55 names them: James, Joses, Simon and Judas, and also mentions sisters. Jesus' brothers were the sons of Joseph and Mary, born after Jesus (Matthew 1:25; 13:55-56). Matthew 1:25 says Joseph did not know Mary until she had given birth to her firstborn son. Some churches hold that Mary stayed a virgin all her life and that these were Joseph's sons by an earlier marriage or cousins. These were the people closest to Jesus in His home, and they did not yet understand Him.

3:33-35 *And He answered them, saying, "Who is My mother, or My brothers?" And having looked around at those sitting around Him in a circle, He says, "Look, My mother and My brothers! For whoever does the will of God, he is My brother and My sister and mother."*

Jesus looked around at the people sitting with Him and said, "Look, My mother and My brothers!" Then He explained: "For whoever does the will of God, he is My brother and My sister and mother."

Jesus was not being cruel to His family. He loved His mother and cared for her even from the cross (John 19:26-27). But He was teaching that there is a family closer than blood. Those who do God's will belong to His family. Doing God's will starts with believing in the One He sent (John 6:29).

That is good news for anyone who has been rejected by their own family because of Jesus. You have brothers and sisters and mothers in His family, the church (Mark 10:29-30). And it is a warning for anyone who thinks being raised in a Christian home makes them a Christian. Mary's own sons had to come to faith in Him like everyone else.

Chapter 3 Summary

Jesus heals a man's withered hand in the synagogue on the Sabbath, and the Pharisees join with the Herodians to plot His death. Great crowds come to Him from all over the land and beyond, and He silences the unclean spirits who call Him the Son of God. On a mountain He appoints twelve apostles to be with Him and to be sent out to preach, and Mark names each one, ending with Judas Iscariot, who betrayed Him. His family thinks He has lost His mind, and scribes from Jerusalem say He casts out demons by Beelzebul. Jesus shows that a divided kingdom cannot stand, that He has bound the strong man, and that blasphemy against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven. He then says that whoever does the will of God is His brother, sister and mother.

Chapter 3 Study Questions

1. Why were the Pharisees watching Jesus closely in the synagogue? (3:1-2)

2. What question did Jesus ask before healing the man, and why were the leaders silent? (3:4)

3. What two reasons does Mark give for why Jesus appointed the twelve? (3:14-15)

4. Which two very different men did Jesus put side by side among the twelve, and what does that tell you? (3:18)

5. What did Jesus' family think about Him, and what did the scribes say? (3:21-22)

6. How did Jesus answer the charge that He cast out demons by Satan? (3:23-27)

7. According to verse 30, what had the scribes said that led Jesus to warn about blasphemy against the Holy Spirit? (3:28-30)

8. Who did Jesus say was His brother, sister and mother? (3:35)

9. Jesus called the twelve first "so that they might be with Him" (3:14). How much time do you spend simply being with Jesus before you try to work for Him?

10. Has following Jesus ever put you at odds with your family? How does 3:31-35 encourage you?

Chapter 4: Parables and the Storm

Scripture

4:1-20 And again He began to teach beside the sea. And a great crowd was gathered to Him, so that He, having climbed into a boat, sat in the sea; and all the crowd was by the sea on the land. And He was teaching them many things in parables, and He was saying to them in His teaching, "Listen! Look, the sower went out to sow. And it came to pass, while sowing, some fell along the road, and the birds of the sky came and devoured it. And other fell on the rocky ***ground***, where it did not have much soil; and immediately it sprang up because of not having depth of soil. But the sun having risen, it was scorched; and because of not having root, it withered away. And other fell among the thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it did not yield fruit. And other fell into the good soil, and was yielding fruit, growing up and increasing, and was bearing, one thirty, and one sixty, and one a hundred." And He was saying to them, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear." Now when He was alone, those around Him with the twelve asked Him ***about*** the parable. And He was saying to them, "To you it has been given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God; but to those who are outside, all things are done in parables, so that seeing they may see and not perceive, and hearing they may hear and not understand, lest they should turn and the sins be forgiven them." And He says to them, "Do you not know this parable? And how will you know all the parables? The sower sows the word. And these are the ***ones*** along the road where the word is sown; and when they hear, immediately Satan comes and takes away the word that has been sown in their hearts. And these are likewise the ***ones*** being sown on the rocky ***places***, who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with joy; and they do not have root in themselves, but are temporary; then, when tribulation or persecution comes because of the word, immediately they are caused to stumble. And these are the ***ones*** being sown among the thorns, the ***ones*** hearing the word, and the cares of this age, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires concerning the other things, entering in, choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful. And these are the ***ones*** having been sown on the good soil, who hear the word and receive ***it*** and bear fruit, one thirty, and one sixty, and one a hundred."

4:21-34 And He was saying to them, "Does the lamp come so that it may be put under the basket or under the bed? ***Is it*** not so that it may be put on the lampstand? For there is not anything hidden which will not be made manifest, nor did anything become secret except that it should come into the open. If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear." And He was saying to them, "Take heed what you hear. With what measure you measure, it will be measured to you; and it will be added to you who hear. For whoever has, it will be given to him; and he who does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him." And He was saying, "Thus is the kingdom of God: as if a man should cast the seed on the earth, and should sleep and rise night and day, and the seed should sprout and grow, how, he himself does not know. For the earth bears fruit by itself: first a blade, then a head, then full grain in the head. But when the fruit permits, immediately he sends the sickle, because the harvest has come." And He was saying, "To what shall we liken the kingdom of God? Or in what parable shall we compare it? ***It is*** like a grain of mustard, which, when it is sown on the earth, is smaller than all the seeds that ***are*** on the earth; and when it is sown, it grows up and becomes greater than all the garden plants, and produces great branches,

so that the birds of the sky are able to nest under its shade." And with many such parables He was speaking the word to them, as they were able to hear. But without a parable He was not speaking to them; but privately He was explaining all things to His disciples.

4:35-41 And He says to them on that day, evening having come, "Let us pass over to the other side." And having dismissed the crowd, they take Him along as He was in the boat; and other little boats also were with Him. And a great storm of wind comes, and the waves were breaking into the boat, so that it was already being filled. And He Himself was on the stern, sleeping on the cushion. And they wake Him and say to Him, "Teacher, does it not concern You that we are perishing?" And having been awakened, He rebuked the wind and said to the sea, "Be quiet! Be silenced!" And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. And He said to them, "Why are you so fearful? How ***is it that*** you do not have faith?" And they feared a great fear, and they were saying to one another, "Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey Him?"

Chapter 4 Preview

Up to now Mark has shown us mostly what Jesus did. In chapter 4 he slows down and lets us hear Jesus teach. Jesus sits in a boat and teaches the crowd on the shore in parables, simple stories from everyday life that carry a deeper truth about the kingdom of God. The first and longest is the parable of the sower, and Jesus explains it to His disciples Himself. It is really a parable about hearing: the same seed falls on four kinds of ground, and only one kind bears fruit.

Then come shorter sayings about a lamp, a measure, a seed that grows while the farmer sleeps, and a tiny mustard seed that becomes a large plant. The chapter ends at night on the lake. A great storm hits, the boat is filling with water, and Jesus is asleep. The disciples wake Him in fear. He speaks to the wind and the sea, and they obey. The disciples are left with a question that the whole book of Mark is answering: "Who then is this?"

Chapter 4 Study

4:1-2 *And again He began to teach beside the sea. And a great crowd was gathered to Him, so that He, having climbed into a boat, sat in the sea; and all the crowd was by the sea on the land. And He was teaching them many things in parables, and He was saying to them in His teaching,*

The crowd was so large that Jesus got into a boat and sat in it, a little way out on the water, while the people stood on the shore. Teachers in that day sat to teach. The shore near Capernaum has places where the land slopes up from the water like a natural theater, and sound carries well across the water. Jesus used what was at hand.

"He was teaching them many things in parables." A parable is a story taken from ordinary life, farming, fishing, cooking, weddings, that is laid beside a spiritual truth to explain it. The word means to throw alongside. Parables are easy to remember, but they make the listener think. Those who want the truth will dig for it. Those who do not care will walk away with a nice story and nothing more.

4:3-4 *"Listen! Look, the sower went out to sow. And it came to pass, while sowing, some fell along the road, and the birds of the sky came and devoured it.*

"Listen! Look, the sower went out to sow." Jesus started by calling for attention. In Israel a farmer often scattered seed by hand as he walked across his field, and in some places the plowing came after. Seed went everywhere.

Some seed fell "along the road." Footpaths ran through and beside the fields, and the ground there was packed hard by people walking on it. The seed just sat on top, and the birds ate it.

4:5-6 *And other fell on the rocky **ground**, where it did not have much soil; and immediately it sprang up because of not having depth of soil. But the sun having risen, it was scorched; and because of not having root, it withered away.*

Some fell on "rocky ground." This does not mean a field full of loose stones. Much of Galilee has a shelf of limestone rock just under a thin layer of soil. Seed sprouted fast there because the shallow soil warmed up quickly. But the roots hit rock and could not go down to find water. When the hot sun came, the young plants dried up and died.

4:7 *And other fell among the thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it did not yield fruit.*

Some fell "among the thorns." The thorn roots were already in the ground, hidden. The good seed sprang up, but so did the thorns, and they grew faster and taller. They took the water, the soil and the sunlight, and the good plant was choked. It lived, but it "did not yield fruit."

4:8-9 *And other fell into the good soil, and was yielding fruit, growing up and increasing, and was bearing, one thirty, and one sixty, and one a hundred." And He was saying to them, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear."*

And some fell "into the good soil." This seed grew and kept growing, and it bore a harvest: thirty, sixty, even a hundred times what was planted. A normal harvest in that day might be far less than that. Jesus was describing a harvest beyond what any farmer expected.

"He who has ears to hear, let him hear." Everyone in the crowd had ears. Jesus was talking about another kind of hearing. He wanted them to listen with their hearts and take His words in.

4:10-12 *Now when He was alone, those around Him with the twelve asked Him **about** the parable. And He was saying to them, "To you it has been given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God; but to those who are outside, all things are done in parables, so that seeing they may see and not perceive, and hearing they may hear and not understand, lest they should turn and the sins be forgiven them."*

Later, when they were alone, the twelve and the others close to Jesus asked Him about the parable. To them, Jesus said, "it has been given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God." In the Bible a mystery is a truth God kept hidden before and now reveals. The disciples were not smarter than the crowd. It was given to them.

But "to those who are outside, all things are done in parables." Then Jesus quoted Isaiah 6:9-10. When God called Isaiah, He told him that the people would hear his message and not understand, because their hearts were already hard. Isaiah's preaching would harden them further.

This is a hard verse. Does God hide the truth so people cannot be saved? Here is how I understand it. Parables reveal and hide at the same time. To a person whose heart is open, a parable opens the door wider. To a person who has already closed his heart, like the scribes in chapter 3 who called the Spirit's work Satan's, the parable becomes a closed door. God does not shut out seeking hearts. But when people keep rejecting the light, He may give them what they have chosen. That is why Jesus keeps saying, "Let him hear." The call is still open.

Old Testament links: Isaiah 6:9-10 (quoted)

4:13-14 *And He says to them, "Do you not know this parable? And how will you know all the parables? The sower sows the word.*

"Do you not know this parable? And how will you know all the parables?" The parable of the sower is a key to the rest. If you understand this one, you have a tool for understanding the others.

"The sower sows the word." The seed is God's word, His message. The sower is first of all Jesus, and after Him, everyone who shares the word. Notice that the seed is the same in every case. The sower does not change. The seed does not change. The only thing that changes is the soil. The difference is in the hearer.

4:15 *And these are the **ones** along the road where the word is sown; and when they hear, immediately Satan comes and takes away the word that has been sown in their hearts.*

The hard road is the heart that hears but never lets the word in. "Immediately Satan comes and takes away the word." The devil is a thief, and he does not want the word to stay long enough to take root. He uses distraction, pride, mockery, or simple forgetting. Have you ever heard a sermon on Sunday and could not remember a thing about it by Monday? Do not let him take the seed.

4:16-17 *And these are likewise the **ones** being sown on the rocky **places**, who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with joy; and they do not have root in themselves, but are temporary; then, when tribulation or persecution comes because of the word, immediately they are caused to stumble.*

The rocky ground is the person who hears the word and "immediately receive it with joy." At first this looks like the best soil of all. Lots of excitement, quick growth. But there is no root. They are "temporary." When "tribulation or persecution comes because of the word," they fall away.

Notice the word "immediately" twice here. Quick to receive, quick to quit. Following Jesus is not only an exciting start. It takes a root that goes down deep into Christ. Jesus never promised that following Him would be easy. In fact, He said trouble would come because of the word.

4:18-19 *And these are the **ones** being sown among the thorns, the **ones** hearing the word, and the cares of this age, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires concerning the other things, entering in, choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.*

The thorny ground is the most common danger for many of us. These people hear the word, and something grows. But three things crowd it out: "the cares of this age, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires concerning the other things." Cares are worries. Riches promise happiness and security, and they lie. Desires for other things can be anything we want more than God.

None of those thorns are big, open sins. They are ordinary life: bills, work, things we want. That is what makes them so dangerous. They don't kill the plant in a day. They slowly choke it until it "becomes unfruitful." What are the thorns in your life?

4:20 *And these are the **ones** having been sown on the good soil, who hear the word and receive **it** and bear fruit, one thirty, and one sixty, and one a hundred."*

The good soil hears the word, receives it, and bears fruit. Three things: hear, receive, bear fruit. Real faith is not just hearing. It takes the word in, holds on to it, and lets it change the life.

Not every good plant bears the same amount, "one thirty, and one sixty, and one a hundred." God does not ask us to compare our harvest with someone else's. He asks us to be good soil.

Bible teachers debate whether the rocky and thorny soils describe people who were truly saved. Some see them as people who seemed to believe but never had real saving faith. Others see them as believers who did not grow. What is plain is that only the good soil bears fruit, and fruit is the mark of real life in Christ (John 15:8).

4:21-23 *And He was saying to them, "Does the lamp come so that it may be put under the basket or under the bed? **Is it** not so that it may be put on the lampstand? For there is not anything hidden which will not be made manifest, nor did anything become secret except that it should come into the open. If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear."*

Next Jesus asked a question with an obvious answer. Does anyone light a lamp and then hide it under a basket or a bed? Of course not. In that day a lamp was a small clay bowl of olive oil with a wick, and it was set on a stand so it could light the room.

Jesus is the light, and the truth about Him was not meant to stay hidden. For now, some things were veiled in parables, and He was telling the disciples to keep quiet about who He was. But "there is not anything hidden which will not be made manifest." The day would come when it would all be out in the open. And what we hear from Him in private, we are meant to share in public.

4:24-25 *And He was saying to them, "Take heed what you hear. With what measure you measure, it will be measured to you; and it will be added to you who hear. For whoever has, it will be given to him; and he who does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him."*

"Take heed what you hear." Be careful how you listen. "With what measure you measure, it will be measured to you." The picture is of a merchant measuring out grain. If you give a little attention to God's word, you get a little. If you give much, God gives you more, and more besides.

Verse 25 sounds unfair at first. But think about learning anything. A person who uses what he knows learns more. A person who ignores what he knows loses even that. The same is true of God's word. Use it or lose it.

4:26-29 *And He was saying, "Thus is the kingdom of God: as if a man should cast the seed on the earth, and should sleep and rise night and day, and the seed should sprout and grow, how, he himself does not know. For the earth bears fruit by itself: first a blade, then a head, then full grain in the head. But when the fruit permits, immediately he sends the sickle, because the harvest has come."*

Only Mark records this parable. A farmer scatters seed, then goes about his life, sleeping and getting up, night and day. The seed sprouts and grows, and "how, he himself does not know." The ground produces "first a blade, then a head, then full grain in the head." When the grain is ripe, he brings the sickle, because harvest time has come.

This is a great comfort to anyone who shares the gospel. We plant. We water. But we do not make the seed grow. God does (1 Corinthians 3:6-7). We cannot see what God is doing in a person's heart. Growth takes time, and it comes in stages. Be patient with new believers and with yourself.

The harvest at the end points to the end of the age, when God brings in His harvest and judges the world (Joel 3:13; Revelation 14:15).

Old Testament links: Joel 3:13 (alluded to)

4:30-32 *And He was saying, "To what shall we liken the kingdom of God? Or in what parable shall we compare it? **It is** like a grain of mustard, which, when it is sown on the earth, is smaller than all the seeds that **are** on the earth; and when it is sown, it grows up and becomes greater than all the garden plants, and produces great branches, so that the birds of the sky are able to nest under its shade."*

"To what shall we liken the kingdom of God?" Jesus picked the mustard seed. It was the smallest seed farmers in Israel planted in their gardens, and Jesus' listeners used it as a saying for something tiny. Yet it grows into a plant that can stand ten feet tall, big enough that "the birds of the sky are able to nest under its shade."

The kingdom started small. A carpenter from Nazareth and twelve ordinary men. It did not look like much. But it would grow beyond anything they could imagine. Today people from every nation have heard about Jesus. And when Jesus returns to set up His kingdom on the earth, it will fill the whole world (Daniel 2:35, 44).

Some teachers see the birds here as a picture of evil settling into the church, since in verse 4 the birds stood for Satan. Others see them as the nations finding shelter in the kingdom, as in Ezekiel 17:23. The main point is clear either way: small beginnings, huge results.

Old Testament links: Ezekiel 31:6 (alluded to); Daniel 4:12 (alluded to)

4:33-34 *And with many such parables He was speaking the word to them, as they were able to hear. But without a parable He was not speaking to them; but privately He was explaining all things to His disciples.*

Jesus taught the crowd "as they were able to hear." He was patient. He gave them what they could take in. But to His disciples, "privately He was explaining all things." Those who stay close to Jesus get to hear the explanation. The same is true today. If you want to understand His word, spend time with Him in it.

4:35-36 *And He says to them on that day, evening having come, "Let us pass over to the other side." And having dismissed the crowd, they take Him along as He was in the boat; and other little boats also were with Him.*

That same evening Jesus said, "Let us pass over to the other side." He was tired after a long day of teaching. They took Him "as He was in the boat," without even going ashore first. Mark mentions other boats too, a small eyewitness detail, the kind of thing Peter would remember.

Notice what Jesus said: we are going to the other side. He did not say, we are going halfway and then sinking. When Jesus tells you where you are going, you will get there.

4:37-38 *And a great storm of wind comes, and the waves were breaking into the boat, so that it was already being filled. And He Himself was on the stern, sleeping on the cushion. And they wake Him and say to Him, "Teacher, does it not concern You that we are perishing?"*

The Sea of Galilee lies about 700 feet below sea level, with hills and mountains around it. Cool air can rush down through the valleys and hit the warm water with no warning. Even experienced fishermen like Peter, Andrew, James and John feared these storms. "The waves were breaking into the boat, so that it was already being filled."

And Jesus was asleep "on the stern, sleeping on the cushion." The stern is the back of the boat. Here we see His real humanity. He was tired, and He slept. The Son of God was also a true man.

The disciples woke Him with a hurt question: "Teacher, does it not concern You that we are perishing?" Have you ever prayed that prayer? Lord, don't You care? It can feel that way when the storm is loud and Jesus seems quiet. But His sleep was not a lack of care. It was perfect peace.

4:39 *And having been awakened, He rebuked the wind and said to the sea, "Be quiet! Be silenced!" And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm.*

He got up and "rebuked the wind and said to the sea, Be quiet! Be silenced!" He spoke to the storm the same way He spoke to the demon in the synagogue (1:25). And the wind stopped, "and there was a great calm."

Normally, even after the wind stops, the waves keep rolling for a while. Not this time. The sea went flat at once. The Old Testament says that only God rules the raging sea and stills its waves (Psalm 89:9; 107:29). The disciples were watching the God of the Psalms sitting in their boat.

4:40 *And He said to them, "Why are you so fearful? How **is it that** you do not have faith?"*

Then Jesus turned to them. "Why are you so fearful? How is it that you do not have faith?" He was not scolding them for waking Him. He was teaching them. They had seen Him heal the sick and cast out demons. They had heard Him say they were going to the other side. Still they thought they would die.

Faith does not mean we never feel fear. It means we trust the One in the boat with us. Storms will come in this life, even when we are right where Jesus told us to be. The question is not whether the storm is big. The question is whether Jesus is bigger.

4:41 *And they feared a great fear, and they were saying to one another, "Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey Him?"*

"They feared a great fear." Before, they feared the storm. Now they feared the One who stopped it. That is a holy fear, the awe of standing in the presence of God.

"Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey Him?" That is the question of the whole book. Mark told us the answer in his first verse: He is the Son of God. The disciples were still working it out. In chapter 8 Peter will answer it. Each of us has to answer it too.

Old Testament links: Jonah 1:16 (alluded to)

Chapter 4 Summary

Jesus teaches the crowds from a boat in parables. In the parable of the sower, the same seed falls on four kinds of ground: the hard road, the rocky ground, the thorns and the good soil. Jesus explains that the seed is the word, and the soils show four ways people hear it, with only the good soil bearing fruit. He teaches that a lamp is meant to be seen, that what is hidden will be revealed, and that how we listen matters. He compares the kingdom of God to seed that grows while the farmer sleeps and to a tiny mustard seed that becomes a large plant. That evening, as they cross the lake, a great storm fills the boat while Jesus sleeps. The disciples wake Him in fear, and He rebukes the wind and the sea, bringing a great calm. The disciples are left in awe, asking who He is that even the wind and sea obey Him.

Chapter 4 Study Questions

1. What is a parable, and why do you think Jesus taught in them? (4:2, 4:33-34)

2. In the parable of the sower, what does the seed stand for? (4:14)

3. What happens to the word that falls along the road, and who takes it? (4:15)

4. Why do those on the rocky ground fall away? (4:16-17)

5. What three things choke the word in the thorny ground? (4:19)

6. What does the parable of the seed growing by itself teach about sharing the gospel? (4:26-29)

7. What did Jesus do in the storm, and what did the disciples ask afterward? (4:39-41)

8. Which of the four soils best describes your heart right now? Why?

9. What "thorns," the cares of this life, the pull of money, or the desire for other things, are crowding God's word in your life? (4:19)

10. What storm are you facing right now, and what would it look like to trust the One who is in the boat with you? (4:38-40)

Chapter 5: Power Over Demons, Disease, and Death

Scripture

5:1-20 And they came to the other side of the sea, into the region of the Gadarenes. And when He had come out of the boat, immediately a man out of the tombs with an unclean spirit met Him, who had ***his*** dwelling in the tombs; and no one was able to bind him, not even with chains, because he had often been bound with shackles and chains, and the chains had been torn apart by him and the shackles shattered; and no one was strong ***enough*** to subdue him. And always, night and day, he was in the mountains and in the tombs, crying out and cutting himself with stones. Now having seen Jesus from afar, he ran and worshiped Him, and having cried out with a loud voice, he said, "What ***is there*** to me and to You, Jesus, Son of God Most High? I adjure You by God, do not torment me." For He was saying to him, "Come out, unclean spirit, out of the man!" And He was asking him, "What ***is*** your name?" And he answered, saying, "Legion ***is*** my name, because we are many." And he was begging Him much that He would not send them out of the region. Now there was there near the mountains a great herd of pigs feeding. And all the demons begged Him, saying, "Send us into the pigs, so that we may enter into them." And immediately Jesus allowed them. And having gone out, the unclean spirits entered into the pigs; and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the sea (now they were about two thousand), and they were drowned in the sea. And those feeding the pigs fled and reported ***it*** in the city and in the fields. And they went out to see what it is that has happened. And they come to Jesus and see the ***one*** being demonized sitting and clothed and being of sound mind, the ***one*** having had the legion; and they were afraid. And those having seen ***it*** related to them how it happened to the ***one*** being demonized, and concerning the pigs. And they began to implore Him to depart from their region. And when He had gotten into the boat, the ***one*** having been demonized was begging Him that he might be with Him. But Jesus did not permit him, but says to him, "Go to your house, to your own ***people***, and report to them how much the Lord did for you, and ***how*** He had mercy on you." And he departed and began to preach in the Decapolis how much Jesus did for him; and all were marveling.

5:21-34 And Jesus having crossed over again in the boat to the other side, a great crowd was gathered to Him; and He was beside the sea. And look, one of the synagogue rulers comes, Jairus by name; and having seen Him, he falls at His feet, and he was begging Him much, saying, "My little daughter is at the point of death; ***I ask*** that, having come, You may lay ***Your*** hands on her, so that she may be saved, and she will live." And He departed with him. And a great crowd was following Him, and they were pressing in on Him. And a certain woman, being with a flow of blood twelve years, and having suffered much under many physicians, and having spent all that she had, and having benefited nothing, but rather having come to the worse, having heard about Jesus, having come in the crowd behind, touched His garment. For she was saying, "If I touch even His garments, I will be saved." And immediately the fountain of her blood was dried up, and she knew in the body that she has been healed of the affliction. And immediately Jesus, having known in Himself that power had gone forth out of Him, having turned around in the crowd, was saying, "Who touched My garments?" And His disciples were saying to Him, "You see the crowd pressing in on You, and You say, 'Who touched Me?'" And He was looking around to see her who had done

this. And the woman, having been afraid and trembling, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell down before Him and told Him all the truth. And He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has saved you; go in peace, and be healthy from your affliction."

5:35-43 While He was still speaking, they come from the synagogue ruler, saying, "Your daughter died; why do you still trouble the Teacher?" And Jesus, immediately having heard the word being spoken, says to the synagogue ruler, "Do not fear; only believe." And He did not allow anyone to follow with Him except Peter and James and John the brother of James. And He comes to the house of the synagogue ruler, and He sees a commotion, and ***people*** weeping and wailing much. And having entered, He says to them, "Why are you making a commotion and weeping? The child did not die, but is sleeping." And they were laughing at Him. But He, having put ***them*** all out, takes along the father of the child and the mother and those with Him, and enters in where the child was lying. And having taken hold of the hand of the child, He says to her, "Talitha koumi," which is, being translated, "Little girl, I say to you, arise." And immediately the little girl arose and was walking; for she was twelve years ***old***. And they were amazed with great amazement. And He instructed them strictly that no one should know this, and He said ***that something*** should be given to her to eat.

Chapter 5 Preview

In chapter 4 Jesus calmed a storm on the sea. In chapter 5 He calms three storms in human lives, and each one is worse than the last. First, on the far side of the lake, He meets a man so full of demons that no chain could hold him. Jesus sets him free with a word, sends the demons into a herd of pigs, and then sends the man home to tell what the Lord has done for him.

Back on the other shore, a synagogue ruler named Jairus begs Jesus to come heal his dying daughter. On the way, a woman who has been sick for twelve years touches His garment and is healed. Jesus stops to find her and calls her "Daughter." But while He is still speaking, word comes that Jairus' daughter has died. Jesus says, "Do not fear; only believe," goes to the house, takes the girl by the hand, and raises her from the dead. Demons, disease and death all bow to the Servant who is the Son of God.

Chapter 5 Study

5:1 *And they came to the other side of the sea, into the region of the Gadarenes.*

They crossed to the east side of the Sea of Galilee, "into the region of the Gadarenes." This was mostly Gentile country, part of the area called the Decapolis, which means ten cities. These were Greek-style cities with Greek and Roman ways of life.

Older Greek copies give the place name in different forms, Gadarenes, Gerasenes, or Gergesenes (compare Matthew 8:28 and Luke 8:26). The names likely point to a town and the larger district around it. What matters is that Jesus had gone into Gentile land. The storm on the way had not stopped Him. Someone on the other side needed Him.

5:2-5 *And when He had come out of the boat, immediately a man out of the tombs with an unclean spirit met Him, who had **his** dwelling in the tombs; and no one was able to bind him, not even with chains, because he had often been bound with shackles and chains, and the chains had been torn apart by him and the shackles shattered; and no one was strong **enough** to subdue him. And always, night and day, he was in the mountains and in the tombs, crying out and cutting himself with stones.*

As soon as Jesus stepped out of the boat, the man came at Him from the tombs. Matthew mentions two men (Matthew 8:28), while Mark and Luke focus on the one who did the talking. Mark gives us the most detail.

Look at this man's life. He lived among the tombs, in caves cut into the hillside where the dead were buried. To a Jew, that was the most unclean place there was. People had tried to chain him, but he tore the chains apart. "No one was strong enough to subdue him." Night and day he screamed and cut himself with stones.

This is what Satan does to the people he holds. He isolates them, he torments them, and he gets them to harm themselves. Satan never gives life. He only takes it (John 10:10). Society had no answer for this man except chains. Jesus had a better answer.

5:6-8 *Now having seen Jesus from afar, he ran and worshiped Him, and having cried out with a loud voice, he said, "What **is there** to me and to You, Jesus, Son of God Most High? I adjure You by God, do not torment me." For He was saying to him, "Come out, unclean spirit, out of the man!"*

"Having seen Jesus from afar, he ran and worshiped Him." The word for worship here means to bow down before. The demons in the man knew exactly who had come. "Jesus, Son of God Most High." They did not doubt who He was. They feared Him. James says the demons believe and shudder (James 2:19). Knowing the facts about Jesus is not the same as trusting Him.

"I adjure You by God, do not torment me." Can you see the strange turn here? The demon who had tormented this man for years now begged not to be tormented. The demons know their final end is coming (Matthew 8:29; Revelation 20:10).

Mark tells us Jesus had already been commanding, "Come out, unclean spirit, out of the man!"

5:9-10 *And He was asking him, "What **is** your name?" And he answered, saying, "Legion **is** my name, because we are many." And he was begging Him much that He would not send them out of the region.*

"What is your name?" Jesus did not ask because He did not know. He asked so the size of the problem would be clear to everyone. "Legion is my name, because we are many." A Roman legion was an army unit of several thousand soldiers. This man was not troubled by one demon, but by a whole army of them.

The demons begged not to be sent "out of the region." Luke adds that they begged not to be sent into the abyss (Luke 8:31), a place of confinement for evil spirits. They wanted to stay and keep doing harm.

5:11-13 *Now there was there near the mountains a great herd of pigs feeding. And all the demons begged Him, saying, "Send us into the pigs, so that we may enter into them." And immediately Jesus allowed them. And having gone out, the unclean spirits entered into the pigs; and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the sea (now they were about two thousand), and they were drowned in the sea.*

A great herd of pigs was feeding on the hillside. Pigs were unclean animals under the Law of Moses (Leviticus 11:7), and no faithful Jew would raise them. This was Gentile country.

The demons begged to go into the pigs, and Jesus allowed it. Notice that they could not go anywhere without His permission. The whole herd, "about two thousand," rushed down the steep bank into the sea and drowned.

People sometimes ask why Jesus would let a farmer's pigs be destroyed. Scripture does not tell us all His reasons. But we can see a few things. The drowning of the pigs proved to everyone that the demons were real and that they had truly left the man. It showed what the demons had wanted to do to the man all along. And it showed that one human soul is worth more to Jesus than two thousand pigs.

5:14-17 *And those feeding the pigs fled and reported **it** in the city and in the fields. And they went out to see what it is that has happened. And they come to Jesus and see the **one** being demonized sitting and clothed and being of sound mind, the **one** having had the legion; and they were afraid. And those having seen **it** related to them how it happened to the **one** being demonized, and concerning the pigs. And they began to implore Him to depart from their region.*

The herdsmen ran into town and told everyone. People came out to see, and what they saw scared them. The man who had been naked and screaming was "sitting and clothed and being of sound mind." Luke tells us he was sitting at the feet of Jesus (Luke 8:35).

You would think the town would rejoice. Instead, "they began to implore Him to depart from their region." Why? Perhaps they were afraid of His power. Perhaps they cared more about their pigs, and their money, than about a man made whole. Jesus had shown them power over evil, and they asked Him to leave.

That still happens. When Jesus starts to change things, it can cost us something, and some people would rather have their pigs than have Jesus. And Jesus left. He does not force Himself on anyone.

5:18-20 *And when He had gotten into the boat, the **one** having been demonized was begging Him that he might be with Him. But Jesus did not permit him, but says to him, "Go to your house, to your own **people**, and report to them how much the Lord did for you, and **how** He had mercy on you." And he departed and began to preach in the Decapolis how much Jesus did for him; and all were marveling.*

As Jesus was getting into the boat, the man begged to go with Him. That is a natural response. He wanted to stay close to the One who set him free.

But Jesus said no, and gave him a job instead. "Go to your house, to your own people, and report to them how much the Lord did for you, and how He had mercy on you." Notice that Jesus did not tell this man to keep quiet, as He told others. This was Gentile land, where people were not looking for a Jewish Messiah to make king, and Jesus was leaving. He left behind a witness.

The man obeyed. He went through the Decapolis, the ten cities, telling "how much Jesus did for him." Jesus said to tell what the Lord had done, and the man told what Jesus had done. He understood that they are the same. When Jesus came back to this region later, crowds were waiting for Him (7:31-37; 8:1-9). One changed man had prepared the way.

You may not be called to go overseas. But you can start at home and tell your own people what the Lord has done for you.

5:21-24 *And Jesus having crossed over again in the boat to the other side, a great crowd was gathered to Him; and He was beside the sea. And look, one of the synagogue rulers comes, Jairus by name; and having seen Him, he falls at His feet, and he was begging Him much, saying, "My little daughter is at the point of death; **I ask** that, having come, You may lay **Your** hands on her, so that she may be saved, and she will live." And He departed with him. And a great crowd was following Him, and they were pressing in on Him.*

Back on the west side of the lake, the crowds gathered again. Then "one of the synagogue rulers comes, Jairus by name." A synagogue ruler was the man in charge of the local synagogue. He arranged the services and chose who would read and teach. He was an important man in town. And many religious leaders were already against Jesus.

But Jairus fell at Jesus' feet. "My little daughter is at the point of death." When your child is dying, you don't care what the other leaders think. He had faith that if Jesus would come and lay His hands on her, she would live.

Jesus went with him. The crowd went too, pressing in on every side. Every minute counted.

5:25-26 *And a certain woman, being with a flow of blood twelve years, and having suffered much under many physicians, and having spent all that she had, and having benefited nothing, but rather having come to the worse,*

Then Mark stops the story. "A certain woman, being with a flow of blood twelve years." She had a bleeding condition that would not stop. Under the Law of Moses this made her unclean (Leviticus 15:25-27). Anyone she touched became unclean. She could not go to the temple or join in worship. For twelve years she had been shut out.

She "suffered much under many physicians," spent everything she had, and only got worse. Mark tells it plainly. Luke, who was a doctor, puts it more gently (Luke 8:43). She was sick, broke, alone, and out of hope. Have you ever reached the end of every human answer? That is often when we finally reach for Jesus.

5:27-29 *having heard about Jesus, having come in the crowd behind, touched His garment. For she was saying, "If I touch even His garments, I will be saved." And immediately the fountain of her blood was dried up, and she knew in the body that she has been healed of the affliction.*

She had heard about Jesus. She came up behind Him in the crowd and touched His garment. She did not want anyone to see. She was unclean, and by the Law she should not have been in that crowd at all. "If I touch even His garments, I will be saved." The word saved here means made well, rescued.

"Immediately the fountain of her blood was dried up." Twelve years of sickness ended in one moment. She could feel it in her body. She knew she was healed.

5:30-32 *And immediately Jesus, having known in Himself that power had gone forth out of Him, having turned around in the crowd, was saying, "Who touched My garments?" And His disciples were saying to Him, "You see the crowd pressing in on You, and You say, 'Who touched Me?'" And He was looking around to see her who had done this.*

"Immediately Jesus, having known in Himself that power had gone forth out of Him." Jesus stopped. "Who touched My garments?"

The disciples thought this was a silly question. "You see the crowd pressing in on You." People were bumping into Him from every side. But Jesus knew the difference between the crowd pressing against Him and one person reaching out to Him in faith. Many people are near Jesus. Fewer reach out and touch Him by faith.

"He was looking around to see her who had done this." He would not let her slip away.

5:33-34 *And the woman, having been afraid and trembling, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell down before Him and told Him all the truth. And He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has saved you; go in peace, and be healthy from your affliction."*

Why did Jesus make her come forward? Not to embarrass her. She came "afraid and trembling," fell at His feet, and told Him the whole truth. I believe Jesus wanted her to have more than a healed body. He wanted her to have a relationship with Him. He wanted her to know that her healing was not stolen, and He wanted the whole town to know she was clean.

"Daughter, your faith has saved you; go in peace, and be healthy from your affliction." She is the only person in the Gospels whom Jesus speaks to as "Daughter" (Matthew and Luke tell the same event). For twelve years no one had touched her. Now the Son of God calls her family. She came for healing and left with peace, and with a Father.

Notice too that her faith did not heal her. Jesus did. Her faith was the hand that reached out to Him. A weak, trembling faith in a strong Savior is enough.

5:35-36 *While He was still speaking, they come from the synagogue ruler, saying, "Your daughter died; why do you still trouble the Teacher?" And Jesus, immediately having heard the word being spoken, says to the synagogue ruler, "Do not fear; only believe."*

While Jesus was still speaking to the woman, messengers came from Jairus' house. "Your daughter died; why do you still trouble the Teacher?" Imagine how Jairus felt. While Jesus stopped for the woman, his daughter died. The delay must have felt like it cost him everything.

But Jesus heard the message and spoke to Jairus right away. "Do not fear; only believe." Jesus did not say, don't be sad. He said, don't let fear take over, keep trusting Me. Jairus had believed Jesus could heal a sick girl. Now he had to believe Jesus could raise a dead one.

Jesus is never late. Sometimes His delays are part of a greater plan. Lazarus' sisters learned the same thing (John 11:6, 21-27).

5:37-40 *And He did not allow anyone to follow with Him except Peter and James and John the brother of James. And He comes to the house of the synagogue ruler, and He sees a commotion, and* ***people*** *weeping and wailing much. And having entered, He says to them, "Why are you making a commotion and weeping? The child did not die, but is sleeping." And they were laughing at Him. But He, having put* ***them*** *all out, takes along the father of the child and the mother and those with Him, and enters in where the child was lying.*

Jesus took only Peter, James and John. These three would also see the transfiguration (9:2) and be near Him in Gethsemane (14:33).

At the house there was "a commotion, and people weeping and wailing much." In that culture, when someone died, families hired professional mourners to wail and play flutes (Matthew 9:23). The noise had already started.

Jesus said, "The child did not die, but is sleeping." She really was dead. Everyone there knew it, and so did Jesus. He meant that, for Him, death is like sleep. Someone who is asleep will wake up. That is how the New Testament talks about believers who have died (1 Thessalonians 4:13-14).

"They were laughing at Him." The mourners went from weeping to mocking in a moment. Jesus put them all out. He took only the girl's parents and His three disciples into the room. Unbelief had no place there.

5:41-42 *And having taken hold of the hand of the child, He says to her, "Talitha koumi," which is, being translated, "Little girl, I say to you, arise." And immediately the little girl arose and was walking; for she was twelve years* ***old****. And they were amazed with great amazement.*

Jesus "having taken hold of the hand of the child." Under the Law, touching a dead body made a person unclean (Numbers 19:11). Once again Jesus touched what was unclean, and instead of being made unclean, He gave life.

"Talitha koumi." Mark keeps the very words Jesus spoke in Aramaic, the everyday language of the Jews in Israel at that time, and then translates them for his readers: "Little girl, I say to you, arise."

Peter heard those words in that room, and I believe he never forgot them. They were gentle words, the kind a parent might say to wake a child in the morning.

"Immediately the little girl arose and was walking." She was twelve years old. The woman had been sick for twelve years, and this girl had lived for twelve years. Both were given new life on the same day. "They were amazed with great amazement."

5:43 *And He instructed them strictly that no one should know this, and He said* ***that something*** *should be given to her to eat.*

Jesus gave two instructions. First, He told them strictly that no one should know about this. He did not want a crowd that came for miracles to keep Him from His real work. Second, He told them to give her something to eat. That small detail shows the care of Jesus. He had just raised her from the dead, and He thought about her being hungry. The Lord of life cares about the small things in our lives too.

And this is a picture of what is coming. One day Jesus will speak, and the dead in Christ will rise (1 Thessalonians 4:16; John 5:28-29). Death does not have the last word. Jesus does.

Chapter 5 Summary

On the east side of the lake, Jesus meets a man possessed by a legion of demons, a man no chain could hold. Jesus casts the demons out, allows them to enter a herd of about two thousand pigs, which rush into the sea and drown. The man is left clothed and in his right mind, but the townspeople beg Jesus to leave. Jesus sends the man home to tell what the Lord has done, and he preaches it through the Decapolis. Back across the lake, Jairus, a synagogue ruler, begs Jesus to heal his dying daughter. On the way, a woman with a twelve-year flow of blood touches His garment and is healed, and Jesus calls her "Daughter" and sends her away in peace. Word comes that Jairus' daughter has died, but Jesus tells him not to fear, only believe. He takes the girl by the hand, says "Talitha koumi," and raises her from the dead.

Chapter 5 Study Questions

1. Describe the man's life among the tombs. What had people tried to do to help him? (5:2-5)

2. What did the demons know about Jesus, and what did they fear? (5:7)

3. How did the townspeople respond when they saw the man healed, and why do you think they reacted that way? (5:15-17)

4. Why do you think Jesus told the healed man to go home instead of coming with Him? (5:18-20)

5. What had the woman with the flow of blood already tried before she came to Jesus? (5:25-26)

6. Why do you think Jesus stopped to find the woman who touched Him? (5:30-34)

7. What did Jesus say to Jairus when news came that his daughter had died? (5:36)

8. What does it mean that Jesus said the girl was sleeping, and how does that help us think about believers who have died? (5:39)

9. The healed man was told, "Go to your house, to your own people." Who are your own people, and what could you tell them about what the Lord has done for you? (5:19)

10. Is there an area of your life where you have reached the end of every human answer? What would it look like to reach out to Jesus in faith? (5:25-28)

Chapter 6: Rejected at Home, Sent Out, and Five Thousand Fed

Scripture

6:1-13 And He went out from there and came into His hometown, and His disciples follow Him. And when ***the*** Sabbath came, He began to teach in the synagogue; and many hearing were astonished, saying, "From where ***are*** these things to this ***man***? And what ***is*** the wisdom that has been given to Him, that even such miracles are done through His hands? Is this not the carpenter, the son of Mary, and brother of James and Joses and Jude and Simon? And are His sisters not here with us?" And they were caused to stumble in Him. And Jesus was saying to them, "A prophet is not without honor except in his hometown, and among his relatives, and in his house." And He was not able to do any miracle there, except that, having laid ***His*** hands on a few sick ***people***, He healed ***them***. And He was marveling because of their unbelief. And He was going around the villages in a circle, teaching. And He summons the twelve, and He began to send them out two ***by*** two, and He was giving them authority over the unclean spirits. And He instructed them that they should take nothing for the road except a staff only: no bag, no bread, no money in the belt, but having sandals tied on, and not to put on two tunics. And He was saying to them, "Wherever you enter into a house, remain there until you go out from there. And as many as do not receive you nor hear you, departing from there, shake off the dust that ***is*** under your feet for a testimony to them. Truly I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Sodom or Gomorrah in ***the*** day of judgment than for that city." And having gone out, they were preaching that ***people*** should repent. And they were casting out many demons, and were anointing with oil many sick ***people***, and were healing ***them***.

6:14-29 And King Herod heard ***of it***, for His name had become known; and he was saying, "John the Baptizer was raised from ***the*** dead, and because of this the powers are at work in him." Others were saying, "He is Elijah"; and others were saying, "He is a prophet, or like one of the prophets." But Herod, having heard, said, "Whom I beheaded, John, this is he; he himself was raised from ***the*** dead!" For Herod himself, having sent, seized John and bound him in the prison because of Herodias, the wife of Philip his brother, because he had married her. For John was saying to Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have the wife of your brother." And Herodias was holding ***it*** against him and was wanting to kill him, and she was not able; for Herod was afraid of John, knowing him ***to be*** a righteous and holy man, and he was keeping him safe. And having heard him, he was doing many things, and he was hearing him gladly. And an opportune day having come, when Herod on his birthday was making a dinner for his great men and the commanders of thousands and the leading ***men*** of Galilee, and when the daughter of Herodias herself had entered and danced and pleased Herod and those reclining with ***him***, the king said to the girl, "Ask me whatever you wish, and I will give ***it*** to you." And he swore to her, "Whatever you ask me, I will give you, up to half of my kingdom." And having gone out, she said to her mother, "What shall I ask?" And she said, "The head of John the Baptist." And having entered immediately with haste to the king, she asked, saying, "I desire that you give me at once on a platter the head of John the Baptist." And the king, having become very sorrowful, because of the oaths and those reclining with ***him***, was not willing to refuse her. And immediately the king, having sent an

executioner, commanded his head to be brought. And having gone, he beheaded him in the prison, and brought his head on a platter and gave it to the girl, and the girl gave it to her mother. And having heard, his disciples came and took up his corpse and laid it in a tomb.

6:30-44 And the apostles are gathered together to Jesus, and they reported to Him all things, both what they had done and what they had taught. And He said to them, "Come, you yourselves, privately into a deserted place and rest a little." For those coming and those going were many, and they were not even having opportunity to eat. And they went away in the boat into a deserted place privately. And the crowds saw them going, and many recognized Him, and on foot from all the cities they ran together there, and went ahead of them, and came together to Him. And having gone out, Jesus saw a great crowd, and He was moved with compassion toward them, because they were like sheep not having a shepherd; and He began to teach them many things. And the hour having already become late, His disciples, having come to Him, say, "The place is deserted, and the hour ***is*** already late. Dismiss them, so that, having gone into the surrounding fields and villages, they may buy loaves for themselves; for they do not have what they may eat." But answering, He said to them, "You give them ***something*** to eat." And they say to Him, "Having gone, shall we buy two hundred denarii ***worth*** of loaves and give them to eat?" And He says to them, "How many loaves do you have? Go and see." And having found out, they say, "Five, and two fish." And He commanded them to make all recline company ***by*** company on the green grass. And they reclined group ***by*** group, by hundreds and by fifties. And having taken the five loaves and the two fish, having looked up to heaven, He blessed, and broke the loaves, and was giving ***them*** to His disciples so that they might set ***them*** before them; and the two fish He divided among all. And all ate and were satisfied. And they took up twelve baskets full of broken pieces, and of the fish. And those having eaten the loaves were about five thousand men.

6:45-56 And immediately He compelled His disciples to get into the boat and to go ahead to the other side, to Bethsaida, until He Himself should dismiss the crowd. And having taken leave of them, He departed into the mountain to pray. And evening having come, the boat was in ***the*** middle of the sea, and He Himself alone on the land. And He saw them straining in the rowing, for the wind was contrary to them; and about ***the*** fourth watch of the night He comes to them, walking on the sea, and He was wanting to pass by them. But having seen Him walking on the sea, they thought ***it*** to be a ghost, and cried out; for all saw Him and were troubled. And immediately He spoke with them, and says to them, "Take courage; I am ***He***; do not fear." And He went up to them into the boat, and the wind ceased. And they were exceedingly amazed in themselves beyond measure, and were marveling. For they did not understand about the loaves, for their heart was hardened. And having crossed over, they came onto the land of Gennesaret and anchored. And when they had come out of the boat, immediately, having recognized Him, having run around all that surrounding region, they began to carry around on the mats those who were ill, wherever they were hearing that He is there. And wherever He was entering, into villages or cities or fields, they were laying the ailing in the marketplaces, and were begging Him that they might touch even the fringe of His garment; and as many as were touching Him were being saved.

Chapter 6 Preview

Chapter 6 begins with a sad visit home. The people of Nazareth have heard about Jesus' miracles, but they cannot get past the fact that they knew Him as the local carpenter. Their unbelief amazes Him. Then Jesus sends out the twelve, two by two, to preach repentance, cast out demons, and heal the sick. While they are gone, Mark tells us a dark story from the past: how King Herod had John the Baptist beheaded at a birthday party to keep a foolish promise.

When the twelve come back, Jesus tries to take them away to rest, but the crowds get there first. Moved with compassion, He teaches them and then feeds five thousand men with five loaves and two fish. That night He walks on the sea to His disciples, who are rowing against the wind, and tells them, "Take courage; I am He; do not fear." The chapter ends with crowds bringing their sick to Him everywhere He goes, and all who touch Him are healed.

Chapter 6 Study

6:1-2 *And He went out from there and came into His hometown, and His disciples follow Him. And when **the** Sabbath came, He began to teach in the synagogue; and many hearing were astonished, saying, "From where **are** these things to this **man**? And what **is** the wisdom that has been given to Him, that even such miracles are done through His hands?*

Jesus went back to "His hometown," Nazareth, where He had grown up. On the Sabbath He taught in the synagogue He had likely attended all His life. The people were astonished. "From where are these things to this man?" They had heard the stories. They could not deny the wisdom or the miracles. But they could not figure out where they came from.

Luke 4:16-30 tells of a visit to Nazareth where the people tried to throw Jesus off a cliff. Bible teachers are not agreed on whether Luke tells the same visit or an earlier one. Either way, Nazareth did not welcome Him.

6:3 *Is this not the carpenter, the son of Mary, and brother of James and Joses and Jude and Simon? And are His sisters not here with us?" And they were caused to stumble in Him.*

"Is this not the carpenter, the son of Mary?" The word for carpenter means a builder or craftsman who worked with wood and sometimes stone. Jesus had worked with His hands for years. They had seen Him build their tables and doors. How could a common workman be a prophet?

Calling a man the son of his mother, instead of his father, was unusual in that culture. It may have been an insult, a hint that people still whispered about His birth. Or it may simply mean Joseph had died by this time. Mark does not say.

He names four brothers and mentions sisters. As we saw in chapter 3, these were the sons and daughters of Joseph and Mary, born after Jesus. James and Jude would later believe in Him and write the New Testament letters that bear their names.

"They were caused to stumble in Him." The word comes from skandalon, the trap or stumbling block. They tripped over His ordinary life. They thought they knew Him, so they missed Him. That can happen to people who grew up around church too.

6:4 *And Jesus was saying to them, "A prophet is not without honor except in his hometown, and among his relatives, and in his house."*

"A prophet is not without honor except in his hometown, and among his relatives, and in his house." This was a well-known saying, and Jesus applied it to Himself. The people closest to us often find it hardest to believe God is working through us. They remember us as kids.

If you have tried to share Jesus with your family and been brushed off, you know how this feels. Jesus felt it too. Keep living it out in front of them. His own brothers came around in the end.

6:5-6 *And He was not able to do any miracle there, except that, having laid **His** hands on a few sick **people**, He healed **them**. And He was marveling because of their unbelief. And He was going around the villages in a circle, teaching.*

"He was not able to do any miracle there, except that, having laid His hands on a few sick people, He healed them." This does not mean Jesus lost His power. He still healed some. It means He would not force His works on people who refused to believe. His miracles were meant to point people to God, and Nazareth had already decided not to look.

"He was marveling because of their unbelief." Only twice do the Gospels say Jesus marveled: here, at the unbelief of His own people, and at the great faith of a Roman centurion (Matthew 8:10; Luke 7:9). One was a Gentile soldier, the other His hometown. Which one would Jesus marvel at in you?

So He went on to other villages, teaching. Rejection did not stop Him.

6:7 *And He summons the twelve, and He began to send them out two **by** two, and He was giving them authority over the unclean spirits.*

Now Jesus "summons the twelve, and He began to send them out two by two." Back in 3:14 He chose them to be with Him and to be sent out. They had been with Him. Now it was time to go.

Why two by two? The Law required two witnesses to confirm a matter (Deuteronomy 19:15). And two can help each other, encourage each other, and pray together (Ecclesiastes 4:9-10). Jesus never meant for His people to serve alone. He gave them "authority over the unclean spirits." The power was His, but He shared it with them for the work.

6:8-9 *And He instructed them that they should take nothing for the road except a staff only: no bag, no bread, no money in the belt, but having sandals tied on, and not to put on two tunics.*

They were to travel light: a staff and sandals, but no bread, no bag, and "no money in the belt." Men often carried their coins in a fold of their belt. They were not to take an extra tunic, the long shirt worn under the cloak.

Why so little? Jesus was teaching them to depend on God, who would provide through the people who welcomed them. This was a short trip with a special purpose, to the towns of Galilee. Later, before the cross, Jesus gave different instructions for a different time (Luke 22:35-36). The lesson for us is the same: trust God to supply what you need for the work He gives you.

6:10-11 *And He was saying to them, "Wherever you enter into a house, remain there until you go out from there. And as many as do not receive you nor hear you, departing from there, shake off the dust that **is** under your feet for a testimony to them. Truly I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Sodom or Gomorrah in **the** day of judgment than for that city."*

They were to stay in one house in each town, not moving around looking for a better offer. If a town refused them, they were to "shake off the dust that is under your feet for a testimony to them." Jews coming back into Israel from Gentile lands sometimes shook off the dust so they would not bring anything unclean home. Doing this to a Jewish town was a strong warning. It meant: you have refused God's message, and the responsibility is now yours.

Jesus said it would be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah on the day of judgment than for such a town. Sodom was wicked, but it never heard the Son of God's messengers. The more light we are given, the more we are held responsible for.

6:12-13 *And having gone out, they were preaching that **people** should repent. And they were casting out many demons, and were anointing with oil many sick **people**, and were healing **them**.*

They went and did what Jesus did. They "were preaching that people should repent." That was the heart of their message, the same as John's and the same as Jesus' (1:4, 15). They cast out demons and healed many.

They anointed the sick with oil. In that day oil was used as medicine (Luke 10:34), and it was also a sign of God's touch and blessing. James tells the elders of the church to anoint the sick with oil and pray over them (James 5:14). The healing came from God, not the oil.

6:14-16 *And King Herod heard **of it**, for His name had become known; and he was saying, "John the Baptizer was raised from **the** dead, and because of this the powers are at work in him." Others were saying, "He is Elijah"; and others were saying, "He is a prophet, or like one of the prophets." But Herod, having heard, said, "Whom I beheaded, John, this is he; he himself was raised from **the** dead!"*

News of Jesus reached "King Herod." This was Herod Antipas, a son of Herod the Great, who ruled Galilee and Perea for Rome. His real title was tetrarch, a ruler of part of a kingdom, but people called him king.

People had different ideas about Jesus. Some said He was John the Baptist raised from the dead. Some said Elijah. Some said a prophet. Herod was sure: "Whom I beheaded, John, this is he." A guilty conscience will not stay quiet. Herod had killed John, and now he was afraid John had come back. Mark then goes back in time to tell us what happened.

6:17-18 *For Herod himself, having sent, seized John and bound him in the prison because of Herodias, the wife of Philip his brother, because he had married her. For John was saying to Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have the wife of your brother."*

Herod had arrested John "because of Herodias, the wife of Philip his brother." Herod had divorced his own wife and married Herodias, who had been married to his half-brother. The Law forbade a man from marrying his brother's wife while the brother was alive (Leviticus 18:16; 20:21).

John told Herod to his face, "It is not lawful for you to have the wife of your brother." That took courage. John did not soften the truth because Herod was powerful. He called sin what it was, and it cost him his freedom.

Old Testament links: Leviticus 18:16 (alluded to); Leviticus 20:21 (alluded to)

6:19-20 *And Herodias was holding **it** against him and was wanting to kill him, and she was not able; for Herod was afraid of John, knowing him **to be** a righteous and holy man, and he was keeping him safe. And having heard him, he was doing many things, and he was hearing him gladly.*

Herodias hated John and wanted him dead, but Herod would not allow it. "Herod was afraid of John, knowing him to be a righteous and holy man." He protected John and even listened to him. "He was hearing him gladly." But he was also "doing many things," or as some copies put it, he was greatly troubled.

Herod is a sad picture of many people. He liked to hear a good preacher. He respected John. He was moved by the message. But he would not give up his sin. Liking the truth is not the same as obeying it.

6:21-23 *And an opportune day having come, when Herod on his birthday was making a dinner for his great men and the commanders of thousands and the leading **men** of Galilee, and when the daughter of Herodias herself had entered and danced and pleased Herod and those reclining with **him**, the king said to the girl, "Ask me whatever you wish, and I will give **it** to you." And he swore to her, "Whatever you ask me, I will give you, up to half of my kingdom."*

Then Herodias found her chance. Herod threw a big birthday dinner for the important men of Galilee: officials, army commanders, and leading citizens. The daughter of Herodias came in and danced, and the dance "pleased Herod and those reclining with him." Most likely it was the kind of dance no respectable mother would let her daughter do in front of a room full of drunken men. Herodias knew what she was doing.

Herod, showing off, made a rash promise. "Whatever you ask me, I will give you, up to half of my kingdom." It was the kind of thing a proud man says in front of his guests. He did not really have a kingdom to give. Rome did. But he wanted to look big.

Old Testament links: Esther 5:3 (alluded to)

6:24-26 *And having gone out, she said to her mother, "What shall I ask?" And she said, "The head of John the Baptist." And having entered immediately with haste to the king, she asked, saying, "I desire that you give me at once on a platter the head of John the Baptist." And the king, having become very sorrowful, because of the oaths and those reclining with* ***him****, was not willing to refuse her.*

The girl ran to her mother. "What shall I ask?" Herodias did not hesitate. "The head of John the Baptist." The girl went back "immediately with haste" and asked for it "at once on a platter," like a dish at the dinner.

"The king, having become very sorrowful." Herod did not want to do it. But "because of the oaths and those reclining with him," he would not say no. He was more afraid of looking weak in front of his guests than of killing a holy man. Pride and fear of people have led many to do things they knew were wrong. A foolish promise is better broken than kept when keeping it means sin.

6:27-29 *And immediately the king, having sent an executioner, commanded his head to be brought. And having gone, he beheaded him in the prison, and brought his head on a platter and gave it to the girl, and the girl gave it to her mother. And having heard, his disciples came and took up his corpse and laid it in a tomb.*

Herod sent an executioner, and John was beheaded in the prison. His head was brought on a platter, given to the girl, and she gave it to her mother. It is one of the ugliest scenes in the Bible.

John's disciples came, took his body, and buried it. The greatest prophet of his day (Matthew 11:11) died alone in a prison, because of a dance and a drunken promise. From the world's point of view, he lost. From heaven's point of view, he finished his work. He prepared the way for the Lord.

Mark tells this story here for a reason. John was the forerunner. What happened to John points to what will happen to Jesus. Faithful servants of God often suffer in this world. Jesus told us so. But no one who loses his life for Christ truly loses it (8:35).

6:30-32 *And the apostles are gathered together to Jesus, and they reported to Him all things, both what they had done and what they had taught. And He said to them, "Come, you yourselves, privately into a deserted place and rest a little." For those coming and those going were many, and they were not even having opportunity to eat. And they went away in the boat into a deserted place privately.*

"The apostles are gathered together to Jesus." This is the only time Mark calls them apostles, which means sent ones. They had just come back from being sent. They told Jesus everything they had done and taught.

Jesus saw that they were worn out. "Come, you yourselves, privately into a deserted place and rest a little." There were so many people coming and going that they did not even have time to eat. Jesus cares about our rest. Serving God does not mean running ourselves into the ground. Even the Servant of the Lord took His disciples away to rest. If you are tired from serving, it is not unspiritual to stop and rest with Jesus.

6:33-34 *And the crowds saw them going, and many recognized Him, and on foot from all the cities they ran together there, and went ahead of them, and came together to Him. And having gone out, Jesus saw a great crowd, and He was moved with compassion toward them, because they were like sheep not having a shepherd; and He began to teach them many things.*

But the crowds saw where they were going, ran around the shore on foot, and got there first. Their quiet day was gone. How would you feel?

Jesus "was moved with compassion toward them, because they were like sheep not having a shepherd." Sheep without a shepherd are lost, hungry and helpless. The religious leaders were supposed to shepherd Israel, and they had failed (Ezekiel 34:2-6). Jesus is the Good Shepherd (John 10:11). His first response to the crowd was not frustration. It was compassion. "He began to teach them many things." What they needed most was the truth.

Old Testament links: Numbers 27:17 (alluded to)

6:35-38 *And the hour having already become late, His disciples, having come to Him, say, "The place is deserted, and the hour **is** already late. Dismiss them, so that, having gone into the surrounding fields and villages, they may buy loaves for themselves; for they do not have what they may eat." But answering, He said to them, "You give them **something** to eat." And they say to Him, "Having gone, shall we buy two hundred denarii **worth** of loaves and give them to eat?" And He says to them, "How many loaves do you have? Go and see." And having found out, they say, "Five, and two fish."*

As evening came, the disciples had a practical idea. Send them away so they can buy food. It sounds sensible. But Jesus said, "You give them something to eat."

They were stunned. "Shall we buy two hundred denarii worth of loaves?" A denarius was a Roman silver coin, about a day's pay for a working man. Two hundred denarii was most of a year's wages. They did not have it, and even if they did, there was no store out there.

Jesus asked a simple question. "How many loaves do you have? Go and see." He always starts with what we have. They came back: "Five, and two fish." John tells us they came from a boy's lunch (John 6:9). It was not much. It was enough in His hands.

6:39-40 *And He commanded them to make all recline company **by** company on the green grass. And they reclined group **by** group, by hundreds and by fifties.*

Jesus had them sit "company by company on the green grass." Mark, with Peter's eye for detail, mentions that the grass was green. That means spring, near Passover (John 6:4). The groups of hundreds and fifties look like the way Moses organized Israel in the wilderness (Exodus 18:21). Here was a greater than Moses, about to feed His people in the wilderness.

The groups also made the work orderly. Jesus did not create chaos. He worked in order.

6:41-42 *And having taken the five loaves and the two fish, having looked up to heaven, He blessed, and broke the loaves, and was giving* ***them*** *to His disciples so that they might set* ***them*** *before them; and the two fish He divided among all. And all ate and were satisfied.*

"Having looked up to heaven, He blessed, and broke the loaves." Jesus gave thanks to the Father first. Then He broke the bread and kept giving it to the disciples to pass out. The miracle happened in His hands as He broke and gave. The disciples carried it to the people.

That is still how Jesus works. He provides, and His people carry it to others. Mark says it simply: "all ate and were satisfied." No one got a crumb or a taste. They were full.

6:43-44 *And they took up twelve baskets full of broken pieces, and of the fish. And those having eaten the loaves were about five thousand men.*

There were "twelve baskets full of broken pieces" left over, more than they started with. Jesus gives more than enough.

"About five thousand men." The word used means men, not people. With women and children (Matthew 14:21), the crowd could have been far larger. This is the only miracle, besides the resurrection, recorded in all four Gospels (Matthew 14:13-21; Luke 9:10-17; John 6:1-14). And Jesus would later teach that He Himself is the Bread of Life (John 6:35). He feeds more than our bodies.

6:45-46 *And immediately He compelled His disciples to get into the boat and to go ahead to the other side, to Bethsaida, until He Himself should dismiss the crowd. And having taken leave of them, He departed into the mountain to pray.*

Right away Jesus "compelled His disciples to get into the boat." Why the hurry? John tells us the crowd wanted to take Him by force and make Him king (John 6:15). Jesus would not be that kind of king, and He did not want His disciples caught up in the excitement. So He sent them off and dismissed the crowd Himself.

Then He went up the mountain to pray. After a day of great success, He went to be alone with the Father. When things go well, we often forget to pray. Jesus did not.

6:47-48 *And evening having come, the boat was in* ***the*** *middle of the sea, and He Himself alone on the land. And He saw them straining in the rowing, for the wind was contrary to them; and about* ***the*** *fourth watch of the night He comes to them, walking on the sea, and He was wanting to pass by them.*

That night the boat was in the middle of the lake, and Jesus was alone on land. "He saw them straining in the rowing, for the wind was contrary to them." He was watching them from the mountain. They could not see Him, but He could see them.

"About the fourth watch of the night." The Romans divided the night into four watches. The fourth watch was from about 3 to 6 in the morning. They had been fighting that wind for hours. Then He came, "walking on the sea."

"He was wanting to pass by them." That sounds odd. But in the Old Testament, when God showed Himself to Moses and to Elijah, Scripture says He passed by them (Exodus 33:19-22; 1 Kings 19:11). Jesus was showing Himself to His disciples the way God shows His glory. Job says God alone walks on the waves of the sea (Job 9:8).

Old Testament links: Job 9:8 (alluded to)

6:49-50 *But having seen Him walking on the sea, they thought **it** to be a ghost, and cried out; for all saw Him and were troubled. And immediately He spoke with them, and says to them, "Take courage; I am **He**; do not fear."*

They thought He was a ghost and screamed. All of them saw Him, and all of them were terrified. Then "immediately He spoke with them." "Take courage; I am He; do not fear."

"I am He" is ego eimi in Greek, which means I am. It is how God named Himself to Moses at the burning bush (Exodus 3:14). Jesus was not only saying, it's Me. He was saying more than they could understand that night. The God who calls Himself I AM was standing on the water in front of them.

Take courage. Do not fear. Jesus says that to us too, in the middle of the night, when the wind is against us.

6:51-52 *And He went up to them into the boat, and the wind ceased. And they were exceedingly amazed in themselves beyond measure, and were marveling. For they did not understand about the loaves, for their heart was hardened.*

Jesus got into the boat, "and the wind ceased." The disciples were "exceedingly amazed in themselves beyond measure."

Then Mark gives a hard line: "For they did not understand about the loaves, for their heart was hardened." The feeding of the five thousand should have taught them who Jesus is. The One who could make bread out of five loaves could surely handle a storm. But they had not put it together. Their hearts were dull and slow.

Mark is honest about the disciples, and Peter must have been honest about himself as he preached. Even after miracles, their faith was slow. That gives me hope. Jesus did not give up on them, and He does not give up on us.

6:53-56 *And having crossed over, they came onto the land of Gennesaret and anchored. And when they had come out of the boat, immediately, having recognized Him, having run around all that surrounding region, they began to carry around on the mats those who were ill, wherever they were hearing that He is there. And wherever He was entering, into villages or cities or fields, they were laying the ailing in the marketplaces, and were begging Him that they might touch even the fringe of His garment; and as many as were touching Him were being saved.*

They landed at Gennesaret, a fertile plain on the northwest shore of the lake. As soon as they stepped out, people recognized Jesus. They ran all over the region, carrying the sick on mats to wherever He was. Villages, cities, fields, marketplaces: everywhere He went, they laid out the sick.

They begged to touch "even the fringe of His garment." The fringe was the tassel that faithful Jews wore on the corners of their garments to remind them of God's commands (Numbers 15:38-39). They had heard about the woman who touched His garment (5:27-29). "As many as were touching Him were being saved."

Many came for healing. How many came for Him? We do not know. But the door was open to all of them. It still is.

Chapter 6 Summary

Jesus returns to Nazareth, but the people cannot get past knowing Him as the carpenter, and He marvels at their unbelief. He sends the twelve out two by two with authority over unclean spirits, and they preach repentance, cast out demons and heal the sick. Mark tells how Herod had imprisoned John the Baptist for condemning his marriage to Herodias, and how, at his birthday feast, Herod had John beheaded to keep a rash oath. When the apostles return, Jesus takes them away to rest, but a great crowd follows. Moved with compassion, Jesus teaches them and feeds five thousand men with five loaves and two fish, with twelve baskets left over. That night He walks on the sea to His disciples, who are struggling against the wind, and tells them to take courage. At Gennesaret, crowds bring their sick to Him, and all who touch even the fringe of His garment are healed.

Chapter 6 Study Questions

1. Why did the people of Nazareth stumble over Jesus? (6:2-3)

2. Why do you think Jesus did few miracles in Nazareth? (6:5-6)

3. What did Jesus tell the twelve to take, and what not to take, on their journey? (6:8-9)

4. Why was Herod afraid of John, and why did he still have him killed? (6:20, 26)

5. Why did Jesus take His disciples to a deserted place? (6:31)

6. What did Jesus see in the crowd that moved Him with compassion? (6:34)

7. What did Jesus ask the disciples to do when they wanted to send the crowd away? (6:37-38)

8. What did the disciples fail to understand about the loaves? (6:52)

9. Herod liked to hear John but would not give up his sin. Is there something God has spoken to you about that you have enjoyed hearing but not obeyed? (6:20)

10. Jesus started with five loaves and two fish. What small thing do you have that you could put in His hands this week? (6:38-41)

Chapter 7: Clean Hearts and Opened Ears

Scripture

7:1-13 And the Pharisees and some of the scribes, having come from Jerusalem, are gathered together to Him. And having seen some of His disciples eating bread with defiled hands, that is, unwashed, they found fault. For the Pharisees and all the Jews, unless they wash the hands with the fist, do not eat, holding the tradition of the elders; and ***coming*** from ***the*** marketplace, unless they wash ***themselves***, they do not eat; and there are many other things which they received to hold: washings of cups and pitchers and copper vessels and couches. Then the Pharisees and the scribes question Him, "Why do Your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat the bread with unwashed hands?" And He, answering, said to them, "Well did Isaiah prophesy concerning you hypocrites, as it has been written: 'This people honors Me with the lips, but their heart is far away from Me. And in vain they worship Me, teaching ***as*** teachings the precepts of men.' For having left the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men, washings of pitchers and cups; and many other such similar things you do." And He was saying to them, "Well do you set aside the commandment of God, so that you may keep your tradition. For Moses said, 'Honor your father and your mother'; and, 'The ***one*** speaking evil of father or mother, let him die by death.' But you say, 'If a man says to the father or to the mother, "Corban," that is, a gift, "***is*** whatever you might be profited from me,"' and you no longer permit him to do anything for his father or for his mother, making void the word of God by your tradition which you handed down; and many such similar things you do."

7:14-23 And having called to ***Him*** all the crowd, He was saying to them, "Hear Me, all ***of you***, and understand: There is nothing outside the man entering into him that is able to defile him; but the ***things*** going out from him, those are the ***things*** defiling the man. If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear." And when He entered into a house from the crowd, His disciples were asking Him concerning the parable. And He says to them, "Are you yourselves also thus without understanding? Do you not perceive that everything from outside entering into the man is not able to defile him, because it does not enter into his heart but into the belly, and goes out into the latrine, cleansing all the foods?" And He was saying, "That which goes out of the man, that defiles the man. For from within, out of the heart of men, go out the evil thoughts, adulteries, sexual immoralities, murders, thefts, covetings, wickednesses, deceit, sensuality, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. All these evil ***things*** go out from within and defile the man."

7:24-37 And having risen up from there, He went away into the borders of Tyre and Sidon. And having entered into the house, He was wanting no one to know ***it***, and He was not able to be hidden. For a woman, having heard about Him, whose little daughter had an unclean spirit, having come, fell at His feet. Now the woman was a Greek, a Syrophoenician by race; and she was asking Him that He would cast the demon out of her daughter. But Jesus said to her, "Let the children first be satisfied; for it is not good to take the bread of the children and to cast ***it*** to the little dogs." But she answered and says to Him, "Yes, Lord; for even the little dogs under the table eat from the crumbs of the little children." And He said to her, "Because of this word, go; the demon has gone out of your daughter." And having gone away to her house, she found the demon having gone out, and the daughter having been laid on the bed. And again, having gone out from

the region of Tyre and Sidon, He came to the Sea of Galilee, through the midst of the region of Decapolis. And they bring to Him a deaf man who spoke with difficulty, and they implore Him that He would lay the hand on him. And having taken him away from the crowd privately, He put His fingers into his ears, and having spit, He touched his tongue; and having looked up to heaven, He sighed deeply, and He says to him, "Ephphatha," that is, "Be opened." And immediately his ears were opened, and the bond of his tongue was loosed, and he was speaking correctly. And He ordered them that they should tell no one; but as much as He Himself was ordering them, so much the more exceedingly they were proclaiming ***it***. And they were astonished beyond measure, saying, "He has done all things well; He makes both the deaf to hear and the mute to speak."

Chapter 7 Preview

Religious leaders come all the way from Jerusalem to check on Jesus, and they find something to complain about: His disciples eat without washing their hands the way tradition requires. Jesus answers by quoting Isaiah. These leaders honor God with their lips while their hearts are far from Him, and they have set aside God's commands to keep their own traditions. He then teaches the crowd one of the most important truths in the book. What makes a person unclean is not what goes into his mouth. It is what comes out of his heart.

Then Jesus travels north into Gentile country near Tyre and Sidon. A Greek woman begs Him to cast a demon out of her little daughter, and her humble, quick-witted faith wins her request. On His way back through the Decapolis, Jesus takes a deaf man aside, touches his ears and tongue, looks up to heaven and says, "Ephphatha," that is, "Be opened." The crowds say, "He has done all things well." The chapter moves from the hard hearts of the religious to the open hearts of outsiders.

Chapter 7 Study

7:1-2 *And the Pharisees and some of the scribes, having come from Jerusalem, are gathered together to Him. And having seen some of His disciples eating bread with defiled hands, that is, unwashed, they found fault.*

"The Pharisees and some of the scribes, having come from Jerusalem." This is the second group sent from Jerusalem to watch Jesus (3:22). The leaders in the capital were keeping an eye on Him.

They saw some of His disciples "eating bread with defiled hands, that is, unwashed." Mark explains the word defiled for his readers. This was not about dirt or germs. It was about being ritually unclean, unfit for God by the standards of their religious rules.

7:3-4 *For the Pharisees and all the Jews, unless they wash the hands with the fist, do not eat, holding the tradition of the elders; and* ***coming*** *from* ***the*** *marketplace, unless they wash* ***themselves****, they do not eat; and there are many other things which they received to hold: washings of cups and pitchers and copper vessels and couches.*

Mark stops to explain Jewish customs to his readers. This is one of the clearest signs that he was writing for Gentiles, most likely in Rome. A Jewish reader would not need any of this explained.

The Pharisees, and many Jews who followed them, would not eat without a ceremonial washing of their hands. The phrase "with the fist" is hard to translate. It may mean washing with a cupped hand, or rubbing one fist in the other palm, or washing up to the wrist. Whatever the exact motion, it was a ritual with set steps.

These rules were "the tradition of the elders." This was a large body of teaching passed down by word of mouth from earlier rabbis, meant to explain and protect the Law of Moses. Over time, these traditions were treated as if they were just as binding as the Law itself. The Law of Moses had washing rules for priests serving in the tabernacle (Exodus 30:17-21). The tradition had stretched them to every Jew at every meal, and to cups, pitchers, copper pots and even dining couches.

7:5 *Then the Pharisees and the scribes question Him, "Why do Your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat the bread with unwashed hands?"*

"Why do Your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders?" Notice the question. They did not ask why His disciples broke God's Law. They asked why they broke tradition. That is the key to the whole passage. The Pharisees could not tell the difference anymore between what God said and what men had added.

7:6-7 *And He, answering, said to them, "Well did Isaiah prophesy concerning you hypocrites, as it has been written: 'This people honors Me with the lips, but their heart is far away from Me. And in vain they worship Me, teaching **as** teachings the precepts of men.'*

Jesus did not answer their question. He went to the root. "Well did Isaiah prophesy concerning you hypocrites." A hypocrite was first a stage actor, someone who wore a mask and played a part. These men played the part of holy men.

Jesus quoted Isaiah 29:13. "This people honors Me with the lips, but their heart is far away from Me." Their words were right. Their hearts were not. And "in vain they worship Me, teaching as teachings the precepts of men." Worship that is built on man-made rules is empty. It may look holy, but God is not in it.

We need to ask ourselves the same hard question. Do I honor God with my lips while my heart is somewhere else? It is easy to sing the songs and say the prayers and keep our hearts far from Him.

Old Testament links: Isaiah 29:13 (quoted)

7:8-9 *For having left the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men, washings of pitchers and cups; and many other such similar things you do." And He was saying to them, "Well do you set aside the commandment of God, so that you may keep your tradition.*

"For having left the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men." They had not just added to God's word. They had let go of it. Then Jesus said it again, with a sharp edge: "Well do you set aside the commandment of God, so that you may keep your tradition." The word well here is biting. You are very good at it, He was saying.

Traditions are not bad in themselves. Many churches have good traditions. The danger comes when our traditions become more important to us than God's word, or when we use them to get around what God has said. Every tradition has to be tested by Scripture.

7:10-13 *For Moses said, 'Honor your father and your mother'; and, 'The **one** speaking evil of father or mother, let him die by death.' But you say, 'If a man says to the father or to the mother, "Corban," that is, a gift, "**is** whatever you might be profited from me,"' and you no longer permit him to do anything for his father or for his mother, making void the word of God by your tradition which you handed down; and many such similar things you do."*

Jesus gave an example. Moses said, "Honor your father and your mother" (Exodus 20:12), and he gave a death penalty for cursing your parents (Exodus 21:17). Honoring parents includes taking care of them when they are old and in need.

But the tradition had a loophole. A man could say his money or property was Corban, a word Mark explains for us as a gift, something dedicated to God. Once he said that word over it, he could keep using it himself, but he could tell his parents that he could not use it to help them, because it now belonged to God. The tradition said a vow must be kept, so the scribes would not let him undo it, even to help his own mother and father.

Do you see what had happened? A religious-sounding word let a man walk away from his parents in need. Jesus called this "making void the word of God by your tradition." And He added, "many such similar things you do." This was not one small slip. It was a pattern.

We still do this. We can say we are too busy serving at church to care for our own family. Paul says a believer who will not provide for his own household has denied the faith (1 Timothy 5:8). God does not accept religious service as a substitute for obeying His plain commands.

Moses gave these same two commands again in Deuteronomy 5:16 and Leviticus 20:9.

Old Testament links: Exodus 20:12 (quoted); Exodus 21:17 (quoted); Deuteronomy 5:16 (quoted); Leviticus 20:9 (quoted)

7:14-15 *And having called to **Him** all the crowd, He was saying to them, "Hear Me, all **of you**, and understand: There is nothing outside the man entering into him that is able to defile him; but the **things** going out from him, those are the **things** defiling the man.*

Jesus called the whole crowd to Him. "Hear Me, all of you, and understand." This was important, and He wanted everyone to get it.

"There is nothing outside the man entering into him that is able to defile him; but the things going out from him, those are the things defiling the man." The Pharisees thought a person became unclean from the outside in, by touching the wrong things or eating with unwashed hands. Jesus said the real problem works from the inside out. Our hearts are the problem.

That is a hard truth for all of us. We like to blame what is around us: our upbringing, our situation, other people. Those things can tempt us. But sin comes from inside us.

7:16 *If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear."*

"If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear." Jesus has used this saying before (4:9, 23). It is a call to listen with the heart, not just the ears. He had just said something that turned the whole Pharisee system on its head, and He wanted them to stop and think about it.

This verse is a textual passage. Most of the older Greek copies of Mark do not have these words here, and many modern Bibles put the verse in brackets or a footnote, or leave it out and skip the number. The SLB follows the Received Greek Text, which includes it. No teaching of the faith rests on this verse alone. The same words appear in Mark 4:9 and 4:23, so nothing is lost or added either way.

7:17-19 *And when He entered into a house from the crowd, His disciples were asking Him concerning the parable. And He says to them, "Are you yourselves also thus without understanding? Do you not perceive that everything from outside entering into the man is not able to defile him, because it does not enter into his heart but into the belly, and goes out into the latrine, cleansing all the foods?"*

When they were in a house away from the crowd, the disciples asked Him what He meant. Jesus was surprised. "Are you yourselves also thus without understanding?" Then He explained it plainly. Food goes into the stomach, not the heart, and it passes out of the body "into the latrine." Food cannot make your heart unclean.

The last phrase in verse 19, "cleansing all the foods," can be read two ways. It may describe the body's natural process, which takes in food and cleans out what is not used. Or it may be Mark's own note to his readers, telling them that by saying this, Jesus made all foods clean. Many modern Bibles take it the second way. Either way, the rest of the New Testament agrees: the food laws of Moses do not bind believers in Christ. God showed Peter this in a vision (Acts 10:9-16), and Paul wrote that nothing is unclean in itself (Romans 14:14). That is good news for the Gentile believers in Rome who first read Mark.

7:20-23 *And He was saying, "That which goes out of the man, that defiles the man. For from within, out of the heart of men, go out the evil thoughts, adulteries, sexual immoralities, murders, thefts, covetings, wickednesses, deceit, sensuality, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. All these evil* ***things*** *go out from within and defile the man."*

Then Jesus listed what comes out of the heart. "Evil thoughts" come first, because every sin starts there. Then come sins of action: "adulteries, sexual immoralities, murders, thefts, covetings, wickednesses." Sexual immoralities is the Greek word porneia, any sexual sin outside of marriage between a man and a woman. Covetings means greedy wanting of what is not ours.

Then sins of attitude: "deceit, sensuality, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness." Sensuality means throwing off all restraint, sin with no shame. An evil eye was a saying for envy and stinginess. Pride is thinking yourself above others. Foolishness in the Bible is not a lack of brains. It is living as if God does not matter.

"All these evil things go out from within and defile the man." This is a list no one can read without seeing himself. Jeremiah said the heart is deceitful above all things (Jeremiah 17:9). We cannot wash it clean with water and rituals. That is why we need a new heart, and that is what God promises in Christ (Ezekiel 36:26; 2 Corinthians 5:17). Jesus does not just clean up the outside. He changes us from within.

7:24 *And having risen up from there, He went away into the borders of Tyre and Sidon. And having entered into the house, He was wanting no one to know* ***it****, and He was not able to be hidden.*

Jesus "went away into the borders of Tyre and Sidon." These were Gentile cities on the Mediterranean coast, north of Galilee, in what is now Lebanon. This is the farthest into Gentile land we see Jesus travel during His ministry.

He went into a house and wanted no one to know. He may have been looking for rest and time alone with His disciples. "He was not able to be hidden." Jesus' fame had gone ahead of Him, even into Gentile land.

7:25-26 *For a woman, having heard about Him, whose little daughter had an unclean spirit, having come, fell at His feet. Now the woman was a Greek, a Syrophoenician by race; and she was asking Him that He would cast the demon out of her daughter.*

A woman heard about Him and came and fell at His feet. Her little daughter had an unclean spirit. Mark tells us two things about her. She was "a Greek," meaning a Gentile, not a Jew. And she was "a Syrophoenician by race," from the part of Phoenicia that belonged to the Roman province of Syria. Matthew calls her a Canaanite woman (Matthew 15:22), which reminds us that her people were the old enemies of Israel.

She did what any loving mother would do. She kept asking. Right after Jesus taught that uncleanness comes from the heart and not from food or race, a Gentile woman shows up with a clean heart of faith.

7:27 *But Jesus said to her, "Let the children first be satisfied; for it is not good to take the bread of the children and to cast* ***it*** *to the little dogs."*

Jesus' answer sounds harsh to us. "Let the children first be satisfied; for it is not good to take the bread of the children and to cast it to the little dogs." The children were Israel. The bread was the blessing of the Messiah's ministry. Jews sometimes called Gentiles dogs as an insult.

But look closer. Jesus used the word for little dogs, house pets, not the wild street dogs that roamed the towns. And He said "first." God's plan was that the gospel would go first to Israel and then to the Gentiles (Romans 1:16). Jesus did not slam the door. He left it open a crack, and He was testing her faith to bring it out.

7:28 *But she answered and says to Him, "Yes, Lord; for even the little dogs under the table eat from the crumbs of the little children."*

And she walked right through that crack. "Yes, Lord; for even the little dogs under the table eat from the crumbs of the little children." She did not argue or get offended. She agreed with Him. Yes, Lord, I am not one of the children. But even the house dogs get the crumbs that fall from the table. I am not asking for the children's meal. I am only asking for a crumb.

What humility and what faith! She knew she had no claim on Him. She only trusted His goodness. She also understood that one crumb from Jesus was enough to drive out a demon. That is great faith.

7:29-30 *And He said to her, "Because of this word, go; the demon has gone out of your daughter." And having gone away to her house, she found the demon having gone out, and the daughter having been laid on the bed.*

"Because of this word, go; the demon has gone out of your daughter." Jesus did not go to the house. He did not touch the girl. He spoke, and it was done, miles away.

She went home and found her daughter lying on the bed, quiet and free. The demon was gone. This Gentile mother got what the religious leaders from Jerusalem never received, because she came humbly. God still gives grace to the humble (James 4:6).

7:31 *And again, having gone out from the region of Tyre and Sidon, He came to the Sea of Galilee, through the midst of the region of Decapolis.*

Jesus took a long way back. He went north to Sidon, then east and south around to the Sea of Galilee "through the midst of the region of Decapolis." This was the same area where the man freed from the legion of demons had been telling everyone what Jesus had done (5:20). Now Jesus came, and the people were ready.

7:32-34 *And they bring to Him a deaf man who spoke with difficulty, and they implore Him that He would lay the hand on him. And having taken him away from the crowd privately, He put His fingers into his ears, and having spit, He touched his tongue; and having looked up to heaven, He sighed deeply, and He says to him, "Ephphatha," that is, "Be opened."*

"They bring to Him a deaf man who spoke with difficulty." He could not hear, and because he could not hear, he could barely talk. People begged Jesus to lay His hand on him.

Watch how gently Jesus works. He took him "away from the crowd privately." A deaf man in a noisy crowd would not understand what was happening. Then Jesus spoke to him in a language he could understand: touch. He put His fingers in the man's ears. He spat and touched his tongue. Jesus was showing him, without words, what He was about to do. He looked up to heaven, showing that the power came from God. "He sighed deeply," a groan of grief over the brokenness that sin has brought into the world (Romans 8:22).

Then Jesus said, "Ephphatha," another Aramaic word that Mark keeps for us, "that is, Be opened."

7:35 *And immediately his ears were opened, and the bond of his tongue was loosed, and he was speaking correctly.*

"Immediately his ears were opened, and the bond of his tongue was loosed, and he was speaking correctly." He did not have to learn to talk over months. He spoke clearly at once.

Isaiah promised that in the days of the Messiah, "the ears of the deaf will be unstopped" and the tongue of the mute will shout for joy (Isaiah 35:5-6). Here it was happening.

Spiritually, this is what Jesus does for all of us. Sin makes us deaf to God and unable to speak rightly about Him. Jesus opens our ears to hear His word and loosens our tongues to praise Him. Has He opened your ears?

Old Testament links: Isaiah 35:5-6 (alluded to)

7:36-37 *And He ordered them that they should tell no one; but as much as He Himself was ordering them, so much the more exceedingly they were proclaiming* ***it****. And they were astonished beyond measure, saying, "He has done all things well; He makes both the deaf to hear and the mute to speak."*

Jesus told them to tell no one. But the more He told them, the more they told everyone. In Gentile land He had let the freed man tell his story (5:19). Here, the crowds were starting to see Him only as a wonder-worker, and that was not the message He wanted spread.

"He has done all things well." The words echo Genesis 1:31, where God looked at everything He had made, and it was very good. The Creator was making things good again. "He makes both the deaf to hear and the mute to speak." That is exactly what the prophets said the Messiah would do. These Gentiles saw it more clearly than the leaders from Jerusalem did.

Old Testament links: Isaiah 35:5-6 (alluded to)

Chapter 7 Summary

Pharisees and scribes from Jerusalem complain that Jesus' disciples eat with ceremonially unwashed hands, breaking the tradition of the elders. Jesus quotes Isaiah to show that they honor God with their lips while their hearts are far from Him, and He exposes how they use the Corban tradition to set aside God's command to honor their parents. He teaches the crowd that nothing going into a person can defile him, but what comes out of the heart does, and He lists the evil things that flow from the human heart. In the region of Tyre, a Syrophoenician woman humbly asks for crumbs from the table, and Jesus casts the demon out of her daughter from a distance. In the Decapolis, He takes a deaf man aside, touches his ears and tongue, and says "Ephphatha," and the man hears and speaks plainly. The people say He has done all things well.

Chapter 7 Study Questions

1. What did the Pharisees and scribes complain about, and was it God's Law or man's tradition? (7:2-5)

2. What did Jesus quote from Isaiah, and what does it say about their worship? (7:6-7)

3. What was Corban, and how did it let people get around God's command? (7:10-13)

4. According to Jesus, what really makes a person unclean? (7:15, 20-23)

5. What does 7:19 teach about the food laws, and how do Acts 10 and Romans 14:14 agree?

6. How did the Syrophoenician woman answer Jesus, and what does her answer show about her? (7:28)

7. How did Jesus show care for the deaf man before He healed him? (7:33-34)

8. What did the crowd say about Jesus after the healing? (7:37)

9. Is there a tradition, habit, or religious practice in your life that has become more important to you than obeying God's word? (7:8-9)

10. Look at the list in 7:21-22. Which of these do you struggle with most, and what would it look like to ask Jesus to change your heart from within?

Chapter 8: Who Do You Say That I Am?

Scripture

8:1-13 In those days, the crowd being very great and not having anything they might eat, Jesus, having called His disciples to ***Him***, says to them, "I am moved with compassion on the crowd, because already three days they remain with Me, and they do not have anything they might eat. And if I send them away hungry to their home, they will faint on the way; for some of them have come from far away." And His disciples answered Him, "From where will anyone be able to satisfy these ***people*** with bread here in a desolate place?" And He was asking them, "How many loaves do you have?" And they said, "Seven." And He commanded the crowd to recline on the ground; and having taken the seven loaves, having given thanks, He broke ***them*** and was giving ***them*** to His disciples so that they might set ***them*** before ***them***; and they set ***them*** before the crowd. And they had a few small fish; and having blessed ***them***, He said to set them also before ***them***. And they ate and were satisfied; and they took up seven large baskets of leftovers of broken pieces. Now those having eaten were about four thousand; and He sent them away. And immediately, having embarked into the boat with His disciples, He came into the parts of Dalmanutha. And the Pharisees went out and began to dispute with Him, seeking from Him a sign from heaven, testing Him. And having sighed deeply in His spirit, He says, "Why does this generation seek a sign? Truly I say to you, no sign will be given to this generation." And having left them, having embarked again into the boat, He went away to the other side.

8:14-26 And the disciples forgot to take loaves, and except for one loaf they did not have ***any*** with them in the boat. And He was ordering them, saying, "Watch out, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod." And they were reasoning with one another, saying, "***It is*** because we do not have loaves." And Jesus, having known ***it***, says to them, "Why do you reason that you do not have loaves? Do you not yet perceive or understand? Do you still have your heart hardened? Having eyes, do you not see? And having ears, do you not hear? And do you not remember? When I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many baskets full of broken pieces did you take up?" They say to Him, "Twelve." "And when the seven for the four thousand, of how many large baskets ***did*** you take up fillings of broken pieces?" And they said, "Seven." And He was saying to them, "How do you not understand?" And He comes to Bethsaida; and they bring to Him a blind ***man***, and they implore Him that He would touch him. And having taken hold of the hand of the blind ***man***, He led him out of the village; and having spit on his eyes, having laid the hands on him, He was asking him if he sees anything. And having looked up, he was saying, "I see the men like trees, walking." Then again He laid the hands on his eyes, and made him look up; and he was restored, and he saw everyone clearly. And He sent him away to his home, saying, "Do not enter into the village, nor tell ***it*** to anyone in the village."

8:27-38 And Jesus and His disciples went out into the villages of Caesarea of Philip; and on the way He was questioning His disciples, saying to them, "Who do men say that I am?" And they answered, "John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; but others, one of the prophets." And He Himself says to them, "But you, who do you say that I am?" And Peter, answering, says to Him, "You are the Christ." And He warned them that they should tell no one concerning Him. And He began to teach them that it is necessary ***for*** the Son of Man to suffer many things and to be rejected by the

elders and chief priests and scribes, and to be killed, and after three days to rise again. And He was speaking the word openly. And Peter, having taken Him aside, began to rebuke Him. But He, having turned around and having seen His disciples, rebuked Peter, saying, "Go behind Me, Satan; for you are not minding the things of God, but the things of men." And having called the crowd to ***Him*** with His disciples, He said to them, "Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and let him take up his cross, and let him follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it; but whoever loses his life on account of Me and the gospel, this ***one*** will save it. For what will it profit a man, if he gains the whole world and forfeits his life? Or what will a man give ***as*** an exchange for his life? For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man also will be ashamed of him when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels."

Chapter 8 Preview

Chapter 8 is the hinge of the book of Mark. It opens with a second great feeding, this time four thousand people fed with seven loaves, mostly in Gentile country. The Pharisees demand a sign from heaven, and Jesus refuses. In the boat, the disciples worry about bread, and Jesus asks them a string of hard questions: Do you still not understand? Then He heals a blind man in two stages, the only healing in the Gospels that happens that way.

Then comes the turning point. Near Caesarea Philippi, Jesus asks His disciples, "Who do men say that I am?" and then, "But you, who do you say that I am?" Peter answers, "You are the Christ." From that moment Jesus begins to teach them plainly that He must suffer, be killed, and rise again. When Peter tries to correct Him, Jesus rebukes him sharply. Then He calls everyone to deny himself, take up his cross, and follow Him. The first half of Mark asks who Jesus is. The second half shows what kind of Messiah He came to be: the Servant who goes to the cross.

Chapter 8 Study

8:1-3 *In those days, the crowd being very great and not having anything they might eat, Jesus, having called His disciples to* ***Him****, says to them, "I am moved with compassion on the crowd, because already three days they remain with Me, and they do not have anything they might eat. And if I send them away hungry to their home, they will faint on the way; for some of them have come from far away."*

"In those days" points back to Jesus' time in the Decapolis (7:31). Once more a huge crowd had gathered, and they had nothing to eat. These people had been with Jesus "three days." Whatever food they brought was gone.

"I am moved with compassion on the crowd." Jesus saw their need before anyone mentioned it. He knew some had come a long way and would collapse on the road home if He sent them away hungry. The Lord who teaches our souls also cares about our bodies. He knows when you are tired and hungry and running on empty.

8:4-5 *And His disciples answered Him, "From where will anyone be able to satisfy these **people** with bread here in a desolate place?" And He was asking them, "How many loaves do you have?" And they said, "Seven."*

The disciples' answer is hard to believe. "From where will anyone be able to satisfy these people with bread here in a desolate place?" They had seen Jesus feed five thousand with five loaves not long before (6:35-44). How could they ask that?

Before we are too hard on them, we should look at ourselves. How many times has God provided for you in the past, and yet the next time a need comes, you worry as if He never had? We forget quickly. That is why the Bible tells us again and again to remember what the Lord has done (Psalm 103:2).

Jesus asked the same question as before: "How many loaves do you have?" "Seven."

8:6-7 *And He commanded the crowd to recline on the ground; and having taken the seven loaves, having given thanks, He broke **them** and was giving **them** to His disciples so that they might set **them** before **them**; and they set **them** before the crowd. And they had a few small fish; and having blessed **them**, He said to set them also before **them**.*

Jesus had the crowd sit on the ground. He took the seven loaves, gave thanks, broke them, and kept handing them to the disciples to pass out. Then He blessed a few small fish and had those handed out too. It is the same pattern as before: thanks, breaking, giving. And again the disciples carried the food to the people.

8:8-9 *And they ate and were satisfied; and they took up seven large baskets of leftovers of broken pieces. Now those having eaten were about four thousand; and He sent them away.*

"They ate and were satisfied." Seven large baskets of leftovers were taken up. The word for baskets here is different from the word in 6:43. These were large baskets, big enough to hold a man. Paul was let down over the wall of Damascus in one (Acts 9:25).

About four thousand people ate. Some people think this is the same story as the five thousand, told twice. But Mark gives different numbers of people, loaves and baskets, and a different place. And Jesus Himself speaks of both feedings as two separate events in verses 19-20. I take it as it is written.

There is a reason for two feedings. The first was for a mostly Jewish crowd in Galilee. This one was in the Decapolis, Gentile country. Jesus is the Bread of Life for Jews and Gentiles alike.

8:10 *And immediately, having embarked into the boat with His disciples, He came into the parts of Dalmanutha.*

Right after, Jesus got into the boat with His disciples and went to "the parts of Dalmanutha." Scripture does not tell us exactly where Dalmanutha was. Matthew calls the place Magadan (Matthew 15:39). It was most likely on the west shore of the Sea of Galilee, back in Jewish territory.

8:11-12 *And the Pharisees went out and began to dispute with Him, seeking from Him a sign from heaven, testing Him. And having sighed deeply in His spirit, He says, "Why does this generation seek a sign? Truly I say to you, no sign will be given to this generation."*

The Pharisees came out to argue. They wanted "a sign from heaven, testing Him." Jesus had healed the sick, cast out demons, calmed a storm, raised a dead girl and fed thousands. They wanted more. They wanted a sign on their terms, something in the sky that would prove He came from God.

"Having sighed deeply in His spirit." Jesus groaned. Their unbelief grieved Him. "Truly I say to you, no sign will be given to this generation." Matthew adds that the only sign they would get was the sign of Jonah, His death and resurrection (Matthew 12:39-40; 16:4).

Here is a hard truth: more proof does not change a heart that has decided not to believe. Jesus told a story about a rich man who wanted someone raised from the dead to warn his brothers, and Abraham answered that if they will not listen to Moses and the prophets, they will not be persuaded even if someone rises from the dead (Luke 16:31). The problem was not a lack of evidence. It was a hard heart.

8:13 *And having left them, having embarked again into the boat, He went away to the other side.*

"Having left them." Jesus got back in the boat and went to the other side. He did not stay to argue. There comes a point where Jesus leaves those who keep refusing Him. That should make every one of us take His word seriously while He is still speaking to us.

8:14-15 *And the disciples forgot to take loaves, and except for one loaf they did not have **any** with them in the boat. And He was ordering them, saying, "Watch out, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod."*

In the boat, the disciples realized they had forgotten to bring bread. They had only one loaf. And Jesus warned them, "Watch out, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod."

Leaven is yeast. A small amount works its way through a whole lump of dough. In the Bible, leaven is often a picture of sin or false teaching that spreads quietly (1 Corinthians 5:6-8; Galatians 5:9). The leaven of the Pharisees was their hypocrisy (Luke 12:1) and their unbelief, demanding signs while rejecting the Son of God. The leaven of Herod was worldliness and political power, a faith that bends to whatever keeps you comfortable. Both were spreading, and Jesus did not want them in His disciples.

8:16-18 *And they were reasoning with one another, saying, "**It is** because we do not have loaves." And Jesus, having known **it**, says to them, "Why do you reason that you do not have loaves? Do you not yet perceive or understand? Do you still have your heart hardened? Having eyes, do you not see? And having ears, do you not hear? And do you not remember?*

The disciples completely missed it. They thought He was talking about bread. "It is because we do not have loaves." They were still thinking about lunch.

Jesus knew what they were saying, and He asked them question after question. "Do you not yet perceive or understand? Do you still have your heart hardened? Having eyes, do you not see? And having ears, do you not hear? And do you not remember?" These were the very words used for the crowds outside in 4:12. Now Jesus was asking if His own disciples were becoming just as blind and deaf.

These questions are for us too. Do we see what Jesus has done? Do we remember?

Old Testament links: Jeremiah 5:21 (alluded to); Ezekiel 12:2 (alluded to)

8:19-21 *When I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many baskets full of broken pieces did you take up?" They say to Him, "Twelve." "And when the seven for the four thousand, of how many large baskets **did** you take up fillings of broken pieces?" And they said, "Seven." And He was saying to them, "How do you not understand?"*

Jesus took them through the facts. When He broke five loaves for five thousand, how many baskets were left? Twelve, they said. When He broke seven for four thousand, how many? Seven.

"How do you not understand?" The point was simple. One loaf in the boat with Jesus is more than enough. They were worried about bread while sitting next to the One who made bread for thousands with His own hands. They did not need to fear running out. They needed to understand who was with them.

Mark leaves the question hanging. The disciples did not have an answer yet. But their eyes were about to be opened, and Mark shows us how with the next story.

8:22-23 *And He comes to Bethsaida; and they bring to Him a blind **man**, and they implore Him that He would touch him. And having taken hold of the hand of the blind **man**, He led him out of the village; and having spit on his eyes, having laid the hands on him, He was asking him if he sees anything.*

At Bethsaida, people brought a blind man and begged Jesus to touch him. Like the deaf man in 7:33, Jesus took him away from the crowd. "Having taken hold of the hand of the blind man, He led him out of the village." Picture that. The Son of God holding a blind man's hand and walking him out of town.

He spat on his eyes, laid His hands on him, and "was asking him if he sees anything." This is the only time in the Gospels that Jesus asks a person whether a healing has worked.

8:24-26 *And having looked up, he was saying, "I see the men like trees, walking." Then again He laid the hands on his eyes, and made him look up; and he was restored, and he saw everyone clearly. And He sent him away to his home, saying, "Do not enter into the village, nor tell **it** to anyone in the village."*

"I see the men like trees, walking." He could see something, but it was blurry. He knew they were people only because they were moving. Notice that he knew what trees looked like, so he may not have been born blind.

Then Jesus laid His hands on his eyes again, "and he saw everyone clearly." The healing was complete.

Why did Jesus heal this man in two stages? It was not because His power was weak. It was a living picture of what was happening with the disciples. They had begun to see who Jesus was, but their sight was still blurry. In the very next scene, Peter will see that Jesus is the Christ, but he will not see clearly what kind of Christ He is. They needed a second touch. And Jesus would keep working on them until they saw clearly.

Many of us are like that too. We come to Jesus and begin to see. But growing in Him takes time, and He keeps touching our eyes until we see Him as He really is.

Jesus sent the man home and told him not to go into the village. Again He wanted to keep the crowds from spreading the news the wrong way.

8:27-28 *And Jesus and His disciples went out into the villages of Caesarea of Philip; and on the way He was questioning His disciples, saying to them, "Who do men say that I am?" And they answered, "John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; but others, one of the prophets."*

Jesus took His disciples north to "the villages of Caesarea of Philip." Caesarea Philippi was about twenty-five miles north of the Sea of Galilee, at the foot of Mount Hermon. Herod Philip, another son of Herod the Great, had rebuilt the city and named it for Caesar and himself. The area was full of pagan worship, with shrines to the Greek god Pan cut into the cliffs. In that place, among the idols, Jesus asked the most important question there is.

First He asked, "Who do men say that I am?" The disciples gave the popular answers: John the Baptist, Elijah, one of the prophets. These were all compliments. The people saw Jesus as a great man of God. But every one of those answers fell short. Many people today are the same. They say Jesus was a good teacher or a prophet. That sounds nice, but it is not enough.

8:29-30 *And He Himself says to them, "But you, who do you say that I am?" And Peter, answering, says to Him, "You are the Christ." And He warned them that they should tell no one concerning Him.*

Then Jesus made it personal. "But you, who do you say that I am?" In the Greek, the word you comes first, for stress. It does not matter in the end what the crowd says. What do you say?

Peter answered for the group: "You are the Christ." The Christ is the Messiah, the Anointed One, the King God had promised to send. This is the first time in Mark that a disciple says it. For eight chapters the question has been building: Who is this? Now Peter says it plainly.

Matthew 16:13-20 tells the same event in more detail, including Jesus' blessing on Peter. Mark, who wrote with Peter's preaching behind him, gives the shortest version. Perhaps Peter did not care to tell the part that honored him.

Again Jesus "warned them that they should tell no one concerning Him." Why? Because they had the right title but the wrong picture. They expected the Christ to throw out Rome and set up His

throne in Jerusalem. Jesus was about to tell them the truth, and they were not ready to preach it until they understood it.

I have to ask you the same question Jesus asked them. Not what your parents believe, or what your church says, or what you learned growing up. Who do you say that Jesus is? Your answer to that question matters more than anything else in your life.

8:31 *And He began to teach them that it is necessary **for** the Son of Man to suffer many things and to be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and to be killed, and after three days to rise again.*

"And He began to teach them." Everything changes here. From this point on, Jesus speaks again and again about the cross (9:31; 10:33-34). He used the word "necessary." It was not a possibility. It was God's plan. The Son of Man must "suffer many things and to be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and to be killed, and after three days to rise again."

The elders, chief priests and scribes made up the Sanhedrin, the ruling council of the Jews in Jerusalem. The very leaders of God's people would reject God's Christ.

"After three days" is a Jewish way of counting that includes parts of days. Jesus died on Friday afternoon and rose on Sunday morning, and the Jews counted any part of a day as a day. Matthew and Luke say "on the third day" for the same event (Matthew 16:21; Luke 9:22). And notice that Jesus never spoke of His death without speaking of His resurrection. The cross was never the end of the story.

8:32-33 *And He was speaking the word openly. And Peter, having taken Him aside, began to rebuke Him. But He, having turned around and having seen His disciples, rebuked Peter, saying, "Go behind Me, Satan; for you are not minding the things of God, but the things of men."*

"He was speaking the word openly." No more hints. This was plain talk. And Peter, who had just said the right thing, now did the wrong thing. He "having taken Him aside, began to rebuke Him." Imagine telling Jesus He is wrong. Peter could not fit a suffering Messiah into his picture. Kings conquer. They don't die.

Jesus turned and looked at the rest of the disciples. They were thinking the same thing. Then He rebuked Peter in front of them: "Go behind Me, Satan; for you are not minding the things of God, but the things of men."

That is strong. Jesus was not saying Peter was Satan. He was saying that Peter, without knowing it, was saying what Satan had said in the wilderness: take the crown without the cross. Satan offered Jesus all the kingdoms of the world if He would only bow to him (Matthew 4:8-10). Here was the same temptation coming from the mouth of a friend.

"Go behind Me" means get back in your place, behind Me, as a follower. Peter had tried to lead. A disciple follows.

There is a warning here for us. A person can love Jesus and still think like the world. Peter meant well. He wanted to protect Jesus. But good intentions without God's mind can still stand in the way of God's plan.

8:34 *And having called the crowd to **Him** with His disciples, He said to them, "Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and let him take up his cross, and let him follow Me.*

Now Jesus called the crowd over, together with the disciples. What He was about to say was for everyone, not just the twelve. "Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and let him take up his cross, and let him follow Me."

There are three parts. To deny yourself means to say no to yourself, to stop living for your own will and comfort, and to say yes to Him. It is not just giving up chocolate for a season. It is giving up the throne of your life.

To take up your cross meant something very plain in that day. A man carrying a cross was a man on his way to die. The Romans made those being crucified carry their own cross beam to the place of execution. Jesus' listeners had seen it. Taking up the cross means being willing to die to self and, if it comes to that, to die for Him. It is not a bad back or a hard boss. It is choosing His way even when it costs.

And follow Me. Keep walking behind Jesus, every day. Luke adds the word daily (Luke 9:23).

8:35 *For whoever desires to save his life will lose it; but whoever loses his life on account of Me and the gospel, this **one** will save it.*

"For whoever desires to save his life will lose it; but whoever loses his life on account of Me and the gospel, this one will save it." This sounds backward, but it is the truth. If you hold on to your life and live it for yourself, you will lose it in the end. If you let go of your life for Jesus and His gospel, you will find real life, now and forever.

Notice the words "and the gospel." Only Mark records that Jesus said this. Mark's first readers in Rome would soon face Nero's persecution, and some of them would lose their lives for Christ and the gospel. Jesus promised that they would not lose in the end.

8:36-37 *For what will it profit a man, if he gains the whole world and forfeits his life? Or what will a man give **as** an exchange for his life?*

"For what will it profit a man, if he gains the whole world and forfeits his life?" Think of a man who gets everything he ever wanted: money, power, fame, pleasure. Then he dies and loses his own soul. What did he gain? The word for life here is psyche, which also means soul.

"Or what will a man give as an exchange for his life?" Once your soul is lost, there is nothing you can trade to get it back. All the money in the world cannot buy back one soul. Only Jesus could pay that price, and He did with His own life (10:45).

This is a question every person needs to answer. What are you living for? Is it worth your soul?

8:38 *For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man also will be ashamed of him when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels."*

"For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation." Adulterous here means unfaithful to God, as Israel was often called in the Old Testament when it turned to idols (Hosea 2:2-5). It can be hard to stand up for Jesus in a world like that. People may laugh, or worse.

But listen to the warning. If we are ashamed of Jesus now, "the Son of Man also will be ashamed of him when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels." This is a clear promise that Jesus is coming again. He is not coming the next time as a Servant to suffer. He is coming in glory, with the angels, as King and Judge (Matthew 25:31). I believe He will return visibly to the earth at the end of the Tribulation to set up His kingdom (Revelation 19:11-16).

Which do you want? To be embarrassed for a little while in this world, or to have the King of glory be ashamed of you on that day? Peter learned this the hard way. He denied Jesus three times out of fear (14:66-72). But Jesus forgave him and restored him (John 21:15-19), and Peter spent the rest of his life unashamed. There is grace for those who have failed. Get up and follow Him again.

Chapter 8 Summary

Jesus feeds four thousand people with seven loaves and a few fish, with seven large baskets left over. The Pharisees demand a sign from heaven, but He refuses. In the boat, He warns His disciples about the leaven of the Pharisees and of Herod, and they think He is talking about bread, so He reminds them of the two feedings and asks why they still do not understand. At Bethsaida He heals a blind man in two stages. Near Caesarea Philippi, He asks His disciples who people say He is, and then who they say He is, and Peter answers, "You are the Christ." Jesus begins to teach them plainly that the Son of Man must suffer, be rejected, be killed, and rise after three days. When Peter rebukes Him, Jesus rebukes Peter for thinking like men. Then He calls everyone to deny himself, take up his cross and follow Him, warning that gaining the whole world is worth nothing if one loses his soul, and that the Son of Man will be ashamed of those ashamed of Him when He comes in glory.

Chapter 8 Study Questions

1. Why was Jesus moved with compassion for the crowd of four thousand? (8:2-3)

2. Why did Jesus refuse to give the Pharisees a sign from heaven? (8:11-12)

3. What did Jesus mean by "the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod"? (8:15)

4. What questions did Jesus ask His disciples in the boat, and what was His point? (8:17-21)

5. How was the healing of the blind man at Bethsaida different from other healings, and what might it picture? (8:22-26)

6. What answers did people give about who Jesus was, and what did Peter say? (8:27-29)

7. What four things did Jesus say must happen to the Son of Man? (8:31)

8. Why did Jesus rebuke Peter so strongly? (8:32-33)

9. Jesus asked, "But you, who do you say that I am?" How would you answer Him today, in your own words? (8:29)

10. What does it look like for you to deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow Jesus this week? (8:34-35)

Chapter 9: The Transfiguration and True Greatness

Scripture

9:1-13 And He was saying to them, "Truly I say to you that there are some of those standing here who will certainly not taste of death until they see the kingdom of God having come with power." And after six days Jesus takes along Peter and James and John, and brings them up into a high mountain privately, alone. And He was transfigured before them; and His garments became shining, exceedingly white like snow, such as a launderer on the earth is not able to whiten. And Elijah with Moses appeared to them, and they were talking with Jesus. And Peter, answering, says to Jesus, "Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; and let us make three tabernacles, one for You and one for Moses and one for Elijah." For he did not know what he might say; for they were terrified. And a cloud came overshadowing them, and a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is My Son, the beloved; listen to Him." And suddenly, having looked around, they no longer saw anyone except Jesus alone with themselves. Now as they were coming down from the mountain, He ordered them that they should tell no one what they had seen, except when the Son of Man has risen out of ***the*** dead. And they kept the word to themselves, questioning together what the rising out of ***the*** dead is. And they were asking Him, saying, "Why do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?" And He, answering, said to them, "Elijah indeed, having come first, restores all things; and how has it been written of the Son of Man that He should suffer many things and be treated with contempt? But I say to you that Elijah also has come, and they did to him whatever they wished, just as it has been written of him."

9:14-29 And having come to the disciples, He saw a great crowd around them, and scribes disputing with them. And immediately all the crowd, having seen Him, were greatly amazed, and running to ***Him***, they were greeting Him. And He asked the scribes, "What are you disputing with them?" And one out of the crowd, answering, said, "Teacher, I brought to You my son, having a mute spirit; and wherever it seizes him, it throws him down; and he foams and grinds his teeth and is withering away. And I spoke to Your disciples that they might cast it out, and they were not able." And He, answering him, says, "O unbelieving generation, until when will I be with you? Until when will I bear with you? Bring him to Me." And they brought him to Him. And having seen Him, the spirit immediately convulsed him, and having fallen on the ground, he was rolling around, foaming. And He asked his father, "How long a time is it since this has happened to him?" And he said, "From childhood. And often it has cast him both into fire and into waters so that it might destroy him. But if You are able ***to do*** anything, help us, having compassion on us." And Jesus said to him, "If you are able to believe, all things ***are*** possible to the ***one*** believing." And immediately the father of the child, having cried out with tears, was saying, "I believe, Lord; help my unbelief." Now Jesus, having seen that a crowd was running together, rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, "Mute and deaf spirit, I command you, come out of him, and enter into him no more." And having cried out and having convulsed him much, it came out; and he became like a dead ***man***, so that many said that he had died. But Jesus, having taken hold of him by the hand, raised him up, and he arose. And when He had entered into a house, His disciples were asking Him privately, "Why were we not able to cast it out?" And He said to them, "This kind is able to come out by nothing except by prayer and fasting."

9:30-41 And having gone out from there, they were passing through Galilee, and He was not wanting anyone to know ***it***. For He was teaching His disciples and was saying to them, "The Son of Man is being delivered into ***the*** hands of men, and they will kill Him; and having been killed, He will rise on the third day." But they were not understanding the declaration, and they were afraid to ask Him. And He came to Capernaum. And having been in the house, He was asking them, "What were you discussing among yourselves on the way?" But they were silent; for on the way they had discussed with one another who ***was*** greater. And having sat down, He called the twelve and says to them, "If anyone desires to be first, he will be last of all and servant of all." And having taken a child, He set it in the midst of them; and having taken it in His arms, He said to them, "Whoever receives one of such children in My name receives Me; and whoever receives Me does not receive Me, but the ***One*** having sent Me." Now John answered Him, saying, "Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in Your name, who does not follow us; and we forbade him, because he does not follow us." But Jesus said, "Do not forbid him; for there is no one who will do a mighty work in My name and will be able soon to speak evil of Me. For whoever is not against us is for us. For whoever gives you a cup of water to drink in My name because you are Christ's, truly I say to you, he will certainly not lose his reward.

9:42-50 And whoever causes one of these little ones believing in Me to stumble, it is better for him rather if a millstone is put around his neck and he has been cast into the sea. And if your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter into life crippled than having the two hands to go away into Gehenna, into the unquenchable fire, where their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched. And if your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter into life lame than having the two feet to be cast into Gehenna, into the unquenchable fire, where their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched. And if your eye causes you to stumble, cast it out; it is better for you to enter into the kingdom of God one-eyed than having two eyes to be cast into the Gehenna of fire, where their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched. For everyone will be salted with fire, and every sacrifice will be salted with salt. Salt ***is*** good; but if the salt becomes unsalty, with what will you season it? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another."

Chapter 9 Preview

Chapter 8 ended with Jesus telling His disciples that He must suffer, die, and rise again, and that anyone who follows Him must take up his cross. Chapter 9 opens with a promise and a glimpse of glory. Jesus takes Peter, James, and John up a high mountain, and there He is transfigured before them. His clothes shine whiter than snow. Elijah and Moses appear and talk with Him, and the Father speaks from a cloud: "This is My Son, the beloved; listen to Him." The disciples get a look at who Jesus really is before they watch Him go to the cross.

Then they come down the mountain into a mess. The other disciples could not cast a spirit out of a boy, and a crowd is arguing. Jesus heals the boy and teaches about faith and prayer. On the road He tells them again that He will be killed and rise on the third day, and they argue about which of them is the greatest. Jesus sets a child in front of them and teaches what true greatness looks like. The chapter closes with hard words about causing others to stumble, about cutting off whatever leads us into sin, and about the fire of Gehenna.

Chapter 9 Study

9:1 *And He was saying to them, "Truly I say to you that there are some of those standing here who will certainly not taste of death until they see the kingdom of God having come with power."*

Jesus had just said that He would come "in the glory of His Father with the holy angels" (8:38). Now He adds a promise: some of those standing there "will certainly not taste of death until they see the kingdom of God having come with power." To taste death is a Hebrew way of saying to die.

What did He mean? Many Bible teachers believe the next verses answer it. Six days later, three of the men standing there saw Jesus in His glory on the mountain. The Transfiguration was a preview of the kingdom, a small look ahead at the King as He will appear when He comes in power. Peter, who was there, wrote years later that he was an eyewitness of Jesus' majesty on "the holy mountain" and tied it to the power and coming of our Lord (2 Peter 1:16-18). Other teachers take Jesus' words to mean His resurrection, the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost, or the judgment on Jerusalem in A.D. 70.

9:2-3 *And after six days Jesus takes along Peter and James and John, and brings them up into a high mountain privately, alone. And He was transfigured before them; and His garments became shining, exceedingly white like snow, such as a launderer on the earth is not able to whiten.*

Mark is usually vague about time, but here he counts: "after six days." Jesus took only three men, Peter, James, and John. These three were also with Him when He raised Jairus' daughter (5:37), and they will be closest to Him in Gethsemane (14:33).

"He was transfigured before them." The Greek word is metamorphoo, the word we get metamorphosis from. It means to be changed in form. This was not a light shining on Jesus from the outside. The glory that was always His shone out from within. Mark, who writes for ordinary people, gives a homely detail: His clothes were whiter than any "launderer on the earth is not able to whiten." No soap on earth could do that. This was the glory of God.

9:4 *And Elijah with Moses appeared to them, and they were talking with Jesus.*

"Elijah with Moses appeared to them." Why these two? Moses gave the Law, and Elijah stood for the prophets. Together they picture the whole Old Testament bearing witness to Jesus. Both men also left this world in unusual ways. God buried Moses Himself (Deuteronomy 34:5-6), and Elijah was taken up to heaven in a whirlwind (2 Kings 2:11).

Luke tells us what they talked about: His departure, which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem (Luke 9:31). On the mountain of glory, the subject was the cross. Notice too that Moses and Elijah were alive and known by name hundreds of years after they left the earth. Those who die in the Lord are not gone. They are with Him.

9:5-6 *And Peter, answering, says to Jesus, "Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; and let us make three tabernacles, one for You and one for Moses and one for Elijah." For he did not know what he might say; for they were terrified.*

Peter did what Peter often did. He spoke first and thought later. "Let us make three tabernacles." A tabernacle was a tent or booth, like the shelters Israel lived in during the Feast of Tabernacles. Maybe Peter wanted to make the moment last. Maybe he thought the kingdom had come and it was time to settle in.

Mark is honest about it: "he did not know what he might say; for they were terrified." Many believe Mark got this story from Peter himself, and Peter never made himself look good. His mistake was putting Jesus on the same level as Moses and Elijah, one tent each. God was about to correct that.

9:7-8 *And a cloud came overshadowing them, and a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is My Son, the beloved; listen to Him." And suddenly, having looked around, they no longer saw anyone except Jesus alone with themselves.*

"A cloud came overshadowing them." In the Old Testament, God's presence came in a cloud over the tabernacle (Exodus 40:34-35). The Father spoke out of it: "This is My Son, the beloved; listen to Him." At Jesus' baptism the Father spoke to the Son (1:11). Here He speaks to the disciples about the Son.

"Listen to Him." Moses had promised that God would raise up a Prophet like him, and the people must listen to Him (Deuteronomy 18:15). Jesus is that Prophet, and He is far more. Then the cloud was gone, and "they no longer saw anyone except Jesus alone." Moses and Elijah were great servants, but they stepped away. Jesus is the One who stays. When everything else fades, He is the One we listen to.

Old Testament links: Deuteronomy 18:15 (alluded to)

9:9-10 *Now as they were coming down from the mountain, He ordered them that they should tell no one what they had seen, except when the Son of Man has risen out of **the** dead. And they kept the word to themselves, questioning together what the rising out of **the** dead is.*

On the way down, Jesus told them to "tell no one what they had seen, except when the Son of Man has risen out of the dead." Why keep it quiet? The crowds wanted a king who would throw out Rome. Talk of a shining Messiah on a mountain would only feed the wrong hopes. The glory would make sense only after the cross and the empty tomb.

The disciples kept the command, but they were confused, "questioning together what the rising out of the dead is." Most Jews of that day, apart from the Sadducees, believed in a resurrection at the end of the age. What they could not understand was the Messiah dying and rising on His own before then. It did not fit what they had been taught.

9:11-13 *And they were asking Him, saying, "Why do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?" And He, answering, said to them, "Elijah indeed, having come first, restores all things; and how has it been written of the Son of Man that He should suffer many things and be treated with contempt? But I say to you that Elijah also has come, and they did to him whatever they wished, just as it has been written of him."*

The scribes were teachers and experts in the Law of Moses. They taught from Malachi 4:5 that Elijah must come before the great and terrible day of the Lord. The disciples had just seen Elijah, so they asked about it.

Jesus agreed that "Elijah indeed, having come first, restores all things." Then He turned them to the Scriptures about the Son of Man, who must "suffer many things and be treated with contempt." And He said that "Elijah also has come, and they did to him whatever they wished." He meant John the Baptist. John came "in the spirit and power of Elijah" (Luke 1:17), and Herod had him killed (6:14-29). What they did to the forerunner, they would do to the Messiah.

Some Bible teachers also believe Elijah will come again before Christ's return, pointing to Malachi 4:5 and the two witnesses of Revelation 11. Jesus' words leave room for both: John fulfilled the role for His first coming, and the full restoring of all things still lies ahead.

Old Testament links: Malachi 4:5-6 (alluded to)

9:14-16 *And having come to the disciples, He saw a great crowd around them, and scribes disputing with them. And immediately all the crowd, having seen Him, were greatly amazed, and running to **Him**, they were greeting Him. And He asked the scribes, "What are you disputing with them?"*

From the mountaintop to the valley. When Jesus came back, He found "a great crowd around them, and scribes disputing with them." The nine disciples who stayed behind had failed, and the scribes were enjoying it.

When the crowd saw Jesus, they "were greatly amazed." Some think His face still showed something of the glory, as Moses' face shone when he came down from Sinai (Exodus 34:29-30). Mark doesn't say. What we do see is that Jesus stepped right into the argument: "What are you disputing with them?" He doesn't leave His disciples alone in their failure.

9:17-18 *And one out of the crowd, answering, said, "Teacher, I brought to You my son, having a mute spirit; and wherever it seizes him, it throws him down; and he foams and grinds his teeth and is withering away. And I spoke to Your disciples that they might cast it out, and they were not able."*

A father answered. His son had "a mute spirit," a demon that kept the boy from speaking. Mark gives the details plainly. It threw the boy down, he foamed, ground his teeth, and was "withering away." Some of these signs look like what we would call seizures, and the boy may have had both. But Mark is clear that a spirit was behind this.

"I spoke to Your disciples that they might cast it out, and they were not able." Back in chapter 6, Jesus had given the twelve authority over unclean spirits, and they had cast out many demons (6:7, 13). Now they could not. Something was missing.

9:19 *And He, answering him, says, "O unbelieving generation, until when will I be with you? Until when will I bear with you? Bring him to Me."*

"O unbelieving generation, until when will I be with you? Until when will I bear with you?" Jesus was speaking to all of them: the scribes, the crowd, the father, and His own disciples. He had just come from the Father's glory into a world full of doubt.

We hear sorrow here, not only frustration. Yet He did not walk away. In the same breath He said, "Bring him to Me." That is still His answer. When others can't help and we have run out of ideas, bring it to Jesus.

9:20-22 *And they brought him to Him. And having seen Him, the spirit immediately convulsed him, and having fallen on the ground, he was rolling around, foaming. And He asked his father, "How long a time is it since this has happened to him?" And he said, "From childhood. And often it has cast him both into fire and into waters so that it might destroy him. But if You are able* ***to do*** *anything, help us, having compassion on us."*

As soon as the spirit saw Jesus, it threw the boy into a convulsion. Evil often makes its loudest noise right before it is defeated.

Jesus asked the father, "How long a time is it since this has happened to him?" The answer was "From childhood." This dad had watched it for years. The spirit had thrown the boy into fire and water to destroy him. Then came the father's plea: "if You are able to do anything, help us, having compassion on us." Notice he said "help us." When a child suffers, the whole family suffers.

9:23-24 *And Jesus said to him, "If you are able to believe, all things* ***are*** *possible to the* ***one*** *believing." And immediately the father of the child, having cried out with tears, was saying, "I believe, Lord; help my unbelief."*

Jesus picked up the father's words and turned them around. The question was not whether Jesus was able. The question was whether the father would believe. "If you are able to believe, all things are possible to the one believing."

The father's answer is one of the most honest prayers in the Bible: "I believe, Lord; help my unbelief." He had faith, but it was mixed with doubt. He didn't pretend. He brought both to Jesus. Have you ever prayed like that? Jesus did not reject him for weak faith. Faith is not how strong we feel. It is where we turn. A little faith placed in a great Savior is enough.

9:25-27 *Now Jesus, having seen that a crowd was running together, rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, "Mute and deaf spirit, I command you, come out of him, and enter into him no more." And having cried out and having convulsed him much, it came out; and he became like a dead* ***man****, so that many said that he had died. But Jesus, having taken hold of him by the hand, raised him up, and he arose.*

Jesus acted before the crowd got bigger. "Mute and deaf spirit, I command you, come out of him, and enter into him no more." He did not chant or bargain. He commanded, and the spirit had to obey. The words "enter into him no more" gave the father something he needed: the healing would last.

The spirit came out screaming and left the boy like a corpse, and "many said that he had died." Then "Jesus, having taken hold of him by the hand, raised him up, and he arose." It is a small picture of what Jesus does for every sinner. He takes the hand of one who looks dead and raises him to life.

9:28-29 *And when He had entered into a house, His disciples were asking Him privately, "Why were we not able to cast it out?" And He said to them, "This kind is able to come out by nothing except by prayer and fasting."*

Later, in private, the disciples asked the question that had bothered them: "Why were we not able to cast it out?" Jesus answered, "This kind is able to come out by nothing except by prayer and fasting."

The disciples may have started to think the power was theirs, something they could switch on. Jesus reminded them that it came from dependence on God. Prayer says to God, Lord, I can't, but You can. Fasting is setting food aside for a time to seek God more fully. The problem was not a missing formula. It was a missing reliance on God. That is true for us too. Our service grows weak when our prayer life grows thin.

9:30-32 *And having gone out from there, they were passing through Galilee, and He was not wanting anyone to know* ***it****. For He was teaching His disciples and was saying to them, "The Son of Man is being delivered into* ***the*** *hands of men, and they will kill Him; and having been killed, He will rise on the third day." But they were not understanding the declaration, and they were afraid to ask Him.*

Jesus moved quietly through Galilee. "He was not wanting anyone to know it," because He was teaching His disciples. His time of public ministry in Galilee was coming to an end, and He focused on the twelve.

This is the second time He told them plainly what would happen (the first was 8:31). "The Son of Man is being delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill Him; and having been killed, He will rise on the third day." Son of Man was Jesus' favorite name for Himself. It comes from Daniel 7:13-14, where one like a son of man receives an everlasting kingdom. The disciples "were not understanding," and they "were afraid to ask Him." Sometimes we don't ask because we are afraid of the answer.

9:33-34 *And He came to Capernaum. And having been in the house, He was asking them, "What were you discussing among yourselves on the way?" But they were silent; for on the way they had discussed with one another who **was** greater.*

They came to Capernaum, Jesus' home base by the Sea of Galilee. In the house He asked, "What were you discussing among yourselves on the way?"

"But they were silent." They were embarrassed, and they should have been. Jesus had just told them He was going to die, and they were arguing about "who was greater." While He talked about a cross, they talked about crowns. Before we shake our heads at them, we should ask how often we do the same thing. Pride is quick to show up, even among people who follow Jesus.

9:35 *And having sat down, He called the twelve and says to them, "If anyone desires to be first, he will be last of all and servant of all."*

Jesus "sat down," the way a Jewish teacher sat to teach something important. He "called the twelve." Then He turned their whole idea of greatness upside down: "If anyone desires to be first, he will be last of all and servant of all."

Jesus did not tell them it was wrong to want to be great. He showed them the way to real greatness. In God's kingdom, the way up is down. The greatest person is the one who serves the most. This theme runs through all of Mark. The Servant was teaching His servants to be like Him (10:45).

9:36-37 *And having taken a child, He set it in the midst of them; and having taken it in His arms, He said to them, "Whoever receives one of such children in My name receives Me; and whoever receives Me does not receive Me, but the **One** having sent Me."*

Then Jesus gave them a picture they would never forget. He set a child in the middle of them and took the child in His arms. In that culture children had no standing. They could not do anything for you.

"Whoever receives one of such children in My name receives Me." To receive means to welcome, to care for, to make room for. When we welcome the least important person for Jesus' sake, we welcome Jesus Himself, and in welcoming Him we welcome "the One having sent Me," the Father. How we treat people who can do nothing for us shows what we really think of Jesus.

9:38-40 *Now John answered Him, saying, "Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in Your name, who does not follow us; and we forbade him, because he does not follow us." But Jesus said, "Do not forbid him; for there is no one who will do a mighty work in My name and will be able soon to speak evil of Me. For whoever is not against us is for us.*

John, one of the "sons of thunder," spoke up. They had seen a man casting out demons in Jesus' name, and they stopped him "because he does not follow us." Notice the word us. The man was following Jesus. He just wasn't part of their group. And he was succeeding where they had just failed.

"Do not forbid him." Jesus said that no one who does a mighty work in His name will "be able soon to speak evil of Me." Then He gave a rule: "whoever is not against us is for us." This is a needed word for churches. Not everyone who serves Jesus will be in our group or do things our way. If they truly honor Jesus' name and preach the true gospel, they are not our enemies. This does not mean anything goes. Jesus also warned about false prophets who use His name (Matthew 7:22-23). The test is whether they honor Him and His truth.

9:41 *For whoever gives you a cup of water to drink in My name because you are Christ's, truly I say to you, he will certainly not lose his reward.*

Even small things done for Jesus count. "Whoever gives you a cup of water to drink in My name because you are Christ's, truly I say to you, he will certainly not lose his reward."

A cup of water cost almost nothing, but in a hot, dry land it meant a great deal. God notices the small kindnesses done for His people. You may think what you do for others is too small to matter. Jesus says it is not. Nothing done for Him is wasted.

9:42 *And whoever causes one of these little ones believing in Me to stumble, it is better for him rather if a millstone is put around his neck and he has been cast into the sea.*

Now Jesus turns to a serious warning. "Whoever causes one of these little ones believing in Me to stumble." To cause someone to stumble means to trip them up and lead them into sin or away from faith. The "little ones" include children, but also any humble believer, especially one young in the faith.

How serious is it? It would be better to have "a millstone" tied around your neck and be thrown into the sea. A large millstone was so heavy it took a donkey to turn it. Jesus is saying it would be better to die than to lead one of His children into sin. Those who abuse, mislead, or corrupt others, especially children, need to hear this. God takes it seriously.

9:43-44 *And if your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter into life crippled than having the two hands to go away into Gehenna, into the unquenchable fire, where their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched.*

"If your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off." Is Jesus telling us to cut off body parts? No. The problem is not the hand. It is the heart (7:21-23). A man with no hands can still lust and covet. Jesus is using strong words to say: deal with sin ruthlessly. Whatever leads you into sin, a habit, a friendship, a website, a place, cut it out of your life. It is better to lose something precious than to lose your soul.

Gehenna is the Greek form of the Valley of Hinnom, a valley south of Jerusalem. In the days of wicked kings, children were burned there as sacrifices to the false god Molech (Jeremiah 7:31). Jesus used the name for the place of final punishment, hell. He calls it "the unquenchable fire."

Verse 44 describes it: "where their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched." These words come from the last verse of Isaiah (Isaiah 66:24). The worm that does not die and the fire that never goes out picture punishment that does not end. Jesus spoke about hell more than anyone else in the Bible. He did it out of love, to warn us.

Old Testament links: Isaiah 66:24 (quoted)

9:45-46 *And if your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter into life lame than having the two feet to be cast into Gehenna, into the unquenchable fire, where their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched.*

Jesus repeats the warning with the foot. The foot takes us places. "It is better for you to enter into life lame than having the two feet to be cast into Gehenna." Some places we go lead us straight into sin, and the answer is to stop going. Verse 46 repeats the words of verse 44 about the worm and the fire.

A word about verses 44 and 46. The SLB follows the Received Greek Text, which has these words in both places. Most older Greek copies do not have verses 44 and 46, so many modern Bibles put them in brackets or a footnote, or leave them out and skip the verse numbers. The same words appear in verse 48 in all copies, so nothing in the meaning is lost either way. No teaching of the faith rests on these two verses alone.

Old Testament links: Isaiah 66:24 (quoted)

9:47-48 *And if your eye causes you to stumble, cast it out; it is better for you to enter into the kingdom of God one-eyed than having two eyes to be cast into the Gehenna of fire, where their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched.*

The third example is the eye. The eye is often the first step into sin. David looked before he took (2 Samuel 11:2). Jesus said looking at a woman with lust is already adultery in the heart (Matthew 5:28). If what you look at is pulling you down, take drastic action. "It is better for you to enter into the kingdom of God one-eyed than having two eyes to be cast into the Gehenna of fire."

Notice that entering into life in verses 43 and 45 is the same as entering into "the kingdom of God" here. Eternal life is life in God's kingdom with Him. Hell is the opposite: outside His kingdom forever. Jesus repeats the words from Isaiah a third time. When Jesus repeats something, we should listen.

Old Testament links: Isaiah 66:24 (quoted)

9:49 *For everyone will be salted with fire, and every sacrifice will be salted with salt.*

"For everyone will be salted with fire, and every sacrifice will be salted with salt." This is one of the hardest verses in Mark, and Bible teachers read it in different ways. In the Law of Moses, every grain offering was seasoned with salt (Leviticus 2:13). Salt preserves and purifies. Fire also tests and purifies (1 Peter 1:7).

Many understand Jesus to mean that every believer will go through fiery trials that purify, as an offering given to God (Romans 12:1). Others see the fire as the judgment that falls on the unbeliever, just mentioned in verse 48. Either way, Jesus ties it to the costly life of discipleship He has been describing. Following Him is not easy. But the fire He allows in a believer's life purifies; it does not destroy.

Old Testament links: Leviticus 2:13 (alluded to)

9:50 *Salt **is** good; but if the salt becomes unsalty, with what will you season it? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another."*

"Salt is good." In Jesus' day salt was valuable. It kept meat from spoiling and gave food flavor. But salt from the Dead Sea area was often mixed with other minerals. If the real salt washed out, what was left looked like salt but had no taste. "With what will you season it?"

"Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another." The chapter comes full circle. It started with the disciples arguing about who was greatest. Jesus ends by telling them to keep their saltiness, the real flavor of a life given to God, and to live at peace with each other. Pride kills peace. Humble service keeps the salt in the salt.

Chapter 9 Summary

Jesus promised that some standing with Him would see the kingdom of God come with power. Six days later Peter, James, and John saw Him transfigured on a high mountain, His clothes shining white, with Elijah and Moses talking with Him. The Father spoke from the cloud, "This is My Son, the beloved; listen to Him." Coming down, Jesus explained that Elijah had come in John the Baptist, and that the Son of Man must suffer. At the foot of the mountain He freed a boy from a mute and deaf spirit that His disciples could not cast out, after the boy's father cried, "I believe, Lord; help my unbelief." Jesus taught that this kind comes out only by prayer and fasting. He again foretold His death and resurrection, and when the disciples argued about who was greatest, He taught that the first must be last and servant of all, and set a child among them. He told John not to forbid a man casting out demons in His name, promised a reward for even a cup of water given in His name, and warned in the strongest words against causing others to stumble and against sin that leads to Gehenna. He ended by calling His disciples to have salt in themselves and be at peace with one another.

Chapter 9 Study Questions

1. Who went up the mountain with Jesus, and what did they see? (9:2-4)

2. What did the Father say from the cloud, and why does it matter that only Jesus remained? (9:7-8)

3. Who did Jesus mean when He said Elijah had already come? (9:11-13)

4. What did the father of the boy pray, and what does it teach you about faith? (9:24)

5. Why did Jesus say the disciples could not cast out the spirit? (9:28-29)

6. What were the disciples arguing about on the road, and how did Jesus answer them? (9:33-35)

7. What does it mean to receive a child in Jesus' name? (9:36-37)

8. How should we treat believers who serve Jesus but are not part of our group? (9:38-40)

9. Is there something in your life you need to "cut off" because it leads you into sin? (9:43-48)

10. Where is God calling you to be a servant instead of trying to be first? (9:35)

Chapter 10: Marriage, Riches, and the Servant Who Gives His Life

Scripture

10:1-16 And having risen up from there, He comes into the region of Judea through the ***region*** beyond the Jordan. And crowds come together to Him again, and as He had been accustomed, He was again teaching them. And the Pharisees, having come to ***Him***, asked Him if it is lawful for a husband to divorce a wife, testing Him. And He, answering, said to them, "What did Moses command you?" And they said, "Moses permitted to write a scroll of divorce and to divorce ***her***." And Jesus, answering, said to them, "Because of your hardness of heart he wrote this commandment for you. But from ***the*** beginning of creation God made them male and female. On account of this a man will leave his father and mother and will be joined to his wife, and the two will be into one flesh; so that they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate." And in the house His disciples again asked Him concerning the same ***matter***. And He says to them, "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her. And if a woman divorces her husband and is married to another, she commits adultery." And they were bringing little children to Him so that He might touch them; but the disciples were rebuking those bringing ***them***. But Jesus, having seen ***it***, was indignant and said to them, "Permit the little children to come to Me, and do not hinder them; for of such is the kingdom of God. Truly I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will certainly not enter into it." And having taken them in His arms, laying the hands on them, He was blessing them.

10:17-34 And as He was going out on ***the*** way, one having run up and having knelt before Him was asking Him, "Good Teacher, what should I do so that I may inherit eternal life?" And Jesus said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one ***is*** good except One, God. You know the commandments: 'Do not commit adultery; do not murder; do not steal; do not bear false witness; do not defraud; honor your father and mother.'" And he, answering, said to Him, "Teacher, all these I have kept from my youth." And Jesus, having looked at him, loved him and said to him, "One ***thing*** you lack: go, sell whatever you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me, having taken up the cross." But he, having become gloomy at the word, went away grieving; for he was ***one*** having many possessions. And having looked around, Jesus says to His disciples, "How difficultly will those having riches enter into the kingdom of God!" And the disciples were amazed at His words. But Jesus, answering again, says to them, "Children, how difficult it is for those having trusted in riches to enter into the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of the needle than for a rich ***man*** to enter into the kingdom of God." And they were exceedingly astonished, saying to themselves, "And who is able to be saved?" And having looked at them, Jesus says, "With men ***it is*** impossible, but not with God; for all things are possible with God." And Peter began to say to Him, "Look, we left all and followed You." And Jesus, answering, said, "Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands on account of Me and the gospel, who will not receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions, and in the coming age eternal life. But many

first will be last, and the last first." Now they were on the way, going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was going on ahead of them; and they were amazed, and following, they were afraid. And having taken the twelve along again, He began to tell them the things about to happen to Him: "Look, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be delivered to the chief priests and to the scribes; and they will condemn Him to death and will deliver Him to the Gentiles; and they will mock Him and will flog Him and will spit on Him and will kill Him; and on the third day He will rise again."

10:35-52 And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, come up to Him, saying, "Teacher, we desire that You would do for us whatever we ask." And He said to them, "What do you desire Me to do for you?" And they said to Him, "Grant to us that we may sit, one at Your right and one at Your left, in Your glory." But Jesus said to them, "You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup which I drink, and to be baptized ***with*** the baptism ***with*** which I am baptized?" And they said to Him, "We are able." And Jesus said to them, "The cup which I drink you will indeed drink, and ***with*** the baptism ***with*** which I am baptized you will be baptized; but to sit at My right and at My left is not Mine to give, but ***it is for those*** for whom it has been prepared." And having heard ***it***, the ten began to be indignant about James and John. But Jesus, having called them to ***Him***, says to them, "You know that those being accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and their great ***ones*** exercise authority over them. But it will not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you will be your servant; and whoever of you desires to become first will be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life ***as*** a ransom for many." And they come to Jericho. And as He was going out from Jericho, and His disciples and a large crowd, a son of Timaeus, Bartimaeus the blind ***man***, was sitting beside the road begging. And having heard that it is Jesus the Nazarene, he began to cry out and to say, "Son of David, Jesus, have mercy on me!" And many were rebuking him that he should be silent; but he was crying out much more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" And Jesus, having stopped, said for him to be called. And they call the blind ***man***, saying to him, "Take courage; rise, He calls you." And he, having thrown off his cloak, having risen, came to Jesus. And Jesus, answering, says to him, "What do you desire ***that*** I should do for you?" And the blind ***man*** said to Him, "Rabboni, that I may receive sight." And Jesus said to him, "Go; your faith has saved you." And immediately he received sight and was following Jesus on the way.

Chapter 10 Preview

Jesus leaves Galilee for the last time and heads south toward Jerusalem and the cross. Along the way people bring Him questions and needs, and each one shows us something about life in God's kingdom. The Pharisees test Him on divorce, and Jesus takes them back to the beginning, when God made them male and female and joined the two into one flesh. Parents bring their children, and Jesus takes them in His arms. A rich man runs up and asks how to inherit eternal life, then walks away sad because he loves his possessions more than he wants to follow Jesus.

For the third time Jesus tells the twelve exactly what will happen in Jerusalem. And for the third time they miss it. James and John ask for the best seats in His glory. Jesus answers with the key verse of the whole Gospel: "the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many." The chapter ends outside Jericho, where a blind beggar named

Bartimaeus cries out, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" He receives his sight and follows Jesus on the road to Jerusalem.

Chapter 10 Study

10:1 *And having risen up from there, He comes into the region of Judea through the **region** beyond the Jordan. And crowds come together to Him again, and as He had been accustomed, He was again teaching them.*

"He comes into the region of Judea through the region beyond the Jordan." Jesus left Galilee and traveled south. The region beyond the Jordan, on the east side of the river, was often called Perea. Jewish travelers from Galilee often went this way to Jerusalem.

The crowds came again, and "as He had been accustomed, He was again teaching them." Mark shows Jesus as a man of action, but notice what He did by habit: He taught. Wherever He went, He opened God's Word to people. The Servant met their needs, but He never forgot that their greatest need was the truth.

10:2 *And the Pharisees, having come to **Him**, asked Him if it is lawful for a husband to divorce a wife, testing Him.*

"The Pharisees, having come to Him, asked Him if it is lawful for a husband to divorce a wife, testing Him." The Pharisees were a strict religious party in Israel who prided themselves on keeping the Law of Moses and the traditions built around it. Their question was a trap.

In those days the rabbis argued over Deuteronomy 24:1, which speaks of a man who finds in his wife "the nakedness of a thing," some shameful thing. One school taught that this meant only serious sexual sin. Another school taught that a man could divorce his wife for almost any reason, even for burning his dinner. Jesus was also in the region ruled by Herod Antipas, who had divorced his wife to marry his brother's wife. John the Baptist lost his head for speaking against that marriage (6:17-18). Whatever Jesus said, someone would be angry.

10:3-4 *And He, answering, said to them, "What did Moses command you?" And they said, "Moses permitted to write a scroll of divorce and to divorce **her**."*

Jesus answered with a question: "What did Moses command you?" He sent them back to Scripture.

They answered, "Moses permitted to write a scroll of divorce and to divorce her." Notice their own word: "permitted." Moses never commanded divorce. In Deuteronomy 24:1-4, Moses put limits on a practice that was already happening. A man had to give his wife a written certificate. That paper protected her. It proved she was free and could marry again without being called an adulteress. The law was there to keep a bad situation from getting worse.

Old Testament links: Deuteronomy 24:1 (alluded to)

10:5 *And Jesus, answering, said to them, "Because of your hardness of heart he wrote this commandment for you.*

"Because of your hardness of heart he wrote this commandment for you." Jesus said the divorce law was given because of sin. God allowed it because people's hearts were hard. It was a concession to human failure, not God's plan.

This is a key point. Just because the law allowed something does not mean God approved of it. The Pharisees wanted to know how far they could go. Jesus wanted them to see what God wanted from the start. Hard hearts are still the root of most broken marriages today: pride, selfishness, an unwillingness to forgive.

10:6-8 *But from **the** beginning of creation God made them male and female. On account of this a man will leave his father and mother and will be joined to his wife, and the two will be into one flesh; so that they are no longer two, but one flesh.*

Jesus went back further than Moses, all the way to "the beginning of creation." He quoted Genesis 1:27, "God made them male and female," and Genesis 2:24, "a man will leave his father and mother and will be joined to his wife."

God designed marriage. It is not a human invention, and people do not get to redefine it. It is one man and one woman. A man leaves his parents, which means a new family is formed. He is "joined to his wife," which means stuck together like glue. "And the two will be into one flesh." That is more than the physical union. It is two lives made into one. Jesus added, "they are no longer two, but one flesh." When you tear apart one flesh, both people are hurt.

Old Testament links: Genesis 1:27 (quoted); Genesis 2:24 (quoted)

10:9 *Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate."*

"Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate." This is the heart of Jesus' answer. Marriage is not only a contract between two people. God Himself joins them. When a couple marries, God is part of it.

The word man here can mean anyone: a husband, a wife, a judge, or someone who comes between them. No one has the right to pull apart what God has put together. If you are married, guard your marriage. Don't let anyone or anything separate what God joined.

10:10-12 *And in the house His disciples again asked Him concerning the same **matter**. And He says to them, "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her. And if a woman divorces her husband and is married to another, she commits adultery."*

In the house, the disciples asked again. Jesus said, "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her. And if a woman divorces her husband and is married to another, she commits adultery."

Look at what this says. In that culture, many thought adultery could only be a sin against a husband. Jesus said a man can commit adultery "against her," his wife. He gave the wife equal

dignity. He also spoke of a woman divorcing her husband, which Roman law allowed. Mark was writing for readers in the Roman world, and this word fit their lives.

Mark gives Jesus' words without any exception. Matthew records the same teaching with the words "except for sexual immorality" (Matthew 19:9), and Paul speaks of an unbelieving spouse who leaves (1 Corinthians 7:15). Good Bible teachers disagree on how these fit together. Some believe divorce is allowed in those cases and the innocent person may remarry. Others believe that even when separation or divorce happens, remarriage is not allowed while the other spouse lives. What all agree on is what Jesus said plainly: God hates the breaking of marriage, and it was never His plan.

If you have been through a divorce, hear this too. Divorce is not the unforgivable sin. The same Jesus who spoke these words forgives every sinner who comes to Him. And this verse never means a person must stay where they are being abused. If you are in danger, get to safety and get help.

10:13 *And they were bringing little children to Him so that He might touch them; but the disciples were rebuking those bringing **them**.*

Right after teaching on marriage, Mark shows us children. "They were bringing little children to Him so that He might touch them." Parents wanted Jesus to bless their kids. Jewish parents often brought children to a rabbi for a blessing.

"But the disciples were rebuking those bringing them." Maybe they thought Jesus was too busy or too important. Maybe they thought children did not matter much. They were wrong, and they had just been taught this lesson in 9:36-37. We learn slowly, don't we?

10:14 *But Jesus, having seen **it**, was indignant and said to them, "Permit the little children to come to Me, and do not hinder them; for of such is the kingdom of God.*

"But Jesus, having seen it, was indignant." This is the only place in the Gospels where Jesus is said to be indignant at His own disciples. It made Him angry that they kept the children away.

"Permit the little children to come to Me, and do not hinder them; for of such is the kingdom of God." The kingdom belongs to people like these children. Churches and parents should hear this. Never do anything that keeps a child from Jesus. Teach them, pray with them, bring them. Children's ministry is not babysitting. It is kingdom work.

10:15 *Truly I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will certainly not enter into it."*

"Truly I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will certainly not enter into it." How does a little child receive? With open hands. A child cannot earn a gift or pay for it. A child simply trusts and receives.

That is how we come to God. We don't enter His kingdom by being impressive or by working our way in. We come with empty hands and receive it as a gift (Ephesians 2:8-9). The rich man in the next story will show us the opposite.

10:16 *And having taken them in His arms, laying the hands on them, He was blessing them.*

"And having taken them in His arms, laying the hands on them, He was blessing them." Mark is the only Gospel writer who tells us Jesus took them in His arms. He did more than the parents asked. They wanted a touch; He gave a hug and a blessing.

That is the heart of our Lord. He is never too busy for the least of us. He welcomes the ones others push away.

10:17 *And as He was going out on **the** way, one having run up and having knelt before Him was asking Him, "Good Teacher, what should I do so that I may inherit eternal life?"*

"One having run up and having knelt before Him was asking Him, Good Teacher, what should I do so that I may inherit eternal life?" Matthew tells us the man was young (Matthew 19:20), and Luke tells us he was a ruler (Luke 18:18). He was eager. He ran. He knelt. He asked the most important question anyone can ask.

But look at how he asked it. "What should I do?" He thought eternal life was something he could earn by doing enough good. He had wealth, position, and a good reputation. He wanted to add eternal life to his list.

10:18 *And Jesus said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one **is** good except One, God.*

"Why do you call Me good? No one is good except One, God." Jesus was not denying that He is good or that He is God. He was making the man think. If only God is good, and you call Me good, do you know what you are saying?

Jesus was also challenging the man's idea of goodness. If no one is truly good except God, then the man was not good enough either. Romans 3:10 says there is none righteous, not even one. That is where every one of us has to start.

10:19 *You know the commandments: 'Do not commit adultery; do not murder; do not steal; do not bear false witness; do not defraud; honor your father and mother.'"*

Jesus pointed him to the commandments. "Do not commit adultery; do not murder; do not steal; do not bear false witness; do not defraud; honor your father and mother." These are from the second half of the Ten Commandments, the ones about how we treat other people (Exodus 20:12-16). "Do not defraud" may sum up the command not to covet, or it may point to cheating people out of what is theirs. Notice Jesus did not list the commands about loving God first. That was where the man's real problem lay.

Moses repeated these same commandments when he gave the Law again in Deuteronomy 5:16-20.

Old Testament links: Exodus 20:12-16 (quoted); Deuteronomy 5:16-20 (quoted)

10:20 *And he, answering, said to Him, "Teacher, all these I have kept from my youth."*

"Teacher, all these I have kept from my youth." He meant it. On the outside he had lived a decent life. He had not murdered or stolen. He respected his parents.

But Jesus had taught that the Law reaches the heart. Anger is murder in the heart, and lust is adultery in the heart (Matthew 5:21-28). The man was measuring himself by what others could see. God looks deeper. And still, the man knew something was missing. Why else would he have run to Jesus?

10:21 *And Jesus, having looked at him, loved him and said to him, "One **thing** you lack: go, sell whatever you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me, having taken up the cross."*

"And Jesus, having looked at him, loved him." Only Mark tells us this. Before Jesus said the hard thing, He loved him. What came next was not harsh. It was love telling the truth.

"One thing you lack: go, sell whatever you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me, having taken up the cross." Jesus put His finger on the one thing the man loved more than God. His money was his god. Jesus does not ask every believer to sell everything. He asked this man, because this was the idol standing between him and God. The real call was "follow Me." Whatever holds first place in your heart instead of Jesus has to go.

10:22 *But he, having become gloomy at the word, went away grieving; for he was **one** having many possessions.*

"But he, having become gloomy at the word, went away grieving; for he was one having many possessions." His face fell. He had come running, and he walked away sad.

This is one of the saddest verses in the Bible. He came to the right Person and asked the right question, and he walked away from eternal life because he would not let go of what he could not keep. We don't know the rest of his story. But Jesus let him go. He does not force anyone to follow Him.

10:23-25 *And having looked around, Jesus says to His disciples, "How difficultly will those having riches enter into the kingdom of God!" And the disciples were amazed at His words. But Jesus, answering again, says to them, "Children, how difficult it is for those having trusted in riches to enter into the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of the needle than for a rich **man** to enter into the kingdom of God."*

Jesus turned to His disciples: "How difficultly will those having riches enter into the kingdom of God!" The disciples were amazed. Many Jews believed riches were a sign of God's blessing.

Jesus said it again, more tenderly: "Children, how difficult it is for those having trusted in riches to enter into the kingdom of God!" The problem is not having money. It is trusting in it. Then He gave a picture: "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of the needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." The camel was the largest animal in Israel. The eye of a needle was the smallest opening. Some have said there was a small gate in Jerusalem called the Needle's Eye, but there is no good evidence for that. Jesus meant what He said. It is impossible.

10:26-27 *And they were exceedingly astonished, saying to themselves, "And who is able to be saved?" And having looked at them, Jesus says, "With men **it is** impossible, but not with God; for all things are possible with God."*

The disciples were "exceedingly astonished, saying to themselves, And who is able to be saved?" If the rich, who seemed blessed by God, could not get in, who could?

"With men it is impossible, but not with God; for all things are possible with God." That is the answer. No one, rich or poor, can save himself. Salvation is impossible for man. It is God's work from start to finish. He can change a heart that loves money into a heart that loves Him. Zacchaeus, a rich tax collector, is proof (Luke 19:1-10).

10:28-30 *And Peter began to say to Him, "Look, we left all and followed You." And Jesus, answering, said, "Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands on account of Me and the gospel, who will not receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions, and in the coming age eternal life.*

Peter spoke up: "Look, we left all and followed You." In other words, what about us? They had done what the rich man would not do.

Jesus promised that no one who leaves house, family, or lands "on account of Me and the gospel" will miss out. There is no one like that "who will not receive a hundredfold now in this time." How? When you follow Jesus, you gain a family of brothers and sisters, mothers and children, in the church, and homes open to you everywhere. Notice what Jesus slipped into the list: "with persecutions." He never promised an easy life. And "in the coming age eternal life." The best is still ahead.

10:31 *But many first will be last, and the last first."*

"But many first will be last, and the last first." God's kingdom turns the world's order upside down. The rich man seemed first, and he walked away. Fishermen and tax collectors seemed last, and they will sit with Christ. Don't judge anyone's standing with God by what you see on the outside, including your own.

10:32 *Now they were on the way, going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was going on ahead of them; and they were amazed, and following, they were afraid. And having taken the twelve along again, He began to tell them the things about to happen to Him:*

"Now they were on the way, going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was going on ahead of them." Jerusalem sits high in the hills, so travelers always went up to it. Picture Jesus walking out in front, setting His face toward the city where He would die.

"They were amazed, and following, they were afraid." They could sense something serious was ahead. Then He took the twelve aside again and told them what was about to happen to Him. Jesus did not stumble into the cross. He walked straight toward it.

10:33-34 *"Look, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be delivered to the chief priests and to the scribes; and they will condemn Him to death and will deliver Him to the Gentiles; and they will mock Him and will flog Him and will spit on Him and will kill Him; and on the third day He will rise again."*

This is the third time Jesus foretold His death (8:31; 9:31), and it is the most detailed. He would be "delivered to the chief priests and to the scribes." The chief priests were the leading priests in Jerusalem, mostly Sadducees, who ran the temple. They "will condemn Him to death and will deliver Him to the Gentiles," meaning the Romans, since the Jewish leaders could not carry out a death sentence on their own (John 18:31).

Then the details: "they will mock Him and will flog Him and will spit on Him and will kill Him." Every one of these came true in chapters 14 and 15. And then the promise He never left out: "on the third day He will rise again."

10:35-37 *And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, come up to Him, saying, "Teacher, we desire that You would do for us whatever we ask." And He said to them, "What do you desire Me to do for you?" And they said to Him, "Grant to us that we may sit, one at Your right and one at Your left, in Your glory."*

Right after Jesus spoke of His suffering, "James and John, the sons of Zebedee" came with a request: "Teacher, we desire that You would do for us whatever we ask." That is not how to pray. They wanted Jesus to sign a blank check.

"Grant to us that we may sit, one at Your right and one at Your left, in Your glory." They believed He was the King and that the kingdom was coming. That part was faith. But they wanted the top seats. Matthew tells us their mother came with them (Matthew 20:20-21). Jesus had just spoken of mocking, flogging, and death, and they were thinking about power.

10:38 *But Jesus said to them, "You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup which I drink, and to be baptized* ***with*** *the baptism* ***with*** *which I am baptized?"*

"You do not know what you are asking." Then Jesus asked them, "Are you able to drink the cup which I drink, and to be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?"

In the Old Testament, a cup often pictured God's judgment poured out (Psalm 75:8; Isaiah 51:17). Jesus would soon pray in Gethsemane for the Father to take "this cup" from Him (14:36). Baptism here means being plunged under, overwhelmed. Jesus was speaking of His suffering and death, when He would be overwhelmed by the judgment we deserved.

10:39-40 *And they said to Him, "We are able." And Jesus said to them, "The cup which I drink you will indeed drink, and **with** the baptism **with** which I am baptized you will be baptized; but to sit at My right and at My left is not Mine to give, but **it is for those** for whom it has been prepared."*

"We are able." They said it quickly, without knowing what it meant. Jesus said they would indeed drink His cup. They would suffer for Him. James became the first of the apostles to be killed for his faith (Acts 12:2). John lived long but was sent to the island of Patmos "because of the word of God" (Revelation 1:9). They could never drink the cup of God's wrath for sin. Only Jesus could do that. But they would share in His sufferings.

The seats in glory were "not Mine to give, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared." The Father has already settled it. Places in God's kingdom are not handed out to those who push for them.

10:41 *And having heard **it**, the ten began to be indignant about James and John.*

"The ten began to be indignant about James and John." Why were they angry? Probably not because James and John were proud, but because they had asked first. The ten wanted the same thing. Pride in one person stirs up pride in others, and soon the whole group is fighting. That is how many church fights start.

10:42 *But Jesus, having called them to **Him**, says to them, "You know that those being accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and their great **ones** exercise authority over them.*

Jesus called them together and gave them a lesson in leadership. "Those being accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them."

In the world, power means being on top and making others serve you. The disciples lived under Rome. They knew what that looked like: Caesar, governors, soldiers. That was the way of the world, and it still is in many places, in government, in business, and sadly even in some churches.

10:43-44 *But it will not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you will be your servant; and whoever of you desires to become first will be slave of all.*

"But it will not be so among you." Jesus drew a line. His people are to be different. "Whoever desires to become great among you will be your servant; and whoever of you desires to become first will be slave of all."

The word for servant is diakonos, one who waits on tables. It is where we get the word deacon. The word for slave is doulos, one who belongs to another and lives to do his will. In God's

kingdom, greatness is measured by how much you serve. Do you want to be great? Ask yourself how you can serve the people around you today.

10:45 *For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life* ***as*** *a ransom for many."*

This is the key verse of Mark's Gospel. "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many."

The Son of Man in Daniel 7:14 is the One all peoples will serve. But He came first to serve. He washed feet, touched lepers, fed crowds, and healed the sick. And His greatest act of service was to give His life.

A ransom was the price paid to set a slave or a prisoner free. We were slaves to sin and under God's judgment, and we could not pay our way out. Jesus paid the price with His own life. He died in our place. Isaiah 53:11-12 says the Servant would bear the sins of many. Bible teachers discuss what "for many" tells us about those for whom Christ died, but the plain point here is that His one life was enough to pay for a great multitude. Every chapter in Mark has been leading here, and every chapter after this shows Him doing it.

Old Testament links: Isaiah 53:11-12 (alluded to)

10:46 *And they come to Jericho. And as He was going out from Jericho, and His disciples and a large crowd, a son of Timaeus, Bartimaeus the blind* ***man****, was sitting beside the road begging.*

"They come to Jericho." Jericho was about fifteen miles northeast of Jerusalem, the last town before the steep climb up to the city. Thousands of pilgrims passed through on their way to the Passover.

"Bartimaeus the blind man, was sitting beside the road begging." His name means son of Timaeus, and Mark gives both. Mark may have named him because the early church knew him. Blind men in that day had few ways to live except to beg where the crowds passed.

10:47 *And having heard that it is Jesus the Nazarene, he began to cry out and to say, "Son of David, Jesus, have mercy on me!"*

"Having heard that it is Jesus the Nazarene, he began to cry out and to say, Son of David, Jesus, have mercy on me!" He could not see, but he could hear, and he did not miss his chance.

"Son of David" was a title for the Messiah. God had promised David that one of his sons would sit on his throne forever (2 Samuel 7:12-16). Bartimaeus was blind, but he saw who Jesus was more clearly than many with good eyes. This is the first time in Mark that anyone calls Jesus by this title in public, and Jesus does not silence him. The time for hiding was almost over.

10:48 *And many were rebuking him that he should be silent; but he was crying out much more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!"*

"Many were rebuking him that he should be silent." The crowd wanted him to be quiet. A blind beggar should not bother an important teacher.

"But he was crying out much more, Son of David, have mercy on me!" He would not give up. When people try to keep you from Jesus, keep calling. Bartimaeus knew his need, and he knew who could meet it. That is the kind of faith Jesus answers.

10:49-50 *And Jesus, having stopped, said for him to be called. And they call the blind* ***man****, saying to him, "Take courage; rise, He calls you." And he, having thrown off his cloak, having risen, came to Jesus.*

"And Jesus, having stopped, said for him to be called." The same Jesus who was walking to the cross with the weight of the world on Him stopped for one blind beggar. The crowd's tune changed: "Take courage; rise, He calls you."

"And he, having thrown off his cloak, having risen, came to Jesus." For a beggar, his cloak was everything. It kept him warm at night, and he may have spread it out to catch coins. He threw it off. He did not want anything to slow him down. Compare him with the rich man earlier in the chapter, who would not let go of his possessions. Bartimaeus let go of everything he had.

10:51 *And Jesus, answering, says to him, "What do you desire* ***that*** *I should do for you?" And the blind* ***man*** *said to Him, "Rabboni, that I may receive sight."*

"What do you desire that I should do for you?" Jesus asked James and John the same question in verse 36. They asked for power. Bartimaeus asked for mercy.

Jesus knew what he needed. Why ask? Because Jesus wanted him to say it. Prayer is not telling God something He doesn't know. It is coming to Him in trust and naming our need. "Rabboni, that I may receive sight." Rabboni means my teacher or my master, a warm and respectful word.

10:52 *And Jesus said to him, "Go; your faith has saved you." And immediately he received sight and was following Jesus on the way.*

"Go; your faith has saved you." The word saved can mean healed, and it can mean saved from sin. For Bartimaeus it meant both. His faith did not have power in itself. It reached out to the One who did.

"And immediately he received sight and was following Jesus on the way." Jesus told him to go, and he went, right behind Jesus. "The way" led to Jerusalem and the cross. Bartimaeus is a picture of a true disciple. He knew he was helpless, he cried out for mercy, he threw off everything, and he followed Jesus.

Chapter 10 Summary

Jesus traveled into Judea beyond the Jordan, teaching the crowds. When the Pharisees tested Him on divorce, He took them back to creation: God made them male and female, the two become one flesh, and what God has joined, let no man separate. He welcomed little children, took them in His arms, and taught that the kingdom must be received like a little child. A rich man asked how to inherit eternal life, but he went away grieving when Jesus told him to sell what he had and follow Him. Jesus taught that it is impossible for man to save himself, but all things are possible with God, and He promised that those who leave everything for Him will receive far more, with persecutions, and eternal life. For the third time He foretold His death and resurrection. When James and John asked for places of honor, He taught that greatness comes through serving, for the Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many. Outside Jericho, blind Bartimaeus cried out to the Son of David for mercy, received his sight, and followed Jesus on the way.

Chapter 10 Study Questions

1. Where did Jesus go to answer the question about divorce, and why does that matter? (10:6-9)

2. Why did Moses allow divorce, according to Jesus? (10:5)

3. How did Jesus respond when the disciples kept the children away? (10:13-16)

4. What did the rich man lack, and why did he go away grieving? (10:21-22)

5. What did Jesus say about who is able to be saved? (10:26-27)

6. What did James and John ask for, and how did Jesus answer? (10:35-40)

7. How does Jesus describe true greatness in His kingdom? (10:42-44)

8. What does it mean that Jesus gave His life "as a ransom for many"? (10:45)

9. Is there anything you are holding on to, like the rich man's possessions, that keeps you from following Jesus fully?

10. Bartimaeus threw off his cloak and followed Jesus. What would it look like for you to follow Him "on the way" this week? (10:50-52)

Chapter 11: The King Comes to Jerusalem

Scripture

11:1-14 And when they draw near to Jerusalem, to Bethphage and Bethany, toward the Mount of Olives, He sends two of His disciples and says to them, "Go into the village opposite you; and immediately, entering into it, you will find a colt tied, on which no one of men has sat; having untied it, bring ***it***. And if anyone says to you, 'Why are you doing this?' say that the Lord has need of it, and immediately he will send it here." And they went away and found the colt tied at the door outside on the street, and they untie it. And some of those standing there were saying to them, "What are you doing, untying the colt?" And they spoke to them just as Jesus had commanded; and they let them go. And they brought the colt to Jesus and put their cloaks on it, and He sat on it. And many spread their cloaks on the road, and others were cutting branches from the trees and were spreading ***them*** on the road. And those going ahead and those following were crying out, saying, "Hosanna! Blessed ***is*** the ***One*** coming in ***the*** name of ***the*** Lord! Blessed ***is*** the coming kingdom, in ***the*** name of ***the*** Lord, of our father David! Hosanna in the highest!" And Jesus entered into Jerusalem and into the temple; and having looked around at all things, the hour already being late, He went out to Bethany with the twelve. And on the next day, when they had gone out from Bethany, He was hungry. And having seen from far away a fig tree having leaves, He went ***to see*** if perhaps He would find anything on it. And having come to it, He found nothing except leaves; for it was not ***the*** season of figs. And Jesus, answering, said to it, "May no one eat fruit from you anymore forever." And His disciples were listening.

11:15-33 And they come to Jerusalem. And Jesus, having entered into the temple, began to cast out those selling and buying in the temple, and He overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those selling the doves. And He was not permitting anyone to carry a vessel through the temple. And He was teaching, saying to them, "Has it not been written, 'My house will be called a house of prayer for all the nations'? But you made it a den of robbers." And the scribes and the chief priests heard ***it***, and they were seeking how they might destroy Him; for they were afraid of Him, because all the crowd was astonished at His teaching. And when evening came, He was going out of the city. And passing by in the morning, they saw the fig tree dried up from ***the*** roots. And having remembered, Peter says to Him, "Rabbi, look, the fig tree which You cursed has been dried up." And Jesus, answering, says to them, "Have faith of God. For truly I say to you that whoever says to this mountain, 'Be taken up and be cast into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that the things he says happen, it will be ***done*** for him, whatever he says. Because of this I say to you, all things whatever you ask, praying, believe that you receive ***them***, and it will be ***done*** for you. And whenever you stand praying, forgive if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father who ***is*** in the heavens may also forgive you your trespasses. But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father who ***is*** in the heavens forgive your trespasses." And they come again to Jerusalem. And as He is walking in the temple, the chief priests and the scribes and the elders come to Him, and they say to Him, "By what authority are You doing these things? And who gave You this authority, that You should do these things?" And Jesus, answering, said to them, "I also will ask you one word, and answer Me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things: The baptism of John, was it from heaven or from men? Answer Me." And they were

reasoning with themselves, saying, "If we say, 'From heaven,' He will say, 'Why then did you not believe him?' But if we say, 'From men'"—they were afraid of the people; for all were holding John, that he truly was a prophet. And answering, they say to Jesus, "We do not know." And Jesus, answering, says to them, "Neither do I tell you by what authority I do these things."

Chapter 11 Preview

With chapter 11 we come to the last week of Jesus' life before the cross. Mark gives six of his sixteen chapters to these few days. That tells us where the heart of the story is. Jesus comes to Jerusalem riding on a colt, the way the prophet Zechariah said Israel's King would come. The crowds spread their cloaks and branches on the road and shout, "Hosanna! Blessed is the One coming in the name of the Lord!"

The next day Jesus curses a fig tree that has leaves but no fruit, then goes into the temple and drives out those who had turned God's house of prayer into a den of robbers. The fig tree withers from the roots, and Jesus teaches His disciples about faith, prayer, and forgiveness. The chapter ends with the religious leaders demanding to know by what authority He does these things. Jesus answers with a question about John the Baptist, and they will not answer Him.

Chapter 11 Study

11:1 *And when they draw near to Jerusalem, to Bethphage and Bethany, toward the Mount of Olives, He sends two of His disciples*

"When they draw near to Jerusalem, to Bethphage and Bethany, toward the Mount of Olives." The Mount of Olives is a ridge just east of Jerusalem, across the Kidron Valley from the temple. Bethany was a village on its far side, about two miles from the city. It was the home of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus (John 11:1). Bethphage was a small village nearby.

The Mount of Olives matters in Bible prophecy. Zechariah 14:4 says the Lord's feet will stand on the Mount of Olives when He comes to fight for Jerusalem. Jesus would leave this world from here (Acts 1:9-12), and He will return here.

11:2-3 *and says to them, "Go into the village opposite you; and immediately, entering into it, you will find a colt tied, on which no one of men has sat; having untied it, bring* ***it****. And if anyone says to you, 'Why are you doing this?' say that the Lord has need of it, and immediately he will send it here."*

Jesus sent two disciples ahead with exact instructions. They would find "a colt tied, on which no one of men has sat." An animal that had never been ridden was set apart for a sacred purpose (Numbers 19:2; 1 Samuel 6:7).

"If anyone says to you, 'Why are you doing this?' say that the Lord has need of it." Some think Jesus had made plans ahead of time with the owner. Others believe He simply knew in advance, as He did with the upper room in 14:13-16. Either way, He was in full control. Nothing about the coming week caught Him by surprise.

11:4-6 *And they went away and found the colt tied at the door outside on the street, and they untie it. And some of those standing there were saying to them, "What are you doing, untying the colt?" And they spoke to them just as Jesus had commanded; and they let them go.*

"They went away and found the colt tied at the door outside on the street." It was exactly as Jesus said. When some bystanders asked what they were doing, the disciples gave the answer Jesus had given them, "and they let them go."

There is a simple lesson here. When we do what Jesus tells us, the way He tells us, we will find that He has gone ahead of us. The disciples did not have to argue or explain. They obeyed, and the Lord handled the rest.

11:7-8 *And they brought the colt to Jesus and put their cloaks on it, and He sat on it. And many spread their cloaks on the road, and others were cutting branches from the trees and were spreading **them** on the road.*

"They brought the colt to Jesus and put their cloaks on it, and He sat on it." For over five hundred years Israel had the promise of Zechariah 9:9: "Rejoice exceedingly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Look, your King comes to you." The prophet said He would be humble and riding on a donkey, on a colt. Jesus was telling the whole city, as plainly as He could without words, that He was that King.

A king riding a war horse came to make war. A king riding a donkey came in peace. "Many spread their cloaks on the road." That is how Israel once greeted a new king (2 Kings 9:13). Others cut branches from the fields. John tells us they were palm branches (John 12:13). This is why many churches call this day Palm Sunday.

Old Testament links: Zechariah 9:9 (fulfilled)

11:9-10 *And those going ahead and those following were crying out, saying, "Hosanna! Blessed **is** the **One** coming in **the** name of **the** Lord! Blessed **is** the coming kingdom, in **the** name of **the** Lord, of our father David! Hosanna in the highest!"*

The crowd shouted, "Hosanna! Blessed is the One coming in the name of the Lord!" Hosanna is a Hebrew word that means save now, or save, we pray. It had become a shout of praise. The words come from Psalm 118:25-26, one of the psalms pilgrims sang on the way to the feasts.

"Blessed is the coming kingdom, in the name of the Lord, of our father David!" The people expected Jesus to bring in the kingdom promised to David right then. Many of them pictured a Messiah who would throw out the Romans. They were right that He is the King, but they did not understand that He had come first to die. Within a week, some in the same city would shout, "Crucify Him!" (15:13). Crowds are fickle. Real faith keeps following when the cheering stops.

Old Testament links: Psalm 118:26 (quoted); Psalm 118:25 (alluded to)

11:11 *And Jesus entered into Jerusalem and into the temple; and having looked around at all things, the hour already being late, He went out to Bethany with the twelve.*

"Jesus entered into Jerusalem and into the temple; and having looked around at all things." Jesus came into the temple and looked around. He saw everything. He was like a landlord walking through his property, taking note of what was wrong.

"The hour already being late, He went out to Bethany with the twelve." He did not act that evening. He would come back the next day. Jesus never acts rashly. When He moves, it is on purpose.

11:12-13 *And on the next day, when they had gone out from Bethany, He was hungry. And having seen from far away a fig tree having leaves, He went **to see** if perhaps He would find anything on it. And having come to it, He found nothing except leaves; for it was not **the** season of figs.*

"On the next day, when they had gone out from Bethany, He was hungry." Jesus was fully God, but He was also fully man. He got tired and hungry like we do.

He saw "a fig tree having leaves" and went to see if it had anything on it. "He found nothing except leaves; for it was not the season of figs." This bothers some readers. Why look for fruit out of season? In Israel, fig trees put out small early fruit along with their leaves in spring, before the main crop. People often ate these. A tree full of leaves promised that something should be there. This tree made a show but had nothing to give.

11:14 *And Jesus, answering, said to it, "May no one eat fruit from you anymore forever." And His disciples were listening.*

"May no one eat fruit from you anymore forever." This is the only miracle of judgment in Mark. Jesus was not losing His temper at a tree. He was acting out a living parable, the way the Old Testament prophets often did.

The fig tree was a familiar picture of Israel (Jeremiah 8:13; Hosea 9:10). The temple was busy with religion, leaves everywhere, but it was not bearing the fruit God wanted. Mark wraps the cursing of the tree around the cleansing of the temple (11:12-14, 15-19, 20-21) so we read them together. "And His disciples were listening." We should listen too. God is not impressed with leaves. He looks for fruit.

11:15 *And they come to Jerusalem. And Jesus, having entered into the temple, began to cast out those selling and buying in the temple, and He overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those selling the doves.*

"Jesus, having entered into the temple, began to cast out those selling and buying in the temple." This happened in the Court of the Gentiles, the large outer court, the only part of the temple where non-Jews were allowed to come and pray.

Pilgrims came from all over the world for the Passover. They needed animals for sacrifice, and the temple tax had to be paid in a certain coin. Money changers swapped foreign money for the right

coin, often for a fat fee. Those "selling the doves" sold the sacrifice that the poor could afford (Leviticus 5:7). Jesus "overturned the tables." This was not a quiet protest. The gentle Servant was also the Lord of the temple, and He was angry.

11:16 *And He was not permitting anyone to carry a vessel through the temple.*

"He was not permitting anyone to carry a vessel through the temple." People used the outer court as a shortcut through the city, carrying their goods. Only Mark records this detail.

Jesus would not let God's house be treated as a back alley. How we treat the place and time of worship shows what we think of God. Our gatherings should be marked by reverence, not by business as usual.

11:17 *And He was teaching, saying to them, "Has it not been written, 'My house will be called a house of prayer for all the nations'? But you made it a den of robbers."*

"Has it not been written, 'My house will be called a house of prayer for all the nations'?" Jesus quoted Isaiah 56:7. Only Mark includes the words "for all the nations." God always meant His temple to be a place where Gentiles could come and pray. The noise and trade in the Court of the Gentiles had shut them out.

"But you made it a den of robbers." This comes from Jeremiah 7:11. A den is where robbers hide after they rob. The leaders were cheating people in God's name and then hiding behind the temple as if it made them safe. Jeremiah's warning came before the first temple was destroyed. Jesus' words warned that the same would happen again, and it did in A.D. 70.

Old Testament links: Isaiah 56:7 (quoted); Jeremiah 7:11 (quoted)

11:18-19 *And the scribes and the chief priests heard **it**, and they were seeking how they might destroy Him; for they were afraid of Him, because all the crowd was astonished at His teaching. And when evening came, He was going out of the city.*

"The scribes and the chief priests heard it, and they were seeking how they might destroy Him." The chief priests ran the temple and profited from the trade. Jesus had hit them where it hurt. "They were afraid of Him, because all the crowd was astonished at His teaching." They could not arrest Him in front of the crowd, so they looked for another way.

"When evening came, He was going out of the city." Each night of that week, Jesus left Jerusalem, likely to Bethany or the Mount of Olives (Luke 21:37).

11:20-21 *And passing by in the morning, they saw the fig tree dried up from **the** roots. And having remembered, Peter says to Him, "Rabbi, look, the fig tree which You cursed has been dried up."*

The next morning, "they saw the fig tree dried up from the roots." It was not just the leaves that had wilted. The whole tree was dead from the bottom up.

Peter remembered: "Rabbi, look, the fig tree which You cursed has been dried up." Rabbi means teacher, a title of respect for a Jewish teacher. What Jesus says happens. And the tree was a warning. Religion with leaves and no fruit will not last.

11:22 *And Jesus, answering, says to them, "Have faith of God.*

"Have faith of God." Jesus did not explain the fig tree. He turned the disciples to faith. The phrase means a faith that has God as its object, faith in God.

This is where everything starts. The disciples were amazed at the power. Jesus pointed them past the power to the One it came from. Our faith is only as good as the One we put it in.

11:23 *For truly I say to you that whoever says to this mountain, 'Be taken up and be cast into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that the things he says happen, it will be **done** for him, whatever he says.*

"Whoever says to this mountain, 'Be taken up and be cast into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that the things he says happen, it will be done for him." Jesus was likely standing on the Mount of Olives, and from there you could see the Dead Sea on a clear day.

A mountain was a common Jewish picture for a huge problem that seemed impossible to move. Jesus is not teaching that we can make God do whatever we want if we just believe hard enough. Faith is trust in God, not a force we use on Him. When we pray in line with God's will, there is no obstacle He cannot remove.

11:24 *Because of this I say to you, all things whatever you ask, praying, believe that you receive **them**, and it will be **done** for you.*

"All things whatever you ask, praying, believe that you receive them, and it will be done for you." This is a wonderful promise, and it has to be read with the rest of Scripture. John tells us we receive what we ask "according to His will" (1 John 5:14). Jesus Himself prayed in Gethsemane, "not what I want, but what You want" (14:36).

Believing prayer is not wishful thinking. It is asking God for what He wants to give, and trusting Him to give it in His way and His time. Do you pray expecting God to answer? Or do you pray and then go on worrying?

11:25 *And whenever you stand praying, forgive if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father who **is** in the heavens may also forgive you your trespasses.*

Then Jesus added something that might seem out of place. "Whenever you stand praying, forgive if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father who is in the heavens may also forgive you your trespasses." Jews often stood to pray.

Unforgiveness blocks prayer. You cannot hold a grudge in one hand and reach out to God with the other. Jesus is not saying we earn God's forgiveness by forgiving others. He is saying a heart that

has truly received God's mercy will show mercy. If you are struggling in prayer, ask yourself if there is someone you need to forgive.

11:26 *But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father who **is** in the heavens forgive your trespasses."*

"But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father who is in the heavens forgive your trespasses." This puts the same truth the other way around. A person who refuses to forgive shows that he has not understood God's forgiveness (Matthew 18:21-35).

About this verse: the SLB follows the Received Greek Text, which includes verse 26. Most older Greek copies of Mark do not have it, so many modern Bibles put it in brackets or a footnote. Jesus says the same thing in Matthew 6:15, which all copies include, so the teaching stands either way. No doctrine of the faith rests on this verse alone.

11:27-28 *And they come again to Jerusalem. And as He is walking in the temple, the chief priests and the scribes and the elders come to Him, and they say to Him, "By what authority are You doing these things? And who gave You this authority, that You should do these things?"*

"They come again to Jerusalem." As Jesus walked in the temple, "the chief priests and the scribes and the elders" came to Him. These three groups made up the Sanhedrin, the Jewish ruling council of seventy leaders and the high priest. This was an official challenge.

"By what authority are You doing these things? And who gave You this authority?" They wanted to know who had given Him the right to cleanse the temple. They had not given it to Him. They hoped to trap Him. If He said His authority came from God, they could charge Him with blasphemy. If He said it came from Himself, they could dismiss Him.

11:29-30 *And Jesus, answering, said to them, "I also will ask you one word, and answer Me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things: The baptism of John, was it from heaven or from men? Answer Me."*

Jesus answered with a question, a common way rabbis debated. "The baptism of John, was it from heaven or from men? Answer Me."

This was not a dodge. It was the answer. John had pointed to Jesus as the One coming after him (1:7-8). If John's ministry came from God, then so did Jesus' authority. Jesus put the question back on them. Before they judged Him, they had to deal with what God had already said through John.

11:31-32 *And they were reasoning with themselves, saying, "If we say, 'From heaven,' He will say, 'Why then did you not believe him?' But if we say, 'From men'"—they were afraid of the people; for all were holding John, that he truly was a prophet.*

They huddled together. "If we say, 'From heaven,' He will say, 'Why then did you not believe him?'" They had not believed John. "But if we say, 'From men'" they would be in trouble with the people, "for all were holding John, that he truly was a prophet."

Look at how they reasoned. They never asked what was true. They only asked what would be safe. That is the mark of a person who does not want the truth. They were more afraid of the crowd than of God.

11:33 *And answering, they say to Jesus, "We do not know." And Jesus, answering, says to them, "Neither do I tell you by what authority I do these things."*

"We do not know." It was a lie, and a cowardly one. These men were the teachers of Israel, and they would not take a stand on the most famous prophet of their day.

"Neither do I tell you by what authority I do these things." Jesus would not give more light to those who refused the light they already had. That is a sobering truth. When people keep rejecting what God has shown them, He may stop showing them more. But for anyone with an honest heart, the answer is plain: Jesus' authority comes from heaven, because He is the Son of God.

Chapter 11 Summary

Jesus came to Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives riding on a colt no one had ridden, as Zechariah foretold. The crowds spread cloaks and branches on the road, shouting, "Hosanna! Blessed is the One coming in the name of the Lord!" He entered the temple, looked around at everything, and went back to Bethany. The next day He cursed a fig tree that had leaves but no fruit, then drove the buyers and sellers out of the temple, saying God's house was to be a house of prayer for all the nations, but they had made it a den of robbers. The chief priests and scribes began looking for a way to destroy Him. The next morning the fig tree had withered from the roots, and Jesus taught His disciples to have faith in God, to pray believing, and to forgive so that their Father would forgive them. When the chief priests, scribes, and elders demanded to know by what authority He acted, Jesus asked them whether John's baptism was from heaven or from men. They would not answer, so neither did He.

Chapter 11 Study Questions

1. How did Jesus enter Jerusalem, and what Old Testament promise did it fulfill? (11:1-7)

2. What did the crowds shout, and what does "Hosanna" mean? (11:9-10)

3. Why do you think Jesus cursed the fig tree? What does it picture? (11:12-14, 20-21)

4. What did Jesus find in the temple, and why was He angry? (11:15-17)

5. What does Jesus mean by "Have faith of God"? (11:22)

6. How should we understand the promise about prayer in 11:24 together with praying for God's will?

7. Why does unforgiveness get in the way of prayer? (11:25-26)

8. How did the religious leaders decide how to answer Jesus' question about John? What does that show about their hearts? (11:31-33)

9. Is your faith showing fruit, or only leaves? What fruit would you like God to grow in you?

10. Is there someone you need to forgive before you pray this week? (11:25)

Chapter 12: Questions in the Temple

Scripture

12:1-12 And He began to say to them in parables: "A man planted a vineyard, and put a fence around ***it***, and dug a wine vat, and built a tower; and he rented it out to farmers and went abroad. And at the season he sent a slave to the farmers, so that he might receive from the farmers from the fruit of the vineyard. And they, having taken him, beat ***him*** and sent ***him*** away empty. And again he sent to them another slave; and having stoned that ***one***, they wounded ***him*** in the head and sent ***him*** away dishonored. And again he sent another; and that ***one*** they killed; and many others, beating some and killing some. Having yet therefore one son, his beloved, he sent him also to them last, saying, 'They will respect my son.' But those farmers said to themselves, 'This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.' And having taken him, they killed ***him*** and cast ***him*** out of the vineyard. What therefore will the master of the vineyard do? He will come and destroy the farmers and give the vineyard to others. Have you not even read this Scripture: 'A stone which those building rejected, this has become ***the*** head of ***the*** corner; this was from ***the*** Lord, and it is marvelous in our eyes'?" And they were seeking to lay hold of Him, and they feared the crowd; for they knew that He had spoken the parable against them. And having left Him, they went away.

12:13-27 And they send to Him some of the Pharisees and of the Herodians, so that they might catch Him in a word. And having come, they say to Him, "Teacher, we know that You are true and You do not care about anyone; for You do not look at ***the*** face of men, but You teach the way of God in truth. Is it lawful to give a poll tax to Caesar, or not? Should we give, or should we not give?" But He, knowing their hypocrisy, said to them, "Why are you testing Me? Bring Me a denarius, so that I may see ***it***." And they brought ***it***. And He says to them, "Whose ***is*** this image and the inscription?" And they said to Him, "Caesar's." And Jesus, answering, said to them, "Give back the things of Caesar to Caesar, and the things of God to God." And they marveled at Him. And Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, come to Him; and they asked Him, saying, "Teacher, Moses wrote for us that if anyone's brother dies and leaves behind a wife and does not leave children, his brother should take his wife and raise up seed for his brother. There were therefore seven brothers; and the first took a wife, and dying, he did not leave seed. And the second took her and died, and neither did he leave seed; and the third likewise. And the seven took her and did not leave seed. Last of all the woman also died. In the resurrection, therefore, when they rise, of which of them will she be wife? For the seven had her ***as*** wife." And Jesus, answering, said to them, "Is it not because of this that you are in error, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God? For when they rise out of ***the*** dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels who ***are*** in the heavens. But concerning the dead, that they are raised, have you not read in the book of Moses, how at the bush God spoke to him, saying, 'I ***am*** the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob'? He is not the God of ***the*** dead, but God of ***the*** living. You therefore are greatly in error."

12:28-44 And one of the scribes, having come up, having heard them disputing, knowing that He had answered them well, asked Him, "Which is ***the*** first commandment of all?" And Jesus answered him, "***The*** first of all the commandments ***is***: 'Hear, Israel: ***the*** Lord our God, ***the*** Lord is

one; and you shall love ***the*** Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' This ***is the*** first commandment. And ***the*** second ***is*** like ***it***, this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these." And the scribe said to Him, "Well ***said***, Teacher; You have spoken in truth that God is one, and there is no other besides Him; and to love Him with all the heart and with all the understanding and with all the soul and with all the strength, and to love the neighbor as oneself, is more than all the burnt offerings and the sacrifices." And Jesus, having seen him, that he answered wisely, said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God." And no one any longer was daring to question Him. And Jesus, answering, was saying, teaching in the temple, "How do the scribes say that the Christ is ***the*** son of David? For David himself said by the Holy Spirit, 'The Lord said to my Lord, "Sit at My right ***hand*** until I make Your enemies a footstool of Your feet."' Therefore David himself calls Him Lord; and from where is He his son?" And the great crowd was listening to Him gladly. And He was saying to them in His teaching, "Beware of the scribes who desire to walk around in robes, and greetings in the marketplaces, and first seats in the synagogues and first places at the feasts, who devour the houses of the widows, and for a pretext pray at length. These will receive greater judgment." And Jesus, having sat down opposite the treasury, was watching how the crowd casts copper ***money*** into the treasury; and many rich ***people*** were casting in much. And one poor widow, having come, cast in two lepta, which is a quadrans. And having called His disciples to ***Him***, He says to them, "Truly I say to you that this poor widow has cast in more than all those having cast into the treasury; for all cast in out of what is abounding to them, but she out of her poverty cast in all that she had, her whole livelihood."

Chapter 12 Preview

Chapter 12 takes place in the temple courts during the last week. The leaders of Israel have just refused to answer Jesus about John's baptism. Now Jesus tells them a parable about a vineyard owner whose tenant farmers beat his servants and kill his beloved son. The leaders know He is talking about them. Then one group after another comes with a question meant to trap Him. The Pharisees and Herodians ask about paying taxes to Caesar. The Sadducees, who deny the resurrection, ask about a woman who married seven brothers. A scribe asks which commandment is the first of all.

Jesus answers every question with wisdom no one can match, until "no one any longer was daring to question Him." Then He asks a question of His own: how can the Christ be David's son if David calls Him Lord? He warns the crowd about scribes who love the best seats and devour widows' houses. The chapter ends with a poor widow quietly dropping two tiny coins into the treasury. Jesus says she gave more than all the rich.

Chapter 12 Study

12:1 *And He began to say to them in parables: "A man planted a vineyard, and put a fence around **it**, and dug a wine vat, and built a tower; and he rented it out to farmers and went abroad.*

"He began to say to them in parables." A parable is a story from everyday life that teaches a spiritual truth. Jesus told this one to the chief priests, scribes, and elders who had just questioned His authority (11:27).

"A man planted a vineyard, and put a fence around it, and dug a wine vat, and built a tower." Any Jew listening would think of Isaiah 5:1-7, the song of God's vineyard. There the vineyard is "the house of Israel," and God looked for good grapes but found only wild ones. The owner did everything needed: a fence for protection, a vat to press the grapes, a tower for a watchman. Then he "rented it out to farmers and went abroad." This was common in Galilee, where rich landowners lived far away and tenant farmers worked the land for a share of the crop.

Old Testament links: Isaiah 5:1-2 (alluded to)

12:2-5 *And at the season he sent a slave to the farmers, so that he might receive from the farmers from the fruit of the vineyard. And they, having taken him, beat **him** and sent **him** away empty. And again he sent to them another slave; and having stoned that **one**, they wounded **him** in the head and sent **him** away dishonored. And again he sent another; and that **one** they killed; and many others, beating some and killing some.*

"At the season he sent a slave to the farmers, so that he might receive from the farmers from the fruit of the vineyard." The owner had a right to his share. But the farmers beat the first slave and sent him away empty. They wounded the second in the head and treated him shamefully. They killed the third. And "many others, beating some and killing some."

The slaves stand for the prophets God sent to Israel again and again. Many were mistreated or killed. Jeremiah was beaten and thrown into a pit. Tradition says Isaiah was killed, and Zechariah son of Jehoiada was stoned in the temple court (2 Chronicles 24:20-21). Look at the patience of the owner. Any human landlord would have given up long before. That is a picture of God's long patience with His people.

12:6 *Having yet therefore one son, his beloved, he sent him also to them last, saying, 'They will respect my son.'*

"Having yet therefore one son, his beloved, he sent him also to them last." The word "beloved" is the same word the Father used from heaven at Jesus' baptism and at the Transfiguration (1:11; 9:7). Jesus is telling them plainly who He is.

"They will respect my son." The owner sent the one closest to his heart. And "last" means there would be no one after Him. Hebrews 1:1-2 says the same thing: God spoke long ago through the prophets, and in these last days He has spoken to us in His Son. Jesus is God's final word.

12:7-8 *But those farmers said to themselves, 'This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.' And having taken him, they killed **him** and cast **him** out of the vineyard.*

"This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and the inheritance will be ours." The farmers thought that with the son dead, the vineyard would be theirs. That is the heart of sin. People want God's gifts without God. They want to run their own lives and keep what belongs to Him.

"And having taken him, they killed him and cast him out of the vineyard." Jesus was telling these leaders what they were about to do. Within days they would hand Him over to be crucified. And He would die outside the city walls (Hebrews 13:12).

12:9 *What therefore will the master of the vineyard do? He will come and destroy the farmers and give the vineyard to others.*

"What therefore will the master of the vineyard do? He will come and destroy the farmers and give the vineyard to others." Jesus answers His own question. Judgment would come on those who rejected the Son. In A.D. 70 the Romans destroyed Jerusalem and its temple, and the rule of these leaders came to an end.

Who are the others? Jesus means new leaders over God's people, the apostles and the church built on the Son. This does not mean God has rejected the nation of Israel forever. Paul teaches that a hardening has come on Israel in part, until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in, and then "all Israel will be saved" (Romans 11:25-26). The judgment fell on the wicked tenants. God's promises to Israel still stand.

12:10-11 *Have you not even read this Scripture: 'A stone which those building rejected, this has become **the** head of **the** corner; this was from **the** Lord, and it is marvelous in our eyes'?"*

"Have you not even read this Scripture?" These were the experts in the Scriptures. Jesus quoted Psalm 118:22-23, the same psalm the crowds had sung when He entered the city (11:9). "A stone which those building rejected, this has become the head of the corner."

The builders were the leaders of Israel. They looked at Jesus and threw Him aside as useless. But God took the rejected stone and made Him the head of the corner, the most important stone in the building. The leaders would kill the Son, but God would raise Him up. "This was from the Lord, and it is marvelous in our eyes." Peter preached this verse to the same council after the resurrection (Acts 4:10-11).

Old Testament links: Psalm 118:22-23 (quoted)

12:12 *And they were seeking to lay hold of Him, and they feared the crowd; for they knew that He had spoken the parable against them. And having left Him, they went away.*

"They were seeking to lay hold of Him, and they feared the crowd; for they knew that He had spoken the parable against them." They understood exactly what He meant. And they still did not repent. They did what the parable said they would do: they plotted to kill the Son.

It is possible to understand the truth perfectly and still refuse it. Knowing about Jesus is not the same as bowing to Him. "And having left Him, they went away." But they would be back.

12:13 *And they send to Him some of the Pharisees and of the Herodians, so that they might catch Him in a word.*

"They send to Him some of the Pharisees and of the Herodians, so that they might catch Him in a word." The leaders sent a team. The Pharisees were strict about the Law and hated Roman rule. The Herodians were Jews who supported the family of Herod, who ruled with Rome's backing. Normally these two groups would not agree on anything. But they agreed on getting rid of Jesus. They had plotted together before (3:6).

"Catch Him in a word" is a hunting picture. They wanted to trap Him with His own words, like an animal in a snare.

12:14-15 *And having come, they say to Him, "Teacher, we know that You are true and You do not care about anyone; for You do not look at **the** face of men, but You teach the way of God in truth. Is it lawful to give a poll tax to Caesar, or not? Should we give, or should we not give?" But He, knowing their hypocrisy, said to them, "Why are you testing Me? Bring Me a denarius, so that I may see **it**."*

They started with flattery: "Teacher, we know that You are true and You do not care about anyone; for You do not look at the face of men." Every word was true, but they did not mean it. Flattery is praise with a hook in it.

Then came the trap: "Is it lawful to give a poll tax to Caesar, or not?" The poll tax was a tax paid by every person to Rome, and the Jews hated it. If Jesus said yes, the crowd would see Him as siding with Rome. If He said no, the Herodians could report Him to the Romans as a rebel.

"Knowing their hypocrisy," Jesus said, "Why are you testing Me? Bring Me a denarius." A denarius was a silver Roman coin, about a day's wage for a laborer. It was the coin used to pay the tax.

12:16-17 *And they brought **it**. And He says to them, "Whose **is** this image and the inscription?" And they said to Him, "Caesar's." And Jesus, answering, said to them, "Give back the things of Caesar to Caesar, and the things of God to God." And they marveled at Him.*

"Whose is this image and the inscription?" The coin carried the face of the emperor, Tiberius Caesar, with words calling him the son of the divine Augustus. "They said to Him, Caesar's."

"Give back the things of Caesar to Caesar, and the things of God to God." The coin had Caesar's image on it, so give it back to him. Christians are to pay taxes and respect the government (Romans 13:1-7). But there is a deeper point. What bears God's image? We do. Every person is made in the image of God (Genesis 1:27). Caesar can have the coin. God must have you, all of you. And no government ever gets what belongs only to God: our worship and our final loyalty. "They marveled at Him." The trap had snapped shut on empty air.

12:18 *And Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, come to Him; and they asked Him, saying,*

Next came the Sadducees, "who say there is no resurrection." This is the only time Mark mentions them. The Sadducees were a smaller party of wealthy, powerful Jews, many of them priests. They accepted only the five books of Moses as their final authority. They did not believe in the resurrection, angels, or spirits (Acts 23:8). They controlled the temple and the high priesthood.

12:19 *"Teacher, Moses wrote for us that if anyone's brother dies and leaves behind a wife and does not leave children, his brother should take his wife and raise up seed for his brother.*

"Teacher, Moses wrote for us that if anyone's brother dies and leaves behind a wife and does not leave children, his brother should take his wife and raise up seed for his brother." They were pointing to Deuteronomy 25:5-6. This custom kept a dead man's family line and land alive in Israel. Ruth and Boaz are a famous example of a related custom (Ruth 4).

They started with Moses because they knew Jesus respected Moses, and they thought Moses was on their side.

Old Testament links: Deuteronomy 25:5-6 (alluded to); Genesis 38:8 (alluded to)

12:20-23 *There were therefore seven brothers; and the first took a wife, and dying, he did not leave seed. And the second took her and died, and neither did he leave seed; and the third likewise. And the seven took her and did not leave seed. Last of all the woman also died. In the resurrection, therefore, when they rise, of which of them will she be wife? For the seven had her **as** wife."*

Then they told a story. Seven brothers married the same woman, one after another, and each died without children. "Last of all the woman also died. In the resurrection, therefore, when they rise, of which of them will she be wife?"

They thought this made the resurrection look silly. They probably used this story often to embarrass the Pharisees. The idea behind it was that if life after death is just like this life, the resurrection creates impossible problems. So, they reasoned, there must not be one.

12:24 *And Jesus, answering, said to them, "Is it not because of this that you are in error, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God?*

"Is it not because of this that you are in error, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God?" Jesus did not mock them. He went straight to the root of their mistake. They had two problems.

First, they did not know the Scriptures. They had read them, but they did not understand them. Second, they did not know "the power of God." They limited God to what they could imagine. Most errors about the faith come from one or both of these. The answer is to know God's Word and to trust God's power.

12:25 *For when they rise out of **the** dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels who **are** in the heavens.*

"When they rise out of the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels who are in the heavens." Life in the resurrection will not be a copy of this life. Marriage is for this age, for companionship and for filling the earth. In the age to come there is no more death, so there is no need for new births.

Jesus did not say we become angels. He said we will be "like angels" in this way: they do not marry. This verse does not say we will forget those we love. Scripture does not give us all the details, but it does promise that believers will be with the Lord and with one another (1 Thessalonians 4:17). And by mentioning angels, Jesus also corrected the Sadducees on another point. Angels are real.

12:26-27 *But concerning the dead, that they are raised, have you not read in the book of Moses, how at the bush God spoke to him, saying, 'I **am** the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob'? He is not the God of **the** dead, but God of **the** living. You therefore are greatly in error."*

Now Jesus answered them from the books of Moses, the part of Scripture they accepted. "At the bush God spoke to him, saying, 'I am the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob'?" He quoted Exodus 3:6.

When God said this to Moses, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had been dead for hundreds of years. Yet God did not say He was their God. He said "I am the God of Abraham." "He is not the God of the dead, but God of the living." God's covenant with them did not end at death. They are alive to Him, and they will be raised. Jesus built a whole argument on the tense of one verb. That shows how much He trusted every word of Scripture. "You therefore are greatly in error." Plain words, said in love, to men who needed to hear them.

Old Testament links: Exodus 3:6 (quoted)

12:28 *And one of the scribes, having come up, having heard them disputing, knowing that He had answered them well, asked Him, "Which is **the** first commandment of all?"*

"One of the scribes, having come up, having heard them disputing, knowing that He had answered them well, asked Him, Which is the first commandment of all?" The rabbis counted 613 commands in the Law of Moses. They debated which ones were heavier and which were lighter.

This scribe seems different from the others. He was impressed with Jesus' answer. Matthew says his question was also a test (Matthew 22:35), but Mark shows us an honest man who wanted a real answer.

12:29-30 *And Jesus answered him, "**The** first of all the commandments **is**: 'Hear, Israel: **the** Lord our God, **the** Lord is one; and you shall love **the** Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' This **is the** first commandment.*

Jesus answered with the Shema, the words every Jew prayed each morning and evening, from Deuteronomy 6:4-5. Shema is the Hebrew word for hear. "Hear, Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one."

God is one. There is only one true God. This is the starting point. Then comes the command: "you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength." All of you. Your heart, your inner life and choices. Your soul, your life itself. Your mind, the way you think. Your strength, all your energy and effort. God doesn't want a part of us. He wants all of us. Loving God is not just a feeling. It is giving Him everything we are.

Old Testament links: Deuteronomy 6:4-5 (quoted)

12:31 *And **the** second **is** like **it**, this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these."*

"And the second is like it, this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'" Jesus was asked for one, and He gave two. This one comes from Leviticus 19:18. The two belong together. You cannot love God and hate the people He made (1 John 4:20).

"There is no other commandment greater than these." Every other command hangs on these two. If we love God with everything, and love our neighbor as ourselves, we will keep the rest. Here is the hard part: none of us has kept these two perfectly. Only Jesus has. That is why we need Him.

Old Testament links: Leviticus 19:18 (quoted)

12:32-33 *And the scribe said to Him, "Well **said**, Teacher; You have spoken in truth that God is one, and there is no other besides Him; and to love Him with all the heart and with all the understanding and with all the soul and with all the strength, and to love the neighbor as oneself, is more than all the burnt offerings and the sacrifices."*

"Well said, Teacher; You have spoken in truth that God is one, and there is no other besides Him." The scribe agreed with Jesus. Then he added something: loving God and neighbor "is more than all the burnt offerings and the sacrifices."

That was a brave thing to say while standing in the temple, with sacrifices going on all around. But it was true, and the prophets had said it long before (1 Samuel 15:22; Hosea 6:6). Religious rituals mean nothing without a heart that loves God and others.

Old Testament links: Deuteronomy 6:5 (quoted); Leviticus 19:18 (quoted); Deuteronomy 4:35 (alluded to); Deuteronomy 6:4 (alluded to); 1 Samuel 15:22 (alluded to); Hosea 6:6 (alluded to)

12:34 *And Jesus, having seen him, that he answered wisely, said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God." And no one any longer was daring to question Him.*

"Jesus, having seen him, that he answered wisely, said to him, You are not far from the kingdom of God." That is a compliment, and it is also a warning. Not far is not the same as in.

This scribe understood the truth. He knew love mattered more than ritual. But knowing the right answers does not bring a person into the kingdom. What he still needed was to come to the King Himself. Many people today are not far from the kingdom. They know the facts. They agree with the teaching. But they have never turned to Jesus. Are you in, or only near?

"And no one any longer was daring to question Him." Every trap had failed.

12:35-37 *And Jesus, answering, was saying, teaching in the temple, "How do the scribes say that the Christ is **the** son of David? For David himself said by the Holy Spirit, 'The Lord said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand until I make Your enemies a footstool of Your feet."' Therefore David himself calls Him Lord; and from where is He his son?" And the great crowd was listening to Him gladly.*

Now Jesus asked a question. "How do the scribes say that the Christ is the son of David?" Everyone agreed the Messiah would come from David's line. Jesus did not deny it. He wanted them to see that the Messiah is more than David's son.

Jesus said that David spoke "by the Holy Spirit," and David wrote, "The Lord said to my Lord." What did the Lord say? "Sit at My right hand until I make Your enemies a footstool of Your feet." This is Psalm 110:1, the Old Testament verse quoted most often in the New Testament. Notice that Jesus said David wrote it by the Holy Spirit. Scripture is inspired by God. In the psalm, God (the LORD) speaks to David's Lord. Who would King David call "my Lord"? No father in Israel would call his own son Lord.

"Therefore David himself calls Him Lord; and from where is He his son?" The answer is that the Messiah is both. He is David's son because He was born in David's line. He is David's Lord because He is the eternal Son of God. Jesus is fully man and fully God. "The great crowd was listening to Him gladly."

Old Testament links: Psalm 110:1 (quoted)

12:38-40 *And He was saying to them in His teaching, "Beware of the scribes who desire to walk around in robes, and greetings in the marketplaces, and first seats in the synagogues and first places at the feasts, who devour the houses of the widows, and for a pretext pray at length. These will receive greater judgment."*

"Beware of the scribes." Jesus did not condemn every scribe. He had just praised one. But He warned against the many who used religion for themselves.

They loved "to walk around in robes," long flowing robes that showed off their status. They loved "greetings in the marketplaces," when people bowed and called them Rabbi. They loved "first seats in the synagogues and first places at the feasts." A synagogue was the local Jewish meeting

place for reading Scripture and prayer, and the front seats faced the people. Worst of all, they "devour the houses of the widows." Some took advantage of widows who trusted them to manage their property, or lived off their gifts. "And for a pretext pray at length." Long public prayers to look holy. "These will receive greater judgment." The more you know, the more you will answer for (James 3:1). Religious leaders who abuse the weak will face God.

12:41 *And Jesus, having sat down opposite the treasury, was watching how the crowd casts copper* ***money*** *into the treasury; and many rich* ***people*** *were casting in much.*

"Jesus, having sat down opposite the treasury, was watching how the crowd casts copper money into the treasury." In the Court of the Women stood collection boxes shaped like trumpets, where people dropped their offerings. Coins thrown in made noise. Some rich people put in a lot, and everyone could hear it.

Notice that Jesus "was watching." He still sees what we give and how we give it. Not just the amount, but the heart behind it.

12:42 *And one poor widow, having come, cast in two lepta, which is a quadrans.*

"One poor widow, having come, cast in two lepta, which is a quadrans." A lepton was the smallest Jewish coin, a tiny bit of copper. Two of them made a quadrans, the smallest Roman coin. Mark explains it in Roman money for his Roman readers. It was almost nothing, a tiny part of a day's wage.

Just a few verses earlier, Jesus warned about scribes who devour widows' houses. Here is a widow giving to God anyway. She could have kept one coin. She gave both.

12:43-44 *And having called His disciples to* ***Him****, He says to them, "Truly I say to you that this poor widow has cast in more than all those having cast into the treasury; for all cast in out of what is abounding to them, but she out of her poverty cast in all that she had, her whole livelihood."*

Jesus called His disciples over. He wanted them to see this. "Truly I say to you that this poor widow has cast in more than all those having cast into the treasury;"

How could two tiny coins be more? Because God measures a gift by what is left over, not by its size. "For all cast in out of what is abounding to them, but she out of her poverty cast in all that she had, her whole livelihood." The rich gave from their extra, and they never missed it. She gave everything she had to live on. She trusted God to take care of her.

This does not mean God wants everyone to give away every penny. It means God looks at the heart. A small gift from a sacrificial heart means more to Him than a big gift that costs nothing. In a few days, Jesus would give His whole life. This widow gave her whole living. She is the last person Jesus points to before He leaves the temple for good.

Chapter 12 Summary

Jesus told a parable about tenant farmers who beat and killed the servants sent to collect the owner's fruit and finally killed his beloved son. He quoted Psalm 118: the stone the builders rejected has become the head of the corner. The leaders knew He spoke against them. The Pharisees and Herodians tried to trap Him about paying taxes, and He answered, "Give back the things of Caesar to Caesar, and the things of God to God." The Sadducees, who deny the resurrection, asked about a woman married to seven brothers. Jesus said they did not know the Scriptures or the power of God, that in the resurrection people do not marry, and that God is the God of the living. A scribe asked which commandment is first, and Jesus answered: love God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength, and love your neighbor as yourself. He told the scribe he was not far from the kingdom of God. Jesus then asked how the Christ could be David's son when David calls Him Lord. He warned against scribes who seek honor and devour widows' houses, and He praised a poor widow who gave two small coins, all she had to live on.

Chapter 12 Study Questions

1. In the parable of the vineyard, who do the owner, the farmers, the slaves, and the beloved son stand for? (12:1-8)

2. What does Psalm 118:22 mean when it says the rejected stone became the head of the corner? (12:10-11)

3. How did Jesus answer the question about paying taxes to Caesar? What belongs to God? (12:14-17)

4. What two things did Jesus say the Sadducees did not know? (12:24)

5. How did Jesus prove the resurrection from the words God spoke at the burning bush? (12:26-27)

6. What are the two greatest commandments? (12:29-31)

7. Why did Jesus say the scribe was "not far from the kingdom of God," and what was he still missing? (12:34)

8. What does Psalm 110:1 show us about who the Messiah is? (12:35-37)

9. Which of the scribes' habits in 12:38-40 is the biggest temptation for religious people today?

10. What does the widow's gift teach you about your own giving? (12:41-44)

Chapter 13: Signs of His Coming

Scripture

13:1-13 And as He is going out of the temple, one of His disciples says to Him, "Teacher, look, what stones and what buildings!" And Jesus, answering, said to him, "Do you see these great buildings? There will certainly not be left stone on stone which will certainly not be thrown down." And as He is sitting on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter and James and John and Andrew were asking Him privately, "Tell us, when will these things be? And what ***will be*** the sign when all these things are about to be accomplished?" And Jesus, answering them, began to say, "Take heed lest anyone mislead you. For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am ***He***,' and they will mislead many. And when you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be alarmed; for it must happen, but the end ***is*** not yet. For nation will rise up against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; and there will be earthquakes in various places, and there will be famines and disturbances. These ***are*** beginnings of birth pains. But take heed to yourselves; for they will deliver you up to councils, and in synagogues you will be beaten, and before governors and kings you will be brought for My sake, for a testimony to them. And to all the nations the gospel must first be preached. And when they lead you, delivering ***you*** up, do not be anxious beforehand what you should speak, nor premeditate; but whatever is given to you in that hour, speak this; for you are not the ones speaking, but the Holy Spirit. And brother will deliver up brother to death, and a father ***his*** child; and children will rise up against parents and will put them to death. And you will be hated by all on account of My name; but the ***one*** having endured to ***the*** end, he will be saved.

13:14-27 But when you see the abomination of the desolation, which was spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not (let the ***one*** reading understand), then let those in Judea flee to the mountains. And let the ***one*** on the housetop not come down into the house, nor go in to take anything out of his house; and let the ***one*** being in the field not turn back to the things behind to take his cloak. But woe to those having ***a child*** in ***the*** womb and to those nursing in those days! And pray that your flight may not happen in winter. For those days will be tribulation such as has not happened like it from ***the*** beginning of creation which God created until now, and certainly will not happen. And unless ***the*** Lord had shortened the days, no flesh would have been saved; but on account of the elect, whom He chose, He shortened the days. And then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here ***is*** the Christ!' or 'Look, there!' do not believe ***it***. For false christs and false prophets will rise up, and they will give signs and wonders so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect. But you, take heed; look, I have foretold all things to you. But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars of heaven will be falling, and the powers that ***are*** in the heavens will be shaken. And then they will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory. And then He will send His angels and will gather together His elect from the four winds, from ***the*** end of ***the*** earth to ***the*** end of heaven.

13:28-37 Now learn the parable from the fig tree: when its branch has already become tender and puts forth the leaves, you know that the summer is near. So you also, when you see these things coming to pass, know that it is near, at ***the*** doors. Truly I say to you that this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things happen. The heaven and the earth will pass away, but My words will certainly not pass away. But concerning that day and the hour no one knows,

not even the angels who ***are*** in heaven, nor the Son, except the Father. Take heed, be alert and pray; for you do not know when the time is. ***It is*** like a man away on a journey, having left his house and having given to his slaves the authority, and to each one his work; and he commanded the doorkeeper that he should keep watch. Keep watch therefore, for you do not know when the master of the house is coming, in the evening, or at midnight, or at the crowing of the rooster, or in the morning, lest, having come suddenly, he find you sleeping. And what I say to you, I say to all: keep watch!"

Chapter 13 Preview

Chapter 13 is the longest stretch of teaching in Mark. As Jesus leaves the temple for the last time, a disciple points out the great stones and buildings. Jesus says that not one stone will be left on another. Sitting on the Mount of Olives, Peter, James, John, and Andrew ask Him privately when this will happen and what the sign will be. His answer is called the Olivet Discourse, because He gave it on the Mount of Olives. Matthew 24-25 and Luke 21 record the same teaching.

Jesus warns His followers not to be misled by false christs, wars, earthquakes, and famines. These are only the beginning of birth pains. He tells them they will be hated and handed over, but the gospel must first be preached to all the nations. Then He speaks of the abomination of desolation that Daniel foretold, a time of tribulation worse than any before it, and after that the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory. He ends with the lesson of the fig tree and a command He repeats three times: keep watch.

Chapter 13 Study

13:1 *And as He is going out of the temple, one of His disciples says to Him, "Teacher, look, what stones and what buildings!"*

"Teacher, look, what stones and what buildings!" The temple in Jerusalem was one of the wonders of the ancient world. Herod the Great had begun rebuilding it about 20 B.C., and work on it was still going on in Jesus' day (John 2:20). Some of its stones were huge, many tons each. The white stone and gold trim shone in the sun.

The disciples were like tourists from the country, amazed at the big city. It was natural. But Jesus had just watched a poor widow give everything to that temple while its leaders devoured widows' houses (12:40-44). He saw what the disciples did not.

13:2 *And Jesus, answering, said to him, "Do you see these great buildings? There will certainly not be left stone on stone which will certainly not be thrown down."*

"Do you see these great buildings? There will certainly not be left stone on stone which will certainly not be thrown down." This must have shocked them. The temple seemed like it would stand forever.

About forty years later, in A.D. 70, the Roman army under Titus captured Jerusalem and burned the temple. The Jewish historian Josephus describes the destruction, and the Romans tore the

buildings down. Jesus' words came true exactly. What looks most solid to us can be gone in a day. Only God and His Word last forever.

13:3-4 *And as He is sitting on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter and James and John and Andrew were asking Him privately, "Tell us, when will these things be? And what **will be** the sign when all these things are about to be accomplished?"*

"As He is sitting on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple." From the Mount of Olives you look straight across the Kidron Valley at the temple mount. Four disciples came to Him privately: Peter, James, John, and Andrew. These were the first four He called (1:16-20).

They asked two questions. "When will these things be?" That is, when will the temple be destroyed? "And what will be the sign when all these things are about to be accomplished?" Matthew's account shows they were also asking about His coming and "the consummation of the age" (Matthew 24:3). In their minds the fall of the temple and the end of the age were one event. Jesus' answer covers both, and we need to read carefully to see which part speaks of which.

13:5-6 *And Jesus, answering them, began to say, "Take heed lest anyone mislead you. For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am **He**,' and they will mislead many.*

"Take heed lest anyone mislead you." The first thing Jesus said was not a date. It was a warning. He cared more about their faithfulness than their curiosity.

"Many will come in My name, saying, 'I am He,' and they will mislead many." False messiahs rose up in Israel before A.D. 70, and false christs have appeared in every century since. Some claim to be Jesus returned. Others claim a special word that no one else has. Jesus said they will fool "many." Don't be one of them. The way to spot a counterfeit is to know the real thing, Jesus as Scripture shows Him.

13:7-8 *And when you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be alarmed; for it must happen, but the end **is** not yet. For nation will rise up against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; and there will be earthquakes in various places, and there will be famines and disturbances. These **are** beginnings of birth pains.*

"When you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be alarmed; for it must happen, but the end is not yet." Wars will come. Jesus said not to panic. They are not the sign that the end has arrived.

"Nation will rise up against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; and there will be earthquakes in various places, and there will be famines and disturbances." Then He gave them a picture: "These are beginnings of birth pains." A woman's labor pains start, and they come closer together and harder as the birth gets near. These troubles have been part of every age, but Jesus is saying they will grow in strength as the end approaches. They point ahead to the great travail of the Tribulation. Every war and earthquake is a reminder that this broken world is not our home and that Jesus is coming.

Old Testament links: Isaiah 19:2 (alluded to)

13:9 *But take heed to yourselves; for they will deliver you up to councils, and in synagogues you will be beaten, and before governors and kings you will be brought for My sake, for a testimony to them.*

"Take heed to yourselves; for they will deliver you up to councils, and in synagogues you will be beaten, and before governors and kings you will be brought for My sake." The councils were the local Jewish courts. Synagogues were where the Jews met each Sabbath, and they also held trials there.

The book of Acts shows this coming true. Peter and John stood before the Sanhedrin (Acts 4). Paul was beaten in synagogues and stood before governors Felix and Festus and King Agrippa (Acts 24-26). Notice the purpose: "for a testimony to them." Even persecution becomes a chance to tell people about Jesus.

13:10 *And to all the nations the gospel must first be preached.*

"And to all the nations the gospel must first be preached." Before the end comes, the good news will go out to every nation. This was God's plan from the start. He promised Abraham that all the families of the earth would be blessed through him (Genesis 12:3).

This verse gives us our job. While we wait for Jesus to come back, we are to tell the world about Him. Revelation 14:6 shows that even during the Tribulation God will send His gospel to every nation and tribe and tongue and people. God will not let the end come without warning the world.

13:11 *And when they lead you, delivering **you** up, do not be anxious beforehand what you should speak, nor premeditate; but whatever is given to you in that hour, speak this; for you are not the ones speaking, but the Holy Spirit.*

"When they lead you, delivering you up, do not be anxious beforehand what you should speak, nor premeditate; but whatever is given to you in that hour, speak this; for you are not the ones speaking, but the Holy Spirit."

This is a promise for believers on trial for their faith. The Holy Spirit will give them the words they need. It is not a promise that lets a preacher skip his study. It is for those who stand before courts and kings because they belong to Jesus. Peter, who would later deny Jesus, stood before the council and spoke boldly, "filled with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 4:8).

13:12-13 *And brother will deliver up brother to death, and a father **his** child; and children will rise up against parents and will put them to death. And you will be hated by all on account of My name; but the **one** having endured to **the** end, he will be saved.*

"Brother will deliver up brother to death, and a father his child; and children will rise up against parents and will put them to death." The deepest pain of persecution often comes from those closest to us. Following Jesus can split families.

"You will be hated by all on account of My name." Not for being difficult or unkind, but for His name. "But the one having endured to the end, he will be saved." This does not mean we save ourselves by hanging on. It means those who truly belong to Him will endure, because He keeps

them. In the context of the Tribulation, it can also mean those who endure to the end of that time will be delivered when Christ returns. Endurance is the mark of real faith.

13:14 *But when you see the abomination of the desolation, which was spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not (let the **one** reading understand), then let those in Judea flee to the mountains.*

Here Jesus answers the question about the sign. "When you see the abomination of the desolation, which was spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not (let the one reading understand), then let those in Judea flee to the mountains."

What is the abomination of the desolation? An abomination is something God hates, here an idol or something unholy set up in His holy place. Desolation means it brings ruin. Daniel spoke of it in Daniel 9:27, 11:31, and 12:11. About 167 B.C., the Syrian king Antiochus Epiphanes set up an altar to the false god Zeus in the temple and sacrificed a pig on it. That was a preview. But Jesus spoke of it as still to come.

I believe this looks ahead to the future Tribulation, the seven years before Christ returns. Daniel 9:27 says a coming ruler will make a covenant for seven years and in the middle of it put a stop to sacrifice and set up the abomination. Paul says the man of lawlessness will take his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as God (2 Thessalonians 2:3-4). Notice Mark's words "standing where it ought not." Paul's words point the same way, to a person standing in God's holy place. Many teachers believe this is the Antichrist. The destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, which Luke 21:20-24 describes, was a terrible judgment and a foretaste, but the abomination Jesus speaks of here belongs to the last days.

"Let the one reading understand." Mark wants us to stop and think. Read Daniel. Know what is coming.

Some Bible teachers believe Jesus' words here were fulfilled completely in A.D. 70, when the Romans destroyed the temple, but I hold the future view given above.

Old Testament links: Daniel 9:27 (alluded to); Daniel 12:11 (alluded to); Daniel 11:31 (alluded to)

13:15-16 *And let the **one** on the housetop not come down into the house, nor go in to take anything out of his house; and let the **one** being in the field not turn back to the things behind to take his cloak.*

When that sign appears, there is no time to lose. "Let the one on the housetop not come down into the house, nor go in to take anything out of his house." In Israel, houses had flat roofs used for rest and work, often with stairs on the outside. Jesus said to go straight down the stairs and run. Don't go back for anything.

"Let the one being in the field not turn back to the things behind to take his cloak." A worker in the field often left his outer cloak at the edge. Don't even go back for that. Lot's wife looked back (Genesis 19:26). When God says flee, you flee.

13:17-18 *But woe to those having **a child** in **the** womb and to those nursing in those days! And pray that your flight may not happen in winter.*

"Woe to those having a child in the womb and to those nursing in those days!" Jesus spoke with tender pity for pregnant women and nursing mothers who would have to run for their lives. They could not move fast or easily.

"Pray that your flight may not happen in winter." Winter in Israel brings rain, cold, and flooded streams that make travel hard. Jesus cared about the practical details of His people's suffering. That tells us something about Him. He knows what is coming, and He cares.

13:19 *For those days will be tribulation such as has not happened like it from **the** beginning of creation which God created until now, and certainly will not happen.*

"For those days will be tribulation such as has not happened like it from the beginning of creation which God created until now, and certainly will not happen." Tribulation means great pressure and distress. Jesus says this time will be worse than anything in all of history and worse than anything that will ever come after.

That is why I believe this cannot be only A.D. 70. As horrible as the fall of Jerusalem was, it was not the worst time in all history, and worse has followed. Daniel 12:1 speaks of "a time of distress such as has not been since there was a nation until that time" and ties it to the end and the resurrection. Jeremiah 30:7 calls it the time of Jacob's distress. Revelation 6-19 describes it in detail. This is the Great Tribulation.

Will the church go through it? I believe Scripture teaches that Christ will come for His church before this time begins. Paul tells believers, "God did not appoint us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation" (1 Thessalonians 5:9), and he describes the Lord coming down from heaven to catch us up to meet Him in the air (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17). Jesus promised to come and take us to Himself (John 14:3). The Olivet Discourse speaks to Jesus' disciples as Jews standing in Israel, and in that coming day it speaks to those in Judea who come to faith during the Tribulation.

Old Testament links: Daniel 12:1 (alluded to); Jeremiah 30:7 (alluded to)

13:20 *And unless **the** Lord had shortened the days, no flesh would have been saved; but on account of the elect, whom He chose, He shortened the days.*

"Unless the Lord had shortened the days, no flesh would have been saved." The word saved here means kept alive. If God did not put a limit on that time, no one on earth would survive it.

"But on account of the elect, whom He chose, He shortened the days." The elect are God's chosen people. Here it means those who belong to Him during the Tribulation, both Israel and those from every nation who turn to Him then (Revelation 7). God has set the limits. Daniel and Revelation measure it: three and a half years, 1,260 days, forty-two months (Daniel 7:25; Revelation 11:2-3; 12:6). Even in the darkest time in history, God is in control, and He watches over His own.

13:21-22 *And then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here **is** the Christ!' or 'Look, there!' do not believe **it**. For false christs and false prophets will rise up, and they will give signs and wonders so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect.*

"If anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or 'Look, there!' do not believe it." During those days, people will claim Christ has come in secret, in some hidden place. Jesus says don't believe it.

"False christs and false prophets will rise up, and they will give signs and wonders so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect." Notice that the false prophets will do real signs. Revelation 13:13-14 says the false prophet will make fire come down from heaven. Miracles alone do not prove something is from God. Everything must be tested by God's Word. "If possible" tells us that God will keep His own. The elect will not be finally deceived.

Old Testament links: Deuteronomy 13:1-3 (alluded to)

13:23 *But you, take heed; look, I have foretold all things to you.*

"But you, take heed; look, I have foretold all things to you." Jesus told us ahead of time so we would not be caught off guard. Prophecy is not given so we can argue about charts. It is given so we will stay faithful, watchful, and calm when the world shakes. God is never surprised.

13:24-25 *But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars of heaven will be falling, and the powers that **are** in the heavens will be shaken.*

"But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars of heaven will be falling, and the powers that are in the heavens will be shaken." Matthew says this comes "immediately after the tribulation" (Matthew 24:29).

These words echo the prophets (Isaiah 13:10; Joel 2:31). I take them plainly. God will shake the heavens themselves. The lights of the sky will fail. Revelation 6:12-14 describes the same kind of signs. The whole universe will announce that its Creator is about to appear.

Old Testament links: Isaiah 13:10 (alluded to); Isaiah 34:4 (alluded to); Joel 2:10 (alluded to); Joel 3:15 (alluded to)

13:26 *And then they will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory.*

"And then they will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory." This is the Second Coming. Jesus quoted Daniel 7:13, where one like a son of man comes with the clouds of heaven and receives an everlasting kingdom.

His first coming was quiet: a baby in a manger, a servant on a donkey. His second coming will be in "great power and glory." Everyone will see it. It will not be secret (Revelation 1:7). This is when Christ returns visibly to the earth at the end of the Tribulation, as Revelation 19:11-16 shows Him riding out of heaven as King of kings and Lord of lords. Then He will set up His kingdom on the earth for a thousand years (Revelation 20:4-6).

Old Testament links: Daniel 7:13 (alluded to)

13:27 *And then He will send His angels and will gather together His elect from the four winds, from **the** end of **the** earth to **the** end of heaven.*

"And then He will send His angels and will gather together His elect from the four winds, from the end of the earth to the end of heaven." When Jesus returns, His angels will gather His chosen people from every corner of the earth. The four winds means every direction.

Is this the rapture? I believe it is not. At the rapture, the Lord Himself comes in the air for the church and believers are caught up to meet Him (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17). Here, at the end of the Tribulation, angels gather the elect, the believing remnant of Israel and those who came to faith during the Tribulation, to enter His kingdom. The prophets promised that God would gather His scattered people Israel back to their land (Isaiah 11:12; Deuteronomy 30:3-4). God still has a future for the nation of Israel (Romans 11:25-29), and He will keep every promise He made.

Old Testament links: Deuteronomy 30:4 (alluded to); Zechariah 2:6 (alluded to)

13:28-29 *Now learn the parable from the fig tree: when its branch has already become tender and puts forth the leaves, you know that the summer is near. So you also, when you see these things coming to pass, know that it is near, at **the** doors.*

"Now learn the parable from the fig tree: when its branch has already become tender and puts forth the leaves, you know that the summer is near." Many trees in Israel, like the olive, keep their leaves all year. The fig tree loses its leaves in winter. When its branches soften and new leaves come out, you know summer is close.

"So you also, when you see these things coming to pass, know that it is near, at the doors." When the signs Jesus described begin, those who see them can know His coming is very close, right at the door. Some Bible teachers also see the fig tree as a picture of Israel, and they point to Israel becoming a nation again in 1948. Jesus' main point is simpler: watch the signs as you would watch a fig tree.

13:30-31 *Truly I say to you that this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things happen. The heaven and the earth will pass away, but My words will certainly not pass away.*

"Truly I say to you that this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things happen." What did Jesus mean? This is one of the most debated verses in the discourse. Many dispensational teachers believe "this generation" means the generation that sees these signs. The people alive when the abomination is set up will see the Lord return. Others take the word generation to mean race or kind, the Jewish people, who will not pass away until all is fulfilled. Others apply it to the disciples' own generation and A.D. 70. Each view has good teachers behind it, and I won't press one here.

"The heaven and the earth will pass away, but My words will certainly not pass away." Whatever we debate, this is certain. The universe will one day be gone, but every word Jesus spoke will stand. You can stake your life on what He said.

13:32 *But concerning that day and the hour no one knows, not even the angels who **are** in heaven, nor the Son, except the Father.*

"But concerning that day and the hour no one knows, not even the angels who are in heaven, nor the Son, except the Father." No one knows the date. Not the angels. Not even the Son.

How could Jesus, who is God, not know? When the Son became man, He set aside the independent use of some of His divine rights (Philippians 2:6-8). He lived as a servant in full dependence on the Father, and He knew what the Father gave Him to know. After His resurrection He still told His disciples it was not for them to know the times or seasons the Father set (Acts 1:7). Here is the plain lesson: anyone who sets a date for Christ's return is claiming to know what Jesus said only the Father knows. Run from date setters.

13:33 *Take heed, be alert and pray; for you do not know when the time is.*

"Take heed, be alert and pray; for you do not know when the time is." Since we don't know when, we must always be ready. Be alert means stay awake, don't drift off. And pray.

The right response to prophecy is not fear or speculation. It is watchfulness and prayer. Are you ready if Jesus came today? Is there anything you would want to make right first?

13:34 ***It is*** *like a man away on a journey, having left his house and having given to his slaves the authority, and to each one his work; and he commanded the doorkeeper that he should keep watch.*

"It is like a man away on a journey, having left his house and having given to his slaves the authority, and to each one his work; and he commanded the doorkeeper that he should keep watch."

Jesus is the man away on a journey. He has gone to the Father. He has given each of His servants work to do. We are not to sit and stare at the sky. We are to be busy with the work He gave us. And someone is to keep watch at the door, ready to open it the moment the master comes. Each one of us has a job in His house. Are you doing yours?

13:35-36 *Keep watch therefore, for you do not know when the master of the house is coming, in the evening, or at midnight, or at the crowing of the rooster, or in the morning, lest, having come suddenly, he find you sleeping.*

"Keep watch therefore, for you do not know when the master of the house is coming, in the evening, or at midnight, or at the crowing of the rooster, or in the morning." These are the four watches of the night as the Romans counted them, from evening until dawn. He could come at any hour.

"Lest, having come suddenly, he find you sleeping." The danger is not that Jesus will come too soon. The danger is that we will be spiritually asleep when He does: careless, distracted, living for ourselves. This word "suddenly" fits the teaching that Christ's coming for His church could happen at any moment. Nothing has to happen first.

13:37 *And what I say to you, I say to all: keep watch!"*

"And what I say to you, I say to all: keep watch!" Jesus spoke this to four disciples on a hillside, but He meant it for everyone who would ever follow Him. That includes you and me.

Mark ends the discourse the way Jesus did, with a command. Not a timeline. Not a chart. Keep watch. Just a few verses later, in Gethsemane, Jesus would tell these same men to keep watch, and they fell asleep (14:34-41). Let's learn from them. Stay awake. Stay faithful. Jesus is coming.

Chapter 13 Summary

As Jesus left the temple, He told His disciples that not one stone would be left on another. On the Mount of Olives, Peter, James, John, and Andrew asked when this would happen and what the sign would be. Jesus warned them not to be misled by false christs and told them that wars, earthquakes, and famines are only the beginning of birth pains. His followers would be handed over to councils, beaten, brought before rulers, and hated for His name, but the gospel must first be preached to all nations, and the Holy Spirit would give them words. When the abomination of the desolation spoken of by Daniel stands where it ought not, those in Judea must flee at once, for that time will be a tribulation worse than any in history, shortened for the sake of the elect. False christs will show signs and wonders. After that tribulation the heavens will be shaken, and all will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory, and He will send His angels to gather His elect. Jesus gave the lesson of the fig tree, promised that His words will never pass away, and said that no one knows the day or hour except the Father. So He told all His followers to keep watch.

The work God has given me while I wait for Him is these studies and these resources, along with a Bible that is accurate and easy to understand. That is why the Steadfast Literal Bible (SLB) exists. It is how I try to stay busy at the job He gave me.

Chapter 13 Study Questions

1. What did Jesus say would happen to the temple, and when did it come true? (13:1-2)

2. What was the first warning Jesus gave in answer to the disciples' question? (13:5-6)

3. What does Jesus mean by "beginnings of birth pains"? (13:7-8)

4. What must happen to the gospel before the end comes? (13:10)

5. What promise did Jesus give to believers brought to trial for His name? (13:11)

6. What is the abomination of the desolation, and where else does Scripture speak of it? (13:14; Daniel 9:27; 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4)

7. How will the Son of Man's second coming be different from His first coming? (13:26)

8. Why should we be careful of anyone who sets a date for Jesus' return? (13:32)

9. What work has the Lord given you to do while you wait for Him? (13:34)

10. If Jesus came back today, would He find you awake or sleeping? What would you want to change? (13:35-37)

Chapter 14: The Last Supper, Gethsemane, and the Trial

Scripture

14:1-11 Now the Passover and the ***Feast of*** Unleavened ***Bread*** were after two days. And the chief priests and the scribes were seeking how, having seized Him by deceit, they might kill ***Him***. But they were saying, "Not during the feast, lest there be an uproar of the people." And while He was in Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as He was reclining, a woman came having an alabaster flask of perfume of pure nard, very costly; and having broken the alabaster flask, she poured ***it*** down on His head. But there were some indignant among themselves and saying, "Why has this waste of the perfume happened? For this could have been sold for more than three hundred denarii and given to the poor." And they were scolding her. But Jesus said, "Leave her alone. Why are you causing her trouble? She did a good work toward Me. For you always have the poor with you, and whenever you want, you are able to do good to them; but Me you do not always have. What this ***woman*** had she did; she came beforehand to anoint My body for the burial. Truly I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this ***woman*** did will also be spoken of for a memorial of her." And Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve, went away to the chief priests in order that he might deliver Him up to them. And having heard ***it***, they rejoiced and promised to give him money. And he was seeking how he might conveniently deliver Him up.

14:12-26 And on the first day of the Unleavened ***Bread***, when they were sacrificing the Passover, His disciples say to Him, "Where do You want us, having gone, to prepare, so that You may eat the Passover?" And He sends two of His disciples and says to them, "Go into the city, and a man carrying a jar of water will meet you; follow him. And wherever he enters, say to the master of the house, 'The Teacher says, "Where is the guest room where I may eat the Passover with My disciples?"' And he himself will show you a large upper room, furnished ***and*** ready; there prepare for us." And His disciples went out and came into the city and found ***it*** just as He had said to them; and they prepared the Passover. And evening having come, He comes with the twelve. And as they were reclining and eating, Jesus said, "Truly I say to you that one of you will deliver Me up, the ***one*** eating with Me." And they began to be grieved and to say to Him one by one, "Surely not I?" And another, "Surely not I?" And answering, He said to them, "***It is*** one of the twelve, the ***one*** dipping with Me into the bowl. The Son of Man indeed goes just as it has been written concerning Him; but woe to that man through whom the Son of Man is delivered up! It would have been good for him if that man had not been born." And as they were eating, Jesus, having taken bread, having blessed, broke ***it*** and gave ***it*** to them and said, "Take, eat; this is My body." And having taken the cup, having given thanks, He gave ***it*** to them, and they all drank of it. And He said to them, "This is My blood, the ***blood*** of the new covenant, which is being poured out for many. Truly I say to you that I will certainly no longer drink of the produce of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God." And having sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

14:27-42 And Jesus says to them, "All of you will be caused to stumble in Me during this night; for it has been written, 'I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.' But after I have been raised, I will go before you into Galilee." But Peter said to Him, "Even if all will be caused to stumble, yet not I!" And Jesus says to him, "Truly I say to you that today, in this night, before a

rooster crows twice, you will deny Me three times." But he kept saying all the more emphatically, "If I must die with You, I will certainly not deny You!" And likewise they all were also saying. And they come to a place whose name ***is*** Gethsemane; and He says to His disciples, "Sit here while I pray." And He takes along Peter and James and John with Him, and He began to be greatly alarmed and to be deeply distressed. And He says to them, "My soul is very sorrowful, to ***the point of*** death. Remain here and keep watch." And having gone forward a little, He fell on the ground and was praying that, if it is possible, the hour might pass from Him. And He was saying, "Abba, Father, all things ***are*** possible for You; take this cup away from Me. But not what I want, but what You ***want***." And He comes and finds them sleeping, and He says to Peter, "Simon, are you sleeping? Were you not able to keep watch one hour? Keep watch and pray, so that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed ***is*** willing, but the flesh ***is*** weak." And again having gone away, He prayed, saying the same word. And having returned, He found them again sleeping, for their eyes were weighed down; and they did not know what they should answer Him. And He comes the third time and says to them, "Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? It is enough; the hour has come. Look, the Son of Man is delivered up into the hands of the sinners. Rise up, let us go. Look, the ***one*** delivering Me up has drawn near."

14:43-52 And immediately, while He was still speaking, Judas comes up, being one of the twelve, and with him a great crowd with swords and clubs from the chief priests and the scribes and the elders. Now the ***one*** delivering Him up had given them a signal, saying, "Whomever I kiss, He is ***the one***; seize Him and lead ***Him*** away securely." And having come, immediately having gone up to Him, he says, "Rabbi, Rabbi!" And he kissed Him warmly. And they laid their hands on Him and seized Him. But a certain one of those standing by, having drawn the sword, struck the slave of the high priest and cut off his ear. And answering, Jesus said to them, "Did you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs, to arrest Me? Every day I was with you in the temple teaching, and you did not seize Me; but ***it is*** so that the Scriptures may be fulfilled." And having left Him, they all fled. And one certain young man was following Him, having thrown a linen cloth around ***his*** naked ***body***; and the young men seize him. But having left behind the linen cloth, he fled from them naked.

14:53-72 And they led Jesus away to the high priest; and all the chief priests and the elders and the scribes come together to him. And Peter followed Him from a distance, as far as inside into the courtyard of the high priest; and he was sitting with the officers and warming himself at the fire. And the chief priests and the whole council were seeking testimony against Jesus to put Him to death, and they were not finding ***any***. For many were bearing false testimony against Him, and the testimonies were not alike. And some, having risen up, were bearing false testimony against Him, saying, "We heard Him saying, 'I will destroy this temple made with hands, and in three days I will build another not made with hands.'" And not even so was their testimony alike. And the high priest, having stood up in the midst, questioned Jesus, saying, "Do You not answer anything? What are these testifying against You?" But He was silent and did not answer anything. Again the high priest was questioning Him and says to Him, "Are You the Christ, the Son of the Blessed ***One***?" 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." And the high priest, having torn his tunics, says, "What further need do we have of witnesses? You heard the blasphemy. How does it appear to you?" And they all condemned Him to be deserving of death. And some began to spit on

Him and to cover His face and to beat Him with fists and to say to Him, "Prophesy!" And the officers were striking Him with slaps. And while Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant girls of the high priest comes, and having seen Peter warming himself, having looked at him, she says, "You also were with the Nazarene, Jesus." But he denied ***it***, saying, "I do not know nor understand what you are saying." And he went out outside into the forecourt, and a rooster crowed. And the servant girl, having seen him, began again to say to those standing by, "This ***man*** is of them." But again he was denying ***it***. And after a little ***while*** again those standing by were saying to Peter, "Truly you are of them; for you are also a Galilean, and your speech is like ***theirs***." But he began to curse and to swear, "I do not know this man of whom you speak!" And a second time a rooster crowed. And Peter remembered the word that Jesus had said to him, "Before a rooster crows twice, you will deny Me three times." And having broken down, he was weeping.

Chapter 14 Preview

Chapter 14 is the longest chapter in Mark, and it covers less than a day and a half. The chief priests plot to kill Jesus. In Bethany a woman pours a flask of costly perfume on His head, and He says she has anointed His body for burial. Judas goes to the chief priests to betray Him. At the Passover meal Jesus tells the twelve that one of them will deliver Him up, and then He takes bread and the cup and gives them the meal we call the Lord's Supper: "this is My body," and "This is My blood, the blood of the new covenant."

On the Mount of Olives Jesus warns that all of them will stumble and that Peter will deny Him three times. In Gethsemane He falls on the ground and prays to His "Abba, Father" to "take this cup away from Me. But not what I want, but what You want." His disciples sleep. Judas arrives with a crowd and betrays Him with a kiss, and every disciple runs. Jesus is taken before the high priest and the council, where false witnesses cannot agree, until Jesus Himself answers the high priest's question, "I am." They condemn Him to death. Down in the courtyard, Peter denies Him three times, the rooster crows a second time, and Peter breaks down and weeps.

Chapter 14 Study

14:1-2 *Now the Passover and the **Feast of** Unleavened **Bread** were after two days. And the chief priests and the scribes were seeking how, having seized Him by deceit, they might kill **Him**. But they were saying, "Not during the feast, lest there be an uproar of the people."*

"Now the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread were after two days." The Passover remembered the night God brought Israel out of Egypt. The lamb was killed, its blood was put on the doorposts, and the angel of death passed over those houses (Exodus 12). The Feast of Unleavened Bread followed for seven days. Jerusalem would be packed with pilgrims.

"The chief priests and the scribes were seeking how, having seized Him by deceit, they might kill Him." They had already decided He must die. The only question was how. "Not during the feast, lest there be an uproar of the people." They wanted to wait until the crowds went home. But God had His own timing. Jesus, "our Passover" (1 Corinthians 5:7), would die at the Passover, right when the lambs were being sacrificed.

14:3 *And while He was in Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as He was reclining, a woman came having an alabaster flask of perfume of pure nard, very costly; and having broken the alabaster flask, she poured* ***it*** *down on His head.*

"While He was in Bethany in the house of Simon the leper." This Simon may have been a leper Jesus had healed. No one with active leprosy could host a dinner. As Jesus reclined at the table, the way people ate at a feast, "a woman came having an alabaster flask of perfume of pure nard, very costly."

Nard was a perfume made from a plant that grew in the mountains of India. It was very expensive. An alabaster flask was a jar of soft white stone with a long neck. "Having broken the alabaster flask, she poured it down on His head." She did not pour out a few drops. She broke the jar and gave all of it. John tells us this woman was Mary, the sister of Martha and Lazarus (John 12:3).

14:4-5 *But there were some indignant among themselves and saying, "Why has this waste of the perfume happened? For this could have been sold for more than three hundred denarii and given to the poor." And they were scolding her.*

"Why has this waste of the perfume happened?" Some were indignant. John tells us Judas was one of them (John 12:4-6). The perfume "could have been sold for more than three hundred denarii." A denarius was a day's wage for a laborer, so this was close to a year's pay. "And they were scolding her."

It sounded good, giving to the poor. But what they called waste, Jesus called worship. Have you ever been criticized for giving too much to the Lord? Those who don't love Jesus much will always think love for Him is wasteful.

14:6-7 *But Jesus said, "Leave her alone. Why are you causing her trouble? She did a good work toward Me. For you always have the poor with you, and whenever you want, you are able to do good to them; but Me you do not always have.*

"Leave her alone. Why are you causing her trouble? She did a good work toward Me." Jesus defended her. The word for "good" here means beautiful. What she did was lovely to Him.

"For you always have the poor with you, and whenever you want, you are able to do good to them; but Me you do not always have." Jesus was not saying the poor do not matter. He was quoting the idea of Deuteronomy 15:11, which tells Israel to open its hand to the poor. There would always be a chance to help the poor. But there were only days left to honor Jesus before the cross. Some opportunities come only once.

Old Testament links: Deuteronomy 15:11 (alluded to)

14:8-9 *What this **woman** had she did; she came beforehand to anoint My body for the burial. Truly I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this **woman** did will also be spoken of for a memorial of her."*

"What this woman had she did." She gave what she had. That is all God asks. "She came beforehand to anoint My body for the burial." Bodies were anointed with spices after death. Jesus said she had done it before He died. Maybe she understood what the disciples didn't, that He was really going to die.

"Wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman did will also be spoken of for a memorial of her." And here we are, two thousand years later, telling her story. Jesus kept His word. Nothing done for Him out of love is ever forgotten.

14:10-11 *And Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve, went away to the chief priests in order that he might deliver Him up to them. And having heard **it**, they rejoiced and promised to give him money. And he was seeking how he might conveniently deliver Him up.*

The contrast is stark. A woman gave Jesus something worth a year's wages. Now "Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve, went away to the chief priests in order that he might deliver Him up to them." Mark says "one of the twelve," as if to say, one of His own. Iscariot probably means man of Kerioth, a town in Judea.

Why did Judas do it? Mark doesn't say. Matthew tells us he asked what they would give him, and they paid him thirty pieces of silver (Matthew 26:15). John says he was a thief and that Satan entered him (John 12:6; 13:27). "They rejoiced and promised to give him money." Money had been his god for a long time. The leaders had been looking for a way to arrest Jesus quietly. Now they had a man on the inside.

14:12 *And on the first day of the Unleavened **Bread**, when they were sacrificing the Passover, His disciples say to Him, "Where do You want us, having gone, to prepare, so that You may eat the Passover?"*

"On the first day of the Unleavened Bread, when they were sacrificing the Passover." The lambs were killed at the temple on the afternoon before the Passover meal. Each family or group took a lamb, had it sacrificed, and roasted it to eat that night.

"Where do You want us, having gone, to prepare, so that You may eat the Passover?" There was much to prepare: the lamb, unleavened bread, bitter herbs, wine, and the room itself. Thousands of pilgrims needed a place in the city to eat the meal.

14:13-16 *And He sends two of His disciples and says to them, "Go into the city, and a man carrying a jar of water will meet you; follow him. And wherever he enters, say to the master of the house, 'The Teacher says, "Where is the guest room where I may eat the Passover with My disciples?"' And he himself will show you a large upper room, furnished **and** ready; there prepare for us." And His disciples went out and came into the city and found **it** just as He had said to them; and they prepared the Passover.*

Jesus sent two disciples. Luke tells us they were Peter and John (Luke 22:8). "A man carrying a jar of water will meet you; follow him." Carrying water jars was usually women's work, so a man doing it would stand out.

They were to ask "the master of the house" for the guest room. He would show them "a large upper room, furnished and ready." Jesus kept the place secret, maybe so Judas could not tell the leaders where to find Him before the meal was over. "And His disciples went out and came into the city and found it just as He had said to them." Again, Jesus knew. Again, it happened just as He said. Everything was going according to plan, His plan.

14:17-19 *And evening having come, He comes with the twelve. And as they were reclining and eating, Jesus said, "Truly I say to you that one of you will deliver Me up, the **one** eating with Me." And they began to be grieved and to say to Him one by one, "Surely not I?" And another, "Surely not I?"*

"Evening having come, He comes with the twelve." The Passover meal was eaten at night. As they were reclining and eating, Jesus said, "Truly I say to you that one of you will deliver Me up, the one eating with Me."

In that culture, eating together meant friendship and trust. To betray someone you had shared bread with was the worst kind of treachery. Psalm 41:9 speaks of a trusted friend, one "who ate my bread," turning against him. "They began to be grieved and to say to Him one by one, Surely not I?" To their credit, none of them pointed at someone else. Each one looked at his own heart. That is a good place to start when we hear a warning.

Old Testament links: Psalm 41:9 (fulfilled)

14:20-21 *And answering, He said to them, "**It is** one of the twelve, the **one** dipping with Me into the bowl. The Son of Man indeed goes just as it has been written concerning Him; but woe to that man through whom the Son of Man is delivered up! It would have been good for him if that man had not been born."*

"It is one of the twelve, the one dipping with Me into the bowl." They all dipped bread into a shared bowl of sauce. Jesus did not name Judas in front of everyone. Even now He gave Judas room to turn back.

"The Son of Man indeed goes just as it has been written concerning Him." Jesus' death was God's plan, foretold in Scripture. "But woe to that man through whom the Son of Man is delivered up!" God's plan did not take away Judas' guilt. Judas freely chose, and he was responsible. Both are true: God is in control, and people are accountable for what they do. "It would have been good for

him if that man had not been born." These are some of the most solemn words Jesus ever spoke about a person.

14:22 *And as they were eating, Jesus, having taken bread, having blessed, broke **it** and gave **it** to them and said, "Take, eat; this is My body."*

"As they were eating, Jesus, having taken bread, having blessed, broke it and gave it to them and said, Take, eat; this is My body." This was unleavened bread, flat and without yeast. In the Passover meal, the head of the house explained what each part meant. Jesus gave the bread a new meaning. It pictured His body, about to be broken for them.

"Take, eat." Just as we take food into our bodies, we take Christ by faith. He gives Himself to us. Here Jesus started what Christians have kept ever since, the Lord's Supper, also called Communion. Paul tells us Jesus said to do this in remembrance of Him (1 Corinthians 11:24).

14:23-24 *And having taken the cup, having given thanks, He gave **it** to them, and they all drank of it. And He said to them, "This is My blood, the **blood** of the new covenant, which is being poured out for many.*

"Having taken the cup, having given thanks, He gave it to them, and they all drank of it." "This is My blood, the blood of the new covenant, which is being poured out for many."

A covenant is a binding agreement. At Mount Sinai, Moses sprinkled the people with blood and called it the blood of the covenant (Exodus 24:8). Jeremiah promised a new covenant, when God would write His law on their hearts and remember their sins no more (Jeremiah 31:31-34). Jesus said His blood would seal that new covenant. The Passover lamb's blood saved Israel from death. Christ's blood saves us from sin and judgment. "For many" points back to 10:45, the ransom for many.

What do "this is My body" and "This is My blood" mean? Christians have understood these words in different ways. Roman Catholics teach that the bread and wine become the body and blood of Christ, Lutherans that Christ is truly present in, with, and under them, many Reformed believers that He is present spiritually, and many Baptist and Bible churches that the bread and cup are pictures, the way Jesus also called Himself the door and the vine. What Scripture shows plainly is this: the Lord's Supper is a remembrance and a proclamation that Jesus commanded. He said to do it in remembrance of Him, and Paul says that as often as we eat this bread and drink the cup, we "proclaim the death of the Lord until He comes" (1 Corinthians 11:26). Whatever a believer's view, we should come to the table with reverence, examine our hearts, and remember what it cost Him.

Jeremiah 31:31 says God will make this new covenant "with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah." Some teachers say the church has taken Israel's place in this covenant, but I believe the church shares now in its forgiveness through Jesus' blood, while God will still keep every promise of it to the nation of Israel when Christ returns (Romans 11:26-27).

Old Testament links: Exodus 24:8 (alluded to); Jeremiah 31:31 (alluded to)

14:25 *Truly I say to you that I will certainly no longer drink of the produce of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God."*

"Truly I say to you that I will certainly no longer drink of the produce of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God." This was His last meal with them before the cross. But it was not goodbye forever.

Jesus looked past the cross to the kingdom. He was certain of His resurrection and His return. There is a day coming when He will eat and drink with His people again in His kingdom. Revelation 19:9 calls it the marriage supper of the Lamb. Every time we take the Lord's Supper, we look back at the cross and forward to that day.

14:26 *And having sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.*

"And having sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives." At the Passover, Jews sang the Hallel, Psalms 113 to 118, praising God. They likely sang the last of these psalms before leaving. Psalm 118 includes the words about the rejected stone (118:22) and this line: "This is the day which the LORD has made." Think of Jesus singing a song of praise on His way to Gethsemane and the cross.

14:27-28 *And Jesus says to them, "All of you will be caused to stumble in Me during this night; for it has been written, 'I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.' But after I have been raised, I will go before you into Galilee."*

"All of you will be caused to stumble in Me during this night." Jesus said every one of them would fall away that night. He quoted Zechariah 13:7: "I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered." Notice who does the striking. God Himself would strike the Shepherd. The cross was not just men's work. It was God's plan to punish sin in His Son (Isaiah 53:10).

But before they had even failed, Jesus gave them hope: "after I have been raised, I will go before you into Galilee." He promised a reunion. He would not abandon them after they abandoned Him. That is grace.

Old Testament links: Zechariah 13:7 (quoted)

14:29-31 *But Peter said to Him, "Even if all will be caused to stumble, yet not I!" And Jesus says to him, "Truly I say to you that today, in this night, before a rooster crows twice, you will deny Me three times." But he kept saying all the more emphatically, "If I must die with You, I will certainly not deny You!" And likewise they all were also saying.*

"Even if all will be caused to stumble, yet not I!" Peter meant it. He loved Jesus. But he trusted his own strength.

"Truly I say to you that today, in this night, before a rooster crows twice, you will deny Me three times." Only Mark mentions the rooster crowing twice. That is the kind of detail Peter would remember. Peter would not hear it: "If I must die with You, I will certainly not deny You!" And

"likewise they all were also saying." Every one of them was sure. Self-confidence is not the same as faith. "Let the one who thinks he stands watch, lest he fall" (1 Corinthians 10:12).

14:32 *And they come to a place whose name **is** Gethsemane; and He says to His disciples, "Sit here while I pray."*

"They come to a place whose name is Gethsemane." Gethsemane means oil press. It was an olive grove on the slope of the Mount of Olives. Olives were crushed there to press out the oil. That night, Jesus would be pressed under the weight of what was coming.

"Sit here while I pray." In the greatest crisis of His life, Jesus prayed. If the Son of God needed to pray, how much more do we?

14:33-34 *And He takes along Peter and James and John with Him, and He began to be greatly alarmed and to be deeply distressed. And He says to them, "My soul is very sorrowful, to **the point of** death. Remain here and keep watch."*

"He takes along Peter and James and John with Him." The same three who saw His glory on the mountain now saw His agony in the garden. "He began to be greatly alarmed and to be deeply distressed." Mark uses strong words. Jesus was overwhelmed.

"My soul is very sorrowful, to the point of death." Jesus was fully human. He felt real grief and real dread. Why such distress? Not just because of pain. Many people have faced death bravely. Jesus was about to bear the sin of the world and the wrath of God against it (2 Corinthians 5:21). No one has ever faced anything like that. "Remain here and keep watch." He wanted His friends near.

14:35-36 *And having gone forward a little, He fell on the ground and was praying that, if it is possible, the hour might pass from Him. And He was saying, "Abba, Father, all things **are** possible for You; take this cup away from Me. But not what I want, but what You **want**."*

"Having gone forward a little, He fell on the ground and was praying that, if it is possible, the hour might pass from Him." He fell face down. The hour meant the time of His suffering and death.

"Abba, Father, all things are possible for You; take this cup away from Me." Abba is the Aramaic word a child used for his father, a word of close and loving trust. Only Mark keeps the Aramaic word here. The cup was the cup of God's wrath against sin (Isaiah 51:17). Jesus asked if there was any other way.

"But not what I want, but what You want." This is the greatest act of surrender in history. Jesus told the Father honestly what He felt, and then He gave His will to the Father's will. That is how we should pray too. We can tell God everything we feel, and then trust Him with the answer. There was no other way. The cup would not pass, because there was no other way for us to be saved.

14:37-38 *And He comes and finds them sleeping, and He says to Peter, "Simon, are you sleeping? Were you not able to keep watch one hour? Keep watch and pray, so that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed **is** willing, but the flesh **is** weak."*

"He comes and finds them sleeping." He says to Peter, "Simon, are you sleeping? Were you not able to keep watch one hour?" Jesus calls him Simon, his old name, not Peter, the rock. A few hours earlier Peter had promised to die with Him. Now he couldn't stay awake.

"Keep watch and pray, so that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." Jesus knew the test that was coming. The spirit, the inner man who loves God, may be willing. But the flesh, our human weakness, gives out. The answer is to watch and pray. Peter slept instead of praying, and in a few hours he fell. Prayerlessness always comes before a fall.

14:39-40 *And again having gone away, He prayed, saying the same word. And having returned, He found them again sleeping, for their eyes were weighed down; and they did not know what they should answer Him.*

"Again having gone away, He prayed, saying the same word." Jesus prayed the same prayer again. It is not wrong to bring the same request to God more than once (Luke 18:1).

"Having returned, He found them again sleeping, for their eyes were weighed down." They were exhausted and full of sorrow (Luke 22:45). "They did not know what they should answer Him." There was no excuse to give. We have all been there, embarrassed by our own weakness before the Lord.

14:41-42 *And He comes the third time and says to them, "Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? It is enough; the hour has come. Look, the Son of Man is delivered up into the hands of the sinners. Rise up, let us go. Look, the **one** delivering Me up has drawn near."*

"He comes the third time and says to them, Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? It is enough; the hour has come." Three times He prayed, and three times they slept. Soon Peter would deny Him three times.

"Look, the Son of Man is delivered up into the hands of the sinners." The time for prayer was over. The time to act had come. "Rise up, let us go. Look, the one delivering Me up has drawn near." Jesus did not run or hide. He got up and walked toward the one betraying Him. After the agony of prayer came the calm of surrender. He went to the cross on purpose.

14:43 *And immediately, while He was still speaking, Judas comes up, being one of the twelve, and with him a great crowd with swords and clubs from the chief priests and the scribes and the elders.*

"Immediately, while He was still speaking, Judas comes up, being one of the twelve." Mark says it again, "one of the twelve." It still stings.

With him was "a great crowd with swords and clubs from the chief priests and the scribes and the elders." John tells us Roman soldiers were with them, along with the temple police (John 18:3, 12). They came at night, armed, as if Jesus were a dangerous rebel. Jesus had nothing in His hands.

14:44-45 *Now the **one** delivering Him up had given them a signal, saying, "Whomever I kiss, He is **the one**; seize Him and lead **Him** away securely." And having come, immediately having gone up to Him, he says, "Rabbi, Rabbi!" And he kissed Him warmly.*

"Whomever I kiss, He is the one; seize Him and lead Him away securely." It was dark, and the crowd might not know which man was Jesus. Judas gave them a signal. A kiss was how a disciple greeted his teacher, a sign of respect and love.

"Rabbi, Rabbi! And he kissed Him warmly." The word Mark uses means he kissed Him over and over, with a show of affection. Judas used a sign of love to betray the One who loved him. Proverbs 27:6 says the kisses of an enemy are deceitful. Betrayal hurts most when it comes from someone close.

14:46-47 *And they laid their hands on Him and seized Him. But a certain one of those standing by, having drawn the sword, struck the slave of the high priest and cut off his ear.*

"They laid their hands on Him and seized Him." The Son of God let Himself be taken. He could have called legions of angels (Matthew 26:53). He didn't.

"A certain one of those standing by, having drawn the sword, struck the slave of the high priest and cut off his ear." Mark does not name him. John tells us it was Peter, and the slave was Malchus (John 18:10). Luke tells us Jesus healed the ear (Luke 22:51). Peter, who could not stay awake to pray, was ready to fight. But that was not the battle Jesus came to fight. His kingdom does not advance by the sword.

14:48-49 *And answering, Jesus said to them, "Did you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs, to arrest Me? Every day I was with you in the temple teaching, and you did not seize Me; but **it is** so that the Scriptures may be fulfilled."*

"Did you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs, to arrest Me?" The word robber could also mean a rebel or bandit. They treated Him like a dangerous criminal.

"Every day I was with you in the temple teaching, and you did not seize Me." They had had every chance to arrest Him in the open. They came at night because they were afraid of the people and afraid of the truth. "But it is so that the Scriptures may be fulfilled." Even this was in God's plan. Isaiah 53:12 says He was counted with the transgressors.

14:50 *And having left Him, they all fled.*

"And having left Him, they all fled." Just as Jesus said in verse 27. Every one of them. The ones who promised to die with Him ran into the night.

Before we judge them, we should be honest. Fear has made all of us run at some point. The good news is that this is not the end of their story. Jesus would restore them. He came to save failures, and that includes you and me.

14:51-52 *And one certain young man was following Him, having thrown a linen cloth around **his** naked **body**; and the young men seize him. But having left behind the linen cloth, he fled from them naked.*

"One certain young man was following Him, having thrown a linen cloth around his naked body; and the young men seize him. But having left behind the linen cloth, he fled from them naked." Only Mark tells us this. Who was he?

Mark does not say. Many Bible teachers believe it may have been Mark himself. The early church met at the home of Mark's mother in Jerusalem (Acts 12:12), and some think the Last Supper may have been in that house. If so, Mark may have woken up, thrown on a linen cloth, and followed the crowd to the garden. That would explain why Mark includes a detail no one else mentions, almost like a writer quietly signing his work. We can't be sure, but it is a reasonable possibility.

Either way, the point is plain. Everyone deserted Jesus, even a young man who tried to follow. Jesus went to the cross alone.

14:53-54 *And they led Jesus away to the high priest; and all the chief priests and the elders and the scribes come together to him. And Peter followed Him from a distance, as far as inside into the courtyard of the high priest; and he was sitting with the officers and warming himself at the fire.*

"They led Jesus away to the high priest." John tells us this was Caiaphas, with his father-in-law Annas also involved (John 18:13, 24). "All the chief priests and the elders and the scribes come together to him." This was the Sanhedrin, the Jewish ruling council of about seventy men plus the high priest. They met in the middle of the night, which was against their own rules for capital trials.

"Peter followed Him from a distance, as far as inside into the courtyard of the high priest." Peter deserves some credit. He came back. But he followed "from a distance." He sat with the officers, the temple guards, "warming himself at the fire." He was close to Jesus' enemies and far from Jesus. That is a dangerous place for a believer to be.

14:55-56 *And the chief priests and the whole council were seeking testimony against Jesus to put Him to death, and they were not finding **any**. For many were bearing false testimony against Him, and the testimonies were not alike.*

"The chief priests and the whole council were seeking testimony against Jesus to put Him to death, and they were not finding any." Think about that. They had already decided the verdict. Now they were looking for evidence. That is not justice.

"For many were bearing false testimony against Him, and the testimonies were not alike." The Law required two or three witnesses who agreed for a death sentence (Deuteronomy 17:6). Their

witnesses kept contradicting each other. Even liars could not find anything true to say against the sinless Son of God.

14:57-59 *And some, having risen up, were bearing false testimony against Him, saying, "We heard Him saying, 'I will destroy this temple made with hands, and in three days I will build another not made with hands.'" And not even so was their testimony alike.*

Some stood up and said, "We heard Him saying, 'I will destroy this temple made with hands, and in three days I will build another not made with hands.'" Jesus had said something like this, but not the way they told it. He had said, "Destroy this sanctuary, and in three days I will raise it up," and John tells us He was speaking of His body (John 2:19-21).

"And not even so was their testimony alike." The case was falling apart. The false witnesses twisted His words, which is what the enemies of truth often do. They take a real word and bend it into a lie.

14:60-61 *And the high priest, having stood up in the midst, questioned Jesus, saying, "Do You not answer anything? What are these testifying against You?" But He was silent and did not answer anything. Again the high priest was questioning Him and says to Him, "Are You the Christ, the Son of the Blessed **One**?"*

"The high priest, having stood up in the midst, questioned Jesus, saying, Do You not answer anything?" The high priest was frustrated. His case was failing. "But He was silent and did not answer anything." Isaiah 53:7 says, like a lamb led to the slaughter, He did not open His mouth. Jesus did not need to defend Himself against lies.

Then the high priest asked the question that mattered: "Are You the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One?" The Blessed One was a way of saying God without speaking His name. The high priest was asking under oath (Matthew 26:63) if Jesus claimed to be the Messiah and the Son of God.

Old Testament links: Isaiah 53:7 (alluded to)

14:62 *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."*

"And Jesus said, I am." Now Jesus broke His silence. He had stayed quiet against lies, but He would not stay quiet about the truth. These two words in Greek, ego eimi, also echo the name God gave Himself to Moses at the bush, I AM (Exodus 3:14).

Then He added, "you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power and coming with the clouds of heaven." He joined Psalm 110:1 and Daniel 7:13. The Power is another way of saying God. Jesus was telling the judge that one day the roles will be reversed. Today you are judging Me. One day you will see Me seated at God's right hand, coming to judge. Every person who rejects Jesus will one day stand before Him.

Old Testament links: Psalm 110:1 (alluded to); Daniel 7:13 (alluded to)

14:63-64 *And the high priest, having torn his tunics, says, "What further need do we have of witnesses? You heard the blasphemy. How does it appear to you?" And they all condemned Him to be deserving of death.*

"The high priest, having torn his tunics, says, What further need do we have of witnesses?" Tearing one's clothes was a sign of grief or horror. The high priest acted shocked, but this was what he wanted.

"You heard the blasphemy." Blasphemy means speaking against God or claiming for oneself what belongs only to God. If Jesus was not who He said, it would have been blasphemy. But He was telling the truth. "They all condemned Him to be deserving of death." The council condemned its own Messiah for telling the truth about Himself.

14:65 *And some began to spit on Him and to cover His face and to beat Him with fists and to say to Him, "Prophesy!" And the officers were striking Him with slaps.*

"Some began to spit on Him and to cover His face and to beat Him with fists and to say to Him, Prophesy!" They blindfolded Him and hit Him, then mocked Him: if You are a prophet, tell us who hit You. "And the officers were striking Him with slaps."

Spitting in someone's face was the worst insult (Numbers 12:14). Isaiah 50:6 foretold it: the Servant gave His back to those who struck Him and did not hide His face from shame and spitting. The irony is heavy. They mocked Him as a false prophet at the very moment His prophecy about Peter was coming true in the courtyard below.

Old Testament links: Isaiah 50:6 (alluded to)

14:66-68 *And while Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant girls of the high priest comes, and having seen Peter warming himself, having looked at him, she says, "You also were with the Nazarene, Jesus." But he denied **it**, saying, "I do not know nor understand what you are saying." And he went out outside into the forecourt, and a rooster crowed.*

"While Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant girls of the high priest comes." Not a soldier. Not a priest. A servant girl. "You also were with the Nazarene, Jesus."

"But he denied it, saying, I do not know nor understand what you are saying." Peter, who had drawn his sword against a crowd, folded before a servant girl. Fear makes us weak in strange places. "He went out outside into the forecourt, and a rooster crowed." He tried to slip away from the light of the fire. And the first rooster crowed. It was a warning, but Peter did not hear it.

14:69-70 *And the servant girl, having seen him, began again to say to those standing by, "This **man** is of them." But again he was denying **it**. And after a little **while** again those standing by were saying to Peter, "Truly you are of them; for you are also a Galilean, and your speech is like **theirs**."*

"The servant girl, having seen him, began again to say to those standing by, This man is of them." She would not let it go. "But again he was denying it."

"After a little while again those standing by were saying to Peter, Truly you are of them; for you are also a Galilean, and your speech is like theirs." People from Galilee had an accent, the way people from different parts of a country sound different. Peter could deny Jesus with his words, but his accent gave him away. And so should our lives. People should be able to tell we have been with Jesus (Acts 4:13).

14:71 *But he began to curse and to swear, "I do not know this man of whom you speak!"*

"But he began to curse and to swear, I do not know this man of whom you speak!" To curse here means Peter called down a curse on himself if he was lying. To swear means he took an oath. He would not even say Jesus' name. He called Him "this man."

This was Peter at his lowest. Three times he denied the Lord he loved. It shows how far a believer can fall when he trusts his own strength and stops watching and praying.

14:72 *And a second time a rooster crowed. And Peter remembered the word that Jesus had said to him, "Before a rooster crows twice, you will deny Me three times." And having broken down, he was weeping.*

"And a second time a rooster crowed." At that moment, "Peter remembered the word that Jesus had said to him." Luke tells us that the Lord turned and looked at Peter (Luke 22:61). "And having broken down, he was weeping."

Peter's tears were the tears of real repentance. Judas felt sorry too, but he went out and took his own life (Matthew 27:3-5). Peter went out and wept, and later came back. The difference is not in how bad the sin was. It is in where they went with it. Paul says godly sorrow leads to repentance and salvation (2 Corinthians 7:10).

And here is something worth noticing. Many believe Mark wrote down what Peter preached. If so, Peter told this story on himself again and again. He did not hide his failure. He told it so others would see the grace of the Lord who restored him (John 21:15-19). If you have failed Jesus, your story isn't over either. Come back to Him.

Chapter 14 Summary

Two days before the Passover, the chief priests and scribes looked for a way to arrest and kill Jesus. In Bethany a woman poured costly perfume on His head, and Jesus defended her, saying she had anointed His body for burial and would be remembered wherever the gospel is preached. Judas went to the chief priests to betray Him for money. Jesus sent two disciples to prepare the Passover, and at the meal He said one of the twelve would deliver Him up. He took bread and said, "Take, eat; this is My body," and took the cup and said, "This is My blood, the blood of the new covenant, which is being poured out for many." On the Mount of Olives He foretold that all would stumble and Peter would deny Him three times. In Gethsemane He prayed in deep distress, "not what I want, but what You want," while His disciples slept. Judas came with a crowd and betrayed Him with a kiss, and all the disciples fled, including a young man who ran away naked. Before the high priest and the council, false witnesses could not agree, but when the high priest asked if He

was the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One, Jesus said, "I am," and they condemned Him to death, spit on Him, and beat Him. In the courtyard Peter denied Him three times, the rooster crowed a second time, and Peter broke down and wept.

I have followed Jesus from a distance, like Peter in the courtyard. What pulls me away is my own pride and self-reliance. When I think I can handle things myself, I drift back a few steps. Following close means needing Him.

Chapter 14 Study Questions

1. Why did Jesus call the woman's gift a good work, when others called it a waste? (14:3-9)

2. What did Judas do right after this, and what does the contrast teach us? (14:10-11)

3. What did Jesus say about the bread and the cup at the Last Supper? (14:22-24)

4. What is the new covenant, and how does Jesus' blood seal it? (14:24; Jeremiah 31:31-34)

5. What did Peter promise, and what did Jesus tell him would happen? (14:29-31)

6. How did Jesus pray in Gethsemane, and what can you learn from His prayer? (14:36)

7. Why did Jesus tell the disciples to "keep watch and pray"? What happened when they slept instead? (14:38)

8. What did Jesus answer when the high priest asked if He was the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One? (14:61-62)

9. Have you ever followed Jesus "from a distance"? What pulls you away from Him? (14:54)

10. How is Peter's response to his failure different from Judas'? What does that mean for you when you fail? (14:72)

Chapter 15: The Crucifixion

Scripture

15:1-15 And immediately, in the morning, the chief priests, having held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council, having bound Jesus, led ***Him*** away and delivered ***Him*** to Pilate. And Pilate questioned Him, "Are You the King of the Jews?" And answering, He said to him, "You say ***it***." And the chief priests were accusing Him of many things, but He Himself answered nothing. And Pilate again questioned Him, saying, "Do You not answer anything? See how many things they testify against You!" But Jesus no longer answered anything, so that Pilate was amazed. Now at ***the*** feast he was releasing to them one prisoner, whomever they were requesting. And there was the ***one*** called Barabbas, bound with the fellow rebels who had committed murder in the insurrection. And the crowd, having cried out, began to ask ***him to do*** just as he was always doing for them. But Pilate answered them, saying, "Do you want me to release to you the King of the Jews?" For he knew that the chief priests had delivered Him up because of envy. But the chief priests stirred up the crowd, so that he would rather release Barabbas to them. And Pilate, answering, again said to them, "What then do you want me to do ***to Him*** whom you call King of the Jews?" And they again cried out, "Crucify Him!" And Pilate was saying to them, "Why, what evil has He done?" But they cried out all the more, "Crucify Him!" And Pilate, wishing to do what ***was*** satisfying to the crowd, released Barabbas to them; and having flogged Jesus, he delivered ***Him*** up so that He might be crucified.

15:16-32 And the soldiers led Him away inside the courtyard, which is ***the*** Praetorium, and they call together the whole cohort. And they clothe Him ***in*** purple, and having woven a crown of thorns, they put ***it*** on Him. And they began to salute Him, "Hail, King of the Jews!" And they were striking His head with a reed and were spitting on Him, and bending the knees, they were worshiping Him. And when they had mocked Him, they took the purple off Him and put His own garments on Him. And they lead Him out so that they may crucify Him. And they compel a certain ***man*** passing by, Simon, a Cyrenian, coming from ***the*** country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to carry His cross. And they bring Him to ***the*** place Golgotha, which is, being translated, Place of a Skull. And they were giving Him wine mixed with myrrh to drink; but He did not take ***it***. And having crucified Him, they were dividing His garments, casting a lot for them, who should take what. Now it was ***the*** third hour, and they crucified Him. And the inscription of His accusation was written: "THE KING OF THE JEWS." And with Him they crucify two robbers, one at ***His*** right and one at His left. And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "And He was reckoned with ***the*** lawless." And those passing by were blaspheming Him, shaking their heads and saying, "Aha! You who destroy the temple and build ***it*** in three days, save Yourself and come down from the cross!" Likewise also the chief priests, mocking with one another along with the scribes, were saying, "He saved others; Himself He is not able to save. Let the Christ, the King of Israel, come down now from the cross, so that we may see and believe." And those crucified with Him were reproaching Him.

15:33-47 And when ***the*** sixth hour had come, darkness came over the whole land until ***the*** ninth hour. And at the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eloi, Eloi, lamma sabachthani?" which is, being translated, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" And

some of those standing by, having heard, were saying, "Look, He is calling Elijah." And one, having run and having filled a sponge with sour wine, and having put ***it*** on a reed, was giving Him to drink, saying, "Leave ***Him*** alone; let us see whether Elijah comes to take Him down." But Jesus, having uttered a loud cry, expired. And the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. And the centurion who stood by opposite Him, having seen that He, having cried out thus, expired, said, "Truly this man was God's Son." And there were also women looking on from a distance, among whom were also Mary the Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the Less and of Joses, and Salome, who also, when He was in Galilee, were following Him and ministering to Him, and many other ***women*** who had come up with Him to Jerusalem. And evening having already come, since it was ***the*** Preparation, which is the day before the Sabbath, Joseph of Arimathea, a prominent council member, who himself also was waiting for the kingdom of God, came ***and***, having taken courage, went in to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. And Pilate wondered if He had already died; and having summoned the centurion, he questioned him whether He had died long ago. And having learned ***it*** from the centurion, he granted the body to Joseph. And having bought a linen cloth and having taken Him down, he wrapped ***Him*** in the linen cloth and laid Him in a tomb which had been cut out of rock; and he rolled a stone against the door of the tomb. And Mary the Magdalene and Mary ***the mother*** of Joses were watching where He is laid.

Chapter 15 Preview

This is the chapter the whole Gospel has been moving toward. Early in the morning the council binds Jesus and hands Him over to Pilate, the Roman governor. Pilate asks, "Are You the King of the Jews?" and is amazed when Jesus answers nothing more to the charges. Pilate knows the chief priests have acted out of envy, but when the crowd shouts, "Crucify Him!" he releases the murderer Barabbas, has Jesus flogged, and hands Him over to be crucified.

The soldiers mock Him with a purple robe and a crown of thorns. Simon of Cyrene is forced to carry His cross to Golgotha. There they crucify Him between two robbers, under a sign that reads "THE KING OF THE JEWS," while the crowds and the chief priests mock Him. At noon darkness covers the land for three hours. At three in the afternoon Jesus cries out, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" and breathes His last. The veil of the temple is torn from top to bottom, and the Roman centurion says, "Truly this man was God's Son." Joseph of Arimathea boldly asks Pilate for the body and lays Jesus in a tomb cut out of rock, while the women watch where He is laid.

Chapter 15 Study

15:1 *And immediately, in the morning, the chief priests, having held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council, having bound Jesus, led* ***Him*** *away and delivered* ***Him*** *to Pilate.*

"Immediately, in the morning, the chief priests, having held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council." The night trial was not enough. They met again at dawn to make the sentence official, since by their own rules a capital case had to be decided in daylight.

"Having bound Jesus, led Him away and delivered Him to Pilate." Pontius Pilate was the Roman governor of Judea from about A.D. 26 to 36. The Jewish council could condemn a man, but under Rome only the governor could carry out a death sentence (John 18:31). Notice the word "delivered." Jesus had said He would be delivered to the Gentiles (10:33). It was happening just as He said.

15:2 *And Pilate questioned Him, "Are You the King of the Jews?" And answering, He said to him, "You say **it**."*

"Are You the King of the Jews?" The council had condemned Jesus for blasphemy, but Pilate would not care about a religious charge. So they brought a political one. If Jesus claimed to be a king, He was a threat to Caesar.

"You say it." Jesus did not deny it. He is the King. But His kingdom was not the kind Pilate feared. John tells us Jesus said His kingdom is not of this world (John 18:36). He was not leading a revolt against Rome. He was going to die for His people.

15:3-5 *And the chief priests were accusing Him of many things, but He Himself answered nothing. And Pilate again questioned Him, saying, "Do You not answer anything? See how many things they testify against You!" But Jesus no longer answered anything, so that Pilate was amazed.*

"The chief priests were accusing Him of many things, but He Himself answered nothing." Luke tells us some of their charges: misleading the nation, forbidding taxes to Caesar, and calling Himself a king (Luke 23:2). The tax charge was a lie. Jesus had said to give to Caesar what is Caesar's (12:17). Yet He did not stop to argue with any of it.

"Do You not answer anything? See how many things they testify against You!" "But Jesus no longer answered anything, so that Pilate was amazed." Prisoners usually begged for their lives or shouted their innocence. Jesus stood silent. He was not helpless. He was willing. Isaiah 53:7 had said He would be like a sheep silent before its shearers. Pilate had never seen anyone like Him.

Old Testament links: Isaiah 53:7 (alluded to)

15:6-8 *Now at **the** feast he was releasing to them one prisoner, whomever they were requesting. And there was the **one** called Barabbas, bound with the fellow rebels who had committed murder in the insurrection. And the crowd, having cried out, began to ask **him to do** just as he was always doing for them.*

"At the feast he was releasing to them one prisoner, whomever they were requesting." This was a custom at Passover, a gesture to keep the people happy.

"There was the one called Barabbas, bound with the fellow rebels who had committed murder in the insurrection." Barabbas was a rebel against Rome and a murderer. The crowd came and asked Pilate to do what he usually did. Pilate may have thought he had found a way out. Surely the people would choose Jesus over a killer.

15:9-10 *But Pilate answered them, saying, "Do you want me to release to you the King of the Jews?" For he knew that the chief priests had delivered Him up because of envy.*

"Do you want me to release to you the King of the Jews?" Pilate was trying to get Jesus off. "For he knew that the chief priests had delivered Him up because of envy."

Pilate could see what was going on. This was not about crimes. The chief priests were jealous of Jesus' popularity and His power. Envy is a deadly sin. It can make religious people do terrible things. It put Jesus on the cross.

15:11 *But the chief priests stirred up the crowd, so that he would rather release Barabbas to them.*

"The chief priests stirred up the crowd, so that he would rather release Barabbas to them." The leaders worked the crowd. Many of the people who had praised Jesus earlier in the week may not have been there that early morning, and the ones who were there were easily swayed.

A crowd can be pushed almost anywhere by the right voices. That is why we must think for ourselves in the light of God's Word and not just go along with the noise around us.

15:12-14 *And Pilate, answering, again said to them, "What then do you want me to do* ***to Him*** *whom you call King of the Jews?" And they again cried out, "Crucify Him!" And Pilate was saying to them, "Why, what evil has He done?" But they cried out all the more, "Crucify Him!"*

"What then do you want me to do to Him whom you call King of the Jews?" "And they again cried out, Crucify Him!"

Pilate asked, "Why, what evil has He done?" That was the right question, and no one could answer it. Pilate himself found no guilt in Him (John 18:38). "But they cried out all the more, Crucify Him!" When the facts are against a crowd, it often just gets louder.

Crucifixion was the cruelest death Rome had. It was used for slaves, rebels, and the worst criminals. The victim was nailed or tied to a wooden cross and left to die slowly, often over many hours or days, struggling to breathe. It was meant to be public and shameful.

15:15 *And Pilate, wishing to do what* ***was*** *satisfying to the crowd, released Barabbas to them; and having flogged Jesus, he delivered* ***Him*** *up so that He might be crucified.*

"Pilate, wishing to do what was satisfying to the crowd, released Barabbas to them." Pilate knew Jesus was innocent. But he cared more about keeping the peace and keeping his job than about justice.

"Having flogged Jesus, he delivered Him up so that He might be crucified." Roman flogging was brutal. A whip with several leather straps, tipped with pieces of bone or metal, tore the skin and muscle of the back. Some men died from it.

Think about Barabbas. He was guilty, and he walked free. Jesus was innocent, and He died in his place. That is the gospel in one scene. We are Barabbas. Jesus took our place.

15:16 *And the soldiers led Him away inside the courtyard, which is **the** Praetorium, and they call together the whole cohort.*

"The soldiers led Him away inside the courtyard, which is the Praetorium, and they call together the whole cohort." The Praetorium was the governor's headquarters in Jerusalem. A cohort was a Roman unit that could be several hundred soldiers. Mark explains the Latin word for his Roman readers.

The whole cohort gathered, not to guard Him, but to make fun of Him. This was sport for them.

15:17-19 *And they clothe Him **in** purple, and having woven a crown of thorns, they put **it** on Him. And they began to salute Him, "Hail, King of the Jews!" And they were striking His head with a reed and were spitting on Him, and bending the knees, they were worshiping Him.*

"They clothe Him in purple, and having woven a crown of thorns, they put it on Him." Purple was the color of kings because the dye was so expensive. They likely used an old soldier's cloak. The thorns pressed into His head. A mock robe and a mock crown for a mock king, they thought.

"Hail, King of the Jews!" They mimicked the greeting given to Caesar. "They were striking His head with a reed and were spitting on Him, and bending the knees, they were worshiping Him." The reed was a pretend scepter. The worship was a joke to them. But one day every knee will bow to Him for real, and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord (Philippians 2:10-11). Those soldiers will bow too.

Think of the thorns. In Genesis 3:18 thorns came as part of the curse on the ground because of sin. Jesus wore a crown of thorns as He went to bear the curse for us (Galatians 3:13).

15:20 *And when they had mocked Him, they took the purple off Him and put His own garments on Him. And they lead Him out so that they may crucify Him.*

"When they had mocked Him, they took the purple off Him and put His own garments on Him." They put His own clothes back on, the clothes they would soon gamble for.

"They lead Him out so that they may crucify Him." Executions took place outside the city walls (Hebrews 13:12). The condemned man was marched through the streets carrying the crossbeam, as a warning to everyone.

15:21 *And they compel a certain **man** passing by, Simon, a Cyrenian, coming from **the** country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to carry His cross.*

"They compel a certain man passing by, Simon, a Cyrenian, coming from the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to carry His cross." Jesus was too weak from the flogging to carry it any farther. Roman soldiers could force anyone to carry a load.

Cyrene was a city in North Africa, in what is now Libya. It had a large Jewish community. Simon was probably a pilgrim in town for the Passover. Mark names his sons, Alexander and Rufus, as if his readers knew them. Paul greets a Rufus in Rome (Romans 16:13), and if Mark wrote to Rome,

this may be the same man. If so, the day Simon was forced to carry a cross may have been the day his whole family came to know the One who died on it.

15:22 *And they bring Him to **the** place Golgotha, which is, being translated, Place of a Skull.*

"They bring Him to the place Golgotha, which is, being translated, Place of a Skull." Golgotha is an Aramaic word. The Latin word for skull gives us the name Calvary. Scripture does not tell us why it was called this. It may have been a hill shaped like a skull, or a place of execution. It was outside the city wall but near it, by a road where many would pass (John 19:20).

15:23 *And they were giving Him wine mixed with myrrh to drink; but He did not take **it**.*

"They were giving Him wine mixed with myrrh to drink; but He did not take it." Myrrh was a bitter resin. Mixed with wine, it worked as a drug to dull pain. Some think the women of Jerusalem provided it out of mercy.

Jesus refused it. Why? He would face the cross fully awake and in His right mind. He would bear the full weight of our sin and drink the cup the Father gave Him, without anything to dull it.

15:24 *And having crucified Him, they were dividing His garments, casting a lot for them, who should take what.*

"And having crucified Him." Mark doesn't describe the nails or the pain. His readers knew all too well what crucifixion was. He just says it. The Son of God was crucified.

"They were dividing His garments, casting a lot for them, who should take what." The soldiers who carried out a crucifixion got the victim's clothes. This fulfilled Psalm 22:18, where David wrote that they divided his garments and cast lots for his clothing. A thousand years before, the psalm described the scene at the foot of the cross. While Jesus was dying for the world, men gambled for His clothes.

Old Testament links: Psalm 22:18 (fulfilled)

15:25 *Now it was **the** third hour, and they crucified Him.*

"Now it was the third hour, and they crucified Him." The Jews counted the hours of the day from sunrise, about six in the morning. The third hour was about nine in the morning.

John says Pilate's judgment was about the sixth hour (John 19:14). Bible teachers explain this in different ways. Some believe John used the Roman way of counting from midnight. Others note that people in that day spoke of time in rough blocks of three hours. Mark's timeline is clear: crucified at nine, darkness at noon, death at three in the afternoon.

15:26 *And the inscription of His accusation was written: "THE KING OF THE JEWS."*

"The inscription of His accusation was written: THE KING OF THE JEWS." It was common to post the crime of the condemned man on the cross. John tells us it was written in Hebrew, Latin, and Greek, so everyone could read it (John 19:20).

Pilate meant it as a mockery of the Jews, and the chief priests hated it (John 19:21). But it was the truth. The charge against Jesus was that He is the King. And He is.

15:27-28 *And with Him they crucify two robbers, one at **His** right and one at His left. And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "And He was reckoned with **the** lawless."*

"With Him they crucify two robbers, one at His right and one at His left." These were likely rebels like Barabbas. Just days before, James and John had asked for the places at Jesus' right and left in His glory (10:37). Now those places were taken by two criminals on crosses. This was His glory: dying for sinners.

"And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, And He was reckoned with the lawless." This is Isaiah 53:12. The sinless One was counted with sinners. He took His place among the guilty so that the guilty could take His place among the righteous (2 Corinthians 5:21).

A word about verse 28. The SLB follows the Received Greek Text, which includes this verse. Most older Greek copies of Mark do not have it, so many modern Bibles put it in brackets or a footnote. Luke records Jesus Himself quoting the same verse of Isaiah the night before (Luke 22:37), so the truth stands either way. No teaching of the faith rests on this verse alone.

Old Testament links: Isaiah 53:12 (quoted)

15:29-30 *And those passing by were blaspheming Him, shaking their heads and saying, "Aha! You who destroy the temple and build **it** in three days, save Yourself and come down from the cross!"*

"Those passing by were blaspheming Him, shaking their heads." Golgotha was beside a road, and people walked by and insulted Him. Shaking the head was a sign of scorn. Psalm 22:7 says all who see Him sneer and wag the head.

"Aha! You who destroy the temple and build it in three days, save Yourself and come down from the cross!" They twisted His words again (14:58). The truth is, He was building a new temple right then. His body was being destroyed, and in three days He would raise it up (John 2:19-21).

Old Testament links: Psalm 22:7 (alluded to)

15:31-32 *Likewise also the chief priests, mocking with one another along with the scribes, were saying, "He saved others; Himself He is not able to save. Let the Christ, the King of Israel, come down now from the cross, so that we may see and believe." And those crucified with Him were reproaching Him.*

"Likewise also the chief priests, mocking with one another along with the scribes, were saying, He saved others; Himself He is not able to save." Without meaning to, they spoke the deepest truth of the cross. He did save others. And He could not save Himself and save us at the same time. It was not nails that held Him there. It was love.

"Let the Christ, the King of Israel, come down now from the cross, so that we may see and believe." They would not have believed. They had seen miracles before and still plotted to kill Him. In three

days He would do something greater than come down from a cross. He would come up out of a grave. And most of them still would not believe.

"Those crucified with Him were reproaching Him." At first both robbers mocked Him. Luke tells us one of them later turned and asked Jesus to remember him, and Jesus promised him paradise (Luke 23:39-43). It is never too late to turn to Jesus while there is breath.

15:33 *And when **the** sixth hour had come, darkness came over the whole land until **the** ninth hour.*

"When the sixth hour had come, darkness came over the whole land until the ninth hour." From noon until three in the afternoon, at the brightest time of day, darkness covered the land.

This was not an eclipse. Passover came at the full moon, when a solar eclipse cannot happen. This was a sign from God. In Scripture darkness often goes with judgment. Before the first Passover, darkness covered Egypt for three days (Exodus 10:22). Amos 8:9 speaks of God making the sun go down at noon. For three hours, the Son bore the judgment of God against sin, and the world went dark.

Old Testament links: Amos 8:9 (alluded to)

15:34 *And at the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eloi, Eloi, lamma sabachthani?" which is, being translated, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"*

"At the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, Eloi, Eloi, lamma sabachthani? which is, being translated, My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" This is the only saying from the cross that Mark records. It is Psalm 22:1, spoken in Aramaic, the language Jesus spoke every day.

What does it mean? For all eternity the Father and the Son had perfect fellowship. On the cross, the Father turned away from the Son, because He was bearing our sins. "He made the One who did not know sin to be sin on our behalf" (2 Corinthians 5:21). Jesus was forsaken so that we would never be. This is the deepest mystery of the cross, and we will never fully understand it. But we know this: He was cut off so we could be brought near.

Notice too that Jesus still said "My God." Even in being forsaken, He trusted. And Psalm 22 does not end in despair. It ends with praise and with the nations turning to the Lord (Psalm 22:27-31).

Old Testament links: Psalm 22:1 (quoted)

15:35-36 *And some of those standing by, having heard, were saying, "Look, He is calling Elijah." And one, having run and having filled a sponge with sour wine, and having put **it** on a reed, was giving Him to drink, saying, "Leave **Him** alone; let us see whether Elijah comes to take Him down."*

"Some of those standing by, having heard, were saying, Look, He is calling Elijah." Eloi sounded like the name Elijah. Many Jews believed Elijah would come to help the righteous in trouble.

"One, having run and having filled a sponge with sour wine, and having put it on a reed, was giving Him to drink." Sour wine was a cheap wine vinegar that soldiers and workers drank. Psalm 69:21 speaks of being given vinegar to drink. "Leave Him alone; let us see whether Elijah comes to take Him down." There was still mockery in the air. They did not understand that the One on the cross was greater than Elijah.

Old Testament links: Psalm 69:21 (fulfilled)

15:37 *But Jesus, having uttered a loud cry, expired.*

"But Jesus, having uttered a loud cry, expired." He breathed His last. People dying by crucifixion usually died slowly, too weak to speak at the end. Jesus cried out with a loud voice. He did not slowly fade away. He gave up His life when He chose. John tells us His last word was "It has been finished" (John 19:30). Jesus had said, "No one takes it away from Me, but I lay it down from Myself" (John 10:18).

15:38 *And the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom.*

"The veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom." The veil was a thick curtain in the temple that separated the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place, where God's presence dwelt. Only the high priest could go behind it, once a year, on the Day of Atonement, with blood (Leviticus 16).

It was torn "from top to bottom." No man did this. God tore it from above. The way into God's presence was now open, through the death of His Son. Hebrews 10:19-20 says we now have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, through the veil, that is, His flesh. Any believer can come straight to God through Jesus. You don't need a priest or a temple. You need Jesus.

15:39 *And the centurion who stood by opposite Him, having seen that He, having cried out thus, expired, said, "Truly this man was God's Son."*

"The centurion who stood by opposite Him, having seen that He, having cried out thus, expired, said, Truly this man was God's Son." A centurion was a Roman officer in charge of about a hundred soldiers. He had seen many men die on crosses. He had never seen a man die like this.

Mark began his book with "the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God" (1:1). The Father said it at the baptism and the Transfiguration. Demons said it. But this is the first time in Mark that a human being says it out loud, and it is a Gentile, a Roman soldier, at the foot of the cross. Mark wrote for Gentile readers, likely in Rome. Here is one of their own seeing the truth. It is the cross that shows who Jesus is. Not His miracles alone, but His death.

15:40-41 *And there were also women looking on from a distance, among whom were also Mary the Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the Less and of Joses, and Salome, who also, when He was in Galilee, were following Him and ministering to Him, and many other **women** who had come up with Him to Jerusalem.*

"There were also women looking on from a distance, among whom were also Mary the Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the Less and of Joses, and Salome." The men had fled. The women stayed. Mary Magdalene came from Magdala, a town on the Sea of Galilee. Jesus had cast seven demons out of her (Luke 8:2). Salome was likely the mother of James and John (compare Matthew 27:56).

These women "when He was in Galilee, were following Him and ministering to Him." They had supported Jesus out of their own means (Luke 8:3). They were faithful when it was dangerous and heartbreaking. God noticed, and He made them the first witnesses of the resurrection. Never think your quiet faithfulness goes unseen.

15:42-43 *And evening having already come, since it was **the** Preparation, which is the day before the Sabbath, Joseph of Arimathea, a prominent council member, who himself also was waiting for the kingdom of God, came **and**, having taken courage, went in to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus.*

"Evening having already come, since it was the Preparation, which is the day before the Sabbath." The Preparation was Friday, the day to get everything ready before the Sabbath, which began at sundown. Mark explains it for his readers. The Law said a body hanged on a tree must not stay there overnight (Deuteronomy 21:22-23), and especially not on the Sabbath.

"Joseph of Arimathea, a prominent council member, who himself also was waiting for the kingdom of God." Joseph was a member of the Sanhedrin. Luke tells us he did not agree with their decision (Luke 23:50-51). John says he had been a secret disciple out of fear (John 19:38). But now, "having taken courage, went in to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus." This was a bold move. It put his reputation and his seat on the council at risk. The cross made a secret disciple brave.

15:44-45 *And Pilate wondered if He had already died; and having summoned the centurion, he questioned him whether He had died long ago. And having learned **it** from the centurion, he granted the body to Joseph.*

"Pilate wondered if He had already died." Crucified men often lived for a day or more. Six hours was fast. Pilate called the centurion to make sure.

"Having learned it from the centurion, he granted the body to Joseph." This matters. A Roman officer, a man who knew death when he saw it, confirmed that Jesus was dead. Some have claimed Jesus only fainted on the cross and revived in the tomb. Mark shuts that idea down. Jesus truly died. And that means His resurrection was real.

15:46 *And having bought a linen cloth and having taken Him down, he wrapped **Him** in the linen cloth and laid Him in a tomb which had been cut out of rock; and he rolled a stone against the door of the tomb.*

"Having bought a linen cloth and having taken Him down, he wrapped Him in the linen cloth and laid Him in a tomb which had been cut out of rock." John tells us Nicodemus helped and brought a large amount of spices (John 19:39-40). Matthew tells us it was Joseph's own new tomb (Matthew 27:60). Isaiah 53:9 says His grave was assigned with the wicked, yet He was with a rich man in His death.

"He rolled a stone against the door of the tomb." Tombs like this often had a large round stone that rolled in a groove to seal the entrance. It took several men to move it. The women would worry about it in the morning (16:3).

15:47 *And Mary the Magdalene and Mary **the mother** of Joses were watching where He is laid.*

"Mary the Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses were watching where He is laid." These women saw where He was buried. They would not go to the wrong tomb on Sunday morning. Mark is careful to show us witnesses at every step. They saw Him die (15:40). They saw Him buried. And they would see the empty tomb.

Jesus was dead and buried. The disciples were scattered. His enemies thought it was over. But the Sabbath would pass, and the first day of the week was coming.

Chapter 15 Summary

In the morning the council bound Jesus and delivered Him to Pilate, who asked if He was the King of the Jews. Jesus answered, "You say it," and then said nothing more, so that Pilate was amazed. Pilate knew the chief priests had handed Him over out of envy and tried to release Him, but the chief priests stirred up the crowd to ask for Barabbas, a murderer, and to cry, "Crucify Him!" Pilate released Barabbas, had Jesus flogged, and handed Him over. The soldiers mocked Him with purple and a crown of thorns. Simon of Cyrene was forced to carry His cross to Golgotha, where they crucified Him at the third hour between two robbers, under the inscription "THE KING OF THE JEWS," while passersby, the chief priests, and the robbers mocked Him. From the sixth to the ninth hour darkness covered the land. Jesus cried out, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" and with a loud cry He died. The veil of the temple was torn from top to bottom, and the centurion said, "Truly this man was God's Son." The women watched from a distance. Joseph of Arimathea boldly asked Pilate for the body, wrapped it in linen, and laid it in a rock tomb, rolling a stone against the door, while Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses saw where He was laid.

Chapter 15 Study Questions

1. Why did the chief priests hand Jesus over to Pilate, according to Pilate himself? (15:10)

2. How is the release of Barabbas a picture of what Jesus did for you? (15:6-15)

3. How did the soldiers mock Jesus, and what will one day happen instead? (15:16-20; Philippians 2:10-11)

4. What Old Testament verses were fulfilled at the cross in this chapter? (15:24, 28, 34)

5. The chief priests said, "He saved others; Himself He is not able to save." What truth were they speaking without knowing it? (15:31)

6. What did Jesus cry out at the ninth hour, and what does it mean? (15:34)

7. Why does it matter that the veil was torn "from top to bottom"? (15:38)

8. What did the centurion say, and why is it important that he was the one to say it? (15:39)

9. Joseph of Arimathea stopped being a secret disciple. Is there a place in your life where you need to take courage and stand openly for Jesus? (15:43)

10. The women stayed when others ran. What does their faithfulness teach you? (15:40-41, 47)

Chapter 16: He Is Risen

Scripture

16:1-8 And when the Sabbath had passed, Mary the Magdalene and Mary the ***mother*** of James and Salome bought spices so that, having come, they might anoint Him. And very early on the first ***day*** of the week, they come to the tomb, the sun having risen. And they were saying among themselves, "Who will roll away the stone for us from the door of the tomb?" And having looked up, they see that the stone has been rolled away; for it was extremely large. And having entered into the tomb, they saw a young man sitting on the right, clothed in a white robe; and they were greatly alarmed. And he says to them, "Do not be greatly alarmed. You are seeking Jesus the Nazarene, the ***One*** who has been crucified. He has been raised; He is not here. See the place where they laid Him. But go, tell His disciples and Peter that He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him, just as He said to you." And having gone out quickly, they fled from the tomb; and trembling and astonishment held them. And they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.

16:9-20 Now having risen early on ***the*** first ***day*** of the week, He appeared first to Mary the Magdalene, from whom He had cast out seven demons. She, having gone, reported ***it*** to those who had been with Him, ***who were*** mourning and weeping. And they, having heard that He is alive and was seen by her, disbelieved. And after these things He was manifested in another form to two of them as they were walking, going into ***the*** country. And they, having gone away, reported ***it*** to the rest; they did not believe even them. Afterward He was manifested to the eleven as they were reclining, and He reproached their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they did not believe those who had seen Him raised. And He said to them, "Having gone into all the world, preach the gospel to all the creation. The ***one*** having believed and having been baptized will be saved; but the ***one*** having disbelieved will be condemned. And these signs will accompany those having believed: in My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will certainly not hurt them; they will lay hands on ***the*** sick, and they will be well." So then the Lord, after speaking to them, was taken up into heaven and sat down at ***the*** right ***hand*** of God. And they, having gone out, preached everywhere, the Lord working with ***them*** and confirming the word through the accompanying signs. Amen.

Chapter 16 Preview

The Sabbath is over. Very early on Sunday morning, three women carry spices to the tomb to anoint the body of Jesus, wondering who will roll away the heavy stone. When they get there, the stone is already rolled back. Inside sits a young man in a white robe who tells them, "He has been raised; He is not here." He sends them to tell the disciples, "and Peter," that Jesus is going ahead of them into Galilee. The women run from the tomb, trembling and amazed.

The rest of the chapter, verses 9 to 20, tells of Jesus appearing to Mary Magdalene, then to two disciples walking in the country, then to the eleven. He rebukes their unbelief and sends them into all the world to preach the gospel to all creation. He promises signs that will go with those

who believe. Then the Lord is taken up into heaven and sits down at the right hand of God, and the disciples go out and preach everywhere, with the Lord working with them. The Servant who gave His life is alive, and He is Lord.

Chapter 16 Study

16:1 *And when the Sabbath had passed, Mary the Magdalene and Mary the **mother** of James and Salome bought spices so that, having come, they might anoint Him.*

"When the Sabbath had passed, Mary the Magdalene and Mary the mother of James and Salome bought spices so that, having come, they might anoint Him." The Sabbath ended at sundown on Saturday. The shops could open again, and the women bought spices.

Think about what they expected. They were not coming to see a risen Lord. They were coming to care for a dead body. They loved Jesus, but they did not expect the resurrection, even though He had told them about it again and again. Their love was real. Their faith had not yet caught up with His promises.

16:2-3 *And very early on the first **day** of the week, they come to the tomb, the sun having risen. And they were saying among themselves, "Who will roll away the stone for us from the door of the tomb?"*

"Very early on the first day of the week, they come to the tomb, the sun having risen." The first day of the week is Sunday. This is why Christians have gathered for worship on Sunday from the earliest days of the church (Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16:2). Every Sunday is a celebration of the resurrection.

On the way they had a problem. "Who will roll away the stone for us from the door of the tomb?" The stone was too heavy for them. They went anyway. They didn't have all the answers, but they kept walking toward Jesus. Often the problems we worry about on the way are already solved by the time we get there.

16:4 *And having looked up, they see that the stone has been rolled away; for it was extremely large.*

"Having looked up, they see that the stone has been rolled away; for it was extremely large." The stone was not rolled away to let Jesus out. He was already gone. It was rolled away to let the witnesses in, so they could see the tomb was empty. Matthew tells us an angel rolled it back (Matthew 28:2).

The thing they feared was not a problem for God. The size of the stone shows that no human hand moved it easily, and no small group of grieving women could have.

16:5 *And having entered into the tomb, they saw a young man sitting on the right, clothed in a white robe; and they were greatly alarmed.*

"Having entered into the tomb, they saw a young man sitting on the right, clothed in a white robe; and they were greatly alarmed." Mark calls him "a young man," but the white robe and the

message show he was an angel. Matthew and Luke make that clear (Matthew 28:2-5; Luke 24:4, 23). Angels in Scripture often appear as men.

They were "greatly alarmed." This is the same word Mark used for Jesus' distress in Gethsemane (14:33). They had come expecting to find a body, and they found a heavenly messenger.

16:6 *And he says to them, "Do not be greatly alarmed. You are seeking Jesus the Nazarene, the **One** who has been crucified. He has been raised; He is not here. See the place where they laid Him.*

"Do not be greatly alarmed. You are seeking Jesus the Nazarene, the One who has been crucified. He has been raised; He is not here. See the place where they laid Him."

These are the greatest words ever spoken at a grave. The angel named Him plainly: Jesus, from Nazareth, the One who was crucified. It is the same Jesus. The One who died is the One who rose. "He has been raised." God raised Him from the dead (Acts 2:24). "He is not here." The tomb was empty. "See the place." The evidence was right in front of them.

The resurrection is the center of our faith. Paul says that if Christ has not been raised, our faith is worthless and we are still in our sins (1 Corinthians 15:17). But He has been raised. That changes everything. Death is not the end for those who belong to Him.

16:7 *But go, tell His disciples and Peter that He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him, just as He said to you."*

"But go, tell His disciples and Peter that He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him, just as He said to you."

Look at two words: "and Peter." Only Mark records them. Peter was the one who denied Jesus three times. He may have thought he was no longer one of the disciples. But Jesus sent a message with his name on it. If Mark wrote down Peter's preaching, Peter must have told this part with tears in his eyes. Jesus had not given up on him.

"Just as He said to you." Jesus had promised this the night He was arrested (14:28). He keeps His promises. If you have failed Him, hear this: He still says, "and Peter," and He still puts your name in His invitation.

16:8 *And having gone out quickly, they fled from the tomb; and trembling and astonishment held them. And they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.*

"Having gone out quickly, they fled from the tomb; and trembling and astonishment held them. And they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid."

This was holy fear, the awe that comes when people meet the power of God face to face. They were shaken. They did not stop to chat with anyone on the way. Matthew tells us they ran "with fear and great joy" to tell the disciples (Matthew 28:8). So their silence was toward others on the road, not toward the disciples. Mixed feelings are normal when God does something this big. Fear and joy, trembling and wonder, all at once.

16:9 *Now having risen early on **the** first **day** of the week, He appeared first to Mary the Magdalene, from whom He had cast out seven demons.*

"Now having risen early on the first day of the week, He appeared first to Mary the Magdalene, from whom He had cast out seven demons." Jesus chose to show Himself first to a woman, and to a woman with a dark past. In that culture, a woman's testimony was often not accepted in court. No one making up a story would choose a woman as the first witness. That is one of the marks of a true account.

Why Mary? She had been set free from seven demons, and she loved much. John 20:11-18 tells how she stayed weeping at the tomb and Jesus called her by name. The risen Lord came first to someone who had been rescued from great darkness. That is good news for anyone who thinks their past is too much for Jesus.

16:10-11 *She, having gone, reported **it** to those who had been with Him, **who were** mourning and weeping. And they, having heard that He is alive and was seen by her, disbelieved.*

"She, having gone, reported it to those who had been with Him, who were mourning and weeping." The disciples were heartbroken. They were grieving, as if all their hopes had died with Him.

"And they, having heard that He is alive and was seen by her, disbelieved." They did not believe it. Luke says her words seemed to them like nonsense (Luke 24:11). The disciples were not gullible men who believed whatever they wanted to. They doubted. They had to be convinced. That makes their later boldness, even to death, all the more powerful.

16:12-13 *And after these things He was manifested in another form to two of them as they were walking, going into **the** country. And they, having gone away, reported **it** to the rest; they did not believe even them.*

"After these things He was manifested in another form to two of them as they were walking, going into the country." This is the story Luke tells in full, the two disciples on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-35). "In another form" means they did not recognize Him at first. His resurrection body was real, but it was also glorified, changed in ways we do not fully understand.

"They, having gone away, reported it to the rest; they did not believe even them." Now there were three witnesses, and still the rest did not believe. Unbelief is stubborn. Sometimes it takes Jesus Himself to break through.

16:14 *Afterward He was manifested to the eleven as they were reclining, and He reproached their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they did not believe those who had seen Him raised.*

"Afterward He was manifested to the eleven as they were reclining." There were eleven now, since Judas was gone. Jesus appeared to them while they were eating.

"He reproached their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they did not believe those who had seen Him raised." Jesus rebuked them. They had heard His promises many times. They had the

testimony of Mary and of the two on the road. And they still refused to believe. Hardness of heart is not a lack of evidence. It is an unwillingness to accept it. Jesus loved them too much to leave them there.

16:15 *And He said to them, "Having gone into all the world, preach the gospel to all the creation.*

"Having gone into all the world, preach the gospel to all the creation." This is the Great Commission as Mark records it. Matthew gives it as make disciples of all the nations (Matthew 28:19). The message is not only for Israel. It is for the whole world, every people, every place.

Notice the order. Jesus rebuked their unbelief, and then He sent them out. He did not wait for them to become perfect. He used doubting, failing men to carry His gospel to the world. He still does. The command is for us too. Where is your "all the world"? It may start across the street or across the table.

16:16 *The **one** having believed and having been baptized will be saved; but the **one** having disbelieved will be condemned.*

"The one having believed and having been baptized will be saved; but the one having disbelieved will be condemned." Some read this as saying baptism is required for salvation. Read it carefully. The second half says it is the one who "disbelieved" who will be condemned. It does not say the one not baptized will be condemned. Unbelief is what condemns.

In the early church, believing and being baptized went together. A person who trusted Jesus was baptized right away (Acts 2:41; 8:36-38). Baptism is the believer's public step of obedience, showing that he belongs to Christ. Salvation is by grace through faith in Jesus Christ alone (Ephesians 2:8-9). The thief on the cross was never baptized, and Jesus promised him paradise (Luke 23:43). Repent and believe, and then obey the Lord in baptism.

16:17 *And these signs will accompany those having believed: in My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues;*

"And these signs will accompany those having believed: in My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues." Jesus promised that signs would go with the preaching of the gospel. A sign is a miracle that points to something beyond itself. These signs showed that the message was from God.

The book of Acts shows these things happening. The apostles cast out demons in Jesus' name (Acts 16:18). On the day of Pentecost the believers spoke in other tongues, languages they had never learned (Acts 2:4-11). Notice the words "in My name." The power was never in the disciples. It was in Jesus.

16:18 *they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will certainly not hurt them; they will lay hands on **the** sick, and they will be well."*

"They will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will certainly not hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will be well."

What did Jesus mean? Look at how it happened in Acts. On the island of Malta, a viper bit Paul's hand while he was gathering sticks for a fire. Paul shook it off into the fire and suffered no harm (Acts 28:3-6). He was not looking for a snake. It found him while he was serving God. The promise about drinking something deadly is the same: God's protection for His messengers when they face danger while carrying out His work. Paul also laid hands on the sick on Malta, and they were healed (Acts 28:8-9).

This verse is never a test to put God to. When Satan tempted Jesus to throw Himself off the temple and trust God to catch Him, Jesus answered from Deuteronomy 6:16 that we must not put the Lord God to the test (Matthew 4:7). Some groups have handled snakes or drunk poison in church services to prove their faith, and people have died. That is not faith. It is testing God, the very thing Jesus refused to do. Jesus promised protection for His servants in the dangers of serving Him, not a show for a crowd.

Do these signs continue today? Good Bible teachers disagree. Some believe these signs were given mainly to confirm the message of the apostles in the first days of the church, and that they faded as the New Testament was completed (Hebrews 2:3-4). Others believe God still gives these gifts and still heals in answer to prayer. Every side agrees that God can heal, that we should pray for the sick (James 5:14-15), and that no one should ever put God to the test.

16:19 *So then the Lord, after speaking to them, was taken up into heaven and sat down at **the** right **hand** of God.*

"So then the Lord, after speaking to them, was taken up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God." Notice Mark calls Him "the Lord" here. The Servant who was crucified is now the Lord.

Luke tells us He was taken up from the Mount of Olives while the disciples watched, and angels promised He would come back the same way (Acts 1:9-11). He "sat down at the right hand of God." That is the place of highest honor and authority. It fulfills Psalm 110:1, the verse Jesus quoted in the temple (12:36) and before the high priest (14:62). He sat down because His work of paying for sin was finished (Hebrews 10:12). Now He lives to pray for us (Romans 8:34), and one day He will come again.

Old Testament links: Psalm 110:1 (alluded to)

16:20 *And they, having gone out, preached everywhere, the Lord working with **them** and confirming the word through the accompanying signs. Amen.*

"And they, having gone out, preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word through the accompanying signs. Amen."

The scared men who hid behind locked doors went out and preached everywhere. What changed them? They had seen Jesus alive. And notice who was working. Jesus was in heaven, but He was "working with them." He did not send them out alone. He was with them, and He is with us (Matthew 28:20).

The signs "confirming the word" served the message. The point was always the word, the gospel of Jesus Christ. "Amen" means so be it, it is true. Mark's Gospel ends where it began, with the gospel going out. And it goes on today through everyone who believes it and tells it.

A word about verses 9 to 20. The SLB follows the Received Greek Text, which includes these twelve verses, and they have been read in churches for many centuries. But the two oldest complete Greek copies of Mark end at verse 8, and some other copies have a different, shorter ending. For that reason many modern Bibles put verses 9 to 20 in brackets or add a note. Bible-believing scholars disagree on whether Mark wrote them or whether they were added early to round out the Gospel. What we can say plainly is this: nearly everything in these verses is taught elsewhere in the New Testament, the resurrection appearances, the commission, the ascension, and the signs in Acts, and no teaching of the faith rests on them alone. I have commented on them as printed.

Chapter 16 Summary

When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome brought spices to anoint the body of Jesus, wondering who would roll away the stone. They found it already rolled back, and a young man in a white robe told them, "He has been raised; He is not here," and sent them to tell His disciples and Peter that He was going before them into Galilee. They fled from the tomb trembling and astonished. Jesus appeared first to Mary Magdalene, then to two disciples walking in the country, but the others did not believe their reports. Then He appeared to the eleven, rebuked their unbelief, and sent them into all the world to preach the gospel to all creation. He said that whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, and whoever disbelieves will be condemned, and He promised signs that would go with those who believe. The Lord was taken up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God, and the disciples went out and preached everywhere, with the Lord working with them and confirming the word.

Chapter 16 Study Questions

1. Why were the women going to the tomb, and what were they worried about on the way? (16:1-3)

2. What did the young man in the white robe tell the women? (16:6)

3. Why do you think the message included the words "and Peter"? (16:7)

4. To whom did Jesus appear first, and why is that significant? (16:9)

5. How did the disciples respond to the first reports that Jesus was alive? (16:10-14)

6. What did Jesus command the eleven to do? (16:15)

7. According to 16:16, what is it that condemns a person? How does baptism fit with salvation by faith?

8. How did Paul's experience on Malta show what Jesus meant about serpents, and why must we never put God to the test? (16:18; Acts 28:3-6; Matthew 4:7)

9. Where is Jesus now, and what does it mean that He sat down at the right hand of God? (16:19)

10. The Lord worked with the disciples as they went out. Who is one person you can tell about Jesus this week? (16:15, 20)

Conclusion

Mark is the shortest of the four Gospels, and it moves fast. From the first verse to the last, Mark keeps his eyes on one Person, "Jesus Christ, the Son of God" (1:1). We watched Him call fishermen, cast out demons, heal the sick, calm the storm, feed the crowds, and raise the dead. The disciples in the boat asked, "Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey Him?" (4:41). Then, halfway through the book, Jesus asked His disciples the question every one of us has to answer: "But you, who do you say that I am?" (8:29).

The second half of the book shows us what kind of Messiah He is. He is the Servant. He set His face toward Jerusalem, told His disciples three times that He would be killed and rise again, and then did exactly what He said. Mark sums it up in one verse: "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many" (10:45). At the foot of the cross a Roman soldier, a Gentile who had seen many men die, said what Mark wanted every reader to see: "Truly this man was God's Son" (15:39). And three days later the tomb was empty.

As I said at the start of this study, the guiding principle throughout has been to read God's Word plainly, as it is written, and let Scripture explain Scripture. When we do that with Mark, we find a Gospel that does not let us stay on the sidelines. Jesus calls us to deny ourselves, take up our cross, and follow Him (8:34). He calls us to be servants of all (9:35; 10:43-44). He calls us to keep watch, because He is coming again (13:37). And He sends us into all the world with the good news (16:15).

I hope this study has done what I set out to do: bring you closer to God, help you grow in your walk with Him, and encourage you to follow Jesus "on the way," the way Bartimaeus did when his eyes were opened (10:52). The Servant who gave His life is alive and seated at the right hand of God. The only thing required of us to spend eternity with God is to receive His Son, Jesus, as our Lord and Savior.

If you haven't yet entered into a relationship with Jesus, or if you want to deepen the one you already have with Him, I invite you to pray this prayer with me:

Lord Jesus, You are the Savior of the world, and You forgive all who come to You. I come before You to confess that I have sinned against You. I have rebelled against You and put myself first above You and all others. I want to have a deep, meaningful relationship with You where I can show others by my demeanor and character that You are first in my life. I am asking for Your forgiveness for all my sins. You died for me on the cross so that I could be forgiven and made right with God. Please help me not forget that You gave Your very life for me. I am asking that You take control of my life and make a new creature out of me and into the person You want me to be. I thank You, Lord, and I love You. Amen.

If you prayed this prayer, tell another believer, ask a pastor about being baptized, and find a church where you can grow and serve as part of the body of Christ, remembering that Jesus came "to serve" and calls us to serve one another (Mark 10:43-45).

Old and New Testament Links in Mark

This table lists every Old and New Testament link printed in this study, in verse order. I took the links from the Treasury of Scripture Knowledge, with help from the OpenBible.info cross-references, and I checked each one by reading both passages in the Steadfast Literal Bible. Where I was not sure of a link, I left it out.

Verse in this study	Old Testament passage	Kind
1:2-3	Malachi 3:1	quoted
1:2-3	Isaiah 40:3	quoted
1:6	2 Kings 1:8	alluded to
1:10-11	Psalm 2:7	alluded to
1:10-11	Isaiah 42:1	alluded to
1:43-45	Leviticus 14:2	alluded to
2:25-26	1 Samuel 21:3-6	alluded to
2:25-26	Leviticus 24:9	alluded to
4:10-12	Isaiah 6:9-10	quoted
4:26-29	Joel 3:13	alluded to
4:30-32	Ezekiel 31:6	alluded to
4:30-32	Daniel 4:12	alluded to
4:41	Jonah 1:16	alluded to
6:17-18	Leviticus 18:16	alluded to
6:17-18	Leviticus 20:21	alluded to
6:21-23	Esther 5:3	alluded to
6:33-34	Numbers 27:17	alluded to
6:47-48	Job 9:8	alluded to
7:6-7	Isaiah 29:13	quoted
7:10-13	Exodus 20:12	quoted
7:10-13	Exodus 21:17	quoted
7:10-13	Deuteronomy 5:16	quoted
7:10-13	Leviticus 20:9	quoted
7:35	Isaiah 35:5-6	alluded to
7:36-37	Isaiah 35:5-6	alluded to
8:16-18	Jeremiah 5:21	alluded to
8:16-18	Ezekiel 12:2	alluded to
9:7-8	Deuteronomy 18:15	alluded to
9:11-13	Malachi 4:5-6	alluded to
9:43-44	Isaiah 66:24	quoted
9:45-46	Isaiah 66:24	quoted
9:47-48	Isaiah 66:24	quoted
9:49	Leviticus 2:13	alluded to
10:3-4	Deuteronomy 24:1	alluded to
10:6-8	Genesis 1:27	quoted
10:6-8	Genesis 2:24	quoted
10:19	Exodus 20:12-16	quoted
10:19	Deuteronomy 5:16-20	quoted
10:45	Isaiah 53:11-12	alluded to
11:7-8	Zechariah 9:9	fulfilled

Verse in this study	Old Testament passage	Kind
11:9-10	Psalm 118:26	quoted
11:9-10	Psalm 118:25	alluded to
11:17	Isaiah 56:7	quoted
11:17	Jeremiah 7:11	quoted
12:1	Isaiah 5:1-2	alluded to
12:10-11	Psalm 118:22-23	quoted
12:19	Deuteronomy 25:5-6	alluded to
12:19	Genesis 38:8	alluded to
12:26-27	Exodus 3:6	quoted
12:29-30	Deuteronomy 6:4-5	quoted
12:31	Leviticus 19:18	quoted
12:32-33	Deuteronomy 6:5	quoted
12:32-33	Leviticus 19:18	quoted
12:32-33	Deuteronomy 4:35	alluded to
12:32-33	Deuteronomy 6:4	alluded to
12:32-33	1 Samuel 15:22	alluded to
12:32-33	Hosea 6:6	alluded to
12:35-37	Psalm 110:1	quoted
13:7-8	Isaiah 19:2	alluded to
13:14	Daniel 9:27	alluded to
13:14	Daniel 12:11	alluded to
13:14	Daniel 11:31	alluded to
13:19	Daniel 12:1	alluded to
13:19	Jeremiah 30:7	alluded to
13:21-22	Deuteronomy 13:1-3	alluded to
13:24-25	Isaiah 13:10	alluded to
13:24-25	Isaiah 34:4	alluded to
13:24-25	Joel 2:10	alluded to
13:24-25	Joel 3:15	alluded to
13:26	Daniel 7:13	alluded to
13:27	Deuteronomy 30:4	alluded to
13:27	Zechariah 2:6	alluded to
14:6-7	Deuteronomy 15:11	alluded to
14:17-19	Psalm 41:9	fulfilled
14:23-24	Exodus 24:8	alluded to
14:23-24	Jeremiah 31:31	alluded to
14:27-28	Zechariah 13:7	quoted
14:60-61	Isaiah 53:7	alluded to
14:62	Psalm 110:1	alluded to
14:62	Daniel 7:13	alluded to
14:65	Isaiah 50:6	alluded to
15:3-5	Isaiah 53:7	alluded to
15:24	Psalm 22:18	fulfilled
15:27-28	Isaiah 53:12	quoted
15:29-30	Psalm 22:7	alluded to
15:33	Amos 8:9	alluded to
15:34	Psalm 22:1	quoted
15:35-36	Psalm 69:21	fulfilled

Verse in this study	Old Testament passage	Kind
16:19	Psalm 110:1	alluded to

Bibliography

The following sources were consulted for this study. The Jewish historian Josephus is named in the text where his work is used. The commentary reflects my own study and convictions, and any direct quotation from an outside source is identified and cited at the point where it appears.

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