

**Author**

- 1) Though the gospel itself does not claim a writer, from earliest records of the church fathers, Mark (also called John Mark) is said to be the writer.
- 2) Papias, writing somewhere between 90 to 140 AD, clearly states that Mark is the author.
- 3) Numerous other early church writers backup this claim that Mark was the writer, including Irenaeus, Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, and Jerome.
- 4) From this, it is obvious that the early church unanimously believed this also
- 5) No alternative authors have been proposed.
- 6) Mark was not an apostle and as such was not an eyewitness to Jesus' ministry.
- 7) An important point to be made here is that many of these writers add that John Mark wrote the gospel using the eyewitness accounts of Peter.
- 8) Papias wrote: "Mark became the interpreter of Peter."
  - a) It's unclear if he means that Mark interpreted Greek for Peter because he preached in Aramaic, or if he means that Mark put Peter's oral teachings into written form.
  - b) Either way, if indeed Mark was this involved with Peter's preaching and teaching, he obviously would have brought that experience into his gospel account.

**Some Facts About Mark**

- 9) As mentioned a moment ago, he wasn't an apostle, and he wasn't an eyewitness to the ministry of Jesus, ***so who was he?***
- 10) Mark is actually first mentioned in passing in Acts when Peter is miraculously freed from prison.
- 11) This is the incident where Peter is sleeping between two guards.
  - a) An angel appears to him, has him put on his cloak, then leads him out of the prison.
  - b) Peter thinks he is having a vision but finally we read in Acts 12

**Acts 12:12-15 (NIV)**

- 12) Though this is the first actual scriptural by name mention of Mark, some scholars believe that he was the young man who ran away without his cloths in the garden at Jesus' arrest.
  - a) The reasons for this assumption are twofold –
    - i) First, this particular fact is only found in the gospel of Mark.
    - ii) Second, looking at context, the incident comes totally as a surprise and almost as a aside to the happenings of the moment.
  - b) I found one commentator's interesting scenario that at least seems plausible – again, no real basis in fact for these assumptions – just interesting:

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John Mark's mother lived in Jerusalem (Acts 12), and so it is possible that Mark was wakened by the noise of the soldiers leaving the city during the night of Passover to arrest Jesus. After all, the man was described as wearing only a linen sheet—the typical sleeping garments of this time period. The scenario would go something like this—Mark left his mother's home and followed the soldiers to the Garden. Once he was grabbed, Mark ran away naked, leaving his linen sheet in the hands of soldiers. It seems that Mark recorded the account in his gospel, perhaps as a form of confession for having abandoned the Lord in this way.

13) Next scripturally, we hear of Mark working with Barnabas and the apostle Paul. In Acts ...

**Acts 13:1-5 (NIV)**

14) The John mentioned here is of course, John Mark.

15) The journey continued and then in 13:13, the wheels sort of fall off for him ...

**Acts 13:13 (NIV)**

16) Obviously, no reason is given here or elsewhere for Mark's departure and return to Jerusalem.

17) The next we hear of Mark is in chapter 15 as he becomes a source of dispute between Paul and Barnabas ...

**Acts 15:36-16:1 (NIV)**

18) Whatever the reason for Mark's leaving, we can infer from this exchange that Paul, at least, did not think it was a legitimate or excusable reason.

19) The word used here might lead one to think Mark's reason was related to the work itself – possibly one of lost interest.

20) One can also assume from this situation that Paul's opinion of Mark is not very high at this point.

21) We do not hear of Mark again in the book of Acts.

22) Looking at that situation being exposed if one would predict the final outcome of Mark's life, it would not be that he would become a writer of one of the four Gospels.

a) Nor would he become a valued worker alongside two of the giants of the apostolic community.

23) First, we find that Mark becomes a companion and worker with Peter.

a) As mentioned earlier, Papias writes that Mark was an interpreter of Peter.

b) In 1 Peter 5:13, Peter himself calls Mark "my son".

**1 Peter 5:13 (NIV)**

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- 24) Based on Papias' comment, we can infer with great certainty, that the Mark who Peter refers to here is that same Mark that later writes the Gospel.
- 25) We also find that despite the initial problems with Paul and Paul's low opinion of Mark, he obviously becomes a worker with him as well.
- 26) Paul mentions Mark favorably in 3 different epistles ....

Philem 23-25 (NIV)

Col 4:10-11 (NIV)

2 Tim 4:9-11 (NIV)

### ***Date of Writing***

- 1) O.k. then – when was this gospel written?
- 2) This opens onto another of those current day “scholarly debates”.
- 3) There are actually two aspects of this question that are part of this ongoing debate and should be considered.
  - a) First is the order that the Gospels were written which opens the scholarly question of sources of information used in the Gospels.
  - b) Second is the actual date and how it relates to the content of Mark's writing.
- 4) **The Church Father's View**
  - a) The tradition handed down by the Church Fathers regarded Matthew as the first Gospel written in Hebrew.
  - b) It later became a source used by Mark and Luke.
    - i) Augustine of Hippo wrote in the 5th century:

"Now, those four evangelists whose names have gained the most remarkable circulation over the whole world, and whose number has been fixed as four, ...are believed to have written in the order which follows: first Matthew, then Mark, thirdly Luke, lastly John." And: "Of these four, it is true, only Matthew is reckoned to have written in the Hebrew language; the others in Greek. And however they may appear to have kept each of them a certain order of narration proper to himself, this certainly is not to be taken as if each individual writer chose to write in ignorance of what his predecessor had done..."

- c) The tradition can be traced back at least as far as Irenaeus (c. 120-202 A.D.) who wrote:

"Matthew also issued a written Gospel among the Hebrews in their own dialect, while Peter and Paul were preaching at Rome, and laying the foundations of the Church. After their departure, Mark, the disciple, and interpreter of Peter, did also hand down to us in writing what had been preached by Peter. Luke also, the

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companion of Paul, recorded in a book the Gospel preached by him. Afterwards, John, the disciple of the Lord, who also had leaned upon His breast, did himself publish a Gospel during his residence at Ephesus in Asia."

Against Heresies, Book 3, Chapter 1

### *The Synoptic Problem*

- 5) In preparing for this introduction, I ran into a large volume of information referring to what is called the "Synoptic Problem"
- 6) So, what is the "synoptic problem"?
  - a) When the first three Gospels—Matthew, Mark, and Luke—are compared, it is unmistakable that the accounts are very similar to one another in content and expression.
  - b) As a result, Matthew, Mark, and Luke are referred to as the "Synoptic Gospels."
  - c) The word synoptic basically means "**to see together with a common view.**"
  - d) The similarities among the Synoptic Gospels have led many scholars thru the years to wonder if the Gospel authors had a common source .....
    - i) .....Another written account of Christ's birth, life, ministry, death, and resurrection from which they obtained the material for their Gospels.
    - ii) Or was the first Gospel written the source for the other two.
  - e) The question of how to explain the similarities and differences among the Synoptic Gospels is called the **Synoptic Problem**.
- 7) Let's look at the past and present "Scholarly" view of the solution to the "Synoptic Problem"
  - a) Remember, the church father's view was that Matthew was written first.
  - b) This view of the Gospel origins began to be challenged in the late 18th century.
  - c) Gottlob Christian Storr proposed in 1786 that Mark was the first to be written.
    - i) This is termed the Marcan Priority
  - d) There were at least 4 others who worked on and helped advance the hypothesis of Marcan Priority throughout the 19th century
    - i) were Karl Lachmann, Christian Wilke, Christian Weisse, and Heinrich Holtzmann.
  - e) Most scholars in the twentieth century regarded Marcan priority as no longer just a hypothesis, but an established fact.
  - f) However, challenges from B. C. Butler and William R. Farmer have proven influential returning many scholars to the exploration of Augustine's original statement that Matthew's Gospel was actually written first.
- 8) Other hypothesizes arose involving other sources that were proposed to have been used by the gospel authors to account for the similarities and word for word likenesses.
  - a) Q-source, L-source, and M-source.

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- b) These hypothetical writings that have never been found to exist but are supposed to account for these gospel likenesses and the “Synoptic Problem”.
- 9) Personally, I do **not** believe there is truly a “Synoptic Problem”.
- 10) The explanation as to why the Synoptic Gospels are so similar is first and foremost that they are all inspired by the same Holy Spirit.
- 11) The similarities and, for that matter the differences, are **only** a problem if you take the Holy Spirit out of the equation and in my opinion “over think” the questions.
- 12) The Gospel of Matthew was written by Matthew the apostle, one of the twelve who followed Jesus and were commissioned by Him.
- 13) The Gospel of Mark was written by John Mark, a close associate of the apostle Peter, another one of the twelve.
- 14) The Gospel of Luke was written by Luke, a close associate of the apostle Paul.
- 15) Why would we not expect their accounts to be very similar to one another?
- 16) Why would we not consider the possibility that they had actually read each other’s accounts?
- 17) Each of the Gospels is ultimately inspired by the Holy Spirit.
  - a) Therefore, we should expect coherence and unity.
  - b) Not to mention the obvious – they are reporting in many cases the same events.
- 18) Of course, as to the differences, in the big picture, we are talking about perspectives of the writers and their target audiences.
- 19) Each was written to a different audience – Matthew to a Jewish audience and Luke Theophilus and possibly other Greek converts.

### **Target Audience for Mark**

- 1) Tradition suggests that Peter and Mark worked together in Rome.
- 2) It is this assumption that leads most to believe that the first audience was the church at Rome.
  - a) These were primarily gentile Christians who would have newly acquired and most likely limited knowledge of Jewish law and the prophesies concerning Christ.
- 3) Even if it is not the church at Rome who were the first recipients, we know with reasonable certainty that the target audience was Gentile.
- 4) The structure and certain characteristics of the Gospel presentation are the basis for this.
  - a) First, there are omissions which, if his audience were primarily Jewish would not have occurred:
    - i) Mark makes no reference to the genealogy of Christ.
    - ii) He referred to the Old Testament less than the other Gospel writers.
    - iii) He did not use the word "law," which was mentioned often by Matthew, Luke, and John.

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- b) In several places, Mark takes time to explain Jewish terms to his readers. e.g. >>>>

### **Mark 5:41 (NIV)**

- c) In several instances, he explains Jewish customs which would be germane to the topic at hand but not obvious to a non-Jewish reader. e.g. >>>>

### **Mark 7:3-5 (NIV)**

- d) In several places, Mark uses Latin words and phrases which do not appear other places in the New Testament.
- i) To a Roman audience, this would be totally understandable – to a Jewish audience, not so much.
- e) He uses the Roman references to time.
- 5) It also seems clear from the characteristics of the presentation that He is writing to Christians.
- a) He uses distinctively Christian terms such as baptize and Holy Spirit without explaining them.
- b) He also assumes his readers were familiar with Jesus' background and with John the Baptist.
- c) He starts with reference to the events surrounding Jesus' baptism without any background explanation at all.

### **Purpose and Message**

- 1) The purpose was to present a clear and concise picture of Christ to his readers.
- 2) We have no real concrete ideas as to what prompted Mark to write the Gospel.
- a) I think without doubt, we can know the Holy Spirit was the prompter.
- b) We also know that this writing took place toward the end of Peter's life perhaps, even after his death.
- c) If the early Church Fathers are correct and Mark was indeed an interpreter for Peter, it may have been that they (Peter and Mark) collectively decided it was time to set down in writing Peter's recollections of his time with the Lord.
- 3) Whatever the reason behind the writing, we can be assured of the purpose:
- a) The Gospel of Mark gives its readers a close and personal look at Jesus, our Savior and Lord.
- b) If the original audience was the church at Rome, it gave them assurance that the faith they were living and for which they were giving their lives was true and reliable.
- c) Jesus, the Son of God, had lived, served (1-13), suffered, and died for them and us (14-15).
- d) Mark wants his readers to see the servant Jesus – the man who gave all for them and others.
- e) The key verse for the entire idea is in chapter 10:

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### Mark 10:45 (NIV)

- 4) He had risen from the grave (16:1-8) — their triumphant Savior was alive!
- 5) Today we enjoy the Bible, complete with Old and New Testaments.
- 6) In fact, most of us probably own several copies of the Scriptures.
- 7) And, of course, this leads to an obvious purpose – first-century believers did not have that privilege.
- 8) It could be that the Holy Spirit moved Mark to writing the Gospel for that reason alone which would have been purpose enough.

- 1) As I mentioned, Mark quotes the old testament less than any of the other Gospels however, turns out that that is exactly where we begin – with one of those rare quotes.

**Mark 1:1-3 (NIV)**

- 1) The opening phrase in each of the Gospels lays a unique foundation for the structure of that book.
  - a) Matthew begins by placing Jesus in the history of God's chosen people.
  - b) Luke provides a careful summary of the verbal accounts of Jesus' life that were being circulated among believers.
  - c) John opens with a theological perspective, emphasizing Jesus as the unique Word of God who has come into his own creation.
- 2) Mark introduces his account as "the gospel about Jesus Christ, the Son of God."
  - a) Mark refers to the "gospel" (euangelion, good news, tidings) three times in his first chapter.
  - b) Both Matthew and Luke waited until chapter 4 to introduce the term.
  - c) John did not use the word "gospel."
- 3) The term gospel would have been familiar to both the Jewish and Roman reader of this time.
  - a) The Jewish reader from its use in the Old Testament (Septuagint – Greek version).
  - b) The Roman reader would also have been familiar and, surprisingly from perhaps the same perspective but referencing a different person.
    - i) There is an early inscription dating from 9 BC that provides insight into how the word was understood in ancient Gentile context.

... and whereas the birthday of the god [Augustus] was the beginning of the world of the glad tidings that have come to men through him. ...

- 4) The word in Greek society was also used to relay good news regarding military conquests and victories.
- 5) Even with all that, Mark sets out immediately to convey his crucial message – the life changing good news (GOSPEL) about Jesus Christ – and, as we will see all the way thru this gospel the explicit truth that He – Jesus – is the Son of God.
- 6) Getting back to the verses at hand, Mark's quote here is actually from two sources Isaiah 40:3 and Malachi 3:1.
- 7) Although quoting from two prophets, Mark simply applied the words to Isaiah, the more popular of the two.
- 8) The theme in both references is the focus on a "messenger" who would "prepare the way."



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- 9) With the help of the Holy Spirit, Mark understood the ministry of John the Baptist as fulfilling these promises. He was the messenger.
- 10) To us, the expression describing John the Baptist's mission may seem a little strange:  
'Prepare the way for the Lord,  
make straight paths for him.'
- 11) The word "prepare" of course, refers to making something ready.
- 12) This picture may have come from the Oriental custom of sending servants ahead of a king to level and clear the roads to make them passable for his journey.
- 13) The people in Israel needed to prepare their minds and hearts:  
a) clear away the spiritual debris and straighten any "crooked" moral paths
- 14) Mark's message was also to introduce a different vision of the in eagerly anticipated King and Messiah.  
a) As we discussed briefly, and will continue to see throughout our study, Mark shows Jesus as the suffering servant, sent to die for the sins of the entire world.  
b) John's message makes a connection between this suffering servant and the Messiah that the Jews did not ever seem to get.  
c) They always saw the Messiah as the knight on the white horse – a political savior restoring Israel to its former glory – not a suffering servant dying for the sins of this world.  
d) Mark's audience would not have had that ingrained idea about the savior.  
e) He appears to want to make the connection clear that Jesus was not the knight on a white horse, and as unlikely as it may seem, his roll was far more important.  
f) Jesus' mission reached far beyond the restoration of a national status.  
g) Instead, his purpose was to provide an eternal restoration of the broken connection between God and all of mankind THAT ONLY GOD THRU HIS SON COULD PROVIDE.  
h) The Hebrew writer in chapter 10 verses 1-18 clearly explains the entire relationship between the sin and sinner before Christ.  
i) In the first few verses (1-4), he explains the situation of the Jewish people at the time John the Baptist arrived as the forerunner of Christ.

### **Heb 10:1-4 (NIV)**

- j) As this passage makes clear, Israel's true need went far beyond a national restoration and being freed from Roman domination.

### **Mark 1:4-8 (NIV)**

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- 2) Before we discuss John's message, let's spend a moment discussing his situation – why he was where he was and why he presented himself in the manner he did.
- 3) John's powerful, to the point preaching and his lifestyle made him quite different.
  - a) Lived in a wilderness area.
  - b) Wore very different cloths from the mainstream Jew.
  - c) Had a strange diet.

### *What are some reasons you can think of that would have made him choose this way of presenting his message?*

- to get away from distractions so he could hear God's instructions;
  - to capture the undivided attention of the people;
  - to symbolize a sharp break with the hypocrisy of the religious leaders who preferred their luxurious homes and positions of authority over doing God's work;
  - to fulfill Old Testament prophecies that said the Messiah's forerunner would be preaching "in the wilderness."
- 4) John's message was different not only from the idea of changing the way people thought about their sins but gave them a different way of dealing with them.
  - 5) There are several aspects of John's message that we need to see clearly.
  - 6) First, the people "were going out".
    - a) Clearly, they were making an effort to hear John since he was in this remote area.
  - 7) They "were baptized," and were **confessing their sins**.
  - 8) The phrasing of the original language reveals that these acts of baptism and confession occurred at the same time.
  - 9) Confession was not a new concept to the Jewish people.

Num 5:6-7 (NIV)

Lev 5:5-6 (NIV)

Prov 28:13 (NIV)

- 10) Confession then and now is more than simply acknowledging one's own sinfulness.
- 11) It is agreeing with God's verdict on sin and expressing the desire to get rid of sin and live for God.
- 12) Finally, the idea of repentance.
- 13) Repentance has two sides — turning away from sins and turning toward God.
  - a) To be truly repentant, people must do both.
  - b) Without apology or hesitation, John preached that the people had to determine to rid their lives of any sins God pointed out and put their trust in him alone.

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- c) They had to understand that they were sinners, that sin is wrong, and that they needed to change both their attitude and their conduct.
- 14) Based on their reaction to John and his message, some at least did understand their situation in regard to sin and their relationship with God because of that sin.
- 15) When they did so, John would baptize them.
- 16) I think we need to note here, at the time of John the Baptist preaching and baptizing, the Jewish people did not have the Hebrew writer's explanation that we read a moment ago.
- a) The gift of the Holy Spirit was not a part of John's baptism.
  - b) We see this explained in Acts, when Paul finds some who were believers in Christ but had only been baptized by John – John's baptism – as opposed to the baptism of the Holy Spirit.
  - c) They were then baptized as again and received the Holy Spirit.
- 17) As important as all of John's message about sin and repentance was, there was another portion of his message that was **really more important**.
- 18) It was a message saying that there was another coming soon that the people should listen to Him.
- a) One who was powerful.
  - b) One worthy of respect.
  - c) And the part that, they may not have connected but really should have – one baptizing with the Holy Spirit.
- 19) This is the real clincher based on prophesy for identifying the Messiah.
- Isa 44:3 (NIV)
- Ezek 36:26-28 (NIV)
- Joel 2:28-30 (NIV)
- 20) The idea being of course that God pouring out his Spirit on all people would come thru his Messiah who John is heralding.
- 21) John's message should have given a clue to the astute listener of exactly what the coming Messiah would be like.
- 22) A conquering hero on a white horse would NOT:
- a) Baptize
  - b) deal with individual people
  - c) heal sick and lame
- 23) He would be all about conquering and ridding the country of the Roman oppression.
- 24) There is also the consideration of exactly what John's words regarding being "baptized" with the Holy Spirit meant.

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25) One commentator puts it like this: “Being baptized with the Holy Spirit refers to the regenerative work of salvation.”

26) We see this I think in Ezekiel that we read a moment ago >>>>

**Ezek 36:26-27 (NIV)**

27) It is the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit that occurs at the moment of salvation.

28) Paul tells Titus in chapter 3 verse 5 and ff...

**Titus 3:5-7 (NIV)**

29) Let’s go back for a moment and consider baptisms a little more in depth.      Question ...

### ***How many different baptisms are there in the New Testament Gospels?***

John’s baptism

Jesus’ disciples baptism (called that because Jesus himself did not baptize)

Baptism of Pentecost and beyond instituted by Christ in Matt 28.

30) In Acts 19, as we referenced a moment ago, we see some who were true believers but had somehow to this point missed the receiving of the Holy Spirit.

**Acts 19:1-8 (NIV)**

### ***Were these disciples (learners) Christians (saved) or not?***

No (as always, God has the final say)

31) Continuing our reading in Acts ...

3 So Paul asked, "Then what baptism did you receive?"

"John's baptism," they replied.

4 Paul said, "John's baptism was a baptism of repentance. He told the people to believe in the one coming after him, that is, in Jesus." 5 On hearing this, they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. 6 When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied. 7 There were about twelve men in all.      NIV

32) From this, we can see that John’s baptism was another part of preparing the way for the true Messiah.

33) Paul further states in Romans, regarding the Holy Spirit’s indwelling ...

**Rom 8:9 (NIV)**

34) I think this clears up the question regarding their state of salvation – again these were believers but, at this point their salvation was not complete without the Holy Spirit.

35) Next, let’s consider Jesus’ baptism (or, should we say His disciples baptism).

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### **John 4:1-2 (NIV)**

- 36) Thus, Jesus never personally performed water baptism;
- 37) His disciples continued to perform that task during Jesus' ministry.
- 38) These baptisms, still following the pattern set by John the Baptist, indicating repentance and confession of sin.
- 39) Again, like John's baptism, it was not the final Jesus commissioned baptism that John predicted.
- 40) To get to that FINAL baptism, we must read Jesus' commission in Matthew 28 ...

### **Matt 28:18-20 (NIV)**

- 41) Here, Jesus of course establishes the final baptismal act encompassing all that is needed including the Holy Spirit.
- 42) We see this instituted in Acts 2:38 ...

### **Acts 2:38-40 (NIV)**

- 43) And of course, this is the baptism that Paul performs in Acts on the believers who had only John's baptism.

- 1) Back into chapter 1, reading from vs. 9-13.
- 2) I chose the NASB2020 version because of a couple of words and phrases that are probably clearer.

**Mark 1:9-13**

9 In those days Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. 10 And immediately coming up out of the water, He saw the heavens ***opening***, and the Spirit, like a dove, descending upon Him; 11 and a voice came from the heavens: “You are My beloved Son; in You I am well pleased.” 12 And immediately the Spirit ***\*brought*** Him out into the wilderness. 13 And He was in the wilderness for forty days, being tempted by Satan; and He was with the wild animals, and the angels were serving Him. (NASB 2020)

- 1) It is estimated that Jesus is in his early thirties at this point.
- 2) Beyond the experience in the temple at age 12 (Luke chapter 2), we have no canonical record of what Jesus did during those intervening years.
- 3) Some of the non-canonical works give stories of his youth but though they are interesting and perhaps entertaining, we as a rule do not accept them as truth.
  - a) Infancy Gospel of Thomas
- 4) Mark is no help here either. As we see, he brings us immediately to Jesus’ baptism and the beginning of His ministry.
- 5) However, what Mark does do here is simply and powerfully reveal the fact that Jesus is the Son of God.
- 6) The heavens open and God expressly states that Jesus is His Son and that He is well pleased.
  - a) Just as comparison, the word translated \*opening in the NASB is rendered . . . “heaven being torn open” in the NIV. Again, just feel the NASB is clearer here.
  - b) There is some debate regarding God’s statement to Jesus.
    - i) Some think it is perhaps only referring to His baptism others to His entire life to this point.
    - c) I personally think it is the latter –the comment refers to Christ’s entire life to this point.
- 7) We see here in this next verse, Mark’s use of his favorite word “immediately” for the first time. And immediately the Spirit ***\*brought*** Him out into the wilderness.
- 8) Here is the second word that I mentioned at the beginning.
- 9) The word “brought” in the NASB2020 (ekballō in Greek) is a forceful word, meaning “to cast out”, “to drive out”, or “to compel one to depart.”
- 10) The verb fits Mark’s dramatic style, however, but, the word can also be translated “to take out”

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- 11) This is why I think the NASB is perhaps a clearer translation. The NIV has .... Spirit sent him out into the desert                      NIV
- 12) The point here is that certainly, the Holy Spirit did **not** “force” Jesus into the wilderness temptations
- 13) He was **not** resistant to the Spirit’s leading.
- 14) Rather, it underscores the reality that the Spirit was in control – perfectly leading Jesus to fulfill each element of the Father’s plan.
- 15) The Judean wilderness is an arid, inhospitable desert that stretches west from the Dead Sea toward Jerusalem, encompassing an area roughly thirty-five miles long and fifteen miles wide.
- 16) The dusty, desolate, and dangerous landscape is broken up by rocky peaks, craggy cliffs, and plunging ravines.
- 17) Jesus faces the devil in the middle of this foreboding wasteland.
- 18) Jesus finds Himself all alone and weakened by 40 days of fasting.
- 19) Mark explains that He was with the wild beasts.
- 20) This emphasizes the reality that He was completely isolated from human care.
- 21) There many untamed animals living in this area and may have included leopards, foxes, jackals, and wild pigs. Of course, along with snakes and scorpions and the like.

### ***What is the worse most uncomfortable situation you have ever found yourself in?***

- 22) Many of us would basically do anything to get out of this situation and back to civilization.
- 23) So, when the devil temps Christ, there is more at play here than just his ability to resist the temptation.
- 24) There are external forces that bear on the situation.
- 25) Mark’s concluding phrase and the angels were ministering to Him implies what Matthew and Luke state explicitly—that, indeed,
  - a) Jesus triumphed over all the temptation Satan brought.
  - b) He emerged victorious from His forty-day isolation in the wilderness.
- 26) The word ministering indicates that these angels provided Jesus with food.
- 27) But the angels also ministered to Him by their very presence, which served as confirmation that the Father who sent them was still well pleased with His Son.

### **Mark 1:14-15 (NIV)**

- 1) Mark followed his brief description of Christ’s temptation with an equally short introduction to Jesus’ preaching ministry.
- 2) Quite some time had passed since Jesus’ baptism.

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- 3) If we look at a timeline, we see that he had been in Judea, ministering there and even cleansing the temple.
- 4) This time period is covered in John's gospel (John 2:13–4:3).
- 5) Mark bypasses those events, along with Jesus' journey through Samaria (John 4:4–42), to focus on the beginnings of Jesus' public ministry in Galilee.
- 6) Going on starting in vs. 16 >>>>

### **Mark 1:16-20 (NIV)**

- 1) Several months have now passed since Jesus was baptized.
- 2) Looking at John 1:35–42, it appears that Jesus had already met Simon Peter and Andrew his brother.

### **John 1:35-42 (NIV)**

- 3) So, from this we see that Andrew was with John the Baptist when John pointed to Jesus and declared, "Behold, the Lamb of God!".
- 4) After spending the day with Jesus, Andrew went and found his brother Simon, who also came to see the Lord. Of course, this is Simon Peter.
- 5) After spending this time with Andrew and Simon, Jesus leaves Judea the next day for Galilee but we do not know if Simon and Andrew accompany him or not.
- 6) At the very least, we can assume here that once John the Baptist was imprisoned, the two of them returned to their livelihood as fishermen in Galilee.
- 7) This is where we pick up next.
- 8) Jesus walking along the sea of Galilee sees them fishing and then calls them to leave their work as fishermen and follow Him to share His eternal work.
- 9) We can probably assume that Jesus accompanied by Andrew and Simon proceed a short distance along the shore to another fishing boat.
- 10) There He sees the two men who will eventually be called the "sons of thunder", James and John, the sons of Zebedee.
- 11) Jesus calls them as well, and they too leave everything immediately to follow Jesus.
- 12) I think we must be struck by how quickly these men left everything and followed Jesus.
- 13) Simon Peter and Andrew had spent a day with Jesus plus, they had heard John's testimony regarding Jesus.
- 14) James and John, however, from what we are told had not seen or met Jesus prior to this encounter while preparing their nets for the days fishing with their father.
- 15) Yet, all four men left everything immediately and followed Jesus.
- 16) Here is perhaps a hard question ...



***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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***Do you think that the commitment they demonstrated by leaving everything was greater than ours?***

***Should it be?***

***Why?            Why not?***

**Mark 1:21-28 (NIV)**

1) I think that perhaps it is significant that vs. 22 comes before the outcry of the demon.

***When you read vs. 22 ...*** 22 The people were amazed at his teaching, because he taught them as one who had authority, not as the teachers of the law

2) If the people were amazed at His teaching perhaps, it was that authority that caused the outcry of the demon.

***How would you describe teaching with authority as opposed to not having authority?***

- Jesus taught with absolute conviction, objectivity, dominion, and clarity.
  - He spoke the truth with the unwavering confidence of the divine King, and the people could only respond in wonder.
  - It is the authoritative and powerful teaching that the demon no doubt recognized.
- 3) John MacArthur sheds some light on the difference in what the people were used to and the teaching of Jesus:

Scribes were the primary teachers in first-century Jewish society. They traced their heritage back to Ezra who, according to Ezra 7:10 and Nehemiah 8:4–8, read the law and explained it to the people. Most people had only limited access to the Scriptures, copies of which were too expensive for ordinary, working-class people to own. Consequently, they would go to the synagogue to hear the Scriptures read and explained by the scribes. Because they handled the Scriptures, the scribes became so revered that they were given the title “rabbi,” meaning “honored one.” Over the centuries, from the time of Ezra to the time of Christ, the teaching of the scribes grew less focused on the text of Scripture and more focused on what previous rabbis had said. By the first century, scribes prided themselves on being familiar with all possible views. Rather than faithfully explaining the simple meaning of Scripture, they delighted in complex musings, fanciful allegories, obscure insights, mystical notions, and the teachings of earlier rabbis.

MacArthur, John. Mark 1-16 MacArthur New Testament Commentary Two Volume Set (MacArthur New Testament Commentary Series) . Moody Publishers. Kindle Edition.

- 4) Given all that, it is no wonder that Jesus’ teaching was so extraordinary and amazing to the people and, a point of recognition for the demons hearing him.
- 5) One thing we see throughout the gospels including Mark are a number of demon encounters.
- 6) In the Old Testament, there is only one mention of a demon in Gen 6:1-2.
- 7) In the New Testament, Acts relays only two encounters with demons.

## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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- 8) To me, this is not surprising – demons would definitely recognize Christ and know Him as the son of God.
- 9) In this particular incident, there are a couple of things to note.
- a) First, the demon definitely uses the plural in the personal reference.
  - b) It is unclear as to the antecedent for the pronouns we and us.
  - c) We cannot tell if there are multiple demons associated with the man (as in the case of Legion) or if he is referring to the demon population as a whole.
  - d) Most likely, it is the demon population as a whole.
    - i) This is based on the singular nouns in verse 26 - **The evil spirit shook the man violently and came out of him with a shriek.**
  - e) Second, there are several ways the first question the demon asks is translated:
    - i) "What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth?" NIV
    - ii) "Why are you interfering with us, Jesus of Nazareth?" NLT
    - iii) "What business do we have with each other, Jesus of Nazareth?" NASU
    - iv) "Let us alone! What have we to do with You, Jesus of Nazareth?" NKJV
  - f) The second question, however, is pretty standard in its interpretation – “have you come to destroy us?”
  - g) The recognition by the demon of Christ’s authority and power are unmistakable.
  - h) Then the demon switches back to the singular and says:  
“I know who you are — the Holy One of God!”
    - i) This is a definite clue indicating that Jesus is the Christ.
      - i) It is either not being heard by the people present or ...
      - ii) It indicates that the statement is being ignored by the Jewish people seeing these incidents.
    - j) In fact, throughout the gospels, demons NEVER doubt who Jesus is.
      - i) They should have no doubt, since they have known him from the time they were created.
- 10) Jesus then commands the demon beginning in second half of vs. 25 :
- "Be quiet!"** said Jesus sternly. **"Come out of him!"** 26 **The evil spirit shook the man violently and came out of him with a shriek.**
- 11) Here we need to address exactly why Jesus tells the demon to be silent.
- 12) Throughout Mark’s gospel, we will see him showing Jesus as silencing the demon almost with a tone of insisting on secrecy.
- 13) He will also command some of those he heals not to publicize their healing.

## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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14) He even orders the disciples to keep insights about his true nature and glory to themselves.

15) There are several possible explanations as to why Jesus insisted on this secrecy:

- a) **FIRST** – Jesus wanted to contain the enthusiasm for a political messiah.
  - i) He did not wish to be the people's king in the way they desired.
  - ii) He also did not want to be a military leader.
- b) **SECOND – (and perhaps most importantly)** To have the population confess Jesus' deity without a proper understanding of his crucifixion is partial and invalid.
  - i) As the Son of God, Jesus' ultimate mission would not be accepted or understood – He was here to die for the sins of the world
  - ii) This would not meet any of their expectation.
  - iii) He did not want people to wildly proclaim him to be God's Son unless they understood the meaning of his death for them on the cross.
  - iv) This would explain why even his disciples lacked understanding until his resurrection.
- c) **THIRD** – Though their identification of Jesus was accurate, He did not need any publicity from the Satan's demons.
  - i) As it was, the religious leaders accused Him of casting “out demons only by Beelzebul the ruler of the demons”.
  - ii) Permitting the demons to continue speaking about Him would only have added support to the sneering speculations of the Pharisees.
- d) **FINALLY** – As you may recall from our introduction, one of the main purposes of Mark's writing was to show Jesus as the servant.
  - i) The Gospel of Mark gave its readers a close and personal look at Jesus, their Savior and Lord.
  - ii) It gave them assurance that the faith they were living and for which they were giving their lives was true and reliable.
  - iii) Jesus, the Son of God, had lived, served (1-13), suffered, and died for them (14-15).
  - iv) Mark wanted his readers to see the servant Jesus – the man who gave all for them and others.
  - v) The key verse in Mark for the entire idea is in chapter 10 vs 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.” NIV

16) This entire passage ends with the thoughts of the crowd.

27 The people were all so amazed that they asked each other, "What is this? A new teaching — and with authority! He even gives orders to evil spirits, and they obey him." 28 News about him spread quickly over the whole region of Galilee.

## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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- 17) Again, one obvious fact here is that they did not understand the meaning of or perhaps they did not hear what the demon said.
- 18) Regardless of their understanding or not, Jesus' actions – teaching with authority and demons obeying Him led to his fame spreading rapidly across the region.
- 19) In this next passage, we will see some of the results of this fame spreading throughout the region.

### **Mark 1:29-34 (NIV)**

- 1) Before we look at the miraculous healing of Peter's mother-in-law, let's take a look at some traditions and facts about these 4 men James, John, Andrew, and Peter.
  - a) We see here 4 successful men.
  - b) They were not "just fisherman", they had a very successful business.
  - c) Fish was a staple of the diet of most who lived in that area and other places.
  - d) From other non-biblical sources, we find that the fisherman of the area around Capernaum and the Sea of Galilee actually exported much of their catch to other places in the area.
  - e) Archeologists have unearthed what they believe is Peter's house only a very short distance from the synagogue at Capernaum.
  - f) The house was actually what was called an "insula".
    - i) This is a complex with doors and window openings onto an enclosed courtyard and not the street.
    - ii) Insulas were normally family dwellings and the courtyards contained hearths, millstones, and hand presses
    - iii) The courtyard also contained stairs taking the occupants second floor living quarters.
    - iv) Insulas were very much large dwellings intended for extended families.
  - g) Again, I think we can surmise from this that Peter and by inference the other three men were very successful.
  - h) All this making their commitment to Jesus and their leaving their business to follow him as they did all the more significant.
- 2) Next, we want to look at some things in general as we look at this miraculous healing of Peter's mother-in-law.
  - a) First, we see here that, as with the casting out of the demon from the man in the synagogue, this healing is immediate.
  - b) There is no requirement for a convalescence time.
  - c) She was able to get up immediately and serve her guests as if nothing had been wrong.
- 3) As we see Jesus perform healings and cast out demons throughout his ministry, we will always see just that – they are always immediate

## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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### ***What were the requirements for the healings?***

- Desire and normally a belief that Jesus could heal them – no a belief in Him as their redeemer and/or the Son of God was required.

### ***What about casting out of the demons?***

- Desire or in the last case only a challenge on the part of the demon.
- 4) In some cases, the people do believe at least in his ability to heal beforehand.
  - 5) As in the case of one of the 10 lepers he heals, they do come to a belief in him as their savior BUT, there is no prerequisite requirement for either of these beliefs.
  - 6) Looking quickly at the actual healing event here, we see again, the immediacy.
  - 7) Jesus simply takes her by the hand, helps her up, and “The fever left her and she began to wait on them.”
  - 8) Later that evening, Mark says after sunset, we see that the word about the demon being casted out of possessed man and perhaps even the fact that he had healed Simon’s mother-in-law had an effect on the community.
  - 9) They bring the sick and demon possessed to Jesus for healing.
  - 10) I think, we can assume that the effect on the community was not one of wanting to hear this marvelous new teacher but to be healed and see demons casted out.
  - 11) Jesus was able to accomplish the healing and casting out the demons in large numbers.
  - 12) The case of the verb here indicates that the sick and demon possessed kept on coming.
    - a) It may have been after midnight when the end came.
  - 13) Here again however he forbids the demons to speak so they cannot tell who He was.
  - 14) No mention of a sermon or of Jesus teaching on this occasion.
  - 15) This fact enters into what we see happen next.

### **Mark 1:35-39 (NIV)**

- 1) It is apparent that Jesus needed some alone time with his thoughts and especially with the Father in prayer.
- 2) I don’t believe this would be an out of the ordinary occurrence for him.
- 3) The “out of the ordinary” situation occurs while he is away.
  - a) The crowds have obviously started to reassemble at Peter’s house.
  - b) Equally obvious is perhaps the fact they are there for healings.
  - c) Peter and the other three disciples went looking for Him.
- 4) Jesus makes a choice here. As we surmised in our discussion earlier, he probably was not preaching while healing and casting out demons at Peter’s house the evening before.

## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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- 5) So, here we see Jesus making what might be a tough decision.
- 6) Perhaps, he was praying about it through the time prior to the disciples finding Him.
- 7) The obvious question is, does he stay here and continue to help those who are in need and preach in the Capernaum synagogue or is it time now to again strike out on his ministry journey?
- 8) The answer He comes to is that He is to move on and preach other places as well.
  - a) He says clearly “That is why I have come”.
- 9) We are not told here, but I would assume that Jesus did return to Peter’s house and take care of at least some more of those who were seeking his help.
- 10) But, as we are told, he does not stay there – he launches his ministry journeys “throughout Galilee”.

### ***Do we ever have to make tough decisions regarding our own ministries?***

- If Jesus the man was incapable of “handling it all” then who are we to think that we can?
- We must continuously evaluate what we are doing and try to align ourselves with what God’s plan for us is – NOT our plan for us!

- 1) I ran across a comment by MacArthur this week that, in view of some of our discussion last time I thought might be of interest.

Historically, the Jewish people viewed the messiah as nothing more than a man. They expected him to be an earthly ruler of unparalleled power and influence. He would conquer Israel's enemies and fulfill all the promises that were given to Abraham, repeated to his children, and reiterated and expanded in the promises given to David of a coming king and kingdom. The messiah would be a son (descendant) of David and, like him, defeat Israel's foes and usher in the glorious kingdom. The Jewish people viewed the messiah as the savior of the nation as a whole, but not of individual souls. They did not (and still do not) believe the messiah would be God in human flesh.

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- 2) Returning to our last reading chapter 1 vs. 40-45

### **Mark 1:40-45 (NIV)**

- 1) The key to this passage is contained in vs. 38 and in the result of the lepers not obeying Jesus' command not to tell anyone.

"Let us go somewhere else — to the nearby villages — so I can preach there also. That is why I have come."

- 2) Though Jesus had compassion on all those who were sick and demon possessed, his primary ministry was not to heal but to preach.
- 3) MacArthur calls Jesus' healings "...a massive unleashing of divine power with no parallel in history."
  - a) He cites 7 different passages in Matthew alone that point out Jesus healing of the masses. One of those passages is >>>

### **Matt 4:23-25 (NIV)**

- 4) What Matthew describes here is pretty much the entire area of Palestine – from the Dead Sea in the south, north to the Sea of Galilee, and points east and west.
- 5) Getting back to Mark, this passage breaks down into three distinct sections:
  - a) the leper's predicament
  - b) the Lord's handling of the situation
  - c) and the results due to the leper's not keeping quiet.
- 6) First, ***the leper's predicament*** – in Luke's account of this incident in Luke 5:12, he tells us "a man came along who was covered with leprosy".



## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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- a) This tells us that man's condition was obvious.
  - b) With that came certain requirements
    - i) They had to remain apart from people (basically banished from society).
    - ii) They had to cover their mouth and cry out "unclean, unclean" when approaching someone.
  - c) Then, instead of following any of this, he falls on his knees in front of Jesus and begs for healing.
  - d) In this case, the leper had approached Jesus and from the text, he had gotten within arm's length of the Lord.
- 7) The Lord then handles the situation in a totally unexpected and unacceptable way by Jewish standards.
- a) No one would normally touch a leprous person.
  - b) Jesus does the unthinkable – he reaches out and touches the man.
  - c) Immediately, the man is healed – he is clean.
  - d) To me, this means that the man "immediately had no sign of leprosy on him anywhere".
  - e) Take a second to let that picture – the before and after – sink in – Amazing!!
  - f) Then, the Lord tells the man to do what, to me seems almost impossible - "See that you don't tell this to anyone" – how could he not?
- 8) However, in verse 45, Mark again tells us why Jesus says things like this.
- 45 Instead he went out and began to talk freely, spreading the news. ***As a result***, Jesus could no longer ***enter a town*** openly but stayed outside in lonely places. Yet the people still came to him from everywhere.
- 9) As we can see, Jesus had compassion for those in need of healing.
  - 10) Healings were also important to His work.
  - 11) However, they were a two edged sword – the process and time taken hindered his true purpose.
  - 12) That purpose was the preach and teach the good news of the fulfillment of God's plan and purpose for sending Him.

### **Mark 2:1-2 (NIV)**

- 1) There are a couple of pieces of information we should gather from these two verses.
- 2) First, here we see a transition for Jesus – Mark calls Capernaum his home.
  - a) This possibly indicates that Jesus returned to Capernaum occasionally throughout his ministry.

## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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- b) Obviously, the exact number of times we do not know for sure but interesting none the less.
  - c) As you may recall, this is also Simon Peter's and Andrew's home – their families were there so these visits are opportunities for them to see their families.
  - d) We will see shortly that Matthew is likely from there or at least very close by.
  - e) Pure conjecture – but – other of the disciples may have either been from there or could have moved their families there as well – again pure conjecture on my part.
- 3) Second, the attitude of the people in Capernaum appears have changed from our first encounter there.
- a) In our first glimpse into Jesus' relationship with the people there was one of their needing healing and pressing in on him for that healing to the point that he was unable to teach.
  - b) This was the reason he left and went into other towns at the time He did.
  - c) Here, we see the people portrayed as hungry for his teaching – so much so that there was standing room only to hear Him speak.
- 4) All that is not to say that no one need healing. There were still those who were in need of his healing power as we see in this next passage.

### **Mark 2:3-12 (NIV)**

- 1) Ok, it's Sunday morning, Micah is at the speaker's stand bringing the message when a few pieces of debris fall down in front of him.
- a) Everything stops, Micah moves back away from the spot where the debris hit and starts watching where the rest of the debris is coming from.
  - b) Everyone is watching and suddenly a lot of debris comes down and a larger and larger hole forms.
  - c) Finally, everyone sees the bottom of a mat appear in the opening and start to slowly descend to the ground.
  - d) Once low enough people realize there is a person on the mat.
  - e) Several rush to help lower him safely to the ground.
  - f) The person does not move but it is obvious he is alive.
  - g) Then, a super strange thing happens, Micah steps forward and says to the man, "Son, your sins are forgiven."

### ***What would your thoughts be?***

### ***What do you think the elders thoughts would be?***

- 2) Obviously, that would not ever happen but, I think it helps us see perhaps what the folks who were there were thinking – not just the leaders but the individuals as well.

## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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- 3) I'm equally sure that Jesus knew the thoughts of the listeners as well as the teachers of the law.
- 4) Jesus zeros in on the teachers of the law and calls them out by asking "Why are you thinking these things?"

### ***What should they have been thinking or, perhaps a better question might be what do the things they are thinking say about their attitude?***

- 5) To be fair, we also should consider that the rest of the audience most likely does not realize that Jesus has zeroed in on the teachers of the law.

### ***So, what response do you think his question evokes in the average person in the crowd?***

- 6) I personally think that Jesus, being the master teacher that he was and being all knowing as he was probably handled these actions specifically the way he did to teach.
- 7) He knew the response of the teachers of the law, he knew the response of the crowd.
- 8) He could have healed the man first and all of those responses would have been different.
- 9) However, he made the seemingly odd statement forgiving the paralyzed man his sins first probably to evoke the very responses he got.
- 10) So, now the teaching moment.

Which is easier: to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up, take your mat and walk'? 10 But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins . . . ." He said to the paralytic, 11 "I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home." 12 He got up, took his mat and walked out in full view of them all.

- 11) As good teachers often do, he begins with a question that causes the listeners to think about the very point he is getting ready to make.
- 12) There is a possibility that this is a really pivotal moment in Christ's ministry – at least in Capernaum.
- 13) To this point, my guess would be that, most if not all of those who were listening to Jesus teach and either being aware of his healing or actually experiencing them were thinking of him as a great teacher who could heal and not much beyond that.
- 14) Here, because of the thoughts of the Pharisees, the very thing he had been avoiding he now brings into focus.
- 15) All who were listening to him at this gathering most likely were aware of the issue the Pharisees were concerned about even if they did not have the same attitude.
  - a) They all knew that only God could forgive sins.
- 16) In that day and time however, there were many who could supposedly heal the sick – not as truly and spectacularly as Christ did, but heal none the less.

## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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- 17) Here is the ultimate connection – a healing that was way out of the ordinary – taking a man totally paralyzed from his mat completely healed and walking out of the assembly in front of them all.
- This was not a man who was on crutches who tosses them aside and limps away.
  - This was a man who was totally paralyzed getting up and walking normally through the crowd.
- 18) Combine that with what he just said and there had to be a lot of lightbulbs coming on over the heads of many in the crowd – ah hah! This must be the Messiah! And, could it be, yes even the Son of God.

### **Mark 2:13-14 (NIV)**

- Mark very quickly gives us three different thoughts that at first seem to be disconnected here.
  - First**, Jesus went out beside the lake.
  - Second** people came to him and he began to teach.
- If we think back to the event that Mark just related regarding the crowd and the men lowering their paralyzed friend thru a hole in the roof, we can see that Jesus drew large crowds.
- As we generally look at Jesus' ministry, he taught outside a lot.
- One can, and I think should, infer from this that it was his way of reaching more people than he could teaching in buildings or structures of any kind.
- The **third** thought here is Jesus walking along.
  - I think, in context, we can assume he is walking along perhaps returning to Capernaum after teaching.
- Then, comes a “gasper” event. TV show commercial for “Ghosts”.
- Speaking to Levi and asking him to follow Jesus would have been a true gasper event!!
- Let's take a deep dive into Levi (Matthew) and why this would have been so shocking to the people.
  - First, Levi was a Jew – the name and the “son of Alphaeus” description tells us this concretely.
- Now, let's look at what he was as far as the people were concerned.
- Due to the Roman occupation of Israel, the Jewish people were required to pay taxes to Rome.
- In Galilee, the responsibility to collect those taxes fell to Herod Antipas, the tetrarch, who sold tax collection franchises to the highest bidder.
- Those who purchased a franchise were required to meet a minimum quota for Rome
- Anything they collected beyond that quota was theirs to keep.

## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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14) This was where the problem came in - tax collectors continually looked for ways to squeeze extra money out of people and were aided in their collection by thugs and low-life sorts.

15) You may recall the incident in Luke 3:12 where Jesus addresses this:

### **Luke 3:12-14 (NIV)**

16) There were many different taxes that were collected.

- a) poll tax, income tax (about 1 percent)
- b) land tax (20% of all grain, wine, and fruit)
- c) taxes on the transport of goods and produce
- d) road use
- e) crossing of bridges
- f) many other miscellaneous activities.

17) When we bring this idea to our current society, we find that tax collectors were basically legalized extortionists.

18) They ran a legal protection and loan sharking operation.

19) They charged more than was necessary or reasonable and then, for those unable to pay, they loaned money at exorbitant interest rates.

20) As in collection and loan sharking activities today, were aided in their collection by thugs and low-life sorts.

21) They were also seen as traitors to their own people – they extorted money from their fellow Jews in order to support the corrupt infrastructure of foreign oppression as well as to line their own pockets.

22) One can see from this why society considered them as part of the worst of sinners

23) Beyond just opinion, they were considered unclean, barred from attending the synagogue, and prohibited from testifying in a Jewish court.

24) As one commentator explains:

The Mishnah and Talmud (although written later) register scathing judgments of tax collectors, lumping them together with thieves and murderers. A Jew who collected taxes was disqualified as a judge or witness in court, expelled from the synagogue, and a cause of disgrace to his family (b. Sanh. 25b). The touch of a tax collector rendered a house unclean (m. Teh. 7:6; m. Hag. 3:6). Jews were forbidden to receive money and even alms from tax collectors since revenue from taxes was deemed robbery. Jewish contempt of tax collectors is epitomized in the ruling that Jews could lie to tax collectors with impunity (m. Ned. 3:4).

(James R. Edwards, *The Gospel according to Mark*, Pillar New Testament Commentary [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002], 83)

25) They were almost as contemptible as Gentiles to the Jews.

26) Further, according to the Talmud, there were two kinds of tax collectors – the gabbai and mokhes.

## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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- 27) Gabbai were responsible to collect the more general taxes, like the poll, land, and income tax.
- 28) Mokhes were responsible for more specialized taxes, like tolls for using roads and bridges, were collected by the mokhes.
- 29) A tax booth would be owned by a great mokhes who would employ a little mokhes to sit there and actually collect the taxes.
- 30) From Mark's description, it is clear that Matthew was a mokhes.
- 31) Because he was in constant contact with the people, daily charging them as they passed his toll booth, Matthew would have been one of the most familiar and hated men in Capernaum.
- 32) One commentator describes his occupation in these words:
- Levi is no tax baron but one who is stationed at an intersection of trade routes to collect tolls, tariffs, imposts and customs, probably for Herod Antipas. Toll collectors were renowned for their dishonesty and extortion. They habitually collected more than they were due, did not always post up the regulations, and made false valuations and accusations (see Luke 3:12–13). Tax officials were hardly choice candidates for discipleship since most Jews in Jesus' day would dismiss them as those who craved money more than respectability or righteousness.
- (David E. Garland, Mark, NIV Application Commentary [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996], 103)
- 33) Matthew's booth appears to have been located near the shore, meaning that he likely collected tolls and tariffs from those involved in the city's bustling fishing trade.
- 34) I guess that we can now see why this was an event that would cause those that were following him and any that observed the event to gasp.
- 35) It would be inconceivable that a Rabbi of any standing at all would speak to a tax collector.
- 36) And to ask him to become a member of his disciples would be even more unthinkable.
- 37) And, it gets even worse ...

**>>>>>> Lesson 06 <<<<<<<**

It is difficult to come to a firm decision concerning the original text. On the one hand, it is easy to see why ὀργισθεῖς {or gis theis} ("being angry") would have prompted over-scrupulous copyists to alter it to σπλαγχνισθεῖς {splanch nis theis} ("being filled with compassion"), but not easy to account for the opposite change. On the other hand, a majority of the Committee was impressed by the following considerations. (1) The character of the external evidence in support of ὀργισθεῖς is less impressive than the diversity and character of evidence that supports σπλαγχνισθεῖς. (2) At least two other passages in Mark, which represent Jesus as angry (3:5) or indignant (10:14), have not prompted over-scrupulous copyists to make corrections. (3) It is possible that the reading ὀργισθεῖς either (a) was suggested by ἐμβριμησόμενος of ver. 43, or (b) arose from confusion between similar words in Aramaic (compare Syriac *ḥ* , "he had pity," with *ḥ* , "he was enraged").\*

(from Nestle-Aland, Novum Testamentum Graece, 27th Revised Edition, edited by Barbara Aland, Kurt Aland, Johannes Karavidopoulos, Carlo M. Martini, and Bruce M. Metzger in cooperation with the Institute for New Testament Textual Research, Münster/Westphalia, © 1993 by Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, Stuttgart. Used by permission.)

- 1) Quick review from last time to set the framework for this next passage:
  - a) Jesus is on the road, likely on His way back into Capernaum when He calls Levi (Matthew) the tax collector to follow Him.
  - b) We discussed at length (perhaps too long) the fact that this would be a shock to virtually everyone who witnessed the call.
  - c) The reason was the attitude of people and perhaps even the disciples toward tax collectors.
  - d) To make matters even worse, some of the disciples may have actually had to deal with Levi as he charged (or overcharged) them taxes.
- 1) This leads us to the next passage.
- 2) Here we find Jesus at Matthew's house (again assumed to be in Capernaum) eating a meal with him and many "other tax collectors and sinners".

**Mark 2:15-17 (NASU)**

- 3) It is interesting to me that even though they are eating at Matthew's house, those apparently joining the dinner were tax collectors and sinner followers of Jesus – not necessarily Matthew's friends or acquaintances.
- 4) Notice that the scribes ask Jesus' disciples – not Jesus himself the question.
- 5) I can imagine this situation;
  - a) The scribes would not have entered Matthew's house and be defiled by it.
  - b) He probably corrals some of the disciples outside and asks them the question

## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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- i) "Why does he eat with tax collectors and 'sinners'?"
- 6) We can assume that the disciples were not eating at this time, so the scribe did not ask "why do you".
- 7) Obviously, they were close enough to Jesus that he heard the question.
- 8) I can also imagine that the disciple really would not have answered the question anyway – he probably turn toward Jesus as one might do as if to say, "this one's for you teacher".
- 9) One other point we might consider here is that some of the disciples might have wondered the same thing.
  - a) As we discussed, some of them were fisherman here and had likely paid much in taxes perhaps even to Levi himself.

10) Of course, Jesus gives the answer I'm sure we are all familiar with:

"It is not those who are healthy who need a physician, but those who are sick; I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners." NASU

11) There are several things to take away from this exchange:

- a) First, we can tell from the opening remarks to this incident, Jesus attracts sinners and the outcasts of society.
  - i) We can make a simple observation here that I think would be absolutely on point.
    - (1) Jesus was a great teacher and obviously a devout Jew.
    - (2) He was probably seen by those who followed him as being on the same plain intellectually as any of the Pharisees or teachers of the law.
    - (3) Despite this, he treated "sinners and tax collectors" with respect and caring – not with the holier than thou attitude that the Pharisees and teachers of the law did.
    - (4) I can also imagine that other devout Jews also treated these folks as outcasts.
- b) Along with this, we can see that Jesus did not feel it was necessary to follow the precepts of the current Jewish community with regard to who one associates with.
- c) Finally, from Jesus' own words, we get the conclusion of the teaching moment.
- d) His call was to these very people – they and anyone like them were the ones that needed his message.
- e) The problem here is that the scribes of the Pharisees were oblivious to the fact that they were in the same condition.
- f) Jesus was not saying that they were righteous and did not need him.
- g) Instead, he was saying that anyone who was sick (in a sinful condition) was in need of him (the physician).

***How do we fit in this picture are we always the sinner and/or tax collector at the table with Jesus or, are we the scribe asking the question?***



## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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### ***Perhaps a different way to ask the question is – are we ever oblivious to our condition?***

- 1) This following passage is recorded in all three of the synoptic gospels:
  - a) Matt. 9:14–17; Luke 5:33–39
  - b) All three place it immediately after the call of Matthew.
- 2) According to MacArthur, the chronological sequence is not accidental.
  - a) Shortly before this, Jesus had stunned the crowds when He declared that He possessed the authority to forgive sins (Mark 2:10).
  - b) He then demonstrated His eagerness to extend that forgiveness to sinners by calling a tax collector to follow Him as a disciple
  - c) He even shared a meal at the tax collector’s home and with other like individuals.
  - d) Through His actions, Jesus made it crystal clear that the principle of His preaching was diametrically opposed to everything the attitude of the scribes and Pharisees represented.
  - e) They depended on self-righteous effort and legalistic works,
  - f) Jesus focused on divine grace being granted to those believing in Him, who humbly cried out for mercy and repented from sin.

### **Mark 2:18-22 (NASB)**

- 1) The NASB which I read is somewhat confusing in this first sentence.
  - a) The NIV has the sentence ...

### **Some people came and asked Jesus**

- b) The two words translated “they come” and “they say” would NOT be considered as not referring back to the Pharisees and John’s disciples.
  - c) They are considered indirect plurals meaning simply “some people” come and say.
- 2) Most likely the some people in this case were the Pharisees.
- 3) We have seen and will continue to see, that when the scribes and/or the Pharisees have conflict with Jesus’ actions or his teachings, they launch their protest in the form of questions.
- 4) However, getting back to the actual question asked.
- 5) In order to get a clear picture of the problem here, we need to look at the Law.
  - a) The Law demanded only one day of fasting – the Day of Atonement.
    - i) This was a day dedicated to mourning over sin in one’s life.
  - b) There were other fasts listed throughout the Old Testament, but they were voluntary.
    - i) These were used to show grief, sorrow over sin, and pursuit of communion with God

## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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- c) In the first part of Isa 58, he explains that God looks on fasting as a connection to Him and His desires and requires one to commune with Him.
  - i) It requires more than just an abstinence from food.
  - ii) It requires a purposeful connection to God and being in subjection to Him – it is never about show or display
- 6) Jesus makes this clear in the sermon on the mount when he discusses prayer, fasting, and giving.
  - a) They are to be done in “secret”.
  - b) They are to honor God not put on a show for others to see.
- 7) Jesus’ answer casts a glaring light on their misunderstanding and misuse of fasting.
  - a) In the case of John’s disciples, it was perhaps an ignorance of all the facts about and a misunderstanding of the Messiah and the complete gospel.
  - b) In the case of the Pharisees, it was showing their blatant misuse of the act of fasting.
- 8) To illustrate this so clearly, Jesus refers to a wedding feast.
  - a) In Jewish tradition of that day, wedding celebrations lasted 7 days.
  - b) They started with the bridegroom’s arrival.
  - c) The attendants of the bridegroom were responsible for all the festivities – it was a time of happiness and celebration.
  - d) To fast at a wedding would have been insulting and totally inappropriate.
  - e) In fact, rabbinic rules forbade the practice.
  - f) For a member of the wedding party to mourn at such a joyous occasion would have been as ridiculous as it was rude.
  - g) Simply put, it would have been equally ludicrous to think that Jesus’ disciples ought to fast and grieve while the messiah was in their midst.
  - h) This points clearly that the Monday and Thursday (two day per week that were required by the Pharisaical Law) were not appropriate.
  - i) He then makes reference to His own crucifixion and a sudden removal of the bridegroom from the festivities and states that they (his disciples – the bridegroom’s attendants) would mourn then.
- 9) Jesus goes on to add a couple of clarifying analogies – new cloth, old garment and new wine and old wine skins.
- 10) Simply put, the point Jesus makes both of these is that the ritualistic practices of existing Judaism and the new and personal heart driven worship practices he was teaching – “the new way” are totally incompatible.
- 11) His way shows a heart transformed by love for and honoring of God.

## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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- 12) Even if you do the same things – fasting, praying, giving alms, etc. – doing them from the heart is a totally different concept.
- 13) Practicing these things as a ritual to be seen and admired by men and/or as a measure of their own holiness has none of the love for or honoring of God – it is all about self.
- 14) Truly, if we are honest with ourselves, we may all fall into the “ritual” mode occasionally.
- 15) I doubt seriously that it would be because we wanted to be admired by men and/or as a measure of our own holiness.

***However, if our actions become purely habitual – without much if any thought given to them would they not fall into the same category?***

***(discuss)                      How do we prevent this?***

## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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### **>>>>>>> *Lesson 07* <<<<<<<<**

- 2) If we were to name the this passage and the next passage, they could be called “The Lord of the Sabbath – Part 1” and “The Lord of the Sabbath – Part 2”.

#### **Mark 2:23-28 (NASU)**

- 1) Here, we see an abrupt thought train change from the fasting situation of the last few verses to a specific incident on a Sabbath.
- 2) It is interesting to me that the Pharisees seem to be almost stalking Jesus.
  - a) Everywhere he and his disciples go, they seem to be there watching.
- 3) God had established the Sabbath as a day of reverence toward Him and refreshment from work for His children.
- 4) The Pharisees and scribes had transformed it into a day of stifling regulations and restrictions.
- 5) Jewish life in Jesus' day revolved around the Sabbath.
- 6) Elaborate laws had been designed so that everyone knew exactly how to "keep the Sabbath."
- 7) It was difficult for Jews to get any rest on the seventh day because they were so busy making sure they didn't do any "work."
  - a) This may sound silly but there were so many rules and taboos that it became almost impossible to live normally on the Sabbath
- 8) Here we see one of many specific stifling regulations that over-zealously attempted to clarify God's intent in many cases.
- 9) God said it was not lawful to harvest on the Sabbath – got it – that's serious work and defeated God's purpose.
  - a) One of these regulations that had been created made taking hold of a stalk of grain, pulling your hand up along it to gather a few grains of wheat harvesting.
  - b) This is almost, if not completely, non-scriptural!

#### **Deut 23:25 (NIV)**

- a) To me, it is implied here (if not stated directly) that picking kernels with your hands to eat would be fine but harvesting is done with the sickle and you would be stealing his crop!
- 2) As the trend is, they turn their displeasure to a question. Pointing to the disciples, they ask “why are they doing what is not lawful on the Sabbath?”
- 3) Jesus' answer turns the tables so to speak on the question and the Pharisees:
- 4) First, we know that the Pharisees knew the Scriptures thoroughly, yet Jesus' question, "Have you never read" reveals their ignorance of the true meaning of the Scriptures that they claimed to know so well.

## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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- 5) Obviously, they had read this story many times, but they had not discerned or applied its meaning.
- 6) Jesus justified his disciples' action on the grounds that they were hungry and that their need superseded the technicalities of ceremonial rule.
- 7) When Jesus compared himself and his disciples to David and his men, Jesus was saying, in effect, "If you condemn us, you must also condemn David and his men."
- 8) **Jesus was not condoning disobedience to God's laws.**
- 9) He was emphasizing discernment and compassion in enforcing the ceremonial laws – something the self-righteous Pharisees did not comprehend.
  - a) They had elevated the rules which had been made over the past four hundred or so years to be on a par with God's Law and intent.
- 10) People's needs are *never more important than God's laws* but are more important than the technicalities of their rules (traditions). *Agree / Disagree?*
- 11) By the way, if you look at the Old Testament telling of the story Jesus refers to, you will see that the actual high priest that gave the bread to David was Ahimelech, not Abiathar.
- 12) Abiathar was Ahimelech's son and successor.
- 13) Jesus obviously knew that Ahimelech was the high priest.
  - a) Jesus was using a rabbinical method of referring to a section of Scripture.
  - b) In this section, Abiathar was a more prominent name.
  - c) Abiathar may have been in training at the time and also involved in the incident.
- 14) Then, Jesus really pokes the bear!

27 Jesus said to them, "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. 28 "So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath."
- 15) He made no apology or excuse, He simply and unashamedly claimed to be the sovereign ruler over the Sabbath.
- 16) Jesus was clearly claiming to be God, the Creator, and the One who designated the Sabbath in the first place and the sovereign over it (cf. John 1:1–3).
- 17) He was the Son of Man, a messianic title from Daniel 7:13–14, the divine King who created the Sabbath and defined its parameters.
- 18) The Pharisees prided themselves on being the authoritative interpreters of God's Word and will.
- 19) Here stands the One whose interpretation was infinitely more authoritative – the Son of God Himself.
- 20) He condemned their self-righteous attempts to please God.
- 21) He was characterized by grace;
  - a) They prided themselves on their works.

## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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- 22) He demonstrated mercy and compassion to people
  - a) They cared only about protecting their petty customs.
- 23) He exemplified the true purpose of the Sabbath
  - a) They twisted a divine blessing into a dismal day of drudgery.
- 24) For the Pharisees, the Sabbath belonged to them.
- 25) For centuries they had been working out its rules.
- 26) When Jesus, with this statement, elevated Himself far above them and their rules.
- 27) He declared Himself to be the Lord of the Sabbath which would have angered them and brought out their hostility and hatred even more.

### ***Do we personally ever impose on ourselves rules that are of our own making in an effort to please God?***

- 28) Mark chooses not to go further into the details of this situation or even comment on any response the Pharisees may have had.
- 29) Instead, as we will see, he immediately begins to relay another incident of Jesus being in conflict with the Pharisees regarding the Sabbath rules they had established.

1) Moving on to the “Lord of the Sabbath – Part 2” ...

#### **Mark 3:1-6 (NIV)**

- 2) Mark shows here that Jesus was not through poking the bear.
- 3) This time he does it in the synagogue – the home turf of the Pharisees.
- 4) To be clear, by my “poking the bear” comment, I don’t mean to indicate that Jesus is being malicious or petty in any way.
- 5) I really think he is trying to drive home a point to these that are so hard hearted; and that point is that he is the Son of God.
- 6) For centuries, the nation of Israel had awaited a Messiah and here he stands in front of them.
- 7) However, because of their hard-hearted inflexible attitude and their misunderstanding of who the Messiah really was, they would not see him for what he was.
- 8) As we are told here, Jesus was angered and grieved because of this hardheartedness.
- 9) If we really consider what is happening, we can see a lot of pettiness in the Pharisees. Mark says:

“They were watching Him to see if He would heal him on the Sabbath, so that they might accuse Him”

- 10) Jesus does not disappoint them.
- 11) He calls the man with the withered hand forward, and restores his hand to normal.

## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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12) One commentator says of the withered hand:

It was a term that refers to atrophy. It was used of dead plants that have dried up and wasted away, suggesting that his hand was neurologically lifeless or incapacitated.

13) Another comment I ran across was that the term may have meant disfigured or maimed and not useable.

- a) I could not help but think of BETTY OWEN – she had a form of arthritis which was terribly disfiguring and rendered her hands almost unusable.

14) As indicated, they were watching Jesus to accuse Him.

15) Actually, it goes beyond that – they hated Him.

16) There were at least three major reasons for this hatred:

- a) **First**, Jesus challenged their authority with what he taught and his actions.
- b) **Second**, and something that goes along with the first, he violated their customs and traditions.
- c) But the **third** reason was special – it was because of the very claim he is making – to be Messiah – the Son of God.

17) To sum this up, it was obvious from what he taught that if he were the Messiah they were in absolute trouble.

18) What they were doing according to this “imposture” was all wrong in God’s sight and their way of life would have to come to an end if he was indeed the Messiah.

19) John 10:29–39 records an incident when Jesus clearly claimed his divine nature and the most violent reaction to that claim:

### **John 10:29-39 (NASU)**

20) In the incident we are looking at in Mark, they conspire with the Herodians how they might destroy him.

21) The word translated destroy here can also mean ruin or kill.

22) The Herodians are mentioned three different times in the New Testament – each time with the idea that they are sympathetic to the Pharisees with regard to Jesus.

- a) Some interpreters put forth that they were courtiers or soldiers of Herod Antipas.
- b) Others argue that the Herodians were a sect of Hellenistic Jews similar to the Pharisees and Sadducees.
- c) In context, I think that the last idea is most likely correct.
- d) Either way, the Herodians were more of a political party than a religious group.
- e) They were distinguished by the fact that they were sincerely friendly to Herod the Great, the King of the Jews, and to his dynasty.

## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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- f) Unlike the Pharisees who sought to restore the kingdom of David and have political independence, the Herodians wished to restore a member of the Herodian dynasty to the throne in Judea.
- g) The Herodians and Pharisees had little in common until Jesus posed a threat to them both.
- h) To get rid of Jesus, the Pharisees needed the support of people with some influence with the secular leaders.
- i) Thus the Pharisees and Herodians, normally enemies, joined forces to discuss how to get rid of Jesus.
- j) The Herodians then became a group that would fall under the “The enemy of my enemy is my friend” saying.
- k) We will see this alliance pop up again in the temple discussions during the week before the crucifixion.



**Mark 3:7-12 (NIV)**

- 1) We really do not know exactly where Jesus is at this point.
- 2) In the last verses, he entered the synagogue – most likely in Capernaum.
- 3) If that is the case the sea he is withdrawing to is likely the Sea of Galilee.
- 4) What Mark is describing here is truly, the far reaches of Palestine.
  - a) Idumea is the far south of Judea at Beersheba.
  - b) Beyond the Jordan would indicate east of the Jordan in the territory of Perea
  - c) And to the far north, would be Sidon at the northern extreme of Palestine.
- 5) The indication is clearly that Jesus was known all over the Jewish world of that day and people were flocking to him for healing and his teaching.
- 6) I think we need to take a second and let the description of Jesus' predicament really sink in.
  - a) We have all seen cases where stars are mobbed with fans trying to get close to touch them.
  - b) In this case the purpose is to receive healing which would make the scene even more dramatic.
  - c) If you combine that with demons coming into His presence and crying out (thru their hosts) that He was the son of God.
  - d) This must have been a truly chaotic scene and, traumatic for Jesus and His disciples.
- 7) As to the last item we just mentioned – in verse 11, we have another situation that, at first glance, may appear to be a contradiction.
  - a) As we have seen in the past couple of passages, Jesus is truly at this point trying to drive home the point to the Pharisees that he is the Messiah and the Son of God.
  - b) Yet, here again, we hear him telling the evil spirits that recognized him not to tell who he really was.
  - c) From our study of Revelation, we know that these unclean or evil spirits were likely fallen angels who had joined Satan in his rebellion and therefore knew Jesus well.
    - i) They knew his power and his capability to destroy them if he desired.
  - d) When these evil spirits identify Jesus as the Son of God, there are several reasons why he would try to silence them.
    - i) First, though he was revealing himself to the religious leaders by his answers and actions, the majority of the people still did not get him – meaning, they did not realize His deity.
    - ii) Also that he did not want them to reveal his identity because it could be construed by the religious leaders as an endorsement him.

## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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- iii) The Pharisees were already saying that he was casting out demons by the ruler of the demons. We will see details of this shortly in verses 20 to 35 of this chapter.
  - (1) The vocal recognition and endorsement of Jesus for who he was by these demons would only add fuel to the fire.
- iv) Finally, as we discussed a few weeks back, there is the issue of understanding who He really was prior to His crucifixion and resurrection.
- v) He did not want the evil spirits to identify him because he knew that his true identity would be revealed at his resurrection.

### **Mark 3:13-19 (NIV)**

- 1) We have already met some but not all of these men in Mark's writing.
- 2) When we look at this list, we do not see a group of men who by any means would be expected to be totally successful on their own.
  - a) Fisherman, tax collectors – what one would likely call “common folks”.
  - b) No special credentials
  - c) Definitely not trained teachers, rabbis, or other religious leaders.
- 3) As I contemplated this event, it occurred to me that Jesus really had no other source from which to choose those that would establish his church.
  - a) He could not go to any of the groups that constituted the religious establishment of the day – with only a few exceptions, they all were trying in every way possible to stop his efforts.
  - b) He really could not go to his family – not enough resources there and at this point, we are not sure what their take on Jesus really is.
  - c) John tells us his brothers did not believe in him at this point.
- 4) So, why did Jesus choose these men? They were a truly diverse lot!
  - a) Tax collector
  - b) Couple of Fishermen who had probably had run ins with the tax collector
    - i) Possible conflict within the group.
  - c) A Zealot – perhaps a political activist.
  - d) A thief and betrayer
  - e) To use the vernacular – a couple of “hot heads” – James and John (son's of Zebedee)
  - f) The others were probably equally diverse.
- 5) Though they are a diverse and unlikely group, we know they were His choices – “those whom He Himself wanted”
- 6) By the way I used the NASB here. Some of your translations have the words “designating them apostles” or something to that effect.

## *Gospel of Mark – NOTES*

- a) Here again, the words do not appear in all the earliest manuscripts so there is some debate.
  - b) The NASB leaves them out but NA27 says in their opinion, the evidence is too strong in favor of leaving them in.
  - c) In that, they place the phrase in brackets – thus the difference.
- 7) But as always, He looks to the Father for security in His choices.
- 8) When we look at Luke's account of this event, we are told that Jesus spent the night in prayer:  
**Luke 6:12-13 (NASB 2020)**
- 9) This, to me says unequivocally that he wanted his father's input on this choice.
    - a) There is much at stake here – in the end God's whole plan hinges on these men.
  - 10) There are two other reasons that Mark states why Jesus chose these men.
    - a) “so that they would be with Him”
    - b) And“so that He could send them out to preach, 15 and to have *authority* to cast out the demons”
  - 23) In Matthew 10:1 we read additionally that they were also given the power “to heal every kind of disease and every kind of sickness.”
  - 24) It was important that, like Jesus, these men as they preached, were validated by their acts in both the physical and spiritual or supernatural realms.
    - a) In the physical – healing the sick.
    - b) In the spiritual – by casting out demons.
  - 25) Eleven of these men were the ones who would establish the church – His Church after He departed back to the Father.
  - 26) The twelfth was the instrument that would lead to the culmination of God's plan of salvation – Jesus' betrayal!
- 11) This is a pivotal moment in Christ's earthly ministry.
- 12) To this point, he had been concentrating on the crowds that had come to believe in his healing power and were listening to his message.
- 13) As we proceed, we will see that, even though he is still teaching and healing, He will be spending a large amount of effort on training and preparing these men for the work they are to do after he departs this earth.

### **Mark 3:20-30 NASU**

- 1) Mark never lets us get very far from a situation in which someone is challenging Jesus – his power authority and, in this case His sanity as well.

## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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- 2) In fact, we can see that anyone who seriously encounters or even considers Jesus has only three options:
  - a) They can find him divine.
  - b) They can find him demon possessed.
  - c) Or, they can find him delusional (crazy).
- 3) In this passage, we see all three.
  - a) Many among the crowds that are looking to him for healing and are coming to hear him speak with authority would most likely consider him to be divine.
  - b) Clearly, “his people” meaning his family considered him delusional.
    - i) As we mentioned a bit ago, John records that his brothers did not believe in him at this point. In fact, they attempted to taunt him about his ministry.

### **John 7:3-5 (NASU)**

- c) Finally, we see the “teachers of the Law” (the Scribes) attributing Jesus’ ministry to Satan.
- 4) In the first two cases we can be sure that he was glad for those in the crowd (the multitudes) that did believe.
- 5) In the case of his family, I am sure Jesus would have preferred that his family they would have embraced his message, but he probably understood.
- 6) However, in the situation with the Scribes, Jesus had to deal with this attitude!
- 7) In the parallel passage in Matthew, there is a precipitating incident that brings forth this accusation from the scribes.

### **Matt 12:22-25 (NIV)**

Beelzebub or Beelzebul is a name derived from a Philistine god, formerly worshipped in Ekron, and later adopted by some Abrahamic religions as a major demon. The name Beelzebub is associated with the Canaanite god Baal. In theological sources, predominantly Christian, Beelzebub is another name for Satan. [Wikipedia](#)

- 8) Returning to Mark’s description of this event we see how Jesus handles the accusation.
- 9) First, he calls them to himself which means he wanted them closer to him so he could speak directly to them about their thoughts and accusations.
  - a) They truly did not realize how serious what they were saying was.
- 10) To set the focus, he begins by asking them a simple question.

"How can Satan cast out Satan?"

- 11) He then uses two parables to answer the accusation in a very clear and concise way

"If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand." AND

"If a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand."

## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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12) To be sure the dots are connected of these two parables he tells them point blank what he thinks about their assertion

"If Satan has risen up against himself and is divided, he cannot stand, but he is finished!"

13) Then, to bring it further into focus for them he tells them a concluding parable;

"But no one can enter the strong man's house and plunder his property unless he first binds the strong man, and then he will plunder his house."

14) The LABC explains the point of this parable in this way:

This picture reflects a situation in the ancient world where wealthy people's homes were virtual fortresses, and their servants could form a small army. Jesus pictured Satan as the wealthy man and his demons as his servants and possessions. Jesus called Satan a strong man in this parable. His house is the realm of evil where there is sickness, demon possession, and death. It also refers to a possessed individual in whom Satan's demons live. Satan's possessions are the demons — those beings through whom Satan carries out his work in the world. The only way those possessions could be carried off would be for someone to first tie up the strong man — the only way for the demons to be cast out is for someone to first limit Satan's power. Jesus' advent into the world did just that (1 John 3:8).

Although God permits Satan to work in our world, God is in control. Jesus, as God, has "tied up" Satan; Jesus is able to drive out demons and end their terrible work in people's lives. As such, every exorcism was a binding of Satan; one day Satan will be bound forever (Rev 20:10). Jesus was not in league with Satan, as the teachers of the law tried to claim; rather, he had overpowered Satan by refusing his temptations and by constantly freeing people held in Satan's grasp — either through demon possession or through the power of sin.

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15) Finally, Jesus brings them to the reality of *their* assertion.

- a) Obviously, by their denial, they have rejected him.
- b) But by the assertion that he was acting thru the power of an evil spirit SATAN (in essence calling the Holy Spirit and evil spirit or SATAN) they were committing an unpardonable sin!

16) As we look at this, we can and should see that Jesus has an immediate and specific offense in mind when he says this.

17) Jesus has been in total submission to the Father and under the influence of the Holy Spirit his entire life.

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- a) The Holy Spirit has been involved in every aspect of his life – birth, temple visit at age 12, baptism, desert temptations, and anything else you can think of.
- b) To me, this is the crux of Christ’s fully human nature.
  - i) Though he is the Son of God and fully divine, he is totally human in his functioning here on earth at this time.
  - ii) The Hebrew writer tells us:

### **Heb 4:15 (NASU)**

- 18) Here in lies the sin that Jesus is calling “unpardonable” – those who have been observing him with such a critical eye have ample evidence of his power.
- 19) The problem is they attribute that power NOT to the Holy Spirit, recognizing in that process that he is divine in nature and the power ultimately comes from God.
- 20) Instead, they say publicly that this power is from Satan!
- 21) William Hendriksen in his “The Exposition of the Gospel according to Matthew” says:  
For penitence they substitute hardening, for confession plotting. Thus, by means of their own criminal and completely inexcusable callousness, they are dooming themselves. Their sin is unpardonable because they are unwilling to tread the path that leads to pardon. For a thief, an adulterer, and a murderer there is hope. The message of the gospel may cause him to cry out, “O God be merciful to me, the sinner.” But when a man has become hardened, so that he has made up his mind not to pay any attention to the promptings of the Spirit, not even to listen to His pleading and warning voice, he has placed himself on the road that leads to perdition.
- 22) PAUSE to SEPARATE .....
- 23) This is the unpardonable sin, that one hardens their heart to the point that they cannot and will not accept God’s truth.

***Is it possible then for us to commit the unpardonable sin?***

***Does the unpardonable sin have to involve blaspheming the Holy Spirit as the religious leaders did here?***

**Mark 3:31-35 (NASB 2020)**

1) Here we have the continuation of the thought that was presented in verse 20 and 21.

**Mark 3:20-21 (NIV)**

- 2) Jesus is in the midst of a crowd that is filling the house such that his family, when they do arrive, cannot get in to see him.
- 3) Instead they send word in that they are outside waiting to see him.
- 4) This is one of those situations that can be looked at with two totally different perspectives if one chooses.
- 5) It can be seen as a very negative situation from both Jesus' point of view in that his family members do not believe in him, and they are basically coming to seize "take custody of" him and drag him off to who knows where.
- 6) From the family's point of view negatively they do not believe in him and think he is crazy and are going to seize him and try to protect Him from Himself.
- 7) Looking at the other gospel accounts in Matthew and Luke really doesn't change the perspective much.
- 8) However, I think there is definitely room for a little more positive thinking here from the perspective of his family and in looking at Jesus' comments – WITHOUT being untrue to the intent.
- 9) First, we know that at least some of Jesus' brothers did not believe in him.
  - a) That in itself does not mean that they feel animosity toward him – you are able to not believe in something someone says or does and still love them – especially if they are family.
  - b) Jesus' mother definitely believed in him.
- 10) Their statement about him being out of his mind or as some translations put it "beside himself" could refer to:
  - a) what he was teaching
  - b) being so involved with his work he was not eating
  - c) even perhaps just putting up with the sizes of the crowds that were pressing in on him
- 11) As to them "taking custody" of him, the verb κρατέω {karato} has a ton of meanings associated with it.
  - a) Taking custody has, in the English, a negative connotation.
  - b) Other gentler meanings are:
    - i) To hold securely (so that he cannot get away)
    - ii) to restrain, hold back, hinder

## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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- iii) to hold fast (to prevent escaping)
  - iv) to hold fast (to) something or someone to stay closely united
  - v) to subdue, conquer, prevail
  - vi) to grasp, seize, take hold of
- c) The idea in some of these definitions is more the idea of restraining
  - d) When we apply it to the situation of Jesus not eating and them being worried about him, it might be more appropriate to say “take hold of” or “prevail on him” with the intent to allow him to eat.
  - e) One way or the other, the family appears to be showing genuine concern for His wellbeing.
- 12) Getting to Jesus’ closing comment to the crowd, it could be construed as a slam against his family.
- 13) Jesus’ question – “Who are My mother and My brothers?” was not indicating in any way that he did not know his own family – he obviously knew the identity of His earthly family members.
- 14) It was also not intended as any level of disrespect or antagonism toward His mother and brothers, whom He clearly loved (cf. John 19:26–27).
- 15) Jesus simply used this real-life interruption to teach a transcendent spiritual truth to His followers who were gathered around Him.
- 16) He then answers his own question.
- “Here are My mother and My brothers! 35 For whoever does the will of God, this is My brother, and sister, and mother.”
- 17) His point is that the only relationship to Him that matters eternally is not physical – it is spiritual – those who have a saving relationship with him thru faith and obedience to God’s plan.
- 18) In John 8:31 Jesus explained, “If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine.”
- 19) A few chapters later, He echoed that same truth: “If you love Me, you will keep My commandments” (John 14:15).

### **Mark 4:1-9 (NIV)**

- 1) We begin here again with Jesus being pressed by the crowds so much so that he actually has to get into a boat and put out from shore in order to be able to teach effectively.
- 2) He begins teaching them in parables.
- 3) Skipping the actual parable for a moment, and looking at his concluding statement.

"He who has ears to hear, let him hear."

NIV



## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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'He who is having ears to hear — let him hear. YLT

- 4) This is a quote from the Old Testament that can be found in several different places:
  - a) Isa 6:9 f; Isa 43:8; Jer 5:21; Ezek 12:2;
- 5) Now, let those words sink in for a second and let's look at what he tells his apostles and other believers in his following remarks:

### **Mark 4:10-13 (NIV)**

- 6) I think, if we truly analyze the situation at this point in Jesus' ministry, there are three basic groups following him.
  - a) The majority are interested in the healing and are probably somewhat curious about his radical teaching.
    - i) Many in this group are looking to him for an indication that he is the "knight on the white horse" that will save them from Roman oppression.
    - ii) This group when they figure out that he is not what they are looking for or, they get what they need, simply go away.
  - b) There are then two minority groups:
    - i) The first minority group would be the religious leaders – firmly against him and want to kill him as soon as the opportunity presents itself.
    - ii) The second minor group would be those who are truly seeking to hear him and find a path to God thru what he is saying.
      - (1) From this group, we find his followers and of course the disciples themselves.
- 7) So, looking at these groups, we see two indictments.
- 8) The first indictment would be against the unbelievers that are basically rejecting him.
  - a) These would fall into two fundamental categories:
    - i) The religious establishment on the one hand.
    - ii) On the other, those who really are NOT looking for a way to forgiveness and God.
      - (1) These are the ones looking for healing and/or a savior who will take them out of the Roman rule they are under.
- 9) The second indictment is of his own followers who are not thinking and trying to understand.
  - a) He says clearly that they have been given the ability to understand but they are not using it.
- 10) As to the ones who basically reject Christ, the quote from Isaiah 6:9-10  
"they may be ever seeing but never perceiving, and ever hearing but never understanding; otherwise they might turn and be forgiven!"  
is very appropriate.

## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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- a) These would be the religious leaders and to some extent those who are looking for a different Messiah than He is and walk away.

11) John MacArthur says of this quote as applied to these two groups here:

Though written some seven centuries earlier, those words from Isaiah provided an apt description of the unbelieving Israelites in Jesus' day. During Isaiah's ministry, the people repeatedly ignored the prophet's warnings until their consciences were so seared, and their spiritual senses so dulled, that they no longer had any ability to understand or respond. God allowed them to harden their hearts to the point that they could no longer repent. Consequently, divine judgment on Israel, executed through the instrument of Nebuchadnezzar's invading armies, became inevitable. Jesus' parables represented a similar form of judgment on the intractable unbelief He encountered in the first century. Due to the people's repeated rejection of His clear teachings and undeniable miracles, from this point on Jesus would frame His teachings in a way they could not understand. Unable to comprehend the truth, they would never return and be forgiven. Thus, they would face God's wrath. Historically, divine judgment came upon the apostate nation of Israel in A.D. 70 when Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans. Eternally, that judgment came when those who had rejected Jesus died and were cast into the everlasting torments of hell.

MacArthur, John. Mark 1-16 MacArthur New Testament Commentary Two Volume Set (MacArthur New Testament Commentary Series) . Moody Publishers. Kindle Edition.

- 12) A word of clarification which we will get into in more detail shortly, Jesus is not trying to "hide" his teachings from anyone.
- 13) To the contrary, parables are made to make things clearer – if you are willing to listen and think about them.
  - a) The key is being willing to listen – effort is required!
  - b) Those whom MacArthur is saying are people who repeatedly rejected His clear teaching and undeniable miracles are not going to put forth any effort thus sealing their fate.
- 14) As for the indictment of ones who are his followers, those who believe – they miss the point because they are not thinking kingdom thoughts.
- 15) They are not applying what they are hearing to their lives which they need to do.
- 16) Again, speaking to His followers, so that they can see what they missed, he clearly explains each portion of the parable.

### **Mark 4:14-20 (NIV)**

- 14) This point-by-point explanation of how those who hear the gospel accept or reject it sets the stage for the next series of parables that Jesus gives to his followers.

## *Gospel of Mark – NOTES*

*Do we ever read scripture and fail to try to understand or even think about the true meaning? YES!*

*What are some ideas of how we can raise our study to a higher level – study more deeply and understand more?*

- 1) Jesus continues speaking we assume, to his disciples and followers.
- 2) The parables we are about to hear highlight the responsibility of the faithful hearer and evangelist.
- 3) Jesus' disciples would shortly be called to bear fruit by obediently proclaiming the message of salvation to others therefore it is important that they get these parables.

### **Mark 4:21-23 (NIV)**

- 4) In ancient Israel, a lamp was lighted and set on a stand in the middle of the room so that it would give light to the entire room.
- 5) If one places the lamp under a bed or a bowl, obviously the light would not fill the room.
- 6) As we just said a moment ago, Jesus' disciples are now to go and proclaim the message of salvation.
- 7) In view of Jesus' comment regarding teaching in parables and his quote from Isaiah  
"they may be ever seeing but never perceiving, and ever hearing but never understanding; otherwise they might turn and be forgiven!"  
his disciples were probably confused as to exactly who they were to teach.
  - a) If the word was going to fall on hardened hearts, why should they sow so liberally?
  - b) Should they limit their teaching to those who were consider and willing to listen?
- 8) The LABC interprets this parable as Jesus' answer to these questions:

"No," explained Jesus, "I am not deliberately trying to hide the truth from people. That would be like lighting a lamp and then putting it under a bowl. Why then light the lamp at all? If I am hiding the truth, there is no reason for me to teach." The purpose of the parables is not to conceal the truth, but to reveal it; the parables explain in everyday terms truths that human minds cannot grasp. Thus the parables do not obscure, they clarify — but only to those who are willing to listen and believe.

The disciples may have been beginning to understand the mission to which Jesus had called them. Like the farmer in the parable, theirs would be the job of sowing the seed of the gospel in a largely hostile world. The light of the truth about Jesus had illuminated them, and it was their ministry to shine that light to a sin-darkened world. Their witness for Christ would be public, not hidden. The benefits of knowing Jesus and receiving salvation were not to be kept to themselves, but passed on to

## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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others. Christ's message is intended for all people. We should not hide our Christianity from the watching world.

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***Where are our lamps? Are we placing them squarely on a stand in the middle of the rooms of our lives or – not so much?***

***How do we assure our lamps are on stands and not under the beds of our everyday living?***

***Other***

- 1) We are in the midst of a series of four parables.
- 2) The actual situation here is somewhat unclear.
- 3) There is question in my mind whether all these are spoken only to his disciples or if at some point Mark begins relating parables given to the crowds and the disciples.
- 4) Regardless of the audience, these parables can definitely be directed toward the disciples as they are being prepared for the mission ahead – not only immediately but also when Jesus is no longer with them.

**Mark 4:24-25 (NIV)**

- 5) At this point, Jesus tells the disciples and anyone else listening to him to “Pay attention to what you hear” (NRSV).
- 6) The New Living Translation I think delivers this in a very clear manner:

**Mark 4:24-25 (NLT)**

24 Then he added, "Pay close attention to what you hear. The closer you listen, the more understanding you will be given—and you will receive even more. 25 To those who listen to my teaching, more understanding will be given. But for those who are not listening, even what little understanding they have will be taken away from them." NLT

- 7) We know that Jesus taught in parables.
- 8) That being a given, we must know that the parables are important for what they teach.
- 9) Jesus wants his disciples and all of us to pay attention to his words.
- 10) We are to understand, and then share with others.
- 11) As we do, even more understanding will be given to pass along.
- 12) The LABC makes the following comment in this regard:

Believers are responsible to use well their God-given understanding, insight, and opportunities to share the gospel. Whether they have little or much, that is not nearly as important as what is done with what they have. It is the measure with which they give that determines what more will be given. Even then, still more will be given because a person's openness and perception of the kingdom message will bring great rewards. Ultimately, believers will receive eternal blessings in heaven.

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- 13) The point can further be made that, as with the disciples any who teach or preach, can expect to be rewarded for their diligent efforts.
- 14) In context, this refers to all of us for we are all to be sharing the gospel with others – teaching if you will.

## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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- 15) The more we study (hear and understand) the better able we are to share and the more that will be given to us in the way of understanding.
- 16) I think the takeaway for us is the only way we can be part of what Jesus is saying to the disciples today is to **read, study, and meditate on what he says in scripture.**
- 17) In this way, we can apply and share what he is saying:  
“Pay close attention to what you hear. The closer you listen, the more understanding you will be given—and you will receive even more.”
- 18) To be sure, the way we hear Jesus’ words today is thru studying and paying attention to his teachings.
- 19) And, in this way, we can be ready when the opportunity arises to share what we understand – in other words to be the farmer planting good seed in good soil.

- 1) Now, with regard to how we understand as we hear;
- 2) Let’s do a little experiment – this is not a test – it is simply an illustration of a couple of points and also help us clear up exactly who the audience might be at this point.
- 3) Listen carefully to this next parable as I read it. Perhaps even read along carefully as well.
- 4) **Here’s the important part**, try to imagine yourselves as a member of Jesus’ audience – not a disciple or even one who had heard him speak before but as a ***person hearing Jesus for the first time.***
- 5) ***I’ll give a couple of seconds at the end*** for it to sink in and then, let’s discuss the parable and try to come to a conclusion as to what it means exactly – FROM the non-disciple non-believer perspective.
  - a) They are looking for healing.
  - b) Jewish – knows about God and the Kingdom.
  - c) Curious about His teaching.

### **Mark 4:26-29 (NIV)**

#### ***PAUSE - Ok – FROM the non-disciple perspective what does the parable mean?***

- As an individual listening to Jesus’ sermon, the crux might be that God is powerful and in charge and even though we do not understand the how’s of what he does, we reap the benefits.
  - Probably add to that, we should be grateful!
- 6) Now, read the parable again.
  - 7) **This time**, try to imagine yourselves as part of Jesus’ disciples and other followers:
    - a) Obviously have heard Jesus’ teachings.
    - b) As a disciple, you are getting ready to go out and preach the good news to others.
    - c) Have doubts about many things.

## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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8) As before, *I'll give a couple of seconds at the end* for it to sink in and then, let's discuss the parable and try to come to a conclusion as to what it means exactly from that perspective.

### ***Ok – what does the parable mean from a disciples perspective?***

9) As one who is going to be an apostle, and envoy, or messenger planting the seed, we might:

- a) have concerns about our effectiveness
- b) even think we were the ones that were making the final difference – NOT!!

10) The conclusion is the same - God is powerful and in charge and even though we do not understand the how's of what he does, we reap the benefits.

11) However, the impact is different from the disciples perspective.

- a) In their case, it requires a trust that God will provide the increase.

12) They need to be like the farmer who goes to sleep and even though he does not understand the how's he can trust God to supply the increase.

13) And, like the farmer, he must do his part but that is all he can do!

14) There are a couple of points I hope we get here.

15) First – context – if you do not have a context in which you are reading it becomes very difficult to understand what Jesus is saying in these parables.

#### ***a) You are listening without ears to hear.***

b) As we have discussed before, there are many facets to context

i) Scripturally we have (as we read and meditate):

- (1) surrounding verses – few to many
- (2) the situation of the writer
- (3) the situation of the hearer
- (4) the entire biblical narrative
- (5) etc.

16) The Second Point is also context (from the hearer's perspective)!

a) As we just saw, personal perspective as a context can have a definite effect on how we view a given "hearing of the word".

- (1) What are we dealing with in our lives
- (2) What is the situation as we hear (study) the word

17) In any contextual situation, we could see the potential for a problem – definitely more so when considering personal context.

### ***What kind of problems can you see us getting in when we start considering personal context?***

- Totally ignoring any possible differences in readings from one time to the next.

Heb 4:12 (NIV)

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12 For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.

- To me, this means simply that God’s word plays out in our lives.
- It has meaning that is relevant to our current situations.
- It is not a just text book to be memorized and used as a step by step method (checklist) by which to live.
- It is obviously to be obeyed but not every historical fact or situation in scripture needs to be turned into a rule – sometimes they are “just situations”.
  - I sometimes think this is one of the main problems that our early founders had (Campbell and Stone and many others who followed thru the years).
  - In attempting to restore the “Ancient Faith” returning to the way the apostles indicated things were at the time they wrote the divinely inspired words they missed what the Hebrew writer said – they wanted to take every situation and every inference and turn it into a guide on how we worship.
  - i.e. scripture was not be living and active – it a textbook to be followed at all costs.
  - This was especially true of early Campbell.
  - Stone had more of a lifestyle idea than Campbell (at least at first) and saw a need more to help people and live a right life.
  - AGAIN – this is MY OPINION – many may not agree.

Getting back to the problems we may encounter and me off my soapbox.

- Letting selfishness because of our situation dictate what we think a scripture means.
- This one is subtitle – Doubting the conclusion we draw if it makes us uncomfortable.
  - This might lead to ignoring what God is trying to tell us.

18) As a disciple in this context, even though the basic meaning is the same the impact on the hearer is different.

- a) There was a desire to assure they were being effective, so the parable spoke to them in a confidence building, don’t worry about it sense.
  - i) Same words but very different meaning!
  - ii) Both valid assessments and understandings
  - iii) Both true.



**Mark 4:30-32 (NIV)**

- 1) Of course, the idea in this parable is that the kingdom has very small beginnings.
- 2) If we look at actual mustard seed, it is between 1 to 2 mm (0.029 to 0.079 in.) in diameter. It is a little smaller than a bee-bee.
- 3) The plant when fully grown can be as much as 9 to 20 feet tall depending on the species.
- 4) Obviously, a tremendous difference in size – seed to plant fully grown.
- 5) I think we first have to consider the context carefully here to get the impact of the parable.
- 6) Jesus is talking to his disciples who he will soon send out – they are the mustard seeds.
  - a) Personally, I think each one might be construed to be a mustard seed.
- 7) These men were:
  - a) Not part of the religious elite.
  - b) In fact, they were far from being religious leaders of any kind.
  - c) They will be shown to be fearful, slow to believe, and spiritually weak at times.
  - d) Unbelieving and slow to understand even who Jesus really was (we will see this vividly in verses 35 to 41 of this chapter).
  - e) Even later on when Jesus is arrested, they will show their weakness by fleeing.
  - f) And yet, here we are – this is God’s chosen way to bring his church (kingdom) into existence.
  - g) This is the mustard seed from which His Kingdom will emerge!
- 8) This idea is perfectly in keeping with what Jesus has been teaching them to this point.
  - a) It lets them know again how important what they are going to do is.
  - b) It also shows them, when combining this parable with the last regarding the farmer that God will supply the huge increase.
- 9) Bonnie made a truly valid point last time regarding the fact that we and the disciples are truly farmers planting seeds.
- 10) However, the Kingdom is made up of people – souls – and in that regard, we are mustard seeds as well.
- 11) God gives knowledge of His word to pass on to others.
- 12) Putting these parables together, again, we gain that knowledge thru study – having ears to hear.
- 13) Thru passing that knowledge to others we are in essence a small part of building the Kingdom.
- 14) My point was that considering a seed vs. plant we would should truly be the seed – always passing the knowledge on to others.

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### **Mark 4:33-34 (NIV)**

- 1) There are varying opinions regarding the meaning of what Mark says here.
- 2) MacArthur comments that “the unbelief of the crowds was judged by Jesus as He obscured the truth and taught them only unexplained riddles.”
- 3) However, others (myself included) believe that this was simply method of teaching and there was no intent to obscure.
  - a) For some who were, as we discussed earlier, only listening to him for curiosity or were part of the crowd for healings and miracles their hearts were hardened,
    - i) They would not expend the effort to hear and understand.
  - b) Obviously, we have the religious leaders who were definitely not going to listen – hearts were totally hardened!
  - c) Others would.
  - d) Again, looking back at verse 11 of this chapter:

11 He told them, "The secret of the kingdom of God has been given to you. But to those on the outside everything is said in parables 12 so that,

"they may be ever seeing but never perceiving, and ever hearing but never understanding; otherwise they might turn and be forgiven!"

- e) Those who were not inclined to listen would not perceive the true message – the disciples must!
- f) Again, being on the “outside” requires a hardened heart and an unwillingness to listen.
- g) When considering this we must always look back at Jesus’ own words in verses 21-23,

### **Mark 4:21-23 (NIV)**

- 4) The word for hear in this case is ακουω in both places.
  - a) It has meanings of hear, learn, obey, or understand.
  - b) Interestingly, in the second instance it is an imperative.
    - i) Could be translated “if this is you, LISTEN UP!!!”

- 5) In the parallel passage Matthew, quotes the prophet Asaph in Psalm 78:2

### **Matt 13:34-35 (NIV)**

- 6) If we look at the next few verses in the Psalm, I think the prophet backs up the position that Jesus would not be obscuring things intentionally as he taught.

### **Ps 78:2-4 (NIV)**

- 7) Mark concludes by saying:

“But when he was alone with his own disciples, he explained everything.”

## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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- 8) To me, given what we know, this was to be expected.
- 9) Jesus had to assure that the disciples understood the meaning of what He was teaching since they were the ones with the responsibility of carrying the message forward.

### **Mark 4:35-41 (NIV)**

- 1) RECAP – We have been dealing with one day in Jesus’ ministry which has probably been exhausting.
  - a) It began with the accusation that he was in league with Satan, so he had to deal with the religious leaders.
  - b) Then his family shows up and he had to deal with them – probably at length beyond the brief encounter that was relayed by Mark.
  - c) The requirements of the day were such that they did not have time to eat.
  - d) He had dealt with the crowd that was so large and pressing he had to get into a fishing boat to preach.
  - e) Finally, he spent time explaining the parables he was teaching.
- 2) Given all that, it doesn’t take much for us to see that it would be perfectly normal for Jesus to have fallen asleep on the ride over from Capernaum to the other side.
- 3) As I mentioned sometime back, the remains of a 1<sup>st</sup> century fishing boat was found in 1986.
  - a) It was 27ft. long, 7.5ft. wide, and at least 4.3ft. deep.
  - b) It is assumed to be a typical fishing boat for that area during that time.
  - c) Obviously, there is no direct connection to Jesus other than the time period and place.
- 4) I say all that to bring a little more perspective to their situation.
- 5) If we assume, that the group that was with Jesus in the boat was the 12, given the size of the boat, you can see that it was comfortably full.
- 6) One might further assume that this boat belonged to Peter and Andrew or James and John.
- 7) That being said, they set sail for the other end of the lake and Jesus falls asleep in stern (back) of the boat.
  - a) The Sea of Galilee is 7 mi. wide and 13 mi long.
  - b) Since Jesus is at the far northwestern tip of the lake, the trip was the longest you could possibly take on the lake.
- 8) Then terrible things happen.
- 9) The sea of Galilee is situated in such a way that it is subject to down draft winds from the surrounding mountains which can cause very violent storms and high waves.
- 10) Waves can reach heights of 10 feet or more during these storms.

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- 11) It does not take a lot of imagination to see that a fully loaded boat of the size we described would be in a lot of trouble during such a storm.
- 12) These storms usually occur during the day, so this was a reasonably odd occurrence.
- 13) None the less, here we are seriously in trouble.
- 14) Other boats containing other believers and disciples (not the twelve) were also in peril.
  - a) Depending on how far they had gone when the storm occurs, they could be miles from shore in all directions.
- 15) Jesus is asleep through all this.
- 16) Now before you say, “how can that be”, some people are really heavy sleepers.
  - a) My story
- 17) Add to that as we said earlier, Jesus is likely exhausted.
- 18) But here we see the real point of the story – the disciples (probably not any of the fisherman) became distraught and woke Jesus.
- 19) That was not so surprising – however, the surprising thing was the comment!
- 20) The indictment – "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?"
- 21) Without uttering a word in response, he got up and commanded the storm to stop.
- 22) This is quite the scene:
  - a) All went quite!!!!
  - b) I can see Jesus standing in the stern of the boat staring at the disciples.
  - c) They are seated holding on for dear life with their mouths hanging open at what they just witnessed.
  - d) In the quite calm that now exists Jesus asks a simple question  
"Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?"
- 23) These men have seen many miracles performed by Jesus.
  - a) Healings – demon exorcisms.
- 24) They knew His power from that perspective.
- 25) Here, it is a matter of human frailty and frustration that blinded their faith.
- 26) It was beyond their comprehension that Jesus could be so uncaring that he would sleep through their fear of dying!
- 27) Have you ever been frustrated with a loved one or coworker because they did not appear to see a situation with the same seriousness that you did?
- 28) On the other hand, Jesus' frustration was with the fact that their lack of faith allowed them to be afraid in the first place.
- 29) Now, the situation is totally changed!

## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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- 30) Mark says, “They were terrified and asked each other, "Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!"
- 31) They are now in a situation far beyond healing miracles.
- a) As spectacular as they are, the scale was still conceivable.
- 32) Here, however, the scale is so immense that in their hearts, they probably started to recognize that they were in the presence of God himself.
- 33) As with most instances when anyone realized that they were in the presence of God, terror sets in – this is no exception – they were terrified!!

***What do you think a better response to the situation might have been on the part of the disciples?***

***What would have been the absolute BEST response?***

***How do we deal with our storm situations – do we say “God how could you let this happen OR God, we trust you completely?”***

**Mark 5:1 (NIV)**

- 1) This was the original destination Jesus had when He left the evening before.
- 2) The region of the Gerasenes was located at the southeastern tip of the Sea of Galilee.
  - a) There are manuscript differences here – some indicate:
    - i) Gerasenes,
    - ii) some Gergesenes,
    - iii) and still some Gadarenes.
  - b) The difference is in the association with the prevalent town name.
  - c) Some scholars think the reference is to the small town of Gersa.
    - i) Others prefer the reference to the larger town of Gadara which was one of the most important cities in the region.
    - ii) Gadara was a member of the Decapolis (Ten Cities).
- 3) What is important is that the Decapolis – actually entire region – was primarily Gentile territory.
  - a) Hence the pigs – Jews would not have raised or farmed pigs.
- 4) All that being said, the actual town is probably not really all that important.
- 5) What is important is that Jesus intended to go there.
  - a) This was to be possibly a new direction in Jesus’ ministry.
  - b) Those who followed in the other boats were most likely other disciples – truly interested followers or students.

**6) *Continuing ...***

**Mark 5:2-13 (NIV)**

- 7) Once they reach land at Gerasene, Jesus departs the boat.
- 8) Mark tells us that “**a**” man (singular) came from the tombs to meet him.
- 9) Matthew and Luke tell us that there were two men.
- 10) Likely, Mark only references the one man whom Jesus was speaking with or that was the most violent.
- 11) Both were demon possessed, menacing, violent, and by Luke’s account, naked.
- 12) From what we see in looking at the situation is that these men would accost anyone who passed their way.
- 13) They were such a menace that the residents had tried to tie them up and restrain them but to no avail – they would always break their chains and shackles.

## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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- 14) The man that Mark refers to, and possibly the other as well, was not only in the tombs but in the mountains.
- 15) He would cry out and cut himself with stones – indicating the terrible state the demons were causing the man to be in.
- 16) Let's try to put this situation for those who were with Jesus together in our minds.
- 17) Now, you have just spent the night crossing the Sea of Galilee.
  - a) You have been in a terrible storm frightened for your life.
  - b) You are then confronted by the indisputable fact that you are in the presence of the Son of God Himself who can control the very elements of your universe.
  - c) And now, here is at least one and perhaps two men who are running toward you in a such a state that they are ready to harm if not kill you.
- 18) You are probably wondering what you have gotten yourself into by following this man.
- 19) You may be afraid for you very life again at this point.
- 20) But – then an amazing thing happens.
- 21) Just as you have decided to turn and run for your life in the face of this oncoming mad man, the mad man suddenly falls on his knees at the feet of Jesus and cries at the top of his voice  
"What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? Swear to God that you won't torture me!"
- 22) WOW! – Didn't see that coming!
- 23) The expression in Greek is rather odd. Literally it says "What to me and to you?"
  - a) It is an idiom.
  - b) Some of the following input comes from the Net Bible ([net.bible.org](http://net.bible.org)).
  - c) The phrase is Semitic in origin, though it made its way into colloquial Greek.
  - d) The equivalent Hebrew expression in the OT had two basic meanings:
    - i) When one person was unjustly bothering another, the injured party could say "What to me and to you?" meaning, "What have I done to you that you should do this to me?" (Judg 11:12, 2 Chr 35:21, 1 Kgs 17:18).
    - ii) When someone was asked to get involved in a matter he felt was no business of his own, he could say to the one asking him, "What to me and to you?" meaning, "That is your business, how am I involved?" (2 Kgs 3:13, Hos 14:8).
    - iii) These nuances were apparently expanded in Greek, but the basic notions of defensive hostility (option 1) and indifference or disengagement (option 2) are still present.
    - iv) Some alternative expressions here might be:
      - (1) What have I to do with you?
      - (2) What have we in common?

## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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- (3) Basically saying - Leave me alone!
- e) Hostility between Jesus and the demons is certainly to be understood in this context, hence the translation: “Leave me alone....”
- 24) Looking at vs. 8, we can see from the tense that is used here that either Jesus had spoken to the evil spirit prior to his outburst and commanded him to come out of the man.
- a) Perhaps even while the man was rushing toward Jesus and His followers.
- 25) The other interesting part of this interchange is the demons outburst – “Swear to God that you won't torture me!”
- a) It seems unusual for a demon to invoke God’s name in his demands of Jesus.
  - b) The parallel in Matt 8:29 suggests the reason: “Why have you come to torment us before the time?”
  - c) As you recall from our study of Revelation, there is an appointed time in which demons would face their judgment.
    - i) They seem to have viewed Jesus’ arrival on the scene as an illegitimate change in God’s plan regarding the time when their sentence would be executed.
- 26) As we see, the demon, rather than instantly submitting, begins a conversation with Jesus.
- a) First, Jesus asks his name and the gets reply of Legion “for we are many”.
    - i) A legion of Roman soldiers was between 3000 to 6000 men.
    - ii) There is also a possibility that the name referred to the TELOS – a force numbering 2048 men.
      - (1) This would also fit nicely with the 2000 pigs in the herd.
- 27) Before submitting to the inevitable, the demons ask Jesus again and again not to send them out of the area.
- 28) Jesus could have banished them to anywhere he liked including the abyss.
- 29) We do not know for sure how long this exchange took but, finally in desperation, comes a rather bizarre request.
- "Send us among the pigs; allow us to go into them."
- 30) Jesus grants their request and the demons obeyed and came out of the man and went into the herd of pigs.
- 31) Jesus did not grant their wish out of compassion or because he had no other choice – he did so perhaps for several reasons:
- a) To demonstrate the fact that the demons were gone.
  - b) We can only assume that once the pigs were drowned, the demons also ceased to exist (assumption) on my part.
  - c) Since this conversation was “at the top of the demons voice” we can also assume that all those present were able to hear all this and understood what really happened.



## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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- d) This would – as we will see – also quickly gets back to the folks of the surrounding towns.
- 32) In the previous passage, Jesus demonstrated his power over the forces of the natural world by his complete control of the wind and waves.
- 33) In this passage, he exercised his absolute sovereignty over the forces of the supernatural realm.
- 34) The account illustrates three spiritual forces at work over which Jesus had power and authority:
  - a) the destructive power of demons
  - b) the delivering power of deity
  - c) and the damning power of depravity.

### **Mark 5:14-17 (NIV)**

- 1) The herdsmen who attend the pigs go off to the town and tell folks what had happened.
  - a) Matthew tells us they “reported everything”
  - b) Mark makes a point of saying that they reported about the death of the pigs as well.
- 2) Of course, we do not know how much time passes from the incident until the towns people arrive back at the shore – most likely several hours.
  - a) What we do know is that in that time, the demon possessed man was supplied cloths from somewhere (miraculous?)
  - b) When they arrive, they see the man sitting down (presumably with Jesus) and in his right mind.
  - c) We might also assume, that Jesus had been sharing the gospel with the man or men who were now demon free.
- 3) The reaction of the towns people might at first seem somewhat unexpected until we consider some of the facts.
  - a) First, the crowd is predominately if not completely Gentile.
    - i) Even if there were Jews in the town, the folks who herd the pigs would probably not have been in contact with them (actually, the other way round).
  - b) We must assume they really had no knowledge of a Messiah, God, or any other information that would make them connect Jesus to the God of the Universe.
  - c) What they do know is that what Jesus did here was supernatural and powerful beyond anything they could comprehend.
  - d) Not unlike the disciples who became more fearful after the storm was calmed, being in the presence of such power could not help but be frightening.
  - e) Finally, of course, there was the loss of the herd – a financial impact at a minimum.
  - f) If we consider all this, their reaction is probably not that unexpected.
- 4) However, we must also acknowledge the difference in this and the Jewish crowds.

## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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- a) They saw Jesus' healing as something to be sought out.
  - b) Here, it is Jesus' actions are something to run from – something to be feared.
  - c) Probably not the casting out of the demons but the Man Himself.
- 5) What happens next is probably the most significant part of the entire incident.
- 6) It shows how this incident will miraculously complete Jesus' mission in coming to this region to begin with – and – without Him ever leaving the shore where He landed!

### **Mark 5:18-20 (NIV)**

- 1) There are probably many reasons why the man or men who had been freed from the demons were wanting to leave with Jesus:
  - a) Gratitude for what Jesus had done.
  - b) Fear of the towns people
  - c) Newly found attachment to Jesus
  - d) Wanting to learn more about Him and gain more knowledge of the Savior.
  - e) Probably others
- 2) However, regardless of the reasons, Jesus did not let him leave.
- 3) Instead, he transforms the man into the completion of the mission to the region.
- 4) Jesus tells him to start with his family and let them know “how much the Lord has done for you”
- 5) I am sure the Jesus knew full well that the man would not stop with his family.
- 6) Instead, the man tells the Lord's story in all 10 of the cities that make up the Decapolis.
- 7) And the completion – “and all the people were amazed”
- 8) The fear of the people was transformed to amazement.
- 9) Jesus' answer to the man was probably very disappointing at the time but the man, realizing his gratitude and who Jesus truly was did as he was told and more.
- 10) This will be confirmed as we will see at the end of chapter 7 and beginning of chapter 8.

### ***What is a lesson or lessons we can take way from this entire miraculous event?***

Dealing with unexplained miraculous events?

Disappointing answers to our desires?

Sharing what Jesus has done for us?

Dealing with Reactions of people who are way different than us?

**>>>>>> Lesson 13 <<<<<<<**

- 1) Before we move on, we need to go back and revisit my comments of a few weeks back regarding the disciples reaction when Jesus was sleeping during the storm.
- 2) As I said then, the real point of the story at that time was that – the disciples (probably not any of the fisherman) became distraught and woke Jesus.
- 3) That was not so surprising – however, the surprising thing was the question!
- 4) I indicated that this was an indictment – "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?"
- 5) Of course, as you recall, without uttering a word in response, he got up and commanded the storm to stop.
- 6) The thing that is not right in this is the word I used to describe the question – INDICTMENT.
- 2) It turns out, as I have learned in recent days, Greek has among other things that are much different from English, ways of inflecting the expected answers to questions.
- 3) In this case for instance, the questions are asked in a way that a definite yes or no answer is expected.
  - a) English does not have a construction that does that.
  - b) Instead, we do the same thing in English using voice inflection and facial expressions.
  - c) The Greek has a definite sentence structure for an expected yes, no, and open ended question.
- 4) The Greek for this particular question "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?" indicates not an indictment – i.e. they thought he did not care and would answer in that way.
- 5) The way it is constructed in Greek really indicates that they really did expect his answer to be that he did care – they knew that!
- 6) This makes a real difference in how we perceive their relationship at this point.
- 7) A more accurate way to convey the correct question might be "Teacher, you don't care if we drown do you?"
- 8) It also means that the two questions Jesus asked can be clarified somewhat as well.

"Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?"
- 9) The first question is indicated in the Greek as truly open ended – it does not accept or require a Yes / No answer – it requires thought.
- 10) This is obvious in the English translation.
- 11) The second question "Do you still have no faith?" is asked in a way that again, a yes answer is expected meaning a truthful answer from them would mean they still do not have faith – not in Jesus' caring for them but in his abilities.
- 12) That has already been asked. It is not saying that they do not think he cares for them.

## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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### **Mark 5:21-23 (NIV)**

- 1) This begins an interesting series of events.
- 2) Stepping back and taking the distant view, this and the incident that follows shows the compassion Jesus exhibits regardless of His condition or circumstance.
- 3) It also shows how Jesus was always sharing His message of love and caring.
  - a) He shows it in His words and in His actions
- 4) Jesus has traveled all night from one end of the Sea of Galilee to the other.
  - a) Calmed a storm.
  - b) Dealt with the demon possessed man and his Legion of demons.
  - c) Had the residents of that place reject Him because of that miracle.
  - d) Traveled back across the lake.
    - i) Most likely, He returned to the vicinity of Capernaum
- 5) Now, on reaching the shore, He is pressed again by crowds looking for healing and some I'm sure looking for words of encouragement.
- 6) Just as we are familiar with the jumble of urgency, delays, obstacles, and disappointments in our lives, so was Jesus.
  - a) There is a series of commercials that have the take away "Jesus gets us". Though I don't agree with all they portray, that punch line is true – Jesus does get us.
  - b) Though His time and lifestyle was different from ours, He totally understands our lives and the things we deal with everyday.
- 7) Returning to our passage, most likely, as Jesus began to speak to and heal those in the crowd that were pressing in on Him, Jairus forced his way thru to Jesus.
- 8) When he reaches Him, he falls at Jesus' feet and begins to plead with Him to save his daughter.
  - a) Jairus was not described as a Pharisee or Scribe. He was described as a synagogue ruler.
  - b) They were responsible for:
    - i) supervising worship services
    - ii) caring for the scrolls
    - iii) running the weekly school
    - iv) keeping the congregation faithful to the Law
    - v) distributing alms, and administering the care of the building.
  - c) If there was no permanent rabbi or teacher, the synagogue rulers often would ask visiting teachers to teach.
  - d) We might say they were a lot like deacons in their rolls.

## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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- 9) Because of his responsibilities he was probably well known to the crowd thru which he had just pushed.
- 10) Though he was desperate, for Jairus to fall at Jesus' feet and plead for Him to come heal his daughter was a significant and daring act.
  - a) There will likely be significant consequences caused by this action.
  - b) It could indicate a real respect and belief.
  - c) Or, it could be a case of the desperation causing him to do anything to save his daughter.
  - d) As we will see in a bit when we get back to Jairus' story it really is a case of belief – at least in the healing powers of this man Jesus.
  - e) First, we're going to take a look at another immediate interruption in Jesus' plans.

### **Mark 5:24 (NIV)**

- 1) We are told of no hesitation on Jesus' part – He simply sets out with Jairus to his home where his dying daughter is.
- 2) Now, the plot switches to another healing incident – also an incident of faith in the healing power of Jesus. *Continuing in the last part of verse 24 ...*

### **Mark 5:24-34 (NIV)**

- 1) Here we see another desperate situation.
- 2) This woman had been suffering for many years.
  - a) Not only the physical symptoms but also what she had endured at the hands of the doctors.
  - b) Only to have “spent all she had” with no cure.
- 3) There is another side of this situation that even heightens the woman's severe problem.
  - a) The bleeding caused the woman to be in a constant condition of ritual uncleanness (see Lev 15:25-33).
  - b) She could not worship in the synagogue, and she could not have normal social relationships with friends or even family.
  - c) Anyone who came into contact with her would also become unclean.
  - d) Thus, the woman was treated almost as severely as a leper.
- 4) Who would not be desperate under these circumstances?
- 5) We can envision the woman pushing her way thru the crowd just trying to get close enough to Jesus to touch any part of His garments.
- 6) Once she had accomplished her goal, it must have been a real shock when Jesus stopped abruptly and started looking for her.
- 7) She had simply touched his outer garment – probably thinking that it was so lightly that he would not have even noticed.

## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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- 8) Truth is, she was probably correct.
- 9) However, though that was the question he asks, that was NOT truly what Jesus detected – He had detected “the power going out from Him”.
- 10) To me, this is a very interesting aspect of Jesus – He obviously had a sense that we do not have – when a healing took place, He felt the supernatural power go from Him to the healed person.
  - a) We do not know if this was the case with every healing or only this one.
  - b) One way or the other it was a unique facet of Jesus.
  - c) It also might beg the question if others were touching him to be healed, why were they not?
  - d) Obvious (at least to me) is the faith issue – the woman had absolute faith that if she could only touch his garment, she would be healed!
- 11) Now, we might ask ourselves why Jesus would feel the need to discover who was healed by this touch.
- 12) First, as the disciples point out, many people were probably touching Jesus as He moved along with the crowd
- 13) Even though some may have had problems that could have used Jesus’ healing He did not address them.
- 14) What is unique here is the fact that this was purposeful.
  - a) As I said a moment ago, the woman began with a faith that the healing would take place if she touched His garments.
  - b) Because of that faith, the power did go out from Him when she touched His clothes.
- 15) In all that lies the answer to the question of why Jesus would stop and seek out this woman.
- 16) Because of her faith, He wanted to complete the establishment of a relationship with her.
- 17) He wanted her to know unequivocally that her faith was the reason for her healing.
- 13) Imbedded in this event is a simple phrase that opens into probably another reason for Jesus’ stopping.

She “told him the whole truth”.
- 18) To me, this indicates she told Him, the entire story of her illness and what she had been thru.
- 19) This served the purpose of bringing the crowd to that knowledge and letting them see once again that He had this power and He had compassion for them.
- 20) What a relief she must have felt when, after listening to her story, Jesus simply says:

"Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering."
- 21) Added to this is the fact that Jesus saying this to this woman let everyone else in hearing distance know that faith was necessary!

***Here we are some 2000 years later, after the man Jesus lived. Should we (or do we) have the feelings that this woman must have felt at Jesus’ words?***

**Mark 5:35-43 (NIV)**

- 1) Jesus is still speaking, presumably to the healed woman when Jairus is approached by men from his house.
- 2) They bring the devastating news that his daughter is dead.
- 3) At this point, the situation changes for everyone.
  - a) First, Jairus must have been totally devastated – all hope for his daughter vanished.
  - b) Jesus attempts to reassure him and challenges his faith again – “don’t be afraid just believe”.
  - c) This would likely take a lot of effort on any of our parts.
  - d) To add finality to the situation, his friends were so sure that they told him not to bother Jesus any longer.

***Have you ever had to ignore the unbelief of others and hold firmly to Jesus?***

***Have you ever not done that when you know now you should have?***

- 4) The situation also changes for the disciples and the crowd.
  - a) Jesus leaves the crowd including most of his disciples behind.
  - b) He only allows the three, Peter, James, and John, to accompany Himself and Jairus on the rest of the journey to Jairus’ house.

***Why do you suppose Jesus chose to go on alone with only Peter, James and John of the disciples?***

- 5) Once Jesus reaches the house, He sees all the mourners and tells them that the daughter is not dead but asleep.
  - a) Understandably, the mourners ridicule Jesus for His statement – after all, He had not even seen the girl – how would He know if she were dead or not?
  - b) At this point, he sends away the mourners and the rest of the family.
  - c) All that are left at this point are Jairus, his wife, Peter James, and John, and Jesus himself.
- 6) As he did with the disciples when Lazarus had died, he tells these folks that the girl is not dead but asleep.
- 7) John MacArthur comments on this:

The drama of the moment was intensified by the sudden silence. Jesus broke the silence by making a shocking statement, “The child has not died, but is asleep.” Jesus, of course, was well aware that Jairus’s daughter had died. In John 11:11, Jesus responded similarly to the death of Lazarus, telling the disciples,

“Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I go, that I may awaken him out of sleep.”

## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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On that occasion, not even His disciples immediately understood the metaphor. As John explains:

The disciples then said to Him, “Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will recover.”

Now Jesus had spoken of his death, but they thought that He was speaking of literal sleep. So Jesus then said to them plainly,

“Lazarus is dead, and I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, so that you may believe; but let us go to him.” (John 11:12–15)

This incident similarly provided Jesus with an opportunity to display His life-giving power. By using the metaphor of sleep, the Lord redefined death as a temporary state. That same word picture is used throughout the New Testament to remind believers that death is not permanent and that future resurrection awaits (cf. Matt. 27:52; Acts 7:60; 1 Cor. 15:6, 20, 51; 1 Thess. 4:13–15; 5:10; 2 Peter 3:4). Though the body sleeps temporarily in death, the soul does not (cf. Luke 16:19–31; 23:43; 2 Cor. 5:8; Phil. 1:23; Rev. 6:9–11).

- 8) Next, Jairus, his wife, Peter, James, and John then proceed along with Jesus to where the little girl was laying, and He proceeds to take her by the hand and bring her back to life.
- 9) Again, Jesus wants everyone who witnessed this miracle to keep silent about it.
- 10) There would be no mistaking this event for a miracle that could only have been accomplished by God Himself or Jesus the Son of God.
- 11) It is still not His time and He still has much to share with the people and His disciples before His departure.



**>>>>>> Lesson 14 <<<<<<<**

- 1) We pickup in Mark 6:1 with Jesus leaving Jairus' house and heading to his hometown.
- 2) This is the second time Jesus returns to His hometown of Nazareth.
- 3) The first had similar yet more drastic results.
- 4) We read in Luke 4 about the event which follows sometime after his baptism and temptation in the wilderness.

**Luke 4:16-33 (NIV)**

- 5) We are not told the exact amount of time that elapses between Jesus' baptism and His first return to Nazareth.
- 6) We do know that He had become well known and was preaching in synagogues throughout the area.
  - a) Jesus mentions in particular Capernaum.
- 7) We are also told nothing scripturally about Jesus from the age of 12 until He is approximately 30 years old, and He is baptized by John.
- 8) However, from the comments made by the towns people in the encounter we just read and what we will read in Mark in a moment, we can definitely get an idea of His life during that 18-year period.
- 9) First, from His encounter with the teachers in the temple courts at age 12, we can assume as he matured:
  - a) He was active in the synagogue (Luke tells us it was his custom).
  - b) He was well versed in scripture so He likely spoke and taught in the synagogue.
  - c) He was probably respected as Jesus the man.
  - d) He was most likely well known as a "smart man" with lots of scriptural knowledge.
  - e) He had followed in His father's footsteps and was a carpenter.
  - f) His family was well known and when we make a comparison between two particular phrases in the two different accounts, we might also make the assumption that they knew of (and still remembered) the scandal associated with His birth.
    - i) In His first return, He was referred to as "Joseph's son."
    - ii) In the second return in Mark, we will see, He is referred to as "Mary's son."
  - g) Some commentators believe this is slur.
    - i) Normally, children were referred to by their father's name but, when they were illegitimate, they were referred to by their mother's name.
- 10) I know this so far has been more about the incident in Luke than the one in Mark (we'll get to that in a moment) but we need to take a deeper dive into why the people of Nazareth reacted this way.

## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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- 11) What did he say that caused such anger?
- 12) First, they must have known of His reputation and in order for His words to have had this drastic an impact.
- 13) They must have at least partially believed He was a powerful and popular person now.
- 14) If that were not the case, His words would probably not have had such an impact on them.
- 15) Their first reaction to his teaching was that “All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words”.
- 16) This was great until he began to tell them of God’s true plan.
- 17) Jesus’ words filled them with rage because He was saying that God would reach out to Gentiles as well as to Jews.
- 18) They expected that with the Messiah’s coming, the evil Gentiles would be vanquished.
  - a) Gentiles here referring to Romans.
  - b) They were focused on Isaiah’s words “to release the oppressed” rather than the rest of what he said.
- 19) Instead, Jesus, who had just claimed to be the Messiah about whom Isaiah prophesied, illustrated his mission by way of the prophets who had shown kindness to Gentiles.
- 20) Jesus' words implied that His hearers were as unbelieving as the citizens of the northern kingdom of Israel in the days of Elijah and Elisha
  - a) This was a time notorious for great wickedness.
- 21) Again, it looks like some at least, did believe He was the Messiah, if not, they would not have gotten so angry.
- 22) However, they did and so much so that they got up, drove him out of the town . . . so that they might hurl him off the cliff.

### ***Do you think there was an obvious and marked difference in Jesus after His baptism (began His ministry)?***

#### ***What about in the eyes of the townspeople?***

23) Now, looking at this second return to his hometown we read in Mark 6:1

#### ***Mark 6:1-6a (NIV)***

- 24) Here in Mark’s account of Jesus’ second return to Nazareth with His disciples, the reaction is not quite so dramatic.
- 25) Any belief they exhibited on His first return had turned to disbelief.
- 26) They allowed Him to teach but basically we can assume from what is said here they dismissed Him – probably the attitude was He was just another crackpot preacher.

## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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27) This may have been their way of dealing with the harsh words with which he dealt with them on His first return.

28) Jesus could not do many miracles there in Nazareth – the LABC makes this comment regarding unbelief which caused this:

Jesus did few miracles in his hometown because of the people's unbelief. Unbelief blinds us to the truth and robs us of hope. These people missed the Messiah. How does your faith measure up? If you can't see God's work, perhaps it is because of unbelief. Believe, ask God for a mighty work in your life, and expect him to act.

**Look with the eyes of faith.**

**Is there a potential problem in what is put forth here?**

- Don't challenge God for proof with our requests – the key is belief. God does not need nor will He prove who He is to us.

29) One other thing to note here is Jesus' amazement at their unbelief.

30) As His divine self, nothing would amaze Him.

31) As Jesus the human, He went to Nazareth the second time probably hoping for a different outcome than the first.

32) Unfortunately not so much!

33) Scripture only records Jesus being amazed twice – here at the unbelief of the folks in Nazareth and the other time when He saw the faith of the centurion at Capernaum.

34) John MacArthur says of the relationship of Jesus and the townspeople:

For all of His earthly life, He had been the most unique and amazing person in their midst. They did not know why Jesus was different, but they could not have missed the manifestations of His divine perfection. How could those who claimed to know all about Him stubbornly refuse to accept the only reasonable explanation regarding Him, that He was the Son of God? But such is the blinding power of unbelief (cf. 2 Cor. 4:3–4). Once it became clear that Nazareth had rejected Jesus, He rejected them.

**What are lessons from these two incidents?**

- Rejection is to be expected as we share the truth with those around us.
- Family and non-Christian friends are likely to be the most rejecting of our message.
- "According to your faith will it be done to you" (Matt 9:29 NIV).
  - In the Bible, unbelief is regarded as a mind-set, a stubborn refusal to believe, a moral rebellion, not merely a logical conclusion of evaluating evidence.
  - So the folks in Nazareth had a moral problem, not an intellectual one.
  - They were hardened in their attitudes.

## Gospel of Mark – NOTES

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- We must ask: *Does my lack of faith prevent Jesus from working in my life, my family, and my church?*

### Mark 6:6b-13 (NIV)

- 1) Jesus left Nazareth and continued teaching in the villages of the area.
- 2) From what we read next, this particular mission (for want of a better word) was likely a season of on-the-job-training for the twelve.
- 3) He knew that He was about to send them out and what better way to prepare them than to give them experience.
- 4) After all, He had earlier promised them they He would train them to be “fishers of men”.
- 5) Once the time was right, He called the twelve together and gave them their marching orders:
  - a) No bread
  - b) No bag
  - c) No money
  - d) No extra tunic
- 6) I am as a rule, a person that likes to be prepared. I don’t like being at the mercy of fate so to speak.
- 7) I am also a person that likes to understand the why behind instructions.
- 8) Here, we don’t see much if any of either of these.
- 9) To compound the difficulty of the situation, we can know without doubt, this was not a day trip.
- 10) If we think about the factors involved we can see it was many days if not weeks on this mission.
  - a) Distance between villages.
  - b) Time required to make contact and begin teaching and healing.
  - c) Time to teach all that they should.
  - d) The good news in all the instructions was that Jesus gave them authority over evil spirits.
- 11) Luke also adds they were to proclaim the kingdom of God and to perform healing.
- 12) “Proclaim” (kērussō) refers to the authoritative, public pronouncement of vital information by a herald or forerunner.
- 13) The Twelve functioned as Christ’s personal heralds, emulating His example by publicly preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God.
  - a) In the culture of that time, when one was the representative of someone else, to the persons they were representing to, it was the same as that person speaking or acting.

## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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- 14) Looking at this situation and knowing the end of the story, we can know a couple things for sure.
- a) First, no bread, bag, money, or even an extra tunic – these men were to depend on God and God alone to provide their sustenance during this mission
  - b) Second, though they were depending on God for that sustenance, it would come thru the generosity of the people they met and taught.
  - c) Jesus also made it clear that they were to be honoring of those who did befriend them.
  - d) As one commentator put it: “they were not to shop around for better accommodations.”
- 15) In all this, there is a subtle “oh by the way” comment regarding failure in some towns:
- 11 And if any place will not welcome you or listen to you, shake the dust off your feet when you leave, as a testimony against them.”
- 16) There are the obvious comments here regarding this being a way of showing their discontent with the outcome there.
- 17) This was an action that Jews customarily took when leaving a Gentile city.
- 18) Beyond that, there is the other unspoken issue here – if they were not accepted and they were to leave the town, then they possibly did not get any food or lodging during their stay there.
- 19) Really indicates a serious situation depending on the distance to the next village AND once they arrived there, whether they would be accepted or not.
- 20) As I contemplated what Jesus asked of his disciples it was a challenge:

***In our faith walk today, are we ever asked to do things that are as difficult as what Jesus asked his disciples?***

- 1) What we are about to read is what we might call an interlude.
- 2) As you may recall, last time, we finished with Jesus sending out his disciples by twos to preach and heal.
- 3) Mark relays an incident that is triggered by what King Herod thinks when he hears of the success of Jesus and the disciples.

**Mark 6:14-29 (NIV)**

- 1) This is a record of a guilty conscience.
- 2) This is Herod Antipas – Jewish ruler whose father Herod the Great had tried to kill Jesus at birth.
  - a) Herod the Great died in 4 AD and Herod Antipas inherited part of his father’s kingdom after the Roman emperor Augustus adjusted his father’s will.
  - b) Of course, this was Galilee, a minor principality in the Roman Empire, in northern Palestine, and Peraea, east of the Jordan River and Dead Sea.
  - c) He ruled throughout Jesus of Nazareth’s ministry.
  - d) In Luke (13:32), Jesus is reported as having referred to him with contempt as “that fox.”
- 3) Herod heard about Jesus and the disciples and the impact they were having. That is the “this of verse 1.

12 They went out and preached that people should repent. 13 They drove out many demons, anointed many sick people with oil, and healed them.

- 4) Herod was convinced that John the Baptist whom he feared and had beheaded had come back to life and was the one doing all this.
- 5) One thing that jumped out to me here that I had not really noticed before was that John had a bit of a political side.
- 6) When you think of John’s roll in heralding the arrival of the Messiah, you think of him as this isolated, almost wild man, out in the desolate places of the country.
- 7) In that context, we would assume he had a single message.
- 8) However, I think we tend to forget that despite this image, there was still a man that needed to eat, sleep, and function as an otherwise normal human being.
- 9) This probably meant that he was exposed to the culture by being around others and therefore, knew of the goings on in the country.
- 10) Obviously, he did in this case because he knew of the situation with Herod and Herod’s wife enough to call them out (we assume publicly) on their sin.
- 11) It is easy to see that Herodias had a large influence over Herod because, she was the reason John was arrested.

## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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- 12) It should be noted here that in those times, a king had the power to arrest anyone for any reason. In fact, for no reason at all.
- 13) At any rate, we know the story of how Herod basically falls victim to his lust as his step daughter Salome danced for him and his guests.
- 14) Then evil and hate take over and Herod is forced, because of the rash promise he made, to behead John.
- 15) It doesn't take much to see why Herod, because of his guilty conscience, would think that it was John raised from the dead.
- 16) One might ask at this point, why did Mark insert this account here?
- 17) I think perhaps it was because this is a clear indication of how people saw Jesus at this time.
- 18) They were more willing to believe virtually any thing that could explain Him (His message and power) other than face the fact that He was the Son of God and the Messiah.
  - a) Prophet like prophets of old. (400 years since the last true prophet)
  - b) Elijah returned to earth.
  - c) John the Baptist raised from the dead despite his severed and missing head.

### ***Why were they unwilling to accept Jesus for what He was?***

### ***Why are people unwilling to accept Him for what He is today?***

#### **Mark 6:30-32 (NIV)**

- 1) As is the case in many of Mark's narratives, he leaves out much of the detail but clearly makes the point required.
- 2) We must assume I think quite naturally, that the disciples did not all come back at the exact same time.
- 3) Most likely, the pairs returned several days apart.
- 4) I personally think the idea here is that as each pair of disciples returned, they excitedly told Jesus about their mission and all that had happened.
- 5) This was probably an ongoing conversation that was held as each pair returned
- 6) Obviously, they would not only want to share with Jesus but also the other disciples all that they were able to see and accomplish while on their individual missions.
- 7) However, once they were all back, and things were back to the press of everyday ministry, Jesus sees the need for them to have some special time away from all that and get some rest.
- 8) LABC comments:

“Capernaum had never proven to be a place where Jesus and his disciples could find solitude. Indeed, so many people were coming and going that Jesus and the disciples did not even have time to eat. Jesus knew that his disciples were weary from their

## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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trip, so he kindly suggested that they all go away to a deserted place and rest a while. The disciples needed to be away from crowds and busy distractions in order to rest and regain their strength. Doing God's work is very important, but Jesus recognized that to do it effectively we need periodic rest and renewal. Jesus and his disciples, however, did not always find it easy to get the rest they needed. But they certainly wouldn't find it in Capernaum.”

- 9) Though Jesus and the disciples could possibly have walked from Capernaum to their chosen place of rest crowds would probably have continued to press them and follow them.
- 10) Taking the boat would have been more restful and they thought prevent the crowd from following – rest is the objective.
- 11) As we will see shortly, this is not going to be the case.

### ***How does the need for rest and renewal apply to us in our Christian walk? – or does it? (do we do enough to need rest?)***

#### **Mark 6:33-34 (NIV)**

- 1) The intension was to go away for some rest – that obviously did not happen.
- 2) Instead, Jesus “reads the crowd” and cannot refuse to help them.
  - a) The expression “reading the crowd” is used by Disc Jockeys to mean looking at the crowd, picking up on what they want musically and giving it to them so they can have a good time.
  - b) Another idiom of today is “reading the room”. It is a sales jargon that means to be or become aware of the opinions and attitudes of a group of people that you are talking to.
- 3) When Jesus reads this crowd, He sees something very much different.
- 4) Mark says “they were like sheep without a shepherd”.
- 5) Jesus was neither trying to entertain these people or sell them anything.
- 6) Instead, He was moved with compassion for them because He saw in many of them the need for God as a guide in their lives.
- 7) I think it is interesting here that Mark makes a point of Jesus’ compassion being on the fact that needed his teaching – not just healing or demon removals.
- 8) Obviously, this is not to say that he did not heal during this time only that that is not the emphasis.
- 9) One commentary said “the people needed a true Shepherd who could teach them what they needed to know and keep them from straying from God”.
- 10) This was something they were not getting from the religious establishment of the time.
- 11) The only way to help them – to give them what they needed – was to “teach them many things”



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12) Obviously, many things here would mean the good news and how they were to live because of that good news.

***What are the reasons we come to church each Sunday?***

***Most important?***

***Least important?***

- 1) As we finished last time, we found the disciples and Jesus trying to get away from the crowds and rest.
- 2) Instead the crowds found them and Jesus had compassion on them and spent the rest of the day “teaching them many things” because they were like sheep without a shepherd.

**Mark 6:35-44 (NIV)**

- 1) As time went on, the end of the day drew near, the disciples I think were showing some compassion of their own.
- 2) They wanted to allow the crowd time before sunset to get into the nearby villages and get food since they had none.
- 3) At their suggestion, instead of answering, Jesus simply says, what would be to the disciples very confusing thing – “You give them something to eat”.
  - a) This is an imperative – basically a command.
- 4) First, there is no doubt Jesus knew the financial status of the disciples – He had just sent them out some weeks before with “no money” in their purses.
  - a) Perhaps they did have a treasury at this point – another unknown.
- 5) He also knew that they did not have a stash of food on the boat they just came in on so???
- 6) They knew well that Jesus knew their situation but, this did not change the fact that His statement was mystifying!
- 7) Their only comment was an overview of the facts of the situation: “That would take eight months of a man’s wages! Are we to go and spend that much on bread and give it to them to eat?”
- 8) Underlying that question were even more questions they readily knew answers to.
  - a) If they had that much money in their possession, were they supposed to walk from the remote place to several villages in order to track down enough bread?
  - b) Spend that much on bread.
  - c) Then somehow carry it all back to this remote place?
  - d) If one considers five thousand slices of bread – ~20 per loaf would mean 250 loaves.
  - e) Each disciple would have to carry over 20 loaves.
  - f) Then, they would have to serve it?
- 9) No matter how they looked at it, the disciples saw Jesus' statement to be impossible.
- 10) So what did he mean, and why would he tell them to do something so obviously impossible?
- 11) First, let’s talk for a second about mindset – some see the question asked by the disciples as a lack of faith – I personally think that is a little harsh in this case.
- 12) We know that their faith was not totally there yet – Jesus himself tells us that.

## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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13) However, the disciples had

- a) just finished a missionary journey during which they had taught, and healed people
- b) they knew first hand they – thru the power of the Holy Spirit given them by the Lord – were able to do these things.
- c) However, I doubt seriously during their mission trip they had created any food for anyone or themselves.
- d) On top of that, they had seen his power over the natural, the universe, and the supernatural (demons).

14) But, I don't think the disciples minds were even remotely geared toward them being able to perform such a miraculous feat! – **Control and healing is one thing – creation is quite another!**

- a) Scientist joke...

15) Now, if Jesus had said at the outset, “have everyone sit down and we will feed them” that would have possibly set their minds on a different path.

16) Perhaps they would have been more inclined to view that as possible for Him.

17) The details of this miracle are phenomenal – of that, there is no doubt.

- a) The sheer number – between 5 and 10 thousand people.
- b) The assumed servers to handle them – 12 disciples and perhaps some other followers.
- c) The number of groups and logistics of getting the food to them.
  - i) Somewhere between 50 and 100 groups.
- d) We always think of the loaves and the fish being created but where did the baskets come from?

18) All show an amazing – miraculous – event by any standards.

19) However, despite the miraculous portions of this event there is a big picture lesson for the disciples and for us.

### ***Do you think God would ask (command) you to do something that you and he together couldn't handle?***

- The answer to this question is one of the keys to the mindset of the disciples.
  - i) If they had thought that thought, perhaps their question might have been somewhat different.
  - ii) Perhaps more on the line of ... “Can you help us, if you do we know we can”
- Don't let our lack of resources blind us to seeing God's power.
- Often our meager resources are the starting point for what God wants to do.
- “Never mind that the horse is dead – load the wagon!” HDO

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### **Mark 6:45-46 (NIV)**

- 1) Geographically, this is a confusing section of scripture.
- 2) Luke tells us that they withdrew to a city called Bethsaida.
- 3) There are currently arguments and excavations going on indicating there were actually two Bethsaidas – one on the western shore below Capernaum (Bethsaida of Galilee) and one north east of Capernaum (Bethsaida Julius).
- 4) John MacArthur offers the following explanation:

Some scholars have wondered what Mark meant, since John 6:17 explains that their intended destination was Capernaum. Two proposed and reasonable solutions merit consideration. First, some have suggested that there were two different villages named Bethsaida. Because the name means “house of fish,” it is possible that more than one fishing village near the lake claimed that title. Those who hold this view differentiate between “Bethsaida Julius,” located on the northeastern side of the Sea of Galilee, and “Bethsaida of Galilee,” which they assert was located on the western side of the lake near Capernaum (cf. John 12:21). According to this view, the meal for the crowd took place near Bethsaida Julius. Upon leaving that area, the disciples sailed toward Bethsaida of Galilee and neighboring Capernaum. A second, perhaps less convincing, solution asserts that there was only one village named Bethsaida (i.e., Bethsaida Julius), based mainly on a lack of archaeological evidence for a second village by that same name. According to this view, the feeding of the five thousand took place in a remote location southeast of Bethsaida (cf. Mark 6:35). When Jesus commanded the disciples to go ahead of Him to the other side to Bethsaida, He was actually instructing them to cross the lake by traveling “toward Bethsaida,” meaning west. (The Greek pre position *pros* [translated as to] can mean “to,” “toward,” or “with regard to.”) As they sailed to the western shore of the Sea of Galilee, they would have initially gone toward Bethsaida, eventually passing it on their way. (It may be that Jesus intended them to follow the shoreline as they traversed the lake, thereby sailing near the village. Bethsaida is part of the larger Plain of Bethsaida that stretches for about three miles along the northern edge of the Sea of Galilee.)

MacArthur, John. Mark 1-16 MacArthur New Testament Commentary Two Volume Set (MacArthur New Testament Commentary Series) . Moody Publishers. Kindle Edition.

- 5) That lets you know some of the debate that goes on regarding this.
- 6) However, what we must know is the principle points that are being put forth here.
  - a) The disciples needed rest.
  - b) At this point, I believe this is off the table so to speak.
  - c) Jesus was in control of the entire situation all the way thru.

## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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- d) They accomplished what they set out to do.
- e) And, finally as we will see shortly, they wind up at the place that was truly Jesus' desired destination – the plain of Gennesaret!
  - i) Not to be confused with the “region of the Gerasenes” and the Decapolis.
  - ii) Jesus gets back there in chapter 8.

### **Mark 6:47-52 (NIV)**

- 1) To set this scene, it has been several hours since the disciples set out on the lake toward Bethsaida.
- 2) Fourth watch is between 4 and 6 in the morning.
- 3) John tells us they were 3 or 4 miles out in the lake.
- 4) With these facts, we can see not just one but several miraculous things happening as this incident unfolds.
  - a) First, no normal human can discern someone struggling 3 or 4 miles away in the middle of the night.
  - b) At sea, you can barely start to discern a ship emerging from the horizon at 12 miles
  - c) Here, we have a high wind and possibly rough waters as well.
  - d) At an average stroll, a person will take about 30 minutes to walk a little over a mile.
  - e) This would mean for Jesus to approach them after seeing them in trouble would have been about 1.5 to 2 hours.
  - f) In my mind, this indicates a second miraculous event – Jesus was there very quickly so as to help them.
  - g) Obviously, the third miracle is His walking on the water itself.
    - i) As the old joke goes, this is impossible unless you know where the rocks are.
  - h) Fourth, the high winds do not seem to affect Jesus as he walks
    - i) If it was strong enough to make the men struggle to row forward then, for an average human, one would think it would have affected someone walking in that same direction.
  - i) Fifth, there is the calming of the winds when he steps into the boat.
- 5) That's a lot of things for a mind to absorb!
- 6) Now, let's go a little deeper – what happens next.
- 7) Jesus knows their fear and says to them; "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid."
- 8) At this point, Matthew tells us of Peter's reaction:

### **Matt. 14:28–32 (NIV)**

- 9) Jesus then climbs into the boat with them so they see him and know who He is for sure.

## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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- 10) The winds die down and all is well – just as they should have expected at this point knowing Jesus as they should have.
- 11) They had just seen Him feed 5000 plus people with basically nothing.
- 12) They had already seen Him still a storm on this very lake, maybe in this very boat, and for sure, only a short time before.
- 13) Instead of hearts filled with faith, knowledge, and an even more solid belief in the fact that they are in the presence of the Son of God ----- they are amazed.
- 14) And not just an amazed at how great this is but amazed in disbelief.
- 15) There is an underlying condition of the heart that is exposed here.
- 16) They see and have seen the miracles.
- 17) They have even by the Holy Spirit given by him been able to perform healings on their own.
- 18) They are smart enough to figure it out – but for whatever reason, they are unable to connect the dots.
- 19) Belief in something this life changing takes effort.
- 20) Thus, Mark’s comment in verse 52; “for they had not understood about the loaves; their hearts were hardened.”
- 21) You might ask at this point how did Mark know this?
- 22) I think for that, we have to again consider who most consider to be Mark’s source for his knowledge (other than the Holy Spirit of course) – that was Peter.
- 23) Peter, the one whose good confession we all know, looking back on this event would know beyond a doubt what was truly in the hearts and minds of all of them at this point.
- 24) He knew that they did not see and was probably somewhat ashamed and bewildered at the same time that their hearts were that hard and they were that unseeing at that point.
- 25) The LABC comments here:

Even after watching Jesus miraculously feed five thousand people, they still could not take the final step of faith and believe that he was God's Son. If they had understood about the loaves (in other words, if they had learned what the miracle was meant to teach them), they would not have been amazed that Jesus could walk on water.

Mark explained that their hearts were hardened. Peter, Mark's source for the story, probably felt a little sheepish as he recounted his and the disciples' continued lack of belief. This was not merely misunderstanding; instead, it meant a hard-hearted refusal to believe (the word is used elsewhere only when describing unbelievers, see 3:5; 10:5).

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## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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26) Notwithstanding Matthew's final comment – "Then those who were in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."

### ***Are our hearts ever hardened against Jesus in this way as the disciples were at first?***

- Yes – when we are amazed at Jesus working in others lives and refuse to (or cannot) accept the fact that He will work the same way in ours.

### ***As we grow in faith, should our belief in His willingness and ability to help us increase? And shouldn't the same be said for the Holy Spirit?***

- Perhaps, if this growth in faith does not take place, it could be viewed as not unbelief but willful hard-hearted rejection of Christ's help.

### ***How do we overcome this hard heartedness when we find it in our lives?***

- The disciples were privileged to witness more of Jesus life after this incident.
- However, at the time of the crucifixion they still were struggling with hard-hearts.
- Effort – prayer – study and more effort!

### **Mark 6:53-56 (NIV)**

- 1) In John's gospel (6:17) he says they were headed for Capernaum.
- 2) Well, the plain of Gennesaret is just to the southwest of Capernaum. The city was about 2 miles from Capernaum.
- 3) Mark, as we just read gives the bigger picture of their travels not just to Capernaum but to other villages and towns throughout the countryside.
- 4) In this next segment, we do not know Jesus' exact location – most likely he is still in the vicinity of Capernaum.
- 5) What is amazing is that the Pharisees traveled about 80 mi. to see what Jesus was up to.
  - a) This trip would take about 3 days walking 8 hours per day.
- 6) His reputation and His increase in popularity had obviously reached Jerusalem and perhaps the religious authorities were already feeling threatened.

### **Mark 7:1-13 (NIV)**

- 7) We see here the Pharisees seizing an opportunity to drag Jesus into another debate in which they wished to discredit Him.
- 8) The Mosaic law prescribed ceremonial washings for priests.
- 9) Nowhere did it require others to wash their hands in any particular way before eating.

## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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### **Ex 30:17-21 (NIV)**

- 10) The “traditions of the elders” referred to here is basically what is called the “Oral Talmud”.
- 11) These are extrabiblical rules which were passed down and expanded upon from the time of the Babylonian captivity (605–535 B.C.).
- 12) These oral traditions, which pervaded the Judaism of Jesus’ day, were purportedly written down for the first time just after the destruction of the temple in 70 AD and continued to be added to producing the Mishnah and the Gemara.
- 13) The Mishnah, along with additional rabbinic commentary called the Gemara, make up the Talmud of today.
- 14) This collection of Jewish tradition in printed form encompasses thousands of pages of extrabiblical material.
- 15) We must be careful when we deal with these facts and not overstate the magnitude of the rules or traditions themselves.
- 16) Thousands of pages seems like a lot, but, we must remember that this is not just the rules themselves but also rabbinical debate and commentary on these rules.
- 17) The idea here is that these “traditions” were viewed by the religious leaders of that day as not just equal in authority to the original Mosaic law but, to be honored before the Mosaic law.
- 18) The irony is that the purpose of the “traditions” was to protect the Mosaic law.
- 19) That is where the real bind comes in – that is the point Jesus is trying to make to them.
- 20) Jesus also points out that the problems with these “traditions” goes even beyond the fact that they are being bound on the people as law.
- 21) It goes to the fact that they actually in many cases violate or set aside the original Mosaic law to the advantage of anyone who wanted to use them in that way.
- 22) Here, He gives the Corban example we just read.
- 23) Corban in the Hebrew means in broad terms a gift dedicated to God.
- 24) In essence, one could declare all their possessions Corban and, according to most commentators, they could then still use the money as they chose.
- 25) The irony was that they could use the money for their own purposes but they were forbidden because of the vow to use the money for others.
- 26) From what Jesus is saying here, the Pharisees are the crux of the problem.
- 27) They actually legislated the use of the Corban gift and forbid anyone from giving the money or property to anyone else once it was dedicated to the temple.
- 28) One commentary says that things declared Corban were “withdrawn from profane or ordinary use by anyone else.”
- 29) Now, according to at least one commentary, the gift could be taken back by simply saying Corban over it again.



## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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30) All this is obviously confusing, however, if we take the whole thing at face value, we can see where this tradition could provide a loophole for anyone to refuse help for their parents.

31) They Corban everything

- a) They can still use it
- b) They don't want to take the gift back by saying corban over it again.
- c) And, unless they do, the pharisees would not allow them to use it for "profane use" such as helping their parents.

***Do we have any "traditions" that fall into this category? To clarify - do we have any traditions that we use as an excuse to prevent us from doing something we probably should be doing?***

- We don't drink so we use that as an excuse not to associate with someone who does.

32) As we finished last time some of the Pharisees from Jerusalem had traveled to the Bethsaida area south of Capernaum and were challenging Jesus – hoping to discredit him before the multitudes.

33) We read ....

**Mark 7:1-7 (NIV)**

34) There is something we need to note here. The Pharisees knew the status of the command Jesus' disciples were being accused of – it was a “tradition of the elders”.

35) The key to Jesus' rebuttal and for that matter what their real error was, is summed up in his comment in vs. 6 when he calls them HYPOCRITES and in vs. 8

8 You have let go of the commands of God and are holding on to the traditions of men."

36) Jesus has silenced the pharisees with a challenge of his own regarding Corban and the Pharisaical treating of the law.

37) He goes on to address to the crowd the original question they raised.

***Easy one – What is the hypocrisy of the Pharisees?***

**Mark 7:14-23 (NIV)**

- 1) To us, Jesus' opening statement to the crowd is perfectly clear – we have had the benefit of the rest of the gospel message.
- 2) Even without that, I think it is pretty clear.
- 3) Cleanness or uncleanness to the Jewish people to this point was a physical thing.
  - a) Don't touch a dead body.
  - b) Don't touch a dead animal.
  - c) The dietary laws were seen as purely a physical thing.
  - d) LABC comments:

Lev 11 records many of the Jewish dietary laws, including foods considered "clean" and "unclean." The Jews had a restricted diet for three main reasons: (1) To ensure the health of the nation. The forbidden foods were usually scavenger animals that fed on dead animals; thus, disease could be transmitted through them. (2) To visibly distinguish Israel from other nations. For example, the pig was a common sacrifice of pagan religions. (3) To avoid objectionable associations. The creatures that move about on the ground, for example, were reminiscent of serpents, a common symbol for sin.

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## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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- 4) Though God had intended these rules as physical He had also intended them to teach the very lesson Jesus is about to pronounce.
- 5) We have to realize that verses 17-19 represent a huge change in thinking for the Jew of this time.
- 6) Over the years, they had lost the point that it was not necessarily the food that defiled – it was the act of disobedience that defiled.
- 7) This disobedience begins in the heart.
- 8) Here we see one of those examples of folks still not getting it!
- 9) Remember, it is Peter (along with the Holy Spirit of course) who is most likely the source for Mark's thoughts here.
- 10) We don't see Peter really getting this concept until chapter 10 of Acts!
- 11) Obviously, this applies to us very well – **the sin in our lives does not begin with the act it begins in the mind and the heart. SAY THAT AGAIN!!!**
- 12) I'm sure I have related the anecdote from a comedian many years ago to you before – Brother Dave Gardner.
- 13) Though his irreverent style got him in trouble throughout his career this is one thing he said that truly is a gem.
- 14) When asked how did he try to stay out of trouble he replied.  
    “I don't have to watch what I say – I watch what I think!
- 15) As simple as that sounds, that is really basic idea of how to help eliminate sin in our lives.
- 16) Not easy – Never easy – but truly a key to the whole problem!
- 17) Paul gives us one of the absolute best ways to help us in accomplishing this in our lives every day – and – it falls right in line with Dave Gardner's answer!

### **Phil 4:8-9 (NIV)**

- 18) Occupying our minds with good and righteous thought is always a deterrent for bad and evil thoughts!
- 19) Like the tossed out evil spirit that returns to find an empty house he goes in and occupies it with even more evil spirits.
- 20) If we evict an evil thought or idea from our mind we need to replace it with good thoughts else, the evil thought will return.
- 21) Again, **Not easy – Never easy!**

### **Mark 7:24-30 (NIV)**

- 1) Jesus and his disciples were still in need of rest.
- 2) Leaving Galilee and heading into Gentile territory was a way to possibly get that rest and also, traveling that distance would give time for more training for the disciples.

## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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- 3) When He arrives at Tyre some 30 miles to the north of Galilee Mark tells us that he entered a house and wanted to keep His presence a secret – again probably to give time for rest and disciple training.
- 4) The house was probably the house of a Jew who lived there and perhaps Jesus or one of the disciples knew them.
- 5) As in most cases we have seen, despite His desire not to be announced, some folks obviously learn of His presence and thus we see what unfolds next.
- 6) A woman who has a daughter possessed of an evil spirit comes to Jesus.
- 7) Mark says of her “a Greek, born in Syrian Phoenicia”.
- 8) Matthew says she was a Canaanite woman.
- 9) These are not mutually exclusive – she can be both.
- 10) The Matthew account of this encounter is somewhat more drawn out than is Mark’s.
- 11) The basics of the situation are that she was desperate and was asking repeatedly for Jesus’ help.
- 12) Here is one of those cases that we really need to be careful about assumptions based on wording.
- 13) First, we really need to continue to consider Matthew’s account to get the full picture of what is happening.
- 14) In that account, the woman is asking repeatedly and Jesus is basically not acknowledging her until the disciples say that he should send her away.
- 15) At that point, Jesus says to them that He was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel.
- 16) In context, it would sound like he was really agreeing with them that they should just send her away.
- 17) However, that truly becomes the start of a teaching moment for them.
- 18) The woman comes to Jesus one more time and kneels before Him saying “Lord help me!”
- 19) Then, here is the part we need to be careful about.
- 20) Jesus says;  
**27 "First let the children eat all they want," he told her, "for it is not right to take the children's bread and toss it to their dogs."**
- 21) The word used for dogs here is one of two words in the Greek that he could have used – one indicating pets the other referring to stray mongrel dogs that roamed the streets.
- 22) The latter was the term used most often by Jews in referring to Gentiles.
- 23) The other word is basically referring to a family pet – this is the term used here.
- 24) Even without that word difference, we would know that since He referred to them as “their dogs” also indicating they were pets not stray mongrel dogs.
- 25) It is also obvious that the woman understood

## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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28 "Yes, Lord," she replied, "but even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs."

26) With this response, Jesus simply tells the woman her daughter has been relieved of the demon and she can go to her.

### ***How do you think the woman felt at this point?***

***Trust? Faith? Relief?***

### **Mark 7:31-37 (NIV)**

- 1) Jesus continues His circuitous route by going north to Sidon then back south and to the east of the Sea of Galilee down to the region of the Decapolis (10 cities) which is another Gentile area.
- 2) In fact, archaeological discoveries indicate that these towns were centers of Greek paganism.
- 3) Many idols honoring pagan deities like Zeus, Aphrodite, Artemis, and Dionysus have been found throughout the region.
- 4) Though the nation of Israel was still Jesus' priority, His willingness to minister in this Gentile area, and in Tyre and Sidon before that, previewed the fact that the gospel was always intended to be preached throughout the whole world.

### ***What are some reasons you can think of that caused Jesus to go to the gentiles now?***

- Disciple training – different approach – gentile vs. Jew.
  - Gospel Message to the Jews of the area.
  - Make clear God's plan was for all.
- 5) As you may recall, the last time Jesus and the disciples were in this area, He removed the demons from the man (or men) in the tombs.
  - 6) As far as we know, he never left the spot where they landed.
  - 7) Reading from ...

### **Mark 5:18-20 (NIV)**

- 8) Of course, this means that Jesus is now known in this region so, it is no surprise when people begin bringing the sick to Him for healing.
- 9) Though Matthew relays a bigger picture of the stay in the Decapolis, Mark relates a very specific instance here that has some interesting facts.
- 10) Here, we have a deaf and at least partially mute man brought to Jesus by "some people" and we know nothing about them either.
- 11) However, we will get a clue in Jesus' actions that at least the man, might have been Jewish.
- 12) The most important thing is what Jesus does.

## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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- 13) First, regardless of the crowds which there probably were some around Him at this point, he pulled the man aside.
- 14) Some commentators say that He did this to keep the healing a secret, however, I think it was more for the man's benefit – especially in light of what Jesus does next.
- 15) Jesus knows the man's problems and he wants to communicate with him in the most loving and effective way.
- 16) To do that, Jesus does several things that might at first seem strange but, if we look at it from the perspective of the man it would likely be considered a kind set of gestures that he could understand.
- 17) In an act of profound kindness Jesus uses four specific signs communicate with the man.
- 18) **First**, He put His fingers into both of his ears to indicate that He recognized the man's physical problem.
  - a) Jesus understood that he was not stunted mentally or possessed by demons, as some may have thought; he simply could not hear.
- 19) **Second**, after spitting, He touched his tongue with the saliva.
  - a) Jesus again employed a physical gesture to identify the man's speech disability.
  - b) Though Jesus used saliva in His healings on two other occasions (cf. Mark 8:23; John 9:6), it obviously had no power.
  - c) However, ancient people generally believed that saliva had healing properties.
  - d) The deaf man would have understood that Jesus' use of saliva meant He intended to heal him.
- 20) **Third**, looking up to heaven, Jesus demonstrated that the creative power He exercised came from God.
  - a) Even as a pagan, the man would have understood what Jesus meant by gazing toward heaven.
- 21) **Fourth**, by giving a deep sigh and a single Aramaic word "Ephphatha!" (which means, "Be opened!"), the Lord communicated a sincere sympathy for the long agonies of this man's disability.
- 22) This is the clue that the man may have been Jewish.
- 23) Regardless of the man's origin, using nonverbal communication, the Lord Jesus taught this man about both God's power and His compassion.
- 24) The Son of God has healed him, with power that came from above, because He cared deeply about him.
- 25) Jesus again tells the man who can now hear and speak and presumably those that brought him not to speak of this.
- 26) However, because of their amazement, they cannot keep quite.

- 1) As we concluded last time, Jesus and the disciples were in the area of the Decapolis.
- 2) Mark opens this next incident in his narrative of Jesus' ministry with a time reference – "During those days".
- 3) One must assume that he is referring to the days in this area.

**Mark 8:1-10 (NIV)**

- 4) It is most likely that this crowd was made up of Jewish and Gentile folks. I would assume primarily Gentile considering the area.
- 5) By the question one of the disciples asks, they are in a remote area – not in or near any of the towns in the area.
- 6) Still in Gentile territory but obviously gathering quite a following.
- 7) Of course, there are many differences in these two feedings of a large gathering.
- 8) The two major things are:
  - a) here the crowd had been with Him for 3 days and ...
    - i) Comment on what might have occurred
    - b) it was Jesus who came to the conclusion that they needed food rather than the disciples.
- 9) In the previous feeding of the 5000, it was the disciples that started the ball rolling.
- 10) The question the disciples asked here is a perfectly normal question for them as normal people to have asked.
- 11) As disciples, it should not have been.
- 12) Jesus doesn't even bother to answer their question – instead, He simply asks them what they have and proceeds to deal with the issue at hand.
- 13) Once the 4000 are fed, Jesus and the disciples get in a boat and sail to the to the region of Dalmanutha.
- 14) Dalmanutha is a mystery.
  - a) Although there are possible locations, no town has ever been found by that name.
  - b) In Matthew's gospel, he refers to Magdala – the home of Mary Magdalene.
  - c) One scholar has put forth that this was not the name of a town at all but a reference for Mark's readers referring to the battle around Magdala during the Jewish Revolt.
- 15) Dismissing these details, the consensus is that they sailed back across the Sea of Galilee and were again in Jewish territory.
- 16) This incident and the one that follows really and truly highlight the "hardness of heart" of the disciples.
- 17) I use the term because it is truly a biblical term

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- 18) In fact, it is the term Jesus uses many times to refer to them.
- 19) The question always comes to my mind about the negative connotation it brings –
  - a) Is the condition of their hearts a deliberate thing or simply an unchanging mindset?
- 20) As I have mentioned before, in asking myself why can they not see the obvious it occurs to me that it is not their belief or the disbelief that is in the spotlight.
  - a) Instead, it is their way of thinking.
  - b) This could also be God's way of showing us how we don't necessarily have to get it immediately – just a thought!
- 21) Keep this in mind as we read these next sections of Scripture and see what conclusion you draw.

### **Mark 8:11-13 (NIV)**

- 1) There is a lot happening in the 3 short verses.
- 2) First, the Pharisees as it seems, are becoming desperate.
- 3) In this case, they don't ask questions trying to trip Him up they ask for a miraculous sign.
- 4) We must remember at this point, the Pharisees have accused Jesus of performing His miracles under the power of Satan.
- 5) That being said, I think we can safely assume that their asking for a sign was not so they could change their minds and believe in Jesus.
- 6) According to one commentator, a popular Jewish superstition was that demons could mimic earthly miracles.
- 7) But only God could work wonders in the sky.
- 8) This is perhaps the reason Jesus was accused by the Pharisees of doing His miracles by the power of Satan.
- 9) This request for a sign then becomes an ultimate test.
- 10) Jesus failing to be able to provide a miracle from heaven would be the final proof they needed to condemn Him as doing His miracles by the power of Satan.
- 11) In the parallel passage in Matthew, this is more apparent as well as Jesus' showing that He sees thru their deception and puts it right back on them.

### **Matt 16:1-4 (NIV)**

- 12) Here, they can recognize the coming storm from something as subtle as a sky color yet, they fail to recognize the coming of the Messiah in spite of the abundant evidence that was right in front of them.
- 13) In Mark's account, Jesus leaves them and says no sign will be given – meaning of course that He would not grant their request.



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- 14) In Matthew's account, Jesus also does not perform for them but, He does tell them that there will be a sign – that of Jonah.
- 15) Of course, that referring to this death, burial and resurrection in the not too distant future.
- 16) At this point Jesus leaves the Pharisees and Sadducees probably standing there with their mouths hanging open.
- 17) There are a couple of other points to consider here before we move on.
- 18) **First**, this leaving is more than a temporary separation.
- 19) This exchange is the last open conflict with the religious leadership in Galilee.
- 20) Of course, once he reaches the temple in Jerusalem for the last time, there will be confrontation with those leaders.
  - a) Assuming here that the Galilean leaders are, for the most part, different from those in the Jerusalem temple.
- 21) From this point onward, Jesus' miracles and His teaching would primarily be for His disciples not the crowds or the religious leaders.
- 22) **Second** point here sort of goes with our discussion at the conclusion of the last section – “hardness of heart”.
- 23) The hard heartedness of the Pharisees and Sadducees was different than that of the disciples.
  - a) It is what one commentator calls “permanent”
- 24) These religious leaders were so set against Jesus that they were unable to return to any real consideration or belief in Him as the real Messiah.
- 25) Of course there are exceptions - Nicodemus one of only a few leaders that did recognize the self-evident truth that Jesus' power was divine.
- 26) As he said to Christ as recorded in John 3:2, “Rabbi, we know that You have come from God as a teacher; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him”.

***In our sharing Jesus with others, there are a couple of questions we need to consider here:***

***First, how do we tell if someone is hard hearted beyond turning – i.e. permanent hard heartedness as the Pharisees and Sadducees were? – or, can we make that call????***

***A second question is when we run into someone who we may think is in this state how do we handle the situation?***

- 1) Moving on to the next section of Mark, we see another type of hard heartedness – that of the disciples.
- 2) Again, remember the question at the beginning of these two sections;

## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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### ***How do we describe the hard heartedness of the disciples – mindset, dullness of mind, or willful – where are they?***

#### **Mark 8:14-21 (NIV)**

- 3) Mark begins this section with an explanation that, without context seems a little off the wall.
- 4) Since we do not know if this is part of an on going conversation, it is like he is explaining something that doesn't need explaining until Jesus speaks and sets the context.
- 5) Even with Jesus' words, the comment and the disciples discussion still appear to be a little out of place.
- 6) Lets talk for a minute about Jesus' statement;

"Be careful watch out for the yeast of the Pharisees and that of Herod."

### ***In your mind, what is Jesus talking about? What is the yeast of the Pharisees? What is the yeast of Herod?***

- Yeast in this passage symbolizes evil.
  - Just as only a small amount of yeast is needed to make a batch of bread rise, so the evil teachings and hypocrisy of the religious and political leaders could permeate and contaminate the entire society.
  - Jesus used yeast as an example of how a small amount of evil can affect a large group of people.
  - The wrong teachings of the Pharisees were leading many people astray.
  - Jesus warned his disciples to constantly watch out for the contaminating evil of the religious leaders.
- 7) Mark mentioned the yeast of the Pharisees and of Herod.
    - a) Matthew wrote about the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees (Matt 16:6,12).
    - b) Mark's audience, again assumed to be mostly non-Jews (perhaps the church at Rome), would have known about Herod, but not necessarily about the Jewish religious sect of the Sadducees.
    - c) Thus Mark quoted the part of Jesus' statement that his readers would understand.
  - 8) This reference to Herod may have also meant the Herodians, a group of Jews who supported the king.
  - 9) Many Herodians were also Sadducees.
  - 10) They were known for their skepticism, materialism, and political opportunism.
  - 11) The Pharisees were self-righteous, maintaining a form of religiousness without inner strength and spiritual insight.

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- 12) In your wildest thought would you make the connection the disciples did? – probably not yeast is the only word connected to bread
- a) they must have thrown the rest of the sentence away in their minds.
- 13) As a human, Jesus must have been frustrated with them on two levels.
- a) First, that they would not be open and thinking enough to understand what He was talking about.
- b) Second, that they would have so quickly forgotten the miracles that they themselves participated in – feeding 5000 and 4000 people – which would of course made them realize that regardless of their forgetfulness, the situation was easily remedied by Jesus.
- 14) Notice, He chooses to address the latter (more important point) not the fact that they completely missed what He was talking about.
- 15) I know Jesus is not weak like us but I can truly almost hear the frustration in His voice as He asks these questions and reminds these men of what again, they themselves had participated in.
- 16) And, by the way, one point to make here is that Jesus is not telling these men these things – He is asking them –
- 17) Trying to get them to think more kingdom and Son of God Messiah than earthly and deliverer Messiah.
- 18) Along with hearing the frustration in Jesus' voice, I think I can hear the timidity in disciples voice as they answer His questions – correctly but, realizing His displeasure with them.
- 19) Another point here I think is important to note – He asks the question “do you not understand” twice.
- 20) I'm sure that He was hoping for an answer or a discussion that would show that they did – however, none is given here.
- 21) Two questions...

***First, we are not told, but, what are the disciples being asked if they understand? – yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees or Herod or who He Jesus is?***

- 1) Last time, we were discussing hard-heartedness on the part of the disciples.
- 2) As we concluded we posed the question

***How do we display hard heartedness?***

- 3) Before we address that, let's do a quick review of the scripture that brought us to the question.

**Mark 8:14-21 (NIV)**

- 4) I know Jesus is not weak like us but I can truly almost hear the frustration in His voice as He asks these questions to remind these men of miracles, they themselves had participated in.
- 5) I think it is important to note that Jesus is not telling these men these things – He is asking them – He wants them to bring the events to mind.
- 6) Along with hearing the frustration in Jesus' voice, I think I can hear the timidity in disciples voice as they answer His questions – correctly but, realizing His displeasure with them.
- 7) Another point here I think is important to note – He asks the question “do you not understand” twice.
- 8) I'm sure that He was hoping for an answer or a discussion that would show that they did – however, none is given here.

***The first question we need to answer is – How are the disciples displaying hard heartedness?***

- Wrong thinking – they hear what Jesus says and see (even participate in) what he can do but do not grasp the significance in their hearts.
  - They don't connect what they see and know about Jesus to the big picture.
  - Could we not say – if we boil this down to the basics – they (their hearts) are not changed by him or his teachings?
- 9) The LABC makes this comment about what they call the HARDHEARTS CLUB.

Today the hard hearts believe

- (1) that poverty is caused by laziness; helping poor people only reinforces their failures;
- (2) that youth are vicious and spoiled and should be taught from early age to respect their elders (be seen and not heard) as their first duty;
- (3) that worship is best conducted in one way — our way — which has worked very well for forty years, thank you, and need not be changed;
- (4) that evangelism doesn't apply; people will never change anyway, so we don't need to do it.

Many churches have chapters of this distinguished club. The stronger the club, the more money is saved from frivolous expense (like a youth program), and

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the more time is saved from silliness like innovative programming and special ministries to needy populations.

### ***Now, back to the question – How do we display hard heartedness? Is the HARDHEARTS CLUB the only way or are there other less drastic ways?***

10) LABC concludes their comment this way:

Joining the hard heart Club requires only one pledge: You must refuse to listen to Jesus' questions. Don't be a hard heart. Be open to Christ's truth. Let him change your heart.

11) Mark gives us no further information about this exchange between Jesus and the disciples.

a) I personally assume that there was more discussion as they continued to Bethsaida.

- 1) Despite His frustration with them He still loved them and wanted them to be strong and become the founders of the church that He knew they were going to be.
- 2) To me, what we will see next, the miracle healing of the blind man, and the following incident of Peter's confession are all linked together as an example of growing faith.

### **Mark 8:22-26 (NIV)**

- 3) Jesus and the disciples have now arrived back in Bethsaida.
- 4) Mark tells us that some people (family, or friends) brought a blind man to Jesus.
- 5) Most likely, it was family since blind folks were considered outcasts of society in those times.
- 6) Here, we see another time when Jesus chooses to heal away from the crowds.
- 7) He takes the man by the hand and leads him outside the village we assume that they are accompanied by the ones who brought the man and the disciples.
- 8) Once they are in the place Jesus chooses, he heals the man.
- 9) Now, this healing is unique in that it takes place in two stages.
- 10) At the first laying on of Jesus' hands, the man can see but not completely
- 11) At the second, he is completely healed and "sees everything clearly"
- 12) This is NOT a failure of Jesus' power!
- 13) Instead, it is a lesson for the disciples – spiritual blindness can be overcome with faith but not instantly.
- 14) As the blind man began to see, so we (and the disciples) must grow.
  - a) Just like the blind man, at first he sees things but they are not clear (not understood) "people look like trees walking around".
  - b) But as Jesus completed the healing he saw clearly – as will the disciples.
- 15) We begin with faith but that faith must mature which takes time.

## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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- 16) This two stage cure of the blind man was a lesson of encouragement to the disciples.
- 17) Beyond this, this private miracle underscored a number of important truths for them.
- 18) **First**, it served as a confirmation of Jesus' deity, since only divine power could open the eyes of the blind
- 19) **Second**, it marked a turning point in Jesus' ministry.
- a) The Lord's public ministry in Galilee was over, and His focus was on training His disciples.
  - b) From this point forward, with the cross only months away, Jesus began to speak plainly to the Twelve about His coming death (cf. Mark 8:31; 9:31; 10:32).
- 20) **Finally**, this miracle served as an illustration for the disciples of temporary spiritual blindness.

### ***Let's discuss for a moment our spiritual blindness –***

***Are there days when we feel like the disciples – we just don't get it?***

***Are there days when you feel like the blind man after the second touch?***

### ***How do we cure our spiritual blindness?***

#### ***Opinion Question (no right / wrong answers)***

***– Is faith like a muscle that requires exercise to increase and not decrease?***

- 1) Last time, we began looking at Mark 8:27-30.
- 2) Let's spend a few minutes wrapping that up and then we will continue from there.

**Mark 8:27-30 (NIV)**

- 1) Jesus and the disciples were again heading into primarily Gentile territory.
  - a) Caesarea Philippi was north of Bethsaida about 25 miles.
  - b) It was greatly influenced by Greek and Roman culture and was in the territory ruled by Philip, Herod Antipas's brother.
  - c) Well known for its worship of Greek gods and its temple devoted to the ancient god Pan.
- 2) On the way there, Jesus asks them the first of two questions –
  - a) as the disciples talked to people, who did they think Jesus was?
  - b) Various ones of the disciples gave Jesus what they had experienced as the common view – all incorrect!
  - c) This revealed that the people generally still did not get Jesus' true identity.
  - d) As we discussed a couple of weeks back – people were attributing Jesus' power, miracles, and teachings to virtually anyone else but the Messiah.
- 3) Then the big question –
  - a) who did the disciples think he was?
- 4) I would assume that there was probably a pause before anyone spoke.
- 5) We obviously can't speak for the rest of the disciples but from this it looks like at least Peter finally got it!
- 6) Peter uses the word Χριστος meaning Christ, Messiah, and/or Anointed One.
- 7) This is only the second time this Greek word is used in Mark's gospel.
- 8) As we will see in our next segment of verses, perhaps Peter does not understand to the depth he would someday but at least all the pieces are coming together.
- 9) One final comment on this section by way of perspective.
- 10) Jesus tells the disciples not to tell anyone that He is the Messiah.
- 11) This is basically the same thing that He had been telling the demons that He cast out.
- 12) He tells the demons because He does not want demons testifying to His sonship because it would possibly be seen as an endorsement.
- 13) However, here, it is for a different reason.

***Why do you think Jesus tells them here not to tell anyone about Him (i.e. that He was the Messiah)***

## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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- Here, Jesus wants the disciples not to share with others because they were not ready to share the truth.
  - Again, as we will see in this next section, Peter, still doesn't see the big picture.
  - He doesn't get why Jesus has to be subjected to the humiliation He is going to suffer and ultimately die.
- Even though they were on their way to getting it – they were still not 100% there.
- People would not get it either at this point – their idea of the Messiah was still not on the right track
  - What they were looking for, **He was not!**

14) The LABC makes an interesting observation regarding this exchange between Jesus and His disciples.

15) One that really brings a perspective that we all need to have – to use a common expression for today – this should be our real “Take Away” from this exchange and the one that follows.

Jesus asked the disciples who other people thought he was; then he asked them the same question. We must each answer this question for ourselves. T. S. Elliot criticized modern thinking when he said, "Jesus, now there was a man; we need more like him. Take Abraham Lincoln, for example."

Was Jesus just a man with some good ideas, one of many spiritual leaders? Or was he the true God, the one mediator, our only source of life and peace with the Father? It is not enough to know what others say about Jesus: You must know, understand, and accept for yourself that he is the Messiah. You must move from curiosity to commitment, from admiration to adoration. If Jesus were to ask you this question, how would you answer? Is he your Lord and Messiah?

- 1) Moving on to the next phase of Jesus ministry, we find Jesus dealing more and more with things that are now going to happen.
- 2) He is teaching and preparing the disciples for the things to come as much as He possibly can – knowing full well all that will truly transpire in His last days before the crucifixion.

### **Mark 8:31-33 (NIV)**

- 1) To me personally, it would have been difficult to be a disciple of Jesus at this point.
- 2) Peter had just made “the good confession”.
- 3) Most likely the others were onboard with that confession (or at least they were coming around).
- 4) They are also likely just starting to contemplate what this might mean
  - a) Was the Roman domination of their nation about to come to an end?



## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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- b) Were they, as His disciples, going to be suddenly held in high esteem – maybe even rule with him?
  - c) Was there anything that He could not do?
  - d) ... Oh so many questions....
- 5) And then, there is what comes next.
- 6) When scripture says here that “He spoke plainly about this” it means exactly what it says.
- 7) Jesus tells them with absolute clarity what was going to happen to Him.
- 8) This was not in parables or statements that required them to interpret such as Jesus’ comment back in verse 15
- "Watch out for the yeast of the Pharisees and that of Herod."
- 9) The word “**plainly**” used here means openly or with frankness.
- 10) Considering all the questions that might be going thru their minds this was the absolute last thing they would have expected to be told.
- 11) Generally among the people and one would assume among the disciples at least to some degree, a strong consensus had developed about the political role the Messiah would play once he made himself known.
- 12) The idea that the Messiah would "save people from their sins" had gotten lost among the list of social and political evils that the Christ would, in their minds, correct.
- 13) This spurs Peter, either on his own or as the spokesman for the group to do something that he absolutely should not have done.
- 14) To get this picture, we need to visit again, Peter’s confession.
- 15) In the two other Gospels, Matt and Luke. where Peter is quoted the quotes are:
- Luke 9:20 (NIV)** Peter answered, "The Christ of God."
- Matt 16:16 (NIV)** Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."
- 16) Unlike Mark’s quote, in both Matthew and Luke, Peter makes a definite connection (in words) to God.
- 17) There are a few questions that come to my mind here. It is obvious that there is an understanding of Jesus’ relationship to God BUT
- a) Did Peter or the other disciples understand the Deity of Christ?
  - b) Did they understand the incarnation?
  - c) In Matthew’s quote, what did Peter think it meant to be the “**Son of the living God**”.
  - d) Did they understand the immortality of the man that stood before them?
- 18) To be honest, I don’t think they did – there was absolutely no precedent for this in all history – before or since!!

## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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- 19) John MacArthur in a few comments really sums up what just happened:
- a) In his resistance to his Lord's words, Peter went from being a spokesman for God to being the mouthpiece of Satan.
  - b) Incredibly, a former fisherman had the audacity to contradict the Creator Himself, the one he had just identified as the Messiah and the Son of God.
  - c) Not only had Peter presumptuously elevated his own authority above Jesus, he directly contradicted the redemptive purposes of God.
- 20) Quite the summation.
- 21) Even beyond that, the word used here by Peter, "rebuke" is a very strong word with meanings of censure or admonishment. Strong's adds, "an implication to forbid".
- 22) Probably not the attitude one should take when speaking to the Son of God – your creator and the creator of the universe.
- 23) As I reviewed this, it occurred to me that this could be an answer to one of the questions we posed regarding why the disciples did not get it!
- a) Once they reached this point, there should have been a real change in their attitude toward Jesus.
  - b) Once the realization of who Jesus truly was, should there not have been a difference in the way they dealt with Him and what He said and taught?????????????
  - c) If we were disciples of someone and suddenly, we find ourselves face to face with the fact that they were not a mere person like we are but indeed, the Son of the Most High God – would not our attitude get adjusted?
- 24) Though Jesus addressed his rebuke to Peter, He saw the source of Peter's words more than Peter himself did – it was Satan – rearing his ugly head again.
- 25) When Jesus was tempted and succeeded in thwarting the devil in the desert, scripture tells us that the devil left until a more opportune time.
- 26) This was one of probably many times that Satan has accosted Christ in his time since the temptation in the desert.
- 27) Satan was happy to use Peter as his messenger for this temptation.
- 28) One subtlety here is Jesus' action.
- a) Peter has pulled the Lord aside to perform his rebuke – again we do not know for sure if the disciples were privy to what he was going to do or not.
  - b) The subtlety is Jesus' turning – probably away from Peter and toward the disciples before his exclamation of "Get behind me Satan".
  - c) The picture *to me anyway* is that of Jesus turning away from (perhaps even turning his back on) Peter (Satan's instrument at the moment) and toward the disciples.

## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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- d) This would be a strong visual indication of what Jesus is thinking and he wants not only Peter to get the message but the disciples as well.
- 29) Jesus then clearly states that "You do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men."
- 30) Matthew adds that Jesus said that Peter's rebuke (Satan's words) were a stumbling block to Him.

***Does the devil ever use us as a temptation to others?    How?***

## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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### ***>>>>>> Lesson 21 <<<<<<<***

- 1) Last time, we began looking at Mark 8:34-38.
- 2) We left with a couple of questions on the table:

***Do we all need to become “Paul”? Why? Why not?***

***Is becoming our own version of “Paul” the place we should be? Why?  
Why not?***

- 3) I hope you found this challenging and not discouraging.
- 4) Lets take a quick review of the scripture that led us to them and then we will answer the questions.

#### ***Mark 8:34-38 (NIV)***

- 1) This is one of those “hard sayings” passages.
- 2) If we really and truly look at Jesus’ words here, there is no way it can help but challenge us to our very core.
- 3) When Christ makes this statement – “deny oneself”, to understand it, we have to define for ourselves what the two words mean.
- 4) First, the words in context are not unique to anything associated with first century people.
- 5) To put it another way, the definition of self-denial we come up with is the same that they would have.
- 6) The word used here for deny is the same word used to describe Peter’s denial of Christ.
- 7) Of course, it means to deny, but other meanings include:
  - a) to disown, abstain, renounce, reject, refuse, or repudiate.
- 8) One commentator adds – “disown completely” or “to have no association with”.
- 9) No doubt, we have that picture of DENY – now, what about SELF what does it mean.
- 10) If we are looking for some wiggle room in this very contrite statement, might we find it here?
- 11) Self means (according to dictionaries):
  - a) One individual's personality, character, demeanor, or disposition.
  - b) The subject of one's own experience of phenomena: perception, emotions, thoughts.
  - c) An individual person as the object of the person's own reflective consciousness.
- 12) To deny oneself means to surrender immediate material gratification in order to discover and secure one’s true self and God’s interests.

***If you found any wiggle room here – let me help bust your bubble!***

- 13) One thing you probably had to consider in wrestling with the questions was this:

***You don’t have to answer – but – what parts of “you” do you need to DENY?***

## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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- If you find none then hooray for you – you have arrived!

14) The apostle Paul defines this idea when he describes his condition over in Phil 1:21 – “For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain”

15) John MacArthur says of this verse in Philippians;

Paul fully understood that wealth, power, influence, possessions, prestige, social standing, good health, business or professional success, and all other such things are transitory. Many acknowledge that truth, but not many live as if it is true. Few can say with Paul's utter sincerity to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.

The apostle's very being was wrapped up in his Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. He trusted, loved, served, witnessed for, and in every way was devoted to and dependent on Him. His only hope, his only purpose, his only reason to live was Christ. He traveled for Christ, preached for Christ, and was persecuted and imprisoned for Christ. Ultimately, he would die for Christ. But even death, by God's marvelous grace, was ultimately for Paul's eternal gain.

16) That description says that Paul was the living definition of “denying oneself”.

17) Getting back to Jesus’ words, as if this were not challenging enough, He finishes this sentence with a word picture that was vividly understood by those hearing Him and especially Mark’s Roman readers.

18) Not only are we to deny ourselves we are to “take up our cross and follow Jesus”.

19) Death on a cross was a form of execution used by Rome for dangerous criminals.

20) A prisoner carried his own cross to the place of execution, signifying submission to Rome's power.

21) Following Jesus, therefore, meant identifying with Jesus and his followers, facing social and political oppression and ostracism, and no turning back.

22) We must note here that this is a voluntary taking up of the cross.

23) He isn’t saying that if we are convicted of a crime we should be willing to bear our cross.

24) He is saying that regardless of the cost, we must be willing to bear it.

25) If He has not been clear up to this point, He surely does in His next statement:

For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me and for the gospel will save it.

26) I think the New Living Translation gives a better perspective on this than possibly do others:

If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake and for the sake of the Good News, you will save it.

## **Gospel of Mark – NOTES**

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27) I don't think Jesus is talking about physical living and dying here (*though for some, it might mean that*) – instead, this statement dovetails and serves to reinforce the statement in the previous verse.

28) **It is giving up (loosing) the life we have now (denying ourselves) and accepting a new way of life (coming after Jesus).**

29) Jesus finishes this most difficult statement with what it all means in the long run:

What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his soul? 37 Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul? 38 If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in his Father's glory with the holy angels.

30) There is a point I feel must be made here. In both cases here Jesus bring to focus two conditions

- a) Being ashamed of Him / Giving up our lives for Him AND
- b) Being ashamed of His words / Giving our lives for the Gospel.

31) It is important to recognize that we must cherish and be willing to defend Jesus' words and the Gospel as much as we do Him.

**32) *Now, before we all get so discouraged we just throw up our hands, let's talk about our reality for a few moments.***

33) When we answer the questions, we have to step back and try to grab this and use it as a mirror for our own lives,

**Do we all need to become "Paul"?                      Why?                      Why not?**

**Is becoming our own version of "Paul" the place we should be?                      Why?**  
**Why not?**

- Give till it hurts – enough?
- Evaluation and goals for our Christian walk?
- Discipleship vs. membership discussion

**If anyone would like to share, I have one more question – What is the thing that you found most challenging?**

**Further**

**Mark 9:1 (NIV)**

- 1) We do not know if this statement came at the conclusion of the remarks we just discussed or at a later time.
- 2) The statement has, however, caused many to struggle because of the obvious fact that all those who were there have died and the Jesus' return and the final kingdom of God as revealed in his Revelation has not appeared.

## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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- 3) With that in mind, there are several things that Jesus could have been referring to with this statement.
  - a) **First** – to His transfiguration that will take place a few days later;
  - b) **Second** – perhaps to all those who would witness the Resurrection and Ascension;
  - c) **Finally** – perhaps to the establishment of the church on Pentecost and the spread of that church thereafter.
- 4) As we said, because we know that all who were within hearing of this statement have died, the thing we know that He is NOT referring to is His triumphant return.
- 5) When we look back over the last verses of chapter 8 and as we go forward we see that from Mark’s perspective, Peter’s statement “You are the Christ” was pivotal.
- 6) Everything Mark presented up to that point was **leading** to it – everything that comes after Peter’s statement **flows** from it and verifies it.
- 7) What we are looking at next confirms that Peter’s good confession is true.
- 8) What he affirmed by faith and understanding of what he had witnessed will now be verified by the transfiguration of the Lord – visible absolute confirmation!

### **Mark 9:2-8 (NIV)**

- 1) When we look at the miracles of Jesus in relation to the disciples, we find an interesting three level continuum.
  - a) **First** – there were those miracles that were witnessed by all the disciples and the crowds – healings and demon removals etc.
  - b) **Second** – there were those that were witnessed by all the disciples alone.
    - i) Calming of the sea.
    - ii) Walking on water.
    - iii) One might even argue that the disciples alone witnessed the feedings of the 5000 and 4000 because the people were probably not aware of where the food was coming from.
  - c) **Finally**, there were those miracles witnessed only by the three of the inner circle – Peter, James, and John.
    - i) Several healings.
    - ii) Raising of Jairus’ daughter. JI RUS
    - iii) They will be with Jesus in the Garden as He prays
    - iv) And now, this amazing scene is shown to these three alone.
- 2) The transfiguration was a unique glimpse of the divine Christ.
- 3) Mark says:

## *Gospel of Mark – NOTES*

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His clothes became dazzling white, whiter than anyone in the world could bleach them.

4) Matthew adds: 17:2

His face shone like the sun

### *Where do we see descriptions like this elsewhere in Scripture?*

- Revelation
- 5) Bottom line is, this is a glimpse (perhaps not complete) but a look none the less at Christ in his heavenly glory.
  - 6) Then, there appeared Moses and Elijah.
  - 7) Obviously, Peter, James, nor John had ever seen them since they were dead and gone long before this.
  - 8) Doubt if they had name tags so, we are left with the obvious – they were absolutely recognized by the disciples thru divine revelation.
  - 9) Luke tells us the men were sleepy but became fully awake and saw the glory of the two men.
  - 10) What a fantastic and awe inspiring scene.
  - 11) Peter is so awe struck by it he doesn't know what to say but, being Peter, he has to say something so he makes his suggestion of building the shelters.
  - 12) He did call Jesus Rabbi (Master, Teacher) which indicates that he missed the revealed glory.
  - 13) However, giving him the benefit of the doubt, he was awe struck and half asleep!
  - 14) There are a couple of theories regarding what Peter had in mind.
    - a) He wanted to build true shelters so that they would stay there for a long time.
    - b) He could have had in mind Feast of Tabernacles or shelters.
      - i) That would have meant that the shelters were to be a commemoration of the event just as the shelters of the Feast commemorated the Exodus as an event.
    - c) Possibly three shrines honoring each of them Jesus, Moses, and Elijah.
  - 15) His words “it is good for us to be here” revealed a further lack of understanding.
  - 16) He desired to prolong the experience, to keep Moses and Elijah there with them.
  - 17) But that was NEITHER the point of the experience NOR the lesson to be learned by it.
  - 18) The parenthetical expression here says it best “(He did not know what to say, they were so frightened)”.
  - 19) The purpose of the actual transfiguration is an affirmation by God Himself of Jesus' divinity and His pleasure with Him.
  - 20) There is an underlying lesson (truly secondary) but important none the less to be learned here that is– **WAIT for UNDERSTANDING.**



## *Gospel of Mark – NOTES*

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21) I think the LABC says it best:

Poor Peter takes a lot of heat for blurting out words which, in retrospect, show how far out in left field he still was. It began with his startled fear. He may have reacted with his instinct to do something or his desire to help, or perhaps with his hope that a great messianic era would begin that night, the kind Israel had always dreamed of.

The better part of wisdom, for Peter and for us, is to wait for understanding before getting all worked up about offering one's impressive plans and ambitions. Christ has more to teach us.

Jesus is God's Son, the Messiah, our Savior. In the face of his glory, our first response should be to listen and learn. In churches and in families, that's a good idea, too. In our urge to help, we speak too quickly. In our tendency to direct the show, we nominate ourselves as program director before we've understood the program. Jesus wants our worship now; the time for action will come later.

### *Agree / Disagree?*

22) As I studied the conclusion of the incident, I thought about Peter and how he must have felt at this moment.

23) He makes a somewhat off the cuff statement (by his own admission) and regrets it immediately.

24) Then, suddenly the three men are enveloped in a cloud.

- a) It is assumed by most that this is no ordinary cloud.
- b) It was in fact, the glory of God Himself.
- c) Similar to if not the same cloud that guided the Israelites in the desert or perhaps the same cloud that filled the temple with the glory of the Lord.

25) If I were Peter, the first thought that might cross my mind is "WOW, what have I done?"

26) He, James, and John must have been absolutely terrified.

27) Then if all that wasn't enough, the voice of God Himself fills the air speaking directly to the three disciples – "**This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to him!**"

28) Then, equally as quickly, the cloud disappears and no one is left but Jesus.

29) According to Matthew's account, the three men fell face down and were terrified.

30) Matthew also says that Jesus came to them and touched them and said "Get up, and do not be afraid."

31) They must have been dumbfounded as they stood there, probably with their mouths hanging open in shock at what had just happened.

32) God's affirmation of Jesus as His Son was (or should have been) the end of doubt regarding who Jesus was.

## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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- 33) But, God punctuates that statement with a command – “Listen to Him”.
- 34) This was a command that these men were to listen to Jesus – not their own ideas and desires about what lay ahead.
- 35) Peter’s rebuke of the Lord for His announcement regarding His death was a true example of what God is saying NOT to do!
- 36) The Greek word used here (ακουετε) translated listen carries with it a further meaning of not only hearing but acknowledging and obeying. (it is an imperative – command)

***Do we ever have need to here God’s voice saying “Listen to Him”?***

***Do we ever think we know better than what God’s word says?***

***How about when He speaks to our hearts about something we should or should not do?***

***Further***

1) We began looking at Mark 9:9-13 so lets begin there.

**Mark 9:9-13 (NIV)**

- 1) Here again, Jesus gives Peter, James and John the command not to tell anyone what they had seen on the mountain.
- 2) One must assume this meant the other disciples as well since they would probably not understand and/or the three would not adequately be able to describe what took place.
- 3) Notice, this is the only time one of these admonishments came with a time limit – was only in effect until Christ had risen from the dead.

4) This next sentence (verse 10) is perhaps a little clearer in the NASB rendering:

NASB – 10 They seized upon that statement, discussing with one another what rising from the dead meant.

- 5) The disciples knew what raising someone from the dead was.
- 6) They had seen Jesus bring people back from the dead.
- 7) I think the issue being discussed was not the raising but what it meant in view of Jesus’ ...
  - a) Messiahship
  - b) the coming of the kingdom, and
  - c) other things they were struggling with.
- 8) The disciples depart from their discussion of Jesus’ rising from the dead to ask him another question that came to their minds.

“Why do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?”

9) The scribes based this claim on the final verses of the Old Testament

**Mal 4:5-6 (NIV)**

- 10) The disciples did believe that Jesus was the Messiah though they did not totally understand the meaning of that Messiahship at this point.
- 11) However, seeing Elijah on the mountain and knowing that he had not, to their knowledge, appeared to fulfill the Malachi scripture, they were curious.
- 12) Jesus tells them that basically, the scribes are correct.
- 13) The problem is that they (the disciples) and scribes and the rest of the religious leaders did not recognize him when he was here – that Elijah was John the Baptist.
- 14) Though, John, when asked, denied that he was Elijah, he was clearly the fulfillment of Malachi 4:5-6.
- 15) We see scriptural evidence of this in Matthew’s account:

## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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### **Matt 17:11-13 (NIV)**

16) There is another aspect of this passage we should consider.

17) In the second half of verse 12, there is a question that Jesus injects into his answer:

Why then is it written that the Son of Man must suffer much and be rejected? NIV

18) The ESV renders the question:

And how is it written of the Son of Man that he should suffer many things and be treated with contempt? ESV

19) All of Jesus' answer including this injected question are a tie back to the prophecies that speak of this.

20) The LABC indirectly connects this back to Peter's rebuke of Jesus.

21) This is just one more time he is teaching and trying to bring them to a better understanding of the situation.

The fact that Elijah would come and restore all things would not change the plan of salvation that would require the suffering and rejection of the Son of Man. That the Messiah would suffer much and be rejected was written in Scripture (for example, Ps 22:14,16-17; Isa 53:1). The prophecies would not have been written if they were not going to come true. Jesus was showing them the close connection between the Cross, the Transfiguration, and the messianic passages in the Bible. He was also reminding them of what he said in 8:33. If they rejected the reality of his suffering, they would not have in mind the things of God.

22) This is also clear in the Matthew passage we read a moment ago (Matt 17: end of vs. 12)

In the same way the Son of Man is going to suffer at their hands.

1) Jesus and the 3 now complete their trek back from the mountain and the transfiguration event.

### **Mark 9:14-19 (NIV)**

1) On returning from the mountain, Jesus and the three disciples came upon a scene that was far from what they wanted: a scene of chaos!

2) On the one hand, there was a crowd surrounding the other nine disciples and, it appears they were observing an argument between them and some scribes (teachers of the law).

3) Jesus asks what the argument was about and got no answer from them.

4) Because of their silence, a man in the crowd sees an opportunity to interject and tell Jesus about his disciples' inability to rid his son of a demon.

5) I would speculate that the argument with the scribes was probably not about the disciples' inability to rid his son of a demon.

6) It was likely about something entirely different

## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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- a) Perhaps a question that the scribes had asked the other nine disciples that they could not answer or answered in a way that caused the disagreement.
- b) They did not have Jesus' ability to handle these confrontations and the question degraded to and argument.

### **Matt 7:28-29 (NIV)**

- c) This is a marked difference between Jesus and these men at this point:
- 7) In this case, the man simply seized the moment and brought another failure of the disciples to Jesus' attention.
- 8) Again, in my opinion, Jesus in exasperation speaks to the whole chaotic scene including the disciples:  
19 "O unbelieving generation," Jesus replied, "how long shall I stay with you? How long shall I put up with you?"
- 9) Some commentators believe his comment was directed at the disciples because they had not been able to cast out the demon.
- 10) If that were the case, I don't believe He would have used the term "generation" in His statement.
- 11) Also, He explains to the disciples at the conclusion of the incident why they could not cast out the demon – NOT Unbelief.
- 12) Jesus' appearance and comment evidently stops the argument allowing attention to focus on the man and his complaint.
- 13) Hearing the man's complaint (inditement of the disciples if you will) He says:

### **Mark 9: 20-29 (NIV)**

- 1) Jesus answers the man and tells him to bring his son to Him.
- 2) The indication here is that Jesus is either some distance from the crowd as He answered the father or He moves away from the crowd.
- 3) At any rate, when the demon sees Jesus, he immediately exerts his power over the boy and throws him into a convulsion.
- 4) What comes next is an exchange between Jesus and the boy's father.
- 5) There are a couple of things to note in this exchange.
- 6) First, the man is asking for help not only for his son but for himself as well when he uses the term us.
- 7) Second, depending on the translation you have, Jesus' reply to the man's statement "if you can do anything" may have a question or an exclamation mark.
- 8) The point in either case is not an inditement of the man but simple a challenge of his words.

## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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- 9) Jesus simply wants to drive home the point that faith is required here.
- 10) To which the man makes one of those statements that I can always find myself identifying with – “I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!”
- 11) The man is honest enough to admit that though he believed in Jesus’ power, he struggled with doubt.
- 12) Just as he pleaded in desperation for Jesus to deliver his son from the demon, so also wanted Jesus to help him with any doubts he might have – his unbelief.
- 13) Even the strongest faith may at times be plagued by a measure of doubt.
- 14) I can see this case being that the man absolutely believed in Jesus’ ability to deliver him and his son from their predicament.
- 15) But I can also see him having doubts about so many other things that are involved in a relationship with Jesus.
- 16) Somewhere in here, there must have been a switch in location.
  - a) The crowd ran to Jesus when He first arrived and now, they are running to the scene where the boy is convulsing.
  - b) It is also possible that, since the scribes and the other disciples were arguing, not all the crowd ran to Jesus until this point.
- 17) At any rate, seeing the crowd approaching His position and the immediate need to help the boy, Jesus ends the conversation and takes action.
- 18) The demon is cast out and the boy becomes as a corpse.
- 19) The boy is then brought to his feet and the incident is brought to an end.
- 20) Later, Jesus enters a house along with His disciples and they finally get a chance to ask the question – why could they not cast out the demon.
- 21) At first glance, in context, Jesus’ answer is rather puzzling – we are not told that He prayed before casting out the demon, although He may have.
- 22) The implication is that they had become to self-confident.
- 23) The disciples had faith in their own ability. They were depending on themselves rather than praying for God’s help in removing the demon.
- 24) In Matthew’s account of this, he says:

### **Matt 17:19-20 (NASU)**

- 25) I personally see the issue here as being one of, “the leader is gone but we can handle this”.
- 26) The scribes ask a tough question and obviously, the disciples were not able to handle it correctly and the argument ensued.
- 27) The man asked them to cast out the demon and trying to do it themselves they failed.
- 28) Looking at what Jesus tells them in Matthew’s account, had they turned to God for help in the smallest way, then both situations could have been handled.

## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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***If we look at the nine disciples who are at the heart of the chaos and the failed demon removal, do we see ourselves?***

***Being the “DIY” kind of people we are, how do we combat this issue within ourselves***

- Prayer is a demonstration of faith!
- LABC comments:
  - When Jesus faced a particularly tenacious demon, he talked to God the Father all the more. We can pray, too, and should every day
    - that doubts about God's power be wiped away. God can and will put down all demons and raise us to life.
    - that doubts about Jesus vanish. He is the true Messiah, sent by God, our Savior and Lord.
    - that fears evaporate. In a showdown of power, God will have the final word.
    - that greater reliance on Jesus will make our service more effective.
  - When we feel like arguing, retreating, or resigning, it's time to pray. If the demon has frustrated you, let Jesus give you new confidence.
  - Pray often. That's your source of power.

## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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### **>>>>>> Lesson 23 <<<<<<<**

1) We will NOT meet April 2<sup>nd</sup> (Guess Who's Coming to Dinner) or April 9<sup>th</sup> (Easter).

#### **Mark 9:30-32 (NIV)**

- 1) As we have said earlier, Jesus has now finished His public ministry.
- 2) They are most likely in the area of Caesarea Philippi and they leave there and head thru Galilee heading for Capernaum.
- 3) This was a time of teaching and final preparation of the disciples for what is coming shortly and most likely preparing them for the events that will take place after He returns to heaven.
- 4) On this journey, Jesus tells them again that He will be killed and after three days rise to life again.
- 5) This time however, He tells them that He will be betrayed.
- 6) Again, they cannot comprehend this situation.
- 7) A “crucified Messiah” was a stumbling block for the disciples,
- 8) A “dying Messiah” was utterly incomprehensible and unacceptable to them.
- 9) It is interesting to me that they appear to completely miss this element of betrayal.
- 10) Mark indicates they did not understand and were afraid to ask.
- 11) Remember, last time they showed their disagreement (especially Peter) with what He is saying, they were scolded.
- 12) Not much had changed for the other nine, but, I wonder if the perspective had changed for Peter, James, and John?
- 13) One other point here is what they did not understand.
- 14) We know that they were struggling with the whole dying part – as we said a moment ago, a crucified Messiah did NOT fit their idea of how things should go.
- 15) Beyond that, there is the issue of His returning from the dead.
- 16) The disciples were aware that Jesus himself had raised people from the dead but who would raise Him?
  - a) We must remember, the resurrections they had seen were of the physical person.
  - b) The question comes to my mind – was Jesus explaining to them His new body and of course the ascension?
- 17) Add to that, the concept of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit may not have been in their total understanding at this point.
- 18) It was difficult to make the connection and see the eternal side of Jesus, their teacher and leader of the past 3 years and a risen Son of God.
- 19) Mark goes on ...



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### **Mark 9:33-37 (NIV)**

- 1) Some of the things that have happened to the disciples and who Jesus truly is (the Messiah), is finally beginning to sink in.
- 2) This episode and the next show that what comes to the surface is not necessarily good.
- 3) The disciples are, as one commentator put it, “having prestige issues”.
- 4) They were jostling for position among themselves **and** trying to preserve their special status of their group with the rest of the world.
- 5) I wonder who was involved in this conversation on the road to Capernaum?
- 6) Was it just between Peter, James, and John or were all twelve vying for the top spot?
  - a) My guess is, it was the three.
- 7) Interestingly and yet not surprisingly, when Jesus asked them what they were arguing about they would not say.
  - a) This is interesting because, by this time you would think that they would know that He already knew what they were thinking.
  - b) Not surprising because they must have realized that what they were doing would in no way please Jesus.
- 8) Without being confrontational, Jesus begins another teaching session.
- 9) He calls the twelve to Him and addresses the issue.
- 10) What He is now saying to them directly, they have undoubtedly heard Him say to audiences many times in the past.
- 11) Whether it was the three or all twelve, they know now that He knew exactly what they were arguing about on the road.
- 12) This concept was hard for them – regardless of having heard it before.
- 13) In saying to them ““If anyone wants to be first, he must be the very last, and the servant of all.” He was totally going against Jewish customs of the day.
- 14) In the Jewish culture of that day, rank was highly valued.
- 15) Then, to top-off the conversation, Jesus places a child in their midst and told them they must welcome one of these.
- 16) The word translated welcome or receive or accept in the Greek means just that.
- 17) However another important difference in meaning is in the word for child.
  - a) Likely, Jesus would have been speaking Aramaic in this group.
  - b) In that language, the word for child and servant is the same.
- 18) So, when Jesus uses this Aramaic word in relation the conversation and context of the disciples bickering, it would have had much more impact.
- 19) His explanation of greatness would have been even more distinct.

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- 20) The disciples should have understood completely at this point what Jesus was saying.
- 21) The very attitude they had – to even have a conversation like they were having – was putting their very entry into the kingdom in jeopardy.
- 22) Not even considering who would be first and who would be second.
- 23) Matthew’s wording of this response to this question clarifies Jesus’ response even more.

Matt 18:3-5 (NIV)

***Do we ever have issues of “whose the boss here” questions?***

Unless you are not human, you probably have had.

***However, what does this passage scream at us that we should do in these cases?***

***Other***

**Mark 9:38-41 (NIV)**

- 1) When John says the one casting out the demons in the name of Christ *was not one of us*, he is indicating that this person was ...
  - a) **A** - not following Jesus as they were.
  - b) **B** - not one of the 12.
- 2) The LABC comments:

The disciples had told the man to stop because he was not one of the group, that is, not one of the chosen Twelve. The incident has special irony considering that this unknown man apparently had success driving out demons while the disciples, who had been given special power to do so, had recently failed (9:18).

... it goes on to say ...

The disciples had been incorrect to stop the man from exorcising demons in Jesus' name; and incidentally, they were also incorrect in their supposition that they alone should have a monopoly on Jesus' power. Jesus explained that no one would do such a miracle as exorcising a demon in Jesus' name and then turn around and publicly speak against Jesus.

- 3) Now, if we take John's statement at face value and assume that Jesus also knew that as truth, we can know certain things about this individual.
  - a) He was actually "casting out demons" – not just trying selfishly as were the sons of Sceva in Acts 19.
  - b) From the success and what Jesus says, I think we can assume he was not one of the persons that Jesus was speaking of in Matthew 7:21-22

**Matt 7:21-23 (NIV)**

- a) He must have known Jesus
- b) He must have had faith in Jesus
- c) He must have known what he was teaching,
- d) He must have been doing other things that said he was truly following God's will.
- e) He must have been like the man Jesus describes in the next verse in Matthew (7:24)

**Matt 7:24 (NIV)**

- 4) In Mark's gospel, Jesus concludes the description of one who should not be stopped in what they are doing as;

## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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“anyone who gives you a cup of water in my name because you belong to Christ will certainly not lose his reward.”

- 5) Jesus is saying clearly that one does not have to be a member of the disciples to be His follower and obey God.
- 6) But, there is a nuance here that is often missed – what Jesus is saying goes beyond that.
- 7) Again, the LABC comments:

Not only did the man who exorcised demons serve Christ's kingdom in his stand against Satan, but even someone who offered a cup of water **to a person who bears the name of Christ** was also serving the kingdom. Good treatment of Christ's representatives is important to God (9:37).

"Whoever welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me does not welcome me but the one who sent me."

***Does there seem to be a connection back to the last incident Mark relates about the disciples arguing about who was the greatest among them?***

Perhaps their jealousy was not just personal – perhaps it extended outward from the group as well – perhaps they were jealous of this person who was able to do what they were not able to?

- 1) In this next section however, Jesus does layout some particularly strong requirements for “True Discipleship”.

>>>>>> **Lesson 25** <<<<<<<

1) We will jump back into chapter 9 at vs. 43 thru 48. We started a discussion of this last time.

**Mark 9:42-48 (NIV)**

- 1) Verse 42 is hard to interpret – the word little here in the Greek means small or unimportant.
- 2) It becomes difficult to associate this directly to an antecedent (what “one of these little ones” points back to).
  - a) Is He talking about the little children? ----
  - b) ---- Or is He talking about those who believe in him yet are not part of the group or perhaps NOT AS STRONG(mature) IN THE FAITH?
- 3) On the one hand, I think it is hard to wrap our minds around “little children” believing and also them sinning because of something a Christian would do.
  - a) I think that this is an argument for the antecedent NOT being the children.
- 4) On the other hand, it is not so hard to see a “Christian” causing someone of a different group or immature in the faith to sin by what they would say or perhaps the attitude they might take toward them.
- 5) In this case in particular, I can see someone who is doing good in the name of Jesus – like casting out demons – getting very discouraged by the disciples – “the in crowd” – telling them to stop – – – saying in essence they were not worthy.
- 6) Regardless of the meaning for the phrase for little ones, the punishment described is severe.
- 7) In these three statements, Jesus steps into the metaphoric.
  - a) He speaks of the HAND, the FOOT, and the EYE as causes of sin in our lives.
  - b) I think we ended with this question last time.

***The primary question one must ask here is *how can the hand, foot, or the eye as an organ cause you as a person to sin?****

***Anybody want to take a shot at that?***

- c) Bottom line is they, as body parts, can't!
- d) The hand can steel but it is the self – the person behind the hand that has the desire that leads to the steeling.
- e) Our feet can take us to a place we should not be but it is the self – the person in charge of the feet that desires to go to that place.
- f) The eye can see something we should not see but it is the self – the person that controls where the eye looks.
  - i) It is also the self that gets the image from the eye that does right or wrong with the image seen

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### So now, is it really going to help if we physically cut off the hand or foot or gouge out the eye?

### So what do we do – how do we metaphorically cut off a hand or foot or gouge out an eye?

- 8) We have to of repent or (turn away from) the desire that causes the hand to steel.
- 9) We have to repent of the desire that causes the foot to travel to places it shouldn't.
- 10) We have to learn how to deal with the images and the desires they cause that the eye sees and to make sure that we do our best not cause the eye to see images that it should not.
  - a) Images that tempt us and lead us to cause the hands and feet to do things they should not.
  - b) This is getting harder and harder in our world today.
  - c) Agree/Disagree?
- 11) Here's a little clarification – If you are using the NIV, ESV, and perhaps others as well, and you look carefully, you will see there is **no** verse 44 or 46.
  - a) They are removed because they are repeats of verse 48 that are not in some of the most prominent manuscripts.
- 12) The words are from the last part of Isa 66:'

#### Isa 66:24 (NASU)

- 13) In describing hell (Gehenna), Jesus spoke of a place, like the garbage dump in the valley outside of Jerusalem, where worms infested the garbage and fires burned constantly.
- 14) With these strange words, picked up from Isa 66:24, Jesus pictured the serious and eternal consequences of sin and the absolute destruction of God's enemies.
- 15) Worms and fire represented both internal and external pain.
- 16) Hell will be a place of unbearable and unending torment reserved for those who refuse to believe in Jesus Christ and accept the salvation and eternal life he offers.
  - a) And anyone who falls in the categories Jesus just laid out is subject to this hellish punishment for eternity.
- 17) The next and concluding verses are *also* interesting verses.

#### Mark 9:49-50 (NIV)

- 18) LABC say of verse 49:

This verse, exclusive to Mark, has received dozens of interpretations. The most probable are included here. Some have suggested that "everyone" refers to every person. Thus, the meaning would be that every person will be salted somehow — either with the unquenchable fire of hell or with the painful but life-giving power of self-discipline for the sake of the kingdom. Everyone will be "salted," but each person will have a choice as to which "salting" will be received.

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The "everyone" could refer back to 9:44,46 in that everyone who refuses to believe will be salted with the fire of eternal punishment, the fire described in 9:48.

19) As to verse 50, John MacArthur refers it as “**a call to radical obedience**”.

In the days before refrigeration, salt was good because it was the most widely used preservative for food. Chemically, salt (sodium chloride) is very stable and does not easily degrade. But sometimes salt gathered from the vicinity of the Dead Sea was contaminated with gypsum. If not properly processed, it could lose its effectiveness as a preservative and become unsalty and tasteless (Luke 14:34). Since it could not be made salty again, such salt was “useless either for the soil or for the manure pile; [and was] thrown out” (Luke 14:35). Thus, Jesus’ command, Have salt in yourselves, is a call to radical obedience; to a holy life preserved by righteousness. He then gave the disciples a direct practical application, commanding them to “be at peace with one another”—a fitting challenge to those proud, self-serving, hypercompetitive men who were constantly bickering over which of them was the greatest (cf. 9:34; Matt. 18:1–4; 20:20–24; Luke 22:24). When believers engage in radically loving, pure, sacrificial, obedient discipleship, they will be radical witnesses. Christians are the only true “salt of the earth” (Matt. 5:13). There are no other spiritual influences for modeling the truth other than the lives of true disciples of Jesus Christ, who are known by the radical nature of their discipleship.

20) Jesus elsewhere calls us, “the salt of the earth”.

21) That statement and this verse both are a call for us to have salt within ourselves.

22) Good, useful salt – the "salt" that believers have in themselves refers to:

- a) true discipleship – walking in the Spirit
- b) obedience
- c) denial of self
- d) humility
- e) and willing suffering for the sake of the kingdom.

23) If the disciples had possessed good salt in themselves, then they would not have been arguing about who would be the greatest in Christ's kingdom.

24) Again, vs. 49-50 say:

49 Everyone will be salted with fire.

50 "Salt is good, but if it loses its saltiness, how can you make it salty again? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with each other."

25) If we are to take these principles into our lives,

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***What must we do to make sure we are salted and that the salt we have within ourselves remains at full strength?***



**>>>>>> Lesson 26 <<<<<<<**

- 1) We will jump back into chapter 10 at vs. 1 thru 12.
- 2) We started this discussion last time with what the Jewish society felt about divorce in the 1<sup>st</sup> century.
- 3) This was precipitated by the Pharisees' question and Jesus' answer.

**Mark 10:1-2 (NIV)**

- 1) There were always constants in Jesus' ministry
  - a) Always crowds flocking to Him to hear Him speak and to be healed by Him.
  - b) Always the religious leaders seeking to destroy Him by discrediting Him at every turn.
- 2) This new location in Judea is no exception.
- 3) As usual, Jesus dispatches their attempt with solid scriptural teaching.
- 4) Before we look at the question and the answer Jesus gives, we really need to understand where the Jewish societal mindset was at this time regarding divorce.
- 5) Some 400 years before this, the prophet Malachi had written God's words to His people

**Mal 2:16 (NIV)**

- 6) So, what led God to say this to His people.
- 7) If we go to the beginning, we know that God created men and women to be joined equally with each other.
- 8) At the fall that changed and it was no longer equal.
- 9) Along with that, came selfish desires and broken relationships.
- 10) Finally, God allowed Moses to permit a man to divorce his wife for reasons of indecency (we'll get to that word in a minute).

**Deut 24:1-5 (NIV)**

- 11) The Hebrew word translated "indecent" literally means "nakedness," not in a physical sense but in the sense of something shameful.
- 12) The same word is used in Deuteronomy 23:14 to describe things in the camp of Israel that the holy God must not see.
- 13) The term does not refer to adultery but to sinful behavior.
- 14) It describes things that violate normal social responsibility and behavior in a civilized culture and hence are disrespectful of others.
- 15) The word certainly cannot be extrapolated to mean anything that a man disliked about his wife.
- 16) However, by Jesus' time, these old testament standards had long been abandoned.
- 17) As we discussed last time, there was God's opinion – Mal 2:16 "I hate divorce," says the Lord God of Israel ...

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18) Then, there were two competing groups with opinions on what constituted a legal reason for divorce.

19) The prominent rabbi Hillel (110 B.C.–A.D. 10), had made divorce easy.

- a) According to his view, a man was permitted to divorce his wife for basically anything she did that displeased him.
  - i) burning his dinner
  - ii) allowing someone to see her ankles
  - iii) letting her hair down
  - iv) making a negative comment about her mother-in-law
  - v) or if all else failed, because he found someone else that he preferred.

20) The other group followed Rabbi Shammai.

- a) They believed that a man could divorce his wife only if she was unfaithful to him
- b) In other words, "something indecent" was interpreted to refer to only adultery.

21) Picking up in vs. 2 again and continuing our reading ...

### **Mark 10:2-12 (NIV)**

- 1) The intent of the Pharisees was to cast Jesus – in the minds of the people – in one of two ways:
  - a) As a militant hard line who basically agreed with Shammai
  - b) Or as a liberal who would **not** have stood with John the Baptist against Herod Antipas and basically was agreeing with Hillel.
- 2) Jesus clearly did neither.
- 3) Instead, He pointed back to God’s plan and God’s ideas concerning divorce thus convicting the Pharisees for even asking the question.
- 4) The LABC comments:

Jesus had clearly explained that divorce dissolved a divinely formed union. These people were divorcing in order to get remarried. Here he explained that marriage after divorce is adultery. To say that a man could commit adultery **against** his wife went beyond Jewish teaching and elevated the status of the wife to a position of equality. Women were never meant to be mere property in a marriage relationship; God’s plan had always been a partnership of the two becoming “united into one” (10:8).

- 5) The rabbis’ interpretation of Moses’ law permitted remarriage after divorce, but Jesus said that was committing adultery.
- 6) Matthew recorded the same words of Jesus but added that he gave one exception: “unless his wife has been unfaithful” (Matthew 19:9, see also Matthew 5:32).

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- 7) Jesus then added, “**And if a woman divorces her husband and remarries, she commits adultery.**”
- 8) Scholars agree that Jesus’ words refer to both husband and wife; that is, the unfaithfulness of one could be grounds for divorce by the other.
- 9) John MacArthur comments: “The church’s view of divorce, however, must not be based on the shifting sands of societal norms but on the bedrock of biblical truth.”
- 10) I would suggest that MacArthur’s statement could be changed to refer not only to divorce but also to include *any* societal norm that the church (God’s people) start to buy into.
- 11) God wanted Israel to be isolated from the rest of a sinful world so that they could grow to be His people with His laws and ideas “written on their hearts” – THEY FAILED MISERABLY and CONTINUOUSLY.

### *What does God want of us as His church today? Are we to be isolated?*

### *What is the difference between isolated and set apart?*

### *What is our mission compared to that of the Israelite communities?*

- Theirs inward as opposed to ours outward.

### *How do we accomplish that mission?*

- We bring Jesus Christ and His message of love and forgiveness to “a sinful world.”
- To do this we must deal with many issues, not the least of which is the very thing we were discussing a moment ago – **extreme societal acceptances of a sinful life style.**
  - a) Society as a whole accepting more and more sinful behaviors as “O.K.” makes it very difficult for people to accept that they should not engage in these behaviors.
  - b) We hate the sin and won’t engage in it – but, we **MUST** show love to the sinner and not be condemning.
  - c) This is a very difficult line to walk. We cannot compromise scripture but we must show love.
  - d) It is the Holy Spirit’s job to convict the hearts of sinners.

### *Do you think the Holy Spirit’s job is getting harder?*

- 12) Our job is to present Christ as savior and lover of their souls – the way to eternal life.
- 13) A major part of accomplishing this is relating to people in a manner that does not condone their sinful life style while,
  - a) at the same time **lovingly** showing them the error of their ways **and** Christ as the savior they need.
- 14) To do this we must avoid taking scripture in either of two extreme directions:

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- 15) Conservative Extreme – Making it be more anti-societal by our traditions and thus showing, not love for our fellow man, but a “better than thou attitude” by saying “see how good we are at doing what God wants”.
- 16) Liberal Extreme – nullifying scripture to gain acceptance by society – “I know the Bible says this but its really o.k.”
- 17) Neither extreme is acceptable.
- 18) One way that occurs is to explain what scripture says without watering it down (being liberal) while at the same time sympathizing with the position it may put the person in.

### ***Any***

- 1) In this next passage, the disciples are still struggling with what is important and what is not.

### **Mark 10:13-16 (NIV)**

- 1) Here we have another incident involving the children.
- 2) The disciples probably rebuked the parents because this action (blessing the children) was taking valuable time away from their time with Jesus and His teaching.
- 3) There are two strong terms here – both filled with emotion – rebuked (used by the disciples) and indignant (used by Jesus).
- 4) Basically, I think this was what one might refer to as a heated moment.
- 5) This is the only time in scripture where Jesus directed such strong anger toward His disciples.
- 6) Jesus explained that little children have the kind of faith and trust needed to enter God's kingdom.
- 7) I think we should take notice here that Jesus zeros in on the children not the parents.
- 8) We don't know the state of the parents and, it was not about them anyway.
- 9) Parents would often take their children to rabbis for blessings and in this case, regardless of what they knew or believed about Jesus, He was considered a prominent rabbi.
  - a) Their idea was to have their children blessed.
  - b) Jesus' idea was to minister to and show love to these trusting innocent children and, in turn to the parents.
- 10) I am sure that He did not want the negative attitude being shown by His disciples to have a lasting negative influence on these children.
- 11) Anyone of any age who exhibits such faith and trust is promised access to Jesus and to the kingdom.
- 12) These parents and their children likely came to Jesus in humility and absolutely received his blessing as a gift.
- 13) Jesus, unlike his disciples had a perfect sense of what was more important and what was less important.

## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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14) As important as it was for Him to be with His disciples at this time, it was more important to show the love and caring to these children and their parents.

***How good is our sense of priority?***

***What are some things you can think of that will help us set our priorities better?***

***Other***

**Mark 10:17-23 (NIV)**

- 1) First, there are facts do we know and there are facts we do not know about this “young ruler”.
- 2) What we know:
  - a) He is wealthy
  - b) Young
  - c) Jewish
    - i) He practices his faith
  - d) He has heard of Jesus and knows of His teachings
  - e) Even though he is young, he wants to know how to live forever (inherit eternal life).
- 3) What facts we do not know:
  - a) What he is a ruler of – some have hypothesized that he was a ruler in a synagogue. There are things against this. If the Synagogue were a Jewish Synagogue, they are:
    - i) He ran up to Jesus – totally out of character for such a leader.
    - ii) Showed respect for Jesus – again out of character.
    - iii) Called Him “good teacher” and fell on his knees before Jesus.
  - b) We do not know if he is a follower of Jesus – unlikely.
  - c) We do not know much about how faithful he is as a Jew other than his own estimate.
- 4) Other things we can know:
  - a) We can definitely surmise that – though in his own estimate he kept the law, he was still concerned about how to inherit eternal life (perhaps not secure in his actions).
  - b) Inside, he knew there was a chance that what he was doing was not enough to get there.
- 5) One other **very important thing** we know that has bearing here is that the Jewish mentality of that day was that wealth was a sign of God’s blessing.
  - a) Poverty on the other hand was a sign of God’s displeasure
- 6) Keep this in mind as we look at the rest of this incident – especially the disciples reactions.
- 7) What was the answer the young ruler expected?
- 8) Obviously, we really have no way to know for sure
  - a) We might assume that it was that he was o.k and on his way – nothing further to do.
- 9) Equally obvious is that the final answer was **not** what he wanted to hear.
- 10) His hopes probably soared when Jesus answered with the question regarding keeping the commandments.

## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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- a) I think it is important to note here that all the commands Jesus listed were human relationship commands.
- b) He did not ask about the commands highlighting the man's relationship with God.
- c) If we attach any significance to this, the absence of those commands may highlight the disconnect between what the young man believed about eternal life and his relationship with God.

11) One other factor I think we need to explore briefly is this unique statement that Mark makes:

21 Jesus looked at him and loved him.

- a) The Greek here is agape – that brotherly love that we all should have for one another.
- b) I perceive that this is a statement that really indicates Jesus believed he was sincere in his quest for eternal life.
- c) This was not another Pharisaical trap or question to trick Jesus.
- d) It was also I think, showing that Jesus really wanted to get the right response from the young ruler.
- e) If that is true, then Jesus would also be saddened by his response as he is when we respond incorrectly to this challenge in our own lives.

12) After having his hopes somewhat elevated comes the true and totally unexpected answer –

"One thing you lack," he said. "Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me."

13) For reasons we have already discussed, this must have been not only a disappointment but a confusion and a shock.

14) Regardless, there was apparently no further discussion and no other questions – just the response Mark tells us ...

At this the man's face fell. He went away sad, because he had great wealth.

15) Obviously, the true “cut to the heart” lesson here is contained in these two verses – what Jesus answers the man and what the man's choice is.

16) Three things are listed:

- a) Sell everything. (ridding himself of the things he likes, uses, and enjoys each day)
  - i) Now he has money – still rich but none of the things he likes.
- b) Give the money to the poor – now he cannot reclaim the possessions.
- c) Walk away from his life as he knows it and follow Jesus.

17) For this to have a “cut to the heart” impact on us, first we have to ask ourselves – What would be the answer Jesus would give us if we were to ask that question of him?

18) Second, we must search our hearts for what our answer would be – will we walk away sad or take Jesus' observation of our life to heart and do whatever was required?

## *Gospel of Mark – NOTES*

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- 19) As with the rich young ruler, if we do give the wrong response, I think we make Jesus sad.
- 20) It always strikes me odd that to solve the “what we lack” or “what we are missing” dilemma many times we must give up something,

### *What was the young ruler really lacking?*

*Do you think he ever came around to Jesus’ way of thinking or did he just “go on” hoping that what he was doing was enough?*

### *Soul Searcher – How often do we ask ourselves what we are lacking?*

*How often do we allow God’s word to speak to this question?*

*When we get the answer (and most likely we will if we listen to God carefully) do we change or do we just “become sad and go on”?*

### *Other*

- 1) To complete this we begin in vs 24.
- 2) The disciples were amazed at Jesus’ words so He repeats them in a slightly different manner.

### **Mark 10:24-31 (NIV)**

- 3) As Jews, as we indicated earlier, the disciples would have seen the wealth of this man and anyone who was attempting to serve God for that matter as a sign of God’s blessing.
- 4) Obviously, there were evil rich people who gained their wealth from cheating and stealing from others – these, the disciples could have understood. But this young faithful Jewish man???
- 5) They would have seen his wealth as something that brought a him closer to God and certainly not as an obstacle to entering God’s kingdom.
- 6) As a point of clarification, most translations you may be using render the verse:  
"Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God!
- 7) However, some render it as:  
"Children, how hard it is *for those who trust in riches* to enter the kingdom of God! NKJV
- 8) The phrase “for those who trust in riches” was added in some later manuscripts.
- 9) Probably the scribe did so to keep the statement more in context – in agreement with Jesus’ first statement.
- 10) However, to me, the lack of that phrase definitely takes it more toward the true meaning and the lesson Jesus is teaching –
  - a) Each person, rich or poor, will have something to give up.
    - i) For example, favorite hobbies, attitudes, or possessions.



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- ii) Basically – anything that is of greater importance to us than **what God calls us to**.
  - iii) It is, I think important to get that significance – not necessarily more important than God (that would be bad) but **what God calls us to**.
  - iv) The rich young ruler was not necessarily placing his riches in front of God but, when God thru the answer to his own question caused him to walk away sad, he placed his possessions, riches in front of what God called him to do!
- 11) This amazed the disciples “even more” and they asked the more pointed and yet broad question “Then who can be saved”.
- 12) Jesus’ final answer was of course absolute and simple:  
"With man this is impossible, but not with God; all things are possible with God."
- 13) God will never ask us to do anything he is not willing to help us with.
- 14) Our responsibility is to be willing to try and to trust him.
- 15) We must willing, if called to do so, to give up all those things that stand in the way of our true allegiance to Him and His plan for us.
- 16) Jesus then brings this totally into focus for the disciples and I am sure, relieves their anxiety.
- 17) Jesus responds to Peter’s statement.      "We have left everything to follow you!"  
29 "I tell you the truth," Jesus replied, "no one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for me and the gospel 30 will fail to receive a hundred times as much in this present age homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children and fields — and with them, persecutions *and in the age to come, eternal life*. 31 But many who are first will be last, and the last first."
- 18) These men were not rich but what they did was give up what was most important to them for the more important thing which was God’s call for them to follow Jesus!"
- 19) Jim Elliot a missionary is credited by his wife as saying:  
“He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose.”

### ***How do we know if something is in this category of “being of greater importance to us than what God calls us to”?***

20) A rather odd question to follow this is:

### ***Is it necessary that we feel we are “giving up something” in order to truly be in sync with the lessons of these verses?***

***Why?            Why not?***

**Mark 10:32-34 (NIV)**

- 1) In this opening verse for this section, Mark gives us an indication of the emotions at play.
- 2) First, the disciples were astonished at what he had said regarding riches and entering heaven but they were probably also afraid along with the crowd.
- 3) They were becoming more and more convinced that what Jesus was telling them was true.
- 4) Either the rest of his followers also knew what Jesus had said about the events that were going to take place and they feared because of what they knew –
  - a) or, they simply sensed what was about to happen was not going to be good.
- 5) Probably, as they continued on their journey, they would occasionally stop for rest.
- 6) It is likely that during one of the rests Jesus pulled the disciples aside to tell them again what was going to happen to him in Jerusalem.
- 7) It almost seems that Jesus is trying to be insensitive in the way He is telling them – so very “matter of fact” and blunt.
- 8) However, if one considers the gravity of the situation and remembers what does take place with the disciples during the events –
  - i) their fears, their doubts, their anxiety and wondering what was going to happen and if all of what he has said would unfold –
  - ii) it is no wonder Jesus is speaking plainly.
- b) We should also bare in mind, if we look at other sections of the gospels, we know that Jesus had been relaying to them the prophecies in relation to himself so, this is what one might call “connecting the dots”.
- c) Without all this, how much worse would it have been if Jesus had not prepared them in this manner.
- d) Instead, despite the fears and doubts, they may have taken some solace in the fact that they were seeing the events unfold exactly as Jesus had told them they would.
- 9) Even with all these emotions, (along with not understanding completely), and dark predictions of what was going to happen, it doesn't appear to stop the disciples from showing their more selfish side.
- 10) Continuing in verse 35...

**Mark 10:35-45 (NIV)**

- 1) James and John – the sons of Zebedee – the same two that Jesus had dubbed “sons of thunder” continue to show their brashness in coming to the Lord in this way.
- 2) James and John were part of the inner circle so to speak, consisting of, in addition to themselves, Peter and on many occasions, Andrew.

## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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- 3) Matthew's recording of this incident tells us that their mother was with them when this exchange took place.
- 4) It is important to note the way they asked – it is almost like they are trying to manipulate Jesus – "we want you to do for us whatever we ask."
- 5) In other words, they want Jesus to say – "of course – ask me anything and I'll give it to you".
- 6) Maybe they expected Jesus to feel like he was in the position of Herod when Herodias' daughter asked for the head of John the Baptist?
- 7) Obviously, Jesus does not go there – instead, He simply cuts to the question immediately "what do you want of me"
- 8) It is interesting to me that Jesus handles this in a way that seems almost like He is going to indulge their request – but of course, He is not.
- 9) Jesus' answer back to them is very to the point - the cup and baptism are references to the Lord's suffering.
- 10) To drink the cup is an Old Testament idiom meaning to fully experience something, in this case God's wrath.
- 11) Again, we see the disciples still had at least a glimmer of that earthly kingdom thought still there.
- 12) To sit on the left and right of the king were the two places of highest honor.
- 13) It must have been difficult for Jesus to deal with these kinds of situations as He proceeded toward Jerusalem and what was ahead of Him there but, He does – and as always, with love and patience.
- 14) Their response to His question was typical of their brash confidence –  
    "Yes we can drink the cup and be baptized with the same baptism".
- 15) To end this Jesus reveals their future and at the same time gives them the answer to their request.
- 16) They will suffer as He is going to suffer BUT they will not be granted the request they have made.
- 17) Wait a minute!!! We get the pain but not the glory? – of course not what they wanted to hear.
  - a) If they even understood what they themselves were saying yes to?
- 18) Whether the other disciples picked up on this or overheard part if not all the conversation we don't know.
- 19) We do know they "became indignant" with James and John for trying to elevate themselves above the rest.
  - a) Again, the word indignant indicates real anger!!!
- 20) Obviously, the disciples have still not learned the "being a servant lesson" so Jesus then turns this incident into another teaching moment for the entire group.

## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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"You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. 43 Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, 44 and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. 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."

21) This is not the first time they have had this lesson and it won't be the last.

22) Just like reinforcing their knowledge of what will be happening in Jerusalem, this is reinforcing one of those traits that these men will absolutely have to have in order to establish the church beginning not too many days in the future and lasting the rest of their lives.

23) These are hard lessons not only for them but perhaps for us as well.

### ***Is being a servant an attitude or and action?      Obvious answer BOTH***

- It is saying because Jesus loved and served I will love and serve.

### ***Which is more important – attitude or action?***

- Attitude must precede action. If we serve as a requirement and not out of love and desire is it truly what we are supposed to be about?

### ***In context of what Jesus is telling the disciples, how would you define the term "servant leader"?***

24) The LABC comments on this question ...

By saying that the first will be last and the last first, Jesus changed the terms of winning and losing, as well as terms of leadership. In Jesus' kingdom, leaders are those who work toward the best interests of others, not parading their authority or lording it over others.

Servant leadership in Jesus' kingdom has a lot of the "can do" spirit in it, a big portion of "follow me to the hard work," and a huge helping of "your pile looks bigger than mine, let me help you."

### **Mark 10:46-50 (NIV)**

- 1) This passage marks a milestone in Jesus' life and ministry.
- 2) This will be the last healing recorded in Mark's Gospel and one of the last before His death.
- 3) Jesus passed through the city of Jericho. As we have mentioned, He is on His way to Jerusalem for the last time.
- 4) The large crowd probably consisted of many who were following Jesus but also, it was likely made up of many other Jews who were just on their way to Jerusalem for the Passover.

## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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- a) 5 o'clock traffic without cars.
- 5) Here, we have another of the differences in the synoptic gospels.
  - a) Matthew records that there were two blind beggars – Mark and Luke record only the one.
  - b) The same event but Mark and Luke single out one – the more vocal of the two – Bartimaeus.
- 6) A point of interest here is that Bartimaeus was very much aware of Jesus' reputation and must have to some degree believed, at least, in Jesus' healing abilities.
- 7) He was also aware of the fact that the Messiah would be a descendant of King David.
- 8) It doesn't take a great leap to say then that when he called Jesus the Son of David, he was acknowledging Jesus as the Messiah.
- 9) At any rate, the situation got Jesus' attention and He stopped and called the man to Him.
- 10) Bartimaeus leaps to his feet and goes to Jesus.
- 11) The exchange between him and Jesus is interesting:

### **Mark 10:51-52 (NIV)**

- 12) What we see here is ***faith without sight***.
- 13) Bartimaeus had not seen or, for that matter he had perhaps not even heard Jesus speak but he knew by faith who He was and what He was capable of.
- 14) Jesus has throughout His ministry encountered many people who were in the opposite condition.
- 15) They had seen His miracles and had heard Him speak yet they were spiritually blind – ***sight without faith***.
- 16) These folks walked away – Bartimaeus on the other hand, did not – he decided to cry out to Jesus – not only as the one who would heal him but also as his Messiah!
- 17) Then he follows Jesus!
- 18) Peter speaks of this type of person in 1 Peter 1:8-9

### **1 Peter 1:8-9 (NIV)**

- 19) We are Bartimaeus's of a sort. We are like those Peter was addressing in his letter.
- 20) What we must realize is that the entire world consists only of people who have not seen Jesus.

***The only way people see Jesus and learn of Him and His Messiahship is through God's word and we who are believers. Agree / Disagree?***

***Does this in anyway change our perspective of our responsibility in the world?***

***Is it enough to "set a good example"?***

## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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### **Mark 11:1-11 (NIV)**

1) Of course, as I'm sure you know, this entire incident is a fulfillment of prophesy.

### **Zech 9:9 (NIV)**

- 2) The events that lead up to this entry are a true testimony to the omniscience of our Lord.
  - a) He had not prearranged for the animal to be there.
  - b) He had no way of knowing that the colt had not been ridden before.
  - c) He had no way of knowing other than divine knowledge that the questions that would be asked were.
  - d) He had no way of knowing the response of those questioning the taking of the colt would be as it was.
  - e) Yet – it all takes place exactly as He outlines to the two disciples He sends!
- 3) You likely have heard this called the triumphal entry – and in a manner of speaking, it was but, as MacArthur points out in his title for this section of his commentary it truly is a “False Coronation of a True King”.
- 4) The crowds that followed Jesus to Jerusalem had witnessed several miracles
  - a) Healing and salvation of the blind beggars (Bartimaeus in Mark’s description)
  - b) Conversion of Zacchaeus (Luke 19)
  - c) Resent raising of Lazarus from the dead
- 5) And for that matter, His fame had spread and even those that were already in Jerusalem were aware of His ministry.
- 6) As Jesus approached Jerusalem, the crowd’s reaction must be understood for what it was and for what it was not.
- 7) It was:
  - a) Spontaneous, and likely misplaced – again, the multitudes were not seeing the true idea of the Messiah.
  - b) They were still thinking knight on a white horse – NOT a servant or a sacrifice who will die as a sacrifice for their sins in less than a week.
  - c) This was a welcoming of their idea of a Messiah – NOT the true Messiah.
- 8) It was NOT:
  - a) A genuine expression of faith in or praise for their true King.
  - b) It was NOT a recognition of God’s Holy Son even though the scripture they quote is.
  - c) All of this is obvious, considering the fact that by Friday of this same week, many who were part of this crowd would likely be part of the same crowd crying out “Crucify Him, Crucify Him”.
- 9) However, on this Monday, they are crying “Hosannah”.

## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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10) N.T. Wright says of this response:

“Hosannah” is a Hebrew word which mixes exuberant praise to God with the prayer that God will save his people, and do so right away. The beginning and end of their cheerful chant is taken from Psalm 118:25-26, which is itself all about going up to Jerusalem and the temple. The sentence that follows means, literally, “Blessed is the one who comes”; but in Hebrew and Aramaic that’s the way you say “welcome.” In the middle of the chant they have inserted the dangerous prayer: Welcome to the kingdom of our father David!

11) We don’t spread cloaks on the road for friends or even for family.

12) This would be especially true in the Middle East at this time because the roads were dusty and stony.

13) But would we do it for royalty?

14) When the Queen died sometime back, we saw mourners stand in line for 8 or 9 hours just to spend 30 seconds in front of her coffin to pay their respects.

15) They loved their queen and rightly so.

16) They knew her as a gracious wonderful lady who had dedicated her entire adult life for over 70 years to their service.

### ***How does Jesus’ kingship call us to put ourselves out for Him?***

### ***Do we truly feel compelled to lay our cloaks on the ground in front of Him to worship at that level?***

### ***If the honest answer is no then – Why Not?***

### ***If the answer is yes then – How do we do it?***

17) Finally, after the entry into Jerusalem, Mark tells us

11 Jesus entered Jerusalem and went to the temple. He looked around at everything, but since it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the Twelve.

18) This was a rather anticlimactic comment after the “so called” Triumphal entry.

19) As we will see however, it foreshadows the Lord’s assault on the money changers in the temple the very next day.

20) I think we must consider Jesus’ human side here. What He sees at this point is likely no different than what He sees the next day.

21) He has been thru the totally misplaced “False Coronation of a True King”.

22) He knows the hearts of all those who were laying their cloaks on the ground and the palm branches – they did not know Him for what He was – only what they wanted Him to be.

23) All of this must have been truly disappointing to Him.

## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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- 24) Not to mention the fact of course, that He knew His fate – rejection, abandonment, and a cruel death on a cross – all within days.
- 25) This really sets the stage for the next section's events.



**>>>>>>> Lesson 29 <<<<<<<<**

- 1) One interesting note I found I would like to share with you before we move one regarding the triumphal entry.
- 2) Christians have referred to this start to the passion week as “Palm Sunday”
- 3) Regarding “Palm Sunday”. John MacArthur has the following chronology of the passion week:

- Saturday six days before the Passover (John 12:1) – Jesus arrived at the small villages of Bethphage and Bethany.
- On the next day, Sunday – He attended a dinner in His honor at the home of Simon the leper in Bethany (Matt. 26:6–13).
- Same Day – a “large crowd of the Jews then learned that He was there; and they came, not for Jesus’ sake only, but that they might also see Lazarus, whom He raised from the dead” (John 12:9).
- Monday of Passion Week – Christ’s entry into Jerusalem took place the following day (John 12:12).

NOTE: not on Sunday as Christians have traditionally believed. This chronology eliminates the problem of the Gospels having no record of Jesus’ activities on Wednesday, which would be the case if the triumphal entry were on Sunday. It is difficult to explain how there could be a day omitted in the account of the most momentous week of Christ’s life, especially since the events of all the other days are carefully accounted for.

- Monday night after the triumphal entry –Jesus returned to Bethany
- Tuesday – returned Jerusalem, cursed the fig tree, and cleansed the temple.
- Wednesday – He was involved in controversy with the leaders of Israel, gave a sermon on His second coming, and Judas planned his betrayal of Him.
- Thursday – disciples prepared for the Passover meal, which they celebrated in the upper room.
- From there the Lord and the disciples went to Gethsemane, where He was betrayed and arrested.
- After several trials before the Sanhedrin and the secular rulers Pilate and Herod Thursday night into early Friday morning
- Friday – the Lord was crucified
- Saturday – He was in the grave and Sunday He rose.

MacArthur, John. Mark 1-16 MacArthur New Testament Commentary Two Volume Set (MacArthur New Testament Commentary Series) . Moody Publishers. Kindle Edition.

- 4) He may have a point – it does make sense in looking at it. However, you obviously can agree or disagree. Just some thoughts.

## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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- 1) As we closed last time, Jesus had finished entering the city on either Palm Sunday (or Monday) and it was late in the day.
- 2) He went to the temple and looked around but then left and went back to Bethany with the disciples to spend the night.
- 3) Picking up there...

### **Mark 11:12-14 (NIV)**

- 4) Let's talk about fig trees.
  - a) First, they were very common in Israel and a popular source of food.
  - b) In March, they would bud and the buds were edible.
  - c) In April the tree forms large green leaves.
  - d) Following the leaves, the buds fall off and the actual crop of figs appears.
  - e) Since this incident took place in April, the leaves should have indicated a presence of edible buds.
  - f) This combination of leaves and no edible buds showed that there would not be any fruit this year.
    - i) Perhaps the tree was too young – it takes 3 years from the time a fig is planted until it can produce fruit.
    - ii) We really don't know the reason.
- 5) What we do know is that the tree looked from the outside very promising but offered no fruit.
- 6) Jesus did not curse the tree because He was angry.
- 7) Instead, the situation became an “acted out” parable intended to teach the disciples.
- 8) Jesus was showing His anger at religion without substance.
- 9) This would all come together after what happens next and the final condition of the fig tree becomes apparent to the disciples.
- 10) I think one of the keys to getting the full impact of this entire passage is to remember the last act of Jesus the day before.
- 11) In verse 11 we read...

11 Jesus entered Jerusalem and went to the temple. He looked around at everything, but since it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the Twelve.
- 12) I think the “everything” that he looked at was the same things that will be there the next morning when he arrives.
- 13) It is important that we see the significance of what happens next.
- 14) This is the triggering event that actually leads to God's planned conclusion of Jesus' life.
- 15) This is what triggers his **crucifixion and thus His sacrifice for all of humanity.**

## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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- 16) I am reasonably sure that Jesus knew exactly what He was going to do next when He left the temple the night before.
- 17) I am also sure, He knew exactly what the final outcome of His actions would be.
- 18) So, keep that in mind as we study the remainder of chapter 11 and go thru chapter 12.

### **Mark 11:15-18 (NIV)**

- 19) This is the second time Jesus cleanses the temple.
- 20) What he saw the night before and this morning was an abomination!
- 21) To get the full impact of what is actually happening, we need to look at what had led to the situation.
- 22) We begin with a look at God's intentions for the Temple as recorded in Deut 12:5-7

### **Deut 12:5-7 (NIV)**

- 23) By this time in history, even though many did bring their sacrifices from their own crops and herds, many would travel to Jerusalem and purchase the needed sacrifice there.
- 24) The religious leadership namely Annas and Caiaphas had established markets where these purchases could be made.
  - a) Annas had been deposed by the Romans, yet, he still retained the title of high priest and wielded tremendous power and influence behind the scenes.
  - b) Along with his equally wicked son-in-law Caiaphas, together they Annas ran the temple's business, acquiring extreme wealth in the process.
  - c) The operations in the Court of the Gentiles had become known as the Bazaar of Annas, so named after the greedy high priest.
  - d) It is important to keep in mind that the area we are talking about was the Court of the Gentiles.
  - e) As such, this was the only place a converted Gentile could go in the temple to worship because, they were still not truly Jews.
    - i) Recall if you will Jesus' quote:

"My house will be called a house of prayer for **all nations**"?

- 25) *Getting back to the sacrifices people brought*, even for those who brought their own sacrifices, many times, the priests managed to find the animal or other offering unacceptable in some way.
- 26) In this case, worshipers were forced to buy another.
- 27) To get an idea of the potential scope and magnitude of this operation, the Jewish historian Josephus, wrote that 255,600 lambs were sacrificed at the Passover in A.D. 66.

## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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28) Next, we must discuss the money changers.

- a) The temple tax could only be paid using Jewish or Tyrian coins.
  - i) Coins of Tyre, which in the Roman Empire took on an unusual role as the medium of payment for the Temple tax in Jerusalem, and subsequently gained notoriety as a likely mode of payment for Judas Iscariot.
- b) Foreigners had to exchange their money for acceptable coinage.
- c) Because they had a monopoly, granted by Annas and Caiaphas, the money changers charged exorbitant fees for their services.

29) All of this had combined to turn the temple of God into a place of abuse and extortion.

30) The sound of bawling of oxen, the bleating of sheep, the cooing of doves, and the loud haggling of merchants and their customers was probably deafening.

31) Not to mention the “wonderful” aromas that must have pervaded the entire area.

32) As a converted Gentile, can you imagine traveling the distance many of them did for a worship experience only to find this mess.

33) Regardless – Gentile believer or Jew, this scene must have been totally repulsive and absolutely not conducive to any meaningful worship experience.

34) Jesus entered the temple and single handedly cleaned house so to speak.

35) As I thought about this, I believe it must be considered a miracle in and of itself.

36) Jesus – one man – having strength and **presence** enough to drive all these merchants (along with their animals), and money changers from the temple is quite a feat!

37) There is one other comment scripture makes here that we should take note of – Jesus would not allow anyone to carry merchandise through the temple courts.

38) Apparently, the temple was situated so that it was much more convenient for merchants to carry their merchandise through the temple rather than go around.

39) Jesus puts a stop to that as well.

40) In John 2:17, when he cleared the temple the first time, Jesus makes the comment “How dare you turn my Father’s house into a market!”

41) The entire scene before the cleansing must have been total and complete chaos.

42) Gentile or Jew – no one could worship with this going on.

43) Obviously, after successfully ridding the temple of all of this Annas and Caiaphas and others were hit in their proverbial pockets – thus, in verse 18 we see that this was the trigger for what happens in the rest of the week.

18 The chief priests and the teachers of the law heard this and began looking for a way to kill him, for they feared him, because the whole crowd was amazed at his teaching.

## Gospel of Mark – NOTES

Today, would Jesus drive, out bake sales to fund youth ministries, book tables, or sign-ups for camp from our church foyer?

What would He drive out today?

Those who use the church, people, or the worship gathering for social, political, or financial advantage.

God opposes those who attempt to leverage power or status or to meet their need for self-importance in his house of prayer.

LABC makes the comment ***“Don't throw bake sales out of your church; instead, throw hypocrisy out of your life.”***

*Jesus became angry, but he did not sin. There is a place for righteous indignation. Christians are right to be upset about sin and injustice and should take a stand against them.*

What are some specific things (sins and injustice) that we should be angry about?

Meddling – what are some things we should not get angry about?

- personal insults
- petty irritations

What about getting angry at ourselves?

### Mark 11:19-21 (NIV)

- 1) Peter's remark, "Rabbi, look, the fig tree which You cursed has withered," affirms that what the Lord curses will be destroyed.
- 2) The MacArthur commentary points out that the destruction of the corrupted religious system, centered on the temple, began that Tuesday.
- 3) It would accelerate dramatically on Friday when God tore the veil separating the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies from top to bottom, and be completed some forty years later by the Romans when they destroy the temple completely.
- 4) Again, it is assumed by most commentators which I read that this entire set of happenings – the cursing of the fig tree, clearing of the temple, and the withering of the fig tree was meant as an ongoing parable of sorts describing Jesus' anger at the corrupt and vile religious system.
- 5) However, to be honest, as the LABC indicates, "Jesus did not explain why he cursed the fig tree, and we don't really know whether the disciples understood Jesus' meaning."

- 1) When we left last time Jesus had cursed the fig tree, cleansed the temple, left Jerusalem and was on his way back with the disciples when they noticed the fig tree completely dead.

**Mark 11:20-21 (NIV)**

- 2) What Jesus does now is turn this to a faith and “power of prayer” lesson for the disciples.

**Mark 11:22-25 (NIV)**

- 3) This, at first glance appears to be an odd set of teachings in response to Peter’s comment (assuming it was a response).
- 4) First, we know that there is a need at this point for continued instruction for the disciples. Their time with the Lord before His crucifixion is now quickly coming to an end.
- 5) But, we also know that the events described in these past verses were truly miraculous.
- 6) One possible explanation for this lesson is to give the disciples confidence in how they would be able to carry on, even after Jesus leaves them.
- 7) He may have sensed their uncertainty in Peter’s statement – we just do not know.
- 8) Looking at this passage, however, there are two related but distinct ideas we can know.
- 9) First, faith – “Have faith in God”.
  - a) Faith in God as explained here is an absolute connection to God’s power.
  - b) Saying to a mountain “Go throw yourself into the sea” must have seemed a ridiculous thought to these men.
  - c) Yet, Jesus says clearly if the person who says that it will happen, it will be done for him.
    - i) Note, the strong sense of the verb usage “will happen” – not can or might but **will!**.
    - ii) Note also, it is not the person who is doing the action – the person is in essence asking God thru faith and thought to accomplish this and – “IT WILL BE DONE FOR HIM”.
- 10) God is obviously the judge of the legitimacy of any request.
  - a) If the mountain throwing itself into the sea serves His purpose then it will happen.
  - b) If it is a frivolous request or selfish request or a request that goes directly against God’s desires it will not be granted.
  - c) Jesus was absolutely NOT not saying that God is a cosmic Santa Claus!
- 11) Jesus then steps logically into the practical – normal life prayers.
- 12) Logically it follows if I can say to a mountain “go throw yourself into the sea” and it will happen, I can pray for other things and expect them to happen as well.
- 13) Again, the same set of criteria apply:
  - a) If it is a frivolous request or selfish request or a request that goes directly against God’s desires it will not be granted.

## *Gospel of Mark – NOTES*

- b) The conclusion of this statement “whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it” is quite interesting.
    - i) The concluding phrase “believe you have received it” is based on a Greek verb aorist tense expressing the certainty of a future action.
    - ii) This is one of the true strong points of the Greek language – being able to place emphasis in this manner.
    - iii) To us, the idea should be that of unwavering belief that whatever we ask for in faith and in harmony with God’s desires we can CONSIDER IT DONE!
  - c) Again, only two real criteria apply.
    - i) On the personal side, the request cannot be frivolous or selfish.
    - ii) On God’s side, it must fall in line with his desires – only He has the ultimate say and control – it must fit His purposes.
- 14) Jesus adds here an important part of prayer and faith – “if you hold anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins.”
- a) If a person becomes bitter and angry over a wrong done, prayer is impossible.
  - b) God wants us to deal with our "*horizontal*" relationships in order to have a clear "*vertical*" relationship.
  - c) We see this echoed clearly in Jesus’ comment in the Sermon on the mount Matt 5

### Matt 5:23-24 (NIV)

15) As continuation of this thought, in Matt 6:15 we find:

### Matt 6:15 (NIV)

16) Regarding this entire last portion of this passage, the LABC makes some, what I think are excellent points regarding this concept.

Why would this matter? Because all people are sinners before God. Those who have access to him have it only because of his mercy in forgiving their sins. Believers should not come to God asking for forgiveness or making requests, all the while refusing to forgive others. To do so would be to reveal that they have no appreciation for the mercy they have received. God will not listen to a person with such an attitude. God wants those who are forgiven to forgive others.

Forgiving others is tough work — so much so that many people would rather do something totally distasteful, like run a mile uphill, shovel gravel all day, wash greasy pots, or clean diapers . . . anything but forgive that rotten, no-good scoundrel.

For a person to pray while bearing a grudge is like a tree sprouting leaves and bearing no fruit (11:13). True faith changes the heart. Real prayer dismantles pride and vengeance, filling the holes with love. Real faith seeks peace. For our churches to

## *Gospel of Mark – NOTES*

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have prayer power, there must be harmony and forgiveness evident in the body of believers. Let go of hurts, abandon grudges, and forgive others.

### *Agree / Disagree?*

17) One further note before we conclude:

18) Vs. 26 is likely missing from your translations – this is not a mistake.

19) For you who do not have it, it reads:

"But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses."

20) This verse is not found in the earliest and most reliable manuscripts.

21) Its absence from early witnesses that represent all text-types makes it highly probable that the words were inserted by copyists in imitation of Matt 6:15. (from Nestle-Aland, Novum Testamentum Graece, 27th Revised Edition)

witnesses

all text-types

- 1) As we mentioned earlier, it is important that we see the significance of this cleansing of the temple.
- 2) It is the triggering event that actually leads to God's planned conclusion of Jesus' life – His crucifixion and thus His sacrifice for all of humanity.
- 3) Beginning here in verse 27 and going thru the end of chapter 12, we see the events of Jesus' last day in the temple.
- 4) Multiple confrontations from various groups (all sent by the chief priest and other leaders) trying to trap Him.
- 5) There are two goals that these leaders agree upon.
  - a) They want to force Him into anything they can use as an excuse to arrest Him, try Him, and by that legally kill Him.
  - b) But, the second goal is also to discredit Him in the eyes of the people.
    - i) Those who, by the thousands, two days before had welcomed Him with praise as He made entry into the city.

### **Mark 11:27-28 (NIV)**

- 1) From the events of the day before, combined with the fact that he is walking in the temple courts, I think we can infer one of two things.
  - a) Either the merchants did not show up this day or as Jesus was walking in the courts, they were making a hasty withdrawal. Perhaps an ongoing cleansing as he walked?
- 2) In either case, the chief priests (this was Annas and Caiaphas), the teachers of the law and the elders (all their cronies) confronted Jesus.



## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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- 3) They were obviously not happy – Jesus had stuck His hand squarely in their pockets by clearing all the merchants and money changers from the temple.
- 4) One must assume that this is a confrontation – not just a friendly chat.
- 5) In fact, this is the last confrontation Jesus will have with these religious leaders as a free man.
- 6) It begins here and goes all the way thru chapter 12 when He and His disciples leave the temple.
- 7) These leaders were, as we saw in verse 18, plotting to kill Jesus.
- 8) So they brought him a question that they hoped would trap him into saying something for which he could be arrested.
- 9) They asked for his credentials and demanded that he tell them who gave him the authority to cast the money changers and merchants out of the temple.
- 10) If Jesus answers that his authority comes from God, He would be saying in essence that He was the Messiah and the Son of God
- 11) This is the answer they were hoping for.
- 12) In this case, they would accuse him of blasphemy and since blasphemy was punishable by death under the Jewish law, they would be able to try Him and kill Him legally.
- 13) On the other hand, if Jesus says that His authority is His own, they would not be able to legally kill Him.
- 14) So, they would either dismiss Him as a fanatic. and trust that the crowds would soon return to those with true authority (themselves).
  - a) Or, they would have to find other ways to kill Him.
- 15) Jesus would not let himself be caught in their trap.
- 16) He turns the question back on them, and by doing so, exposed their motives and avoided their trap.

### **Mark 11:29-33 (NIV)**

- 17) We see that they really were trapped – they cannot give either answer that Jesus proposed.
- 18) They are basically shut down at this point.
- 19) As we will see, this is the beginning of a long day for Jesus.

- 1) Jesus continues immediately with a series of parables that “poke the bear” that just attacked Him.
- 2) Mark records one parable whereas, Matthew records three that Jesus uses here.
- 3) All of them are aimed directly at these religious leaders.
- 4) The first exchange is recorded in Matthew goes like this:

### **Matt 21:27-33 (NIV)**

## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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- 5) Jesus' closing remarks here circle around to the very reason these leaders would not answer his rebuttal question.
- 6) From this parable and exchange, we move back to Mark.
- 7) He and Matthew both record the next parable. >>>>>

1) Let's begin with the parable of Mark 12:1-12 and a couple of follow-up questions.

**Mark 12:1-12 (NIV)**

- 1) This parable is more pointed than the first one from Matthew's account.
  - a) Jesus lets them know that He knows they are trying to kill Him.
  - b) He also declares their fate when they do.
- 2) He begins by describing a vineyard.
  - a) The correlation is from the words of Isa 5:1-7, where Isaiah described Israel as a vineyard.
    - i) The passage in Isaiah itself is a parable but a parable of a vineyard that was not producing fruit – perhaps a vineyard needing a Messiah?
  - b) At any rate, they immediately understood that Jesus was speaking of the nation of Israel in his parable.
- 3) The other elements of this parable are:
  - a) The man who planted the vineyard — God
  - b) The tenant farmers — the Jewish religious leaders
  - c) The landowner's servants (12:2) — the prophets and priests who remained faithful to God and preached to Israel
  - d) The son — Jesus (12:6)
  - e) The others to whom the vineyard was given (12:9) — the Gentiles.
- 4) The LABC completes the description of this parable very nicely:

Israel, pictured as a vineyard, was the nation that God had cultivated to bring salvation to the world. The religious leaders not only frustrated their nation's purpose; they also killed those who were trying to fulfill it. They were so jealous and possessive that they ignored the welfare of the very people they were supposed to be bringing to God. By telling this story, Jesus exposed the religious leaders' plot to kill him, and he warned them that their sins would be punished.
- 5) Again, from these comments, we can see the connection between the Isaiah parable and the parable Jesus is telling.
  - a) The vineyard caretakers were at the root of the problem with the vineyard itself.
- 6) At its heart, Jesus' parable is about rejection and the consequences of that rejection.
  - a) Rejection of God's prophets and teachers.
  - b) Ultimately, the rejection of God's own Son and the plan God has for the nation of Israel.
- 7) Stepping into our own lives with these lessons, we may not see an easy fit for them but.....

## **Gospel of Mark – NOTES**

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### **What are ways you can think of that we reject God's prophets, teachers, His Son, and even His plan for us?**

- Reading a scripture and rejecting it as “not applying to us” because we don’t want it to.
  - Ignoring messages that come to us when we study and become convicted.
    - Too uncomfortable
    - Too drastic a change in our comfort zone.
    - Just can’t give up whatever it convicts us to give up.
    - Oswald Chambers – out of the calm of the harbor.
  - Rejecting messages to us from other sources:
    - A friend or family member who comes to us with a caring word.
    - Rejecting a portion of a sermon or conversation with a someone that clearly were words we needed to hear.
- 8) There is also a portion of this parable that is about possession – hanging on to things that are not truly ours.
- 9) This is seen clearly in the final reason the tenants killed the son – they were unwilling to give up the vineyard and even convinced themselves the “the inheritance will be ours”.

### **Are we possessive and resentful when our plans (leisure or pleasure) get bumped for Christian responsibilities?**

### **Would Jesus’ return be unwelcome interruption of the plans that we have made?**

10) Continuing in Mark 12:13-17 ....

#### **Mark 12:13-17 (NIV)**

- 1) Here we have a classic instance of “the enemy of my enemy is my friend”!
- 2) The Pharisees and the Herodians had diametrically opposed views regarding their country’s situation.
  - a) The Pharisees were totally opposed to the Roman occupation of Palestine.
  - b) The Herodians were a political group among the Jews that supported Rome’s installation of the Herod dynasty.
    - i) After Herod the Great died in 4 BC Palestine was divided among his sons.
    - ii) Though the nation had been split apart, the rulers of all the parts were still of one family.
    - iii) The Herodians believed that the only way to preserve their land and national identity was to keep Herod’s family together in the ruling positions.
    - iv) Their hope was to someday be a free nation again by maintaining this identity.
  - c) The common enemy between Pharisees and the Herodians in this case was Jesus.

## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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- i) The Herodians had lost political control when, as a result of reported unrest, Rome had deposed Archelaus (Herod's son with authority over Judea) and replaced him with a Roman governor.
- ii) The Herodians feared that Jesus would cause still more instability in Judea and that Rome might react by never replacing the Roman leaders with a descendant of Herod.
- d) Of course, the Pharisees saw Jesus as an enemy primarily because He exposed their hypocrisy.
- e) He also was a threat to their control and ill-gotten gain – witness the events of the day before.
- f) I want to inject here a point that though I know is true, I tend not to emphasize.
  - i) The Pharisees were, like the Herodians, also attempting to protect their place as God's chosen people in their own way.
  - ii) There was this side of Jesus' teachings that said that this was no longer true – the God of the Jew was no longer “just the God of the Jew” He was the God of all mankind.
  - iii) Along with this, Jesus also posed a threat because of his popularity.
    - (1) He drew thousands to him and if this continued, the Jewish nation could again wind up in exile and Rome could force them to loose their homeland once more.
- 3) Getting back to the scripture at hand, this group begins by blatantly lying about how they felt about Jesus.
  - a) They absolutely did NOT believe that He taught correctly and spoke the truth.
  - b) If they did, they would not have been opposing Him.
- 4) The truth was that they viewed Him as a deceiver, liar, and fraud, who had to be silenced by death.
- 5) Their lying flattery had at least two devious purposes.
  - a) First, they were pretending to identify with the people who, for the most part, did believe that Jesus taught the truth.
  - b) Second, they hoped to inflate the Lord's pride so that He would feel He could not answer the question correctly (as He truly felt).
- 6) Ironically, the Sanhedrin was made responsible for collecting taxes.
  - a) It is assumed that as such, they oversaw the corrupt system of tax collectors that we have discussed in the past.
- 7) The whole idea of paying taxes was a hot topic in Palestine at this time – the people did NOT like paying taxes to Caesar.
  - a) The Jews had been paying tribute (taxes) to Rome since 63 BCE when the Roman Empire annexed Palestine.
  - b) The money supported their oppressor and symbolized their subjection.

## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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- 8) The question was asked in a way that was intended to force Jesus into a straight Yes or No answer.
- 9) Either a yes or a no could lead Jesus into trouble.
- 10) If he answered YES then Jesus agreed that it was right to pay taxes to Caesar, the Pharisees would say he was opposed to God, and the people would turn against him.
- 11) If Jesus said NO that the taxes should not be paid, the Herodians could hand him over to Herod on the charge of rebellion.
- 12) Theoretically, this was a no win situation for Jesus.
- 13) But of course, Jesus immediately sees thru their deceptions and plans, then answers in a way that evaded their trap.
- 14) The Greek here again shows a real ability to highlight the nuances of this conversation.
  - a) The leaders use a word which means “**to give**” bestow, commit, deliver, grant, supply, yield.\*
    - (1) δίδωμι Parse: Verb: Pres Act Ind 1st Sing Meaning: to give (something) to (someone) to grant, bestow, impart to give, give out, hand over, pay out to entrust (something) to (someone) to put, place to give up, sacrifice
    - ii) The idea being to give something to someone perhaps more strongly to the voluntarily aspect.
  - b) The word Jesus uses means to “**give back**”, render (what is due), restore.\*
    - (1) ἀποδίδωμι Parse: Verb: Pres Act Ind 1st Sing Meaning: to give away, give up, give out to give back, return, restore to add to render, reward, repay, recompense, make payment, requite middle: to sell middle: to give up, yield middle: to perform, fulfill (e.g., perform a vow)
    - ii) The idea being to repay a debt or to render what is due..
- 15) Though Jesus and the Herodians were likely speaking Aramaic the dual meaning was likely conveyed there as well.

This is a perfect scripture for exploring language relationships. If we make the assumption that Jesus and these men would have carried on this conversation in Aramaic then at first assessment, the Greek wording might be rendered useless in context of what we had just discussed. However, if we consider the influence of the Holy Spirit on the writer and in this case most likely Peter relating the story of the incident, I think we can KNOW that whatever wording was used in the Aramaic was captured in the Greek. This is the absolute correct way to look at God’s word. God has a message that was preserved in every word and every incident given in His holy word. We can always rest assured that that message is preserved and we have it today.
- 16) I don’t want you to get the impression that Jesus’ answer was some fancy play on words. The words used carried a far deeper meaning.
- 17) By His answer, He was truly teaching two distinct lessons – both were NOT what either of the two parties wanted to hear.

## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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18) In the first part ““Give to Caesar what is Caesar's”, the word He used, he was clearly teaching that rendering “paying back” was fulfilling an obligation to a God instituted government.

- a) Again, repaying something owed.
- b) We are taught by Paul in Romans 13:1-7 the government is a institution of God

### **Rom 13:1-7 (NIV)**

19) In the second part of the answer “to God what is God's", He aimed directly at the Pharisees.

- a) They balked at paying taxes even though they were likely profiting from them.
- b) Yet and by far much worse, they did everything in their power to not give to God what was His.
  - i) The most immediate example was their refusal to properly (if at all) honor His Son.

20) We obviously pay our taxes, hopefully with the right attitude?

21) We obviously ALWAYS give to God what is God’s right?

***So, what does Jesus’ answer say to us? Since we are so right in our attitudes, it probably is not for us at all – RIGHT?***

22) The attempts to trap Jesus and thereby eliminate Him continue...

**Mark 12:18-27 (NIV)**

23) This is an odd incident.

24) The first thing that makes it odd is that the Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection.

- a) They did not accept any but the first 5 books of the Old Testament – the Pentateuch.
- b) They said there was no resurrection because they could not find mention of it in the scripture they accepted.

25) Second, the Sadducees were at odds with the Pharisees.

26) They rejected most of the Pharisee's traditions, rules, and regulations.

27) They were also more inline with the Herodians politically.

- a) They were pro-Herod and favored cooperation with political powers and pursuit of earthly prosperity.

28) Although few in number, the Sadducees had considerable influence.

29) They included many of the aristocratic, wealthy, and influential leaders in Israel, including the high priests, the chief priests (cf. Luke 19:47; 20:1, 19), and most of the Sanhedrin.

30) Holding all the positions of authority over the temple made up for the Sadducees' lack of numbers.

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31) It occurred to me as I studied this that the question (an obvious hypothetical) could have been not only a possible way to trap Jesus but also been a way to show their contempt for him and his teachings – mocking him if you will.

32) Jesus also indicted them because they did not believe in the power of God.

33) Instead of beginning with the answer to their question, Jesus poses a counter question that indites them for the one thing they were most famous for – their knowledge of Scripture – especially the books of Moses.

34) That reply turned the tables on them immediately.

35) In fact, though they probably did not accept it – in His complete answer, Jesus refutes their very core belief that there was no resurrection.

36) The direct answer to their question is in verse 25

When the dead rise, they will neither marry nor be given in marriage; they will be like the angels in heaven.

37) Then comes the shutdown answer.

38) Jesus, knowing their incorrect belief about the resurrection addresses it head on



## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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39) Again, the original question was absurd coming from these Sadducees since they did not believe in the resurrection any way.

Now about the dead rising — have you not read in the book of Moses, in the account of the bush, how God said to him, ***I am the God*** of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? 27 ***He is not the God of the dead, but of the living.*** You are badly mistaken!"

40) Simply put, **if** Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were like Rover “dead all over” and not alive and with God, God would have said “I was the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob” obviously placing them in the past tense.

41) This cuts the legs completely from under the Sadducees position on life after death.

42) However, as we will see next, they did have some further discussion.

### **Mark 12:28-34 (NIV)**

- 1) We begin with one of the teachers of the law overhearing the debate that was occurring.
  - a) We assume it was the debate, regarding Jesus’ last response.
- 2) He basically interrupts with a question of his own.
- 3) At first read, this may appear to be a sincere question.
- 4) However, Matthew in his account clarifies who the person asking the question is and at least the intent:

### **Matt 22:34-36 (NIV)**

- 5) So, we might still ask how is this a test? In essence, they hoped that Jesus would answer by giving a commandment not found in the law of Moses.
  - a) They were likely familiar with Jesus’ teachings when he would say “you have heard it said ... but I say ...
- 6) If He did answer in this manner here in answer to this direct question, He would be elevating Himself above the Law.
  - a) In this case, the obvious right answer is not up for debate.
- 7) Also, this is one area that the religious leaders (Pharisees and Sadducees) agreed on.
- 8) If Jesus did not answer from the Law of Moses, they had Him – blasphemy – and – at the same time, it would tare Him down in the eyes of the people – WIN-WIN!
- 9) Jesus, of course, knew the man’s intent but that did not change His answer.
- 10) However, from the man’s response to Jesus, he may have changed his attitude.
- 11) He answers with the Shema as the first and the second most important commandment from Lev 19:18.
- 12) The Shema is the most basic, foundational Old Testament truth. It is from Deut 6:4-9.

### **Deut 6:4-9 (NIV)**

## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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13) Then, from Leviticus ...

Lev 19:18 (NIV)

14) Here are a couple of hard questions for us.

***Do we believe the answers Jesus gives here apply to us?***

***If no then what is the most important commandment for us?***

***If yes then how do we implement these two commands in our daily lives?***

15) I think the LABC cut to the absolute heart of the matter in a series of questions:

a) Listen for these three qualifications as I go through these questions...

***Which one if any stand out as particularly *difficult*?***

***Which one if any stand out as *impossible*?***

***Which one if any stand out as *easiest*?***

The questions begin...

Jesus taught that love for God involves every aspect of our being. As you consider your devotion to God, does he have all of you?

***Your heart***

- Is he the focus of your affections?
- Is your love for him warm and real?
- Do you take pleasure in his ultimate worth?

***Your soul***

- Are you willing to give him your life itself?
- Does your worship genuinely reflect your inner desires and intentions?
- Do you love him with your total being?

***Your mind***

- Does your commitment fully involve your intellectual capabilities?
- Is your faith fully informed or based on blind trust?
- Is your mind trained to think of his moral perfection?

***Your strength***

- Do you strive to love and serve him energetically?
- Have you devoted all your physical and material capabilities to him?
- Can you sustain intense love for him even under pressure or when doubts arise?

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## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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- 1) The onslaught of questions and attempts to trap Jesus has now stopped for a bit allowing Him to teach.
- 2) But, as we will see, those who wish to kill Him or discredit Him are still around.

**Mark 12:35-37 (NIV)**

- 1) Here we have another one of these situations where it helps to get a fuller picture of the situation if we look at another gospel account along with Mark.
- 2) Mark reports this incident more from the perspective of the crowd and Matthew looks at it more from the perspective of the Scribes and Pharisees.

**Matt 22:41-46 (NIV)**

- 3) Considering the Matthew passage, at first thought, this question could have been put to the Scribes and Pharisees as a test – a way by Jesus to perhaps get the final word in.
- 4) A different way to look at it might be that this was a subtle yet effective way for Jesus to say here I am – I am that descendant of David, I am the Lord.
- 5) In essence, a final invitation to belief or at least consideration of him as the Son of God, the Messiah, the Anointed One of God.
- 6) If this last idea is the correct one, then the reactions were most likely the expected reactions but not the one Jesus was perhaps hoping for.
- 7) The Pharisees go away, I personally feel, more convinced than ever to kill Him.
- 8) Further, they ask no more questions.
- 9) The people were “delighted” with what Jesus was saying.
- 10) As you recall, at the outset, the Pharisees had two options:
  - a) Discredit him in the eyes of the people and He would go away OR
  - b) Kill him by the most legal means possible.
- 11) With the reaction of the crowd, it appears that the first option is off the table (at least for the moment).
- 12) The impression I get is that they were delighted to see Jesus stump the Pharisees.
  - a) Not delighted to finally understand who He truly was
- 13) We will see both these reactions confirmed in a matter of days.
  - a) The Pharisees will finally see Him arrested and put on trial.
  - b) And at that trial, likely many of the people who were delighted at the results of the question we are discussing will be crying out crucify Him, crucify Him.

## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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- 1) As we continue, we see Jesus making an observation and comment on the very men who just rejected His final invitation or could not answer His final question, depending on the way you look at it.

### **Mark 12:38-40 (NIV)**

- 1) First Jesus describes the teachers of the law in pretty scathing terms.
  - a) He shows their hypocritical self-importance.
  - b) He concludes the remarks with an indictment – “they devour widow’s houses”
- 2) The scribes received no pay for their services.
- 3) They depended on the hospitality of devout Jews.
- 4) It was considered an act of piety for people to help the scribes.
- 5) Some people would even go so far as to place all their finances in the scribe's control (especially widows who trusted them).
- 6) Obviously, they were in a position to exploit people.
- 7) Many of them did this by cheating the poor out of everything they had and taking advantage of the rich.
- 8) Jesus goes on to say that even their prayers were merely for the sake of appearance.
- 9) Their long prayers were not conversations with the God they loved, but were merely theatrics to make people think they were especially holy.
  - a) Through their pious actions they hoped to gain status, recognition, and respect.
- 10) Combine all this and how could they deserve anything but condemnation!

***We, (at least one hopes), do not have those who are like teachers of the law among us but, do we need to be on the lookout for them?***

***What about our own motives. Do we need to evaluate our own reasons for doing the things we do? Specifically,***

- ***Is it o.k. to feel good about what we do?***
- ***Is it o.k. to appreciate or even enjoy the praise of others for a job well done?***
- ***Where does the problem come in?***
- ***What about gain – do we ever do “good things” hoping for a monetary or other compensation reward?***

- 1) What we are going to look at next follows so appropriately the last sentence of the previous passage.

They devour widows' houses ...

## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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2) Looking at 12:41 thru 44 .....

### **Mark 12:41-44 (NIV)**

1) As I began looking at this passage, I ran across an introductory comment that was, I think, truly on point – the comment was ...

All around her were large examples of meaningless worship, shallow honor given to God, frivolous giving, and downright evil. But this woman's unnoticed act of sacrifice spoke volumes about herself and her faith.

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- 2) First, the statement was obviously true – we have here the religious leaders and their corruption and their desire to kill Jesus.
- 3) We have selfish motives dominating every aspect of the temple worship – money changers and merchants dishonestly making money off those who were trying to worship God as He had commanded.
- 4) And on and on ...
- 5) Another commentator takes this to what I think is the extreme negative level. He says of Jesus' observation of those making their offerings...

It must have deeply grieved and angered Him to see people sacrificing their money to this wretched, apostate, corrupt system of false religion, under the misguided assumption that doing so would please God and produce divine blessing.

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- 6) Yes, the system was corrupt but, the giving here if given with the right heart had to be pleasing to God regardless of the corruption.
- 7) Not everyone was part of this corruption.
- 8) Though it is easy to do, we must never forget that in and among all this there were many like this poor widow who devoutly worshiped God and wanted nothing more than to serve Him as He commanded.
- 9) And, I would imagine, there were truly devout Scribes and Pharisees as well who truly worshiped and served as they should.
- 10) I would like to think that many of these devout folks in the coming months and years would come to see Jesus as He is and continue to worship God and accept the salvation that Jesus brings.
- 11) With all that being said, let's look at the passage.
- 12) First, commentators disagree on the true meaning of it.
- 13) Jesus does not make a specific point that the woman is an example of anything.

## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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- 14) Many times, we portray this woman as a model of dutiful, faithful giving and though that may be true, Jesus does not really make that point.
- 15) Some commentators argue that the story teaches that giving is not to be measured by the amount that was given but by what the giver kept back.
- 16) Others insist that giving must be measured by the level of the giver's self-denial, as reflected by the percentage of the person's resources that was given.
- 17) Another view is that a gift's value is directly related to the attitude with which it is given.
  - a) Was it given in selfless humility as an expression of love and devotion to God?
- 18) The widow, having given everything she possessed, had the least amount possible left after her gift.
  - a) Therefore, she must have had the attitude most pleasing to God???
  - b) According to that view, it would seem that the gift that most pleases God is everything one possesses.
- 19) One commentator gives what I think is a slightly negative view of this entire question. However, it may be on point!

What is clear from the passage is that the widow is not the hero of the story but the victim, duped into giving all she had by the false promise of Jewish legalism that doing so would bring blessing. She is a tragic example of how the corrupt religious system mistreated widows, and that is what connects this passage with the judgment passages that precede and follow it.

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- 20) There are several things here that I must agree with but several – not so much.
- 21) First, I agree, she may have been a victim – we really can't say that for sure.
- 22) Second, I agree that the religious system was corrupt but, as I pointed out a few moments ago there were many devout and sincere Jews that were truly trying to worship God as He desired.
- 23) Part of that worship was giving.
- 24) One must assume, their giving was to God NOT a "corrupt religious system".
- 25) If they expected or were to be blessed by anything from their giving it was NOT the religious system but God who was the source of the blessing.
- 26) Did she expect a blessing? – in this case, one would have to say yes.
  - a) If, as Jesus said, she gave all she had and that was literal then without a blessing in return for her sacrifice, she would simply go home and die of starvation.
  - b) Not likely literal but relative.
  - c) Blessing expected – probably.

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27) Is there the possibility that the story connects this passage with the judgement passages that precede and follow it? – As I indicated at the start, I think ABSOLUTELY Yes!!!

28) Is that the point we should take from this? – I personally do not think so!

29) Jesus called His disciples to him and made this comment:

"I tell you the truth, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. 44 They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything — all she had to live on."

30) To me, this isn't saying again "beware of the corrupt religious system" but look at the level of sacrifice that the widow is making.

31) God looks for our love and our giving reflects that love.

### ***Does God expect or want us to give everything we have away and live in abject poverty?***

- No – he wants us to give and give generously.
  - a) Our hearts and love of Him should dictate our level of generosity – NOTHING ELSE!
- As we saw in the incident with the rich young ruler, the only time God wants us to give all of something is to remove a stumbling block to our love and dedication to Him.

### ***The amount we give, be it based on percentage, or fixed amount, or whatever other method we may use must first and always be driven by our desire to give and our trust in God to provide – not our obligation. Agree / Disagree?***



1) Let's quickly talk about the question regarding our dealing with the Shema.

In the LABC, the questions begin with this statement:

Jesus taught that love for God involves every aspect of our being. As you consider your devotion to God, does he have all of you?

**Your heart**

- Is he the focus of your affections?
- Is your love for him warm and real?
- Do you take pleasure in his ultimate worth?

**Your soul**

- Are you willing to give him your life itself?
- Does your worship genuinely reflect your inner desires and intentions?
- Do you love him with your total being?

**Your mind**

- Does your commitment fully involve your intellectual capabilities?
- Is your faith fully informed or based on blind trust?
- Is your mind trained to think of his moral perfection?

**Your strength**

- Do you strive to love and serve him energetically?
- Have you devoted all your physical and material capabilities to him?
- Can you sustain intense love for him even under pressure or when doubts arise?

**Anyone stand out as *impossible*?**

**Which one if any stand out as particularly *difficult*?**

**Which one if any stand out as *easiest*?**

- 1) Jesus has now spent the entire day in the temple being accosted by the religious leaders, answering questions, and teaching.
- 2) He now leaves the temple and enters into a chain of events that will culminate in what has become known as the Mount Olivet Discourse.

**Mark 13:1-4 (NIV)**

## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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- 3) As Jesus leaves the temple, part of the crowd follows Him and, as we will see later they are listening to what He is saying.
- 4) This innocent comment by one of His disciples and Jesus' response will be turned against Him.
  - a) In a later chapter we will see it twisted into a lie and given as false testimony.
- 5) Perfect end to a perfect day – right?
- 6) The mount of Olives is about 0.2 mi from the temple and somewhat above it so, you are looking down on the temple.
- 7) The question that the four – Peter, James, John, and Andrew – ask is as we see in the parallel passage in Matthew, far more reaching than just the destruction of the temple.

“Tell us, when will these things happen, and what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?”

- 8) These men were likely thinking things would be happening very, very, soon.
  - a) After all, it was only a few days before that Jesus had been ushered into the city as a hero of the people.
  - b) And, by the way, we must always keep in mind that this was a deliberate act on the part of Jesus. He knew exactly what this meant and what the results would be.
- 9) He has also dispatched all the questions and attempts to discredit Him by the religious leaders.
- 10) He has also displayed what they probably considered super human strength in ousting all the money changers and merchants from the temple.
- 11) In this first section of the discourse, Jesus will lay to rest any hope of an immediate return.
- 12) One could take from this that there is a possibility that they were finally coming to understand what was about to happen.
  - a) They might just be beginning to fully understand the Lord's departure and return as he had been teaching them.
- 13) With that backdrop, we begin to hear His words...

### **Mark 13:5-8 (NIV)**

- 1) The disciples asked two questions:
  - a) Tell us, **when** will these things happen?
  - b) Tell us, **what** will be the sign that they are all about to be fulfilled?
- 2) Jesus begins addressing the second question first.
- 3) He knows that if the disciples are looking for signs, they can be deceived so He begins with a warning.

Watch out that no one deceives you. 6 Many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am he,' and will deceive many

## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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- 4) Note the ‘I am he’ – according to one commentator, this is a direct reference to the use of the ‘I am’ phrase indicating that the person would be God in the flesh.
  - a) εγω ειμι
- 5) Every generation has had and will have those claiming to be the “Christ returned” – Sun Myung Moon, David Koresh, Jim Jones ...
- 6) There are probably many more who haven’t made the national headlines but have deceived folks anyway.
- 7) Jesus then describes basically life going on as mankind moves toward God’s ultimate end to it all and the establishment of the new heaven and new earth.
- 8) Wars, rumors of wars, kingdom against kingdom, earthquakes, famines – all of these things will happen and continue to happen but they do not signal the end of the age.
- 9) Though it is difficult, we as Christians should not be alarmed by these happenings.
- 10) Everything will happen according to God's divine plan.
- 11) Our responsibility as God’s people is to be prepared, to endure, and to continue to take the Good News to all nations.
  - a) Not to be concerned about whether the end is now or 1000, 100,000, or even 1,000,000 years from now.
- 12) He concludes these remarks about signs by saying that the things He has warned them about would be “the beginning of birth pains”.
- 13) In other words, He was telling the disciples the end would not happen today, this week, at the resurrection, or even right after the destruction of Jerusalem which they were not aware of beyond His comments that started this conversation.
- 14) Instead, much suffering would occur as a part of life on earth, while history is moving toward a single, final, God-planned goal – a new heaven and new earth and the restoration of our ultimate relationship with Him.

### ***How do you feel this applies to us today?***

### ***Do you see events that cause you to think of what Jesus was saying here?***

War in Ukraine, global warming, unrest in many countries, natural disasters, ...

### **Mark 13:9-13 (NIV)**

- 1) At first glance, it appears that Jesus switches gears here and begins talking about a different subject but not really.
- 2) Though this is framed as a warning (and rightly so), it still gives the disciples a piece of the puzzle regarding their questions.
- 3) If they are to experience all that Jesus indicates here, it would be obvious to them that the end is not imminent.

## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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- 4) If nothing else, the statement He makes “And the gospel must first be preached to all nations” tells these men they (or someone) has a lot of work to do before they can even consider looking for the end.
- 5) One thing that really struck me about Jesus’ comments in this section is the surprise the disciples must have experienced as they listened to His words.
  - a) handed over to the local councils
  - b) flogged in the synagogues
  - c) stand before governors and kings as witnesses to them
  - d) arrested and brought to trial
  - e) see families torn apart – perhaps even their own
  - f) be hated

***What would you have done if you were told these things about your future when you were baptized?***

***What about 3 years after you were baptized?***

***What about today?***

### **Mark 13:14-23 (NIV)**

- 1) Welcome back to Revelation????
- 2) There is, as you might expect some debate among scholars as to the meaning and specifically the timings of the events Jesus describes here.
- 3) There is one key thing we need to look at in this passage.
- 4) First, “the abomination that causes desolation” quote from Dan 9:17.
  - a) The reference is to something that takes place in the temple that is so horrific that it will render the temple abandoned for all practical purposes.
  - b) Most agree that there have been thus far, two instances where this can be applied.
  - c) **First**, in 168BC, Antiochus Epiphanes sacrifices a pig to Zeus on the sacred temple altar.
    - i) This act incited the Maccabean wars.
  - d) **Second** was of course, in 70AD when the temple was destroyed by the Romans.
- 5) However, what many scholars believe Jesus is referring to here is the incident referred to in Rev 13 and 2 Thess 2.

### **Rev 13:14-16 (NIV)**

### **2 Thess 2:4 (NIV)**

## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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- 6) Again, the remainder of this passage we just read in Mark **and** what we read next (vs. 24 to 37) are Jesus' description of the remainder of the days leading up to His second coming.

### **Mark 13:24-31 (NIV)**

- 1) I'm sure you all recall from the Revelation study the events that fit what Jesus is speaking of here.
- 2) In verses 24 to 27, Jesus completes His answer to the second question of:  
“what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?”
- 3) Beginning in vs. 28 He answers the first question:  
“when will these things happen?”
- 4) One very important thing for us to get a grip on here is the word generation.
  - a) As we discussed in the beginning of the Revelation study, there are three possible meanings that can be attached to this phrase in Mark 13:30
    - i) (1) Refers only to those alive at this time who would be alive also at the destruction of Jerusalem
    - ii) (2) Refers to the end times only
    - iii) (3) Refers both to the destruction of Jerusalem and the end times.
- 5) Jesus explained here that many of those alive at that time would witness the destruction of the temple in 70AD.
- 6) But, He also refers here to the Jewish people – they will be preserved and remain on earth to witness the end times.
- 7) To conclude with confidence His answer, and to assure no doubt in their minds, He assures them.
  - a) While heaven and earth as we know them would eventually come to an end, Jesus' words (including all his teachings during his time on earth) would never pass away into oblivion.
  - b) They were true and would remain for all eternity.
- 8) And, then, as the final answer to their first question – no one knows!
- 9) It was true the day He spoke the words to the disciples and it is true for us today! – NO ONE KNOWS!

**Mark 13:32-37 (NIV)**

- 1) Some look at the situations around them and make assumptions but it is still an absolute – we cannot predict what day God has planned for these events to take place.
- 2) What we can know absolutely – we must *watch*.
  - a) We must not be caught sleeping.
  - b) We must be about our assigned tasks.
- 3) We must never become complacent in our Christian walk.
- 4) I read a cute quip Friday in the Dr. office.
  - a) Why do old folks read their bibles more? They’re studying for their final exam.
  - b) My suggestion here is that we not necessarily read more (though that is always good) but, for sure, we do not want to read them any less! All in the way of staying prepared!
- 5) We must live each day as though it may be the day before the end times begin and be prepared to deal with what God has planned and told us about.

***How could we be caught sleeping?***

***What is our assigned task? Big picture? Individual?***

**Mark 14:1-2 (NIV)**

- 1) The chief priests and scribes had had a couple of exasperating days because of this “Jesus”.
- 2) The week began with the cleansing of the temple which hurt them financially and likely also prestige wise.
- 3) Then there was their many failed attempts to trip Him up and cause Him to loose favor with the people and/or provide them with the reason to kill Him.
- 4) Not long before these events, Jesus had raised Lazarus from the dead and these guys had had a meeting at that time similar to this one we just read. We see this in John’s gospel ...

**John 11:47-53 (NIV)**

- 5) Yes, the Pharisees and others were indeed attempting to kill Jesus.
- 6) However, as I pointed out a bit ago, though their motives are a bit more than suspect, there are national desires at stake here as well.
- 7) In vs. 48 of the John passage, there is a real clue to this:  
“Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation.”
- 8) This is also clear in verse 52.

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- 9) Dr. Ken Calvert (Hillsdale course on Ancient Christianity) makes the point that this is one of the main reasons the Pharisees created all the extra rules and regulations.
- 10) With them, the idea was to assure that the people would follow them and thus prevent God from taking away their land and putting them in exile again.
  - a) Their thought obviously was that if they well defined God's laws, the people would not stray and God would not punish them as a nation.
- 11) Obviously, from the comment in vs. 48, they believe Jesus to be a threat to this national security as well.
- 12) I think that all this combines to give us a clearer picture of the minds and hearts of these men.
  - a) There was a selfish side but also, they thought they were indeed looking out for their nation.
- 13) They were going to kill Jesus but they knew as much as He was unpopular with them He was popular with the people.
  - a) At this time, Jerusalem had an estimated population of around 50,000.
  - b) During Passover and the week that followed (Feast of Unleavened Bread) the population was estimated at 250,000.
- 14) If they kill Him while the hundreds of thousands were in Jerusalem for the Passover feast, the people could revolt and if that were to happen, the Romans would not be happy and other things worse than dealing with this Jesus person could happen.
- 15) This is why they wanted to wait.
- 16) However, if they find a way to discredit Him in the eyes of the people, that probably will not happen.
- 17) As we know and will continue to see as it unfolds, God has a different purpose and plan in the timing of the events.

1) Moving on with chapter 14, we see a shift in location ...

### **Mark 14:3-9 (NIV)**

- 1) Though both Mark and Matthew place this event here in the order of things of that week, we really have no absolute tie for that chronology.
- 2) John included it just before Jesus entry into Jerusalem.
  - a) Scholars mostly agree that John's placement is more chronologically correct.
  - b) As we know, the main purpose of the Gospel writers was to give an accurate record of Jesus' message, not to present an exact chronological account of his life.
  - c) When Gospel writers placed events out of order, they were following:
    - i) (1) the inspiration of the Holy Spirit
    - ii) (2) probably, to some extent and in some cases, their own recollection of the events

## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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- iii) (3) the acceptable practice for historians in the ancient world to place events out of chronological order so each could develop his particular thematic presentation.
- 3) Matthew and Mark's accounts make thematic use of this event without claiming that it occurred at a certain time in the week.
  - 4) They may have simply placed this event here to contrast the complete devotion of Mary with the betrayal of Judas, the next event they record in their Gospels.
  - 5) This act of this woman might at first seem rather strange but in truth, it was a common practice for honored guests to be anointed with oil.
    - a) In John's account, this was Mary the sister of Martha and Lazarus)
  - 6) In this particular case however, the anointing was with a very expensive ointment.
    - a) The alabaster jar was a beautiful and expensive vase with a long slender neck carved from translucent gypsum.
    - b) The nard (ointment) was from the mountains of India.
    - c) John records the ointment being poured on Jesus' feet. Mark says head. Likely it was both since Jesus was reclining at the table.
  - 7) Most importantly however, as Jesus Himself indicates was the meaning of the act – he saw it as a preparation for His burial.
  - 8) One commentary puts it this way: Such an anointing, with expensive oil and pouring it on the head as well as the feet, pictured a royal (messianic) anointing.
  - 9) The woman I'm sure knew in her heart what she meant by the act. Jesus surely knew but obviously, many of those gathered missed it.
  - 10) It is interesting to me that, unlike some cases where the thoughts and even grumblings of those witnesses were suppressed and only perceived by Jesus, here they openly rebuke her for the act.
  - 11) Jesus defends her act and absolutely defines what it was actually all about.

***There are a couple of lessons we can take from this...***

***Should we judge what others do for Christ?***

***What about how they do it?***

***What about how much they give and what they give it for?***

***Why not?***

- Be careful how we judge the acts of others in their work for the Lord.
  - We do not know their hearts.
  - We do not have the knowledge of the mind and heart of Jesus and how He is regarding the action of others in service of their Lord.
  - After all, it is up to Him to accept or reject – NOT US!



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### **>>>>>>> Lesson 36 <<<<<<<**

- 1) We finished last time talking about the women who had anointed Jesus with the oil.
- 2) We also noted that it was likely Judas who had objected.
- 3) In John's account of this incident, he specifically points to Judas as one of if not the main dissenter here.

#### **John 12:4-6 (NIV)**

Continuing in Mark we find ....

#### **Mark 14:10-11 (NIV)**

- 1) Mark's account here is very factual and to the point.
- 2) Matthew adds a comment that probably relates more to John's assessment of Judas being the dissenter.

#### **Matt 26:15-16 (NIV)**

- 3) As we indicated, the chronology of the anointing event is uncertain – could be at the start of the passion week or more toward the end.
- 4) In either case, it appears that this was the trigger for Judas' betrayal.
- 5) Judas was the only disciple from outside Galilee.
  - a) Judas came from a village about 20 miles south of Jerusalem (Iscariot means “man of Kerioth”).
- 6) As we read, he was portrayed as a thief by John.
- 7) Most commentators believe that he was one disciple who totally looked for Jesus to establish an earthly kingdom to replace the Roman rule.
  - a) In that hope, his desire was to become rich – simply put, he was in it for the money.
- 8) Judas had a hardened heart.
- 9) We could ask the question here was Judas God's instrument or Satan's?
- 10) In actuality, from scripture it appears that even though God's purpose was ultimately served in his betrayal of Christ, he was under Satan's power – at least during these events.

#### **Luke 22:3-4 (NIV)**

#### **John 13:26-27 (NIV)**

- 11) The irony in all this is that by entering Judas and convincing him to betray Jesus, Satan sealed his own fate.
- 12) Judas was the link that brought about the culmination of God's plan – the sacrificial death of Jesus.
- 13) The Hebrew writer tells us:

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### Heb 2:14-15 (NIV)

14) So, I guess the question of God's instrument or Satan's remains without a total answer – could actually be both?

### Mark 14:12-16 (NIV)

- 1) MacArthur comments on the timing of the Passover meal:
  - a) Jesus' celebration of the Passover on the night before His death raises an important question:
  - b) How could He celebrate the Passover on Thursday night when the Passover lambs were killed on Friday?
  - c) The answer lies in the fact that, in first-century Israel, the Passover meal was regularly eaten on two evenings.
  - d) Those from Galilee observed it on Thursday evening, while those from Judea celebrated it on Friday.
  - e) Consequently, Jesus was able to eat the Passover with His disciples on Thursday night and still die as the Passover lamb on Friday afternoon.
- 2) This also explains how the comment that the Jewish leaders "led Jesus from Caiaphas into the Praetorium, and it was early [Friday morning; the day of the Crucifixion]; and they themselves did not enter into the Praetorium so that they would not be defiled, but might eat the Passover."
- 3) The consensus is that Jesus had prearranged the location and the room to keep Judas in the dark.
- 4) It was essential that Judas not provide for Jesus' arrest during the Passover meal.
- 5) Obvious reason was that the Passover meal was being transformed from its traditional form (which was hundreds of years old) to the Lord's Supper
  - a) The celebration of the ultimate sacrifice and the establishment of the new covenant in His blood.
  - b) And, of course, the celebration of man's ultimate freedom from the slavery (bondage) of sin.
- 6) The prearrangement of the room in no way detracts from the supernatural events that lead Peter and John to the house. (Luke tells us it was Peter and John who were sent)
- 7) Finding the place would have been no easy task but we must keep in mind that God's hand is controlling every aspect of the situation.
- 8) From the size of the room, big enough for the group to the man carrying the water pot (not normally a man's task) making this rather unique and easy to spot.
- 9) The two of them find everything just as Jesus had told them.

## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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- 10) Of course, once they do so, they went and made all the remaining arrangements for the lamb, the bread, wine, bitter herbs, and any and all required utensils etc.
- 11) Then they returned to the group after they finished the preparations. We know this because we see next that Jesus arrives with the twelve.
- 12) Perhaps there is an important observation we should make regarding Peter and John at this point.
- 13) Here are two men who are maturing in their response to Jesus. He gives them these truly cryptic instructions and without question, they go.
- 14) The LABC makes the comment in this regard:

It's a pattern they would follow many times in the early missionary activity of the church: ***willing, waiting, directed, gone!***

- a) We need that same faith while, at the same time remembering that rushing to a mission without instructions from God is foolhardy.

15) Getting instructions but then staying put is weak-willed.

16) We must be disciples who move out by God's authority, at God's time, eager for the opportunity.

***I am sure that everyone likely agrees with these comments however, it does beg the question:***

***How do we know when to move out by God's authority and at His time?***

- Trust – the disciples trusted Jesus – they knew Him.
- Relationship – continuous observing and looking for opportunities.
- Discerning the difference between what we think is “the thing to do” and what God’s plans are. Sometimes the most difficult part of this!
- Prayer – constant prayer requesting guidance, strength, and help in every aspect of our lives being lived for Him.

1) Let's start by reviewing and finishing verses 17 thru 25 ...

**Mark 14:17-25 (NIV)**

- 1) This night, the Passover meal was a transformation of a celebration.
  - a) A celebration of a release from the bondage of slavery in Egypt to a celebration of release from sin
  - b) The celebration and establishment of a New Covenant.
- 2) There is a four part promise of redemption in Ex 6:6-7 associated with the Passover meal:
  - a) "I will bring you out";
  - b) "I will rid you of bondage";
  - c) "I will redeem you";
  - d) "I will take you for my people, and I will be your God."
- 3) The Passover meal in Jesus' time was organized around drinking four cups of red wine, symbolizing this four-part promise.
- 4) There was a traditional sequence of events for the meal.
  - a) First would come a blessing of the festival and the wine.
    - i) This was a prayer of thanksgiving for God's deliverance, protection, and goodness.
  - b) This was followed by drinking the first cup of wine.
  - c) A ceremonial washing of hands came next.
    - i) Conjecture but, it may have been at this point that the disciples were debating who was greatest among them and Jesus intervened with the washing of their feet.
  - d) Then the food would be brought out.
  - e) The youngest son would then ask why this night was distinguished from others.
  - f) The father would answer with the story of the Exodus and would point to each item on the table as he explained its symbolic significance.
    - i) for example, bitter herbs symbolized the bitter bondage of slavery in Egypt.
  - g) This would be followed by praise to God for the past and future redemption (taken from the first part of the Hallel in Ps 113-115).
  - h) Then the second cup of wine would be served.
    - i) After the second cup, the bread would be blessed, broken, and distributed, and then eaten with bitter herbs and a fruit-paste dish.
      - i) It was likely at this point that Jesus announces that one of them would betray Him.
  - j) This would be followed by eating the meal.
  - k) The meal included roasted lamb sacrificed in the temple.
  - l) At the end of the meal, the father would bless a third cup of wine, which would be followed by singing the second part of the Hallel (from Ps 116-118).

## *Gospel of Mark – NOTES*

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- m) A fourth cup of wine would conclude the meal
- 5) It is very likely that these traditional events of the Passover meal were being followed.
- 6) One would surmise that Jesus would have assumed the role of the father – the head of household and the disciples the family.
- 7) Going back for a moment looking a little deeper at the events reported here in Mark.
- 8) First, I think it is really interesting that even though we know that the disciples later understood all the truth about Judas, at this point, they apparently (with **perhaps** the exception of John) do not suspect him of being the betrayer and person he is.
- 9) The Lord obviously knew – but the disciples appear to be oblivious to the situation.
- 10) It is also interesting to me that they are not playing the “blame game” – “I be it him ... no I think its him...” and so on...
- 11) We know that what Judas did fit into God’s plan. However, as we discussed earlier, God did not make him what he was.
- 12) John MacArthur comments on Judas’ situation in this way:

In His sovereign providence, God constantly overrules people’s sinful choices, like those of Judas, for His own ends and glory (cf. Gen. 50:20; Rom. 8:28). But that reality does not exonerate them for their wickedness. ... Through his willful rejection of Christ, choosing to betray Him rather than believe in Him, Judas doomed his soul to eternal hell.

- 13) This may seem at first harsh and judgmental on MacArthur’s part however, if we look at part of Jesus’ prayer in John 17:12 we read.

### **John 17:12 (NIV)**

- 14) The LABC further comments:

Luke wrote that "Satan entered Judas, called Iscariot" before he went to the religious leaders (Luke 22:3 NIV). However, Satan's part in the betrayal of Jesus does not remove any of the responsibility from Judas. In God's sovereign will and according to his timetable, he uses sinful men. But that doesn't excuse their sin. All people will be held accountable for their choices and actions.

- 15) So, in regard to Bonnie’s question and how do we compare the betrayal of Judas to the denial of Peter?
- 16) First, we have no indication of whether Judas ever repented or not.
  - a) We know that he threw the 30 pieces of silver back at the Sanhedrin.
  - b) We know that he committed suicide.
  - c) What we cannot say is if either of those acts indicated more than regret.

## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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- d) Looking at John's statements regarding Judas it would appear to me at least that Judas had much more to repent of than just the betrayal.
- e) Then, we have Jesus' statement in His prayer

None has been lost except the one **doomed to destruction** so that Scripture would be fulfilled.

- f) Now, in all honesty, we can really look at that meaning or reference of "lost" as being from the original 12 disciples OR "lost" in terms of lost for eternity.
  - i) In the Greek, the actual phrase that the NIV has a "doomed to destruction" is "son of destruction".
  - ii) Either way, it would most likely mean lost for eternity.

17) Looking at Peter, his denial was predicted by Jesus as certainly as that of Judas' betrayal.

- a) My thoughts here are that Peter, even at the very moment Christ told him what he was going to do, in his heart of hearts he could not envision himself doing it.
- b) As to his personal results, once he realized what he had done and Christ looked at him he wept bitterly. Regret or Repentance?
- c) We really don't know at that point.
- d) We must also remember that even though we have a record of Peter denying Christ vocally, he at least followed Christ into the trials.
- e) The rest of the disciples scattered – not a vocal denial but a denial none the less.
  - i) At a minimum, we are seeing them renege on their equally vocal affirmations that they would die with Jesus.
- f) Then, there is Thomas – he lost his faith and refused to believe without proof! Sin or not? Perhaps another question for another day.
- g) We do know that in the appearance of Christ to the 7 disciples by the shore, Christ addressed Peter directly and asked him pointedly 3 times if he loved him – each time Peter answered yes emphatically. Regret or Repentance?
- h) Then, we can simply look at Peter's commitment to the kingdom and the mission he was given.
- i) And, the conclusion of his life – he did exactly what he said he would – he died for Christ as a martyr. Regret or Repentance?

***Now, I said my piece – What do you say?***

***Did Judas repent? Was Judas lost forever?***

***What about Peter – did he repent?***

18) Once Judas is called out and leaves, the meal continues.

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19) It is during and probably toward the end of the next phase of the celebration that Jesus institutes the conversion for the Passover meal to what we call the Lord's supper.

20) Verse 22 thru 24 read:

22 While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take it; this is my body."

23 Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, and they all drank from it. 24 "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many," he said to them.

21) Likely, the cup was the third cup of wine of the feast.

22) We do not have a clear picture of the conclusion of the Passover meal.

a) It may have ended at this point or could have proceeded to its normal conclusion.

23) In the latter case, the final cup that Jesus refers to in verse 25 might be the fourth and final cup of the meal.

25 "I tell you the truth, I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it anew in the kingdom of God."

24) Moving on to verse 26 and the next passage, we read:

### **Mark 14:26-31 (NIV)**

1) Of course, these last couple of verses are what we were referring to earlier when discussing the affirmation of Peter and the others that they would die with Christ.

2) The hymn they sang was likely from the second part of the Hallel (from Ps 116-118).

3) Again, we don't know the exact location of the place where they held the Passover meal but, it was likely not far from the Temple and the Mount of Olives.

4) I'm sure that the disciples were still reeling over the fact that Judas was betraying their Lord.

5) And then ...

27 "You will all fall away," Jesus told them, "for it is written: "I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.'" (Zach 13:7)

6) This had to be an absolute gut punch to these men.

7) It is no wonder that they all – especially Peter would deny this emphatically.

8) They truly felt that they would not and they would for sure not want to suffer the same Woe! Comment that Jesus made about Judas.

9) They now enter the garden ...

### **Mark 14:32-42 (NIV)**

1) Gethsemane was just outside the eastern wall of Jerusalem and just at the western foot of the Mount of Olives.

## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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- 2) The garden was in the Kidron Valley.
- 3) Beyond the cross itself, this is perhaps the most traumatic time in Jesus' life.
- 4) We see agony at the thought of the ordeal He is about to face.
- 5) As human beings, we can perhaps understand some of the facets of the "cup" that Jesus speaks of.
  - a) Certainly, we can all understand the trauma of facing the horrific death on the cross that He is about to face.
  - b) We can understand the desire not to experience the terrible physical pain that He knows He will be enduring.
  - c) The personal pain of departing from family, friends, and loved ones.
  - d) In all truth, the mission and God's plan is about to be a total success but there may have been as a human, even some feelings of failure at getting to this point.
- 6) All that being said, there are two things we cannot identify with.
- 7) First, there is the separation from the Father at the level of Jesus.
  - a) Jesus had, throughout eternity, to this point, been in the presence of the Father.
  - b) Whether on earth in this human bodily form or as God's son in heaven.
  - c) For the first time in eternity, Jesus would be separated from the Him.
  - d) Though He knows it is temporary – it is still a separation that we cannot know.
- 8) The second is the reason for the separation – the bearing of the sins of the world.
  - a) You nor I could ever truly understand what this meant.
  - b) We can and probably should make some basic assumptions about this.
    - i) Jesus would feel the guilt that would be caused by having committed these sins.
    - ii) He would not "just bear them" He would likely feel the pain of remorse for having committed them.
      - (1) I have shared this example before – accidentally killing someone's pet that runs out in front of you.
      - (2) That feeling of helplessness, regret, sadness, and pain is perhaps in a very small and miniscule way what Jesus is feeling.
    - iii) Not just for one or two things but ALL sins that had happened before and ALL sins that will take place after.
    - iv) How absolutely horrifically bad would that make anyone feel – especially someone who had lived a perfect life and had never committed even one sin.
- 9) Additionally in the garden, we see here Jesus' humanity being tempted and tested to the core.
- 10) In the movie *The Passion of the Christ* that came out a some years ago – the author had a snake as part of the garden scene.



## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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- 11) In retrospect, that was most likely an accurate representation of what was actually happening – not necessarily the actual snake but the snake representing the devil.
  - 12) This is perhaps the last ditch attempt of Satan to change his fate – to prevent Jesus from completing His mission and sealing the fate of the devil and his minions for all eternity.
  - 13) Jesus however, doesn't listen or entertain Satan's words.
  - 14) Instead He prays. For all indications, fervently that the cup would pass from Him but always looking to the will of the Father above all else.
  - 15) Jesus had obviously wanted Peter, James, and John to do a couple of things during this time.
    - a) First, He wanted them to keep guard – watch for Judas and those Jesus knew would be coming for Him.
      - i) He needed as much time in prayer as He could have.
    - b) Second, He wanted them to pray as well.
  - 16) Neither took place to the degree that Jesus desired – the disciples were exhausted (physically and emotionally) and could not stay awake.
  - 17) As much as Jesus wanted them to do this He also understood why they couldn't and where their heart really was.
- 37 Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. "Simon," he said to Peter, "are you asleep? Could you not keep watch for one hour? 38 Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak."
- 18) When He returns the third, time, He knows that Judas is approaching and simply gathers the eleven disciples around Him once more.

- 1) First, need to make a minor correction to our discussion last time – I was saying that Peter alone followed Jesus into the trials.
  - a) That is, according to John, not true – my BAD!

**John 18:15–16 (NIV)**

- 2) Obviously, we do not know who this disciple was however, Peter was NOT the only disciple who followed Jesus to the trials.
- 3) A second thing that might have bearing on our discussions of Peter’s denial and its consequences – I was reminded this week that Christ appeared to Peter alone.

Oswald Chambers comments on this:

Peter had denied Jesus Christ with oaths and curses, and yet after the Resurrection Jesus appeared to Peter alone. He restored him in private, then He restored him before the others. “Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee.”

Oswald Chambers, *My Utmost for His Highest: Selections for the Year* (Grand Rapids, MI: Oswald Chambers Publications; Marshall Pickering, 1986).

- 4) Of course that last comment “restored him before others” I assume refers to the meeting by the shore with the seven that we discussed last time.
- 5) Chambers’ dates were 1874-1917 so the use of the KJV is not surprising in his quote.
- 6) Getting back to where we were, in this next passage, we see the beginning of the end.
- 7) Jesus has prayed intensely and came through perhaps His greatest temptation.
- 8) Mark’s account of the events of Jesus’ capture is very short and to the point.
- 9) Though it is short, one thing is perfectly clear – Jesus faces the events that follow with bold resolve and in all that remains He is peaceful and loving.

**Mark 14:43-50 (NIV)**

- 1) We begin here with the coming together of Judas the betrayer and with the support of a crowd supplied by the religious leaders.
  - a) Mark says they, the suppliers, were the chief priests, the teachers of the law, and the elders.
  - b) The Sanhedrin, the Jewish supreme court was made up of men from these elite.
- 2) We are not told by Mark the details of what happened when Judas left the Passover meal.
- 3) John tells us a little about how he might have known where to lead the arresters.

**John 18:2–3 (NIV)**

2 Now Judas, who betrayed him, knew the place, because Jesus had often met there with his disciples. 3 So Judas came to the garden, guiding a detachment of soldiers and some officials from the chief priests and the Pharisees. They were carrying torches, lanterns and weapons.

- 4) One way or the other, it all comes together and Judas proceeds to carry out his plan of betrayal.

## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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- 5) John 18 mentions a contingent of soldiers which were probably a small group of Roman soldiers.
  - i) They did not make the arrest but were likely there to make sure things stayed under control.
- 6) The rest of what Mark describes as “a crowd” and John describes as “officials from the chief priests and the Pharisees” was probably made up of members of the temple guard.
  - i) These were Jewish men given authority by the leaders to make arrests for minor infractions.
- 7) We really are not told of any others who we might call “just plain folks” were in the “crowd” or not.
  - a) We are told that some had “clubs and swords”.
  - b) This is not definitive but I would not think this would have been worthy of mentioning if it were just the temple guards and the contingent of soldiers – that would have been expected.
- 8) Judas pointed out Jesus with a formal greeting, a common kiss.
  - a) One commentary indicated that this was not because Jesus was hard to recognize but because in doing the identifying in this manner, Judas was agreeing to be a formal accuser in case a trial was called.
- 9) Next, one of the disciples pulls a sword and, likely in an attempt to cut off the head of one of those who had come to arrest Jesus, winds up cutting off his ear instead.
- 10) John 18:10 identifies that disciple as Peter, and the high priest’s slave as Malchus.
- 11) But the Lord put an abrupt end to Peter’s brash heroics which if escalated could have ended in a complete alteration of God’s divine plan.
  - a) A riot and physical confrontation with the armed crowd could have ended with some if not all the disciples being killed and perhaps even Jesus himself.
- 12) Knowing this, Jesus issued a direct command to Peter and the other disciples,  
“Stop! No more of this” (Luke 22:51).
- 13) Then, in an act of mercy and divine power, the Lord touched the ear of Malchus and miraculously healed it.
  - a) In truth, He probably re-created it and healed any other injuries that might have accompanied such a blow.
- 14) Jesus then brings to focus the event.
- 15) Regardless of the make up of the crowd, many of them were either in the temple while He taught or knew of His presence and yet here it is after midnight and they come to seize Him in secret – away from the eyes of the rest of Jerusalem.
- 16) To state the obvious here, throughout His ministry, Jesus’ enemies had repeatedly tried to take His life, but without success.

## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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- a) These other attempts were not on the Father's timetable.
- 17) Despite His own desires that the cup would pass from Him, the Lord would lay down His life, but not until His hour had come.
- 18) In keeping with all that, Jesus acknowledged that the events surrounding His arrest were taking place to fulfill the Scriptures.
- 19) To complete this scene, in verse 51, we see a detail that is unique to Mark's account.

### **Mark 14:51-52 (NIV)**

- 20) Because this detail is unique to Mark's gospel, some interpreters have suggested that perhaps the young man was Mark himself.
  - a) As you may recall, during the introduction to this series of lessons, we even discussed a scenario that would have explained Mark's presence in the garden that evening.
  - b) Again, speculation.
- 21) But nothing in the text indicates who the man was, making attempts to identify him entirely speculative.
- 22) One thing that we really should consider however is that the construction of the sentences here indicate that the young man in question was a follower of Jesus.
- 23) According to early church historians, Mark did not know Jesus. He received his knowledge of Jesus thru Peter as he wrote his gospel and of course before that, from Paul and Barnabas.
- 24) One commentary states:

Clearly, the man's identity is irrelevant to Mark's purpose for including this shocking detail in his historical record. Mark's point was likely to emphasize the complete isolation Christ experienced in that moment. The huge crowds who had heard Him teach in the temple were nowhere to be found.
- 25) Another comment I read suggested that Mark included this fact to make a connection to another Old Testament scripture – Amos 2:15-16

### **Amos 2:15-16 (NIV)**

- 26) This is a description of the utterly defeated soldier. If indeed this is the case, it might show how Peter and the others must have felt at this point.
- 27) They had all declared that they would never leave the Lord and, would truly, die with Him.
  - a) Now, they know they have absolutely failed in that promise.
- 28) There are times in our lives when we feel compelled to commit to an action just as the disciples did that night – circumstances, emotions, etc. make it the "thing to do".
- 29) At other times when we feel safe in our surroundings or we take life lightly, it is easy to consider ourselves prepared for anything.

***In living our lives as Christians, how do we assure that our commitments are always true? Or can we?***

## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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### **Mark 14:53-65 (NIV)**

- 1) Mark does not record the first interrogation which took place at the house of Annas the deposed high priest.

### **John 18:12b-14 (NIV)**

- 2) Annas had been Israel's high priest from AD 6 to 15, when he had been deposed by Roman rulers.
  - a) According to Josephus, Valerius Gratus, a Roman procurator, removed Annas from office in 15 C.E. for imposing and executing capital sentences.
  - b) As we have discussed before, the Jews were not allowed to impose capital punishment under Roman law.
    - i) Ishmael ben Fabus served from 15 to 16 then he was deposed.
    - ii) Eleazar ben Ananas 17 to 18 and he was then followed Caiaphas (son-in-law of Annas) who was high priest until 36. Obviously a time of upheaval in the Jewish leadership.
  - c) Not unexpected that Annas would have a key roll in the crucifixion 15 or so years later.
- 3) Then Caiaphas had been appointed high priest. He held that position from AD 18 to 36/37.
- 4) This is where Mark picks up. After the stop at the home of Annas, Jesus was taken to the home of Caiaphas to face the assembled Sanhedrin.
- 5) The irony of their law keeping is so prevalent throughout all this that it is striking.
  - a) Trials could only be held during the day – not at night.
  - b) In order to comply with this, they did all the preliminary work here at Caiaphas' house and then had a more formal sentencing take place in the temple at daybreak.
  - c) This is recorded in chapter 15:1
- 6) Peter followed to Caiaphas' house and was warming himself by the fire along with the soldiers.
- 7) We will pick up the rest of his story in verse 66.
- 8) Verses 55 thru 59 show a dismal failure of the Jewish leadership's plan.
- 9) Their hopes were frustrated when their witnesses failed to agree or provide any evidence whatsoever that would be worthy of condemning Jesus to death.
- 10) They were frustrated – no doubt but, they were also resolved to see this threat to their very existence removed permanently from their midst.
- 11) The verdict of this mockery of trial was sealed before Jesus was ever arrested.
- 12) As you may recall, Caiaphas had stated some time before that this was going to be the plan and final outcome of this entire situation.

### **John 11:49-53 (NIV)**

## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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- 13) His idea of “die for the Jewish nation” was different from God’s but the outcome was going to be the same – Jesus would indeed “die for the Jewish nation” and all mankind.
- 14) At verse 60, we have arrived at a point where legally, Jesus was free to go.
- 15) Obviously, physically and truly He was not.
- 16) The Sanhedrin and especially Caiaphas were totally frustrated.
- 17) Next, we see the tipping point. Caiaphas in his frustration had hoped to prod Jesus into denying or answering in the affirmative to one or all of the accusations that had been leveled against Him.
- 18) Instead Jesus, despite His predicament remained composed and answered nothing.
- 19) Jesus made no attempt to answer any of the confusing and erroneous evidence which all these witnesses had brought against Him.
- 20) Then came the question:
- Again the high priest asked him, "Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One?"
- 21) Matthew indicates that Caiaphas added a special accent to the question:

### **Matt 26:63 (NIV)**

- 22) To not answer, or to answer this question any way but with the truth would have been denying His deity and His mission.
- 23) So, without hesitation, He answers, knowing full well that the answer would seal His fate:
- 24) As I read this in review, I felt as though Jesus was additionally saying – “Enough! Lets get this over with!!
- 62 "I am," said Jesus. "And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven."
- 25) To remove any ambiguity from His answer, He quotes the beginning of a passage from Daniel that anyone in that room would have known:

### **Dan 7:13-14 (NIV)**

- 26) All that He had done in His life had come to this final statement.
- 27) This was Him overcoming the last temptation and completely submitting to the Father’s will.
- 28) The high priest tares his clothes and asks for a vote from the members of the Sanhedrin.
- 29) They all condemned Him.
- a) There may have been at least two dissenting votes – Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus
  - b) We know that both were members of the Sanhedrin and that both were at least sympathetic to and had previously had contact with Jesus.
- 30) At this point, just before the guards take Jesus away, some of the members of the Sanhedrin began to spit on Him and demand that He prophesy.

## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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- a) Of course, the demand to prophesy is a taunt.
- b) They blindfolded Him and then struck Him and wanted Him to tell them who it was that hit Him.
- c) Ultimate viciousness of some of the men that were so filled with hate.

### **Mark 14:66-72 (NIV)**

- 1) As we consider Peter's involvement in the writing of Mark's narrative, we have to know that this must have still been a sad memory for Peter.
- 2) We all know that God forgives our sins and "remembers them no more" but as humans, we do not have that ability – to remember no more.
- 3) Instead, some things we do or say, no matter how far in the past they are, they are still painful to remember.
- 4) We know we are forgiven but the very fact that we did them and perhaps the hurt we caused is always with us.
- 5) As we mentioned, Jesus was first taken to Annas, and then to the assembled Sanhedrin and Caiaphas Annas' son-in-law.
- 6) Likely, this was all in one place. As you may recall, we discussed a few weeks back the fact that many families in that time lived in dwellings called Insulas.
  - a) These were multifamily dwellings with a large courtyard in the center.
  - b) Likely this is what we have here.
  - c) So, even though Jesus is moved, Peter would still be in the same courtyard by the fire as mentioned here.
- 7) Basically, Peter gets called out three times over a period of time. We really don't know how much time elapses between each incident.
  - a) Luke tells us in one case that about an hour had passed between denials.
- 8) When we look at Peter's actions here, if we are honest, we probably see ourselves at various times.
  - a) I'm sure we do not call down curses on ourselves and become as vehement as Peter, but we do, in various ways deny our Lord.
  - b) Anytime we fail to be what we are called to be because we allow our own selfish desires override what we know is right – we deny Him.
    - i) That was blatantly Peter's situation – denial for self preservation!
- 9) Our way out of the situation is to come to the realization we have committed the sin, be sorrowful and request forgiveness.

10) I think John MacArthur sums this up as well as anyone might:

Incredibly, the man who fearfully disavowed the Lord Jesus would become the

## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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fervent preacher of the book of Acts—boldly proclaiming the gospel on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:14–40) less than two months after the devastating collapse of courage recorded in this passage. Jesus had predicted that Peter, after he was restored, would strengthen his fellow believers (cf. Luke 22:32). That promise was fulfilled, not only in Acts (cf. Acts 4:14–31) but also years later when Peter explained to persecuted Christians in Asia Minor that true faith cannot fail, even when severely tested (cf. 1 Peter 1:6–7).

In his failings, Peter learned that pride and overconfidence make believers spiritually vulnerable. But God grants the victory to those who are humble, dependent on Him, and on guard in the face of temptation (cf. 2 Peter 3:17–18). As the forgiven apostle explained in 1 Peter 5:5–8,

And all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE.

6 Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, 7 casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you. 8 Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. NASU

MacArthur, John. Mark 1-16 MacArthur New Testament Commentary Two Volume Set (MacArthur New Testament Commentary Series) . Moody Publishers. Kindle Edition.

### ***What do we take away from what Peter did and what he says here? – How do we apply this to our lives everyday?***

- Anytime we sin, we deny Christ – not just when it is in front of others as Peter did.
- We must be careful to not become “overconfident” in our walk.
  - When we begin to rely on ourselves more than the Lord we are vulnerable to fall.
  - No matter how strong we think we are we must realize that Satan is always there ready to inject himself into our lives.
  - Christ is our protector – not us!



**Mark 15:1-5 (NIV)**

- 1) As we look back, we know that the Sanhedrin had already made its decision to put Jesus to death.
- 2) However, the law said that the decision must be made during the daylight hours so, they waited until after sunup to make it official.
- 3) One commentary noted also that these types of trials, by law, must take place in the temple so they may have reconvened there after sunup.
- 4) To show how hypocritical these men were at this time, the convenient parts of the law, i.e. decision after sunup and trial in the temple were taken care of and carefully observed.
  - a) But, they wanted it done immediately so they ignored the part of the law that said there had to be a full day between a conviction of this type and the actual execution so that new evidence could be brought if available.
  - b) Instead, they immediately take Jesus to Pilate to bring this to a quick end.
- 5) They wanted Jesus executed on a cross which was a method of death that according to Deut 21:23 brought a curse.
  - a) When the Jewish leaders did execute someone illegally (which they have and will do on several occasions) it is by stoning.
- 6) They also wanted to make the Romans responsible for Jesus' execution so that the crowds wouldn't blame them.
- 7) As we know, these guys convicted Jesus on theological grounds — blasphemy.
- 8) But they knew that that charge would be thrown out of a Roman court.
- 9) They had to come up with a political reason for Jesus' death.
- 10) Their strategy was to show Jesus as a rebel who claimed to be a king and thus a threat to Caesar.
- 11) There were other charges but the main charge against Jesus in the Roman court was treason and we see that Pilate focuses on that.
- 12) Pilate was their chosen instrument for accomplishing their end.
- 13) Pilate was in Jerusalem during the Passover to maintain order and keep the peace.
- 14) He was no doubt aware of who Jesus was and all He had done in the city that week, from His triumphal entry to His clearing of the temple.
- 15) The Roman cohort that were present when Jesus was arrested on Friday morning in the garden would not have been dispatched without Pilate's knowledge or permission.
- 16) As we will see, even considering all this, he never believed that Jesus posed a serious political threat, as the Sanhedrin alleged.
- 17) Moving on to verses 6 thru 15 we find ...

## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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### **Mark 15:6-15 (NIV)**

- 1) Only as a matter of completeness, we should mention that, as we see in Luke's account, somewhere in the middle of this interrogation Jesus is sent before Herod Antipas.
  - a) Mention was made that Jesus was a Galilean which meant that he was really under Herod's jurisdiction.
  - b) Pilate was hoping for some help.
  - c) He was hoping that Herod would either take responsibility for the execution or free Jesus.
  - d) As, we know, Herod sent Jesus back to Pilate – no actual help given on either account.
- 2) At this point, it has become obvious to Pilate that Jesus is innocent of anything that had to do with an insurrection or his even being a problem for Rome.
  - a) Especially a problem that would warrant death.
- 3) Pilate is now looking for anyway possible to free Jesus and be done with this whole affair.
- 4) This passage opens with what I think is more a description of what Pilate is thinking.
  - a) He knows that at some point here, the crowd will ask for the customary release of a prisoner.
  - b) This was a custom he himself had instituted.
  - c) He is probably thinking that Barabbas would likely not be their top choice.
  - d) So, that is whom he chooses as the alternate when he asks them if they would suggest.  
Matthew states:

### **Matt 27:17 (NIV)**

- 5) The crowd being egged on by the religious leaders of course requested Barabbas instead.
- 6) One commentary brought up an interesting question – where were the disciples and all the other followers of Jesus during this mob scene?
- 7) Likely, they were in hiding, fearing for their lives as well.
- 8) Another alternative might be that they might have been there but, they would have been vastly outnumbered and outshouted.
- 9) If the entire Sanhedrin was there, that would be 70 religious leaders egging on the crowd to ask for Jesus to be crucified and Barabbas to be freed. We don't know the actual size of this crowd – not probably the multitude that welcomed Jesus a few days before.
- 10) Pilate gives in and, frees Barabbas then he asks:  
"What shall I do, then, with the one you call the king of the Jews?"
- 11) The crowd's answer is a resounding "Crucify him!"
- 12) At this point, Pilate basically gives up. As Mark indicates:

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Wanting to satisfy the crowd, Pilate released Barabbas to them. He had Jesus flogged, and handed him over to be crucified.

13) The flogging as you have probably been told in the past is a horrific ordeal in itself.

- a) The instrument is consists of leather strips with bone or metal fragments at the ends.
- b) It is designed to tear away at the flesh – even to the depth of victims bone.
- c) For the Romans, it was customary to flog prisoners who were to be executed on the cross.
  - i) It so weakened them that they would die quicker.

14) During this particular flogging, Jesus is also humiliated and taunted.

Beginning in vs. 16 we read ...

### **Mark 15:16-20 (NIV)**

- 1) Were you ever mocked as a kid? Kids can be exceedingly cruel in what they say to others.
- 2) Here we have grown men doing that same kind of mocking to our Lord.
- 3) The number of men involved here is debatable. Some commentators have the number between 500 and 1000 (size of a company). Others fix the number at 200.
- 4) I personally cannot see 500 to 1000 men involved in this – in fact I think perhaps, 200 may be high.
- 5) Without regard to the actual number, we can know with certainty that there were a lot of men involved in this mocking making the whole act horrific.
- 6) As I contemplated this, I almost think that Jesus was in enough pain that He may not have even heard the mocking and taunts.
  - a) Deep open wounds most likely on His back, sides, and arms.
  - b) Many thorns piercing in His scalp and forehead.
  - c) Being struck in the head – not with their hands but with a staff – not hard enough to knock Him out – just enough to cause more pain.
- 7) Once they had had their “fun” they took the purple robe off him and put his regular outer garments on him and led him away to be crucified.
- 8) Jesus at this point was about as low as any human being could possibly be.
- 9) As they start this trek to Golgotha He was weak from the physical ordeal that began with the flogging, humiliated, and in severe pain,
  - a) He now faces what He knew was an even worse physical ordeal to begin in only a few minutes.

### **Mark 15:21-25 (NIV)**

## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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1) This section begins with an interesting turn of events – Simon was forced to carry the cross for Jesus because He himself was too physically weak at this point to carry it alone.

2) John MacArthur connects the dots for us on this event:

Mark identifies Simon as the father of Alexander and Rufus, an unexplained reference that indicates Mark's readers were familiar with Simon's sons. Since Mark wrote for Gentile believers in Rome, Alexander and Rufus were almost certainly active in the church there. That conclusion is supported by Paul's mention of Rufus and his mother (Simon's wife) in Romans 16:13. Wondrously, the man who carried Jesus' cross came to embrace Him in saving faith, as did his wife and sons.

3) They offered Jesus myrrh mixed with wine to drink. This was actually a mixture made to dull pain.

4) Jesus refused to take it. He would suffer fully conscious and with a clear mind as He could maintain.

5) Jesus was in all likelihood wearing traditional Jewish garments.

6) They included an inner garment, an outer garment (or tunic), a belt, sandals, and a headpiece.

1) As if this ordeal in itself was not enough, there is more.

2) These next verses highlight the mockery that Jesus endured while hanging on the cross.

### **Mark 15:26-32 (NIV)**

3) We begin with the mockery of the written notice placed on the cross of every crucified criminal.

4) In Jesus' case, the full inscription read "This is Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews".

a) The sign was written in Aramaic, Hebrew, and Greek so that anyone passing by could see the crimes that brought an end to the individual.

b) The Jewish leaders did not want this sign to read as it did but Pilate would not change it.

c) That was the charge that they had brought against Him and despite their protests that was the charge for which He was being crucified.

d) This laid the blame squarely on their shoulders – not the desired charge of insurrection that they wanted Him to be crucified for.

e) Remember, the Jewish leaders wanted to cause the crucifixion to be because the Romans found Him guilty of something – thus, the people would blame them and not the Jewish leaders.

5) This ordeal points out clearly that the Roman way of "justice" was not anything like what we enjoy in America today.

6) One person, Pilate, could be forced into sentencing someone to death with no court, no attorneys, no appeals – simply a pronouncement of "crucify Him".

## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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- 7) Along side Jesus were two robbers, common thieves who may have even been involved with the same insurrection that Barabbas was accused of leading.
- 8) Here again, we run into one of those verses that may or may not be in your translation – verse 28 says

“that the Scripture was fulfilled which says, “and He was numbered with transgressors”.

- a) This phrase was not in the earliest and best manuscripts.
  - b) Copyists could have added it from Luke 22:37
  - c) Regardless of how it got into Mark’s gospel, it has been deemed added so it is either removed or in brackets in most modern translations.
- 9) I find it interesting that Mark reports at the end of verse 32 that these two men (at least one of them) also “hurled insults at Him”
  - 10) Another very interesting thing can be seen indirectly from the insult that Mark reports in verse 29.

"So! You who are going to destroy the temple and build it in three days, 30 come down from the cross and save yourself!"

- a) Nowhere in Mark’s gospel does he report the incident that these passers-by are referring to.
- b) Peter would obviously have known of it, but Mark’s complete readership (the church at Rome) could only have learned of it from John’s gospel.

### **John 2:15-19 (NIV)**

- 11) Finally, Mark reports at least some of the insults of the religious leaders.
- 12) They were there I guess to see this thru to the bitter end. They wanted to make sure that this problem was finally taken care of.
- 13) It is interesting also to see that this is an attempt by their mocking to discredit the sign the Pilate would not change declaring Jesus the king of the Jews.
- 14) They say:

"He saved others," they said, "but he can't save himself! 32 Let this Christ, this King of Israel, come down now from the cross, that we may see and believe."

- 1) Interestingly, this next passage, MacArthur titles “God Visits Calvary”... see if you agree with his assessment.

### **Mark 15:33-41 (NIV)**

- 2) The hour is now noon – the beginning of the end so to speak.
- 3) Jesus has been on the cross now for 3 hours – 3 hours of agony, insults, and humiliation.

## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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- 4) For the next 3 hours, darkness falls over the entire land.
- 5) Normally, death by crucifixion was very slow – it would take as much as 3 days for some men to die.
- 6) Some have attributed the darkness during this three hours to a total eclipse.
  - a) Problems with that are many.
  - b) One is simply that though a “normal” total eclipse can last up to 3 hours, the actual darkness only last for a few minutes at the longest.
- 7) We do not know the exact timing – i.e. which came first, Jesus’ out cry to God or the darkness ending but they did occur at the same time.
- 8) The word Eloi sounds much like the word for Elijah – thus the misunderstanding of those who were watching.
- 9) Jesus breathed His last.
- 10) The loud cry that Mark records could have been the words that John records in John 19:30 – “it is finished”**
- 11) Another interesting and very relevant fact here is that Jesus unlike most who were crucified remained conscious and fully in charge of his faculties thru the entire ordeal.
- 12) Most lapse into a coma and die of suffocation and/or exhaustion.
- 13) Finally, with His out cry and death the temple veil is torn in two.
- 14) This is a very significant part of this event.
- 15) The temple had three main parts — the courts, the holy place (where only the priests could enter), and the most holy place, a place reserved by God for himself.
  - a) It was in the most holy place that the ark of the covenant, and God's presence with it, rested.
  - b) The curtain of the temple could be the outer curtain hanging between the court with the altar for burnt offerings and the actual sanctuary.
  - c) Or it could be the curtain hanging between the two areas of the sanctuary — that is, between the holy place and the most holy place also called the Holy of Holies
  - d) Most likely, the curtain that was torn was between the holy place and the most holy place.
  - e) Symbolically, this curtain separated the holy God from sinful people.
- 16) By tearing the curtain in two, God showed that Christ had opened the way for sinful people to reach a holy God.
- 17) The exact time of the death of the Lord Jesus was accompanied by two additional miracles:
  - a) A powerful earthquake followed by a preview of the resurrection.
  - b) Both are recorded in the gospel of Matthew.

**Matt. 27:51 (NIV)**

## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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- 18) Mark records no more jeers or insults – only the simple recognition by a lone centurion that by these events Jesus was undoubtedly “the Son of God”.
- 19) He concludes his narrative of the event by naming some of the women who stood by Jesus until the very end.
  - a) He mentions that Mary Magdalene was there.
  - b) Another Mary is distinguished from Mary Magdalene and Mary, Jesus' mother by the names of her sons who may have been well known in the early church.
  - c) Salome was the mother of the disciples James and John and was probably Jesus' mother's sister.
  - d) And of course, we also know that Mary the mother of Jesus was there.
- 20) Only the disciple John is mentioned in scripture as being there during the crucifixion.
- 21) The disciples had all made great promises of loyalty to Jesus but, as far as we know, save John, none were to be found at this horrible scene.
- 22) It was the women who were among Jesus’ followers who waited at cross and went to the tomb.

### **Mark 15:42-47 (NIV)**

- 1) Mark only records that Joseph of Arimathea asked for the body.
- 2) However, Nicodemus was also involved.
- 3) It is interesting to note also that the Jewish leaders were also involved – not in the burial but in assuring that Jesus and the other two men crucified with him were dead.
- 4) Though they had for all intents and purposes just committed murder by Pilate’s hand, they were concerned about the rules that the bodies not be left on the crosses overnight into the Sabbath.
- 5) By the leaders making their request, they became instruments of God’s plan.
  - a) They were responsible for the fulfillment of prophecies
    - i) That Jesus’ bones would not be broken and that He would be pierced.
    - ii) They were also responsible for assuring that Jesus was dead since the Romans would not remove the bodies from the cross without first assuring that they were dead.
      - (1) Breaking legs to assure suffocation.
- 6) It is under these circumstances that Joseph requests the body of Jesus.
- 7) In doing this, both he and Nicodemus were totally exposed as followers of Christ and would of course be in conflict with the rest of the Sanhedrin.
- 8) After being assured by the Centurion that Jesus was dead, Joseph’s wish was granted.
- 9) He then takes the body and places it in his own tomb.

## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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- 10) The two Mary's who had been at the crucifixion and stayed to the end either watched where Joseph placed Jesus' body or perhaps they were even involved in the burial process.
- 11) In either case, Mark mentions this so that his audience would know that they knew where the body was in order for them to accomplish what comes next.

### **Mark 16:1-8 (NIV)**

- 1) We are now at the point of the first discovery of Jesus' resurrection.
- 2) These women who had stood at the cross for many hours and watched as their beloved teacher's body was removed from that cross and placed in a tomb are now on their way to take care of His body as required.
- 3) The disciples had all deserted Jesus and were basically in hiding in Jerusalem.
- 4) The women were alone and really had two concerns.
  - a) One stated here was that of rolling away the stone.
  - b) The other (not spoken here) was that of the guards that had been posted.
  - c) It could be that these guards would not allow them entry for fear they might steal the body.
- 5) Turns out neither of these were a problem.
  - a) The guards are not mentioned but the stone, was, to their surprise, already removed from the tomb.
- 6) Having seen the stone rolled away, they were likely cautious as they entered.
- 7) And then, the next surprise – the body was not there and, there was a young man dressed in white sitting to the right.
- 8) Of course, they became alarmed – who wouldn't at this turn of events.
- 9) Next the angel speaks to them:

"Don't be alarmed," he said. "You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him. 7 But go, tell his disciples and Peter, 'He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.'"

“The words He has risen are literally "He is raised." God raised Jesus from the dead. The Resurrection was not an act of Jesus' power, but a vindication of Jesus' divinity.”

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- 10) John records that the linen cloths that had been wrapped around Jesus' body were left as if Jesus had passed right through them.
- 11) The handkerchief was still rolled up in the shape of a head, and it was at about the right distance from the wrappings that had enveloped Jesus' body (John 20:6-7).



## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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- 12) A grave robber couldn't possibly have made off with Jesus' body and left the linens as if they were still shaped around it. The best explanation was that Jesus had risen from the dead, just as he had said he would.
- 13) Additionally, angel's words held hope of renewal and forgiveness for the disciples.
- 14) They were invited to meet Jesus in Galilee — there was work to do.
- 15) The angel made special mention of Peter to show that, in spite of Peter's denials, Jesus had not disowned and deserted him.
- 16) Peter had wept bitterly after his denials (14:72). Jesus forgave Peter and still considered him to be one of his disciples.
- 17) Besides, Jesus had great responsibilities for Peter to fulfill in the church which was not yet born.
- 18) Getting to vs. 8 is a vital point in our study.

8 Trembling and bewildered, the women went out and fled from the tomb. They said nothing to anyone, because they were afraid.

- 19) This is not unusual for Mark to show this type of reaction to exceeding fear. For a typical example we need only to look at Mark 4:41 and 9:30.

Mark 4:40-41 (NIV)

Mark 9:30-32 (NIV)

- 20) Fear is an appropriate response to divine power. These women have absolutely observed divine power here.
- 21) An angle of God has told them the news of a risen Savior and they are witnessing for themselves the empty tomb.

### ***Verses 9-20 and a Few Comment on Multiple endings:***

- 1) If you have perhaps looked at the footnotes for this chapter in your bibles, you may be aware that verse 8 is most likely the last verse of Marks original writing.
- 2) Though all the translations that I could find do have verses 9 thru 20, [The most reliable early manuscripts and other ancient witnesses do not have Mark 16:9-20.]
- 3) Most scholars believe that verses 9 to 20 were added sometime in the second century or later.
- 4) The testimony of the early church fathers also indicates that these verses were not part of the original text of Mark's Gospel.
- 5) The section seems to have been added to give this Gospel, what some consider, a more suitable ending.
- 6) Thus, most modern translations note that these verses are absent from our earliest manuscripts but include them anyway.

## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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### **Mark 16:9-20 (NIV)**

- 7) Some have proposed that the original ending was somehow lost.
  - a) This is highly unlikely in that Mark's original writing (based on estimated dates) would have been on a scroll.
  - b) Scrolls were rolled with the first words of the writing on the outside so that the end would have been much more protected than the beginning.
- 8) What we just read is the most well-known ending and is what appears in our English Bibles, as printed in 16:9-20
- 9) In some ancient versions, another shorter ending, placed after 16:8, is as follows:

And all that had been commanded them they told briefly to those around Peter. And afterward Jesus himself sent out through them, from east to west, the sacred and imperishable proclamation of eternal salvation.

10) In another ancient manuscript, there is an expansion after 16:14, which reads,

And they excused themselves, saying, "This age of lawlessness and unbelief is under Satan, who does not allow the truth and power of God to prevail over the unclean things of the spirits. Therefore reveal your righteousness now" — thus they spoke to Christ. And Christ replied to them, "The term of years of Satan's power has been fulfilled, but other terrible things draw near. And for those who have sinned I was handed over to death, that they may return to the truth and sin no more, that they may inherit the spiritual and imperishable glory of righteousness that is in heaven" (from NRSV margin).

There are other endings, some which combine both the longer ending (16:9-20) and the shorter ending noted above.

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- 11) This ending problem is a debate among scholars that has been going on for the past 150 years.
- 12) If you wish to research this further, there are many books and papers which have been written on the subject.
  - a) One that I read which was interesting and shows clearly the various views is "Perspectives on the Ending of Mark – 4 Views" David Alan Black (editor), Darrell Bock, Keith Elliot, Maurice Robinson, and Daniel Wallace.
  - b) Very interesting but somewhat deep in places.
- 13) I personally believe that Mark's original ending was concluded with verse 8.
- 14) To that end, there are some dots that I would like to connect. I think these are plausible if not absolute.

## ***Gospel of Mark – NOTES***

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15) First, one of the criticisms of Mark's original ending is that it does not address or show the risen Lord.

- a) I personally disagree – the Mary's are told by an angel of God that Jesus has been raised and that 'He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.'
- b) That to me is proof enough even if there were no further knowledge that Christ was raised from the dead.
  - i) Of course, we know thru the other gospels of His appearances and ascension.
- c) An angel of God, an empty tomb, the burial cloths that they likely helped place on His body – all in plain view – what more would one need.

16) Second, regarding the women not saying anything to anyone.

- a) I do NOT believe this means they did not tell the disciples.
- b) I do believe that it means they did not generally speak of the incident to everyone they met.
- c) It also probably indicates that they did not say anything to the guards they were present at the tomb.

17) In short, given Mark's style and these factors I see no reason to doubt this ending.

18) There obviously is a great deal more that could and has been said about this and all the varied opinions as to how we got to this point.

19) These are some closing comments from *Perspectives on the Ending of Mark*:

Mark ended at 16:8 with an open ended attempt to say to listeners that once the message is heard, it becomes the hour of decision. Mark's ending matches the circumstances of his readers: the Resurrection is proclaimed and the only remaining issue is what will the one who hears about the Resurrection do with a risen Jesus. Mark's ending assumes that the women did emerge from their silence and fear to believe and proclaim. That is precisely where Mark wants his readers to go, even in a context like Mark's where suffering for such a decision can be anticipated. Behind this call stands the promise embodied in the Word and the action of God. We can embrace them.

Whatever view one has on this issue, there is no central teaching of the Christian faith at stake in which view is chosen. Obviously, if the Long Ending is taken as original, then everything presented there is taught.

Robinson, Maurice; Bock, Darrell L.; Elliott, Keith; Wallace, Daniel. *Perspectives on the Ending of Mark* (Kindle Locations 3367-3369). B&H Publishing Group. Kindle Edition.