



THE GOSPEL OF

# MARK

THE KINGDOM AND THE KING



# MARK

THE KINGDOM AND THE KING



# WELCOME

We are incredibly glad to have you as part of our study of the Gospel of Mark! Please know you have been prayed for by several people as you step into this new Bible study.

As you probably noticed from the cover, the full title of our study is: “The Gospel of Mark: The Kingdom and The King”. Mark is an exciting, fast-paced account of the life, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Throughout its pages we will encounter Jesus, His teachings, various miracles, and different types of characters. All this activity happens under the umbrella of God’s Kingdom coming to bear in our world—how awesome is that!?

This study is laid out such that each week you will cover a new portion of Mark. As you go through the assigned passage there are questions to guide you through your time of study. Each week is broken down into five days of material (but you are welcome to do it at whatever pace is best for you). The first day simply asks you to reflect on the passage. The second day asks introductory questions to help familiarize you with the unfolding story. As you move into the third day, the questions become more focused on how the passage from Mark connects with the rest of the Bible as a whole. Day four gives you space to process and consider what you have read and learned. The fifth day is carved out for a time of quiet prayer. This year, we are using the Prayer of Examen for our fifth day guide. That may sound like a funny name, but this is an ancient way of praying that simply asks God to examine our day/week with us. In presenting our days to God, we invite Him to speak back to us, showing us more of Himself in our daily lives.

As you get ready to step into the world of Mark, remember it is a “good news” story! There may be passages or questions that are confusing or challenging to you—that is totally okay! You are allowed to ask questions, wrestle with the Scriptures, and invite God and others to help you understand more of what you are encountering.

Something unique and truly good is happening in these pages as Jesus unleashes the Kingdom on earth! Let’s all be on the lookout for this good news as we enter this study together. May God bless your time in the Scriptures, the questions you will work through, and as you go through the Prayer of Examen each week!



# LESSON 1

MARK 1:1-13

As with any beginning, the opening of Mark tells us a lot about the book's message, goals, and main character. The first sentence tells us what we are about to experience is a "good news" story. The way Mark unfolds will somehow, according to the opening, reveal a message that will bring good news about a unique character named Jesus. This Jesus is purposefully identified as the Messiah and the Son of God in the very first verse of Mark—this should cause us to pay special attention to how that reality is unpacked as we move into this gospel.

THE BEGINNING OF THE GOOD NEWS

2. In a few sentences, summarize the passage.

1. What identifiers does Mark use to describe Jesus in Mark 1:1?
2. List the descriptors of John's appearance and his actions.
3. What things does the voice from Heaven say when Jesus is baptized?
4. What happens immediately following Jesus' baptism?



1. Right at the start of his gospel, Mark tells us it is a “good news” story. The announcement and heralding of good news is a common theme throughout the Scriptures. Often, language associated with the announcing of good news is connected with God’s reign. Read Isaiah 40:1-11 and Isaiah 52:7-10.

A. Why do these passages associate good news with God’s work?

B. How do you think this might foreshadow how Mark wants us to understand the story?

2. In 1:2-3, Mark states he is quoting from Isaiah. Actually, these verses are a combination of passages from three different Old Testament texts. Read Exodus 23:20; Isaiah 40:3; and Malachi 3:1.

A. What is happening in each of these verses?

B. Why do you think Mark combines them as part of the prologue to his story?

3. The technical word for what happens in Mark 1:10-11 is "theophany." Theophany means a revelation of God or a moment where God is directly present or revealing Himself. We are told the voice of God says three things to Jesus. (Review question #3 from Day 2 for the three things.)

A. Read Isaiah 42:1-4. What similarities do you see between this passage and the reading from Mark?

B. What role does the servant from Isaiah 42 have according to v. 3-4? What do you think Mark may be highlighting about Jesus in light of this?

1. Throughout the Bible, God's people are often seen as "wilderness people." In Exodus, the people wander around the wilderness, the prophets of the Old Testament often end up in the wilderness, and in Mark 1:12-13 Jesus goes into the wilderness. In the story of God, the wilderness seems to be a place of shaping, meeting with God, and receiving clarity and direction. Why do you think God seems to work in this way so often? Have you ever experienced a wilderness season of shaping and hearing from God?

## THE PRAYER OF EXAMEN

*Take some time this week for quiet prayer, asking God to point out various aspects of your day or week as you sit in His presence.*

- 1.) Start by considering things you are thankful for right now. Thank God for those things as you meditate on His unfailing love and faithfulness toward you.
  
- 2.) Ask God for insight and wisdom as you prepare to pray through your recent day or week with Him.
  
- 3.) Slowly review your last day or week. Consider questions like these:
  - Where did I feel joy? Why?
  - When was I angry? Why?
  - Where did I see God working?
  - Where was I challenged?
  - Are there things for which I need to ask forgiveness from God and others?
  
- 4.) Respond to your realizations during your prayer by considering what God may be prompting you to do or change moving forward.
  
- 5.) Spend a few moments praying about your upcoming day or week. Ask God to make you aware of His constant presence.



## LECTURE NOTES:



# LESSON 2

**MARK 1:14-45**

This week's reading gives us the first words of Jesus in Mark. Jesus tells us the Kingdom of God is present and that this reality requires a response of repentance and belief. This will unfold more as we move through Mark's fast-paced storytelling, so be on the lookout for how the Kingdom is breaking into the world. As our reading progresses this week, Jesus begins to perform miracles (perhaps a sign of the Kingdom moving?). As He calls His first disciples, He also demonstrates power over demons, illness, and other maladies.

**THE KINGDOM IS HERE**

1. What words, themes, or names stick out to you? What questions do you have about these verses?

2. In a few sentences, summarize the passage.

1. What are the first recorded words of Jesus in Mark?
2. What does Jesus say when He calls the first disciples? How do they respond?
3. According to Mark, what are some of the first miraculous events of Jesus' earthly ministry?
4. Based on Mark 1:38-39, why does Jesus say He came?



1. In Mark 1:14-15 we not only get the first words of Jesus in Mark's gospel—we also get a mission statement straight from Jesus about His purpose. Take a moment to re-read Mark 1:1.
  - A. Compare Mark's opening line from 1:1 with Jesus' opening statement in 1:14-15. Why do you think Jesus' statement equates "good news?"
  - B. The Greek text of Mark 1:15 uses the perfect tense for the word "time." It also uses the perfect tense for what English translations render as the phrase "has come near." The perfect tense is used to indicate that something is a present reality. In this phrase Jesus is announcing a very real, very present Kingdom. It is not far away or in the future. Rather, it is here now. How does this knowledge impact your understanding of these verses?

2. When Jesus calls the first disciples, we are told they immediately leave behind everything familiar to them including their jobs and families. These individuals went on to faithfully serve God with the mission and good news Jesus revealed to them. They became so absorbed in God's story that it became their own. These men followed God and continually preached about the good news. Most scholars believe all but one were killed for the proclamations about Jesus. Read Acts 4:1-21; Acts 12:1-2; and Galatians 2:8-10. What are the apostles doing in these passages?

3. According to the Old Testament, one of the signs and promises of God's Kingdom is the removal of impurities and evil spirits. According to Mark the banishment of evil spirits is one of the hallmarks of Jesus' ministry.

A. Read Zechariah 13:1-2. What does this passage say about impurity and evil spirits? How does Jesus begin to enact this type of Kingdom according to Mark?

B. Another impurity Jesus addresses in the beginning of Mark is that of leprosy. Persistent skin diseases were cause for removal from the community because they were considered ritualistic impurities. Read Leviticus 13:38-46. Knowing this, how does it impact your understanding of Jesus' interaction with the leprous man in Mark 1:40-45?

1. Multiple times throughout Mark's gospel, Jesus speaks on and demonstrates the importance of prayer. Even early in His ministry, we see Jesus going off for times of private prayer. Read Mark 1:35; 9:25-29; 11:23-25; and 14:38. Why do you think Jesus mentions prayer so frequently? Write out a prayer to God about whatever is currently on your mind and heart.

## THE PRAYER OF EXAMEN

*Take some time this week for quiet prayer, asking God to point out various aspects of your day or week as you sit in His presence.*

- 1.) Start by considering things you are thankful for right now. Thank God for those things as you meditate on His unfailing love and faithfulness toward you.
  
- 2.) Ask God for insight and wisdom as you prepare to pray through your recent day or week with Him.
  
- 3.) Slowly review your last day or week. Consider questions like these:
  - Where did I feel joy? Why?
  - When was I angry? Why?
  - Where did I see God working?
  - Where was I challenged?
  - Are there things for which I need to ask forgiveness from God and others?
  
- 4.) Respond to your realizations during your prayer by considering what God may be prompting you to do or change moving forward.
  
- 5.) Spend a few moments praying about your upcoming day or week. Ask God to make you aware of His constant presence.



## LECTURE NOTES:



# LESSON 3

MARK 2:1-22

Jesus' healing mission continues in this week's reading. However, physical healing is not all He offers. Pay attention this week to how Jesus' actions begin to challenge and upset the religious and social elite of His day. In Mark 2 Jesus offers a clear, concise reason for why He has come and what His purpose is among us. He also gives a challenge through a strange word picture regarding how we are to receive God's work and how it may not always look like we thought it should in our lives.

NEW WINE & NEW WINESKINS

1. What words, themes, or names stick out to you? What questions do you have about these verses?

2. In a few sentences, summarize the passage.

1. What does Jesus tell the paralyzed man?
2. What question does Jesus ask the teachers of the Law in Mark 2:8-9?
3. According to Mark 2:17, why does Jesus say He came to earth?
4. Why can new wine not be poured into old wineskins?

1. In Jesus' interaction with the paralyzed man, the religious leaders become indignant because He claims to (and then does) forgive the man's sins. While their position is correct (no one but God can forgive sins), they miss the reality that this is precisely what is happening before their eyes. The Old Testament speaks often about what it will look like when God's Kingdom comes to the earth. Read Psalm 103:8-12; Isaiah 35:5-6; and Isaiah 44:21-23. What do these verses say about healing and the forgiveness of sins?

2. In Mark 2:18-20 Jesus uses an illustration of a wedding feast to make a point about fasting. He explains how fasting only takes place while we wait for Jesus to return, but when He comes again, we will feast together in joyful celebration. The image of a wedding points back to several illustrations from the Scriptures where the coming of the Kingdom will usher in a new period of celebration as God dwells with His people.

A. Read Isaiah 61:10-11; Matthew 25:1-13; and Revelation 19:6-8. In your own words, summarize how these passages use the illustration of a wedding to point toward the joy of God's Kingdom.

B. Where have you recently (within the past two weeks) experienced joy in your faith?



3. Jesus' illustration of sewing the cloth and using the old wineskin seems strange at first. These are examples with which we are not overly familiar in our context. However, these examples would have been well known to Jesus' original listeners. He explains how new wine will burst old wineskins. The old ones are brittle and are unable to contain new things. Think about this image in light of Jesus' message in Mark 1:14-15. What do you think Jesus may be trying to convey through this illustration about His message and mission?

1. In light of Jesus' illustration with the new wine, read 1 Corinthians 2:6-10. Sometimes it is hard for us to see or understand what is happening when God does something new in our midst. The people of Jesus' day struggled with this, as illustrated through the challenges and harsh responses He often received. Bearing this in mind, and in light of the 1 Corinthians passage you read, write some thoughts about how we can respond to God when He begins to do something new and fresh in our midst.

## THE PRAYER OF EXAMEN

*Take some time this week for quiet prayer, asking God to point out various aspects of your day or week as you sit in His presence.*

- 1.) Start by considering things you are thankful for right now. Thank God for those things as you meditate on His unfailing love and faithfulness toward you.
  
- 2.) Ask God for insight and wisdom as you prepare to pray through your recent day or week with Him.
  
- 3.) Slowly review your last day or week. Consider questions like these:
  - Where did I feel joy? Why?
  - When was I angry? Why?
  - Where did I see God working?
  - Where was I challenged?
  - Are there things for which I need to ask forgiveness from God and others?
  
- 4.) Respond to your realizations during your prayer by considering what God may be prompting you to do or change moving forward.
  
- 5.) Spend a few moments praying about your upcoming day or week. Ask God to make you aware of His constant presence.

## LECTURE NOTES:



# LESSON 4

**MARK 2:23-3:35**

The Sabbath takes a front seat this week as Jesus continues to challenge the religious elite of His day. Crowds are drawn to Jesus as He moves around the area healing and teaching wherever He goes. When we get to Mark 3, Jesus has officially assembled twelve specific followers whom He uniquely appoints and charges with various responsibilities. Our passage this week ends with a strange teaching from Jesus on the nature of His mission combined with comments about His family. Pay special attention to how Jesus reframes His family and who can be included within that group.

**JESUS & THE SABBATH**

1. What words, themes, or names stick out to you? What questions do you have about these verses?

2. In a few sentences, summarize the passage.

1. What is the common theme of the events occurring from Mark 2:23-3:4?
2. How do impure spirits react when they come in contact with Jesus? What does Jesus tell them?
3. List the twelve men Jesus appoints.
4. According to Jesus, what is the defining marker of how His family is identified?



1. Last week we saw three distinct controversies between Jesus and the religious leaders— Jesus' authority to forgive, Jesus' willingness to associate and eat with "sinners," and fasting. This week, once again, the religious authorities have their anger kindled against Jesus due to issues surrounding the Sabbath. In one instance Jesus allows His hungry disciples to do the work of picking grain on the Sabbath. In the other Jesus publicly heals a man rather than adhering to the laws about the Sabbath. Consider these two examples, then read Matthew 5:17-20 and Matthew 22:34-40. How do you reconcile Jesus' apparent breaking of the Sabbath command with the information from the passages in Matthew? What do you think God may be doing?

2. Mark 3:13-19 tells us of the appointment of the twelve apostles.

A. According to Mark 3:14-15, why did Jesus appoint these individuals?

B. Consider Genesis 12:1-3; Ephesians 2:1-10; and Ephesians 2:19-22. What do you think these verses may be communicating about the breadth of God's plan to heal and restore the world? How does Jesus' appointment of the twelve apostles fit into this ongoing plan?

3. In Mark 3 Jesus' family comes to take Him home because they think He has gone crazy. They have heard of His preaching and actions and they simply cannot believe what He is doing. Jesus responds quite directly to their accusations by claiming anyone who does God's will is considered His family. Read Romans 8:14-17; Ephesians 3:14-19; and 1 John 3:1-2.

A. In your own words, explain what these passages say about God's family.

B. Does this encourage you? Challenge you? Something else? Explain your response.

1. Mark 3:22-29 contains an interesting, often confusing, story. The teachers of the Law accuse Jesus of being possessed by the prince of demons. However, Jesus counters their belief by explaining how it makes no sense for Him to be driving out demons if He, too, is possessed by one. He then explains how forgiveness is readily available to all except for those who “blaspheme against the Holy Spirit.” This statement has caused great confusion and worry for many readers of the Bible. What does this mean?  
The context of these verses offers us many clues. This interaction occurs within the larger setting of the religious leaders accusing Jesus of being possessed because He is doing miraculous works, such as driving out demons. Jesus is ushering in the Kingdom of God by healing, casting out demons, and proclaiming good news. However, rather than attribute this radical, awesome work to God, the religious leaders attribute it to powers of evil by accusing Jesus of being possessed. In doing so, they are “blaspheming against the Holy Spirit” by attributing the righteous, pure things of God to the powers of darkness. The religious leaders were blind and deeply confused about what it would actually look like when God broke into their midst. They missed God standing right in front of them because He did not conform to their long-held expectations and beliefs about how God would act. Where has God surprised you recently? Is there something you are holding onto that no longer seems to fit within God’s character or plan? Spend some time in prayer considering these things and asking God to reveal Himself and His truth to you. Write your thoughts below.

## THE PRAYER OF EXAMEN

*Take some time this week for quiet prayer, asking God to point out various aspects of your day or week as you sit in His presence.*

- 1.) Start by considering things you are thankful for right now. Thank God for those things as you meditate on His unfailing love and faithfulness toward you.
  
- 2.) Ask God for insight and wisdom as you prepare to pray through your recent day or week with Him.
  
- 3.) Slowly review your last day or week. Consider questions like these:
  - Where did I feel joy? Why?
  - When was I angry? Why?
  - Where did I see God working?
  - Where was I challenged?
  - Are there things for which I need to ask forgiveness from God and others?
  
- 4.) Respond to your realizations during your prayer by considering what God may be prompting you to do or change moving forward.
  
- 5.) Spend a few moments praying about your upcoming day or week. Ask God to make you aware of His constant presence.

## LECTURE NOTES:



# LESSON 5

**MARK 4:1-34**

In Mark 4 Jesus turns to one of His most-used teaching techniques based on all four gospel accounts: parables. It is important to note how parables are not simplistic stories told for the purpose of a moral lesson or single interpretation. Parables are sometimes (as we will see in Mark 4:10) confusing and disorienting. We will encounter four different parables this week, each with their own undercurrent and possible interpretations. These stories, told by Jesus, can reveal various aspects of God, ourselves, our world, and a host of other possibilities. Be sure to slowly read through them a few times as you begin your lesson this week.

**PARABLES, PARABLES, PARABLES...**



1. What words, themes, or names stick out to you? What questions do you have about these verses?

2. In a few sentences, summarize the passage.

1. According to Mark 4:2, how did Jesus teach the crowds?
2. List the four parables Jesus uses in this passage.
3. In Mark 4:11-12 what reason does Jesus give the apostles for teaching in parables?
4. In your own words, summarize Mark 4:33-34.

1. It seems strange Jesus refers to the “secret” of the Kingdom of God throughout Mark. We are told the maintaining of this secret is why Jesus taught in parables. What is this secret? Why does God operate this way? Read Job 12:22; Ephesians 1:3-10; Ephesians 6:18-20; and Colossians 1:24-29. In your own words, explain what each of these passages says about the mysteries of God. How do you think this might connect with the secret of the Kingdom of God?

2. In Mark 4:12 Jesus quotes from the book of Isaiah. In Isaiah 6:9-10 the prophet recounts God's explanation about the nature of the Israelites and the condition of their hearts. Just like during the time of Isaiah, the people are seeing miraculous signs and hearing God's message, but they are not truly seeing and hearing what He is doing in their midst. However, there is hope based on Mark 4:21-22, where Jesus explains things that are currently hidden or mysterious will (and must) one day be revealed. Based on what you have read and learned, what do you think is the ultimate revelation of the mystery of God? Why?

3. In both Mark 4:26 and Mark 4:30, Jesus tells the people the Kingdom of God is like something.

A. Summarize the two parables that follow these verses.

B. Often in our minds, we equate greatness with something large and attention-grabbing. However, Jesus seems to be saying the exact opposite when it comes to the Kingdom of God. Read Isaiah 55:8-9 and 1 Corinthians 13:9-12. What do these passages say about the ways and plans of God? What do they say about what we can know and experience of God's plans?

1. In what has become known as the "Parable of the Sower", the seed that falls on good soil results in a large, fruitful crop. Similarly, when we hear the good news about God's Kingdom, we should be compelled to grow and flourish in our understanding of that message. Yet, as the parable illustrates, our reception of the good news can sometimes be dulled or choked out because of the worries and trials of life. Do you more closely identify with one of the four examples given in Mark 4:3-8? How does your life with Christ feel at this time? Strong with good roots and noticeable fruit? Dry? Weak? Where can you see the potential for new growth?

## THE PRAYER OF EXAMEN

*Take some time this week for quiet prayer, asking God to point out various aspects of your day or week as you sit in His presence.*

- 1.) Start by considering things you are thankful for right now. Thank God for those things as you meditate on His unfailing love and faithfulness toward you.
- 2.) Ask God for insight and wisdom as you prepare to pray through your recent day or week with Him.
- 3.) Slowly review your last day or week. Consider questions like these:
  - Where did I feel joy? Why?
  - When was I angry? Why?
  - Where did I see God working?
  - Where was I challenged?
  - Are there things for which I need to ask forgiveness from God and others?
- 4.) Respond to your realizations during your prayer by considering what God may be prompting you to do or change moving forward.
- 5.) Spend a few moments praying about your upcoming day or week. Ask God to make you aware of His constant presence.

## LECTURE NOTES:





# LESSON 6

**MARK 4:35-5:20**

This week brings us two powerful stories demonstrating Jesus' supreme power and authority over the natural and supernatural worlds. As Jesus calms the storm, we learn faith in Jesus can help drive out our fear. As Jesus casts out a powerful demon, we learn of His mercy for those who are helpless and oppressed. When you read the Bible passage and go through your lesson this week, continue to pay attention to how you see the Kingdom of God breaking in as Jesus moves through the world.

**JESUS' POWER ON DISPLAY**

1. What words, themes, or names stick out to you? What questions do you have about these verses?

2. In a few sentences, summarize the passage.

1. What two questions does Jesus ask the disciples in Mark 4:40?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. List the descriptors given of the man with an unclean spirit from Mark 5:1-5.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. List the descriptors given of the man with an unclean spirit from Mark 5:15.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. Where does Jesus send the unclean spirit in Mark 5:1-13?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. What instruction does Jesus give the man possessed by the unclean spirit?

1. Towards the end of Mark 4, Jesus prompts His disciples to sail their boat to the other side of the lake. Storms like the one depicted in this text were common and a very real threat to sailors in this region. High waves and strong winds could easily sink smaller vessels in large bodies of water. The disciples' fear is real (remember several were previously fishermen and would have been quite familiar with this danger). However, Jesus seems to have no concern about His or the disciples' safety in the midst of the powerful storm.

A. Read Psalm 3:5-6; Psalm 4:8; and Proverbs 3:24-26. What do these verses say about the peace that is available if we place our faith in God?

B. Jesus commands the wind and waves with authority that causes their immediate cessation. Read Exodus 15:7-11; Psalm 18:15-16; Psalm 89:6-9; and Isaiah 50:2-3. How do these verses connect with the story from Mark 4?

C. Do you feel tossed around by worry or fear? Spend some time re-reading the verses listed throughout this question and consider God's power over every aspect of our lives and world. Write any reflections below.

2. Mark 5:1-20 signals an interesting shift in Jesus' ministry. Up to this point, Jesus has focused his time of teaching and healing in predominately Jewish towns and areas. Yet, when He and the disciples go to the region called "Gerasenes" in Mark 5:1, they cross over into predominately Gentile lands. This is evident not only by historical knowledge about this region but also by the presence of thousands of pigs. Pigs were an unclean animal and were not raised or tended by Jewish people. So Jesus' interactions here not only deal with a man with an unclean spirit, but they also touch on God's care for and interaction with Gentiles. Read Genesis 12:1-3; Romans 3:21-30; Romans 10:9-13; and Galatians 3:7-9, 26-29. In your own words, summarize what these verses say about God's mission to save all peoples.

3. Things like sorcery, demon possession, and exorcisms are well documented during the time of Jesus' earthly ministry. Based on historical evidence, there were a few phrases or "formulas" that were often used in such interactions. A key element in exorcisms was knowing the name of the demon. Knowing something's name gave you power to command and control it. However, in Mark 5:8-9 Jesus reverses this order and demonstrates divine power over the demon by commanding it to come out of the man before He asks for the demon's name. This may seem like a minor detail to us as modern readers, but it is of deep significance in demonstrating Jesus' power and authority. Read John 16:33 and Colossians 2:13-15. How do these verses highlight the reality of God's complete authority over evil? What encouragement does this give you this week?

1. Jesus tells the man who was previously possessed to go to his own people (presumably the Gentiles) and share with them about God's actions and mercy. According to Mark, the man begged to accompany Jesus. However, Jesus denies this request and sends him to preach in his own town. Sometimes we fall into the trap of believing effective ministry has to be grand, or it can only happen if we travel somewhere else. This is simply not true. Often the most fertile ground to minister is right in our own homes, neighborhoods, and churches. Spend some time in prayer asking God where you might serve this week in a small, simple way right where God has placed you. Write your reflections below.



## THE PRAYER OF EXAMEN

*Take some time this week for quiet prayer, asking God to point out various aspects of your day or week as you sit in His presence.*

- 1.) Start by considering things you are thankful for right now. Thank God for those things as you meditate on His unfailing love and faithfulness toward you.
  
- 2.) Ask God for insight and wisdom as you prepare to pray through your recent day or week with Him.
  
- 3.) Slowly review your last day or week. Consider questions like these:
  - Where did I feel joy? Why?
  - When was I angry? Why?
  - Where did I see God working?
  - Where was I challenged?
  - Are there things for which I need to ask forgiveness from God and others?
  
- 4.) Respond to your realizations during your prayer by considering what God may be prompting you to do or change moving forward.
  
- 5.) Spend a few moments praying about your upcoming day or week. Ask God to make you aware of His constant presence.

## LECTURE NOTES:



# LESSON 7

**MARK 5:21-43**

Jesus is on the move this week as He crosses the lake to continue His teaching and healing. In our reading we encounter Jesus as He performs two somewhat peculiar miracles. Faith plays a major role in both stories. We also get another example of Jesus disregarding purity laws of the day in favor of drawing near to the broken, weary, sick, and needy people around Him.

## TWO ODD HEALINGS

1. What words, themes, or names stick out to you? What questions do you have about these verses?

2. In a few sentences, summarize the passage.

1. How is Jairus described, and what are his actions in Mark 5:22-23?
2. What happens on Jesus' way to heal Jairus' daughter?
3. What does Jesus tell the healed woman in Mark 5:34?
4. Do you see any commonalities between the story of the woman healed from the flow of blood and the story of Jairus' daughter?

1. The woman with the issue of blood would have been an outcast in her community due to her ceremonial uncleanness. She would have been forced to avoid others, and anyone she touched would have also become unclean according to the Levitical law. While we do not know exactly what her "issue of blood" means, it is clear in the law that any such issue or health concern would make a person unclean.

A. Read Leviticus 15:1-33. What is most striking to you about this passage?

B. Note Leviticus 15:27. How do the woman's actions affect Jesus? What is Jesus' reaction toward her?

2. Faith plays a major role in both stories from this week's reading. The word "faith" is often mentioned in Christian settings. However, we do not often stop to consider what faith actually is or how it gets lived out in our daily lives.

A. Read Hebrews 11:1-6; James 1:2-8; and 1 John 5:1-5. In your own words, summarize what these passages say about faith. Is there a challenge, encouragement, or question for you in these verses?

B. In perhaps his most desperate hour, Jarius is forced to wait while Jesus pauses to address the woman who touched Him. Have you been forced to wait for something you desperately need or want? Did your faith play a role in your waiting?



3. Take some time to skim back through the portion of Mark we have covered thus far.

A. Where do you see Jesus most clearly?

B. Where do you see yourself reflected?

C. What have you learned about Jesus?

D. Where have you been challenged by Jesus?

1. Jesus pauses his journey to Jairus' house to have a purposeful, personal interaction with the woman with the issue of blood. He calls her out of isolation and invites her to tell her story. He sends her away in peace. Spend some time reflecting on this story. Now, in the space below, write part of your own story. Consider things like: how did you first encounter Jesus, when do you feel closest to God, when was a time you felt far away from God, what about Jesus is most compelling to you, etc.

## THE PRAYER OF EXAMEN

*Take some time this week for quiet prayer, asking God to point out various aspects of your day or week as you sit in His presence.*

- 1.) Start by considering things you are thankful for right now. Thank God for those things as you meditate on His unfailing love and faithfulness toward you.
- 2.) Ask God for insight and wisdom as you prepare to pray through your recent day or week with Him.
- 3.) Slowly review your last day or week. Consider questions like these:
  - Where did I feel joy? Why?
  - When was I angry? Why?
  - Where did I see God working?
  - Where was I challenged?
  - Are there things for which I need to ask forgiveness from God and others?
- 4.) Respond to your realizations during your prayer by considering what God may be prompting you to do or change moving forward.
- 5.) Spend a few moments praying about your upcoming day or week. Ask God to make you aware of His constant presence.

## LECTURE NOTES:



# LESSON 8

**MARK 6:1-29**

In our reading this week, Mark gives us three separate stories, each with their own purpose and meaning. Be on the lookout for Jesus' commission of the twelve apostles and the work they do as they travel. The remaining bulk of this week's reading is placed on the beheading of John the Baptist at the hands of King Herod. Herod and his family had strong ties to Rome and acted as puppet rulers on Rome's behalf. As you will see in Mark, the story of John's death is laced with familial drama and even some fear.

## THE DEATH OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

1. What words, themes, or names stick out to you? What questions do you have about these verses?

2. In a few sentences, summarize the passage.

1. According to Mark 6:2-3, what do the people in Jesus' hometown say about Him?
2. What about the people in His hometown amazes Jesus?
3. What instructions does Jesus give the pairs of disciples as He sends them out?
4. According to Mark 6:14-29, what were Herod's personal thoughts and feelings about John the Baptist?
5. Why did Herod have John beheaded?



1. The story of Jesus sending out the disciples draws a line of connection back to Mark 3:13-18 where He initially sets apart the specific twelve who will be close to Him.

A. Re-read Mark 3:13-15. According to those verses, why does Jesus appoint the twelve?

B. It may seem strange to us how often demons appear in Mark. Jesus casts out several demons, one of the reasons the disciples are appointed is to cast out demons, and in our text from this week we are told, once again, the disciples are sent out in pairs with one of their primary jobs being to cast out demons. Read Deuteronomy 32:17 (Note: some translations use the phrase "false gods." The word used there in Hebrew can be translated "demons"); Psalm 97:1-12; and Zechariah 13:1-2. In your own words, summarize what these verses say about demons and God's reign.

C. Based on what you have read and learned, why do you think casting out unclean spirits (demons) plays such a major role in Mark's gospel?

2. The Herodian dynasty acted as puppet-rulers for Rome. Herod the Great was the first ruler from this family (see Matthew 2). He had five wives and, through his many marriages, created a dynasty that experienced a lot of conflict, incest, and turmoil. Herod Antipas (from Mark 6) is the son of Herod the Great. Through family tree gymnastics, Herod Antipas married his half-brother Philip's wife (Herodias) who was also Antipas' niece. Herodias had a daughter (Salome) who became Herod Antipas' stepdaughter. However, due to intermarrying, Salome was also Herod Antipas' niece (on her father's side) and also his greatniece (on her mother's side). Salome is the one who danced and requested (on behalf of her mother) John the Baptist's head. John had spoken out against Herod Antipas for marrying his half-brother's wife. The role of a prophet is often to bring messages to people and generations that do not want to hear what you have to say.

A. Read Isaiah 6:1-13 and Jeremiah 1:1-19. In your own words, summarize the prophetic call of both Isaiah and Jeremiah. Do you see any commonalities between their stories?

B. Now consider John the Baptist. He acted as a prophetic forerunner to Jesus. Read Luke 1:1-17; Luke 3:1-20; and Matthew 3:1-11. How does John the Baptist fulfill the role of a prophet? What about his "origin" story sets him apart for this work?

C. Consider the role of a prophet and the stories of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and John the Baptist. Why do you think John was a necessary precursor to Jesus and His ministry?

1. At the beginning of Mark 6, Jesus returns to Nazareth, His hometown. This is the place He spent His childhood and adolescence. This is also where He would have worked as an apprentice to a carpenter in order to learn a trade and contribute to His family. The people of Nazareth watched Him grown up and knew Him better than any other town. Yet when He returns, and they hear about the things He has been saying, and even witness some miraculous signs, they are indignant and unbelieving. There is a major difference between being familiar with someone and actually knowing them. The people of Nazareth knew a lot of things about Jesus. Many had probably spent a great deal of time with Him. However, they did not truly know Him and understand what He was doing. This is an easy trap to fall into even for us today. We replace knowing Jesus personally with being acquainted with Him or knowing facts about Him. Spend some time pondering this, and ask God to reveal any places where you are merely familiar with Him (for example, knowing facts or Bible verses about God) rather than actually knowing Him personally. Write your thoughts below.

## THE PRAYER OF EXAMEN

*Take some time this week for quiet prayer, asking God to point out various aspects of your day or week as you sit in His presence.*

- 1.) Start by considering things you are thankful for right now. Thank God for those things as you meditate on His unfailing love and faithfulness toward you.
- 2.) Ask God for insight and wisdom as you prepare to pray through your recent day or week with Him.
- 3.) Slowly review your last day or week. Consider questions like these:
  - Where did I feel joy? Why?
  - When was I angry? Why?
  - Where did I see God working?
  - Where was I challenged?
  - Are there things for which I need to ask forgiveness from God and others?
- 4.) Respond to your realizations during your prayer by considering what God may be prompting you to do or change moving forward.
- 5.) Spend a few moments praying about your upcoming day or week. Ask God to make you aware of His constant presence.

## LECTURE NOTES:



# LESSON 9

MARK 6:30-56

The feeding of the five thousand and Jesus walking on water are two of the most well-known miracles from the Bible. The magnitude of these stories often overshadows the short verses right before, where Jesus, in the midst of a very busy time, instructs His disciples in the importance of solitude and rest. As you study this week, be sure to carefully and slowly read through the passage multiple times. This practice helps us pick up on things we have not previously noticed. Quiet, contemplative reading often unearths far more than we could ever imagine!

## TWO BIG MIRACLES



1. What words, themes, or names stick out to you? What questions do you have about these verses?

2. In a few sentences, summarize the passage.

1. What does Jesus say to the disciples when they return from their journeys?
2. What is Jesus' reaction when He sees the crowd following Him?
3. What does Jesus tell the disciples when they initially tell Him to send the people away to eat?
4. Why was Jesus not in the boat with the disciples?

1. The Old Testament is filled with images about what it will be like when the Kingdom of God comes to bear in our world. The prophets paint vivid images of healing, restoration, the casting out of evil, and God fully dwelling with God's people. The last book of the Old Testament, Malachi, speaks to the hope of a great prophet like Elijah rising up to lead Israel once again. Along with others like Moses, Elijah was a big deal in Jewish tradition. He was a great prophet of the Lord and had done many miraculous signs. Read Deuteronomy 34:10-12; 1 Kings 17:7-24; and Malachi 4:1-6.

A. In your own words, summarize what is said about Moses and Elijah in these verses.

B. Consider your reading from Mark this week. How does Jesus demonstrate authority like the prophets? Why do you think Mark is pointing out these specific miracles and scenarios with Jesus?

2. Jesus has compassion on the crowds that follow Him. We are told He recognizes they are just like sheep without a shepherd. The metaphor of a shepherd and sheep is strong throughout the whole Bible. Read Ezekiel 34:1-31; Jeremiah 23:1-6; and Micah 5:2-5a.

A. How do these verses use shepherd/sheep imagery?

B. What significance do you see between the imagery of the shepherd/sheep from the Old Testament with your reading from Mark?

3. Many people read the narrative of Jesus walking on the water as a story about Him saving the disciples from a storm. However, a closer reading of the text points out the disciples were not battling a torrential storm. Instead, they were battling wind that kept them from making any progress across the lake. This narrative is much more about a theophany (a revelation of God) than it is about a rescue from bad weather. Mark explains Jesus begins walking on the water and is about to pass by the disciples when they see Him and think He is an apparition. Theophanies happen throughout the Old Testament when God “passes by” His people. Read Exodus 33:17-23; Exodus 34:4-7; and 1 Kings 19:11-13. In your own words, summarize what happens when God “passes by” in these verses. How does God’s self-revelation in these passages tie in with Jesus in Mark 6?

1. Twice in this week's passage we see Jesus practice solitude and prayer. First, He takes the disciples away for solitude when they return from their preaching and ministry journeys. Second, after He feeds the 5,000, He sends the disciples ahead while He takes time to rest and pray. The role of silence, solitude, prayer, etc. must not be overlooked in our lives today. We are programmed to view success by upward mobility, checking things off a list, or successes we can show off. However, this seems to be the exact opposite of Jesus' definition of success. Spend some time this week in solitude and prayer. Ask God to refresh you and even challenge you where necessary. Write your thoughts or a prayer below.

## THE PRAYER OF EXAMEN

*Take some time this week for quiet prayer, asking God to point out various aspects of your day or week as you sit in His presence.*

- 1.) Start by considering things you are thankful for right now. Thank God for those things as you meditate on His unfailing love and faithfulness toward you.
- 2.) Ask God for insight and wisdom as you prepare to pray through your recent day or week with Him.
- 3.) Slowly review your last day or week. Consider questions like these:
  - Where did I feel joy? Why?
  - When was I angry? Why?
  - Where did I see God working?
  - Where was I challenged?
  - Are there things for which I need to ask forgiveness from God and others?
- 4.) Respond to your realizations during your prayer by considering what God may be prompting you to do or change moving forward.
- 5.) Spend a few moments praying about your upcoming day or week. Ask God to make you aware of His constant presence.

## LECTURE NOTES:





# LESSON 10

**MARK 7:1-37**

This week's reading contains three stories that, admittedly, feel disjointed. We first get a long- form teaching from Jesus on cleanliness and purity. Once again, He shakes up the religious authorities and their teachings. Then, there is an incredibly strange story about a Gentile woman asking Jesus to heal her daughter. At first, Jesus' response seems harsh and unlike Him. However, as we will explore in the lesson and the lecture this week, there is more going on here than appears at first— isn't that the way it often is with the things of God?

**CLEANLINESS, A DOG, & A HEALING**

1. What words, themes, or names stick out to you? What questions do you have about these verses?

2. In a few sentences, summarize the passage.

1. What disturbs the Pharisees about Jesus' disciples in Mark 7:1-2?
2. How does Jesus reply to the Pharisees' questions about His disciples and washing?
3. In your own words, summarize Mark 7:14-15.
4. List the two miracles Jesus performs in this passage.

1. The Pharisees were exceptionally concerned with ritualistic purity and loyalty to the Law. Their religious fervor often pushed them to add additional rules to the Law as a sort of extra protective layer so it was less likely to be broken. They were also guilty of manipulating the Law when it suited their interests. Jesus picks up on this when He addresses their concern regarding His disciples' lack of hand washing. He quotes a passage from Isaiah to remind them the Law and worship are primarily about the heart—not external appearances.

A. Read Isaiah 29:13-14. Why do you think Jesus quotes part of this passage in Mark 7?

B. Read Matthew 23:13-36. Do you see any similarities in the judgment of this passage along with the overall message of the passages from Isaiah 29 and Mark 7?

2. The story of the Syrophenician woman is admittedly odd and difficult to understand. She comes to ask Jesus to heal her daughter of an unclean spirit. Jesus seems dismissive (even rude?) at first when He essentially calls her a dog. What could be happening in this text? His response illustrates how His message is first for the Jews (the “children” in His illustration) and then for the Gentiles (the “dogs”). The woman’s great faith pushes her to press Jesus on this matter by reminding Him that even the dogs eat the crumbs from the table as they fall during the meal. While this seems like an incredibly strange story to many of us, it makes sense within the larger Biblical narrative. It may help to read Matthew’s account of this same story in Matthew 15:21-28. Consider Romans 1:14-17 and Romans 3:1-2. How do you see these two passages tying in with the ideas discussed in this question above?

3. Jesus' healing of the man who was deaf and mute falls right in line with other miracles we have seen thus far in Mark. In this section of the book, Jesus continues to minister in predominately Gentile areas (demonstrating the truth that His message is both for Jews and Gentiles). Read Isaiah 35:1-10.

A. Do you see parts of these verses from Isaiah played out in Mark 7? How?

B. Consider what we have studied in Mark so far. How do you see Jesus' mission and work beginning to bring about what is discussed in Isaiah 35?

1. The Pharisees and other religious leaders were immensely concerned with their own ritualistic purity. They believed outward appearances were more important than the condition of their hearts. It's often easier to do outward things rather than focus on the hard work of letting the Holy Spirit transform us from the inside out. Read Matthew 23:27-28 and Romans 14:12-19. What most strikes you about these passages? Do you sense God highlighting an area of your heart He wants to transform?



## THE PRAYER OF EXAMEN

*Take some time this week for quiet prayer, asking God to point out various aspects of your day or week as you sit in His presence.*

- 1.) Start by considering things you are thankful for right now. Thank God for those things as you meditate on His unfailing love and faithfulness toward you.
- 2.) Ask God for insight and wisdom as you prepare to pray through your recent day or week with Him.
- 3.) Slowly review your last day or week. Consider questions like these:
  - Where did I feel joy? Why?
  - When was I angry? Why?
  - Where did I see God working?
  - Where was I challenged?
  - Are there things for which I need to ask forgiveness from God and others?
- 4.) Respond to your realizations during your prayer by considering what God may be prompting you to do or change moving forward.
- 5.) Spend a few moments praying about your upcoming day or week. Ask God to make you aware of His constant presence.

## LECTURE NOTES:



# LESSON 11

**MARK 8:1-26**

In Mark 8 we are told of another large group feeding done by Jesus. This time Gentiles are the main beneficiaries of the miracle as Jesus continues to demonstrate how the Kingdom of God is for everyone. Jesus also gives a stern warning to watch out for the destructive ways of the Pharisees and King Herod. This analogy may take some further digging as we explore exactly what Jesus means. So, as you read, consider what Mark has already told us about Herod and the Pharisees. What is there to avoid? Why would Jesus give such a warning?

**JESUS GIVES A WARNING**

1. What words, themes, or names stick out to you? What questions do you have about these verses?

2. In a few sentences, summarize the passage.

1. What two miracles take place in this passage?
2. What do the Pharisees want from Jesus in Mark 8:11?
3. What warning does Jesus give the disciples in Mark 8:14-21?
4. What questions does Jesus ask the disciples in Mark 8:17-21?
5. How does Jesus heal the blind man?

1. It may seem odd to have another account of a large group feeding. In Mark 6 Jesus feeds 5,000 men (plus women and children). Here, in Mark 8, we have a similar account of Jesus feeding approximately 4,000 people. The key difference is buried within the location of these two separate miracles. The first takes place in a Jewish area. The second takes place while Jesus and the disciples are ministering in predominately Gentile areas. Just as Jesus provided for and fed the predominately Jewish crowd, so He also feeds and cares for the Gentiles. The imagery of a great banquet when the Messiah appears is strong in the Scriptures. Read Isaiah 25:6-9; Isaiah 49:5-6; Acts 1:6-8; and Acts 2:38-39.

A. In your own words, summarize what these verses say about God's mercy reaching beyond Israel.

B. In light of the two passages from Isaiah, what do you think Mark is attempting to highlight about Jesus' identity?

2. In Mark 8:11-13 the Pharisees demand a sign from Jesus. The word used here for “sign” is not the same as a miracle. They are asking for some incredible demonstration of divine power—perhaps something cosmic. In asking for this sign, the Pharisees reveal they have not understood and/or have refused to believe the miracles and words of Jesus up to this point. Read Romans 1:18-22 and 1 Corinthians 1:20-25. What do these verses say about signs? What do they say about how God reveals Himself?



3. Jesus asks the disciples seven questions as a means of confronting their misunderstanding and lack of true faith. Even after seeing several miracles, they still do not fully see who Jesus is and what He is doing in their midst. Jesus uses familiar imagery found throughout the Bible of people possessing sensory organs (eyes, ears, etc.) but failing to use them properly. Read Isaiah 6:8-9; Jeremiah 5:20-23; and Ezekiel 12:1-2.

A. In your own words, summarize these three passages.

B. Even today we struggle with truly holding fast to the teachings of Jesus. We are aware of His power and affirm His resurrection, yet we may experience moments or seasons where we act as if we have forgotten these realities. Read Hebrews 10:23; James 1:5-8; and 1 John 5:4. How do these passages speak about faith? How does this encourage or challenge you this week?

1. In Mark 8:22-26 Jesus heals a blind man in a very odd way. He uses his saliva and applies it to the man's eyes. Perhaps one of the most interesting things about this story is the healing is not instantaneous. It takes the man's eyes a few moments to properly open and perceive the world around him. However, Jesus does not abandon the man or leave him before his eyes are completely healed. Just as we saw in Mark 8:2, Jesus continues to have compassion and mercy on those He encounters. Where do you need Jesus to sit with you right now? Maybe you are currently experiencing His presence through a difficult situation, a change, or a tough decision. Spend some time in prayer about whatever situation comes to mind. Ask Jesus to show you just how He is remaining with you during your need.

## THE PRAYER OF EXAMEN

*Take some time this week for quiet prayer, asking God to point out various aspects of your day or week as you sit in His presence.*

- 1.) Start by considering things you are thankful for right now. Thank God for those things as you meditate on His unfailing love and faithfulness toward you.
  
- 2.) Ask God for insight and wisdom as you prepare to pray through your recent day or week with Him.
  
- 3.) Slowly review your last day or week. Consider questions like these:
  - Where did I feel joy? Why?
  - When was I angry? Why?
  - Where did I see God working?
  - Where was I challenged?
  - Are there things for which I need to ask forgiveness from God and others?
  
- 4.) Respond to your realizations during your prayer by considering what God may be prompting you to do or change moving forward.
  
- 5.) Spend a few moments praying about your upcoming day or week. Ask God to make you aware of His constant presence.

## LECTURE NOTES:



# LESSON 12

**MARK 8:27-9:1**

Peter kicks off our reading this week with a bold confession regarding Jesus' true identity. As you study, look closely at Jesus' question to the disciples, their response, and Peter's confession. Mark paints a truly beautiful interaction in those few verses. Following the conversation about His identity, Jesus jumps right into telling the disciples about His own death and the role of suffering in the lives of His followers. If the One we follow suffered, then we should also expect to take up our crosses every day as we are shaped more into His image.

**THE WAY OF THE CROSS**

1. What words, themes, or names stick out to you? What questions do you have about these verses?

2. In a few sentences, summarize the passage.

1. What three questions does Jesus ask the disciples in Mark 8:27-29?
2. List the events Jesus says will take place according to Mark 8:31.
3. What accusation does Jesus have for Peter?
4. According to Jesus, what is a mark of a true disciple?



1. The identity of Jesus has been a major theme throughout Mark. Take a moment to re-read Mark 1:1; 1:11; 1:24; 1:34; 3:11; 5:7; 6:14-16; and 8:28.

A. List who Jesus is said or thought to be in each of these passages.

B. Consider why Jesus specifically asks the disciples what they believe about His identity. They have been His closest companions, witnessed all his power and miracles, and had extra explanation of His teachings. This proximity to Jesus should have brought them heightened understanding of who He was and what He was doing in their midst. Jesus may not physically be present with us right now, but consider Jeremiah 9:23-24; John 17:3; and Philippians 3:7-10. What do these verses say about knowing God?

2. Peter's confession of Jesus as the Messiah is theologically rich and revealing about Jesus' work and mission. The concept of the Messiah had circulated in Jewish communities for centuries. Multiple Old Testament passages discuss and point toward a messianic figure. As time passed, Israel's understanding of what a messiah would look like took on many shapes. Some thought the Messiah would have a more royal tone. Others thought the Messiah would be more priestly in nature. There were also some who were looking for a Messiah with a more prophetic tone. The Old Testament is strong with images of all of these concepts. Israel believed a Messiah would ultimately come who would restore Israel, vanquish their enemies, and establish God's reign and rule upon the earth. Read Psalm 132:10-18; Isaiah 9:1-7; and Ezekiel 34:20-31. What do these verses say about a Messianic figure? What does this figure do? How does this figure act?

3. Jesus associates suffering and bearing a cross as distinctive markers of Him as the Messiah. He also highlights how His followers are called to share in this suffering as they pursue the gospel. Read Isaiah 53:1-12.

A. What does this passage say about suffering?

B. When Isaiah 53 was originally composed it had a meaning and purpose for its original hearers. In other passages of Isaiah, the nation of Israel as a whole is called and expected to act like the servant outlined in chapter 53. Knowing this passage does not only apply to Jesus as the Messiah, but also had (and has) meaning for those who follow Him, what thoughts does it bring up for you? How does it connect with Jesus' instruction in Mark 8?

1. Despite spending a lot of time with Jesus, witnessing His miracles, and hearing His teaching, Peter still misunderstands how Jesus will carry out His Messianic identity. Peter probably expected Jesus to overthrow Israel's oppressors (Rome), restore power to Israel, and a host of other things. His proximity to Jesus brought him accurate perception into Jesus' identity as the Messiah, but he remained blind to the upside-down nature of Jesus' mission through suffering. Sometimes the Church has misrepresented the Christian life as one full of ease, constant success, and a lack of pain. Is there a place where you have wanted Jesus to act a certain way (like Peter) but have come to realize Jesus has a different agenda? Write your thoughts or experiences below.

## THE PRAYER OF EXAMEN

*Take some time this week for quiet prayer, asking God to point out various aspects of your day or week as you sit in His presence.*

- 1.) Start by considering things you are thankful for right now. Thank God for those things as you meditate on His unfailing love and faithfulness toward you.
  
- 2.) Ask God for insight and wisdom as you prepare to pray through your recent day or week with Him.
  
- 3.) Slowly review your last day or week. Consider questions like these:
  - Where did I feel joy? Why?
  - When was I angry? Why?
  - Where did I see God working?
  - Where was I challenged?
  - Are there things for which I need to ask forgiveness from God and others?
  
- 4.) Respond to your realizations during your prayer by considering what God may be prompting you to do or change moving forward.
  
- 5.) Spend a few moments praying about your upcoming day or week. Ask God to make you aware of His constant presence.

**LECTURE NOTES:**



# LESSON 13

**MARK 9:2-13**

This week does not contain a typical lesson. Instead, we will take time this week to read the assigned passage (Mark 9:2-13) and reflect on our experiences thus far as we have studied Mark. Take some time this week to review the previous lessons, re-read portions of Mark, and pray over what God has revealed to you. We will have a normal teaching on Mark 9:2-13, so be sure to read through that passage, but you do not have any questions to answer as you prepare this week. God bless!



**LESSON 13 NOTES:**

**LESSON 13 NOTES:**



# LESSON 14

MARK 9:14-50

This week's text jumps from scene to scene with the quick pace we have seen throughout Mark. In the hinge point of the passage, Jesus predicts His death for the second time in the book. Buried within this conversation, Jesus reminds His disciples that His self-sacrificial and humble life must be mirrored by His followers. The world tells us greatness lies in accumulation, being well-liked, and a host of other things, while the way of Christ defines greatness in much different terms.

LOTS OF TEACHING

1. What words, themes, or names stick out to you? What questions do you have about these verses?

2. In a few sentences, summarize the passage.

1. What does the possessed boy's father say in response to Jesus' comment about belief?
2. What did the disciples argue about in this passage?
3. How does Jesus respond when He hears of someone casting out demons in His name?
4. Who are the "little ones" Jesus refers to in Mark 9:42?
5. What three comments does Jesus make about salt in Mark 9:49-50?

1. Mark 9 offers the second time in the book where Jesus' prediction of His death is immediately followed by lessons on discipleship (see also Mark 8:34-9:1).

A. Why do you think Jesus associates His own suffering and death with discipleship? Consider both Mark 8:34-9:1 and Mark 9:30-50 as you respond.

B. In Mark 9:35 Jesus offers two requirements for "greatness" in the Kingdom. Write them below.

C. Consider your own life. Where do you see yourself in Jesus' explanation of what it means to be "great?"

2. In Mark 9:36-37 Jesus includes a child in His illustration on discipleship. Today's culture elevates and celebrates children. In the time of the New Testament, children were not highly thought of and lacked social status. Jesus, however, takes a child and places them in a place of prominence right in the middle among His disciples (something that did not naturally happen). He gives the child a place and elevates them out of their normal, lowly status. Jesus is highlighting the importance of becoming like a child insofar as the child has a humble status. To be a true follower of Christ means welcoming and becoming like those who are lowly. Read Matthew 20:16; Ephesians 4:1-6; Colossians 3:8-14; and James 4:1-10. In your own words, comment on what these verses say about humility. How does this tie in with your reading from Mark 9?



3. Jesus uses intense metaphors in Mark 9:42-50. He talks about judgment for anyone who causes one of His followers to stumble. Jesus also stresses the importance of removing anything from our lives that might cause us to stumble in our journey of faith. He uses metaphors and other strong language to intensify His point. The word “hell” in this passage is translated from the Greek word *geenna*, “Gehenna.” This comes from the Hebrew *gē’ hinnōm* which means “Valley of Hinnom.” This is a reference to a geographical location south of Jerusalem. In the Old Testament, human sacrifices had been offered to Baal and Molech at this location (see 2 Chronicles 28:3; Jeremiah 7:31; and Jeremiah 19:5-6). Following these atrocities, the Valley of Hinnom became a place where garbage was burned. Fires smoldered there constantly—Jesus picks up on this imagery in Mark 9:43-48.

A. Considering the intense metaphorical imagery Jesus uses in these verses, what does this lead you to understand about the importance of removing anything that hinders our pursuit of Jesus and the Christian life?

B. Read Romans 5:1-5; Galatians 6:9; and Hebrews 12:1-3. What do these verses say about faithful endurance? How do they challenge or encourage you?

1. Mark 9:14-15 states how the crowd was overwhelmed and “filled with wonder” when they saw Jesus. For people who have been around Christianity for a while, it is sometimes easy to lose the “wonder” of the gospel. Consider your life. When was the last time you were overwhelmed and filled with wonder at the thought of God and His work? If you have a hard time thinking of something recent, spend a few moments in prayer asking God to restore wonder to you as you consider His marvelous acts!

## THE PRAYER OF EXAMEN

*Take some time this week for quiet prayer, asking God to point out various aspects of your day or week as you sit in His presence.*

- 1.) Start by considering things you are thankful for right now. Thank God for those things as you meditate on His unfailing love and faithfulness toward you.
  
- 2.) Ask God for insight and wisdom as you prepare to pray through your recent day or week with Him.
  
- 3.) Slowly review your last day or week. Consider questions like these:
  - Where did I feel joy? Why?
  - When was I angry? Why?
  - Where did I see God working?
  - Where was I challenged?
  - Are there things for which I need to ask forgiveness from God and others?
  
- 4.) Respond to your realizations during your prayer by considering what God may be prompting you to do or change moving forward.
  
- 5.) Spend a few moments praying about your upcoming day or week. Ask God to make you aware of His constant presence.

## LECTURE NOTES:



# LESSON 15

MARK 10:1-52

Divorce, childlike faith, riches, death, a bold request, and a miracle make up our lesson this week as we cover Mark 10. As you read and study, be on the lookout for ways in which Jesus reframes the Law and the questions various groups and individuals ask Him. Even James and John, who have been around Jesus a lot, still do not quite have a firm grasp on His teachings and mission. Hopefully, their question can give us insight into how we are to follow Jesus and understand the mission He calls us to in the world today.

KINGDOM TALK

1. What words, themes, or names stick out to you? What questions do you have about these verses?

2. In a few sentences, summarize the passage.

1. What does Jesus say about becoming like a little child in Mark 10:13-16?
2. What does Jesus tell the rich, young ruler in Mark 10:21?
3. According to Mark 10:23, what type of people find it difficult to enter the Kingdom of God?
4. What do James and John ask Jesus?
5. How does Jesus respond to the request of James and John?



1. Once again, Jesus uses children as an illustration for how His followers should conduct themselves. Jesus is not saying the disciples should become ignorant or immature. Instead, Jesus is using the cultural norms of the day where children were often socially marginalized and incredibly vulnerable. They had no social standing and were not given respect until they reached adulthood. The dependence children have on their caretakers and the lowly status they possessed seem to be what Jesus is driving at in this passage. In Mark 10:15 Jesus explains the Kingdom of God is something that must be received. It is not something we can claim, conquer, or earn on our own. Read Luke 12:32 and Colossians 1:13-14. What do these verses say about the Kingdom? How do they expound upon Jesus' comments from Mark 10?

2. The story of the rich, young ruler is fairly well-known for people who have spent a long time in the church. The story is somewhat shocking as Jesus emphasizes how riches can often be a stumbling block for people who desire to follow Jesus into the eternal life the Kingdom offers. In this passage, the young man's question revolves around how he can inherit eternal life. Mark equates the phrase "eternal life" with the "kingdom of God" and "salvation."

A. Read John 17:3; 1 John 2:15-17; and 1 John 5:10-12. What do these passages say about eternal life? How do you see this connecting with Mark 10?

B. There are many warnings about riches and the exploitation of the poor and needy throughout the Scriptures. Read Psalm 12:5; Psalm 37:12-17; and Amos 2:6-8. In your own words summarize what these passages say about accumulating wealth and the mistreatment of others.

3. The request from James and John to be seated in places of power and prestige in the Kingdom indicates they still have not grasped the upside-down nature of God's mission. Instead of power and violence, Jesus uses humble love. Instead of jockeying for authority, Jesus quietly goes about His business. Instead of going to the rich and powerful, Jesus spends time with the outcasts and poor. There is certainly victory and glory in Jesus' resurrection and the defeat of sin and death, but the way in which Jesus demonstrated power was not what the disciples expected. Read Daniel 7:13-14; Philippians 3:7-12; and Hebrews 2:9-10. In your own words, what do these passages say about the glory of Christ and His/our suffering? How do you see these concepts connecting with what you have learned in Mark?

1. We are over halfway through Mark! Spend some time this week reflecting on these prompts:

A. What has been most surprising to you about Mark?

B. What about Jesus has most surprised or encouraged you in Mark?

C. What has been the most challenging aspect of Mark for you?

## THE PRAYER OF EXAMEN

*Take some time this week for quiet prayer, asking God to point out various aspects of your day or week as you sit in His presence.*

- 1.) Start by considering things you are thankful for right now. Thank God for those things as you meditate on His unfailing love and faithfulness toward you.
- 2.) Ask God for insight and wisdom as you prepare to pray through your recent day or week with Him.
- 3.) Slowly review your last day or week. Consider questions like these:
  - Where did I feel joy? Why?
  - When was I angry? Why?
  - Where did I see God working?
  - Where was I challenged?
  - Are there things for which I need to ask forgiveness from God and others?
- 4.) Respond to your realizations during your prayer by considering what God may be prompting you to do or change moving forward.
- 5.) Spend a few moments praying about your upcoming day or week. Ask God to make you aware of His constant presence.

## LECTURE NOTES:



# LESSON 16

**MARK 11:1-33**

The famous (infamous?) Triumphal Entry of Jesus into Jerusalem is a well-known story we remember on Palm Sunday. The shouts of the crowds and the busyness of Jerusalem as people prepare for Passover are palpable as we enter the story. In Mark this is immediately followed by two incredibly important scenes: the cursing of a fig tree and Jesus' actions in the Temple. Our study this week will demonstrate how many of us may need to rethink the narrative of Jesus in the Temple in light of historical and social context, Jesus' previous comments about the Temple, and Jesus' own death.

## THE FIG TREE AND THE TEMPLE



1. What words, themes, or names stick out to you? What questions do you have about these verses?

2. In a few sentences, summarize the passage.

1. What do the crowds shout as Jesus rides into Jerusalem?
2. Why does Jesus curse the fig tree? What is the result of this action?
3. What does Jesus do in the Temple?
4. According to Mark 11:25, what is the proper response if we are holding a grudge or ill feelings towards anyone?

1. As Jesus rides into Jerusalem, the silence that has surrounded much of His ministry and identity begins to be broken. The crowds shout, “Hosanna!” which rendered in this passage means “save now.” The Jews are incredibly hopeful that Jesus can and will do something about their situation. They quote from Psalm 118 and Zechariah 9—passages their ancestors would have also known. Among other things, they are hoping for release from their captors (Rome), the restoration of their land, and for God’s own designated king to be on the throne.

A. Read Psalm 118:22-27 and Zechariah 9:9-13. In your own words, explain why you think these two passages are the ones quoted by the people who greet Jesus in Jerusalem.

B. Looking ahead to the rest of the story, Jesus disappoints the hopes of the crowd. He is nothing like the Messiah they think has been promised. He doesn’t wage war against Rome, and He doesn’t restore the glory of Israel in the way they hoped. In fact, He dies the very unassuming death of a criminal. How do you reconcile the passages from Psalm 118 and Zechariah 9 with the impending death of Jesus that, on the surface, seems to leave the Jews in no better position?

2. There has been much confusion surrounding Jesus' actions in the Temple courts. Contrary to what seems to be popular thought, Jesus' actions are not brought on because people are buying and selling items on Temple grounds. There is far more happening in this story! Scholars believe Jesus' actions here occurred in the Outer Court—a place where Gentiles were permitted. Vendors would sell animals and necessary items for sacrifice in this area for those who pilgrimaged to the Temple and could not bring along their own sacrificial supplies. Money changers were often present to assist people in changing their money to the proper currency required by all Jewish males for their Temple tax. Jesus is not attempting an overthrow or even a purification of the Temple. Instead, Jesus essentially declares the Temple null and void. Not only will it no longer be necessary for worship, there will also no longer be any division between the Jews and the Gentiles.

A. Read Isaiah 56:4-8 and Micah 4:1-5. How do these passages (one of which is quoted by Jesus in Mark 11) highlight God's plan for all nations and peoples?

B. Read Jeremiah 7:1-11. This is often called Jeremiah's "Temple Sermon" given at the entrance to the Temple during a time where Israel's wickedness was at its peak. They trusted God to save them even though they were simply going through the motions and persisting in their worship of other gods. God has some very harsh words for them about this behavior and about how the Temple will not save them. Jesus quotes from Jeremiah 7 in this week's passage from Mark. Knowing some of the context around Jeremiah 7, and the context of Mark 11, why do you think Jesus quotes from this passage?

B. Read Jeremiah 7:1-11. This is often called Jeremiah's "Temple Sermon" given at the entrance to the Temple during a time when Israel's wickedness was at its peak. They trusted God to save them even though they were simply going through the motions and persisting in their worship of other gods. God has some very harsh words for them about this behavior and about how the Temple will not save them. Jesus quotes from Jeremiah 7 in this week's passage from Mark. Knowing some of the context around Jeremiah 7 and the context of Mark 11, why do you think Jesus quotes from this passage?

3. Forgiving others plays a significant role in one's ability to receive forgiveness throughout the Scriptures. In Mark 11:25 Jesus instructs His followers to not allow grudges or anger to hold them back during their times of prayer. Instead, they are to forgive others so they can receive God's forgiveness. This is not a transactional teaching but, instead, a moment for Jesus to discuss issues of the heart. If we fully understand the nature of God's forgiveness to us, we are then called to extend forgiveness to others. Consider Colossians 1:13-14. How does knowing the truth from this passage encourage you to forgive others in your life?

1. Has God ever disappointed you? This seems like an odd question! However, if we each consider it, there has probably been at least one time or season in your life when God didn't do or act the way you wish God would. The people cheering Jesus' arrival in Jerusalem were to be sorely disappointed a few days later when He was killed. Hindsight often clarifies or makes us grateful that God didn't do what we initially wanted, but in the heat of the moment, we may truly feel disappointed by God. Consider your life. When has God not behaved how you wish He would? Has time or distance helped clarify some of your questions? If yes, spend some time writing about your experience below. If no, and you still find yourself disappointed by God—it's okay! You are free to take any emotion before God, asking Him to give you peace, clarity, or resolution.

## THE PRAYER OF EXAMEN

*Take some time this week for quiet prayer, asking God to point out various aspects of your day or week as you sit in His presence.*

- 1.) Start by considering things you are thankful for right now. Thank God for those things as you meditate on His unfailing love and faithfulness toward you.
  
- 2.) Ask God for insight and wisdom as you prepare to pray through your recent day or week with Him.
  
- 3.) Slowly review your last day or week. Consider questions like these:
  - Where did I feel joy? Why?
  - When was I angry? Why?
  - Where did I see God working?
  - Where was I challenged?
  - Are there things for which I need to ask forgiveness from God and others?
  
- 4.) Respond to your realizations during your prayer by considering what God may be prompting you to do or change moving forward.
  
- 5.) Spend a few moments praying about your upcoming day or week. Ask God to make you aware of His constant presence.

## LECTURE NOTES:





# LESSON 17

**MARK 12:1-27**

This week we have what might feel like a slight pause. Sandwiched between the Triumphal Entry and the forthcoming Last Supper, we have a selection of various parables and teachings from Jesus. As you go through Mark and the lesson, try to pay special attention to the questions asked of Jesus, the questions Jesus asks, and the responses given by the various characters. Throughout all four gospels, Jesus rarely ever answers a question directly. He often seems much more interested with asking His own questions of us.

**TRICKY SUBJECTS**

1. What words, themes, or names stick out to you? What questions do you have about these verses?

2. In a few sentences, summarize the passage.

1. How do the tenants in the parable treat the Master's servants?
2. How do the tenants treat the Master's son?
3. According to Mark 12:12, who is the Parable of the Tenants referencing?
4. What question do the Pharisees and Herodians ask Jesus?
5. What response does Jesus give to the Sadducees in Mark 12:26-27?

1. In the Parable of the Tenants, Jesus uses the imagery of a vineyard as a setting for His illustration. Vineyards and other pieces of farmable land were often purchased by the wealthy and elite. They would then hire tenants or other caretakers much like the parable describes. Throughout the Old Testament, the nation of Israel is referred to as a "vineyard."

A. Read Psalm 80:8-18; Isaiah 5:1-7; and Jeremiah 12:10-11. In your own words, explain how Israel is referenced in these passages.

B. Now read Jeremiah 23:1-8 and Matthew 25:13-39. Why do you think Jesus told the Parable of the Tenants when you consider these passages along with Mark 12:12?

2. The Pharisees and Herodians (those loyal to Herod) approach Jesus in Mark 12:13-17 with the hope of catching him in a political and theological trap. Jesus does not play their game and, instead, amazes them all with His answer. The things belonging to Caesar (presumably the coins with his face on them) belong to Caesar. Jesus takes this one step further by reminding the crowd that there are also things that should be given to God.

A. Consider the opening of Mark's Gospel. Read Mark 1:14-15 and John 1:1-15. If the Kingdom of God has come like Jesus announced, what do you think are the things that should be given to God?

B. Read Romans 13:6-14. How does Paul address paying taxes? What does Paul offer as the ultimate fulfillment of the Law?

3. The Sadducees were a highly influential, often well-off, group of religious officials (mostly priests) around the time of Jesus. Theologically, they differed in opinion with the Pharisees on several topics. One of these was the resurrection of the dead. While this is something Christians cite in our creeds and hold dear based on our reading of the Scriptures, the Sadducees based their understanding of theology and holiness solely off the Torah. This led them to differing perspectives. Jesus responds to their inquiry about marriage and the resurrection by explaining that the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is not the God of the dead but of the living. This is good news for us! The God we serve is in the business of raising the dead and healing and restoring His creation. Read 1 Corinthians 15:12-26. According to Paul in 1 Corinthians 15, why is resurrection such an important concept? How does this challenge or encourage you this week?

1. In Mark 12:10 Jesus quotes from Psalm 118. Psalm 118 would have been well-known among the Jews as it was a psalm regularly used during the season of Passover. The image of Jesus being a cornerstone or a strong foundation occurs elsewhere in the New Testament. Read Ephesians 2:13-22 and 1 Peter 2:1-8. These two passages, along with places like Psalm 118 and Mark 12, highlight the immense importance of Jesus. We have no basis for our salvation, faith, or hope if we do not securely place all those things upon Jesus. Is there a place in your life you tend to be tempted to locate and place your security? Is there another place you often look for fulfillment, hope, or joy? Spend some time in prayer, asking God to help you continually make Jesus the foundation of your life. Write some of your thoughts or your prayer below.



## THE PRAYER OF EXAMEN

*Take some time this week for quiet prayer, asking God to point out various aspects of your day or week as you sit in His presence.*

- 1.) Start by considering things you are thankful for right now. Thank God for those things as you meditate on His unfailing love and faithfulness toward you.
- 2.) Ask God for insight and wisdom as you prepare to pray through your recent day or week with Him.
- 3.) Slowly review your last day or week. Consider questions like these:
  - Where did I feel joy? Why?
  - When was I angry? Why?
  - Where did I see God working?
  - Where was I challenged?
  - Are there things for which I need to ask forgiveness from God and others?
- 4.) Respond to your realizations during your prayer by considering what God may be prompting you to do or change moving forward.
- 5.) Spend a few moments praying about your upcoming day or week. Ask God to make you aware of His constant presence.

## LECTURE NOTES:



# LESSON 18

**MARK 12:28-44**

Sometimes when we approach a familiar part of the Bible, we may be inclined to read through it quickly. Or, because it is so familiar, we may be less inclined to approach it with a heart ready to be challenged or shaped by what we encounter. As we read this week, we will encounter a well-known passage—the Greatest Commandment. Let's be sure to read slowly and diligently, asking God to show us something new in the text. Along with the Greatest Commandment this week, Jesus gives us a clue into His true nature, a warning, and a powerful lesson on wealth.

**TEACHING AND WARNING FROM JESUS**

1. What words, themes, or names stick out to you? What questions do you have about these verses?

2. In a few sentences, summarize the passage.

1. What does the teacher of the Law ask Jesus in Mark 12:28? How does Jesus respond?
2. What critical comments does Jesus make about the teachers of the Law in Mark 12:38-40?
3. What does the poor widow offer at the Temple treasury?
4. How does Jesus respond to seeing the widow's offering?

1. Mark 12:28-31 is one of the better-known passages in the New Testament. Here Jesus sums up the entire Law and offers His followers key information on how to live as citizens of God's Kingdom. Jesus quotes from Leviticus 19 and Deuteronomy 6 in this passage.

A. Read Leviticus 19:16-18 and Deuteronomy 6:1-9. In your own words, explain why you think Jesus uses these two passages to summarize all of God's commands. How do the context and information in these passages inform your answer?

B. In Jesus' instruction we are told to love our neighbors. This is admittedly a difficult thing to accomplish—even with people we like. However, Jesus pushes us even further when it comes to loving others. Read Matthew 5:43-48 and Luke 6:27-31. How do these passages expand on the idea of loving our neighbor?

2. Jesus takes an interesting turn in Mark 12:35-37 when he talks about Psalm 110 and the son of David. Psalm 110 is the most quoted psalm in the New Testament. Jewish people in Jesus' day believed Psalm 110 was written by David. Jesus addresses the title "son of David" and its role within the psalm. This may seem strange to us, but to a Jewish audience at the time, it was an extremely important point both within the context of the psalm and within the life of Jesus. They believed God would raise up a king out of David's line who would usher in God's Kingdom, thereby restoring Israel.

A. Read 2 Samuel 7:8-16. What echoes and commonalities do you see between 2 Samuel, Mark 12:35-37, and Psalm 110?

B. Israel's kings were anointed with the title "Son of David." Knowing this, read Isaiah 11:1-9 and Ezekiel 34:23-24. How do these passages describe the coming son of David? How does this fit in with Jesus' life and ministry?



3. Mark 12:38-44 contains two separate illustrations where widows play a major role. Orphans and widows were often some of the least cared for people of society. The care of widows (and other marginalized people) is a major theme throughout the Scriptures. Read Exodus 22:22-24; Isaiah 10:1-3; and Zechariah 7:10-14. In your own words, summarize what is said about widows and orphans in these passages. Why do you think Jesus spends multiple lessons and illustrations discussing these matters?

1. Worldly kingdoms and societies operate entirely opposite to Jesus' teachings from this week's passage. We do not often truly love our neighbors as ourselves. We certainly do not do well at loving our enemies. We find ourselves living within systems where the orphan, widow, and other marginalized people continue to live in poverty and hardship. Consider your own life. Where can you take simple, attainable steps this week to practice loving others? Where can you pray for your enemies? Where can you serve those less fortunate? Spend some time considering these questions and note your reflections below. Then take those small steps to release the Kingdom of God into the places, situations, and relationships wherever you find yourself today.

## THE PRAYER OF EXAMEN

*Take some time this week for quiet prayer, asking God to point out various aspects of your day or week as you sit in His presence.*

- 1.) Start by considering things you are thankful for right now. Thank God for those things as you meditate on His unfailing love and faithfulness toward you.
- 2.) Ask God for insight and wisdom as you prepare to pray through your recent day or week with Him.
- 3.) Slowly review your last day or week. Consider questions like these:
  - Where did I feel joy? Why?
  - When was I angry? Why?
  - Where did I see God working?
  - Where was I challenged?
  - Are there things for which I need to ask forgiveness from God and others?
- 4.) Respond to your realizations during your prayer by considering what God may be prompting you to do or change moving forward.
- 5.) Spend a few moments praying about your upcoming day or week. Ask God to make you aware of His constant presence.

## LECTURE NOTES:



# LESSON 19

## MARK 13:1-37

On the surface, Mark 13 is bleak and confusing. Here is a suggested outline for this passage: Verses 5-23 cover the forthcoming destruction of the Temple that would eventually take place in 70AD. Verses 24-27 address Jesus' second coming. Verses 28-31 cover the harsh reality that will befall followers of Jesus during the destruction of the Temple. The last portion (verses 32-37) deals again with issues surrounding Jesus' second coming.

Over the years, many people have attempted to make Mark 13:5-23 about future eschatological (end-time) events. However, a careful reading of the text with an attentiveness to historical context does not allow for this interpretation. Instead, Mark 13:5-23 is about events leading up to 70AD and Rome's destruction of the Temple. As with any Bible reading, historical context is key.

### A TEMPLE DESTROYED

1. What words, themes, or names stick out to you? What questions do you have about these verses?

2. In a few sentences, summarize the passage.

1. What comment does Jesus' disciple make about the stones of the Temple? How does Jesus respond?
2. What hope does Jesus offer His disciples in Mark 13:10-11?
3. Jesus offers a truth to His disciples in Mark 13:30. Write it below.
4. What command does Jesus give in Mark 13:37?



1. Mark 13 has a foreboding and bleak tone. It can be confusing and disorienting without an outline (see suggested outline in this week's lesson introduction). Historical records demonstrate the accuracy with which Jesus spoke about the Temple's ultimate destruction in 70AD. At that time, Jews (and Christians) were heavily persecuted. The numbers of Jews who were murdered as Rome flexed the full might of her power are countless. Jesus' words in Mark 13:5-23 offer a graphic warning for those in and around Jerusalem to flee while they still have a chance. Consider Mark 13:7-8. Jesus uses Old Testament language surrounding wars, famine, earthquakes, and birth pains to demonstrate the severity of His message. There are historical records of each of these pains preceding 70AD. Jesus tells the disciples these events are simply the beginning of the birth preceding the destruction of the Temple.

A. Read John 16:19-22 and Romans 8:18-23. How is the imagery of birth pains used in these passages?

B. While Mark 13 is certainly a dark passage, there is still light! The imagery of new birth should spur joy and hope in us. How do you see glimmers of hope in Mark 13, John 16:19-22; and Romans 8:18-23?

2. The disciples and early followers of Jesus often faced intense persecution and even death. Knowing the road before them will not be easy, Jesus encourages His followers in Mark 13:9-11 by telling them the Holy Spirit will give them words to say when they are arrested and interrogated.

A. Read John 14:15-27 and John 16:1-15. In your own words, comment on how Jesus speaks about the Holy Spirit in these verses. What encouragement is there for you?

B. Remember, most of the disciples were uneducated and untrained in areas like public speaking or addressing courts. In His discussion with them here, Jesus extends comfort with the promise that they do not have to concoct speeches or elaborate defenses. Instead, the Holy Spirit will give them words in the moments of their greatest trials. Think about your own life. Is there an area where your own strength and knowledge have failed and you need to surrender to the Holy Spirit?

3. In Mark 13:24-27 Jesus discusses His second coming. While there is, again, what appears to be dark, hyperbolic language, there is still immense hope and joy to be found in these words. Consider Hebrews 10:24-25; 2 Peter 3:13-14; and 1 John 2:28-29. How do these verses address how Christians should act as we await Jesus' second coming?

1. Jesus instructs His followers to “be alert” and “keep watch” in Mark 13:32-37. Our schedules, routines, jobs, responsibilities, and host of other things often threaten to lull us to “sleep.” We can become so focused on our daily tasks or future planning that we fail to be attuned to the things of God. Jesus’ warning and instruction rings just as true for us today as it has for Christians throughout the centuries. How are you actively staying awake and attuned to God in your daily life. List some of those things below and consider what God may be saying to you through them this week.

## THE PRAYER OF EXAMEN

*Take some time this week for quiet prayer, asking God to point out various aspects of your day or week as you sit in His presence.*

- 1.) Start by considering things you are thankful for right now. Thank God for those things as you meditate on His unfailing love and faithfulness toward you.
  
- 2.) Ask God for insight and wisdom as you prepare to pray through your recent day or week with Him.
  
- 3.) Slowly review your last day or week. Consider questions like these:
  - Where did I feel joy? Why?
  - When was I angry? Why?
  - Where did I see God working?
  - Where was I challenged?
  - Are there things for which I need to ask forgiveness from God and others?
  
- 4.) Respond to your realizations during your prayer by considering what God may be prompting you to do or change moving forward.
  
- 5.) Spend a few moments praying about your upcoming day or week. Ask God to make you aware of His constant presence.

## LECTURE NOTES:



# LESSON 20

MARK 14:1-31

The Last Supper takes up the majority of our reading and lesson this week—and rightfully so! This is an incredibly important interaction that still has ramifications today each time we celebrate Communion together in our churches. Passover is the overarching context for this entire meal and gathering, so be sure to keep that in mind as you read through Mark 14. Remember how Passover marks God's rescue of Israel from their oppressors and captors in Egypt. This backstory is the main key to unlocking what is occurring during this meal.

JESUS EATS THE PASSOVER MEAL



1. What words, themes, or names stick out to you? What questions do you have about these verses?

2. In a few sentences, summarize the passage.

1. Why do the chief priests and teachers of the law want to wait to arrest Jesus?
2. What reason does Jesus give for the woman anointing Him with precious perfume?
3. What major calendar event is the backdrop of the Last Supper according to Mark 14:12?
4. What does Jesus say when He breaks the bread and gives it to the disciples? What does He say about the cup?
5. What promise does Jesus give the disciples in Mark 14:28?

1. Anointing was a common practice during the Old Testament and even into the New Testament. In Mark 14:3-9 we see a woman pour incredibly valuable (worth more than a year's income) perfume on Jesus. Anointing was used for several reasons. Sometimes it was used to consecrate or set apart someone for a particular job. Other times it is used as a blessing or as a means of praying for those who are sick. In this passage from Mark, Jesus connects His anointing with His preparation for burial. There are also additional meanings to this anointing that scholars often discuss.

A. Read Exodus 29:1-9; 1 Samuel 16:10-13; and Isaiah 61:1. In your own words, summarize how anointing is used in these passages.

B. Consider Mark 14:3-9 in light of the passages you just read. What significance does Jesus' anointing have along with the preparation for burial?

2. Passover and the Festival of Unleavened Bread provide the backdrop for the events of Mark 14-15. These were celebrations and observances surrounding Israel's rescue from Egyptian oppression and enslavement recounted in the book of Exodus. Jesus sets His final days and His death within the context of Passover. This is immensely important as we consider what Jesus' institution of the new covenant and His death ultimately mean.

A. Read Exodus 12:1-42. What most stands out to you about the first Passover and the exodus from Egypt?

B. The idea of a covenant being sealed in blood is common throughout the Scriptures. Keeping in line with the exodus narrative, read Exodus 24:1-8 and Zechariah 9:9-12. How do these verses use that imagery? What connections do you see between these passages and Jesus from Mark 14?

3. In the midst of His impending death, Jesus offers the disciples a great hope. In Mark 14:25 we get a glimmer of the great Messianic banquet where those in Christ will gather together after His return to celebrate His work and victory. Read Isaiah 25:6-9; Isaiah 55:1-2; Joel 2:24-26; and Revelation 19:6-9. In your own words, explain the overall theme and message of these passages. How do they tie in with Jesus' words from Mark 14:25?

1. Mark 14:1-31 shows two vastly different ways of responding to the reality of Jesus' identity. On one hand, we see the sour, angry reactions from the chief priests, teachers of the Law, and Judas. On the other, we see the pure devotion and commitment of the woman who anointed Jesus. While the first group is motivated by fear, selfishness, and possibly frustration at unmet expectations they had for Jesus, the woman is content to simply be in Jesus' presence, pouring out her offering. Where do you find yourself this week? Sometimes we get frustrated with God when He doesn't respond or act how we desire. Other times we may be more like the woman as we sit in the beauty and love of God. Spend some time thinking about your experiences right now. Where do you see God? How are you responding?

## THE PRAYER OF EXAMEN

*Take some time this week for quiet prayer, asking God to point out various aspects of your day or week as you sit in His presence.*

- 1.) Start by considering things you are thankful for right now. Thank God for those things as you meditate on His unfailing love and faithfulness toward you.
  
- 2.) Ask God for insight and wisdom as you prepare to pray through your recent day or week with Him.
  
- 3.) Slowly review your last day or week. Consider questions like these:
  - Where did I feel joy? Why?
  - When was I angry? Why?
  - Where did I see God working?
  - Where was I challenged?
  - Are there things for which I need to ask forgiveness from God and others?
  
- 4.) Respond to your realizations during your prayer by considering what God may be prompting you to do or change moving forward.
  
- 5.) Spend a few moments praying about your upcoming day or week. Ask God to make you aware of His constant presence.

## LECTURE NOTES:





# LESSON 21

**MARK 14:32-72**

This week's passage moves us several steps closer to the Cross as we see the progression of Jesus' arrest and trial. Under Roman rule, the Jewish authorities did not have the power to enact capital punishment except in cases involving a violation of the Temple. It is evident from Mark 14:57-59 that the Jewish rulers initially attempt to charge Jesus for planning to destroy the Temple. However, they are not able to make these accusations stick. It is not until Mark 14:60-65 that the Jewish rulers are able to find a substantial reason to convict Jesus. By stating He is the Messiah (the king), the Jewish rulers can charge him with blasphemy, and Rome can charge him with sedition. This is why the Jewish rulers then turn Jesus over to Roman authorities.

## JESUS' TRIAL

1. What words, themes, or names stick out to you? What questions do you have about these verses?

2. In a few sentences, summarize the passage.

1. List the various things Jesus says in Mark 14:32-41.
2. Who is present at Jesus' Jewish trial?
3. What does the high priest ask Jesus in Mark 14:61? How does Jesus respond?
4. What is Peter's reaction when he realizes how he disowned Jesus?

1. This week's passage demonstrates in immense detail the reality of Jesus' humanity. We are sometimes so amazed at His divinity and powerful acts throughout Mark that we forget He was also fully human. The emotional and mental agony He experiences in Gethsemane is almost palpable as we journey with Him to the cross. Thankfully, Jesus' humanity and His words in the garden demonstrate how we, as His fellow humans, can bring the entire breadth of our emotion before God. Read Psalm 31:9-15; Psalm 42:1-11; and Mark 14:33-34. Summarize how these verses openly address human emotion. How do you see yourself and God in these passages?

2. It is well worth examining the narrative of Jesus' arrest in all four gospel accounts. Read Matthew 26:47-56, Mark 14:43-52; Luke 22:47-53; and John 18:1-14. Compare and contrast these accounts. What similarities and differences do you see? What most stands out to you?

3. The whole of Jesus' ministry comes under inspection during His Jewish trial. The chief priest asks Him if He is the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One. His actions (forgiveness of sins, healing on the Sabbath, authority over demonic forces, actions in the Temple, etc.) have left the religious leaders with some major questions about His authority and from where He receives His power. Jesus answers the chief priest's question in the affirmative and then expounds on His answer by combining Scriptures from Psalms and Daniel. His response results in a charge of blasphemy.

A. Read Psalm 110:1 and Daniel 7:13-14. How does Jesus incorporate these verses into His response at His trial?

B. Blasphemy was a wide-sweeping conviction. A person could be convicted of it for many reasons, some of which are: claiming to act as God or on behalf of God, not respecting the Law, and making threats or hostile claims against the Temple. Consider what you have studied in Mark. In your own words, explain why the Jewish leaders were able to convict Jesus of blasphemy.

1. Peter's anguish when he realizes his betrayal of Christ is heartbreaking to read. We are told he broke down and cried uncontrollably. Have you ever been overcome with emotion over sin? Maybe you can relate to Peter's reaction. In that moment or season, how did you experience God's presence? How did you encounter God's mercy?



## THE PRAYER OF EXAMEN

*Take some time this week for quiet prayer, asking God to point out various aspects of your day or week as you sit in His presence.*

- 1.) Start by considering things you are thankful for right now. Thank God for those things as you meditate on His unfailing love and faithfulness toward you.
  
- 2.) Ask God for insight and wisdom as you prepare to pray through your recent day or week with Him.
  
- 3.) Slowly review your last day or week. Consider questions like these:
  - Where did I feel joy? Why?
  - When was I angry? Why?
  - Where did I see God working?
  - Where was I challenged?
  - Are there things for which I need to ask forgiveness from God and others?
  
- 4.) Respond to your realizations during your prayer by considering what God may be prompting you to do or change moving forward.
  
- 5.) Spend a few moments praying about your upcoming day or week. Ask God to make you aware of His constant presence.

## LECTURE NOTES:



# LESSON 22

**MARK 15:1-47**

In many ways this week's reading contains the pinnacle of Mark's gospel. Here we will encounter a Gentile man confess Jesus as the true Son of God. This is immensely important based on how Mark has outlined his entire gospel story. All the ramifications of the death of God come crashing down in this chapter. Just as Jesus predicted several times, His death comes at the hands of several parties who are all set against the true Kingdom and the King.

## THE DEATH OF JESUS

1. What words, themes, or names stick out to you? What questions do you have about these verses?

2. In a few sentences, summarize the passage.

1. What question does Pilate ask Jesus? How does Jesus respond?
2. Who does Pilate offer to release to the Jews? What was this individual's crime?
3. In Mark 15:27-32, what groups of people mock Jesus?
4. What is the centurion's reaction at Jesus' death?

1. Pilate ultimately convicts Jesus for claiming to be the king of the Jews. Jesus, however, never claims this title as His own. He refuses to argue or clarify Pilate's statement. In Mark 14 Jesus directly claims to be the Messiah and explains this by quoting from Psalm 110 and Daniel 7. This title and passages conjure up a much more cosmic, God-like image. The title "king of the Jews" had a much different connotation to the Jews and Pilate. This was a title of worldly political authority ripe with nationalistic implications. Jesus refuses this title in favor of the "Son of Man" title, which holds a much stronger, royal meaning. In John's gospel we get a longer response from Jesus. Read John 18:33-37. How does Jesus' response impact your understanding of His acceptance of the title "Son of Man" and His refusal to commit to the title "king of the Jews?"

2. On the cross Jesus quotes Psalm 22. This quotation has led many to assume, since Jesus took on the sin of the world, that God the Father abandoned Him because God can't be in the presence of sin. This, however, does not ring true with Psalm 22 and the whole picture of Jesus we get from the gospels. God's entire mission throughout the Scriptures is to be with His creation despite our sin. Not once does Jesus turn away from sinful people because "God can't be in the presence of sin." Instead, Jesus moves toward each sinner with the full presence of God and offers them healing, forgiveness, and restoration. Jesus knew the rest of Psalm 22 when He recites the first verse from the cross. Read Psalm 22:1-31.

A. What is the overall tone of the psalm?

B. How do you see Psalm 22 mirror the events of Mark 15?



3. One of the highest points of Mark is found in Mark 15:39, where the centurion proclaims Jesus as the Son of God. This centurion was an officer of a group of Roman soldiers. He was not a Jew and had taken part in Jesus' crucifixion. For this man to proclaim the truth of Jesus' identity is a major event. Read Mark 1:1; 1:11; 3:11; 5:7; 9:7; and 14:61-62. Why do you think the centurion's comments are important? How do you see this lining up with Mark's overall message about Jesus' identity?

1. Take a few moments and read Hebrews 10:11-25. Consider the work of Christ on the cross and what Mark tells us about the Temple curtain tearing during His death. Spend some time reflecting on God's mercy and grace in your life. How do the words from Hebrews 10 encourage you or challenge you this week?

## THE PRAYER OF EXAMEN

*Take some time this week for quiet prayer, asking God to point out various aspects of your day or week as you sit in His presence.*

- 1.) Start by considering things you are thankful for right now. Thank God for those things as you meditate on His unfailing love and faithfulness toward you.
  
- 2.) Ask God for insight and wisdom as you prepare to pray through your recent day or week with Him.
  
- 3.) Slowly review your last day or week. Consider questions like these:
  - Where did I feel joy? Why?
  - When was I angry? Why?
  - Where did I see God working?
  - Where was I challenged?
  - Are there things for which I need to ask forgiveness from God and others?
  
- 4.) Respond to your realizations during your prayer by considering what God may be prompting you to do or change moving forward.
  
- 5.) Spend a few moments praying about your upcoming day or week. Ask God to make you aware of His constant presence.

## LECTURE NOTES:



# LESSON 23

## MARK 16

You made it all the way through Mark! Congratulations! We pray this study has helped you grow in unimaginable ways. Spend some time this week looking back over the entire curriculum, meditating on how God has been with you in this journey. Consider where you were a few months ago and how your understanding of Jesus has grown, deepened, and challenged you. Where have you most seen God? What has most encouraged you? We don't have questions to answer this week on Mark 16, but please spend some time reading the final chapter of the book in preparation for our last teaching time and small group.

**LESSON 23 NOTES:**

**LESSON 23 NOTES:**





Curriculum Written By: Laurien Hook

Thanks To: Allison Brandt, Rev. Dr. Clay Brown, Amy Ewing, and Peggy Samuels for their work as editors.