

*A People of the Book*  
*8-Year Curriculum*  
*Year 3, Quarter 1*

A Study of  
Selected Texts from

# The Gospel According to Mark

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# *Mark*

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## *Introduction to the book of Mark*

John Mark was the son of a woman named Mary, apparently an important woman in Jerusalem because the disciples met behind her gate to pray when Peter was about to be executed (Acts 12:12). History has closely linked Peter with both Mark and this gospel account and a notation at the end of Peter's first epistle seems to support it (1 Peter 5:13). John Mark also had the opportunity to travel with Paul and Barnabas (Acts 12:25), but in his life's most noteworthy failure, he abandoned the mission in the middle in order to return home (Acts 13:13). This led to a rift between Paul and Barnabas and resulted in their separation since Mark then accompanied Barnabas on a preaching journey (Acts 15:36-41). Mark seems to write for Gentile readers, especially among the Romans. He passes over the genealogy of the Lord, which would have not mattered much to those who did not understand Judaism, and leaves the condemnations of Jewish traditions to Matthew. Mark might have written from Rome between A.D. 55 and 65. He writes like a journalist with very specific details of Christ's life. Mark emphasizes the redemptive work of Christ and the importance of serving God. The Roman pragmatist would have been likely to appreciate Mark's writings.

### **A. ITS THEME & PURPOSE**

1. Written to Gentiles, perhaps Christians in Rome
  - a. Jewish customs are explained - **Mk 7:3-4**
  - b. Aramaic expresses translated into Greek - **Mk 3:17; 5:41; 7:11**
  - c. Roman reckoning of time is used - **Mk 6:48; 13:35**
  - d. Only Mark identifies Simon of Cyrene as the father of Rufus - **Mk 15:21**
  - e. Few OT quotations are used
2. The focus appears to be on Jesus as the perfect servant
  - a. Mark emphasizes the deeds of the Lord more than His words
  - b. He records nineteen miracles, but only four parables
  - c. One who "did not come to be served, but to serve" - **Mk 10:45**

**-- One could say that the theme is "Jesus, the servant of Man"**

### **B. A SIMPLE OUTLINE**

1. The preparation for Jesus' ministry - **Mk 1:2-13**
2. His ministry in Galilee - **Mk 1:14-9:50**
3. His journey to Jerusalem - **Mk 10:1-52**
4. His ministry in Jerusalem - **Mk 11:1-13:37**
5. His suffering and death in Jerusalem - **Mk 14:1-15:47**

6. His resurrection and appearances - **Mk 16:1-13**

7. His great commission and work from heaven - **Mk 16:14-20**

**-- Jesus came from heaven to serve, and returned to heaven to serve!**

**C. AN EARLY & CONCISE GOSPEL**

1. Probably the first one written

2. All but 31 verses are quoted in the other gospels

3. Leading many to conclude that Matthew and Luke based their gospels on Mark

4. The shortest of the four gospels

5. Luke has 1151 verses, Matthew 1071, John 879, **Mark 661**

**D. AN EVANGELISTIC GOSPEL**

1. It opens with "The beginning of the **gospel** of Jesus Christ..." - **Mk 1:1**

2. It closes with "Go into all the world and preach the **gospel** to every creature" - **Mk 16:15**

## Mark 1:1-45

### Jesus Begins His Ministry

**Lesson Purpose:** To understand the beginnings of the ministry of Jesus. Mark goes straight to those events that herald the start of our Lord's example of service. It is a summary of what Mark saw as important for Gentile believers to know and understand about Jesus. Matthew and Luke introduce Jesus first as "son of David, the son of Abraham." Mark introduces him as "the Son of God." He emphasizes the relation of Jesus to God rather than to Abraham and the Jewish people. Mark points out his divine origin. It is vital to our understanding of the Kingdom of God to properly place "preparing the way of the Lord" into context.

#### *Review of the Reading*

#### **THE COMING OF THE LORD (1:1-13)**

- **The ministry of John the Baptist (1:1-8)**

Not only is the ministry of John the beginning of the unfolding of a new message of mercy and love, but it is the *beginning* of the *end* of the old sacrificial system of the Law. The old covenant was coming to an end as announced by John in the wilderness and the work was completed by Christ "nailing it to the cross" according to Colossians 2:14.

John quotes first from Malachi 3:1 to show that the coming of himself as the messenger of Christ had been foretold by the prophets, and that the gospel had begun in accordance with the prophecy. "The gospel of Jesus Christ" began to unfold, not according to uninspired men, but according to prophecies of inspired men of God, with the preaching of John the Baptist. Isaiah 40:3 is then quoted and declares the purpose of John in preparing the way of the Lord. Malachi 4:5, 6 compares John to Elijah. John said in John 1:21 he is not Elijah himself. Jesus said in Matthew 11:14 that John *was* the Elijah that was to come. He clarifies it in Luke 1:17 when He said John came in the *spirit* and *power* of Elijah.

- **The baptism of Jesus (1:9-11)**

Jesus was baptized to fulfill all righteousness – Matthew 3:13-17

The Spirit descended in bodily form – Luke 3:21, 22

John testified that Jesus was the Son of God – John 1:31-34

Jesus now began His ministry and was about 30 years old – Luke 3:23

- **The temptation of Jesus (1:12-13)**

Matthew 4:1-11 and Luke 4:1-13 give greater details about the temptation of our Lord but Mark gives a stronger picture of how Jesus was *sent* to the desert. Mark says Jesus was “driven” (NKJV) or “sent” (NIV) while Matthew and Luke simply says Jesus was “led”. That he was led by the Spirit to be tempted shows that he was subjected to temptation in accordance with a deliberate purpose, but a purpose not his own. It was not a voluntary entrance into temptation, but of being divinely led into it for a special divine purpose. He fasted 40 days, like Moses did twice (Exodus 34:28 and Deuteronomy 9:9) and Elijah did once (1 Kings 19:8).

## **HIS MINISTRY BEGINS (1:14-45)**

- **The first Galilean ministry (1:14-16)**

Jesus said the time had come and that the Kingdom of God was near. Galatians 4:4, 5 tells us that God had determined the proper time to send our redemption from sin so that we might receive the adoption as sons.

- **The calling of Simon Peter, Andrew, James and John (1:16-20)**

Luke 5:4-7 shows how Jesus demonstrated His power when calling Peter and Andrew. Jesus found men of humble labors of life to begin the process of molding into “fishers of men”. God sees the hearts of those He uses in His service, not their status in the world.

- **Jesus casts out demons in Capernaum (1:21-28)**

Jesus came to destroy the works of the devil (1John 3:8-10) and evil spirits knew their time to corrupt mankind was limited (Matthew 8:29). They knew *EXACTLY* who Jesus was and what He was going to accomplish (James 2:19). Jesus has now showed His authority over the spiritual as well as the physical.

- **Simon's mother-in-law & many others healed (1:29-34)**

The NJKV and NIV in Luke 4:38 says Peter’s mother-in-law had a “great” and “high” fever, perhaps near death or had been bed ridden. The account in Matthew and Luke indicate she arose “immediately”. When word got around what Jesus could do for those who were sick and the authority He had over evil spirits, the whole town came to see Him.

- **Jesus prays and begins preaching throughout Galilee (1:35-39)**

One of the great things in the life of Jesus is the record of his habits of prayer. Divine as he was, there was a constant appeal to and communion with his Father. Jesus confirmed and attested his teaching by the miracles he performed wherever he went, the chief among which was casting out demons. This showed his great opposition to the kingdom of Satan.

- **A leper healed (1:40-45)**

Jesus not only came to preach the Kingdom of God, show His authority over the evil one and heal many people, He had great compassion for individuals. As the leper implored and begged the Lord to cleanse him, Jesus was moved and filled with compassion. Leprosy was perhaps the very worst disease a person could have and brought shame and isolation from others. Jesus not only had compassion for the man but immediately healed him. Jesus instructed the man to go and fulfill the requirements of the Law (Leviticus 14:1-12) in regards to his healing but the man chose to proclaim and spread the news of his healing. Jesus knew this would make it more difficult to move about freely and would certainly arouse the ire of the Jewish authorities.

The leper's intentions were probably good, but his disobedience to Christ's command was a fault and shows the weakness in human nature in following human feelings rather than obeying exactly what the Lord commands. He might have felt that he was honoring Jesus, but it is a sin to do anything against the command of our Lord, even with good intentions to exalt and honor him. Christ can never be exalted and honored when we disobey Him.

## *Questions*

1. Is there a difference between the baptism of John and the baptism of Christians? If so, what is the difference? If not, why not?
  
2. Why was Jesus' baptism necessary?

3. Why would angels attend Jesus when He was tempted by Satan? Can you think of any other time angels attended Him?
  
4. Is there any significance to the timing of the beginning of Jesus' ministry and John's imprisonment?
  
5. Is the statement "fishers of men" a simple metaphor that Jesus used?
6. Can evil spirits overpower us today? If so, does that mean Jesus did not destroy the works of the devil? If He did accomplish what He set out to do, what *CAN* the evil one do today, if anything?
  
7. What is the significance of Simon Peter having a wife?
  
8. If Jesus understood the importance of being alone in prayer with the Father, why don't we?
  
9. When Jesus healed the leper, did He cause the man to sin when the man did not go to the priests in accordance with the Law?

***Your Questions.....what questions do you have from this reading? Write them below, leaving space to answer each based on class discussions.***

## Mark 2:1-28

### Immediate Opposition to Jesus

**Lesson Purpose:** After Jesus had traveled, He returns to Capernaum. The people always flock to Jesus when they know He is near. The more he sought seclusion, the more he was taken notice of by people with physical and spiritual needs. He heals many of their physical ailments but His teaching is different from the teachers of the Law and people were often astonished at the authority in which He taught. Jesus then encounters opposition from the established authorities. As Christians, we too, will often encounter opposition from family, friends and society when we preach the Word of God, even when those same people reach out to us to help them in their time of need.

#### *Review of the Reading*

#### **THE AUTHORITY OF THE LORD (2:1-12)**

- **The paralytic man forgiven (2:1-5)**

Jesus had taken the opportunity of so many people being there to preach the Word. The four men that brought this crippled man trusted that Jesus could heal him. Jesus saw the faith of these men, was willing to forgive his sins, so he kindly said, "Son, your sins are forgiven you."

As people, we often come to Jesus expecting Him to bless us because we know the good He can do in our lives. But in our haste, we do not hear what He says that brings blessings for eternity. Luke 4:18, 19 perfectly describes what Jesus was here to do. *"The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, Because He has anointed Me To preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives And recovery of sight to the blind, To set at liberty those who are oppressed; To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord."*

- **The paralytic man healed (2:6-12)**

Jesus forgiving the man's sins was probably much unexpected by those who were there. Many were there who already knew about Jesus' power to heal and His authority over evil spirits. Many of the scribes who were there apparently were there to test and watch for Jesus to transgress the Law. Jesus knew their hearts and the evil located there. Their question of "who can forgive sins but God alone?" was valid but their heart's blindness prevented them from seeing that Jesus **WAS** God.

They had seen the power and authority He showed in His miracles but in their pride could not be humbled due to their self righteousness. They accused Jesus in their hearts of blasphemy, a serious charge if Jesus did not have the authority or power to forgive sins. The power to heal by His word showed God was with Him. (John 3:2) Jesus was divine, and if He was divine He could not lie about his power to forgive sins. Then He asked, is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, "Your sins are forgiven you," or to say, "Arise, and take up your bed, and walk?" The paralytic may have believed himself, but the faith of those bearing him was taken into account in the healing. His tenderness and love for sinners and those less fortunate are examples we should follow. Jesus thus demonstrates His authority and power to forgive sins when He said, "But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins"--then He said to the paralytic, "Arise, take up your bed, and go to your house."

### **THE PHYSICIAN, BRIDEGROOM & LORD OF THE SABBATH (2:13-28)**

#### **• The call of Levi (Matthew) (2:13-17)**

Levi was a tax collector for the Roman government and, as such, considered an outcast by teachers and scribes of the Pharisees. Luke calls him Levi and says he "left all/everything" in Luke 5:27, 28. Matthew 9:9 refers to him as Matthew. Levi would no longer gather money but men.

Levi apparently has a feast and may be "closing shop" or sharing his joy of his new choice in life with all his friends and associates who were considered tax collectors and sinners. Jesus was having dinner there in view of teachers and scribes of the Pharisees. To them, Jesus was associating with those who were unclean and sinful and they asked His disciples "Why?" The Lord's answer is amazing in that we *ALL* have need of the great physician. (Romans 3:10, 23) Matthew adds this in 9:13: *But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.'* For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners."

#### **• Questioned about fasting (2:18-22)**

When the disciples of John questioned Jesus about fasting, they may have had a legitimate reason for fasting because of John's imprisonment and death. The answer Jesus gave them should have reminded them what John had told them in John 3:29 about Jesus being the bridegroom. But the Pharisees questioning Jesus about fasting was simply a way to demonstrate that their fasting was pious and superior and therefore more righteous before God. The Lord's statement that His disciples would fast when the bridegroom was taken from them is a prophesy of His own death. The wedding feast was a time of celebration, not a time of mourning or fasting.

Once again, the answers to the question about fasting by Jesus by answering it with the bridegroom illustration, a new patch on old cloth and the new wine in old wineskins shows His authority and power to discern the pride of the human heart. It shows that it would have been absurdly inappropriate to the occasion for his disciples to fast, as much so as to mourn at a wedding, to patch an old garment with new cloth, or to put new wine into old bottles. Many times we want to read deeper meanings in what Jesus says than what He intended. All three illustrations are simply meant to show that there is a time for feasting and a time for fasting.

- **Jesus Lord of the Sabbath (2:23-28)**

Luke 6:1 says the disciples rubbed the wheat in their hands. Wheat can be rubbed out in the hand and eaten, and will satisfy hunger, while it is fairly palatable. This must have been when the wheat was ripe, still in the fields, either before it was cut or while in the shock. They began to gather the wheat heads and rub out the wheat in their hands and eat. It was not wrong, according to the Jewish law, for men to take enough of the fruits or the grain to satisfy hunger. They just could not take any away. (Deuteronomy 23:24) The disciples did not violate this law, but the point raised by the Pharisees, was it a violation of the Sabbath law to gather and eat the grain on the Sabbath day?

The Lord reminds the Pharisees that David and his men ate showbread that was meant for the golden table in the Holy Place. The showbread was replaced every week and was actually baked on the Sabbath. He reminded them that it was lawful to good on the Sabbath because "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. *Therefore the Son of Man is also Lord of the Sabbath.*"

### *Questions*

1. Did the paralytic man's faith have anything to do with his healing or forgiveness of sins? Why?
  
2. When the paralytic man so obviously needed healing, why did Jesus forgive his sins first?

3. Does the example of the paralytic man teach us anything about benevolence vs. evangelism?
  
4. Do we ever exhibit or share the Pharisees attitude toward Jesus when He ate with Levi, the tax collectors and sinners when we have people among us that are “different”?
  
5. What does *'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.'* mean to us as Christians?
  
6. Is it appropriate for Christians to fast today? If so, when? Why?
  
7. Why did the Pharisees think Jesus and His disciples were violating the Law by eating grain on the Sabbath?

***Your Questions.....what questions do you have from this reading? Write them below, leaving space to answer each based on class discussions.***

## ***Mark 3:1-35***

### **A Divided House**

**Lesson Purpose:** As the opposition to Jesus increases, He appointed the twelve apostles that He might send them out to preach and have power and authority to heal and cast out demons. Jesus is even accused of being possessed by the prince of demons, Beelzebub. We can learn to think wisely and act with compassion toward others when we hold steadfast in faith.

#### ***Review of the Reading***

##### **THE COMPASSION OF THE LORD (3:1-12)**

- **Healing on the Sabbath (3:1-6)**

Jesus was watched closely by the Pharisees. He was now seen as a threat to their authority. When Jesus saw the man with a withered hand in the synagogue, Jesus did not shrink back from their hypocrisy. They were closely watching Him to see if He would heal on the Sabbath. Luke 6:8 says He knew their thoughts. Again, He asks them a question that turns a mirror on their hearts. "Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill?" Matthew 12:11, 12 also adds "What man is there among you who has one sheep, and if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will not lay hold of it and lift it out? Of how much more value then is a man than a sheep? Therefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath." Jesus has answered their question. He sees the hardness of their hearts and becomes angry. The anger of our Lord is not passion, but a deep, moral resentment against wrong. He was grieved at their spiritual hardness. They were so blind to the truth that they mistook prejudice for religion. When Jesus healed the man's hand, the Pharisees were filled with rage according to Luke 6:11 and immediately began to plot with the Herodians how they might destroy Him.

- **The multitudes (3:7-12)**

Jesus often withdrew when needed to avoid those who sought to kill Him. He did not do so out of fear but in wisdom in staying focused on His great task.

No one could lay a hand on Him – John 7:30

At one point Jesus did not move publicly among the Jews – John 11:53, 54

He walked right through people seeking to harm Him – Luke 4:28-30

To avoid the crush of crowds seeking to be healed, Jesus had His disciples keep a boat ready to push out on the lake to be able to preach to the multitudes. Galilee was bowl shaped and its shore easily allowed many people to spread out and listen to Jesus.

## **THE LORD MAKES DISTINCTIONS (3:13-35)**

- **The calling of the Apostles (3:13-19)**

It is perhaps quite significant that Jesus went up on the mountain before calling the twelve men to Him that would become His apostles. Luke 6:12 tells us He prayed all night to His heavenly Father. If Jesus felt the need of such prayer and was strengthened by it, how much more do we, poor, frail men and women, need constant help and strength, wisdom and guidance from God in our work? And how constant, humble, and earnest should we be in prayer to God for wisdom and strength. When we have important decisions, do we pray without ceasing? (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18) Until now, the ministry of Jesus had been personal. The calling of the apostles begins a turning point in the Lord's ministry.

- **A divided house (3:20-27)**

Returning to Capernaum, the Lord and the apostles were confronted with so many people they couldn't even eat. Events must have been chaotic. So much so that even His own family began to think He was out of His mind. The scribes and teachers of the Law from Jerusalem went even further and accused Jesus of being possessed by Beelzebub, even casting out demons with his power.

Jesus uses this as an opportunity to teach that a house divided against itself cannot stand. "How can Satan drive out Satan?" Matthew 12:25 says Jesus knew their thoughts and said, "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself will not stand."

- **The unforgivable sin (3:28-30)**

On this occasion Jesus mentioned an "unforgiveable sin". Jesus described it as blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. Blasphemy is any kind of injurious speech about another.

There is no forgiveness - Matthew 12:31-32

Blaspheme – "to speak reproachfully, rail at, revile, calumniate" - Thayer

Thus the unforgiveable sin was to speak evil of the Holy Spirit in some way.

Mark reveals exactly how they spoke evil of the Spirit "because they said, 'He has an unclean spirit.'" By attributing Jesus' power to cast out demons to Beelzebub (Satan), they spoke evil of the Holy Spirit by whom Jesus cast out demons.

**In effect, they were calling the Holy Spirit a demon; in so doing –**

They denied the evidence that Jesus was truly from God

They deprived themselves of evidence to believe in Jesus

They were without hope of forgiveness that comes only through Jesus

**The unforgiveable sin was to believe that the Holy Spirit was in fact Satan!**

Several things must be kept in mind about unforgiveable sin. The nature of the sin is to attribute the obvious work of the Holy Spirit to Satan himself.

**Note carefully that ongoing sin is a condition of rebellion against God**

There is sin by which we "crucify again" the Son of God – Hebrews 6:4-6

There is sin for which there "no longer remains a sacrifice for sin" -

Hebrews 10:26-31

Committed openly - Hebrews 6:6

Committed continually, deliberately and knowingly - Hebrews 6:4, 10:26

Tramples the Son of God underfoot

Treats the blood of the covenant (Jesus' blood) a common thing

Insults the Spirit of grace

**What are the consequences of *unforgiven* sin?**

Fearful expectation of judgment - Hebrews 10:27

Fiery indignation - Hebrews 10:27

Worse punishment than death - Hebrews 10:28-29

Vengeance and judgment by the Lord upon His people - Hebrews 10:30-31

Blasphemy is any sin that we knowingly refuse to repent of, despite many opportunities! People should be more concerned about any sin they knowingly commit and/or they refuse to give up. Whether one is obeying the gospel of Christ for the first time, or has already "tasted the heavenly gift" (Hebrews 6:4) and "received the knowledge of the truth" (Hebrews 10:26), ***all sin*** is "unforgiveable" unless we repent. How can we be forgiven if we don't repent?

As Christians we have continuous access to the blood of Christ and forgiveness of sin if we humble ourselves and confess those sins. 1 John 1:7-9 says "But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess

our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

- **The family of Jesus (3:31-35)**

Even the mother and brothers of Jesus had concerns about the physical well being of her son, not fully understanding the nature of His work. In Christ, all those who are of the body are part of the family of God. (Romans 8:14-17)

### *Questions*

1. When Jesus asked the Pharisees if it was lawful to do good on the Sabbath, why did they keep silent?
2. What is the significance of the Pharisees plotting with the Herodians to destroy Jesus?
3. Why would Jesus sternly warn and give strict orders to unclean evil spirits not to tell who He was?
4. What did the name Boanerges mean and to whom did Jesus give the name?
5. Explain the meaning of 3:27. Who is the strong man? Or is it a rhetorical question?

6. If the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are one, why was blasphemy against only the Holy Spirit never to be forgiven?
  
7. Is there an unforgiveable in today? If so, what is it? If not, why not?
  
8. Would the “cloud of witnesses” in Hebrews 12 be a part of Jesus described as “Here are my mother and my brothers!” Are we part of that family?

***Your Questions.....what questions do you have from this reading? Write them below, leaving space to answer each based on class discussions.***

## ***Mark 4:1-34***

### **Parables**

**Lesson Purpose:** Mark now gives a change in the manner of our Savior's teaching - that of parables. This was not the beginning of his teaching, but only of one form of it. The parables that follow are a specimen of his teaching. All that Jesus said and did are not recorded. What is recorded was written to produce faith that Jesus is the Son of God. (John 20:30) Only samples of the *many things* taught by Jesus are preserved. Teaching is important in the scheme of redemption. So much so that no man can come to Jesus except he be taught first. We need to know and understand Jesus draws men to him through teaching. (John 6:44, 45) Jesus taught much by parables. A parable is literally the placing of two things side by side. It is a comparison of things familiar and well known to illustrate and enforce things obscure or not well known.

#### ***Review of the Reading***

##### **FOUR PARABLES (4:1-32)**

- **Parable of the sower (4:1-9)**

Farmers during the time of our Lord carried a bag with seed and tossed seed every which way as he walked across the field. The seed was truly scattered on every type of soil.

Wayside/path – birds ate and devoured it

Stony ground/rocky places without much soil – scorched by sun and withered with no root

Thorns – choked and produced no crop

Good ground – produced good crop with yield of 30x, 60x, 100x

- **Why parables? (4:10-12)**

Jesus explained to those who were close to Him that they would know the mystery of the Kingdom of God. To those outside the Kingdom, the wisdom of God is foolishness. (1 Corinthians 1:18) Our Lord quotes from Isaiah 6:9, 10 here as well as in Matthew 13:13-15 to show how hard hearts cannot receive the Word.

- **Parable of the sower explained (4:13-20)**

Jesus very plainly says the seed is the Word of God.

Wayside/path – Satan immediately snatches it when sown

Stony ground/rocky places received with joy – with no root stumble and fall when trouble or persecution comes

Thorns – cares and worries of life, riches and wealth, desires choke and make unfruitful

Good ground – hear Word and accept it, bear fruit and produce good crop with yield of 30x, 60x, 100x

Which one most accurately describes us?

- **The lampstand (4:21-25)**

No one hides a light. Light brings everything into view. Everything hidden will be revealed. Everything secret will be brought out into the light. So Jesus cautions us to be careful and take heed what we hear. Hebrews 4:12, 13 reminds us that everything will be laid bare before God.

- **The growing seed (4:26-29)**

Isaiah 55:11 promises us that God's Word will accomplish what He sets it out to accomplish. We scatter seed but do not fully understand how the seed grows. As Paul said in 1 Corinthians 3:5-9, we may work the fields of hearts and souls, but only God makes the seed grow.

- **The mustard seed (4:30-32)**

We often consider our teachings of God's Word to be perhaps not very significant, but just as a tiny mustard seed can grow to be great, our efforts to work in God's fields produces a great harvest. Romans 1:16 says the gospel is the power of God to salvation.

### *Questions*

1. Where does our responsibility lie when it comes to the soil of people's hearts?

2. At times, our own hearts may fit the Lord's description of different types of soil. What can we do when we realize the condition of our hearts?
  
3. What is the evidence of our "seeing and not perceiving and hearing but not understanding"?
  
4. How is it that we allow our hearts become the soils that produce no crop?
  
5. What is the meaning of Mark 4:25?
  
6. If we do not know how the seed sprouts and grows, how do we help nurture the seed and change the soil in which it grows?
  
7. If even the smallest of seeds planted can grow to be of great use, why do we find it difficult to find sowers of seed?

***Your Questions.....what questions do you have from this reading? Write them below, leaving space to answer each based on class discussions.***

## ***Mark 4:35 -5:43***

### **The Authority of Jesus over Life & Death**

**Lesson Purpose:** Jesus had healed diseases and driven out evil and unclean spirits for many people. Many marveled at His power and authority. The miracles were important and necessary to confirm His teachings were indeed from His heavenly Father. Now Jesus shows His authority over nature, extreme demon possession, and even over death. Our faith in Christ needs to be rooted firmly in the knowledge that Jesus is truly *Lord* of all creation.

#### ***Review of the Reading***

##### **JESUS IS LORD OF CREATION**

- **Lord over nature (4:35-41)**

Small, open boats were common on Galilee and Luke 5:3 tells us this boat belonged to Peter. Sudden storms were common on Galilee due to cool winds racing down over the low mountains over the cool water. The disciples, particularly the fishermen, would have been used to sudden storms but this one was terrible to the point of the boat being washed over with waves and about to sink. In the midst of the disciples fear and panic, the serene picture of the Lord sleeping on the pillow is amazing. Like the disciples, we cry out to the Lord when we are in a storm of life. Then, as the Lord does here, He calms the storm and reminds us of our lack of faith. The disciples were actually terrified to see the Lord's power over nature.

- **Lord over the spiritual world (5:1-20)**

The country of the Gadarenes (NKJV) or the Gerasenes (NIV) was on the eastern shore of Galilee. It appears Jesus may have traveled there specifically for the demon possessed man, a true madman. It is obvious that the group demons that called themselves Legion knew exactly who Jesus was. James 2:19, 20 says the demons believe and tremble and shudder. It is striking that Jesus had the man remain behind to tell others the great things the Lord had done. While a possession of many demons would horrify us and we would avoid a person like this like a plague, Jesus has compassion on even the most vile and tormented people. How do we treat those we see as vile and contemptible? With revulsion or compassion?

- **Lord over life (5:25-34)**

After being cared for her bleeding by physicians for twelve years, the woman was obviously desperate and had heard or seen Jesus heal people. Her humbleness and perhaps station in life prevented her from openly seeking the Lord's help. But her faith was such that she believed if she could only get close enough to touch His clothes she would be healed. The Lord asked "Who touched my clothes" but knew who it was from what we read in vs. 32 and Luke 8:47. It seems He was encouraging the woman to be public about her faith.

- **Lord over death (5:21-24, 35-43)**

Jairus was *one* of the rulers of the synagogue in Capernaum. Luke 8:42 says his daughter was twelve years old and his only child. It is an interesting contrast to note how previous rulers and teachers had treated Jesus. Jairus begged and pleaded earnestly for the Lord to come and touch his child. His faith was not such as to trust the Lord could merely speak the word. Even as they went to the house and were told the girl was dead, Jesus encouraged faith and raised the little girl from the dead. Can you imagine the amazement, astonishment and joy of Jairus and his wife as well of Peter, James and John when Jesus showed His authority even over death?

- **Conclusion**

Jesus worked every variety of miracle to confirm His authority and teachings and to leave even the weakest in faith no room to doubt his divine power, or that he is the Christ, the Son of the living God.

### *Questions*

1. When storms of life are howling around us, why do we have a hard time sleeping?
  
2. Why do you suppose Jesus was sleeping so soundly when the storm raged?

3. How does the fact that Jesus has control of nature strengthen our faith?
  
4. How is it that Legion could worship Jesus?
  
5. How many pigs were in the herd of swine? What significance, if any, was the fact swine was being raised here?
  
6. What is meant by “his right mind” after the Lord healed the demon possessed man?
  
7. Matthew 8:28 states two men who were demon possessed met Jesus while Mark and Luke mention one in their accounts. Explain.
  
8. Why did the people plead with Jesus to leave their region?
  
9. Why would the healed man beg Jesus to be allowed to go with Him? Why do you suppose the Lord would not permit him to do so?
  
10. Why would it be surprising to find a man of Jarius’ position to beg at Jesus’ feet?

11. Why did Jesus ask who touched Him? Did the woman's healing happen because she touched something Jesus wore?

12. Of the twelve, why did Jesus only take Peter, James and John when He raised the girl from the dead?

***Your Questions.....what questions do you have from this reading? Write them below, leaving space to answer each based on class discussions.***

## ***Mark 6:1-56***

### **Faith in Spite of Opposition**

**Lesson Purpose:** As Christians in our home and hometowns we can be limited by how family and friends perceive us. We in turn often think someone we've known a long time will only amount to so much and forget how the Spirit of God moves in people, changing lives. The Lord often encountered opposition to His teaching and authority along with derision and skepticism of His miraculous power. Opposition to our Lord can be open hostility or lingering doubt which breeds a lack of faith. We are called to a faith that does not doubt in the face of opposition of any kind.

#### ***Review of the Reading***

##### **DOUBTS & LACK OF FAITH**

- **No honor in Nazareth (6:1-6)**

As Jesus taught in the synagogue, the people were astonished and amazed when they heard Him. The most astounding part of this passage is the fact that they were offended by Jesus. The mighty works and miracles He had wrought meant nothing. It's as if they were saying, "Don't get above your raisin'!" As a result, Jesus could do no mighty works there because of their unbelief causing even He to marvel at their lack of faith.

There is no mention of Joseph in this account but Jesus seems to be remembered as a carpenter, a trade He probably took up from his earthly father before beginning His ministry. His earthly brothers James, Joses, Judas and Simon are mentioned here along with Mary His mother and at least two sisters.

- **Two by two (6:7-13)**

Sending the twelve out two by two was as much to train the apostles as it was to preach that people should repent and heal the sick. They were to learn to totally rely on God, not themselves and not take the usual provisions people of that day carried. The twelve were able to do mighty works because of the word of authority Jesus had given them. They were given this power by the Spirit, and it was to show to the Jews the power that he would bestow on them. In this work they acted only in the name of the Lord Jesus. Matthew 10 gives more details about the Lord's instructions to the twelve, including not going among the Gentiles or into a town of the Samaritans.

- **Fears & doubts (6:14-29)**

When Herod heard news about Jesus, he was convinced Jesus was John the Baptist was raised from the dead. John had been imprisoned for telling Herod it was not lawful for Herod to have his brother's wife, Herodias. Herodias was a grand-daughter of Herod the Great, daughter of Aristobulus, and niece of Herod Antipas. Herodias wanted vengeance against John and for her sake, Herod had John thrown in prison. Herodias wanted John dead but Herod feared John and liked to listen to him. He knew John was a holy man and perhaps Herod's conscience was pricked at times. But Jesus called him a fox in Luke 13:32. Herod was weak, sensual, cunning, unscrupulous and superstitious. John did not work miracles according to John 10:41, but Herod was perplexed in Luke 9:7 because he heard John had risen from the dead.

Herod was called "Tetrarch" by Matthew and Luke and was subject only to the Roman emperor. This Herod was Herod Antipas, son of Herod the Great. His dominion composed of Galilee, Samaria, and Perea. He first married a daughter of Aretas, king of Arabia Retrea, but later took Herodias, who was his brother Philip's wife. Aretas, indignant at the insult offered his daughter, waged war against Herod and defeated him. This defeat, according to Josephus (Ant. XVIII. 5, 2), was regarded by many as a punishment for the murder of John. In 39 AD he was banished to France, where Herodias followed him and both died in exile.

It is important to note here that in John 3:29, 30, John himself had told his disciples that he would decrease while Jesus would increase. John may have had some doubts while in prison because Luke 7:18 says he sent word to Jesus to confirm He was indeed the one that was to come. It is in Luke 7:28 that Jesus says of all men born of women, no one was greater than John.

- **Hard hearts (6:30-44)**

The disciples had returned from going out two by two. Jesus had wanted them to rest and sent them by boat to a deserted quiet place. Jesus often withdrew to solitary places to rest and pray according to Luke 5:16. But the multitudes would not let them rest but followed them around the shore and gathered ahead of Jesus when He landed and got out of the boat. Though weary, Jesus was moved with great compassion and began to teach them. The disciples were obviously very tired and wanted to send the people away to seek food. They complained that it would take at least 200 denarii, or about eight month's wages.

According to John 6:5-9, Jesus was testing the disciples and knew what He was going to do. After collecting five loaves and two fish from a boy, He blessed it and began passing it out, feeding five thousand men. Twelve baskets of fragments were taken up.

- **Fears & doubts (6:45-52)**

Jesus sent the disciples by boat to Bethsaida while He dismissed the crowd. It is noteworthy here that Jesus went to the mountain to pray and was there many hours. When we are tired we want to relax and perhaps engage in activities to please ourselves. Walking on the water toward them, it is curious that Jesus was about to pass them by and they thought they were seeing a ghost, so unnatural was the sight. It is not uncommon for Jesus to come to our help in unexpected ways, and we are afraid of his coming though he is bringing blessings in disguise. This is where Peter tried to join the Lord on the water according to Matthew 14:28-31. The disciples marveled and were greatly amazed. When our hearts are hard, we allow fears and doubts about the Son of God to blind us.

### *Questions*

1. Why is the mentioning of the earthly family of Jesus important?
2. What else happened to the Lord in Nazareth? (See Luke 4:28-30)
3. If people in a city did not receive the twelve when Jesus sent them two by two, what was done as a testimony against them?
4. What kind of greeting did they probably give when the twelve went into a house? (See Luke 10:5)
5. What, if any, significance is there to the Lord having the twelve anoint sick people with oil?

6. What was the occasion of the feast Herod gave?
  
7. What was the reckless offer that Herod gave to the daughter of Herodias?
  
8. How did Herod feel when the daughter of Herodias wanted the head of John Baptist on a platter?
  
9. When Jesus told his disciples to feed the multitudes, was their answer one of sarcasm or astonishment?
  
10. After all that Jesus had done, why would the twelve doubt anything the Lord told them to do?
  
11. At what time of the night did Jesus walk out on the water to meet the disciples?
  
12. What did the disciples think Jesus was when they saw Him walking on the water?

13. Where did the people of Gennesaret lay the sick for Jesus to heal?

*Your Questions.....what questions do you have from this reading? Write them below, leaving space to answer each based on class discussions.*

## ***Mark 7:1-8:21***

### **Faith, Signs & the Realities of Faith**

**Lesson Purpose:** Men continue to follow their own traditions and doctrines rather than God's word. Just like the scribes and Pharisees, people today believe that their doctrines actually are God's will. They haven't learned how to distinguish between unnecessary rules and binding commands. Jesus showed how easy it is to tell the difference: Look at their source. Any religious practice or teaching that comes from man is wrong; those which come from God are right. We should examine everything we do to see whether it comes from God or man. Everything from God is in the Bible. So if what we believe isn't taught by Scripture, we can know it must be from man. Jesus' words should motivate us to carefully examine our own heart. Heart disease is a warning symptom, and if not detected and cured, will result in all manner of sin. Jesus warned about greed, envy, pride, and lust. These attitudes are wrong, and must be checked at their onset. We must care for our heart by feeding on the pure Word of God and constantly seeking the Lord.

#### ***Review of the Reading***

- **Jesus vs. Traditions (7:1-13)**

The Pharisees and scribes challenged the disciples because they ate with unwashed hands. The issue here was not hygiene, but religious ritual. The Pharisees had developed elaborate cleansing procedures that they believed were a part of God's will. The truth is God had never commanded these washings. They originated with the doctrines and traditions of men. Jesus answered His critics by pointing out the difference between God-given commandments and human traditions. He showed that their insistence on following rules established by men caused them to actually break God's law. He cited the case of "Corban." This was a Jewish tradition that prohibited a person from using his resources to provide for his aging parents if he had previously declared those resources "dedicated" to God. Their obedience to men's doctrines led them to disregard God's will.

- **Emphasis on the heart (7:14-23)**

The Pharisees focused primarily on external things. But Jesus showed that what actually defiles a person are the things inside his heart. In the Bible, the heart refers to the mind or spirit of man. Every sin germinates and grows within man's spirit

and is then expressed in external action. In this way, the Lord showed how foolish it was for the Pharisees to be frantically seeking external purity by a ritual hand washing procedure. This principle also proved that God no longer had rules prohibiting the eating of certain foods.

- **Jesus heals a Gentile woman's daughter (7:24-30)**

Jesus had traveled to a predominantly Gentile area. Before this, almost all of His work had been done with Jews. He had healed Jews, His apostles were Jews, and He preached to Jews. Jesus wanted to have some time alone with the apostles, so He withdrew to a Gentile region north of Galilee. He had hoped to stay there undetected, but a Syrian woman found out He was there and came requesting that He heal her demon-possessed daughter. At first, Jesus refused. He said that it was not good to take bread from the children and feed it to the dogs. What he meant was that according to God's plan it wasn't time yet to heal and teach the Gentiles. The Jews (the children) were the ones God intended to be the recipients of the bread (healings and blessings in general) first. God planned that later on through the Jewish people the gospel would be introduced to the Gentiles. This woman showed great faith, humility and quickness because she responded: "Yes, Lord, yet even the little dogs under the table eat from the children's crumbs." She implied that just a mere crumb of Jesus' miraculous power would be sufficient to heal her daughter. She also recognized that this did not signal the beginning of a major Gentile "campaign." As a result, Jesus healed her daughter. The conversation had made it clear that she would not misinterpret the healing as a sign that the time for the Gentiles had come.

- **Jesus heals a deaf man (7:31-37)**

Jesus used an unusual procedure to heal this deaf man. After taking him away from the crowd, Jesus put His fingers into the man's ears, and touched the man's tongue with His own spit. Apparently, Jesus was using "sign language" to communicate with him, and to let him know who was about to heal him. Had Jesus not done this, the man would have suddenly begun to hear, but would not have understood why. The multitude's affirmation was absolutely correct: "He has done all things well!"

- **Jesus Feeds 4000 men (8:1-10)**

Huge crowds were constantly following Jesus. On this occasion, they had been in a wilderness area and hadn't eaten for three days. Jesus didn't want to send them home hungry for fear they would faint during the trip. So He asked for a food inventory: there were seven loaves and a few small fish. Jesus directed the

multitude to sit down, and then began serving the food. Miraculously, the supply didn't dwindle. Each loaf generated a large basketful of leftovers besides feeding 4000 men. Jesus' power could not be disputed.

- **Warning about leaven (8:11-21)**

Despite much evidence of Jesus' power and authority, the Pharisees challenged Him to show a sign from heaven. He refused their request. They were simply blind to all evidence and no sign would ever be enough to convince them. Then Jesus and His disciples began to cross the sea by boat. The disciples were worried because they had forgotten to take enough bread with them for the trip. Jesus warned about the leaven of the Pharisees and of Herod. Immediately, the disciples imagined that He was criticizing them for having forgotten the bread. Jesus knew what they were saying to each other and rebuked their obvious hard-heartedness. After all, He had twice produced enough food to feed thousands with abundant leftovers. They should have known that He could handle problems with insufficient food. His warning wasn't about the leaven of bread, but about the false teaching and hypocrisy of the Pharisees and Herod. Bad attitudes spread like leaven and He was worried that the disciples might be contaminated by them.

### *Questions*

1. What criticism did the Pharisees and scribes raise against Jesus' disciples?
2. What was the authority behind this religious practice?
3. What did Jesus say about service to God that is based on the doctrines of men?
4. What causes a person to be defiled?

5. Of what race or nationality was the woman who came to Jesus? What problem did she want Jesus to solve?
  
6. What did Jesus tell her, and how did she respond?
  
7. Where did Jesus put His fingers? What effect did the miracle have on the crowds?
  
8. How many men did Jesus feed on this occasion? How many baskets of food were taken up from the seven loaves and few fish?
  
9. What request did the Pharisees make that Jesus refused to grant?
  
10. What warning did Jesus give to His disciples? In saying this, what did Jesus mean by "leaven"?

***Your Questions.....what questions do you have from this reading? Write them below, leaving space to answer each based on class discussions.***

## ***Mark 8:22-9:29***

### **Glory vs. Division**

**Lesson Purpose:** Don't be satisfied to see men like trees walking: Consider the situation of the blind man. While blind, he saw absolutely nothing. When Jesus first touched him, his vision improved: he saw men, though they looked like trees. To one who had been totally blind, that was fantastic progress. But Jesus could do more. He touched the man again and he began to see perfectly. Unfortunately, in the spiritual realm, some are satisfied with one touch. They see, but not clearly. Many don't even realize that they need a complete cure and that they should not be content to see men like trees walking. Consider, for example, someone whose life has been totally devastated by sin. He hears about Jesus, begins to follow many of His teachings and his life improves. Sadly, however, he is unaware that he lacks understanding of Jesus' word in many areas and that he should not settle for distorted vision. Let's check out our own lives. Could it be that we still are not seeing clearly and that Jesus could restore our vision perfectly?

#### ***Review of the Reading***

- **Jesus heals a blind man in two stages (8:22-26)**

Normally, Jesus' healings were complete and immediate. This case was different. He applied spit to on the eyes of the blind man, laid His hands on him, and then asked what he saw. The man reported seeing men like trees walking around. So Jesus touched his eyes again, and his vision was perfectly restored. Why didn't Christ heal this man all at once, like He normally did? Jesus' healings were signs, symbols of spiritual truths. In this case, the two–stage healing of the blind man symbolized how a man's understanding and insight is often healed in two steps. The disciples, for example, weren't totally blind, for they understood that Jesus was the Son of God. But, on the other hand, they still didn't perceive Jesus' complete ability and therefore had defective vision. They needed to be touched again so they could see clearly.

- **Peter – strength & weakness (8:27-33)**

Jesus asked what the public thought about Him. The disciples reported varying opinions: John the Baptist, Elijah, etc. When Jesus asked for *their* opinion, Peter boldly responded: You are the Christ. It was a brilliant insight. Nevertheless,

when Jesus went on to warn about how He was going to be rejected and crucified, Peter was horrified. He could not imagine the Lord being killed. He began to correct Jesus telling Him that this would never happen! Jesus sternly rebuked Peter: "Get behind Me, Satan! For you are mindful of the things of God, but the things of men." Peter was tempting Him not to suffer. Temptations are often strongest when they come through people we are close to. So Jesus flatly rejected Peter's advice. Isn't it strange that one minute Peter proclaimed Jesus to be Christ, the next he was calling Him aside to inform Him that He was mistaken! If Jesus was truly the Christ, Peter had no business arguing with Him. Nor do we.

- **Conditions of discipleship (8:34 – 9:1)**

Jesus plainly explained what was required to become His disciple. He said that you must deny yourself, take up your cross and follow Him. These requirements are demanding. A person does not naturally deny himself. Instead, he usually does what he wants. Death to self is painful, but that is exactly the meaning of taking up one's cross. The cross was an instrument of death, to take it up would be to die to oneself and to one's own desires in order to serve Christ. There is no profit in gaining the entire world, only to lose one's soul in the transaction. It is worth everything to submit to God's stringent requirements for discipleship. Jesus highlighted the requirements for being a disciple because it is so easy to imagine that you are a follower of Jesus when, in fact, you aren't. Discipleship is not mere church membership or moral living. It is total devotion to Jesus Christ. It is to die to self and live 100% for the Lord. Am I really Jesus' disciple?

- **Jesus is transfigured in glory (9:2-13)**

Jesus had taken three of His closest friends with Him to a high mountain. There, he began to glow with breathtaking brilliance. Just then, Elijah and Moses appeared, talking with Jesus. The disciples were awestruck. Moses was the great Lawgiver, the one who had led Israel out of Egyptian bondage and through the wilderness. Elijah was a great prophet, one of two men in the Old Testament who went directly to heaven without dying. And there they were talking to Jesus. Peter was profoundly moved by the occasion and suggested that they build three tabernacles: one for Jesus, one for Moses and one for Elijah. No doubt he felt that it would honor Jesus to receive a tabernacle alongside Moses and Elijah. But God's voice boomed from heaven: ***"This is My beloved Son. Hear Him!"*** Moses and Elijah vanished. Only Jesus remained. As they descended, Jesus told the disciples not to tell anyone about what had happened until after He was raised from the dead. God's rebuff of Peter's suggestion to construct three tabernacles teaches volumes. The problem with Peter's plan was that it put Jesus on the same level as Moses and Elijah. He isn't. Jesus is above everyone, and in this case, above the

greatest figures of the Old Testament. Our problem is like Peter's. We often tend to build multiple tabernacles. One for Jesus and one for our parents. Or one for Jesus and another for our preacher. Or again, one for our church and another for a favorite activity or career. This won't do. Jesus must have the only tabernacle; He must be the supreme authority in our life. Nothing else can be on a par with Him.

- **The disciples fail to cast out a demon (9:14-29)**

As Jesus descended the mountain, He noticed great commotion in the valley. The crowd ran to meet Him. While Jesus had been with three of the apostles on the mountain, the others had been unable to cast a demon out of a boy. Since the apostles had normally been able to cast out demons (Mark 6:13), this failure puzzled them and surprised the bystanders. Jesus' enemies were taking advantage of this lapse to discredit Him. The father of the tormented lad asked Jesus to do something, if He could. The Lord turned his statement back on him: "If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes." The father said that he believed, but recognizing the possibility that his faith was not as strong as it needed to be, he begged Jesus to help his unbelief. With that, Christ commanded the unclean spirit to leave the boy. The demon cried out and threw the boy into convulsions, but left. Later, the disciples asked why they had been unable to cast out the demon. Jesus explained that they were not relying on God enough, but on their own power: "This kind can come out by nothing but prayer and fasting." Perhaps their prior success in expelling demons had caused them to be self-reliant, and they had neglected to pray in faith to God so that He would cast out the demon.

- **Conclusion**

Time and again the disciples demonstrated a lack of clear spiritual understanding. They saw Jesus multiply loaves and fishes, but failed to see that He could handle another food emergency. Peter affirmed that Jesus was the Christ, but thought it best to give Him some needed "advice." He believed Jesus was great, but on the same level with Moses and Elijah. The nine disciples in the valley boldly attempted to expel a demon, but without relying on the Lord. They were like those formerly blind who even now saw men like trees walking.

### *Questions*

1. How did the blind man see after Jesus first touched him? How did he see after Jesus finished with him?

2. Who did people consider Jesus to be? What did Peter confess regarding Jesus' identity?
  
3. How did Peter react to Jesus' announcement of His coming suffering?
  
4. What did Jesus say was the reason Peter would not believe Jesus was going to die?
  
5. What three things did Jesus name as a requirement for being a disciple?
  
6. How did Jesus teach the importance of proper priorities?
  
7. What two Old Testament heroes appeared on the mountain and talked with Jesus?
  
8. What did Peter want to do on the mountain when he saw Jesus together with these men? What did the Father then say about Jesus?

9. What problem did the man's son have?

10. What happened when Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit?

***Your Questions.....what questions do you have from this reading? Write them below, leaving space to answer each based on class discussions.***

## ***Mark 9:30 - 10:52***

### **Teaching for the Ages**

**Lesson Purpose:** We still desperately need these lessons of Jesus. Many, even in religion, are seeking to be great by trying to gain honor, glory and power. Churches can give in to those who want the limelight and who desire positions of maximum control and authority. We should be ashamed. Jesus was born in a stable outside a small town. He lived His life as a village carpenter and traveling preacher. He accumulated no riches and had no worldly power. Yet, today, many of His self-proclaimed followers seek and promise the very things He rejected, as they pursue higher and higher positions in churches. It is hard to imagine that Jesus would feel at home among people that proclaim His name yet refuse to obey Him. It is impossible to believe that He would preach the "gospels of health, wealth and happiness" so popular today. Jesus said the way to true greatness was the road of service and suffering.

#### ***Review of the Reading***

- **Jesus announces His death & rebukes pride (9:30-37)**

Jesus wanted to prepare His disciples for the tragedy that was nearing. He warned them that He would be betrayed into men's hands and be killed, but encouraged them by announcing that three days later He would rise again. The disciples did not understand; they were too busy arguing about who would be the greatest in Jesus' coming kingdom. Knowing what they had been disputing, Jesus took a child into His arms and used him as a model of the humility that should characterize disciples. It must have disappointed Him greatly to see the disciples struggling for power while He was preoccupied with His coming suffering.

- **Jesus teaches about the dangers of stumbling (9:38-50)**

John related how he had seen someone expelling demons in Jesus' name and had forbidden him to do so. Evidently John thought that no one should have been doing any work for the Lord who was not part of them. But Jesus had called many to go out, preach, and expel demons (Luke 10:1-3). He was pleased with those who were faithfully serving Him in other places. Jesus went on to warn of the danger of causing someone to fall. He said that it would be better to tie a huge millstone around a man's neck and cast him into the sea than for him to cause another to

stumble. He also warned of the danger of allowing anything to cause us to stumble. The Lord encouraged radical, decisive action: cutting off a hand or a foot or plucking out an eye in order to avoid abandoning Him. He was not speaking literally—but He was forcefully declaring that we should sacrifice anything that is tempting us to sin. He described Hell as a horrendous place of maggots and perpetual fire that must be avoided at all cost.

- **Jesus teaches about divorce (10:1-12)**

Jesus' opponents decided to test Him with a hard question. They asked Him whether it was right to divorce. In their society as in ours, there was much disagreement, even among religious people, as to whether or not it was right to divorce and, if so, under what circumstances. Jesus answered their question by reminding them that in the beginning God created only one man and one woman. He intended for marriage to be a permanent union. Because God joins people together when they marry, it is wrong for man to separate them. Later He explained to the disciples that it is not only wrong to divorce, but that a divorced person who remarries is committing adultery. ***We need commitment in marriage!*** Many people today enter marriage with the notion that they will divorce if it doesn't work out. This is wrong. Throw-away marriages are opposed to God's created order. God hates divorce. The fact that men frequently disobey God does not change what He said. In Ephesians 5:22-33, Paul compared marriage to Christ and the Church. ***We need to see marriage in the same light!***

- **Jesus blesses children (10:13-16)**

The disciples never want Jesus to be bothered by people around Him, so they were constantly trying to keep certain kinds of people away from Him. In this case, it was children. When Jesus saw that they were hindering the children from approaching Him, He was indignant and rebuked them. He said that the kingdom of God itself belongs to people who become like children. He took the young people into His arms and began to bless them. He always had time for children. If we are not Christians, if we are not ***in*** Christ, we should seek to be born as little children into His kingdom.

**Romans 6:1-4** - What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? 2 Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? 3 Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? 4 Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

- **Jesus teaches about the high cost of wealth (10:17-31)**

A rich young man ran up to Jesus requesting information on how to receive eternal life. Jesus first told him to keep the commandments, which the man said he had done. Then Jesus ordered him to sell all that he owned, give the proceeds to the poor, and start following Him. The man wanted eternal life, but not at that price. He turned away, saddened. Many follow in this young man's steps. They desire eternal life as long as they don't have to make too many sacrifices. Jesus referred to these people when He remarked about how difficult it is for those who are rich to enter heaven. He said that it is easier to thread a camel through a needle than for a rich man to be saved. The disciples were shocked. The Lord explained that with God all things are possible, but that it is hard for rich people to go to heaven, because of the tendency to trust in material possessions and not in God.

As Jesus talked to the rich man, He observed that he lacked only one thing: he only needed to get rid of his possessions. It became obvious that Jesus had properly diagnosed the man's need, because the man was unwilling to do so. He indeed was valuing his possessions over the Lord. To follow Jesus, we must give up anything in our life that is more important to us than He is. It is interesting that this man lacked only one thing. Some people have the idea that one sin is not all that bad. They think that while they may be failing in one area, at least they serve the Lord faithfully in all the others. This story shows clearly that even one thing can keep a person from being accepted by God. Is there one thing in your life that is separating you from faithfulness in the Lord's service?

- **Jesus teaches about greatness in the Kingdom (10:32-45)**

For the third time, Jesus warned the disciples about what was going to happen when they got to Jerusalem. He gave a detailed description of the suffering He would experience there. Meanwhile, James and John were imagining a different scenario. They, like many Jews were waiting and hoping God restore the physical kingdom of David. They asked Jesus to agree to do whatever they would request. Jesus asked them what they wanted because was not going to make promises by agreeing before they made the request. They replied that they wanted to sit on Jesus' right and left hand; that is, they wanted the chief positions in His kingdom. Jesus asked if they could drink the cup He was going to drink or be baptized with His baptism, and they said they could. Jesus was referring to His sufferings which were often spoken of as a cup of agony that He would have to drink and as a baptism (immersion) in pain (Luke 12:50). They had no clue as to His real meaning, but they enthusiastically accepted the challenge. Jesus then replied that He did not have the authority to grant their request, because He was not the one who assigned the positions of honor in the kingdom.

Of course, the other disciples were incensed. James and John had gotten the jump on them. They themselves wished to have the highest positions and resented the fact that the sons of Zebedee had requested them first. Jesus took some time to define what greatness in the kingdom really meant. He said that in human affairs, whether government or business, the greatest have the most authority. But, He explained, it will not be that way in the kingdom of God. Rather, the greatest is the one who humbles himself most and serves most. He pointed to Himself as the model. He had not come to be served, but to serve and to offer Himself as a sacrifice for others.

- **Jesus teaches again about greatness in the Kingdom (10:46-52)**

As Jesus passed through Jericho, a blind beggar cried out. The crowds tried to silence him, thinking that the Lord should not be bothered with such unimportant people. But Jesus called the blind man to come to Him and healed him. The beggar began to follow Him. Few rich men followed the Lord but many of the poor and downtrodden did.

- **Conclusion**

Jesus taught for the ages. He accepted humble people, even though the disciples tried to turn them away. He accepted the man who worked for Him but was not in His personal company. He welcomed the children. He invited the blind beggar. He rejected those *we* might have accepted: a rich ruler with so much to offer, and all those who sought position and greatness. The great one in the kingdom is the servant of all.

### *Questions*

1. What did Jesus predict was going to happen to Him?
2. What subject were the disciples arguing about? What did Jesus say one should do, if he wants to be first of all?
3. What had John tried to stop someone else from doing?

4. It would be better to do this rather than cause someone to stumble.
  
5. What lesson is taught by Jesus' statements about cutting off a hand, foot, or eye?
  
6. What two things did Jesus say to have? (9:50)
  
7. In marriage, what do two people become?
  
8. What reason did Jesus give why He wanted to receive children?
  
9. What do you suppose the rich man wanted Jesus to tell him?
  
10. What was the rich man's reaction when Jesus told him that he needed to sell all and give the money to the poor?

11. What did James and John want Jesus to do for them?

12. According to Jesus, how can you become great in the kingdom?

13. What was the name of the blind man Jesus healed and what did he keep calling Jesus?

***Your Questions.....what questions do you have from this reading? Write them below, leaving space to answer each based on class discussions.***

## ***Mark 11:1 – 12:44***

### **Jesus Comes to Jerusalem & Confounds the Rulers**

**Lesson Purpose:** As Jesus came to Jerusalem, He knew His time was at hand. He was going to suffer greatly and die for the sins of all mankind, including our sins. Even knowing what was going to happen, He took time to confound and teach in powerful ways. We need to always be prepared to teach as well, even when we are suffering, relying on the Word of God.

#### ***Review of the Reading***

- **Jesus comes to Jerusalem (11:1-11)**

Jesus sent two disciples into Jerusalem to bring him a colt. As He rode it into the city thousands of people lined the route, spreading their clothes and leafy branches in His path to honor Him. While the enthusiastic crowd cheered, Jesus remained calm. He chose to enter the capital on a donkey which is in fulfillment of Zechariah 9:9-10. His life reflected one of His favorite sermons: greatness in the kingdom comes to the one who humbles himself.

- **Jesus confronts a fig tree & commerce at the Temple (11:12-26)**

Jesus was hungry and saw a fig tree in leaf. When He approached, He observed that it had no fruit. He cursed it and by the next day, it was withered up. Jesus' action taught the amazed disciples some lessons. First, people who bear no fruit will be cursed by God. This principle applied to the Jewish nation as a whole, because it was bearing no fruit for the Lord. Second, Jesus noted that God has the power to wither fig trees and move mountains; in short, to respond to prayer. What we must do is to trust Him and turn to Him with our needs.

When Jesus entered the temple He saw a stockyard and money-changers' booths. Some people were selling the special coin used to pay the temple tax, while others sold animals for sacrifices. Jesus began to cast out these merchants, overturning the money-changers' tables and the vendors' chairs. The temple was supposed to be a place of prayer but had been turned into a robbers' den. Would Jesus cleanse the temple (the Church) again? Why did Jesus vehemently oppose these activities? It wasn't because He was against selling animals or changing money. He opposed the perversion of the temple's purpose.

- **Jesus' authority questioned (11:27-33)**

Jesus' bold actions in the temple stirred opposition. The Jewish leaders thought that the temple belonged to them, so they questioned Jesus' right to come into it and make such drastic revisions. Jesus replied to their challenge with a question. He asked whether John's baptism came from God or men. They consulted among themselves and decided that it would be politically unwise to answer. Their refusal demonstrated that they were not sincerely seeking truth. Therefore, Jesus refused to answer their question.

Jesus asked the Jewish leaders an outstanding question that can be applied to everything about the kingdom of God, His church. Anything that originates in man should be rejected; all that God commands should be carefully observed. There is an easy way for us to determine whether a given teaching or activity comes from God or man. Everything that comes from God is in the Bible. If a particular doctrine or practice is not in the Bible, it is not from God. We should verify everything we do by this simple test: *Does it come from God or from man?*

- **Parable of the vineyard (12:1-12)**

Jesus told about a man who planted a vineyard, equipped it with first-class installations and then rented it out. His rent was to be a share of the crop. When the harvest time arrived, he sent servants to collect, but the renters beat, mistreated and even killed them. Finally the owner of the vineyard sent his son to demand payment, but they killed him too. How outrageous! The owner would undoubtedly destroy his tenants and rent the vineyard out to others. The story meant this: God was the owner of the vineyard; the Jews were the renters. God blessed the Jews greatly and expected them to bear the fruit of righteousness, truth, mercy, etc. He sent prophets to collect this "fruit," but they were mistreated and killed. Finally He sent His son, Jesus, whom they murdered. God would certainly destroy the Jewish nation and give His blessings to others. The religious leaders understood that Jesus had spoken this story against them.

Jesus spoke of the stone the builders rejected which God used as His chief cornerstone. He was speaking of Himself, rejected by the Jewish leaders, but selected by God as the foundation of His great building. These words were being fulfilled as Christ spoke. The Jewish authorities, intent on building their own religion, decided Jesus was unsatisfactory. He wasn't suitable for their building. God often reverses human values, however. That which men rejected, God chose and exalted above all. (Philippians 2:5-11)

- **Jesus teaches about taxes (12:13-17)**

The Jews were desperately seeking to discredit Jesus. To do so, various groups began to ask Him questions designed to trap Him. They asked about paying taxes. At this time, the Jews were ruled by the Romans, who were the ones receiving the tax money. The people hated the Roman government and thought it was contrary to the will of God. So they supposed Jesus was trapped. If He said not to pay taxes, He would be guilty of treason and liable to prosecution. If He told them to pay, patriots would view Him as a traitor and even disloyal to God. Jesus didn't answer the question at first. Instead, He requested a coin. He asked whose name and picture were on it. They replied: Caesar's. Since you put your name and picture on something you own, Caesar's markings on the coin showed that it belonged to him. The Jews had no right to withhold Caesar's property from him when he requested it. So Jesus said simply: Give back to Caesar what belongs to him; and give to God what belongs to Him. His answer could not be challenged. It still provides the basis for our relationship to government. We should pay our taxes *and* serve the Lord.

- **Jesus teaches about the resurrection (12:18-27)**

The Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection. They asked a question designed to show that the doctrine of the resurrection was absurd. It involved the invented case of a woman who was married to seven brothers in succession. They asked Jesus to tell them whose wife she would be in the resurrection, since all of them had been married to her. Jesus' reply revealed the ignorance of the Sadducees: There is no marriage in heaven. Furthermore, Jesus showed how even the Old Testament proved the resurrection. He cited the text where God appeared to Moses in the burning bush and described Himself as the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, even though they had been dead for hundreds of years. If death was the end of existence (as the Sadducees believed), then God would have been calling Himself the God of that which doesn't exist. For God to call Himself their God, in some sense Abraham, Isaac and Jacob must still have been "alive" and thus the Sadducees' view of death was wrong. Don't we as well try to pose absurd hypothetical questions to try and confound the truth of God's Word?

- **Jesus teaches about the greatest command (12:28-34)**

A scribe tried his hand at stumping Jesus. He asked Him to name the greatest commandment in the law. Jesus easily replied that it was to love God. He added that the second was to love others. This response demonstrated remarkable insight. Instead of choosing a specific command, Jesus cited the principles that form the foundation for all of the God's laws. Even the scribe had to admit that Jesus'

answer was right. Jesus even acknowledged that particular scribe was not far from the kingdom of God. No one dared to ask Him any more questions.

- **Jesus asks an amazing question & condemns the scribes (12:35-40)**

After weathering their barrage of questions, Jesus asked His opponents a question: How could the Christ be both David's son and David's Lord? This question was crucial; because the scribes' objection to Jesus was that He (a mere man they thought) claimed divine authority. Jesus showed by His question that the Old Testament had predicted that the Messiah would be both David's son (human) and David's Lord (divine).

- **Jesus teaches about the collection (12:41-44)**

Jesus sat and observed people contribute into the temple treasury. He saw many rich people deposit large offerings. He also saw a poor widow give two small coins which were nearly worthless. The Lord explained that the widow had given more than the rich. She put in everything she had, while they had simply given their surplus.

Sometimes we seem to regard large contributions more highly than small ones. Sometimes we honor wealthy donors in special ways and allow them more influence in church decisions. Sometimes we even ridicule small contributions as unworthy of the Lord. It is clear that the Lord Himself viewed giving in a very different way. He was unimpressed by the absolute size of the offering, whether large or small, but very concerned with the attitude of the heart of the giver. To Jesus, the gift of the widow, while having almost no monetary value, was worth much more than the large and impressive donations of the rich. We need to think of riches like Jesus does.

### *Questions*

1. As Jesus entered Jerusalem, what did the crowd shout?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. What was on the fig tree that Jesus saw?



## ***Mark 13:1-37***

### **Signs of the End of the Age**

**Lesson Purpose:** As Jesus came to Jerusalem, He knew His time was at hand. He was going to suffer greatly and die for the sins of all mankind, including our sins. Even knowing what was going to happen, He took time to confound and teach in powerful ways. We need to always be prepared to teach as well, even when we are suffering, relying on the Word of God.

#### ***Review of the Reading***

- **Warnings (13:1-13)**

As they left the temple area, one of the disciples pointed to the magnificent buildings and commented on their splendor. Jesus replied that they all would be torn down. This remark astonished the disciples and they asked when this would happen and what sign there would be of the Temple's impending destruction. Jesus began answering by telling about some things that would happen before the temple was destroyed. He warned of false Christs, wars, natural disasters and great persecution. These events would be unsettling for Christians, but Jesus encouraged them to be ever watchful and ready. It is remarkable that some people take these prophecies that Jesus said and use them to try to predict the date of the return of Christ instead of signs of the destruction of the Temple.

- **The end of the age (13:14-30)**

This passage is seen by many as one of the most difficult in the gospel of Mark. Several things should be carefully observed and compared to similar passages in Matthew and Luke. The sequence of passages should be compared and studied. God is not the author of confusion and man's preconceptions about these passages easily fall away with careful study of the scripture.

***Points to remember -***

1) Jesus said in 13:30 that all of these things were going to occur within that generation. Matthew 24 and Luke 21 also state that it would happen in that generation.

2) We should *always* take into account who Christ was speaking to.

3) Jesus warned the Christians to flee to the mountains. History records that the disciples fled to a mountain fortress near the Dead Sea. As far as we know from history, no Christians perished in that war. It always pays to listen to Jesus.

4) We know that Jerusalem and the Temple were totally destroyed by Roman armies in the year 70 A.D. History reports Jerusalem's horrible siege and tell that many thousands (possibly more than a million) died in the conflict.

5) Jesus will tell the high priest and the Sanhedrin that “you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven.” The expression of “coming on the clouds” is always used as an expression of judgment.

6) The destruction of the Temple would end the sacrificial system and the central tenet of the Jewish economy and way of life. God would bring long prophesied destruction to the Jews.

7) The apostles asked what the singular “sign” of the end of the age.

8) Jesus said the generation would not pass away until **ALL** these things would come to pass.

- **Jesus’ promise to return (13:31-37)**

In verse 30 Jesus said that the destruction of the temple would occur within that generation. But in verse 32, He also said no one but the Father knew the time it would happen. So, He exhorted everyone to be alert and constantly prepared His return. We often mistakenly compare His promised return on clouds of judgment against the Jews to coming at the end of time.

We should not believe anyone who claims to be able to predict the date of the Lord's *final* return. Anyone who claims to be able to discern the time of Jesus' return by a careful study of scripture is claiming to know more than the Lord Himself and should not be taken seriously. Since we don't know when the Lord will return at the end of time, we, like the disciples, should always be ready. If you knew for sure that the Lord would come back today, would you change some things in your life? Then why not just assume that He is returning today (because He might), and make the changes in your life now! It is utterly foolish to put off repentance and obedience.

### ***Questions***

1. What building did Jesus say would be torn down?

2. What did Jesus tell the disciples in Judea to do when they saw the evil thing in the temple?
3. Who privately asked Jesus what the sign would be for the end of the age?
4. What did Jesus say would not pass away?
5. When did Jesus say all the things in 13:1–37 would occur?

***Your Questions.....what questions do you have from this reading? Write them below, leaving space to answer each based on class discussions.***

## ***Mark 14:1-72***

### **Jesus Prepares for Death**

**Lesson Purpose:** The time had come. As events of prophesy and the plan of salvation unfolded, Jesus prepared for death. The physical anxiety and human emotions of our Lord had to be beyond imagination. John declared this about Jesus in John 1:29 “***Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!***” Jesus was going to die for our sins. He was going to be separated from His Father for ***OUR*** sakes. Yet, He approached the events with calmness, resolution and humbleness that truly shows Jesus was the Son of God.

#### ***Review of the Reading***

- **Jesus is anointed (14:1-9)**

What contrasting attitudes toward Jesus! The chief priests and scribes searched for a way to kill Him. Judas offered to betray Him. But a single woman spent a small fortune for perfume which she poured over His head. The disciples criticized her for this extravagant act of love. They viewed it as a waste of money, and thought it would have been better to have sold the perfume and given the money to the poor. But Jesus defended her saying that she had anointed His body for burial and that in all the world people would tell of her deed.

Mark does not give her name, but John says that it was Mary who was sister to Lazarus and Martha. (John 12:3) John also says she anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped them with her hair. The alabaster jar and its contents of oil of spikenard were very valuable. Pliny says that a pound of this ointment cost more than four hundred denarii. This was a perfume, and used only to give a pleasant odor.

- **Betrayal (14:10-11)**

Judas Iscariot now chooses to betray Jesus. He goes to the chief priests, and in their gladness, promise to give Judas money. Matthew 26:14-16 says Judas asked for money and they gave him 30 pieces of silver. This was the price of a slave according to Exodus 21:32. Luke 22:3-6 tells us he sought to betray Jesus away from the crowds which probably meant Judas was also looking for a way to keep himself safe.

- **The Last Supper (14:12-26)**

Passover was an annual feast commemorating God's sparing the Jews in the tenth plague on Egypt. (Exodus 11–12) Jesus sent two disciples to prepare the feast. Luke 22:8 says it was Peter and John. During the meal, Jesus warned that one of them would betray Him. He was trying to prepare the apostles for the traumatic night to follow. The Lord also took some of the bread and fruit of the vine of the Passover and said that it was His body and blood. In this way, He initiated the observance of the Lord's Supper, a feast that was observed weekly by the early Christians. (Acts 2:42; 20:7; 1 Corinthians 11:17–34)

“Is it I?” The NIV says “*Surely not I*”. It is interesting to observe the disciples' reaction to Jesus' prediction that one of them would betray Him. They were thinking of the possibility of their own fall. Unfortunately, this moment of introspection soon vanished and in the next paragraph they return to brash overconfidence. Surprisingly, they did not ask: Is it Judas? Apparently they had not observed anything in Judas' behavior during the months they had spent together that signaled that he was disloyal. When we read Jesus' warnings in the Bible, we also should ask: “Is it I?” Do our own actions put Christ on the cross?

- **Even the disciples will stumble (14:27-31)**

Jesus told the disciples that they would all fall away. Peter declared that though the others might, he would never abandon Him. Jesus told him that he would deny Him three times that very night. Again Peter denied it saying that he would even be willing to die with Him. Perhaps Peter's overconfidence was one reason he fulfilled this very prophecy a few hours later. All the others joined in as well in declaring they would not deny Jesus.

- **Gethsemane (14:32-42)**

Jesus took His disciples into a garden called Gethsemane past Brook Kidron (John 18:1) and asked them to watch and pray. He told them that He was deeply distressed. Peter, James and John went further with Him. It is striking that Jesus threw Himself on the ground. Our Lord prayed that God would take the cup of suffering away from Him. Jesus knew how terrible His death would be. He asked, however, that God's will be done above all. Each time He returned to His disciples, they had fallen asleep. Jesus wrestled with His griefs and fears alone, without human support.

This passage reveals Jesus' deep grief as He thought about what He was going to suffer. He knew *exactly* what was about to happen and He dreaded it. Was He thinking only of physical pain? Crucifixion certainly was an agonizing experience - the victim slowly suffocated as he grew gradually weaker and finally unable to pull his body up against the nails to breathe. But others have suffered

similar executions with less dread than Jesus. There must be something Jesus feared besides pain. Scripture teaches that Jesus bore the sins of the world on the cross. (Isaiah 53; 1 Peter 2:24; 2 Corinthians 5:21) He suffered the punishment for *our* sins, which was spiritual death, separation from God. His greatest agony was being cut off from His Father on the cross. (Mark 15:34) Because He suffered this punishment of utter separation from God, this Lamb of God, we never have to if we submit in faithful obedience to His gift of salvation.

- **Jesus is arrested (14:43-52)**

Judas had bargained with the chief priests to betray his Master. He had promised to lead them to the place where He spent the night, away from the crowds. Although Jesus knew the plan, He went again to the usual spot where He knew Judas could easily find Him. A troop of soldiers with the traitor leading the way interrupted the calm of the night. Judas kissed Jesus, a signal that it was safe to arrest Him. According to John 18:10-11, Peter tried to defend Jesus with a sword. He cut off the right ear of a Malchus, the servant of the high priest. Luke 22:52 says Jesus healed it. 2 Corinthians 10:3-6 shows us that we do not fight by ways of the flesh, our battle is spiritual. Then the disciples lost their nerve and fled. Jesus remained alone with His captors and Judas.

- **Jesus is tried by the Jews (14:53-65)**

Though it was very late at night, Jesus was brought before the Jewish high court and tried Him. They bribed false witnesses who told contradictory stories about Him. For a time, it appeared that the court would be unable to find consistent testimony by which to convict Jesus. Finally, the high priest asked Him if He were the Christ. When Jesus said, "Yes," they used this statement as evidence of blasphemy and convicted Him. But Jesus not only declared Himself to be the Son of God, but also coming as Judge on clouds heaven. To them, this was absolute blasphemy and the proof they sought to condemn Jesus. Then they spat on Him, mocked Him and beat Him.

Matthew 26:57 says Jesus was brought before Caiaphas, who was the high priest. Assembled with him were the chief priests. These, along with the elders of Israel and scribes, comprised the Sanhedrin - the Jewish high court. After the destruction of the Jews national independence by the Romans it remained as the highest court of justice among the Jews. They tried all cases of religious heresy teaching and decided cases of differences among the Jews. The Romans permitted them to decide cases, but they could not inflict a death penalty without the sanction of the Roman governor, and there was also a right of appeal then to Caesar at Rome. They sought grounds to put him to death and then they would bring the case before the governor for his approval.

- **Peter's denial (14:66-72)**

Peter had slipped into the courtyard to watch the trial. Various people began to recognize him. A servant-girl asked him if she hadn't seen him with Jesus. Peter claimed not to understand what she was talking about. Then she began to tell others that he was a disciple and he flatly denied it. Finally, others noticed his Galilean accent and accused him of following Jesus. With this, Peter panicked, vehemently denying Jesus, even asking God to curse him if He knew the man. The cock crowed and Peter remembered Jesus' warning. Peter now had a sickening awareness of the horrible thing he had done. He rushed out and wept in despair.

The disciples failed Jesus miserably in His hour of greatest need. They fled. Peter denied Him. Why? They had been such loyal supporters. Think back upon the factors in their failure: 1) They hadn't listened when Jesus had frequently warned them of His impending suffering. They had been too eager to argue about who would be the greatest in the kingdom. 2) They were overconfident. Earlier that evening, Jesus warned them that they would flee, but they didn't believe it. 3) They didn't watch and pray in the garden as He instructed. Thus, they were not mentally prepared to face the challenge. We could *all* fail in the hour of temptation for these same reasons.

### *Questions*

1. What did the woman pour over Jesus' head?
2. What did the disciples think should have been done with the perfume?
3. How much did Judas betray Jesus for?
4. When Jesus predicted that one of the disciples would betray Him, what did they ask?

5. In the Lord's Supper, what do the bread and fruit of the vine remind us of?
  
6. What did Jesus predict Peter would do that very night? How did Peter respond to this prophesy?
  
7. What did Jesus pray for in the garden? Whose will did Jesus say should be done?
  
8. What sign did Judas use to identify Jesus for the captors?
  
9. What did one disciple do to try and defend Jesus?
  
10. Why was the Jewish court unable to convict Jesus on the basis of the testimony of the false witnesses?
  
11. What was finally used to convict Jesus in the Jewish trial?
  
12. How many times did Peter deny Jesus during the Jewish trial?

13. How did he react when he realized that he had denied Jesus?

*Your Questions.....what questions do you have from this reading? Write them below, leaving space to answer each based on class discussions.*

## ***Mark 15:1 – 16:20***

### **The Crucifixion & Resurrection**

**Lesson Purpose:** The time had come. As events of prophesy and the plan of salvation unfolded, Jesus prepared for death. The physical anxiety and human emotions of our Lord had to be beyond imagination. John declared this about Jesus in John 1:29 “*Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!*” Jesus was going to die for our sins. He was going to be separated from His Father for *OUR* sakes. Yet, He approached the events with calmness, resolution and humbleness that truly shows Jesus was the Son of God.

#### ***Review of the Reading***

- **Jesus on trial before Pilate (15:1- 21)**

Although the Jewish leaders had tried Jesus and convicted Him of blasphemy, they led Him to the Roman governor Pilate for yet another trial. Pilate was the sixth Roman procurator of Judea. He was the supreme authority in the province, but responsible to the governor of Syria. The Jews did not have authority to carry out sentences of capital punishment that were determined by their own courts. Capital crimes had to be tried by Roman officials. Thus, very early the next morning they brought Jesus to Pilate, hoping that he would concur with their decision. They accused Jesus of many things, but He remained silent. Pilate was amazed that He didn't try to defend Himself. The governor perceived that this was not really a question of criminal action, but that the Jews were jealous of Jesus. Therefore, he made several attempts to release Him. Pilate asked Jesus if He was King of the Jews. John 18:36, 37 tells us Jesus told Pilate His kingdom was not of this world. Luke 23:8 says Pilate even sent Jesus to Herod, who was hoping Jesus would perform a miracle. Pilate was eager to appease the Jews, however, and was unable to persuade them that Jesus should be released. Though he did not believe Jesus was guilty, he ended up sentencing Him to death because he feared the start of a riot. Roman soldiers scourged Jesus, mocked Him, and led Him out to be crucified.

Jesus suffered intensely in His last few hours. After being up all night, subjected to the stress of six different trials (if we compare the accounts in Matthew, Luke and John), He was scourged. Scourging was accomplished by tying bits of bone, metal and glass to a whip and then striking the victim's back. This

procedure produced excruciating pain, much loss of blood and sometimes even death. The victim's back became a bloody mass. After scourging Jesus, they took thorns, wove them into a crown, put it on Jesus' head, and began to beat on it, causing intense pain. They put a purple scarlet robe on Him (Matthew 27:28), only to later rip it off, undoubtedly tearing open the blood dried wounds on His back. Then He was crucified. In an execution of this type, they would literally nail the "criminal's" hands and feet onto a piece of wood through the wrists and arches of the feet and then set it upright into a hole. To breathe, the victim had to continually raise himself so that his lung cavity could expand. Pain and fatigue would begin to set in and the lungs would begin to fill with fluid. As exhaustion took hold, the victim would be slowly asphyxiated because of a lack of oxygen and finally die.

- **The crucifixion (15:22-41)**

It was a standard act of mercy to give a narcotic to condemned criminals when they were crucified. The drug would dull the pain a bit and allow the victim to pass away more comfortably. Jesus refused this tranquilizer. He was determined to suffer in full consciousness. The ridicule grew. The soldiers who guarded the cross gambled for Jesus' clothes. Bystanders laughed at the idea that He could rebuild the temple when He couldn't even save Himself. "Come down from the cross, they taunted, and we'll believe in You!" Some Jewish officials standing nearby smirked that He had been able to save others, but was powerless to save Himself. Even the two thieves who were executed on either side of the Lord ridiculed Him. Although it is important to note that one the thieves had a change of heart according to Luke 23:39-42 and fulfilling Isaiah 53:12. From noon until 3:00 the sky was dark. Shortly thereafter, Jesus cried out in anguish, using the very words of Psalm 22:1: "My God, my God, why have You forsaken Me?" Then after a few more minutes, He cried out again and died. At that moment the temple veil split in two, and a centurion who was observing exclaimed, "Truly this man was the Son of God."

There were multiplied ironies in the events of those final hours. As they ridiculed Jesus saying that He had saved others, but now couldn't save himself, they were unaware that He was fully capable of saving Himself, but that if He had, He would not have saved others. He died voluntarily. He had at His disposition thousands of angels that could have rescued Him, but He deliberately chose to lay down His life because He loved us. Jesus had the power to do anything He wanted against His tormentors, but he subdued all desire for revenge and actually prayed for God to forgive those who were treating Him so cruelly (Luke 23:34). By dying as He did, Christ provided the sacrifice that would forgive men's sins. Therefore, the temple veil was torn in two from top to bottom. The veil had blocked access to God's presence and it was a symbol of man's sin. Since Jesus' death atoned for sin,

the veil was severed, demonstrating that with sin removed men could once again enter into fellowship with God. Truly, Jesus was the Son of God!

- **Jesus is buried (15:42-47)**

Joseph of Arimathea, a prominent Jewish official and secret disciple of Christ. (John 19:38) He asked Pilate for permission to bury Jesus' body. He had to act quickly since according to Jewish law He could not bury the body on the Sabbath day, which officially began at sundown. He gathered the corpse up in a sheet and put it in a hole chiseled into the wall of a cave, which served as a typical grave in that era. He closed off the cave by rolling a large rock over the entrance. John 19:39 says Nicodemus, who had met Jesus at night, also helped bury Jesus. This was fulfillment of Isaiah 53:9.

- **The resurrection (16:1-8)**

Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James, and Salome had prepared spices and went out to Jesus' tomb early on Sunday morning. Luke 24:10 says it was it was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women with them. They were planning to embalm His body in order to give it a more honorable burial than had been possible in the few minutes that had been available on Friday afternoon. As they walked down to the cave, they thought about how hard it was going to be for them to roll that large rock away from the entrance of the burial cave. When they arrived, however, they saw that the rock had already been removed and the cave was open. Inside, an angel told them that Jesus had arisen and was on His way to Galilee. He asked them to tell the disciples and Peter. The women fled away very frightened.

The angel told the women to invite the disciples "and Peter" to meet Jesus in Galilee. From John 20:1, 2, we learn that Mary Magdalene, as soon as she saw in the distance that the stone was not in its place, ran to Peter and John with her understanding of the matter, namely, that his enemies had removed the body. Since Peter was himself a disciple, it seems unusual that he would be singled out and receives a special invitation. Perhaps it was because the Lord knew that Peter would no longer feel himself worthy to be counted as a disciple after having denied Him, and therefore, Jesus gave him a special invitation to the meeting. What tenderness the Lord showed!

- **The great commission (16:9-20)**

The disciples had never expected to see Jesus again. They watched Him die and knew about His burial. They were very sad. Because of this, the news of the empty tomb and Jesus' appearances seemed too good to be true. They refused to get their hopes up. Later, when He did appear to them, He rebuked them for being

so slow to believe. Then He gave orders for their future work, telling them to go everywhere and preach the gospel to all. He told them what to preach. The one who believes and is baptized will be saved. He gave them signs to confirm their message.

He that believes and is baptized shall be saved. Jesus set the conditions of salvation. He requires faith and baptism. Unfortunately today men have tried to eliminate one or the other of these two requirements. Others teach salvation by faith only, without baptism. But Jesus clearly said in John 3:5 that baptism was required to receive salvation. In accordance with this command of Jesus, the apostles preached that baptism was necessary to receive forgiveness of sins and new life in Christ. (Acts 2:38; Romans 6:3, 4; 1 Peter 3:21)

The gospel of Mark closes with a note about the results of the great mission Jesus entrusted to the apostles. After He had ascended back to heaven, they went out and began to preach everywhere, just like Jesus told them. The Lord blessed their preaching of the gospel message with signs to confirm it, just as He said He would. May we always continue to be obedient to Lord's commands.

### *Questions*

1. What did Pilate conclude was the real reason the Jews wanted Jesus to be crucified?
2. Why did Pilate sentence Jesus' execution despite believing He was innocent?
3. What was the man who was released in Jesus' place guilty of?
4. After Jesus had been scourged, what did the soldiers put on His head?

5. What was written above Jesus, while He hung on the cross?
  
6. The people mocking Christ said they would believe on Him if He would do this.
  
7. What happened in the temple when Jesus died?
8. In whose tomb was Jesus buried? What was the tomb made of, and how was the opening sealed?
  
9. How did Pilate make sure Jesus was dead?
  
10. On what day did Jesus arise from the dead?
  
11. Why did the women go to the tomb early on the first day of the week?
  
12. What did the young man (angel) say had happened to Jesus?
  
13. What did Jesus say His disciples should do with the gospel?

14. What did Jesus say one must do to be saved?

15. What purpose was to be accomplished by miraculous signs?

***Your Questions.....what questions do you have from this reading? Write them below, leaving space to answer each based on class discussions.***

# ***A People of the Book 8-Year Curriculum***

	January - March	April - June	July - September	October - December
2007	<i><b>Matthew</b></i>	<i><b>Genesis</b></i>	<i><b>Galatians &amp; Ephesians</b></i>	<i><b>Isaiah</b></i>
2008	<i><b>Exodus</b></i>	<i><b>I &amp; II Timothy, Titus</b></i>	<i><b>Hebrews</b></i>	<i><b>Minor Prophets I (Hosea-Obadiah)</b></i>
2009	<b>Mark</b>	Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy	Romans	Jeremiah & Lamentations
2010	I & II Thessalonians	Joshua, Judges, Ruth	James, I & II Peter	Minor Prophets II (Jonah-Habakkuk)
2011	Luke	Samuel, Kings, Chronicles	I, II, III John & Jude	Daniel
2012	Acts	Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther	I Corinthians	Minor Prophets III (Zephaniah-Malachi)
2013	John	Job	II Corinthians	Psalms
2014	Philippians, Colossians & Philemon	Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon	Revelation	Ezekiel

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