

The Gospel Of Mark



Sermon Outlines

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To God Be The Glory!

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The Gospel Of Mark

Introduction

INTRODUCTION

1. “The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God”...
 - a. So begins the Gospel according to Mark - **Mk 1:1**
 - b. The shortest of the four gospels, likely the first one written
 - c. Often overlooked because of the gospels of Matthew and Luke
2. Yet the **Believer’s Bible Commentary** notes that because of its brevity...
 - a. Mark’s gospel is an ideal introduction to the Christian faith
 - b. In mission fields it is often the first book translated into a new language

[Who was Mark? What makes his gospel unique? Let’s start with...]

I. AUTHOR AND DATE OF THE GOSPEL

A. JOHN MARK...

1. Who apparently came from a wealthy family
 - a. His mother was Mary, who had a large house in Jerusalem - **Ac 12:12**
 - 1) Some speculate the Last Supper took place in her home (**RWP**)
 - 2) Also that Mark may have been the young man who fled naked - **Mk 14:51-52**
 - b. His cousin was Barnabas, a Levite from Cyprus - **Ac 4:36-37; Co 4:10**
 2. Who traveled with Paul and Barnabas
 - a. Starting out on their first missionary journey, but turned back - **Ac 13:5,13**
 - b. Which caused trouble between Paul and Barnabas - **Ac 15:36-41**
 - c. He later became a fellow laborer and comfort to Paul - **Phe 1:24; Co 4:10-11**
 - d. In Paul’s final words, Mark proved “useful to me for ministry” - **2Ti 4:11**
 3. Who also accompanied Peter
 - a. Who called him “his son” (his convert?) - **1Pe 5:13**
 - b. Who was in “Babylon” (possibly Rome) at the time
 4. Traditions outside the Bible state:
 - a. Mark was an interpreter for Peter - **Papias, 130 A.D.**
 - b. Mark composed his gospel mostly from Peter’s memoirs - **Justin Martyr, 150 A.D.**
 - c. Mark went to Alexandria in Egypt where he died in 64 A.D.
- **The early and unanimous opinion is that John Mark wrote this gospel**

B. BEFORE 64 A.D....

1. Certainly so, if written by one who died in 64 A.D.
 2. Barnes suggests between 56 and 63 A.D.
 3. Some scholars date the book in the early 50’s
- **A plausible date would 57-59 A.D. (Bible Knowledge Commentary)**

[Now for some information about Mark’s gospel in particular...]

II. THEME AND OUTLINE OF THE GOSPEL

A. ITS THEME OR PURPOSE...

1. Written to Gentiles, perhaps Christians in Rome (**BKC**); note the following:
 - a. Jewish customs are explained - e.g., **Mk 7:3-4**
 - b. Aramaic expressions are translated into Greek - e.g., **Mk 3:17; 5:41; 7:11**
 - c. Roman reckoning of time is used - e.g., **Mk 6:48; 13:35**
 - d. Only Mark identifies Simon of Cyrene as the father of Rufus - cf. **Mk 15:21; Ro 16:13**
 - e. Few OT quotations are used
 2. The focus appears to be on Jesus as the Perfect Servant (**BBC**)
 - a. Mark emphasizes the deeds of the Lord more than His words
 - b. He records nineteen miracles, but only four parables
 - c. The deeds of one who “did not come to be served, but to serve” - **Mk 10:45**
- **Thus one could say that the theme is: “Jesus, 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 continued work from heaven - **Mk 16:14-20**
- **Jesus came from heaven to serve, and returned to heaven to serve!**

[Perhaps of further interest are some...]

III. SPECIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE GOSPEL

A. AN EARLY 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

B. A CONCISE GOSPEL...

1. The shortest of the four gospels
2. Luke has 1151 verses, Matthew 1071, John 879, Mark 661
3. Mark’s entire gospel can be read aloud in 1.5 hours

C. A FAST-PACED GOSPEL...

1. Over 40 times he uses a word translated “straightway” or “immediately”
2. Two-thirds of the verses begin with “and”
3. The present tense is used frequently (e.g., they come...He says...He sends...)

D. A VIVID GOSPEL...

1. Mark presents “lively little touches” not found in the other gospels - **Hendriksen**
2. “...he wrote with all the graphic distinctiveness and vividness of an eyewitness - **Erdman**
3. It may have been Peter’s reminiscences, or perhaps his own, that account for such details

E. 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**

CONCLUSION

1. What Mark accomplished with his gospel in the first century was significant...
 - a. He left a record of the gospel preached by Peter
 - b. Which emphasized the things that Jesus did - cf. **Ac 10:36-39**
 - c. That stressed the servitude of Jesus as the Son of Man - cf. **Mk 10:45**
2. It can serve an important purpose for us today, reminding us...
 - a. That Jesus came to serve, and continues to serve - cf. **He 7:25**
 - b. That Christian discipleship likewise involves service - cf. **Ga 5:13**
3. Mark’s own life was one of early failure, redeemed by later devotion (**Erdman**)...
 - a. He got off to a rocky start in his service for the gospel of Christ
 - b. But he persevered and proved to Paul that he was “useful...for ministry”

May his gospel of Jesus Christ, who came to serve, inspire us to become servants who are also:

“useful for the Master, prepared for every good work” - 2Ti 2:21

The Preaching Of John The Baptist

Mark 1:1-8

INTRODUCTION

1. The Gospel Of Mark begins with the work of John the Baptist...
 - a. Which was foretold by Old Testament prophets - **Mk 1:2-3**
 - b. Which proved to be very successful - **Mk 1:5**
 - c. Which was cut short by his imprisonment - **Mk 1:14**
2. Though John's work was short-lived, it was clearly important...
 - a. Each of the four gospels preface Jesus' ministry with that of John's
 - b. Mark described it as "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ..." - **Mk 1:1**

[To understand the message and ministry of Jesus Christ, we must start with the one sent to "prepare the way of the Lord". In this study we shall begin by observing what we can regarding...]

I. THE PREACHING OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

A. HIS PURPOSE...

1. To fulfill the prophecy of Malachi - **Mk 1:2**
 - a. As the Lord's messenger to prepare His way - **Mal 3:1a**
 - b. Also concerning the sending of Elijah - cf. **Mal 4:5-6; Mt 17:10-13**
 2. To fulfill the prophecy of Isaiah - **Mk 1:3**
 - a. Which was to "prepare the way of the Lord, make His paths straight" - **Isa 40:3**
 - b. I.e., to prepare people for the coming of the Messiah
- **John's purpose was to "make ready a people prepared for the Lord"**

B. HIS MESSAGE...

1. He came baptizing in the wilderness - **Mk 1:4**
 - a. The wilderness of Judea - **Mt 3:1**
 - b. Baptizing in the Jordan River - **Mt 3:6**
 - c. In Bethabara (Bethany) on the east side of the Jordan - **Jn 1:28**
 - d. Later, in Aenon near Salim (west side of Jordan), where there was much water - **Jn 3:23**
 2. He preached a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins - **Mk 1:4**
 - a. A baptism of repentance, literally "a change of mind"
 - 1) Prompted by godly sorrow - **2Co 7:10**
 - 2) Followed by a zealous desire to do right - cf. **2Co 7:11**
 - b. A baptism for the remission of sins
 - 1) That sins might be forgiven (ultimately through Christ's death - **He 9:15**)
 - 2) Similar to what Christ and His apostles taught - **Mk 16:15-16; Ac 2:38; 22:16**
- **John's message called for repentance and baptism for the remission of sins**

C. HIS SUCCESS...

1. All of Judea, Jerusalem, etc., went to him - **Mk 1:5a**
 2. They were baptized by him in the Jordan, confessing their sins - **Mk 1:5b**
- **John's success may have also included the thief on the cross - cf. Lk 23:39-43**

D. HIS LIFESTYLE...

1. Clothed with camel's hair and a leather belt - **Mk 1:6a**
2. Diet of locusts and wild honey - **Mk 1:6b**
3. John came "in the spirit and power of Elijah" - cf. **2 Kin 1:8; Lk 1:17**
- **John's lifestyle reflected the seriousness and sternness of his message (Erdman)**

E. HIS PROMISE...

1. One mightier than he is coming - **Mk 1:7**
 - a. Whose sandal strap he was not worthy to stoop down and loose
 - b. Note John's humility and attitude of servitude
2. Who will baptize them with the Holy Spirit - **Mk 1:8**
 - a. Yes, John did indeed baptize with water with repentance
 - b. But one (Jesus) was coming to baptize with the Holy Spirit!
3. This refers to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit
 - a. Promised also by Jesus; fulfilled at Pentecost - cf. **Ac 1:4-5; 2:1-4,16-17,33**
 - b. With lasting effects for all who come to Christ - cf. **Ti 3:4-6; 1Co 12:13**
- **John's promise bespoke of greater blessings to come!**

[The preaching of John the Baptist was **well received** by those in Judea and Jerusalem. Those who received his message were **well prepared** for the coming of the Lord. But I have often wondered...]

II. WOULD WE HAVE RECEIVED JOHN'S PREACHING?

A. FROM A MAN WHO...

1. Required people to go into the wilderness to hear him? - **Mk 1:4-5**
2. Dressed and ate like an eccentric hermit ("he has a demon!")? - **Mk 1:6; cf. Mt 11:18**
3. Called religious people coming to be baptized a "brood of vipers"? - cf. **Mt 3:7**
- **Would we have given heed to such a "harsh hermit"?**

B. I SERIOUSLY DOUBT IT IF...

1. We balk at traveling some distance to study God's Word!
 - a. As when we live far from the church building
 - b. Or making the effort to attend both services on Sunday, plus the midweek study
 - c. Or going to gospel meetings at other congregations
 - d. What will the Queen of Sheba say of us? - cf. **Mt 12:42**
2. We tend to judge people by the clothes they wear!
 - a. Both young and old are quick to judge by one's appearance
 - b. We need to remember God's perspective - **1 Sa 16:7**
 - c. Partiality based on appearance makes one a judge with evil thoughts - **Jm 2:1-4**
3. We get upset or offended when a preacher points out our faults!
 - a. Some would have preachers to never preach negative sermons
 - b. But Jesus demonstrated that occasions sometimes call it - cf. **Mt 23:13-15**
- **If these things are true of us today, would we have heeded John then?**

CONCLUSION

1. The preaching of John the Baptist had an important purpose...
 - a. To "prepare the way of the Lord; make His paths straight"

- b. This he did by emphasizing repentance and baptism
- 2. Because of John, people were more likely to heed the call of Jesus...
 - a. To repent of their sins - cf. **Mk 1:15**
 - b. To believe the gospel and be baptized - cf. **Mk 16:15-16**
- 3. John's manner of life and style of preaching should not be forgotten...
 - a. For many turn the message of Jesus Christ into a form of "easy-believism"
 - b. John reminds us of the need to bear fruits in keeping with true repentance

As Jesus would say later, "But why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do the things which I say?" (**Lk 6:46**). Are we showing true acceptance of Jesus as Lord by doing the things He says...?

The Baptism Of Jesus

Mark 1:9-11

INTRODUCTION

1. The baptism of Jesus by John served a significant role in both of their ministries...
 - a. It came at the height of John's ministry, after which it began to decline
 - b. It served as the beginning of Jesus' ministry, which soon overtook the ministry of John
2. The baptism of Jesus has often raised two questions...
 - a. Why was He baptized?
 - b. Does His baptism reveal the purpose for Christian baptism?

[This study will answer these questions, first by reviewing Mark's account of the baptism of Jesus...]

I. THE BAPTISM OF JESUS

A. JESUS COMES FROM NAZARETH...

1. From Nazareth of Galilee - **Mk 1:9a**
 2. Located halfway between the Mediterranean coast and the southern tip of the Sea of Galilee
 3. Where Jesus grew up - cf. **Lk 2:39-52**
- **About a hundred mile journey to where John was baptizing**

B. JESUS IS BAPTIZED BY JOHN...

1. In the Jordan river - **Mk 1:9b**
 2. In Bethabara (Bethany) on the east side of the Jordan - cf. **Jn 1:28-29**
- **The Greek word (baptizo) indicates that the baptism involved immersion**

C. THE SPIRIT DESCENDS ON JESUS...

1. Immediately, just as Jesus comes up from the water - **Mk 1:10a**
 2. He saw the heavens parting ("being torn open", ESV) - **Mk 1:10b**
 3. The Spirit descends like a dove - **Mk 1:10c**; cf. **Lk 3:22** ("in bodily form like a dove")
- **Thus the Holy Spirit bears His testimony of Jesus**

D. THE FATHER SPEAKS OF JESUS...

1. As a voice from heaven - **Mk 1:11a**
 2. Proclaiming: "You are My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" - **Mk 1:11b**
- **Thus the Father bears His testimony of Jesus**

[With such visual and audible effects, the baptism of Jesus was certainly a significant event! It naturally raises several questions...]

II. QUESTIONS RELATED TO THE BAPTISM OF JESUS

A. WHY WAS JESUS BAPTIZED...?

1. Not for the same reason other people were being baptized by John
 - a. Theirs was a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins - **Mk 1:4**

- b. They were confessing their sins - **Mk 1:5**
 - c. Jesus was without sin - **He 4:15**
 - 2. Jesus said it was “to fulfill all righteousness” - cf. **Mt 3:15**
 - a. It was God’s counsel that people be baptized of John - cf. **Lk 7:29-30**
 - b. Jesus was willing to set the right example by doing the Father’s will, something He delighted to do - cf. **Ps 40:7-8; Jn 4:34; 8:29**
 - 3. It also served to introduce Him to John and Israel
 - a. John had been proclaiming that He was coming - **Mk 1:7**
 - b. John had been told that the Spirit coming upon Jesus would be a sign - cf. **Jn 1:29-34**
- **He was baptized to do God’s will, and to publicly identify Him to Israel**

B. DOES HIS BAPTISM EXPLAIN THE PURPOSE OF OUR BAPTISM...?

- 1. Many refer to Jesus’ baptism to explain the purpose of Christian baptism
 - a. That baptism has nothing to do with the remission of sins
 - b. That baptism is but a public profession of one’s faith
 - c. That baptism publicly identifies our relation to Christ, just as His baptism publicly introduced Him to Israel
 - 2. However, there is no Biblical connection made between Jesus’ baptism and our own
 - a. Christian baptism is for the remission of sins - **Ac 2:38; 22:16**
 - b. Christian baptism is a union with Christ in His death - **Ro 6:3-7**
 - c. Christian baptism was often administered in relative privacy - **Ac 8:35-38; 16:25-34**
- **No Biblical writer suggests that we are baptized for the same reason as Jesus**

C. WHAT IS THE IMPORT OF THE SPIRIT AND THE FATHER’S ROLE...?

- 1. They certainly bear testimony as to who Jesus is
 - a. As the Spirit would do later, via the works Jesus did - **Mt 12:28**
 - b. As the Father would do later, on another occasion - **Mt 17:5**
 - 2. They also bear testimony to the nature of the Godhead
 - a. I.e., three distinct persons in One God
 - b. Though One in substance, there is a distinction to be made between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit - cf. also **Mt 28:19; 2Co 13:14; Ep 2:18**
- **Thus we see the unity of the Godhead implied in the baptism of Jesus**

CONCLUSION

- 1. With the baptism of Jesus...
 - a. He was formally introduced to John, and by him to Israel
 - b. The Father and the Spirit audibly and visually confirmed Him as the Son of God
 - c. Jesus demonstrated His desire to serve and “fulfill all righteousness”
- 2. The baptism of Jesus is certainly significant to Christians...
 - a. Not that we are to be baptized for the same reason as He
 - b. But certainly in confirming that He was the Messiah
 - c. And displaying the attitude that should be true of all His disciples (“I have come to do my Father’s will”)

Jesus did not need baptism because He was without sin; He was baptized because it was the Father’s will for man at that time. Should we who are sinners dare hesitate to do the Father’s will regarding baptism for the remission of sins today...? - **Mk 16:15-16; Ac 2:38; 22:16**

The Temptation Of Jesus

Mark 1:12-13

INTRODUCTION

1. A blessing of Jesus as Savior is His ability to comfort and aid those who are tempted...
 - a. This is because He too was tempted - **He 2:18**
 - b. He is sympathetic, and can provide mercy and grace to help in time of need - **He 4:14-16**
2. One of His greatest periods of temptation was at the beginning of His public ministry...
 - a. Immediately following His baptism by John - **Mk 1:9-11**
 - b. Just prior to beginning His preaching ministry - **Mk 1:14-15**
3. Studying “**The Temptation Of Jesus**” can be fruitful for several reasons...
 - a. It reminds us that Jesus can understand our own temptations
 - b. It reveals how we can be more successful in overcoming temptation

[With that in mind and using **Mk 1:12-13** as our basic text, let’s begin with...]

I. THE TEMPTATION OF JESUS REVIEWED

A. THE SETTING OF THE TEMPTATION...

1. The Spirit drove Jesus into the wilderness - **Mk 1:12**
 - a. It appears this challenge was initiated by the Spirit
 - b. The same Spirit who descended upon Him in bodily form as dove - **Mk 1:10; Lk 3:22**
 - c. It was likely the wilderness of Judea, a very desolate place
 2. Where he was for forty days - **Mk 1:13**
 - a. During which he fasted, like Moses and Elijah - cf. **Mt 4:2; Exo 34:28; 1 Kin 19:18**
 - b. During which he was tempted - cf. **Lk 4:2**
 3. Tempted by Satan - **Mk 1:13**
 - a. Mark uses the term “Satan” (lit., adversary)
 - b. Matthew and Luke use the term “devil” (lit., accuser, slanderer)
 4. Mark alone mentions the presence of “wild beasts” - Mk 1:13
 - a. Animals known to inhabit the area include hyenas, jackals, panthers, and lions
 - b. Not known is whether they were a source of comfort or trial for Jesus (I suspect the latter)
- **For forty days, Jesus experienced desolation, deprivation, and temptation**

B. THE CLIMAX OF THE TEMPTATION...

1. Mark does not record the climax of Satan’s temptations at the end of forty days
 2. Both Matthew and Luke do, which we briefly summarize:
 - a. Satan’s appeal to the lust of the flesh - **Mt 4:3-4**
 - b. Satan’s appeal to the pride of life - **Mt 4:5-7**
 - c. Satan’s appeal to lust of the eyes - **Mt 4:8-10**
 3. With each temptation, Jesus responds “It is written...” - **Mt 4:4,7,10**
- **With the aid of Scripture, Jesus was victorious over Satan!**

C. THE END OF THE TEMPTATION...

1. Angels ministered to Jesus - **Mk 1:13**
 - a. Exactly what they did is not mentioned
 - b. Perhaps they provided bodily nourishment (**Hendriksen**)
 2. This would not be the last time
 - a. That Satan would tempt Jesus - cf. **Lk 4:13; Mt 16:21-23**
 - b. That angels would minister to Jesus - cf. **Lk 22:43**
- **After tribulation came consolation!**

[With forty days of overcoming temptation behind Him, Jesus was now prepared to begin His public ministry. What application might we draw regarding “**The Temptation Of Jesus**”...?]

II. THE TEMPTATION OF JESUS APPLIED

A. WE HAVE THE SAME ADVERSARY...

1. Jesus was tempted by the devil, and so are we - **1Pe 5:8-9**
 2. The devil now directs his attention towards the disciples of Christ - cf. **Re 12:17**
- **We should not treat him lightly, for the conflict is real! - Ep 6:12**

B. WE HAVE SIMILAR TEMPTATIONS...

1. The lust of the flesh - e.g., immorality, especially when young
 2. The lust of the eyes - e.g., materialism, especially when middle-age
 3. The pride of life - e.g., pride and arrogance, especially when elderly
- **These we must overcome, if we wish to have the love of the Father - 1Jn 2:15-16**

C. WE HAVE THE SAME TOOLS TO OVERCOME...

1. Jesus appealed to the Word of God, and so can we - cf. **Ep 6:17**
 2. Jesus had faith in the plan of God (victory through suffering), we need a similar shield of faith - **Ep 6:16; cf. He 10:35-39**
 3. Jesus undoubtedly prayed, He taught the use of prayer to overcome temptation - **Mt 26:41**
- **The Word of God, faith, and prayer...against these the devil has no chance!**

D. WE HAVE SIMILAR BLESSINGS WHEN WE OVERCOME...

1. Jesus was administered to by angels, angels will carry us home - cf. **Lk 16:22**
 2. Jesus received wonderful blessings when He ultimately overcame and ascended to heaven; He has promised similar blessings for us - cf. **Re 2:10,26-27; 3:21**
- **Angels will minister to us, as heirs of salvation! - He 1:14**

E. WE CAN LEARN SOME IMPORTANT LESSONS...

1. Material food alone cannot satisfy, we need spiritual food from God’s Word
 2. While we are to trust in the Lord, we should not foolishly tempt Him
 3. Scripture can easily be abused, as well as used - cf. **2Pe 3:16**
 4. The way to glory is not quick and easy, but long and hard - cf. **Ac 14:22; Ro 2:7**
- **The Temptation of Jesus teaches much about serving God!**

CONCLUSION

1. Perhaps the greatest lesson from “**The Temptation Of Jesus**” is that we have a Savior who in all things was made like us...

- a. That He might be our merciful and faithful High Priest - **He 2:17**
 - b. That having suffered, being tempted, He can aid us who are tempted - **He 2:18**
 - c. That He might be sympathetic, providing mercy and grace to help in time of need - **He 4:15-16**
2. Are you burdened with temptations...?
- a. Look to Jesus as your example in learning how to overcome temptation in your life!
 - b. Look to Jesus as your High Priest when you need to approach God in prayer and receive mercy and grace for those times when you succumbed to temptation!

As in all things, look to Jesus, as the writer to Hebrews exhorts us...

“Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”

“For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls.”

- He 12:2-3

The Preaching Ministry Of Jesus - I

Mark 1:14-15

INTRODUCTION

1. In **Mk 1:14-15**, we read of the beginning of Jesus' public ministry in Galilee...
 - a. Which followed the imprisonment of John the Baptist - cf. **Mk 6:17-18**
 - b. Which began at Capernaum, on the edge of the Sea of Galilee - cf. **Mt 4:13**
2. His public ministry involved "preaching"...
 - a. "...preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God" - **Mk 1:14**
 - b. The word "preach" (Gr., **kerux**) means "to herald, to proclaim"

[But what was the message Jesus proclaimed? Is it a message we should be preach today? From our text (**Mk 1:14-15**) we first see that...]

I. JESUS PREACHED THE KINGDOM OF GOD

A. WHAT IS THE KINGDOM OF GOD...?

1. **That kingdom of God foretold in book of Daniel**
 - a. A kingdom which shall never be destroyed - **Dan 2:44**
 - b. A kingdom, along with glory and dominion, given to the Son of Man - **Dan 7:13-14**
2. **The kingdom of God involves four interrelated concepts**
 - a. God's kingship, rule, or recognized sovereignty
 - 1) The term "kingdom" as used by the Jews often stressed the abstract idea of rule or dominion, not a geographical area surrounded by physical boundaries
 - 2) **basileia** - royal power, kingship, dominion, rule; not to be confused with an actual kingdom but rather the right or authority to rule over a kingdom - **Thayer**
 - b. This rule of God is spiritual in nature
 - 1) It is not a physical kingdom - cf. **Jn 18:36**
 - 2) But one that is spiritual - cf. **Ro 14:17**
 - c. Its visible manifestation today is in the form of the Lord's church
 - 1) For the church is that community of souls in whose hearts God is Sovereign
 - 2) That the church constitutes the kingdom of God on earth, consider:
 - a) The term "church" and "kingdom" used interchangeably - **Mt 16:18**
 - b) Comments made to those who were in the church - **Co 1:13; 1 Th 2:12**
 - c) The description of those in the churches of Asia - **Re 1:4,6,9**
 - d. It has a future element as well as a present one
 - 1) Future aspect as spoken of by Jesus - **Mt 25:34**
 - 2) Future aspect as spoken of by Paul - **1Co 15:50; 2Ti 4:18**
 - 3) Future aspect as spoken of by Peter - **2Pe 1:10-11**
3. **Thus the kingdom of God is both present and future**
 - a. In the present sense:
 - 1) It is found wherever the sovereignty of God is accepted in the hearts of men
 - 2) It is a spiritual kingdom, for God rules in the hearts of men
 - 3) Its outward manifestation today is the Lord's church
 - 4) This rule or kingdom of God was "inaugurated" on the Day of Pentecost (**Ac 2**)

- b. In the future sense:
 - 1) The rule or kingdom of God will be “culminated” with the coming of the Lord
 - 2) It will involve that “news heaven and a new earth in which righteousness dwells”, described by Peter and John - **2Pe 3:10-13; Re 21-22**
 - 3) It will be experienced only by those in the church who are submitting to God’s will today! - cf. **Mt 7:21-23; 2Pe 3:13-14**

-- **The kingdom of God involves good news (gospel)!**

B. DOES THE KINGDOM OF GOD NEED TO BE PROCLAIMED TODAY...?

1. Most certainly!

- a. Philip “preached the things concerning the kingdom of God” - **Ac 8:12**
- b. The apostle Paul in his preaching and teaching:
 - 1) Spoke of the challenges in entering the kingdom in its future sense - **Ac 14:22**
 - 2) Reasoned and persuaded with people concerning the kingdom - **Ac 19:8**
 - 3) Had gone among the Ephesians, “preaching the kingdom of God” - **Ac 20:25**
 - 4) Solemnly testified of the kingdom of God to the Jews in Rome - **Ac 28:23,30-31**
- c. In his epistles, Paul wrote of:
 - 1) The nature of the kingdom - **Ro 14:17**
 - 2) Those who will not inherit the kingdom - **1Co 6:9-10; Ga 5:21; Ep 5:5**
 - 3) Jesus giving the kingdom to God when He returns - **1Co 15:24-26**
 - 4) How flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom - **1Co 15:50**
 - 5) How we are in the kingdom now - **Co 1:13**
 - 6) His companions as fellow workers for the kingdom - **Co 4:11**
 - 7) How we might be counted worthy of the kingdom - **2 Th 1:5**
 - 8) God calling us into His kingdom and glory - **2 Th 2:12**
 - 9) Jesus judging us at His appearing and His kingdom - **2Ti 4:1**
 - 10) The Lord preserving him for His heavenly kingdom - **2Ti 4:18**
- d. Hebrews refers to our receiving a kingdom which can’t be shaken - **He 12:28**
- e. James described the faithful poor as “heirs of the kingdom” - **Jm 2:5**
- f. Peter wrote how we might have an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom - **2Pe 1:10-11**
- g. John was a brother and companion in the kingdom of Jesus Christ - **Re 1:9**

2. Yet there is an important difference in our message today

- a. John the Baptist, Jesus, His disciples in the Limited Commission...all proclaimed the kingdom “**at hand**” (drawing near)
 - 1) For the rule of God as foretold by the prophets was about to be manifested - cf. **Mk 1:14-15; Dan 2:44; 7:13-14**
 - 2) During Jesus’ earthly ministry that kingdom (reign) was yet future
 - 3) That was the “good news” (gospel) of the kingdom then: it was near!
- b. After the ascension of Christ, the preaching of the kingdom proclaimed it both **present and future**
 - 1) The rule of God is now being fully manifested through Jesus Christ - cf. **Mt 28:18; Ep 1:20-22; 1Pe 3:22**
 - 2) Those who “gladly receive” the message are added by the Lord Himself to His church or kingdom (i.e., the community of believers who submit to His authority) - cf. **Ac 2:36-41,47; Co 1:13; Re 1:9**
 - 3) Those who persevere to the end inherit the heavenly and everlasting kingdom of our Lord - **Ac 14:22; 2Pe 1:10-11**

-- **This is the good news (gospel) of the kingdom today: it is both now and coming!**

CONCLUSION

1. Thus “**The Preaching Ministry Of Jesus**” involved proclaiming the kingdom of God...
 - a. The coming rule or reign of God
 - b. As proclaimed by prophets like Daniel
 - c. Was now “at hand”, for “the time is fulfilled”!

2. But Jesus did more than just announce the coming of the kingdom of God...
 - a. He called on people to **repent**
 - b. He called on people to **believe - Mk 1:15**

We will examine His call for repentance and faith in our next study. In the meantime, we do well to ask ourselves, “Are we in the kingdom of God today?” The answer lies in whether we submit to the rule of God now manifested in the person of Jesus Christ... - cf. **Mt 28:18-20**

The Preaching Ministry Of Jesus - II

Mark 1:14-15

INTRODUCTION

1. Previously, we observed that “**The Preaching Ministry Of Jesus**” involved...
 - a. Proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom of God
 - a. That kingdom foretold by Daniel - **Dan 2:44; 7:13-14**
 - b. The good news that is was “at hand”, for “the time is fulfilled”!
2. In examining the nature of the kingdom, we noted that it...
 - a. Involves the rule or reign of God through the person of Jesus Christ
 - b. Is spiritual in nature
 - c. Is manifested visibly today in the form of the Lord’s church
 - d. Has both present and future elements

-- **Indeed, this kingdom is now available to all who freely submit to the authority of Jesus**
3. But Jesus did more than just announce the coming of the kingdom of God...
 - a. He called on people to **repent**
 - b. He called on people to **believe**

[And so as we return to our text (**Mk 1:14-15**), we note that in addition to the kingdom of God...]

II. JESUS PREACHED THE NEED TO REPENT

A. WHAT DOES REPENT MEAN...?

1. There are two common misconceptions concerning repentance
 - a. E.g., that repentance is “sorrow”
 - 1) But repentance is an outcome of sorrow - cf. **2Co 7:9-10**
 - 2) Sorrow leads to repentance; sorrow itself is not repentance!
 - b. E.g., that repentance is “a changed life”
 - 1) Thinking that repentance is a converted life
 - 2) But repentance and conversion are two separate things - cf. **Ac 3:19**
 - a) Peter says “Repent therefore and be converted”
 - b) If repentance means the same as conversion, then Peter was redundant
2. **W. E. Vine** defines “repentance” as:
 - a. A “change of mind”
 - b. That which “involves both a turning from sin and a turning to God”
3. Repentance is therefore a **decision** to “turn from sin and turn to God”
 - a. Preceded by sorrow - **2Co 7:10**
 - b. Followed by a changed life - **2Co 7:11**

-- **Jesus therefore called on people to make a decision regarding sin, because of the imminent arrival of the kingdom of God**

B. DO WE NEED TO PREACH REPENTANCE TODAY...?

1. **Most certainly!**
 - a. Repentance is to be preached in Jesus’ name to all nations - **Lk 24:46-47**

- b. God now calls men everywhere to repent - **Ac 17:30**
- c. Thus Paul preached to both Jews and Gentiles that they should repent - **Ac 26:20**
- 2. **Wherever there is sin, repentance needs to be proclaimed**
 - a. People need to be told to “change their minds” (repent)
 - b. They need to “turn to God, and do works befitting repentance” - cf. **Ac 26:20**
- 3. **Whenever the kingdom of God is proclaimed, it must include a call to repent**
 - a. Paul spoke of preaching the kingdom of God - cf. **Ac 20:25**
 - b. Which included telling people of repentance - cf. **Ac 20:21**
- **Any preaching of the kingdom of God that does not include a clarion call to repent is not the true gospel!**

[Of course, the decision to turn from sin involves **faith**. So we are not be surprised to note also that...]

III. JESUS PREACHED THE NEED TO BELIEVE

A. WHAT DOES BELIEVE MEAN...?

- 1. As defined by **Easton’s Bible Dictionary**:
 - a. Faith is in general the persuasion of the mind that a certain statement is true
 - b. Its primary idea is trust
- 2. It is a strong conviction or trust in something; as the NIV translates **He 11:1**...
 - a. “Now faith is being sure of what we hope for...”
 - b. “...and certain of what we do not see.”
- 3. For example, you have faith that your parents are indeed your parents
 - a. Based upon your trust or conviction in the reliability of their word
 - b. Such trust prompts you to respond accordingly
- **Jesus proclaimed that people should trust in the good tidings concerning the kingdom of God**

B. DO WE NEED TO PREACH THE NEED TO BELIEVE TODAY...?

- 1. **Most certainly! For people need to believe:**
 - a. In God, to be pleasing to Him - **He 11:6**
 - b. In Jesus, to have forgiveness of sins and eternal life - **Jn 8:24; 20:31**
- 2. **But people also need to believe in the kingdom of God!**
 - a. Which is what Jesus was saying in our text - **Mk 1:15**
 - b. That it was “at hand” when Jesus was preaching
- 3. **Thus there is the need to believe in the kingdom of God today!**
 - a. Just as Paul sought to convince his Jewish brethren - **Ac 28:23**
 - b. If we do not believe, then the good news of God’s kingdom and salvation should be taken to others - **Ac 28:24-28**
- 4. **We need to believe concerning the kingdom of God:**
 - a. That Jesus now reigns over all - **Mt 28:18; Ep 1:20-22; 1Pe 3:22**
 - b. That those who obey the gospel become members of that kingdom - **Co 1:13**
 - c. That those who persevere will inherit the everlasting kingdom - **2Pe 1:10-11**
 - d. That those who persist in sin will not inherit the kingdom of God - **1Co 6:9-10; Ep 5:5**

CONCLUSION

- 1. Thus “**The Preaching Ministry Of Jesus**” began with a proclamation regarding...
 - a. The coming of the kingdom of God

- b. The need to repent and believe
2. The kingdom of God came just as Jesus (and the prophets) said it would...
- a. Jesus received all authority, and now reigns at the right hand of God - **Mt 28:18; 1Pe 3:22**
 - b. He exercises that reign, even in the midst of His enemies - cf. **Ps 110:1-2**
 - c. His people (the church) freely volunteer in the day of His power - cf. **Ps 110:3**
 - d. When He returns, it will be to deliver the kingdom to His Father - **1Co 15:24-26**

Do you wish to be part of that everlasting, heavenly kingdom? Then you must be in the kingdom of God now, freely submitting to the reign of God in your life today!

If you have not yet done so, then repent of your sins, put your faith in Jesus Christ, be baptized for the remission of your sins, and begin living for Him today...! - **Mk 16:15-16; Ac 2:36-38**

The Call Of Four Fishermen

Mark 1:16-20

INTRODUCTION

1. Jesus began His public ministry by preaching...
 - a. Proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom of God - **Mk 1:14**
 - b. That the time was fulfilled, the kingdom of God was at hand - **Mk 1:15a**
 - c. That people needed to repent and believe the gospel - **Mk 1:15b**
2. As He did so, He also called people to become His disciples...
 - a. Calling them to follow Him
 - b. Offering to make them “fishers of men”

[His first disciples included two sets of brothers, four fishermen who later become apostles. In our text (**Mk 1:16-20**) we read how Jesus called them. Let’s take a closer look at them, beginning with...]

I. SIMON AND ANDREW

A. DISCIPLES OF JESUS CHRIST...

1. Their background
 - a. Sons of Jonah - **Jn 1:42**
 - b. From Bethsaida of Galilee - **Jn 1:44**
 - c. Fishermen by trade - **Mk 1:16**
 - d. Partners with James and John - **Lk 5:10**
2. Their call to discipleship
 - a. Both met Jesus a year earlier - **Jn 1:35-42**
 - 1) In Bethabara beyond the Jordan - **Jn 1:28**
 - 2) Andrew had been a disciple of John
 - 3) Andrew introduced Simon to Jesus
 - 4) Jesus named Simon “Cephas” (Aramaic), “Peter” (Greek), meaning “a rock”
 - b. They were called while fishing in the Sea of Galilee - **Mk 1:16**
 - 1) They had been washing their nets - **Lk 5:1-2**
 - 2) Jesus had Simon take him out in a boat, to teach the people on shore - **Lk 5:3**
 - 3) Jesus told him to launch out and cast his net, resulting in a large catch - **Lk 5:4-9**
 - 4) Then Jesus called them to follow Him and be fishers of men - **Lk 5:10; Mk 1:17**
 - 5) They immediately left their nets and followed him - **Mk 1:18**

B. APOSTLES OF JESUS CHRIST...

1. Their service as apostles
 - a. Simon and Andrew were selected along with twelve others - **Mk 3:14-19**
 - b. Simon (Peter) became part of Jesus’ “inner circle” - **Mk 5:37; 9:2; 14:33**
 - c. He is well known for his denial of Christ and restoration - **Mk 14:66-72; Jn 21:15-19**
 - d. He is a key figure in the first half of the book of Acts, and wrote two epistles
 - e. Andrew is known for introducing people to Jesus - **Jn 1:40-42; 6:8-9; 12:20-22**
 - f. Both asked Jesus about the destruction of Jerusalem - **Mk 13:1-4**
2. According to apocryphal (doubtful) literature (cf. **ISBE**)

- a. Simon (Peter) died a martyr at Rome about 67 AD, along with his wife
- b. Crucified upside down at his own request, felt unworthy to die exactly like Jesus
- c. Andrew is thought to have been crucified in Greece, on a cross in the form of an X
- d. Various sources attribute his missionary work in Bithynia, Scythia, Greece, Ephesus

[**Simon and Andrew:** brothers, fishermen, disciples, apostles, martyrs. One well known, the other lesser known. Both faithful servants of the Lord Jesus Christ. Next we take a look at...]

II. JAMES AND JOHN

A. DISCIPLES OF JESUS CHRIST...

1. Their background
 - a. Sons of Zebedee - **Mk 1:19**
 - b. Their mother was Salome - **Mk 16:1; Mt 27:56**
 - c. Many believe Salome was Mary's sister, making them Jesus' cousins - **Jn 19:25**
 - d. Successful fishing business (several boats, partners with Simon and Andrew, hired servants) - **Mk 1:20; Lk 5:10-11**
2. Their call to discipleship
 - a. While mending nets by the Sea of Galilee - **Mk 1:19**
 - b. When Jesus called them, they left their father and hired servants - **Mk 1:20**

B. APOSTLES OF JESUS CHRIST...

1. Their service as apostles
 - a. James and John were selected along with twelve others - **Mk 3:14-19**
 - b. To whom Jesus gave the name "Boanerges" (Sons of Thunder) - **Mk 3:17**
 - c. Perhaps due to a fiery temper (though see below) - cf. **Lk 9:54**
 - d. John tried to forbid one from casting out demons who did not follow them - **Mk 9:38**
 - e. Both became part of Jesus' "inner circle" - **Mk 5:37; 9:2; 14:33**
 - f. They asked to sit at Christ's side in glory - **Mk 10:35-37**
 - g. Both asked Jesus about the destruction of Jerusalem - **Mk 13:1-4**
 - h. Both were present when Jesus appeared the third time after His resurrection - **Jn 21:1-14**
 - i. John was likely the "disciple whom Jesus loved" - **Jn 19:26; 20:2; 21:7,20**
 - j. John often worked with Peter - **Ac 3:1; 8:14; Ga 2:9**
 - k. James became the first apostle to be martyred, fulfilling the Lord's prophecy that he would drink the same cup as His Master - **Ac 12:1-2; cf. Mk 10:39**
 - l. John went on to write his gospel, three epistles, and the book of Revelation
2. According to apocryphal (doubtful) literature (cf. **ISBE**)
 - a. Zebedee their father was of the house of Levi, their mother of the house of Judah
 - b. Called "Sons of Thunder" because they were of both the priestly house and royal house
 - c. James joined Peter in a missionary trip to India; also preached in Spain prior to his death
 - d. John is thought to have spent his later years in Ephesus, following his exile on the isle of Patmos (cf. **Re 1:9**), dying around 98 AD

[**James and John:** brothers, fishermen, disciples, apostles. One an early martyr, the other a lifelong witness. Both faithful servants of the Lord Jesus Christ. Now for some concluding observations...]

CONCLUSION

1. Becoming a disciple of Jesus **often involves sacrifice...**

- a. For Simon and Andrew, it meant leaving their business behind
 - b. For James and John, it also meant leaving their family behind
 - c. For all four, it meant lives of service that included hardship, ending in martyrdom or exile
2. Becoming a disciple of Jesus **means to seek the lost...**
- a. Jesus wants His disciples to become “fishers of men” - **Mk 1:17**
 - b. Just as He came to “seek and save the lost” - **Lk 19:10**
3. As disciples of Christ today...
- a. Are we willing to sacrifice for the Lord?
 - b. Are we willing to seek the lost?
 - c. If not, can we really claim to be disciples of Jesus Christ?

Jesus would have everyone become His disciple today (cf. **Mt 28:19-20**). May “**The Call Of Four Fishermen**”, and the service they rendered to the Lord, inspire us to greater dedication as disciples...

A Teacher With Authority

Mark 1:21-28

INTRODUCTION

1. Up to this point in Mark's gospel, everything has been preliminary...
 - a. The ministry of John the Baptist, sent to prepare the way of the Lord
 - b. The baptism of Jesus, introducing Jesus to Israel as the Lamb of God
 - c. The temptation of Jesus, preparing Him to face the difficult tasks ahead
 - d. The theme of His preaching, concerning the coming kingdom of God
 - e. The calling of His disciples, who would eventually carry on His work
2. But now we begin to read of Jesus' actual ministry...
 - a. Things He **did**
 - b. Things He **taught**

[When people saw and heard Jesus, they immediately noticed something different. Especially in regards to His teaching, for He was “A Teacher With Authority.” In the text (Mk 1:21-28), note first His...]

I. TEACHING AS ONE HAVING AUTHORITY

A. THE SETTING OF HIS TEACHING...

1. Capernaum - on the NW shore of Galilee where Jesus lived - **Mk 1:21; Mt 4:12-13**
 2. On the Sabbath, teaching in the synagogue - **Mk 1:21**
 - a. The Law of Moses was still in effect, so as an observant Jew Jesus kept the Sabbath
 - b. The synagogue on the Sabbath provided a ready audience
 3. Luke gave a detailed description of what it was like when Jesus spoke in the synagogue at Nazareth - cf. **Lk 4:16-22**
- **Teaching in synagogues became a feature of His itinerant ministry - cf. Mk 1:38-39**

B. THE MANNER OF HIS TEACHING...

1. Astonished the people - **Mk 1:22; cf. Mt 7:28-29**
 2. Note this later reaction: “No man ever spoke like this Man!” - **Jn 7:46**
 3. Because He taught as one having authority, not like the scribes - **Mk 1:22**
 - a. Scribes would quote well-known rabbis as their authority for what they taught
 - b. But Jesus would say things like “But I say to you...” - cf. **Mt 5:27-28,31-32; 19:8-9**
- **Jesus spoke that way because He had authority (even to forgive sins)! - cf. Mk 2:10**

[But it wasn't just the **manner** of His teaching. Jesus complemented His teaching with miraculous signs, thus...]

II. TEACHING AS ONE SHOWING AUTHORITY

A. THE POWER OF HIS AUTHORITY...

1. Demonstrated by casting out an unclean spirit - **Mk 1:23-26**
 - a. In a man who was in the synagogue
 - b. That knew Jesus' true identity as the Holy One of God!

- c. Whom Jesus rebuked, then cast out
 2. What were unclean spirits (demons)?
 - a. Their origin not clearly stated in Scripture, but their reality acknowledged
 - b. Some believe they were spirits of wicked men (Josephus, Alexander Campbell)
 - c. Others view them as fallen angels (though bound to Tartarus) - **2Pe 2:4; Ju 1:6**
 3. Demonic activity in the Bible appears in waves
 - a. There is more recorded demonic activity during Jesus' life than any other time in biblical history - **Baker's Evangelical Dictionary**
 - b. If fallen angels, perhaps temporarily released during such times so God's true servants could be identified by their authority to cast them out of those who were possessed
 4. Jesus later explained His casting out of demons was evidence of the coming rule or reign of God - cf. **Mt 12:28**
- **Jesus proved He had authority by casting out the unclean spirit**

B. THE REACTION TO HIS AUTHORITY...

1. The people in the synagogue are amazed - **Mk 1:27**
 - a. They wonder what new doctrine is being revealed
 - b. Which was the purpose of such signs, to reveal and confirm the doctrine was from God - cf. **Mk 16:17-20; He 2:3-4**
 - c. They understood that He not only **spoke** with authority, He **acted** with authority!
 2. His fame spread throughout all Galilee - **Mk 1:28**
 - a. A natural reaction to such an amazing event
 - b. One that would later make it difficult for Jesus - cf. **Mk 1:33,45**
- **The people were amazed, but they understood the significance of the miracle: this Man must be bringing a new revelation (doctrine)!**

CONCLUSION

1. Thus Jesus was "**A Teacher With Authority**"...
 - a. He taught as one having authority (Grk., **exousia**: power, right)
 - b. He did signs (miracles) that proved His authority
2. It is tempting to be distracted by the miracles themselves...
 - a. But as the people deduced on this occasion, there was new doctrine
 - b. So we should focus our attention on what Jesus **taught**, not on what He **did**
3. Later, Jesus would claim to have "**all authority**...in heaven and on earth"... - **Mt 28:18**
 - a. Then command His apostles to make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them - **Mt 28:19**
 - b. And that such disciples should observe all things He has commanded - **Mt 28:20**
4. Later, the apostles would preach Jesus as "Lord"...
 - a. Commanding repentance and baptism in His name (by His authority) - **Ac 2:36-38**
 - b. That He has the authority to one day judge the world - **Ac 10:42; 17:30-31; 2Co 5:10**

Those who gladly accept the authority of Jesus as Lord are baptized (**Ac 2:41**) and continue steadfastly in His apostles' doctrine (**Ac 2:42**).

Are we willing to accept Jesus as our Teacher today by submitting to His authority in the same way...?

At The Home Of Simon And Andrew

Mark 1:29-39

INTRODUCTION

1. Mark's account of the ministry of Christ, like most of his gospel, is...
 - a. Concise
 - b. Fast-paced
2. Even so, Mark does reveal what it must have been like for Jesus...
 - a. On a daily basis
 - b. In constant demand as a teacher and a healer

[For example, after teaching in the synagogue, casting an unclean spirit out of man, Jesus retires to the home of two of his disciples, Simon and Andrew. In our text (**Mk 1:29-39**), we read how...]

I. JESUS HEALS SIMON'S WIFE'S MOTHER

A. THE TEXT...

1. Leaving the synagogue, they enter the house - **Mk 1:29**
 - a. The synagogue where Jesus had taught with authority - cf. **Mk 1:21-28**
 - b. The house of Simon and Andrew, whom Jesus had called - cf. **Mk 1:16-18**
2. Simon's wife's mother lay sick of a fever - **Mk 1:30**
 - a. Her daughter the wife of Simon, better known as the apostle Peter - cf. **Mk 3:16**
 - b. About whom (the mother-in-law) they told Jesus immediately
3. Whom Jesus heals immediately - **Mk 1:31**
 - a. Taking her by the hand and lifting her up
 - b. Free of fever, she then served them

B. OBSERVATIONS...

1. **Note the compassion of our Lord**
 - a. Whether in the crowded synagogue or the quiet home, Jesus is ready to heal - **Erdman**
 - b. The touch of His hand, suggests tenderness and sympathy - **ibid.**
2. **Note that Peter was married**
 - a. His wife would later join him on his travels - cf. **1Co 9:5**
 - b. Who according to tradition suffered crucifixion together with him
 - c. "That Peter had a mother-in-law shows that the idea of a celibate priesthood was foreign to that day. It is a tradition of men which finds no support in the Word of God and which breeds a host of evils." - **Believer's Bible Commentary**
 - d. Requisite celibacy is certainly foreign to the Scriptures - cf. **1Co 7:2,9; 1Ti 3:2,12**
3. **Note the immediate response of the mother-in-law**
 - a. Restored, she used her health to serve others
 - b. When restored from sickness, do we show our gratitude by serving others?

[As the day draws to a close, Jesus' work is not yet done. For we next read how...]

II. JESUS HEALS MANY AFTER SUNSET

A. THE TEXT...

1. At evening many assemble - **Mk 1:32-33**
 - a. After sunset, when the Sabbath was over
 - b. All who were sick, and those demon-possessed were brought to Him
 - c. The whole city gathered at the door of the house
2. Jesus healed many - **Mk 1:34**
 - a. Mark says “many”
 - b. Matthew says “all” - **Mt 8:16**
3. He cast out many demons - **Mk 1:34**
 - a. Just as He done with the unclean spirit in the synagogue - **Mk 1:23-26**
 - b. Likewise forbidding them to speak, because they knew Him

B. OBSERVATIONS...

1. **Note the time - at the end of the day**
 - a. When people would normally retire
 - b. Yet Jesus receives all who come to Him
2. **Note the response of the people**
 - a. Reacting naturally to hearing of one who could really heal
 - b. If someone could really heal like Jesus or His apostles, crowds could not be kept away - cf. **Ac 5:14-16**
3. **Note the success of the healer**
 - a. Jesus healed **all** who came to Him - cf. **Mt 8:16**
 - b. The apostles had similar success - cf. **Ac 5:16**
 - c. Contrast this with so-called “faith healers” today

[Following such a long day of teaching and healing, even so we find that early the next morning...]

III. JESUS TAKES TIME TO PRAY

A. THE TEXT...

1. Jesus rises early in the morning, long before daylight - **Mk 1:35**
2. He departs to a solitary place, and there He prays - **Mk 1:35**

B. OBSERVATIONS...

1. **Note that Jesus was a man of prayer**
 - a. Mark mentions other times that Jesus prayed - **Mk 6:46; 14:32-42**
 - b. If the Son of God needed to pray, how much more do we!
2. **Note that Jesus preferred places of solitude to pray**
 - a. Luke says it was a deserted place - cf. **Lk 4:42**
 - b. Jesus would later go to a mountain - cf. **Mk 6:46**
 - c. He prepared for His crucifixion by praying in quiet garden - cf. **Mk 14:32-42**
 - d. We do well to seek out quiet places to pray - cf. also **Mt 6:5-6**

[Finally, we observe in our text that...]

IV. JESUS REMAINS TRUE TO HIS PURPOSE

A. THE TEXT...

1. Simon and others search for Jesus - **Mk 1:36**
2. Finding Him, they tell how everyone is looking for Him - **Mk 1:37**
3. He says that His purpose requires that He go to other towns to preach - **Mk 1:38**
4. Which He does throughout all Galilee, preaching in the synagogues and casting out demons - **Mk 1:39**

B. OBSERVATIONS...

1. **Note that Jesus' purpose was to preach**
 - a. To proclaim the coming kingdom of God - cf. **Mk 1:14-15**
 - b. Healing was secondary, to confirm His authority
 - c. Likewise our focus should be on what Jesus taught, rather than His miracles
2. **Note that Jesus preached and then moved on to the next town**
 - a. Once people heard the message, He moved on to those who had not heard
 - b. Might this provide insight into our own evangelistic efforts?
 - c. **Oswald J. Smith** said, "No one has the right to hear the gospel twice, while there remains someone who has not heard it once."
 - d. That is not entirely true, for the apostles later stayed in the same place for some period of time - cf. **Ac 17:2; 18:3-4,11; 19:8-10**
 - e. Even so, the point remains the same: our purpose is to tell as many people as possible about the gospel of Christ! - cf. **Mk 16:15**

CONCLUSION

1. In the short time He was at Simon and Andrew's home, Jesus revealed Himself to be a man of...
 - a. Compassion
 - b. Service
 - c. Prayer
 - d. Purpose
2. As disciples of Jesus, may we too be people of...
 - a. Compassion toward those who are sick
 - b. Willing to serve others as we have the ability
 - c. Prayer, taking the time and find the place to do
 - d. Purpose, especially in regards to fulfilling the Great Commission

Speaking of the Great Commission, have you responded to its message...? - **Mt 28:19-20; Mk 16:15-16**

Jesus Cleanses A Leper

Mark 1:40-45

INTRODUCTION

1. One of the more moving accounts of Jesus' miracles is that of cleansing a leper...
 - a. Described by Mark in our text - **Mk 1:40-45**
 - b. Also by Matthew and Luke in their gospels - **Mt 8:2-4; Lk 5:12-14**
2. There is much that can be gleaned from this miracle...
 - a. About the compassion and power of our Lord Jesus Christ
 - b. Not only toward the leper himself, but toward us as well!

[In this study, we shall note some similarities between the leper's condition and cleansing, and that of our own condition and need for cleansing. As we begin with **Mk 1:40**, consider first...]

I. THE LEPER'S CONDITION

A. HIS CONDITION...

1. Leprosy was a term for several skin diseases - **ESV note**
 2. Today it is often applied to Hanson's bacillus, a progressively disfiguring disease - **BKC**
 3. It is likely this man suffered a pitiful existence - **ibid.**
 - a. Not just from the physical ravages of the disease
 - b. But from ritual uncleanness and exclusion from society imposed by the Law of Moses
- cf. **Lev 13:44-46**
- **The leper was truly a wretched man**

B. OUR CONDITION...

1. What leprosy is to the body, so sin is to the soul!
 2. Sin progressively enslaves us - **Jn 8:34; cf. Ro 7:14-24**
 3. Sin separates us from God, and from His people - **Isa 59:2; 1Co 5:11**
 4. Sin is universal - **Ro 3:23**
 5. Sin leads to eternal death - **Ro 6:23; Re 21:8**
- **As long as we remain guilty of sin, we are truly wretched!**

[Should we ever see a leper, let us remember that without Christ our condition is much worse! The leper had heard of Jesus' power to heal, and so he came to Him. We next notice...]

II. THE LEPER'S CRY

A. HIS CRY...

1. It was **earnest and desperate** - "imploing Him"
2. It was **reverent** - "kneeling down to Him"
3. It was **humble and submissive** - "If You are willing"
4. It was **believing** - "You can"
5. It **acknowledged need** - "make me clean"
6. It was **specific** - not "bless me" but "make me clean"

7. It was **personal** - “make me clean”
 8. It was **brief** - five words in the original
- **The leper gives us an instructive example of the prayer that God answers (BBC)**

B. OUR CRY...

1. For forgiveness of sin is first made **in baptism**
 - a. It is how we call upon the name of the Lord - **Ac 2:21,37-41; 22:16**
 - b. For baptism is an appeal for a good conscience - **1Pe 3:21** (ESV, NASB)
 - c. Only through the blood of Christ can we truly purify our conscience - **He 9:14**
 2. For forgiveness of sin is then found **through prayer**
 - a. As Peter counseled Simon after his baptism - **Ac 8:13,22**
 - b. As John counseled his brethren in his epistle - **1Jn 1:9**
- **The gospel describes how we can make our appeal to Christ today!**

[We have undoubtedly heard the gospel; have we made our appeal to Christ? We next read of the wonderful compassion of our Lord as Mark describes...]

III. THE LEPER'S CLEANSING

A. HIS CLEANSING...

1. Actuated by the Lord's compassion - cf. **Mk 6:34; 9:36**
 2. Accompanied by the touch of His hand - cf. **Mk 1:31**
 3. Accomplished as soon as the Lord spoke, “I am willing, be cleansed.” - **Mk 1:41-42**
- **Through a simple touch and with simple words, the leprosy was gone!**

B. OUR CLEANSING...

1. Actuated by God's love - **1Jn 4:9,10**
 2. Accompanied by the blood of Jesus - **Ep 1:7; 1Pe 1:18-19**
 3. Accomplished when we are united with Jesus in baptism - **Ro 6:3-7; Co 2:12-13**
- **Through a simple act of faith (immersion), our sins are washed away!**

[The leper received his cleansing; have we received ours? Finally, let us note in **Mk 1:43-45...**]

IV. THE LEPER'S COMMISSION

A. HIS COMMISSION...

1. Sent away quickly with a strict warning - **Mk 1:43**
 2. Told to tell no one anything, but to show himself to the priest - **Mk 1:44**
 - a. To offer what Moses commanded for his cleansing - cf. **Lev 14:1-7**
 - b. As a testimony to them (of Jesus as the Messiah?) - cf. **Mt 11:5; Lk 7:22**
 3. The leper failed to keep the commission given him - **Mk 1:45**
 - a. Told to keep quiet, he proclaimed what happened so that news of it spread
 - b. It forced Jesus away from cities, and forced people to find Him in deserted places
- **With misdirected zeal, the leper hindered rather than helped Jesus and others**

B. OUR COMMISSION...

1. Jesus gave His disciples a great commission
 - a. To produce disciples of Christ- **Mt 28:19-20**
 - b. To preach the gospel to every person - **Mk 16:15-16**

- c. To proclaim repentance and remission of sins to all nations - **Lk 24:47**
 2. The early church was faithful to that great commission
 - a. Their words went out to the ends of the world - **Ro 10:18**
 - b. The gospel had gone to all the world - **Co 1:5-6**
 - c. It had been preached to every creature under heaven - **Co 1:23**
 3. What about the church today?
 - a. Are we remaining faithful to that great commission?
 - b. Or are we, like the leper, doing what we think best?
 - c. Many have the church focusing on social rather than spiritual needs
- **With misdirected zeal, are we hindering rather than helping Jesus and the lost?**

CONCLUSION

1. The cleansing of the leper provides insight into...
 - a. The compassion and power of our Lord Jesus Christ
 - b. The humble faith needed to receive the benefits of such compassion and power
 - c. The danger of misdirected zeal in hindering the cause of Christ
2. We may not suffer from leprosy, but we do face a much greater problem...
 - a. The spiritual disfigurement and isolation caused by sin
 - b. Which requires the same compassion and power of Jesus
 - c. Along with the same humility and faith to receive forgiveness
3. Once we have been cleansed of our sin, shall we not show proper gratitude...?
 - a. By fulfilling the commission given to all His disciples?
 - b. By directing our zeal in the same manner as did the early church?

May we learn from both the positive and negative examples of the leper...

Jesus Heals A Paralytic

Mark 2:1-12

INTRODUCTION

1. Among the miracles of Jesus, one of the better known is the healing of a paralytic...
 - a. Found in all three synoptic gospels - **Mt 9:1-8; Mk 2:1-12; Lk 5:17-26**
 - b. In which a man was let down through a roof by his friends to be healed by Jesus
2. The occasion produced a range of emotions...
 - a. Jesus charged with blasphemy by some
 - b. God glorified with amazement by others

[The healing of the paralytic contains several valuable lessons for us today. Turning to Mark's account of the miracle (**Mk 2:1-12**), let's first read and examine...]

I. THE NARRATIVE

A. HELPFUL FRIENDS...

1. **The place:** the miracle occurs in Capernaum - **Mk 2:1-2**
 - a. Described as "His own city" - **Mt 9:1; cf. Mt 4:13**
 - b. Located on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee
 - c. Served as the base for His public ministry in Galilee
 - d. Preaching in a house, which soon overflowed with listeners
 2. **The paralytic:** His friends carry him to Jesus - **Mk 2:3-4**
 - a. Totally immobile, confined to a stretcher, unable to enter
 - b. With great effort, his four friends let him down through the roof
 3. **The pardon:** Jesus forgives him of his sins - **Mk 2:5**
 - a. Jesus observes the faith of the paralytic and his friends
 - b. He replies, "Son, your sins are forgiven you."
 - c. Matthew adds, "...be of good cheer..." - **Mt 9:2**
- **It seems strange Jesus forgave him first rather than healed him, but Jesus' purpose will be revealed as we proceed**

B. HOSTILE FOES...

1. **The disdain of the scribes:** blasphemy! - **Mk 2:6-7**
 - a. Luke mentions both scribes and Pharisees - **Lk 5:21**
 - b. They reasoned in their hearts, not speaking
 - c. Silently accusing Jesus of blasphemy, for only God can forgive sin
 2. **The defense of the Savior:** He has power to forgive sin - **Mk 2:8-10**
 - a. Jesus knew their hearts, their reasoning - cf. **Jn 2:24-25**
 - b. Which is easier to say (and do): to forgive or to heal?
 - c. Both require divine authority and power
 - d. Jesus has power to do both!
- **Here is Jesus' purpose in forgiving before healing is revealed: to make known His divine power to forgive sins**

C. HAPPY FINALE...

1. **For the paralytic:** healed! - **Mk 2:11-12a**
 - a. Jesus tells him to arise, take up his bed, and go home
 - b. Which he does immediately, in the presence of all!
 - c. Luke adds that he went “glorifying God” - **Lk 5:25**
 2. **For the people:** amazed! - **Mk 2:12**
 - a. The crowd has never seen anything like this!
 - b. Matthew adds their amazement was that God had given such power to men - **Mt 9:8**
 - c. Luke adds their amazement was joined with fear - **Lk 5:26**
 - d. They also were “glorifying God” - **Lk 5:25**
- **A man healed, people amazed, Jesus’ power made known, but most of all, God is glorified!**

[From **helpful friends** to **hostile foes** to a **happy finale**, the healing of the paralytic is a wonderful story. But it is more than just a story. There are lessons to be gleaned. Here, then, are...]

II. SOME LESSONS**A. THE POWER OF CHRIST TO FORGIVE SINS...**

1. **On earth**, Jesus demonstrated His power to forgive sins
 - a. Not only in the case of the paralytic - **Mk 2:5,10-11**
 - b. But also with the woman who washed and anointed His feet - **Lk 7:44-48**
 - c. And for the thief on the cross - **Lk 23:39-43**
 2. **From heaven**, Jesus continues to have power to forgive sins
 - a. Made possible by the shedding of His blood - **Mt 26:28; Ep 1:7**
 - b. Offered to those who respond to His gospel - **Mk 16:16; Ac 2:38; 10:42-43; 22:16**
 - c. Ever available to those who walk with God - **1Jn 1:7,9**
- **Have we looked to Jesus for the forgiveness of our sins?**

B. THE PRECIOUSNESS OF FRIENDS WITH FAITH...

1. The paralytic was blessed with friends with faith
 - a. Jesus saw “their faith” - **Mk 2:5**
 - b. Evidenced by their great effort to assist their paralyzed friend
 - c. Without them, the paralytic would have been unable to come to Jesus
 2. Do we have and appreciate friends with faith?
 - a. In His church, Jesus provides us with many friends with faith
 - b. Brethren ready to assist and serve us in time of need
 - c. Does our involvement in the local church indicate that we appreciate such friends? - cf. **He 10:24-25**
 - d. If a brother is in need, can they rely on our faith? - e.g., **Ga 6:1-2**
- **Nurture your network of friends with faith, and share your faith with them!**

C. THE PRIVILEGES SO EASILY SQUANDERED...

1. The miracle occurred in the city of Capernaum
 - a. Described as Jesus’ “own city” - **Mt 9:1**
 - b. There He did many wonderful works
 - 1) Healed the centurion’s servant - **Mt 8:5-13**
 - 2) Healed Peter’s mother-in-law - **Mt 8:14-15**
 - 3) Cast out many spirits in the demon-possessed - **Mt 8:16**

- 4) From Cana He healed the nobleman's son at Capernaum - **Jn 4:46-54**
 - c. Yet those in the city brought judgment upon themselves - cf. **Mt 11:23-24**
 2. Have we squandered our privileges?
 - a. Living in a country where God's Word is freely accessible?
 - b. Blessed to be near a congregation of fellow Christians?
 - c. Having many opportunities to grow and serve in the work of the Lord?
 - d. "...For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more." - **Lk 12:48**
- **We have been given much by the Lord, let us give much in return!**

CONCLUSION

1. The healing of the paralytic reveals a man...
 - a. Who was in need
 - b. Who was blessed with good friends
 - c. Who was forgiven of his sins by Jesus Christ
2. We all are like that paralyzed man...
 - a. With needs only Jesus can fulfill
 - b. Who needs forgiveness that only Jesus has power to bestow
 - c. With friends of faith willing to help

But are we like the paralyzed man in regards to faith? His faith led to Jesus fulfilling his needs. May we have the same faith today...!

Jesus And The Tax Collector

Mark 2:13-17

INTRODUCTION

1. As Jesus went about preaching and healing, He called people to follow Him...
 - a. Such as Simon and Andrew - **Mk 1:16-18**
 - b. Also James and John - **Mk 1:19-20**
2. Today, Jesus wants us to call people to follow Him...
 - a. To become His disciples - cf. **Mt 28:19-20**
 - b. To enjoy His salvation - cf. **Mk 16:15-16**

[Who are suitable prospect for discipleship and salvation? We might think those who are religiously inclined. But our text for this study (**Mk 2:13-17**) should caution us not to limit our prospects...]

I. THE NARRATIVE

A. JESUS CALLS THE TAX COLLECTOR...

1. Jesus was teaching by the shores of Galilee - **Mk 2:13**; cf. **4:1**
 2. He saw Levi, son of Alphaeus, sitting at the tax office - **Mk 2:14**
 - a. Better known as Matthew, the apostle and gospel writer - cf. **Mt 9:9; 10:3**
 - b. His father was Alphaeus, not likely the father of James - cf. **Mk 3:18**
 3. He was a tax collector (publican), a profession not well-liked - cf. **Lk 5:27**
 - a. Viewed as **traitors** - as Jews working for the Roman government
 - b. Viewed as **extortionists** - for publicans often charged exorbitant fees
 - c. Classed together with sinners and harlots - cf. **Lk 15:1-2; Mt 21:31-32**
 4. Yet Jesus calls him to become a disciple - **Mk 2:14**
 - a. "Follow Me" - cf. **Mk 1:17-18**
 - b. He "left all" and followed Jesus - cf. **Lk 5:28**
- **Not someone you might consider having potential as a follower of Christ**

B. THE TAX COLLECTOR HOSTS JESUS...

1. Levi (Matthew) gave Jesus a great feast in his house - **Mk 2:15**; cf. **Lk 5:29**
 2. There were many tax collectors and sinners present - **Mk 2:15**
 3. The scribes and Pharisees are shocked - **Mk 2:16**
 - a. Luke says they "complained" - cf. **Lk 5:30**
 - b. They wondered how Jesus could eat with tax collectors and sinners
 4. Jesus' response - **Mk 2:17**
 - a. "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick"
 - b. "I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance"
- **Jesus' words reveal why Levi (Matthew) was a prospect for discipleship**

[As we reflect on this narrative, what lessons might we glean from it? Starting at the end of our text and working backward, here are...]

II. SOME LESSONS

A. JESUS IS LOOKING FOR SINNERS...

1. "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance"
 - a. His purpose was to seek and save the lost - cf. **Lk 19:10**
 - b. This gives great hope to those burdened by the guilt of sin
 2. "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick"
 - a. In regards to the disease of sin, we are all sick - cf. **Ro 3:23**
 - b. But the Great Physician is ready to heal those willing to repent of sin
- **If you are burdened and suffering because of sin, Jesus is looking for you!**

B. FRIENDS OFFER GREAT POTENTIAL...

1. Levi (Matthew) provides a wonderful method of personal evangelism
 - a. He invited friends and co-workers to his home
 - b. He provided opportunity for them to hear Jesus
 2. Cornelius did the same thing, even before he became a Christian
 - a. He invited family and friends - cf. **Ac 10:24**
 - b. He provided opportunity for them to hear Peter - cf. **Ac 10:33**
- **Inviting family and friends for a home Bible study is a great way to share the gospel!**

C. WE ARE TO BE SEPARATE, NOT ISOLATED...

1. The Bible teaches the principle of separation
 - a. Evil company can corrupt good habits - cf. **1Co 15:33**
 - b. We are to be separate, not unequally yoked with unbelievers - cf. **2Co 6:14-18**
 2. But separation does involve total isolation
 - a. Otherwise we would have to leave this world - cf. **1Co 5:9-10**
 - b. Jesus and His disciples were willing to eat with sinners - **Mk 2:15-16**
- **To heal those sick with sin, we must be willing to spend time with them!**

D. JESUS OFTEN CALLS THE BUSY TO SERVE...

1. Consider those whom Jesus called to follow Him
 - a. Fishermen like Simon and Andrew, James and John - cf. **Mk 1:16-20**
 - b. A tax collector sitting at the tax office - cf. **Mk 2:14**
 2. We should not think that God wants only those with youth or time on their hands
 - a. E.g., only young men who go to school to become preachers
 - b. E.g., only older people who are retired with nothing better to do
- **Remember the adage: "If you want something done, ask a busy man to do it"**

CONCLUSION

1. Jesus' interaction with the tax collector should serve to remind us...
 - a. We are never too sinful to be saved by Jesus
 - b. We are never too busy to serve Jesus
 - c. We must be willing to reach out to those who are lost
 - d. Good prospects are family, friends, and co-workers
2. How about you...?
 - a. Are you willing to let Jesus be your Great Physician?
 - b. Are you willing to serve Jesus no matter how busy you may be?

Are you willing to join Him in seeking and saving the lost...?

Jesus Questioned About Fasting

Mark 2:18-22

INTRODUCTION

1. The nature of Jesus' ministry caught the attention of many...
 - a. He healed the sick, cast out demons - **Mk 1:34**
 - b. He traveled from city to city, preaching in the synagogues - **Mk 1:39**
2. The attention of religious leaders led to close scrutiny...
 - a. As when the scribes took issue with His claim to forgive sins - **Mk 2:6-7**
 - b. As when the scribes and Pharisees took issue with His dining with sinners - **Mk 2:16**

[Not just Jesus, but also **His disciples** were scrutinized. When His disciples were not fasting like other men's disciples, Jesus was asked why...]

I. THE NARRATIVE

A. JESUS QUESTIONED REGARDING FASTING...

1. Why did His disciples not fast? - **Mk 2:18**
 2. Both disciples of John and those of the Pharisees fasted - **ibid.**
 3. Fasting was commonly practiced at the time
 - a. The Law of Moses ordained one fast, on the day of Atonement - **Lev 23:26-32**
 - b. But Jews fasted on many other occasions, for different reasons, lengths, and degrees of abstinence - cf. "[Fasting In The Old Testament](#)"
 - c. In the first century, many Jews fasted twice weekly - cf. **Lk 18:12; Didache 8:1**
- **Since it was so common, why did the disciples of Jesus not fast?**

B. JESUS' RESPONSE REGARDING FASTING...

1. He first gave the illustration of friends and the bridegroom - **Mk 2:19-20**
 - a. Friends with the bridegroom do not fast while he is with them, it is time for feasting!
 - b. When the bridegroom is taken away, then they will fast
 2. He then gave the illustrations of new cloth and new wine - **Mk 2:21-22**
 - a. New cloth is not sown on an old garment, or the tear is made worse
 - b. New wine is not put in old wineskins, or the old wineskins will burst
 3. Jesus' explanation was two-fold:
 - a. First, it was inappropriate for His disciples to fast while He was with them
 - b. Second, ritualistic fasting would be out of sync with His "new doctrine" (**Mk 1:27**)
- **The trappings of Judaism would be incompatible with the religion of Jesus**

[So was Jesus saying that fasting would have no place in the New Covenant? Here are some observations taken from the text and other passages related to fasting...]

II. SOME OBSERVATIONS

A. JESUS INDICATED HIS DISCIPLES WOULD FAST...

1. With His illustration: "...they will fast in those days" - **Mk 2:20**

2. When Jesus' ministry on earth was over, some fasting would be appropriate
- **Thus Jesus did not rule out fasting altogether**

B. HE TAUGHT FASTING THAT PLEASES GOD...

1. In His sermon on the mount - **Mt 6:16-18**
 2. Done not to impress men, but to please God
- **Thus Jesus expected His disciples to fast**

C. EARLY CHRISTIANS PRACTICED FASTING...

1. The church at Antioch, as they ministered to the Lord - **Ac 13:1-3**
 2. The churches of Galatia, when they appointed elders - **Ac 14:21-23**
 3. The apostle Paul, as part of his ministry - **2Co 6:5; 11:27**
 4. Husbands and wives, by mutual consent - **1Co 7:5**
- **When joined with prayer, fasting apparently is suitable for Christians**

D. WHEN FASTING WOULD BE PROPER TODAY...

1. Whenever circumstances require God's help
 - a. These may be occasions on an individual level
 - 1) When faced with difficult temptations
 - 2) When faced with the serious illness of a loved one
 - b. These occasions might be on a congregational level
 - 1) As when appointing elders
 - 2) As when sending out missionaries
 2. Whenever circumstances call for much prayer
 - a. Is not God more likely to answer our prayers if we are persistent? - cf. **Lk 18:1-8**
 - b. Is not God more likely to respond if we fast in the proper manner? - cf. **Mt 6:17-18**
- **Not as some ceremonious ritual, but when appropriate for the occasion**

CONCLUSION

1. **Richard Foster** (Celebration Of Discipline) wrote that in a culture where the landscape is dotted...
 - a. With shrines to the "Golden Arches" and an assortment of "Pizza Temples"
 - b. Fasting may seem out of place, out of step with the times
2. Views about fasting usually go to extremes...
 - a. "Some have exalted religious fasting beyond all Scripture and reason, and others have utterly disregarded it." - **John Wesley**
 - b. Some consider fasting unnecessary, something to be ignored; others think it should be bound as a matter of faith (like baptism)
3. From this brief study we have observed...
 - a. There is a place for fasting, but its practice would not be ritualistic
 - b. For the disciple of Christ, fasting is left primarily to individual discretion
 - c. When properly understood and practiced, it can be a valuable spiritual discipline
 - d. A way to humble oneself before God; when joined with prayer, a way to solicit God's help - cf. **Ezr 8:21-23**

We do well to carefully study the subject of fasting (cf. "[Fasting - A Special Study](#)"). It would be a shame to have a spiritual tool at our disposal and not make use of it as disciples of Christ...

Of Wine And Wineskins

Mark 2:22

INTRODUCTION

1. When Jesus was questioned about fasting, He replied with three illustrations...
 - a. Bridegroom and friends - **Mk 2:19-20**
 - b. Patches and garments - **Mk 2:21**
 - c. Wine and wineskins - **Mk 2:22**
2. The illustration most remembered is that of wine and wineskins...
 - a. Jesus used it to show the incongruity of mixing His gospel with the Judaistic system
 - b. Others have taken the illustration much farther, often to teach things Jesus did not

[One might make a broader use of the illustration of wine and wineskins, but the end result should not contradict Jesus' own use of it. Taking a closer look, let's first note some...]

I. IMPLICATIONS OF THE ILLUSTRATION

A. NEW WINE IMPLIES NEW BLESSINGS...

1. Jesus implied His teaching would be like new wine, requiring new wineskins
2. This "new wine" would include blessings for those who believe in Him
3. For example, true forgiveness of sins through His sacrifice - cf. **He 10:10-12**
4. Also, the blessing of the Spirit in some new way - cf. **Jn 7:37-39**
- **New wine: new blessings for those who would be His disciples**

B. NEW WINESKINS IMPLIES NEW STRUCTURES...

1. Jesus intimated that His blessings would be packaged anew in new wineskins
2. The "new wineskins" would be **the means** by which blessings are presented and preserved
3. For example, through baptism instead of circumcision - cf. **Co 2:11-13**
4. Also, through a spiritual tabernacle rather than a physical one - cf. **He 9:9-11**
5. Jesus gave His apostles the "structure" by which He wanted His blessings to be presented and shared (i.e., apostolic doctrine) - e.g., **Ac 2:42; 1Co 4:17; 11:2; 14:33-37**
- **New wineskins: new structures by which those blessings would be enjoyed**

[Once we properly understand the implications of Jesus' use of wine and wineskins, we are less likely to misuse it should we make broader application. Allow me, if I may, to offer four...]

II. EXTENSIONS OF THE ILLUSTRATION

A. SOME PUT JESUS' WINE IN OLD TESTAMENT WINESKINS...

1. That is what Jesus said would be inappropriate in regards to fasting
2. That is, trying to force Jesus' "wine" into the wineskins of **the Old Testament**
3. Even so, note some examples in which people have done this:
 - a. Ritualistic fasting instead of appropriate fasting - **Didache 8:1-2**
 - b. Separate priesthood instead of the priesthood of all believers - **1Pe 2:5,9**
 - c. Instrumental music instead of making melody with the heart - **Ep 5:19**

- d. Infant baptism, based on the OT rite of circumcision - cf. **Co 2:11-12**
- **Early on, many have tried to enwrap Jesus' "wine" with OT "wineskins"**

B. SOME PUT JESUS' WINE IN THEIR OWN WINESKINS...

- 1. Others try to package Jesus' "wine" in the wineskins of **modern concepts**
- 2. They respect the "aged wine", but feel it needs to be "re-packaged"
- 3. Thus the frequent call for change, in such areas as:
 - a. Church organization (denominationalism, sponsoring churches)
 - b. Church worship (modern dance, praise teams)
 - c. Church work (social programs, family entertainment)
 - d. Church leadership (popes, metropolitan bishops, priests, team leaders, women pastors)
- **This attitude fails to appreciate the value of the original "wineskin"**

C. SOME PUT THEIR OWN WINE IN JESUS' WINESKINS...

- 1. Then some believe the Spirit is guiding them to **new revelation**
- 2. While they may respect the "old wineskin", they want "new wine"
- 3. Thus the call to update the teaching of the church, in such areas as:
 - a. New doctrines (social gospel, liberation theology, health and wealth gospel)
 - b. New lifestyles (divorce and remarriage, homosexuality, same-sex marriages)
- **This attitude fails to appreciate the value of the original "wine"**

D. SOME PUT THEIR OWN WINE IN THEIR OWN WINESKINS...

- 1. Some believe the Spirit guides them to make total changes
- 2. Changing both the message (wine) and the organization (wineskin)
- 3. Examples of such extreme makeovers include:
 - a. Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses, Seventh Day Adventists
 - b. Others with their parachurch organizations
- **This attitude reflects disregard for both the original "wine" and "wineskin"**

CONCLUSION

- 1. Many believe we can simply discard the "wine" and "wineskin" Jesus gave...
 - a. That we can **repackage His wine** with wineskins as we see fit
 - b. That we can even **replace His wine** with new wines of our own
- 2. Dare we presume to believe that we can improve on anything Jesus has given us...?
 - a. The **blessings** which are all-sufficient to life and godliness? - cf. **2Pe 1:3**
 - b. The **structures** which have presented and preserved these blessings? - cf. **2Ti 3:16-17; Ju 3**
- 3. After two millennia, Jesus' "new wine" is now "old"...
 - a. But like literal wine, the old is better than the new
 - b. Best served from the container in which it has been preserved

Rather than coming up with "new wine" and "new wineskins" of our own making, we should seek that given by Jesus and His apostles. Therefore the words of Jeremiah seem appropriate...

Thus says the LORD: "Stand in the ways and see, And ask for the old paths, where the good way is, And walk in it; Then you will find rest for your souls. But they said, 'We will not walk in it.'" - Jer 6:16

Lord Of The Sabbath

Mark 2:23-28

INTRODUCTION

1. As noted previously, the ministry of Jesus prompted close scrutiny by religious leaders...
 - a. As when the scribes took issue with His claim to forgive sins - **Mk 2:6-7**
 - b. As when the scribes and Pharisees took issue with His dining with sinners - **Mk 2:16**
2. One issue in particular produced a strong reaction: the Sabbath and its observance...
 - a. At first, it involved Jesus' disciples plucking grain on the Sabbath - **Mk 2:23-24**
 - b. Later, Jesus would be criticized for healing on the Sabbath - cf. **Mk 3:1-2**
3. On the occasion involving Jesus' disciples plucking grain...
 - a. The Pharisees said it was unlawful - **Mk 2:24**
 - b. Actually, it was contrary to rabbinical tradition, but not the Law per se
4. In answering the Pharisees, Jesus stated two notable things...
 - a. "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath." - **Mk 2:27**
 - b. "Therefore the Son of man is Lord even of the Sabbath." - **Mk 2:28**

[These statements will serve as the basis for this study, beginning with the idea that...]

I. THE SABBATH WAS MADE FOR MAN

A. THE INSTITUTION OF THE SABBATH...

1. The Sabbath was first commanded to Israel in the Wilderness - **Exo 16:23-30**
2. It had previously been unknown to them - cf. **Neh 9:14**
3. It was then codified in the Ten Commandments - **Exo 20:8-10**
4. As part of the Covenant not given to the patriarchs, but to Israel - **Deu 5:2-3**
-- **The Sabbath was not commanded by God until the time of Moses**

B. THE BASIS OF THE SABBATH...

1. Based on the fact that God Himself rested on the Seventh Day - **Exo 20:11**
2. Inserted as a prolepsis by Moses in his Genesis account - cf. **Gen 2:3**
3. Given to Israel as a special sign between them and God - **Exo 31:13-17**
4. Given to remind them of their slavery in Egypt - **Deu 5:15**
-- **The Sabbath was given only to Israel as part of the Law of Moses**

[Man was made first, and even existed for millenniums before the Sabbath was ever commanded (see [The Sabbath Day](#) for more detail). Thus the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. Next we notice the claim made by Jesus that...]

II. THE SON OF MAN IS LORD OF THE SABBATH

A. WITH AUTHORITY TO INTERPRET ITS USE...

1. As the Son of Man, Jesus was complete and perfect manhood

- a. Since the Sabbath was made for man, the Son of Man was rightly the Lord of the Sabbath
 - b. He could decide what was permissible, or what was forbidden
 2. As the Son of God, ever one with the Father, He had given the Sabbath in the first place! - cf. **Jn 1:1-2; 8:58; 10:30; 17:21**
 3. Jesus demonstrated His Lordship by the superiority of His reply to the Pharisees
 - a. Jesus first appealed to example of David and his men - **Mk 2:25-26**; cf. **1 Sam 21:1-6**
 - b. Matthew adds the example of priests working in the temple on the Sabbath - cf. **Mt 12:5**
 - c. Note that Jesus appealed to Scripture to make His point (“Have you never read...?”)
 - d. And what was Jesus’ point? Consider the following:
 - 1) “A higher law, where it conflicts with a lower one, suspends or limits the lower one at the point of conflict. Thus the higher laws of worship in the temple suspended the lower law of Sabbath observance, and thus also the higher law of mercy suspended the lower law as to the showbread when David took it and mercifully gave it to his hungry followers, and when God in mercy permitted this to be done.” - **J. W. McGarvey, The Fourfold Gospel**
 - 2) “And thus, had they done what was otherwise unlawful, the disciples would have been justified in eating by the higher law of Christ's service. And thus also would Christ have been justified in permitting them to eat by the law of mercy, which was superior to that which rendered the seventh day to God as a sacrifice.” - **ibid.**
 - e. Thus by using Scripture Jesus effectively silenced their objection based on tradition!
- **As Lord of the Sabbath, He had sovereign authority to interpret its use**

B. WITH AUTHORITY TO RESCIND ITS USE...

1. If He so willed, Jesus could discontinue the Sabbath requirement - cf. **He 1:3** (“upholding all things by the word of His power”)
 2. In fact, Jesus has brought the Law (of which the Sabbath was part) to an end!
 - a. Through His death on the cross - cf. **Ep 2:14-16**
 - b. Having nailed it to the cross - cf. **Co 2:14**
 - c. Jews who come to Christ die to the Law - cf. **Ro 7:4-7**
 - d. The Old Covenant has been replaced by the New Covenant - **2Co 3:6-11; He 8:6-13**
 3. That Jesus ended the Sabbath requirement is evident
 - a. “So let no one judge you in food or drink, or regarding...sabbaths” - **Co 2:16**
 - b. “One person esteems one day above another; another esteems every day alike. Let each be fully convinced in his own mind.” - **Ro 14:5**
 - c. Thus Christians assemble on the first day of the week to worship - **Ac 20:7; 1Co 16:1-2**
- **As Lord of the Sabbath, He has chosen to rescind its use**

CONCLUSION

1. Controversy over the observance of the Sabbath has been around for a long time...
 - a. The **manner** of its observance was a major issue during Jesus’ ministry
 - b. The **need** for its observance is still questioned by some today
2. But when we pay close attention to the teaching of “**The Lord Of The Sabbath**”...
 - a. We will reach conclusions based on Scripture rather than tradition
 - b. We will find that the Lord who ordained the Sabbath has rescinded its use

While we appreciate the role of the Sabbath in Israel’s history, let us be sure that it is the **Lord** of the Sabbath that we worship, and not the **Sabbath** itself...

Hard Hearts And Hard Thoughts

Mark 3:1-6

INTRODUCTION

1. We have seen the criticism that Jesus endured from religious leaders...
 - a. When He claimed to forgive sins - **Mk 2:6-7**
 - b. When He dined with sinners - **Mk 2:16**
 - c. When His disciples plucked grain on the Sabbath - **Mk 2:23-24**
2. Conflict between Jesus and the religious leaders escalated, from **criticism** to **conniving**...
 - a. When the Pharisees sought opportunity to accuse Him - **Mk 3:1-2**
 - b. When Jesus healed a man with a withered hand on the Sabbath - **Mk 3:3-5**
 - c. When the Pharisees began conspiring with the Herodians to destroy Jesus - **Mk 3:6**
3. On this occasion, I am struck by hardness of the Pharisees' hearts...
 - a. Which moved Jesus to grief and anger - **Mk 3:5**
 - b. Which indubitably led to their hardness of plotting to destroy Jesus - **Mk 3:6**

[Apparently unable to appreciate the healing of a suffering man, it is easy to be critical of the Pharisees' "**Hard Hearts And Hard Thoughts**". Yet if we are not careful, we can be guilty of the same...]

I. CONSIDER THE PROBLEM

A. OF HARD HEARTS...

1. Has been around for a long time (Cain, Pharaoh, Israel)
2. It leads to **spiritual dullness** - an inability to see truth
 - a. Which prompted Jesus to teach the public in parables - **Mt 13:13-15**
 - b. Which hindered His disciples from understanding the obvious - **Mk 8:13-21; 16:14**
3. It leads to **mental resistance** - a refusal to consider what might be true
 - a. As seen in our text with the Pharisees
 - b. They were blinded to the good Jesus had done
4. The end result is calamity! - cf. **Pro 28:14**
 -- **Hardness of heart is a very serious problem!**

B. OF HARD THOUGHTS...

1. Hard hearts produce hard thoughts (e.g., the plot to destroy Jesus)
 - a. The Pharisees and Herodians were unable to see the good that Jesus was doing
 - b. They became co-belligerents, though normally opposed to one another
2. Very similar to what we see in today's political environment
 - a. An inability to see any good in the opposition
 - b. A willingness to engage in the politics of personal destruction
 - c. Plotting to destroy by any means possible
3. The same occurs often in the realm of religious differences
 - a. In our efforts to stand firm for the truth
 - b. We can easily begin to think ill of neighbors, co-workers, even brethren!
 - c. It becomes evident in the way we treat others (ignore, malign, abuse)

4. Hard thoughts thus lead to **verbal abuse** and **physical violence**
-- **Hard thoughts don't remain thoughts very long, they transform into deeds!**

[Since the problems of “**Hard Hearts And Hard Thoughts**” are real and serious, what can be done...?]

II. CONSIDER THE ALTERNATIVE

A. FOR HARD HEARTS...

1. We can nurture a **tender, compassionate heart**; by remembering:
 - a. Our own weaknesses and need for forgiveness - **Ep 4:32; Co 3:12-13**
 - b. The condemnation of those without compassion - **Mt 18:33-35; Jm 2:13**
 2. This will help **create good and noble hearts**, with fair minds like:
 - a. The good soil in the parable of the sower - **Lk 8:15**
 - b. The Bereans willing to give Paul a fair hearing - **Ac 17:11**
- **Tender hearts are created by remembering our own failings**

B. FOR HARD THOUGHTS...

1. Tender hearts will address the problem of hard thoughts
 2. But **kind thoughts** can be further nurtured by:
 - a. Dwelling on things that are noble and pure - **Php 4:8**
 - b. Developing the mind of Christ - **Php 2:3-5**
 3. Such **tender minds** will be characterized by:
 - a. Lowliness of mind, esteeming others better than ourselves
 - b. Looking out for the interests of others
- **Tender minds are the result of growing in Christ**

CONCLUSION

1. Consider the following contrast between...
 - a. The mindset of the Pharisees and the Herodians - cf. **Mk 3:6**
 - b. The mindset enjoined by the apostle Peter - cf. **1Pe 3:8-12**
2. What kind of mindset do we have...?
 - a. One filled with **hard thoughts** produced by **hard hearts**?
 - b. One filled with **kind thoughts** produced by **tender hearts**?

The goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering of God is designed to produce the latter. But if we remain hard-hearted against God and man, we will experience the wrath of God in the day of judgment...

Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?

But in accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.

- Ro 2:4-5

Three Responses To Jesus

Mark 3:7-12

INTRODUCTION

1. Our text describes the ongoing impact of Jesus' Galilean ministry...
 - a. Great multitudes followed Jesus and His disciples - **Mk 3:7-9**
 - b. They were drawn by His ability to heal the sick and cast out demons - **Mk 3:10-12**
2. Reflecting on this passage, I observed three distinct classes of individuals...
 - a. The disciples of Jesus - **Mk 3:7,9**
 - b. The great multitude - **Mk 3:7-10**
 - c. The unclean spirits - **Mk 3:11-12**

[Upon further reflection, it occurred to me that these three distinct classes illustrate “**Three Responses To Jesus**”, and that everyone responds to Jesus in one of three ways. First, you have...]

I. THE COMMITTED

A. LIKE THE DISCIPLES...

1. Which included men like Peter, Andrew, James, John, and Levi (Matthew)
2. Who answered the call to follow Jesus - cf. **Mk 1:16-20; 2:14**
3. Who offered their service in whatever way He asked
 - a. As when Jesus asked them to prepare a boat - cf. **Mk 3:9**
 - b. As when Jesus would later send them out to preach - cf. **Mk 3:13,14**

B. THE COMMITTED TODAY...

1. Would include those who make up the Lord's church
2. Who heed Jesus' call to discipleship - cf. **Mt 28:19-20**
3. Who offer their energy and resources to the spread of Christ's kingdom
 - a. By developing a Christ-like character - cf. **2Pe 1:5-11**
 - b. By developing a Christ-like service - cf. **1Pe 4:10-11**

[Just as there committed followers of Jesus then, so there are today. But there was another group of responders, those we might describe as...]

II. THE CURIOUS

A. LIKE THE MULTITUDE...

1. Which included those looking to be healed, or perhaps just to see a miracle
2. Though following Jesus from place to place, they were not true disciples
3. But those seeking some sort of personal satisfaction, whom Jesus often drove away
 - a. As when they followed Him after He fed the 5000 - cf. **Jn 6:24-27**
 - b. As when He challenged them with the call to true discipleship - cf. **Lk 14:25-27**
4. Of course, some would eventually take up the challenge and become true disciples

B. THE CURIOUS TODAY...

1. Would include those who may visit churches, even regularly
2. But they are like “tire kickers”; they never fully commit themselves
3. Perhaps they attend just to appease their conscience
 - a. But they never obey the gospel - cf. **Mk 16:15-16**
 - b. They just put it off, like the Athenians and Felix - cf. **Ac 17:32; 24:24-27**
4. Hopefully, one who is curious will eventually take the step to follow Jesus completely

[Finally, there are those whose response to Jesus is entirely negative, whom we can categorize as...]

III. THE CONDEMNED

A. LIKE THE UNCLEAN SPIRITS...

1. Unclean spirits were demons, whose origin is uncertain (possibly fallen angels)
2. They knew who Jesus was - cf. **Mk 3:11**
3. They knew that torment awaited them - cf. **Mt 8:29**; also **2Pe 2:4; Ju 1:6**
4. Yet they showed no desire to repent of their evil ways

B. THE CONDEMNED TODAY...

1. Would include those who persist in sin and refuse to repent - cf. **He 10:26a**
2. For whom there is no forgiveness while they remain in that state - cf. **He 10:26b-31**
3. Who often think lightly of sin, and mock those trying to do good - cf. **1Pe 4:3-4**
4. Yet they will one day have to answer, even confess Jesus - cf. **1Pe 4:5; Php 2:9-11**

CONCLUSION

1. Dear friend, in which group would you place yourself in your response to Jesus...?
 - a. Are you among **the committed** - a faithful disciple of Jesus Christ?
 - b. Are you among **the curious** - interested, but have not yet made the decision?
 - c. Are you among **the condemned** - determined to resist God and refuse to follow Jesus?
2. One day, we will either be in the group of **the committed** or **the condemned**...
 - a. The time for curiosity will be over
 - b. We will either be saved or lost forever
 - c. Today is time to make your choice!

As Paul wrote in his second epistle to the Corinthians:

We then, as workers together with Him also plead with you not to receive the grace of God in vain. For He says: "IN AN ACCEPTABLE TIME I HAVE HEARD YOU, AND IN THE DAY OF SALVATION I HAVE HELPED YOU." Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.

- 2Co 6:1-2

Receive God's grace by obeying the gospel of Christ, and join ranks with those who are committed to following Jesus and serving Him through time and eternity...! - cf. **Ti 3:4-8**

The Apostles Of Christ

Mark 3:13-19

INTRODUCTION

1. Important to the ministry of Jesus was the appointment and training of His apostles...
 - a. Men who would follow Him and continue His work after His death
 - b. Men who themselves would experience great suffering and martyrdom
2. In our text (**Mk 3:13-19**), we read of **their appointment**...
 - a. To be with Him and later sent out to preach, heal, and cast out demons
 - b. Luke tells us that the selection was preceded by a night of prayer - **Lk 6:12**

[[In another lesson \(on Mt 10:1-4\)](#), attention is given to the identity and history of each man. In this lesson, I wish to focus on **their overall ministry** for Christ and the world. To wit, they served as...]

I. WITNESSES FOR THE RESURRECTION

A. THEY WERE EYEWITNESSES OF JESUS' RESURRECTION...

1. Jesus had shown Himself alive through various proofs - **Ac 1:1-3**
2. Jesus commissioned them to testify concerning Him - **Ac 1:8**
3. Peter explained that the apostles were to be witnesses for the resurrection - **Ac 1:21-22**
4. Thus they testified again and again - **Ac 2:32; 3:15; 4:33; 5:30-32; 10:39-41; 13:29-31**

B. OFFERING A SOLID BASIS FOR OUR FAITH...

1. Jesus expected us to believe in Him through their word - **Jn 17:20**
 - a. Apart from their gospels and epistles, we know little of Jesus
 - b. They tell us of His life, miracles, and resurrection
2. The manner of their lives and death give credibility to their testimony
 - a. They suffered greatly for their faith - **1Co 4:9-13; 2Co 11:23-28**
 - b. All but John suffered martyrdom

[The apostles served the important role of **providing reliable testimony** that Jesus arose from the dead, so that our faith in Him might rest on a solid basis! They also served as...]

II. AMBASSADORS FOR CHRIST

A. REPRESENTATIVES WITH A MESSAGE...

1. Sent out to preach the gospel to every person - **Mk 16:15-16**
2. Given a "ministry of reconciliation" - **2Co 5:18-19**
3. Proclaiming that message as Christ's ambassadors - **2Co 5:20-21**
4. Even when they were bound in prison - **Ep 6:19-20**

B. TELLING THE STORY OF SALVATION...

1. Pleading with all to be reconciled to God - **2Co 5:20**
2. Pleading as co-workers with Christ, not to receive the grace of God in vain - **2Co 6:1**
3. Warning of the danger of refusing Christ and His message - **He 12:25-29**

4. Warning of what will happen to those who obey not the gospel - **2 Th 1:7-9**

[The apostles as ambassadors of Christ **revealed the good news of salvation** to the world. Have we accepted their message in faithful obedience? But consider also their role as...]

III. TEACHERS FOR THE DISCIPLES

A. CONTINUING THE WORK BEGUN BY JESUS...

1. Jesus did not reveal all things during His earthly ministry - **Jn 16:12**
2. The Holy Spirit would reveal all the truth to the apostles - **Jn 16:13-14**
3. The Holy Spirit would remind them of things Jesus said - **Jn 14:25-26**
4. This was part of the Great Commission given to them - **Mt 28:19-20**
5. Declaring the whole counsel of God - **Ac 20:27**
6. Teaching all things that pertain to life and godliness - **2Pe 1:3**

B. BECOMING THE AUTHORITY FOR THE CHURCH...

1. Continuing steadfastly in their doctrine - **Ac 2:42**
2. Receiving their words as the word of God - **1 Th 2:13**
3. Accepting what they wrote as the commandments of the Lord - **1Co 14:37**
4. Rejecting them is thus paramount to rejecting Christ - **1 Th 4:1-2,8; cf. Lk 10:16**

[Through His apostles, Jesus continues to **instruct His church** as we continue steadfastly in their teachings! Finally, the importance of the apostles is seen by their role in the...]

IV. FOUNDATION FOR THE CHURCH

A. TOGETHER WITH CHRIST...

1. The church is built on Christ, as the chief cornerstone - **Ac 4:10-12; 1Co 3:11**
2. But the apostles are also part of the foundation of the spiritual building - **Ep 2:19-22**
3. Their names are even depicted as written on the foundation for the New Jerusalem, which is the Lamb's bride (the church) - **Re 21:9-10,14**

B. SERVING AS THE BASIS OF...

1. Our **faith**, through their eyewitness testimony - **2Pe 1:16-18**
2. Our **doctrine**, through their teaching - **Ac 2:42**
3. Our **hope**, through their message - **Ep 3:5-6**

CONCLUSION

1. **The world** owes a great debt to the apostles of Jesus Christ...
 - a. Without whom they would know little of Jesus of Nazareth
 - b. Without whom they would have little reason to believe in Him
2. **As disciples of Christ**, let us be sure to give them the honor and respect that is their due...
 - a. By continuing steadfastly in their doctrine
 - b. By respecting the authority of their doctrine

Indeed, the moment we begin to drift away from the apostles of Jesus Christ, we begin to drift away from that great salvation made possible by Him...! - cf. **He 2:1-4**

The Family Of Jesus

Mark 3:20-21

INTRODUCTION

1. The ministry of Jesus in Galilee certainly **drew the attention of many...**
 - a. Multitudes followed Him everywhere - **Mk 3:7-8**
 - b. Jesus' very life was endangered by the crowds - **Mk 3:9-10**
 - c. The house where he stayed was besieged - **Mk 3:19b-20**
2. It also **drew the attention of His physical family...**
 - a. Who were concerned about what they heard - **Mk 3:21a**
 - b. Who sought to take Him into custody - **Mk 3:21b**
 - c. For they even questioned His sanity - **Mk 3:21c**

[The reaction of His family is interesting, somewhat understandable. Before we consider their reaction, and how they later responded to Jesus, let's review what is revealed in the Scriptures about...]

I. THE MEMBERS OF HIS FAMILY

A. HIS PARENTS...

1. **Mary - His birth mother**
 - a. A virgin until Jesus was born - **Mt 1:18-25; Lk 1:26-38**
 - b. Visited her cousin Elizabeth - **Lk 1:39-56**
 - c. Gave birth to Jesus in Bethlehem - **Lk 2:1-19**
 - d. Took Jesus to Jerusalem when He was 12 - **Lk 2:48-51**
 - e. Present with Jesus at a marriage in Cana - **Jn 2:1-10**
 - f. Sought Jesus when He was teaching - **Mt 12:46; Mk 3:31; Lk 8:19**
 - g. Present at the cross, committed to John's care - **Jn 19:27**
 - h. With the disciples in Jerusalem following the ascension - **Ac 1:14**
 2. **Joseph - His adoptive father**
 - a. Descendant of David - **Mt 1:1-16**
 - b. Took Mary as wife, did not know her until Jesus was born - **Mt 1:18-25**
 - c. From Nazareth, enrolled at Bethlehem - **Lk 2:1-5**
 - d. Presented Jesus at the temple in Jerusalem, returned to Nazareth - **Lk 2:22-30**
 - e. Fled to Egypt, later re-settled in Nazareth - **Mt 2:13-15,19-23**
 - f. Took Jesus to Jerusalem when He was 12 - **Lk 2:48-51**
 - g. Supposed father of Jesus, a carpenter - **Mt 13:55; Lk 3:23; 4:22; Jn 1:45; 6:42**
- **Jesus was blessed to be born of a virtuous woman, and raised by a just man**

B. HIS SIBLINGS...

1. **Brothers - James, Joses, Simon, Judas**
 - a. All four mentioned by name on one occasion - **Mk 6:3; Mt 13:55**
 - b. They accompanied Jesus and His mother from Cana to Capernaum - **Jn 2:11-12**
 - c. Later, with Mary they sought to see Jesus - **Mk 3:31; Mt 12:46; Lk 8:19-20**
2. **Sisters - Mary, Salome**
 - a. There were at least two sisters - **Mt 13:56; Mk 6:3**

- b. No names are given in the Scriptures
 - c. Later Christian literature gives the names **Mary** and **Salome** - Protevangelium of James 19:3-20:4; Gospel of Philip 59:6-11; Epiphanius, Pan. 78.8.1; 78.9.6
- **Jesus was blessed to have a number of half-siblings**

[Some believe these “brothers” and “sisters” were actually step-siblings or cousins, that His mother Mary remained a virgin all her life. In any case, let’s now direct our attention to...]

II. THE MISGIVINGS IN HIS FAMILY

A. BEFORE HIS RESURRECTION...

1. Some thought He was crazy - **Mk 3:21**
 - a. They thought “He is out of His mind”
 - b. They endeavored to take custody of Him
2. His brothers did not believe in Him - **Jn 7:3-5**
 - a. They taunted Him to prove Himself
 - b. To show Himself openly to the world

-- **When their brother claimed to be the Messiah, the Son of God, who can blame them?**

B. AFTER HIS RESURRECTION...

1. Jesus appeared to James - **1Co 15:8**
 2. His brothers became His disciples - **Ac 1:14**
 3. **James**
 - a. Became identified as “the Lord’s brother”, a pillar in the church, likely author of the epistle of James - **Ac 12:17; 15:13; 21:18; Ga 1:19; 2:19; Jm 1:1**
 - b. Martyred by being thrown from the pinnacle of the temple - **Josephus, Eusebius**
 4. **Joses** - little known, evidently became a traveling missionary - **1Co 9:5**
 5. **Simon** - little known, likewise a traveling missionary - **1Co 9:5**
 6. **Judas** - believed to be the author of the epistle of Jude - **Ju 1:1**
- **Jesus’ resurrection from the dead overcame any misgivings by His brothers**

CONCLUSION

1. The initial unbelief of some members of His family is understandable...
 - a. Mary never doubted, for she alone really knew the truth about Jesus’ birth
 - b. But the doubt of His brothers was a normal reaction to His outlandish claims
2. Their initial unbelief and eventual faith can be thought-provoking...
 - a. They did not believe despite the miracles of His ministry (why not?)
 - b. Yet they later chose to follow His apostles and suffer for His cause (how come?)
3. The transformation in the skeptical members of Jesus’ family is easily understood...
 - a. If in fact Jesus did rise from the dead and appear to them afterward!
 - b. Thus “**The Family Of Jesus**” serves as a powerful testimony to the resurrection of Jesus!

One last thought: if Jesus was not truly born of a virgin, what kind of mother would let her son suffer like Jesus did on the cross and not say a word? A simple admission that Joseph (or someone else) was the father of Jesus, and He could have come down from that cross. Her silence speaks volumes...!

The Unforgiveable Sin

Mark 3:22-30

INTRODUCTION

1. During His earthly ministry, Jesus faced great opposition from religious leaders...
 - a. By Pharisees and Herodians who plotted to destroy Him - **Mk 3:6**
 - b. By scribes from Jerusalem, who accused Him of using demonic power - **Mk 3:22**
2. In our text for this lesson, Jesus easily answered the scribes' charge...
 - a. For Satan to cast out demons defeated his (Satan's) own purpose - **Mk 3:23-26**
 - b. On the contrary, casting out demons was integral to defeating Satan - **Mk 3:27**
3. On this occasion Jesus mentioned an "unforgiveable sin"...
 - a. Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit - **Mk 3:28-29**
 - b. For which there is no forgiveness - cf. **Mt 12:31-32**

[These words of Jesus have troubled many, who wonder if they have committed this "eternal sin" (ESV) that "never has forgiveness". Let's first seek to identify exactly what was...]

I. THE UNFORGIVEABLE SIN THEN

A. WHAT WAS THIS SIN...?

1. Jesus described it as blaspheming the Holy Spirit - **Mk 3:29**
 - a. Blaspheme - "to speak reproachfully, rail at, revile, calumniate, blaspheme" - **Thayer**
 - b. Thus to speak evil of the Holy Spirit in some way
 2. Mark reveals exactly how they spoke evil of the Spirit - **Mk 3:30**
 - a. "because they said, 'He has an unclean spirit.'"
 - b. By attributing Jesus' power to cast out demons to Beelzebub (Satan), they spoke evil of the Holy Spirit by whom Jesus cast out demons - cf. **Mt 12:28**
 3. In effect, they were calling the Holy Spirit a demon; in so doing...
 - a. They denied the evidence that Jesus was truly from God
 - b. They deprived themselves of evidence to believe in Jesus
 - c. They divested all hope of forgiveness that comes only through Jesus
- **The unforgiveable sin was to believe that the Holy Spirit was in fact Satan!**

B. CAN IT BE COMMITTED TODAY...?

1. "Probably not. It was a sin committed when Jesus was on earth performing miracles. Since He is not physically on earth today, casting out demons, the same possibility of blaspheming the Holy Spirit does not exist." - **Believer's Bible Commentary**
2. "People who worry that they have committed the unpardonable sin have not done so. The very fact that they are concerned indicates that they are not guilty of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit." - **ibid.**
3. From the **NET Bible**: "Three things must be kept in mind..."
 - a. "The nature of the sin is to ascribe what is the obvious work of the Holy Spirit (e.g., releasing people from Satan's power) to Satan himself"
 - b. "It is not simply a momentary doubt or sinful attitude, but is indeed a settled condition

- which opposes the Spirit's work, as typified by the religious leaders who opposed Jesus”
- c. “A person who is concerned about it has probably never committed this sin, for those who commit it here (i.e., the religious leaders) are not in the least concerned about Jesus’ warning”

-- **Even if it can be committed today, if you worry that you have, you haven’t!**

[Speaking of “unforgiveable sins”, we do well to review how we can still fall into a condition where forgiveness is not possible as long as we remain in it...]

II. THE UNFORGIVEABLE SIN TODAY

A. WHAT IS THIS SIN...?

1. There is a sin by which we “crucify again” the Son of God - **He 6:4-6**
 2. There is a sin for which there “no longer remains a sacrifice for sin” - **He 10:26-31**
- **This sin is one in which there is no hope for forgiveness!**

B. HOW DO WE COMMIT IT...?

1. Note carefully that it is **an ongoing sin**, a condition of rebellion against God
 - a. Committed openly - cf. **He 6:6**
 - b. Committed continually - cf. **He 10:26** (“go on sinning”, ESV, NASB)
 - c. Committed willfully - cf. **He 10:26** (“deliberately”, ESV, TNIV)
 - d. Committed knowingly - cf. **He 6:4; He 10:26**
 2. A spiritual condition in which one is doing grave things - **He 10:29**
 - a. Trampling the Son of God underfoot
 - b. Treating the blood of the covenant (Jesus’ blood) a common thing
 - c. Insulting the Spirit of grace
 3. A spiritual condition that left unchecked has grave consequences
 - a. Fearful expectation of judgment - **He 10:27**
 - b. Fiery indignation - **He 10:27**
 - c. Worse punishment than death - **He 10:28-29**
 - d. Vengeance and judgment by the Lord upon His people - **He 10:30-31**
- **It is any sin that we knowingly refuse to repent of, despite many opportunities!**

CONCLUSION

1. Many today worry about blaspheming the Holy Spirit...
 - a. A serious sin indeed, but likely cannot be replicated today
 - b. If one worries about it, they are certainly not guilty of it!
2. People should be more concerned about any sin...
 - a. They knowingly commit
 - b. They refuse to give up

Whether one is obeying the gospel of Christ for the first time, or has already “tasted the heavenly gift” (**He 6:4**) and “received the knowledge of the truth” (**He 10:26**), **all sins** are “unforgiveable” unless we repent.

Are we willing to let the goodness of God lead us to repentance...? - cf. **Ro 2:4-5**

The True Family Of Jesus

Mark 3:31-35

INTRODUCTION

1. A wonderful blessing in life is to have a loving, supportive family...
 - a. Where husband and wife truly love one another
 - b. Where parents and children truly support one another
2. Such families are becoming increasingly rare...
 - a. Complicated by cohabitation before marriage, divorce after marriage, eventually death
 - b. Children suffering from parents who don't love each other, who don't care for them
3. But there is a Family...
 - a. Where love and support is available to everyone
 - b. Where the relationships need never end

[We are reminded of this wonderful Family in our text (**Mk 3:31-35**), in which Jesus uses the occasion of His earthly family seeking to talk with Him to make the point about His “true family”...]

I. THE IDENTITY OF HIS FAMILY

A. NOT HIS PHYSICAL FAMILY...

1. Including His mother Mary, and step-father Joseph
2. Including His brothers James, Joses, Judas, Simon, and His sisters - **Mk 6:3**
3. Even at age 12 Jesus knew His true Father - cf. **Lk 2:48-49**
- **Not that Jesus did not value His physical family (cf. Jn 19:26-27)**

B. THOSE WHO DO HIS FATHER'S WILL...

1. His disciples, as identified on the occasion of our text - **Mk 3:34-35**
2. Whoever does the will of His Father are those recognized by Him- cf. **Mt 7:21-23**
3. They are the ones who are truly blessed - cf. **Lk 11:27-28**
- **The true family of Jesus is His spiritual family!**

[Having identified the “true family” of Jesus, let's review some of the many blessings of this family...]

II. THE BLESSINGS OF HIS FAMILY

A. DIVINE...

1. God as our Father
 - a. Who hears our prayers - **Mt 6:6**
 - b. Who provides our basic needs - **Mt 6:11,30-33; 7:11**
 - c. Who forgives our sins - **Mt 6:12**
 - d. Who delivers us from the evil one - **Mt 6:13**
2. Jesus as our Brother
 - a. Who is proud to call us “brethren” - **He 2:11-12**
 - b. Who made like His brethren, is our perfect High Priest - **He 2:17-18; 4:14-16**

- c. Who ever lives to make intercession for us - **He 7:25; Ro 8:34**
- 3. The Holy Spirit as our Helper and Strength
 - a. Who also makes intercession for us - **Ro 8:26-27**
 - b. Who enables us to put to live the Christian life - **Ro 8:12-13**
 - c. Who engenders a child-like love in our hearts for God - **Ro 8:15; Ga 4:6**
- **Just a few blessings made possible by the Divine members of Jesus' family!**

B. IMMENSE...

- 1. A hundredfold family members in this time - **Mk 10:28-30**
- 2. The members of every congregation - **1Ti 5:1-2**
- 3. Indeed, the whole family in heaven and earth - **Ep 3:14-15**
- **Every Christian, living and dead, is a member of Jesus' family!**

C. ETERNAL...

- 1. Physical family ties are severed at death - cf. **Ro 7:2; 1Co 7:39; Mk 12:24-25**
- 2. Jesus' spiritual family looks forward to an eternal inheritance - **Ro 8:16-17; Re 21:1-7**
- **Jesus' family is the only one that will endure through eternity!**

CONCLUSION

- 1. **“The True Family Of Jesus”** is great indeed...
 - a. A spiritual Family involving Deity and countless souls!
 - b. An everlasting Family untainted by divorce and death!
- 2. Becoming an accepted member of this Family...
 - a. Is made possible by the wonderful love of God - **1Jn 3:1**
 - b. Is the result of God's wonderful plan of redemption in Jesus Christ - **Ep 1:3-14**
- 3. **“The True Family Of Jesus”** is available to all...
 - a. Who are willing to receive Him through faith and baptism - **Jn 1:12; Ga 3:26-27**
 - b. Who are thus born again of water and the Spirit - **Jn 3:3-5**
 - c. Who become the family of Jesus through obedience to the will of God - **Mk 3:35**

Don't you want to be a member of **“The True Family Of Jesus”**...?

Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’ - Jn 3:7

The Parable Of The Four Soils

Mark 4:1-20

INTRODUCTION

1. As Jesus proclaimed the gospel of the kingdom He did not always find a receptive audience...
 - a. Some listened only to find reasons to accuse Him - **Mk 3:2**
 - b. Jesus therefore began to teach publicly in parables - **Mk 4:1-2**
 - c. In private, He would explain the parables to His disciples - **Mk 4:10,33-34**
 - d. The main reason: many had become “hard of hearing” - **Mk 4:11-12; cf. Mt 13:10-15**
2. One of the most well-known parables illustrates the problem Jesus faced...
 - a. Commonly known as “The Parable Of The Sower”
 - b. But probably more accurately described as “**The Parable Of The Four Soils**”
 - c. Told by Jesus to illustrate different reactions to the gospel message

[Mark’s account of the parable is given in **Mk 4:1-20** (please read). The significance of this parable is stated in **Mk 4:13**. In this study, we direct our attention to Jesus’ explanation of the four soils...]

I. THE WAYSIDE GROUND

A. EXPLAINED BY JESUS...

1. Those who have the seed taken from their hearts by Satan - **Mk 4:15**
 2. Matthew’s account says it is because they do not understand - cf. **Mt 13:19**
 3. Their condition is one of being “blinded” by Satan to the gospel - **2Co 4:3-4**
 4. While Satan contributes to their blindness, it is precipitated by their own hardness of heart!
- cf. **Mt 13:15**
- **This soil represents those whose hard hearts are manipulated by Satan to resist**

B. APPLIED TODAY...

1. Many people have hardened their hearts to the gospel for various reasons
 - a. Some because they love darkness more than light - **Jn 3:19-20**
 - b. Some because they love praise from men more than God - **Jn 12:42-43**
 2. Satan easily takes advantage of such people to blind them
 - a. Through appealing doctrines like hedonism, secularism, materialism
 - b. Through popular doctrines like humanism, evolution, post-modernism
- **This soil represents many today who have no interest in spiritual things**

[The next soil in the parable is...]

II. THE STONY GROUND

A. EXPLAINED BY JESUS...

1. Those who hear the word and immediately receive it with gladness - **Mk 4:16**
 2. Yet with no root, they do not endure - **Mk 4:17a**
 3. They stumble when faced with tribulation, persecution, temptation - **Mk 4:17b; cf. Lk 8:13**
- **This soil represents those who believe and obey, but do not last long**

B. APPLIED TODAY...

1. Many hear the Word and received it with great joy
 - a. They are quick to obey the gospel
 - b. They are enthusiastic, “on fire” for the Lord
 2. But their faith is shallow, their joy the result of emotionalism
 - a. They are not grounded in the Word
 - b. When troubles arise, there is no endurance and stumbling occurs
- **This soil represents Christians ruled more by emotion than by the Word of God**

[The third soil in the parable is ...]

III. THE THORNY GROUND

A. EXPLAINED BY JESUS...

1. Those who hear the Word - **Mk 4:18**
 2. Whose ability to bear fruit is choked - **Mk 4:19**
 - a. By the cares of this world
 - b. By the deceitfulness of riches
 - c. By the desires for other things - cf. **Lk 8:14** (pleasures of life)
- **This soil represents those who believe and obey, but then stagnate**

B. APPLIED TODAY...

1. Many become Christians, but never mature
 - a. They may attend church, even participate or lead in the services
 - b. But spiritually they remain “babes” and “carnal” - e.g., **1Co 3:1-3; He 5:12-14**
 2. Their spiritual growth is inhibited
 - a. By cares and anxieties that detract their minds - cf. **Lk 12:29-32**
 - b. By riches that deceive them into self-sufficiency - cf. **1Ti 6:17-19**
 - c. By pleasures that divert their minds from the things of the Spirit - cf. **Ga 5:17; 6:7-9**
- **This soil represents Christians rendered fruitless by materialism**

[Finally, the fourth soil in the parable is...]

IV. THE GOOD GROUND

A. EXPLAINED BY JESUS...

1. Those who hear the word, accept it, and bear varying amounts of fruit - **Mk 4:20**
 2. Matthew says they “understand” the Word - **Mt 13:23**
 3. Luke says they hear the Word “with a noble and good heart, keep it and bear fruit with patience.” - **Lk 8:15**
- **This soil represents those with good hearts who understand and obey the Word**

B. APPLIED TODAY...

1. Many become Christians who have this “noble and good heart”
 - a. They make the effort to understand the Word
 - b. They make the effort to keep it, and with patience produce fruit in their lives!
2. They are like the Bereans, commended as “fair-minded”, manifested by:
 - a. How they “received the word with all readiness” - **Ac 17:11a**

- b. “searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so” - **Ac 17:11b**
 - 3. Note the importance of understanding in relation to bearing fruit...
 - a. Jesus made the connection between the two in this parable - **Mt 13:23**
 - b. Paul connects the two when he writes of the gospel producing fruit among the Colossians “since the day they heard (NASV says “understood”) the grace of God in truth” - **Co 1:5-6**
 - 4. When one “understands”, they will more likely “bear fruit”
 - a. But the key to understanding is having a “good and noble heart”
 - b. One that is willing to listen and learn!
 - 5. Note that Jesus said not all will bear the same amount...
 - a. “some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some a hundred” - **Mk 4:20**
 - b. Some may be given more according to their ability - cf. **Mt 25:14-15**
 - c. Whatever our ability, we should exercise it accordingly - cf. **1Pe 4:10-11**
- **This soil represents Christians who are faithful and fruitful in their service**

CONCLUSION

1. **“The Parable Of The Four Soils”** is fairly easy to understand (with Jesus’ help)
2. To truly benefit from the parable, let me ask **“What kind of soil are you?”**...
 - a. **Are you like the wayside?**
 - 1) If you have heard the gospel of Christ, but have not obeyed it...
 - 2) You are in the process of hardening your heart the longer you wait!
 - 3) You are susceptible to Satan’s deception, to blind you to God’s Word!
 - b. **Are you like the stony ground?**
 - 1) If you responded to the gospel, but are not grounded in the faith...
 - 2) You will likely fall away when persecution or temptation comes your way!
 - c. **Are you like the thorny ground?**
 - 1) If you responded to the gospel, but are preoccupied with the cares, riches, and pleasures of this world, you will not be able to bear much fruit!
 - 2) Remember what Jesus said about branches that don’t bear fruit! - **Jn 15:1-6**
 - d. **Are you like the good ground?**
 - 1) If you have responded to the gospel, and are bearing fruit...
 - 2) Then you have demonstrated several important things:
 - a) You have a good and noble heart!
 - b) You have come to understand the Word!
 - c) You have been keeping it with patience!
 - 3) And the Word of God produced its intended effect in you!

May this parable and its explanation by Jesus stimulate our thinking and examine our hearts and lives in relation to the gospel of Christ...!

“He who has ears to hear, let him hear!” - Mk 4:9

Take Heed What You Hear

Mark 4:21-25

INTRODUCTION

1. When we have opportunities to hear or read the Word of God...
 - a. Are we aware that we will be judged by how we give heed?
 - b. That the blessings we receive are proportionate to how we hear?
2. During His ministry, Jesus began teaching in parables...
 - a. To the public He would tell the parables - **Mk 4:1-2**
 - b. In private He would explain them to His disciples - **Mk 4:10-12,33-34**
3. In “The Parable Of The Four Soils” Jesus...
 - a. Illustrated how not all receive the Word as they should
 - b. Ended with the cry, “He who has ears to hear, let him hear!” - **Mk 4:9**

[After explaining the parable, Jesus exhorted His disciples to “**Take Heed What You Hear**” (**Mk 4:21-25**). Let’s first consider Jesus’ words...]

I. AS CHARGED TO THE DISCIPLES

A. THAT WHICH IS HIDDEN IS TO BE MADE KNOWN...

1. Jesus asked rhetorical questions involving a lamp - **Mk 4:21**
 2. What was hidden would be revealed, what was secret should come to light - **Mk 4:22**
 3. The context regards His use of parables and the ultimate intention of His teaching
 - a. Jesus spoke publicly in parables at the time - cf. **Mk 4:11**
 - b. The meaning was explained privately - **Mk 4:33-34**
 - c. But His teaching was meant one day to be proclaimed abroad
 - d. His disciples would be involved in publicly proclaiming it - cf. **Mt 10:27**
 4. Thus they were to pay close attention to what He was saying - **Mk 4:23**
- **Jesus intended one day for all to hear and know His teaching**

B. TAKE HEED WHAT YOU HEAR...

1. Jesus charged His disciples to take heed what they hear - **Mk 4:24a**
 2. The importance of taking heed is repeatedly stressed - **Mk 4:24b-25**
 - a. “With the same measure you use, it will be measured to you”
 - b. “To you who hear, more will be given”
 - c. “For whoever has, to him more will be given”
 - d. “But whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him”
 3. This is illustrated in the parable of **The Talents**
 - a. Talents given according to each person’s ability - **Mt 25:15**
 - b. Those who utilized their talents received more responsibility - **Mt 25:20-23**
 - c. The one talent man lost that which he did not utilize - **Mt 25:24-28**
 - d. “For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away.” - **Mt 25:29**
- **Jesus promised more for those who take heed to what they hear, utilize what they have**

[Jesus spoke these words to prepare and motivate His disciples for their future service. Let's now reflect on His words...]

II. AS APPLIED TO US TODAY

A. THAT WHICH WAS HIDDEN HAS BEEN MADE KNOWN...

1. Things kept private were to be made public after His resurrection - cf. **Mk 9:9**
 2. The Spirit would be given to guide the apostles into all the truth - **Jn 16:12-13**
 3. They were to proclaim the gospel and His commandments to all - **Mk 16:15; Mt 28:19-20**
 4. The apostles (including Paul) were faithful to their charge - **Ac 20:27**
 5. What was once a "mystery" has now been revealed - **Ro 16:25-26; Ep 3:3-5,8-9**
- **In the New Testament, that which was hidden can now be known by all!**

B. TAKE HEED WHAT YOU HEAR...

1. The need to take heed to what we hear is still the same
2. Consider the importance of listening carefully:
 - a. To be blessed - cf. **Mt 13:16-17**
 - b. To have faith - cf. **Ro 1:16-17; 10:17**
 - c. To bear fruit - cf. **Lk 8:15; Co 1:6**
 - d. To prevent apostasy - cf. **He 2:1-3**
 - e. To avoid rejection and condemnation - cf. **Mt 10:14-15; Ac 13:44-49; Mt 12:41-42**

-- For more, see ["How Well Do You Listen?"](#)
3. The principle of measure remains the same - **Mk 4:24-25**
 - a. "With the same measure you use, it will be measured to you"
 - b. "To you who hear, more will be given"
 - c. "For whoever has, to him more will be given"
 - d. "But whoever does not have, even what he has will be take away from him"

-- **For those willing give careful heed to the Word of God, they will be richly blessed!**

CONCLUSION

1. There is a well known maxim: **"You get out of something what you put into it."**
2. Does this not explain why many get little out of religion and the Bible in particular...?
 - a. They have little interest in spiritual matters
 - b. They make little effort to learn what the Bible says
 - c. Their interest in spiritual things declines with time
3. Yet Jesus promises for those willing to **"Take Heed What You Hear"**...
 - a. "With the same measure you use, it will be measured to you"
 - b. "To you who hear, more will be given"
 - c. "For whoever has, to him more will be given"

That is why some never stagnate in their spiritual growth, why their faith is refreshed and renewed daily (cf. **2Co 4:16**). And so together with Jesus we offer the following admonition:

***"If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear."
(Mk 4:23)***

The Parable Of The Growing Seed

Mark 4:26-29

INTRODUCTION

1. Of the many parables taught by Jesus, there is one found only in Mark's gospel...
 - a. It is "**The Parable Of The Growing Seed**"
 - b. Recorded in **Mk 4:26-29** (Read)
2. The setting of this parable is the same as when Jesus told...
 - a. The parable of "**The Four Soils**" - cf. **Mk 4:1-20**
 - b. The parable of "**The Mustard Seed**" - cf. **Mk 4:30-32**

[Let's begin by taking a closer look the parable itself...]

I. THE PARABLE ANALYZED

A. WHAT IT REVEALS ABOUT THE KINGDOM OF GOD...

1. It describes how the Word of God produces fruit (i.e., how the kingdom grows)
 - a. The "seed" is not identified in this parable as the Word of God
 - b. But it was defined as such in the parable of "**The Sower**" - cf. **Mk 4:14; Lk 8:11**
 2. The growth produced by the Word is a mystery - **Mk 4:26-28a**
 - a. The sower can sow the seed and see it sprout and grow
 - b. But the growth is beyond his comprehension, and even grows by itself
 3. The growth produced by the Word is gradual - **Mk 4:28b-29**
 - a. It doesn't all occur at once
 - b. But step by step: first the blade, then the head, then the full grain
 - c. But through such growth the harvest eventually comes - **Mk 4:29**
- **So the kingdom grows mysteriously and gradually by virtue of God's Word**

B. COMPARING THIS PARABLE WITH "THE FOUR SOILS"...

1. The parable of "**The Four Soils**" emphasizes **human responsibility**
 - a. The seed did not produce the desired fruit unless it fell on good soil
 - b. It takes "a good and noble heart" for the seed to produce fruit! - cf. **Lk 8:15**
 2. The parable of "**The Growing Seed**" stresses the **divine power** within the Word
 - a. A "good and noble heart" cannot bear fruit by itself!
 - b. It takes Seed that has within itself the power to germinate and grow in good soil
- **This parable emphasizes the need to trust in the power of the Seed (God's Word)**

[Yes, the Word is the "seed" which contains the power for spiritual life and growth when planted in the soil of a good and noble heart! We may not fully comprehend the true working of that power, but the parable illustrates how we can still use it! And for that, let's now consider...]

II. THE PARABLE APPLIED

A. THE WORD OF GOD IS A POWERFUL "SEED"...

1. It can cause us to be "born again" - **1Pe 1:22-25; Jm 1:18**

2. It can help us to “grow” - **1Pe 2:1-2**
 3. It can indeed “save your souls” - **Jm 1:21**
 4. It is living and powerful, filled with Spirit-giving life - **He 4:12; Jn 6:63**
- **Never underestimate the power of the Word of God!**

B. TWO WAYS TO UTILIZE THE POWERFUL “SEED”...

1. **By receiving it into our own hearts (for spiritual growth)**
 - a. Here we are talking about the growth of the kingdom of God **in our lives**
 - b. Of course, we must receive it properly
 - 1) With a good and noble heart - **Lk 8:15; cf. Ac 17:11**
 - 2) With meekness - **Jm 1:21**
 - 3) As babies longing for their mothers’ milk - **1Pe 2:2**
 - 4) “Laying aside” those things that would “choke” the Word - cf. **Jm 1:21; 1Pe 2:1**
 - c. When so received, growth will occur
 - 1) But remember the parable, for the growth will be gradual - **Mk 4:28**
 - 2) Therefore the need to feed daily on the Word, “that you may grow thereby” - **1Pe 2:2**
 2. **By sowing it as far and wide as we possibly can (for kingdom growth)**
 - a. Here we are talking about the growth of the kingdom of God **in the world**
 - b. Like the sower in the parable of “The Sower”, we must sow the seed everywhere
 - c. But like the sower in the parable of “The Growing Seed”, we must remember...
 - 1) Growth comes through the divine power of the seed
 - a) It is God who gives the increase - cf. **1Co 3:5-7**
 - b) We are simply “seed-throwers” and “water-boys”!
 - 2) Growth comes in stages, not all at once
 - a) There will be days when all we seem to be doing is “sowing”
 - b) There will be days when all we seem to be doing is “waiting”
 - 3) Like the farmer, then, we must be patient - cf. **Jm 5:7**
- **In our lives and in the world, spiritual growth occurs only through the Word!**

CONCLUSION

1. The general lessons in the parable of “**The Growing Seed**” are these...
 - a. In the kingdom of God, as in the kingdom of nature, we are laborers together with God
 - b. The results depend on Him, and for the perfection of these results He takes His own time
2. That being the case...
 - a. Our duty is to sow the seed, it is for God to give the increase - cf. **1Co 3:6-9**
 - b. Having sown the seed, we must wait for God’s Word to perfect the growth - cf. **Php 1:6**
3. Therefore this parable teaches us to trust and hope in power of the Word of God...
 - a. **Do we trust in its power to save the lost?**
 - 1) Or do we look to gimmicks designed by men?
 - 2) The gospel is God’s power to save! - cf. **Ro 1:16-17**
 - b. **Do we trust in its power to save your own soul?**
 - 1) Or do we look to self-help methods that promise but really can’t deliver?
 - 2) The Word of God is what is capable of saving our souls! - cf. **Jm 1:21**

Are you sowing the seed of the kingdom, brother? Both in the world, and in your own life as well...?

The Parable Of The Mustard Seed

Mark 4:30-32

INTRODUCTION

1. In “**The Parable Of The Growing Seed**”, kingdom growth caused by the Word is illustrated as:
 - a. Imperceptible - in that we may not always understand how the growth occurs
 - b. Independent - in that the seed bears fruit beyond our own efforts
 - c. Gradual - in that it occurs in stages, not all at once
2. To further illustrate kingdom growth by the Word of God, Jesus told another parable...
 - a. “**The Parable Of The Mustard Seed**” - **Mk 4:30-32**
 - b. That describes a kingdom destined for remarkable growth

[To appreciate the point of the parable, some background information may be helpful on...]

I. THE MUSTARD SEED

A. THE PLANT ITSELF...

1. The mustard plant is well known for its hot-flavored seeds
2. Among seeds sown in a garden it was generally the smallest
3. As a plant, it reaches ten, sometimes fifteen feet in height
4. In the fall of the year, its branches have become rigid, and the plant often serves as a shelter for birds of many kinds (**William Hendriksen**, Commentary on Matthew)

B. PROVERBIAL USES OF THE MUSTARD SEED...

1. The mustard seed was used frequently to describe anything that is small in its beginning
2. Jesus used it on another occasion to describe one’s faith - cf. **Mt 17:20**
3. The Koran reads “Oh, my son, every matter, though it be of the weight of a grain of mustard seed...” (quoted by **R. C. Trench**)

[With this understanding of the mustard plant and its seeds, perhaps we are better able to appreciate the meaning of the parable itself (please read **Mk 4:30-32**)...]

II. THE MEANING OF THE PARABLE

A. THE KINGDOM OF GOD WOULD HAVE A SMALL BEGINNING...

1. Old Testament prophecy foretold this:
 - a. Concerning the Messiah - cf. **Isa 11:1; 53:2-3**
 - b. Concerning the kingdom - cf. **Dan 2:35b,44** (starting out as a stone, becoming a great mountain)
2. Consider this description of the beginning: “The Son of Man grew up in a despised province; he did not appear in public until his thirtieth year; then taught for two or three years in neighboring villages, and occasionally at Jerusalem; made a few converts, chiefly among the poor and unlearned; and then falling into the hands of his enemies, died the shameful death of the cross; such, and so slight, was the commencement of the universal kingdom of God.”
- **R. C. Trench**, Notes On The Parables Of Our Lord

B. ITS TREMENDOUS GROWTH WOULD BELIE ITS HUMBLE BEGINNINGS...

1. Just as the “small stone” of **Dan 2:35** “became a great mountain and filled the whole earth”
2. The growth of the church in the 1st A.D. certainly confirmed the truth of Jesus’ parable
 - a. The 120 disciples grew to over 3000 just in one day - **Ac 2:41-42**
 - b. It was soon about 5000 - **Ac 4:4**
 - c. The number of the disciples continued to “multiply”
 - 1) In Jerusalem - **Ac 6:7**
 - 2) Throughout Judea, Galilee, and Samaria - **Ac 9:31**
 - d. Years later, there were “myriads” of believers just in Jerusalem alone - **Ac 21:20**
3. Today, we see the growth and influence of the kingdom in lives of believers worldwide!

C. IT’S GROWTH WOULD BE BENEFICIAL TO THE WORLD...

1. In the parable, Jesus spoke of how “the birds of the air come and nest in its branches”
2. What is meant by Jesus? He does not say, but the kingdom of God is certainly a blessing to all who take refuge in its “branches”
 - a. E.g., “for the kingdom of God is not food and drink, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit” - **Ro 14:17**
 - b. To those seeking rest for their weary souls, the King offers His tender invitation to come to Him and enter His kingdom of rest - cf. **Mt 11:28-30**

{With this simple parable, Jesus offers encouragement to that small band of disciples following Him over the hills of Palestine. They would be a part of something that would grow and bless the world immensely!

What about today? The kingdom of heaven continues to grow and spread out its branches to those who will accept it, certainly. But can we ever expect similar growth to that witnessed in the first century? Consider a few thoughts about...]

III. THE GROWTH OF THE KINGDOM TODAY

A. THERE IS THE MATHEMATICAL POSSIBILITY...

1. Beginning with just twenty disciples, each converting just one person a year, and their converts doing the same...
 2. ...the growth would be like a mustard seed!
 - a. End of year 1 - 40
 - b. End of year 5 - 640
 - c. End of year 10 - 20,480
 - d. End of year 15 - 655,360
 - e. End of year 20 - 20,971,520
 - f. End of year 25 - 1,342,177,280
- **All it takes is for each person to bring one soul to Christ each and every year!**

B. THERE IS CERTAINLY THE SPIRITUAL POSSIBILITY...

1. We have the same seed of the kingdom, the Word of God!
 - a. Which is incorruptible, that lives and abides forever - **1Pe 1:23-25**
 - b. Capable of producing what God intends - cf. **Isa 55:10-11**
2. While the parable of “The Four Soils” reminds us that not all will accept the Word of God, this parable declares that the kingdom will grow!

-- **Do we believe in the power of the Word of God?**

C. WHAT IS NEEDED IS PEOPLE...

1. People with vision

- a. Who have the vision of Christ, as expressed in His parables
- b. Who look not at an apple and count the seeds, but looks at a seed and counts the apples (with their many seeds)!
- c. Who look at converting and developing disciples in the same way

2. People willing to put the kingdom first in their lives

- a. The seed of the gospel will produce fruit, but only if it falls on good soil
- b. If we allow...
 - 1) The cares of this world
 - 2) The deceitfulness of riches
 - 3) The pleasures of life...to “choke” us, we cannot bear good fruit
- c. Therefore we need to put the kingdom of God first - cf. **Mt 6:33**

3. People willing to abide in Christ

- a. For apart from Christ they can do nothing - **Jn 15:4-5**
- b. For only they are able to bear “much fruit” - **Jn 15:5**
- c. And only they will be able to glorify God and be His true disciples - **Jn 15:8**

-- **Are we willing to be such people?**

CONCLUSION

- 1. The potential for the kingdom’s amazing growth rests in the Person who reigns as its King...
 - a. Those who will abide in Christ can be used by Him to produce the remarkable growth in the kingdom illustrated by this parable
 - b. As per Paul: “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.” - **Php 4:13**
- 2. Brethren, allow “**The Parable Of The Mustard Seed**” to serve as...
 - a. **An encouragement** - The kingdom is destined for great things, despite its small beginnings
 - b. **A reminder** - If we are going to be useful to the Master in this ever growing kingdom, we must “abide in Him” so we can “bear much fruit”

For those not yet Christians, why not rest your weary wings in this great tree called “the kingdom of God”...?

Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.

- Mt 11:28-30

Private Teaching And Its Benefits

Mark 4:33-34

INTRODUCTION

1. Jesus was truly the Master Teacher...
 - a. He preached often in the synagogues - **Mk 1:39**
 - b. He taught large crowds by the sea shore - **Mk 2:13; 4:1-2**
2. He also taught in private...
 - a. Especially regarding the parables, first told in public - **Mk 4:33**
 - b. Which He later explained to His disciples - **Mk 4:34**

[The disciples of Jesus were blessed to have private instruction. While listening to the Word of God in a public setting is of great value, have you considered the benefits of private teaching...?]

I. WHAT IS PRIVATE TEACHING?

A. EXPLANATION...

1. Simply put, it is teaching in a private setting (home, office, park bench)
 2. Just the teacher and the learner, or at the most a small group of learners
 3. Where the teaching is informal, usually a dialogue rather than a lecture
- **Private teaching involves a more intimate, personal environment for learning**

B. EXAMPLES...

1. Jesus and His disciples in our text - **Mk 4:33-34**
 2. Jesus and Nicodemus - **Jn 3:1-3**
 3. Jesus and the Samaritan woman - **Jn 4:5-26**
 4. Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch - **Ac 8:26-40**
 5. Peter and the household of Cornelius - **Ac 10:24,33**
 6. Aquila and Priscilla working with Apollos - **Ac 18:24-26**
 7. Paul as he taught in homes, including his own - **Ac 20:20; 28:30-31**
- **The Bible is filled with examples of private teaching**

[Jesus and His followers made much use of private teaching in addition to public instruction. To appreciate why, consider the answer to the question...]

II. WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS?

A. INDIVIDUAL ATTENTION...

1. Public teaching is at best a “shotgun” approach
 - a. An audience has many people with different needs, levels of understanding
 - b. No one subject or lesson meets the interests of every person
2. Private teaching can address an individual’s needs or interests
 - a. The need might be basic (“What must I do to be saved?”)
 - b. The interest might be academic (“I ask you, of whom does the prophet say this...?”)
 - c. The desire might be to grow in understanding (“Explain this parable to us.”)

- d. The student might want to act immediately (“What hinders me from being baptized?”)
- **Public instruction cannot provide such individual attention**

B. PERSONAL QUESTIONS...

- 1. Public teaching does not lend itself to asking questions
 - a. Some venues traditionally frown on asking questions (e.g., during a sermon)
 - b. Shy people are often too intimidated to ask questions in public
 - c. Personal questions are not always suitable for public discourse
- 2. Private teaching is well suited for questions
 - a. Related to one’s interests or spiritual level
 - b. Without fear of ridicule or interruption
- **Private teaching allows for inquiry and follow-up questions**

C. SUPERIOR LEARNING...

- 1. Successful people have their mentors and advisors
 - a. Olympic athletes have personal coaches
 - b. Serious fitness buffs have personal trainers
- 2. The disciples benefited by their time with Jesus - cf. **Ac 4:13**
- 3. Personal spiritual training is part of God’s plan - cf. **2Ti 2:2**
 - a. Don’t think you need a personal teacher?
 - b. Then you need to be a teacher! - cf. **He 5:12**
- **Private teaching provides opportunity for accelerated and advanced learning**

CONCLUSION

- 1. Willingness to listen to public preaching and teaching is commendable...
 - a. Do you listen to sermons in worship? Good!
 - b. Do you attend and participate in Bible classes at church? Great!
- 2. But if you want to really get serious about your salvation and spiritual growth...
 - a. Find a personal “spiritual fitness” trainer
 - b. Attend a home Bible study, or start one in your home

After the two disciples walked with Jesus on the road to Emmaus, they said to one another:

“Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while He opened the Scriptures to us?” - Lk 24:32

Their experience (hearts excited by learning) is often shared today by many people who are willing to go beyond just attending church, to become involved in the private teaching of the Word of God.

If you would like to experience the benefits of private teaching, please let us know...

Jesus Calms The Storm

Mark 4:35-41

INTRODUCTION

1. Following a day full of teaching activity...
 - a. Jesus and His disciples got in a boat to sail across the Sea of Galilee - **Mk 4:35-36**
 - b. A windstorm arose, beating waves into the boat - **Mk 4:37**
 - c. Jesus was sleeping, but was wakened by His disciples fearing their lives - **Mk 4:38**
 - d. Jesus rebuked the wind and calmed the seas - **Mk 4:39**
 - e. He then reproached His disciples for their fear and lack of faith - **Mk 4:40**
 - f. Filled with great fear, His disciples expressed their awe of Jesus to one another - **Mk 4:41**
2. The account of Jesus calming the storm is well-known...
 - a. Popular in many children's Bible classes
 - b. The setting for the song "[Master, The Tempest Is Raging](#)"

[Many sermons and lessons have been based on this amazing miracle of Jesus. In this sermon, we shall touch on just a few lessons that can be gleaned from this event, beginning with the fact that...]

I. WE ARE NOT EXEMPT FROM STORMS

A. WE FACE STORMS BECAUSE WE ARE HUMANS...

1. Being Jesus' disciples did not protect them from storms
 2. We live in a world where there are many storms, both literal and figurative
 3. Christians experience literal tornados, hurricanes, just like everyone else
 4. Christians likewise face storms such as sickness, accidents, disappointments, death
 5. Paul certainly experience the perils of storms and shipwrecks - **2Co 11:25-26**
- **Jesus does not promise exemption from the normal storms of life**

B. WE FACE STORMS BECAUSE WE ARE CHRISTIANS...

1. Jesus warned that we will experience tribulation as His disciples - **Jn 16:33**
 2. Paul did, and warned his fellow disciples - **2Co 11:24-25; Ac 14:22; 2Ti 3:12**
 3. Peter wrote that we should not be surprised - **1Pe 4:12**
- **Jesus does not promise exemption from the storms of religious persecution**

[So if we find ourselves in the midst of storms, whether literal or figurative, whether its because we are simply humans or because we are Christians, do not think it strange. Instead take heart knowing that...]

II. JESUS HELPS US DEAL WITH STORMS

A. THROUGH FAITH...

1. During storms, we are often afraid ("we are perishing!") - **Mk 4:38**
2. Jesus teaches that fear is indicative of a lack of faith - **Mk 4:40**
3. To overcome fear in storms, we need to grow in faith!
 - a. Faith that God will protect us if it be His will - cf. **Ps 46:1-3**
 - b. Faith that God will deliver us to His heavenly city even if we die - **Ps 46:4-5,10-11**

-- **Jesus reveals the role of faith in the midst of storms**

B. THROUGH HIS WORD...

1. Jesus' words prepare us to withstand the storms of life - **Mt 7:24-27**
 2. How to pray in order to be heard by God - **Mt 6:5-8**
 3. To lay up treasure in heaven instead of on earth - **Mt 6:19-21**
 4. To seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness - **Mt 6:31-34**
- **Jesus shares the secrets to standing strong against the storms of life**

C. THROUGH PRAYER...

1. Jesus is key to receiving mercy and grace to help in time of need - **He 4:14-16; 7:25**
 2. In anxious times, God offers peace to guard our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus through prayer - **Php 4:6-7**
- **Jesus stands ready to calm our hearts and minds when facing storms**

D. THROUGH HIS SACRIFICE...

1. The greatest "storm" all of us will face will be the Day of Judgment - **2Pe 3:7,10-12**
 2. A day in which we will all stand before the judgment seat of Christ - **2Co 5:10**
 3. But Christ shed His blood to spare us on that Day - **Ro 5:6-10**
 4. By obeying the gospel, we can have our names added to the Lamb's book of life and escape condemnation for our sins - cf. **Mk 16:15-16; Ac 2:38; Re 20:11-15**
- **Jesus stands ready to save us and protect us from the "perfect storm" to come**

CONCLUSION

1. Everyone will face one or more storms in his or her life...
 - a. Whether literally or metaphorically
 - b. Whether atheist or believer
2. How shall we react when the time(s) come...?
 - a. Shall we cry out like the disciples who were weak in faith ("we are perishing!")?
 - b. Or shall we weather the storms with confident faith and calm repose?
3. And how shall we stand on when the final storm comes...?
 - a. The "perfect storm", that is, the Day of Judgment?
 - b. Shall we hear Jesus say, "Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world"? - cf. **Mt 25:34**
 - c. Or will we hear Him say, "Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels"? - cf. **Mt 25:41**

When Jesus rebuked the wind and spoke to the sea, "Peace, be still", the wind ceased and there was a great calm. The disciples, with fear and amazement said:

"Who can this be, that even the wind and the sea obey Him?"

The wind and the sea obeyed Jesus. Shall we not obey Him who now has all authority in heaven and on earth...? - cf. **Mt 28:18-20**

Who Was Afraid Of Jesus?

Mark 5:1-20

INTRODUCTION

1. After calming the storm, Jesus and His disciples arrived in the country of the Gadarenes... - **Mk 5:1**
 - a. A region on the east side of the Sea of Galilee
 - b. Various called Gadarenes, Gersasenes, and Gergesenes (after nearby cities)
 - c. Also known as the Decapolis (a district of ten cities) - **Mk 5:20**
2. After taming a wild sea, Jesus now tames a wild man (**Hendriksen**)...
 - a. A man possessed with unclean spirit - **Mk 5:2**
 - b. Unable to be bound by chains, night and day crying and cutting himself - **Mk 5:3-5**
 - c. Moved to worship Jesus by the legion of demons that possessed him - **Mk 5:6-9**
 - d. The demons begged not to be tormented or sent out of the country - **Mk 5:7,10**
 - e. Asking to be able to fill a herd of swine, they are allowed, only to drown them - **Mk 5:11-13**
 - f. The swine feeders fled to tell others, who when seeing the demoniac in his right mind, begged for Jesus to leave their region - **Mk 5:14-17**
 - g. As Jesus returns to his boat, the healed man pleads to join Him, but is sent home to tell others what the Lord has done - **Mk 5:18-20**

[In studying Mark's account of the healing of the demoniac and the events which followed, I was struck by the fear of Jesus manifested in this story. So I ask, "**Who Was Afraid Of Jesus?**" Was it...]

I. THE DEMONS WHO WERE LEGION?

A. YES, AND JUSTIFIABLY SO...

1. They begged Jesus not to torment them - **Mk 5:7**
2. Note the similarity to the unclean spirit(s) in the synagogue - **Mk 1:23-24**
3. Jesus came to destroy the works of the devil - **1Jn 3:8**
4. The demons (unclean spirits) knew the time was coming - **Mt 8:29**
5. Indeed, everlasting fire is prepared for the devil and his angels - **Mt 25:41**
6. Even now there are sinful angels bound by "chains of darkness" - **2Pe 2:4; Jude 9**
7. One day the devil himself will be cast into the lake of fire - **Re 20:10**
- **Yes, the demons who were legion were terrified of Jesus!**

B. WE SHOULD BE AFRAID...

1. If we are not ready for the coming of the Lord - **2Th 1:7-9**
2. We too will experience everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels - **Mt 25:41,46**
3. Those not in the Book of life will not escape the lake of fire - **Re 20:15; 21:8**
- **Yes, we should be terrified of Jesus if we are not ready!**

[As we return to our text (**Mk 5:1-20**) with our question ("**Who Was Afraid Of Jesus?**"), was it...]

II. THE DENIZENS OF THE REGION?

A. YES, BUT UNJUSTIFIABLY SO...

1. When they came to Jesus and saw the healed demoniac, they were afraid - **Mk 5:14-15**
 2. They pleaded with Jesus to depart from their region - **Mk 5:17**
 3. Their fear was the fear of the unknown, and they were unwilling to know
 4. Their fear deprived them of great blessings!
- **Yes, the denizens of the region were foolishly afraid of learning more about Jesus!**

B. WE SHOULD NOT BE AFRAID...

1. Of learning about Jesus, for He offers rest for our souls - **Mt 11:28-30**
 2. Of coming to Jesus, for He is the source of every spiritual blessing - **Ep 1:3**
 3. Of obeying Jesus, for His words will free us from the bondage of sin - **Jn 8:31-32,34-36**
 4. Of following Jesus, for His words will provide safety in life's storms - **Mt 7:24-27**
- **No, we should not be afraid to learn whatever we can about Jesus!**

[Finally, as we consider “**Who Was Afraid Of Jesus?**”, we ask if it was...]

III. THE DEMONIAK WHO WAS HEALED?

A. NO, AND JUSTIFIABLY NOT...

1. He begged to be with Jesus, but Jesus had other plans for him - **Mk 5:18-19**
 2. He was not afraid of Jesus, nor afraid to tell others about Jesus - **Mk 5:20**
 3. Jesus had done great things for Him, and telling others led them to marvel - **Mk 5:20**
- **No, he who was healed by Jesus was not afraid of Jesus!**

B. WE SHOULD NOT BE AFRAID...

1. Of Jesus, for He loved us and washed us from our sins!- **Re 1:5**
 2. Of telling others about Jesus, who has given us great hope - **1Pe 3:15**
- **No, we who have been saved by Jesus should never be afraid of Jesus!**

CONCLUSION

1. Who was afraid of Jesus...?
 - a. Those unwilling to repent of their sins
 - b. Those unwilling to learn about Jesus
2. Who was not afraid of Jesus...?
 - a. The one who appreciated what Jesus had done for him
 - b. The one who was willing to tell others what Jesus had done
3. Who are we more like in this story...?
 - a. The demons who were legion?
 - b. The denizens of the region?
 - c. The demoniac who was healed?

The nature of our relationship with Jesus reveals the answer. Do we want to be with Jesus? Are we willing to tell others about Jesus? Or are we afraid of Jesus...?

Touches Of The Savior

Mark 5:21-43

INTRODUCTION

1. Mark dedicates much attention to the miracles of Jesus, showing His power over...
 - a. Demons - **Mk 1:23-28,34; 5:1-20**
 - b. Sickness - **Mk 1:29-31,34,40-45; 2:1-12; 3:1-6**
 - c. Nature - **Mk 4:35-41**
2. Our present lesson involves two miracles, showing Jesus power over...
 - a. Disease, in healing the woman suffering from an issue of blood
 - b. Death, in raising the daughter of Jairus

[We are first introduced to Jairus, a ruler of a synagogue, who begs Jesus to heal his dying daughter (**Mk 5:21-24**). But on the way, there was...]

I. THE TOUCH OF A WOMAN

A. THE WOMAN TOUCHED JESUS...

1. She had suffered greatly - **Mk 5:25-26**
 - a. The discharge of blood for 12 years
 - b. The mistreatments of many physicians
 - c. The loss of all that she had
 2. She had heard about Jesus and came to touch His garment - **Mk 5:27-29**
 - a. She believed simply touching His clothes would heal her
 - b. When she did, the fountain of blood dried and up and she was healed
 3. Jesus sensed the miracle, and reassured the woman - **Mk 5:30-34**
 - a. Jesus asked who touched Him, and fearfully the woman came forward
 - b. Jesus reassured her that her faith made her well and she was healed
- **Because she was willing to touch Jesus, she was healed!**

B. ARE WE WILLING TO TOUCH JESUS...?

1. In our previous study we saw those who were afraid of Jesus - **Mk 5:15-17**
 - a. Are we more like the denizens of the Gadarenes?
 - b. Or are we willing to approach Jesus?
 2. We cannot touch Jesus literally, but today we can:
 - a. Put Jesus on in baptism - cf. **Ga 3:27**
 - b. Be united with Him in His death and resurrection via baptism - cf. **Ro 6:3-4**
 - c. Have our sins washed away by His blood - **Ac 22:16; Re 1:5**
- **If we are willing to touch Jesus, we can be saved!**

[If we have enough faith to reach out and touch Jesus by obeying His word, we can be blessed by that touch! While Jesus was still speaking to the woman, troubling news concerning Jairus' daughter came that would lead to...]

II. THE TOUCH OF A CHILD

A. JESUS TOUCHED THE CHILD...

1. On the way to the house - **Mk 5:35-37**
 - a. Jairus was told his daughter is dead
 - b. Jesus reassured Jairus, calling upon him to believe
 - c. Jesus permitted only Peter, James, and John to accompany Him
 2. At the house of Jairus - **Mk 5:38-40**
 - a. There was tumult with people weeping and wailing
 - b. Jesus rebuked the wailing, affirming that the child is not dead but sleeps
 - c. They ridiculed Jesus, and He sent them out of the house
 - d. The parents, Jesus, and His three disciples entered the room where the child lay
 3. Jesus raised the child - **Mk 5:41-43**
 - a. He took her by the hand (i.e., touched her)
 - b. He said to her, “Talitha, cumi” (“Little girl, I say to you arise”)
 - c. Immediately the girl (12 years old) arose and walked
 - d. The parents and disciples were overcome with great amazement
 - e. Jesus commanded them to tell no one, but give food to the girl to eat - cf. **Mk 1:44-45**
 4. Was Jairus’ daughter really dead? **Hendriksen** offers the following thoughts:
 - a. **Lk 8:53** declares that the people knew that she was dead.
 - b. **Lk 8:55** states that at the command of Jesus “her spirit returned.” It is clear, therefore, that there had been a separation between spirit and body.
 - c. **Jn 11:11** we have something similar. Jesus tells his disciples, “Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep.” But in **Jn 11:14** he affirms, “Lazarus died.”
 - d. In both instances the meaning is that death will not have the final say. Not death but life is going to triumph in the end. Also, just as natural sleep is followed by awakening, so this child is going to become awake, that is, is going to live again.
- **With a touch (and the command to arise), Jesus raised the child from the dead!**

B. ARE WE WILLING TO LET JESUS TOUCH US...?

1. Again not literally, but today we can:
 - a. Become a new creation in Christ - **2Co 5:17**
 - b. Enjoy the blessing of His presence in our lives - **Jn 14:23**
 - c. Enjoy every spiritual blessing there is to be found in Christ - **Ep 1:3**
 2. Yes, by the “touch” of Jesus, we can experience:
 - a. A spiritual resurrection now, via baptism - **Col 2:12-13**
 - b. A bodily resurrection to eternal life in the future - **Jn 5:28-29; 11:25**
- **If we are willing to let Jesus “touch” us, we can be raised anew now and in the future!**

CONCLUSION

1. Just imagine the great joy produced by the “**Touches Of The Savior**”...
 - a. The joy of the woman who touched Jesus
 - b. The joy of the parents whose child was touched by Jesus
2. There can be great joy today for us today...
 - a. If we are willing to “touch” Jesus by obeying Him
 - b. If we are willing to let Jesus “touch” us through the blessings He offers

Notice that both the woman and Jairus made efforts to approach Jesus. So we must come to Jesus in faithful obedience if we are to experience the “**Touches Of The Savior**”... - **Mt 11:28-30; 28:18-20**

When Familiarity Breeds Contempt

Mark 6:1-6

INTRODUCTION

1. You have likely heard the saying “familiarity breeds contempt”, which means...
 - a. The better we know people, the more likely we are to find fault with them. - **The New Dictionary of Cultural Literacy**
 - b. If you know someone very well or experience something a lot, you stop respecting them. - **The Free Dictionary**
 - c. The more you know something or someone, the more you start to find faults and dislike things about it or them. - **UsingEnglish.com**

2. We find an example of this in our text...
 - a. When Jesus returned to His hometown - **Mk 6:1-6**
 - b. The town of Nazareth, where He had been brought up - cf. **Lk 4:16-24**

[As illustrated in our text, allowing familiarity to breed contempt can be to one’s disadvantage. For example, “**When Familiarity Breeds Contempt**”...]

I. THE MESSAGE IS NOT RECEIVED

A. JESUS’ COUNTRYMEN TOOK OFFENSE...

1. At first they were impressed by His teaching - **Mk 6:2**; cf. **Lk 4:22**
2. The people of Nazareth knew Jesus as:
 - a. A carpenter and the son of a carpenter - **Mk 6:3**; cf. **Mt 13:55**
 - b. The son of Mary, with brothers and sisters - **Mk 6:3**
3. But the moment He spoke critically, they took offense - **Mk 6:3**
 - a. They became angry - cf. **Lk 4:23-28**
 - b. They attempted to kill Him - cf. **Lk 4:29-30**
4. Which led Jesus say: “A prophet is not without honor, except in his hometown and among his relatives and in his own household.” - **Mk 6:4**
 -- **Because of familiarity, they did not respect Him as a prophet**

B. JESUS LIMITED HIS TEACHING...

1. Their offense led to His leaving and returning to Capernaum - cf. **Lk 4:31**
2. Thus depriving themselves of further teaching by the Son of God!
3. Remember what Jesus had told His disciples earlier? - cf. **Mk 4:23-25**
 -- **Because of their contempt, they lost access to more learning of God’s will!**

C. MIGHT WE BE GUILTY OF THE SAME...?

1. We can easily develop familiarity today
 - a. With those teaching the Word of God (“He no longer impresses me”)
 - b. With the message of the Word itself (“I’ve heard that many times before”)
2. Do we allow our familiarity to breed contempt?
 - a. No longer respecting those we know well, taking them for granted?
 - b. No longer appreciating the significance of the Word of God?

-- **If so, then we will cut ourselves off from its powerful message!**

[Which leads to another disadvantage experienced “**When Familiarity Breeds Contempt**”...]

II. THE BLESSINGS ARE NOT RECEIVED

A. JESUS’ COUNTRYMEN DID NOT BELIEVE...

1. Which caused Jesus to marvel - **Mk 6:6**
 2. Remember, they even tried to kill Him - cf. **Lk 4:28-30**
- **Because of familiarity they were unwilling to believe in Him**

B. JESUS LIMITED HIS MIRACLES...

1. Mark states that “He could do no mighty work there...” - **Mk 6:5**
 2. Matthew says it was “because of their unbelief” - cf. **Mt 13:58**
 3. It wasn’t that Jesus could not do miracles, for He healed a few - **Mk 6:5**
 4. Where people would not believe, He could not do a great work for them
 5. “Such unbelief as this has immense consequences for evil. It closes the channels of grace and mercy, so that only a trickle gets through to human lives in need.” - **J. G. Miller**
- **Because of their contempt, they lost access to receiving more blessings!**

C. MIGHT WE EXPERIENCE THE SAME...?

1. We can easily develop familiarity and contempt toward such things as:
 - a. Baptism, the Lord’s Supper, the Word of God, prayer, assembling
 - b. Even the blood of Christ, counting it as “a common thing” - cf. **He 10:29**
 2. Such contempt will “close the channels of grace and mercy”, for we will not:
 - a. Emphasize the importance of baptism for the remission of sins - **Ac 2:38; 22:16**
 - b. Value the observance of the Lord Supper as a communion with Christ - **1Co 10:16**
 - c. Feed on the Word of God that we might grow thereby - **1Pe 2:2**
 - d. Utilize prayer in order to receive mercy, grace, peace - **He 4:14-16; Php 4:6-7**
 - e. Assemble as often as we can, to stir up love and good works - **He 10:24-25**
- **Could contempt bred by familiarity explain our dull spiritual lives?**

CONCLUSION

1. When the people of Nazareth allowed their familiarity with Jesus to breed contempt...
 - a. They deprived themselves of a great opportunity
 - b. Jesus chose to take His message and His blessings elsewhere - **Mk 6:6**
2. A similar tragedy can befall us...
 - a. We can judge ourselves unworthy of eternal life
 - b. And thus deprive ourselves of blessings we would otherwise receive - cf. **Ac 13:46**

The secret is to pay close attention to the words of Jesus and His apostles, and any familiarity will produce only greater blessings and not contempt (and prayer will certainly help)...

Then He said to them, “Take heed what you hear. With the same measure you use, it will be measured to you; and to you who hear, more will be given.” - Mk 4:24

Open my eyes, that I may see Wondrous things from Your law. - Ps 119:18

Principles Of Evangelism

Mark 6:7-13

INTRODUCTION

1. In **Mk 6:7-13**, we have Mark's account of "**The Limited Commission**"...
 - a. A charge given to the apostles during the earthly ministry of Jesus - cf. **Mt 10:1-5**
 - b. So-called because He limited their work to the house of Israel - **Mt 10:5-6**
 - c. In which the Lord gave them instructions for fulfilling their mission
2. From the instructions of Jesus, we can glean some "**Principles Of Evangelism**"...
 - a. Principles that helped them later carry out "The Great Commission" - cf. **Mk 16:15**
 - b. Principles that can help us be more successful in evangelism today

[From our text, I want to point out at least four principles that Jesus applied in sending out His apostles. They are principles that I believe can prove successful today. The first one is...]

I. THE PRINCIPLE OF SYNERGY

A. THE APOSTLES WERE TO GO TWO-BY-TWO...

1. Mark's account is the only one to mention this - **Mk 6:7**
 2. A practice continued on other occasions...
 - a. When Jesus sent out the seventy - **Lk 10:1**
 - b. When the Spirit sent out Paul and Barnabas - **Ac 13:2**
 - c. When Paul and Barnabas went their separate ways - **Ac 15:36-40**
 3. This illustrates the principle of synergy
 - a. **Synergy**: "The working together of two things (muscles or drugs for example) to produce an effect greater than the sum of their individual effects"
 - b. Two or more working together can do more than by working separately
 - 1) They encourage one another, and help each other - cf. **Ec 4:9-10**
 - 2) A plurality of witnesses lend credibility to their story - cf. **Jn 8:17**
- **Indeed, two are better than one**

B. MAKING APPLICATION TODAY...

1. The practice of two or more preachers working together should be encouraged
 - a. Especially in foreign fields or difficult areas
 - b. Through the principle of synergy they can be effective in one area more quickly, and then move on to the next
 - c. This is better than preachers working alone, struggling for years by themselves
 2. In one's own personal evangelism...
 - a. Seek out a companion in the congregation with similar interests
 - b. Go together in visiting, teaching home studies, etc.
- **Whenever possible, find a co-worker!**

[Perhaps much of the slow growth in evangelism today is a failure to appreciate the principle of synergy which was applied by the Lord and the early church. Another principle to consider is...]

II. THE PRINCIPLE OF SUPPORT

A. THE APOSTLES WERE ALLOWED SUPPORT...

1. They were to depend on others - **Mk 6:8-10**
 2. Supported by those who willing to provide for them - cf. **Lk 10:7-8**
 3. This illustrates the principle of supporting workers
 - a. Defended by Paul in **1Co 9:4-14**
 - b. Applied to elders who rule well - **1Ti 5:17-18**
 - c. Encouraged by John many years later - **3Jn 5-8**
- **This is how the gospel spread throughout the first century world**

B. MAKING APPLICATION TODAY...

1. Preachers may rightly receive support for their labors
 - a. It allows them to concentrate their efforts in matters of the gospel
 - b. This support should come from Christians, and not as a means to accumulate wealth
 2. Churches have an important role in such support
 - a. Churches can provide support of preachers - **2Co 11:8-9**
 - b. Much foreign evangelism goes undone today, not because preachers are unwilling to go, but because churches have not been willing to send and support - cf. **Ro 10:15**
 3. In one's own efforts...
 - a. There is nothing limiting an individual from helping to support preachers
 - b. While one might help support a local congregation's effort to send and support, one can also help through direct support
- **If we are unable to teach, at least we can support those who do!**

[Turning now to the actual proclamation of the good news, we read of the...]

III. THE PRINCIPLE OF SELECTION

A. THE APOSTLES WERE TO BE SELECTIVE...

1. Preaching to those willing to listen - **Mk 6:10**
 2. But they were to "shake off the dust under your feet" when leaving a city that would not receive them or hear their words - **Mk 6:11**
 3. This illustrates the principle of selection
 - a. We're told not to "cast your pearls before swine" - cf. **Mt 7:6**
 - b. People judge themselves unworthy of the gospel by their lack of interest
 - 1) Paul was willing to preach again if people were interested- **Ac 13:42-44**
 - 2) But when people rejected the gospel, he turned elsewhere - **Ac 13:45-46**
- **People judge themselves unworthy of eternal life by their disinterest**

B. MAKING APPLICATION TODAY...

1. We are to preach the gospel to every creature - **Mk 16:15**
 - a. But once people display lack of interest, we are not obligated to keep trying
 - b. Rather than "cast our pearls" before those who don't appreciate it, we should move on
 2. Admittedly, there is room for judgment...
 - a. As to how long we try to reach someone before going on
 - b. Some may not show much interest at first, but do later on
- **At some point, we need to turn to souls who show more interest!**

The next principle is most essential...]

IV. THE PRINCIPLE OF SUBJECT

A. THE APOSTLES WERE GIVEN A SUBJECT...

1. In “The Limited Commission”, the subject was “repent” - **Mk 6:12**
 2. It also included the kingdom of heaven - cf. **Mt 10:7**
 3. In “The Great Commission”, it was expanded to include the gospel of Christ - **Mk 16:15**
 - a. So Philip the evangelist preached when he went to Samaria - **Ac 8:12**
 - b. So Paul preached in synagogues and from house to house - **Ac 19:8; 20:18-21,25; 28:23,30-31**
 4. This illustrates what our subject should be
 - a. It should always be the Word of God, the Gospel - **Ro 1:16**
 - b. As Paul instructed Timothy: “Preach the word!” - **2Ti 4:1-5**
- **The apostles faithfully proclaimed their subject**

B. MAKING APPLICATION TODAY...

1. Preachers need to avoid things...
 - a. Which entertain, rather than provide sound doctrine
 - b. Based more upon the ideas of men, rather than the Word of God
 - c. Text based, expository preaching can help keep preachers in the Word
 2. Churches should consider what message they are presenting to the lost...
 - a. Is it the gospel of health and wealth, or the gospel of Christ?
 - b. Are we call for people to become just church members, or disciples of Jesus?
 3. In one’s own evangelism...
 - a. Do not get sidetracked on various issues
 - b. While many subjects may have their place, they may be “second principles” rather than “first principles”
- **The lost need to know the gospel of Christ and His kingdom, first and foremost!**

CONCLUSION

1. The apostles fulfilled their limited commission with great confirmation - **Mk 6:12-13**
2. “**The Principles Of Evangelism**” gleaned from our Lord’s include...
 - a. The principle of **synergy**
 - b. The principle of **support**
 - c. The principle of **selection**
 - d. The principle of **subject**
3. These principles were later employed by the early church...
 - a. Which may help explain the rapid spread of the gospel in the first century
 - b. Which can still be useful to the Lord’s church today

Could it be that failure to implement any of these may be reasons why the church is not growing like it did then...?

Weakness In The Seat Of Power

Mark 6:14-29

INTRODUCTION

1. The ministry of Jesus was bound to attract attention...
 - a. By virtue of His miracles, even those done by His apostles - **Mk 6:12-13**
 - b. Eventually King Herod heard about Him - **Mk 6:14**
2. In our text, Mark shares with us information about King Herod...
 - a. The king's initial reaction to what he heard - **Mk 6:14-16**
 - b. The events that led up to the king's execution of John the Baptist - **Mk 6:17-29**

[In doing so, Mark shows us a sad picture of “**Weakness In The Seat Of Power**”. It is a picture borne out by secular history as well. Let's first consider...]

I. HEROD AS A KING

A. HIS POSITION AS TETRARCH...

1. He is generally known as **Herod Antipas**
 - a. His father: **Herod the Great**, an Idumean; ruling when Jesus was born - **Mt 2:1,3,19**
 - b. His mother: Malthace, a Samaritan; the fourth of Herod's ten wives
 - c. Educated in Rome (together with Archelaus and Philip)
 2. Not to be confused with:
 - a. **Herod Agrippa I** (nephew), who killed James - **Ac 12:1-2**
 - b. **Herod Agrippa II** (grand-nephew), before whom Paul appeared - **Ac 26:1**
 3. When Herod the Great died (4 B.C.), his kingdom was divided into four parts - **Lk 3:1**
 - a. Archelaus (full brother) - Judea, Idumea, Samaria (later ruled by Pontius Pilate)
 - b. Antipas - Galilee, Perea
 - c. Philip II (half brother) - Iturea, Trachonitus
 - d. Lysanias - Abilene (Syria)
- **Antipas' position as tetrarch was ratified by Caesar Augustus of Rome**

B. HIS ACCOMPLISHMENTS AS TETRARCH...

1. Governed Galilee and Perea for 42 years (4 B.C. - 39 A.D.)
 2. Built the cities of Sepphoris, Tiberias, and oversaw other projects
 3. Imprisoned and executed John the Baptist - **Mk 6:14-29**
 4. Sought to kill Jesus, who described Herod as “that fox” - **Lk 13:31-32**
 5. Later mocked Jesus prior to His death, which led to friendship with Pilate - **Lk 23:7-12**
- **Antipas had the potential and position to be a great man**

[But those in positions of power often have personal failings. Such was certainly true of Herod Antipas...]

II. HEROD AS A MAN

A. HE WAS SUPERSTITIOUS...

1. He initially thought Jesus was John the Baptist - **Mk 6:14**
2. Believing John to be raised from the dead - **Mk 6:14,16**
- **Such was his attempt to explain the miracles he had heard**

B. HE WAS IMMORAL...

1. First married to Phasaelis, daughter of King Aretas IV of Nabatea
2. Divorced her to marry Herodias - **Mk 6:17**
 - a. Who was his half-niece, married to his half-brother Philip
 - b. They had fallen in love while in Rome together
 - c. They agreed to divorce their spouses and marry one another
3. This was an unlawful marriage (even though Antipas was not a Jew) - **Mk 6:18**
 - a. Because it was simple adultery - **Lev 20:10; cf. Ro 7:2-3**
 - b. Also because of the prohibition against marrying a brother's wife - **Lev 20:21**
4. For which both Herodias and Herod wanted to kill John - **Mk 6:19; cf. Mt 14:5**
- **His willingness to divorce and remarry revealed his inner character**

C. HE WAS EASILY MANIPULATED...

1. He feared the multitude, who viewed John as a prophet - cf. **Mt 14:5**
2. He feared John, liked to listen to him, but did not repent - **Mk 6:20**
3. He was enticed by his stepdaughter (Salome, possibly 12-14 years old) - **Mk 6:21-23**
4. He was tricked by Herodias into executing John - **Mk 6:24-25**
5. He was afraid of losing face in front of his guests - **Mk 6:21,26**
6. Herodias' machinations would later lead to his exile
 - a. She became jealous of her brother's (Agrippa I) success
 - b. An attempt to turn Emperor Caligula against Agrippa backfired
 - c. Caligula exiled Antipas to Gaul (possibly Lyon, France)
 - d. Where Herodias chose to join Antipas
- **He was concerned with self-image and self-indulgence**

CONCLUSION

1. What a sad picture of **"Weakness In The Seat Of Power"**...
 - a. A man in the position of power
 - b. A man whose personal failings left him weak and easily manipulated
2. How might we learn from Herod's mistakes today...?
 - a. We may be in positions of power
 - 1) As politicians, businessmen, professional occupations, etc.
 - 2) As husbands, parents, etc.
 - b. Will we be weak or strong?
 - 1) Like Herod Antipas, easily tempted, easily manipulated?
 - 2) Or like John the Baptist, strong in one's moral convictions?

John may have lost his head (literally), but he won his soul. Herod lost both his head (figuratively) and his soul. In the end, who would you rather be? Remember what Jesus said about John...

"Assuredly, I say to you, among those born of women there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist..." - Mt 11:11

The Need For Rest

Mark 6:30-31

INTRODUCTION

1. One might easily conclude that the Bible is all about work and no play...
 - a. It speaks negatively about sloth and idleness - **Pro 6:6-11; 1Ti 5:13**
 - b. It speaks positively about labor and work - **Ep 4:28; 1Th 4:11**
2. Yet Jesus spoke of the need to rest...
 - a. After His disciples had returned from fulfilling the Limited Commission - **Mk 6:30**
 - b. Encouraging them to come aside to a deserted place and rest a while - **Mk 6:31**

[Despite advances in labor-saving technology, it seems we are more stressed than ever. We do well to remember and apply what the Bible says about...]

I. THE NEED FOR REST

A. ILLUSTRATED BY THE SABBATH...

1. God rested on the seventh day - **Gen 2:1-2**
2. The principle of rest served as the basis for the Sabbath - **Gen 2:3**
3. Which later was commanded of the Israelites as a weekly observance - **Deut 5:12-15**
- **Clearly God approved of taking time to rest on a regular basis**

B. ILLUSTRATED BY OTHER JEWISH HOLIDAYS...

1. The Feast of Unleavened Bread, with two days of rest - **Lev 23:5-8**
2. The Feast of Harvest (Pentecost), one day of rest - **Lev 23:21**
3. The Feast of Trumpets (1st day of 7th month), one day of rest - **Lev 23:23-25**
4. The Day of Atonement (10th day of 7th month), one day of rest - **Lev 23:26-32**
5. The Feast Of Tabernacles (15th day of 7th month), two days of rest - **Lev 23:33-36**
6. Included with several of the above were:
 - b. Required trips to Jerusalem - cf. **Lev 23:14-17; Deut 16:16**
 - b. Seven-day feasts, including one week of living in tents - cf. **Lev 23:42**
7. These were in addition to the weekly sabbaths
- **Approximately 70 days each year “no customary work” was to be done**

[As the Old Testament was written for our learning (**Ro 15:4**), it is apparent that God created man with a need for rest. Here are some thoughts related to...]

II. TAKING TIME TO REST

A. TWO DANGERS TO AVOID...

1. **Too much work**
 - a. No man can work without rest; and no man can live the Christian life unless he gives himself times with God
 - b. How can we shoulder life's burdens if we have no contact with him who is the Lord of all good life?

- c. How can we do God's work unless in God's strength?
 - d. How can we receive that strength unless we seek in quietness and in loneliness the presence of God?
 - 2. **Too much withdrawal**
 - a. Devotion that does not issue in action is not real devotion
 - b. Prayer that does not issue in work is not real prayer
 - c. We must never seek the fellowship of God in order to avoid the fellowship of men but in order to fit ourselves better for it
 - d. The rhythm of the Christian life is the alternate meeting with God in the secret place and serving men in the market place
- **These thoughts come from Barclay's Daily Study Bible**

B. TWO TYPES OF REST...

- 1. **Physical rest, to refresh the body**
 - a. Such as a good night's sleep, afternoon naps
 - b. Vacations involving travel, dining with friends - cf. **the OT feasts**
 - c. Benefits: less stress, weight control, memory performance, overall good health
 - 2. **Spiritual rest, to refresh the spirit**
 - a. Such as a daily devotional period
 - b. Special times devoted to prayer, meditation on God's Word - cf. **Php 4:6-9**
 - c. Benefits: a closer walk with God, inner renewal, peace of mind
- **Body and soul both need periods of rest**

C. TWO SUGGESTIONS TO CONSIDER...

- 1. **Making time**
 - a. Schedule for periodic rest
 - b. Isaac liked the evening - **Gen 24:63**
 - c. David and Daniel liked morning, noon, and evening - **Ps 55:17; Dan 6:10**
 - d. Jesus preferred early morning - **Mk 1:35**
 - e. Remember also the OT weekly and annual rests as an example of systematic rest
 - 2. **Choosing location**
 - a. Find places that allow for privacy (in the case of personal devotions)
 - b. Isaac liked the field - **Gen 24:63**
 - c. David meditated on his bed - **Ps 4:4; 63:6**
 - d. Daniel prayed in his room - **Dan 6:10**
 - e. Jesus preferred deserted places - **Mk 1:35; 6:31**
 - f. Remember also the OT feasts (as example of celebratory rest with others)
- **These suggestions are simply to stimulate your thinking**

CONCLUSION

- 1. The life of the Christian is more of a **marathon** than a sprint...
 - a. We need to have endurance - **He 10:36; 12:1**
 - b. Lest we fall short of reaching our rest - **He 4:1,9-11**
- 2. To reach our "**Heavenly Rest**", we need both...
 - a. Diligence in serving the Lord
 - b. Diligence in taking time to rest

3. Some Christians fail to maintain a proper balance...
 - a. Suffering physically as a result (e.g., poor health)
 - b. Suffering spiritually as well (e.g., emotional and mental burn out)

As physical strength requires both **exercise** and **rest**, so it is with spiritual strength. We can be thankful that in the wisdom of God there is to be opportunity for both...

Then Jesus said, "Let's go off by ourselves to a quiet place and rest awhile." - Mk 6:31 (NLT)

Feeding The Five Thousand

Mark 6:32-44

INTRODUCTION

1. One of the better known miracles of Jesus is “Feeding The Five Thousand”...
 - a. With just five loaves and two fish
 - b. With twelve baskets of fragments left over!
2. It is the only specific miracle performed by Jesus recorded in all four gospels...
 - a. **Mt 14:13-21; Mk 6:30-44; Lk 9:10-17; Jn 6:1-13**
 - b. We will let Mark’s account be the starting point for our study

[Many lessons can be gleaned from this miracle. What I found striking is first...]

I. WHAT IT REVEALS ABOUT JESUS

A. COMPASSION...

1. He wanted His disciples to rest, but compassion moved Him to serve - **Mk 6:34**
 2. Compassion that moved Him to send the apostles out earlier - **Mt 9:36; 10:1**
 3. That later moved Him to feed the four thousand - **Mt 15:32-38**
 4. That qualifies Him to be a perfect High Priest - cf. **He 4:14-16; 5:1-2**
- **This miracle reveals the wonderful compassion of our Lord!**

B. POWER...

1. The power to feed 5000 men with five loaves and two fish - **Mk 6:38-44**
 2. 5000 men, besides women and children (possibly 10,000?) - **Mt 14:21**
 3. With twelve baskets of fragments left over - **Mk 6:43**
 4. The sort of power that provides more than one needs - cf. **Ep 3:20**
- **This miracle reveals the overwhelming power of our Lord!**

C. ORDERLINESS...

1. Jesus arranged the multitude in groups and ranks - **Mk 6:39-40**
 2. Such orderliness is typical, evidenced by His creation - cf. **Col 1:16; Ps 19:1; Ro 1:19-20**
 3. He desires it in the organization and worship of His churches - **1Co 14:33,40**
- **This miracle reveals the careful orderliness of our Lord!**

[Jesus’ compassion, power and orderliness can be gleaned from **Mark’s account** of this miracle. From **John’s account** in his gospel, we can also learn...]

II. WHAT IT REVEALS ABOUT MAN

A. MISUNDERSTANDING...

1. Their initial reaction was correct
 - a. That Jesus was the Prophet who was to come into the world - **Jn 6:14**
 - b. As foretold by Moses and confirmed by Peter - cf. **Deut 18:15-18; Ac 3:18-26**
2. But their desire to make Him king reveals their misunderstanding

- a. They wanted to make Him a literal king - **Jn 6:15**
 - b. His kingdom was not to be a literal kingdom - cf. **Jn 18:36; Lk 17:20-21**
 3. Today, we should not presume to know what is God's will
 - a. His ways and thoughts are often much different than our own - cf. **Isa 55:8-9**
 - b. Thus we should be quick to hear, rather than presume - cf. **Ec 5:1-2**
- **The response to this miracle reveals man's ability to misunderstand God's will!**

B. MATERIALISM...

1. They sought Jesus for the wrong reasons
 - a. They wanted the physical food He provided - **Jn 6:26**
 - b. They should have sought food that endures to everlasting life - **Jn 6:27**
 2. He wanted to give them true bread
 - a. That gives life to the world - **Jn 6:32-33**
 - b. The bread of life, given to those who believe - **Jn 6:34-35**
 2. Today, people often choose churches for the wrong reasons
 - a. Entertainment, youth programs, etc.
 - b. When they should be looking for spiritual things - cf. **Ro 14:17**
- **The response to this miracle reveals man's tendency to desire material things**

C. DULLNESS...

1. They complained about Him
 - a. Because of His claim to be bread from heaven - **Jn 6:41**
 - b. Because they saw Him only as the son of Joseph and Mary - **Jn 6:42**
 2. They struggled over His sayings
 - a. Taking Him literally - **Jn 6:52**
 - b. Even many of His disciples left Him - **Jn 6:60,66**
 3. Today, many demonstrate a similar dullness
 - a. Unwilling to stay with Jesus (unlike the apostles) - **Jn 6:67-69**
 - b. Unwilling to make use of their time to learn and apply - cf. **He 5:11-14**
- **The response to this miracle reveals man's propensity to spiritual dullness**

CONCLUSION

1. The miracle we have studied offers insight into **the person of Jesus Christ...**
 - a. His compassion for the souls and bodies of mankind
 - b. His power to provide for every need of man
 - c. His orderliness in the work He sets out to perform
2. The reaction to this miracle reveals insight into **the propensity of man...**
 - a. To misunderstand the will of God
 - b. To seek after material things of the world
 - c. To be dull of heart, which leads to the first two
3. What will be **our response** to this wonderful miracle...?
 - a. Let our spiritual dullness to take it lightly, or ignore it altogether?
 - b. Let it increase our faith in Him who provides our every need?

Jesus' intention was to draw men to Him as the Bread of Life which nourishes our souls. May we not be so blinded by the materialism that we fail to labor for that which leads to everlasting life (**Jn 6:27**)...

Jesus Walks On Water

Mark 6:45-52

INTRODUCTION

1. Have you ever felt alone...
 - a. As you battled the storms of life?
 - b. Wondering where Jesus was when you needed Him?
2. Then perhaps the miracle we are about to study may be helpful...
 - a. When Jesus walked on the water
 - b. Recorded in three gospels (Matthew, Mark, John)

[Our study will be based on Mark's account (**Mk 6:45-52**). We'll divide the study in two sections, beginning with **verses 45-47** where we read of...]

I. THE PRAYER IN JESUS' ABSENCE

A. JESUS PRAYED AS THEY WERE ROWING...

1. Jesus sent His disciples by boat to Bethsaida near Capernaum - **Mk 6:45**; cf. **Jn 6:17**
 2. He Himself departed to the mountain to pray - **Mk 6:46**
 - a. Even in His busy schedule, taking time to pray was a priority for Jesus - cf. **Mk 1:35**
 - b. If the Son of God needed prayer, how much more the children of God today! - cf. **Co 4:2**
 3. Thus at evening, while His disciples were rowing, He was alone - **Mk 6:47**
- **Two vivid scenes: Jesus praying on the mountain, His disciples rowing in the sea**

B. JESUS PRAYS AS WE ARE WORKING...

1. Like the disciples rowing in the sea, we are to busying working
 - a. Working out our salvation with fear and trembling - cf. **Php 2:12**
 - b. Abounding in the work of the Lord - cf. **1Co 15:58**
 2. Meanwhile, as on the mountain, so now in heaven, Jesus prays for us
 - a. He is our great High Priest - cf. **He 4:14-16**
 - b. He makes intercession on our behalf - cf. **He 7:25; Ro 8:34; 1Jn 2:1**
- **Two vivid scenes: Jesus praying in heaven, His disciples busy on earth**

[As we return to our text (**verses 48-52**), the two scenes become one as Jesus joins His disciples and we read of...]

II. THE PEACE OF JESUS' PRESENCE

A. JESUS' COMING BROUGHT THEM PEACE...

1. Jesus saw His disciples straining at rowing - **Mk 6:48**
 - a. For the wind was against them
 - b. Matthew records the boat was being tossed by the waves - **Mt 14:24**
2. Jesus came to them, walking on the sea - **Mk 6:48**
 - a. About the fourth watch of the night (3:00 to 6:00 am)
 - b. He would have passed them by had they not called out

3. The disciples saw Him, thought it was a ghost, and cried out - **Mk 6:49**
 - a. Perhaps like King Herod, they were prone to superstition - cf. **Mk 6:14**
 - b. Given the circumstances (dark night, stormy sea), who could blame them?
 4. They were greatly troubled, but Jesus spoke words of comfort - **Mk 6:50**
 - a. Note that Mark says “immediately” - Jesus sought to allay their fears quickly
 - b. “Be of good cheer” (NKJV), “Take heart” (ESV), “Take courage” (NASB)
 - c. “It is I; do not be afraid” - Jesus sought to encourage them with His presence
 5. It is interesting that Mark does not record Peter’s attempt to walk out to Jesus
 - a. As recorded by Matthew - **Mt 14:28-31**
 - b. Especially if Mark’s gospel was based mostly on Peter’s testimony
 - c. Yet it is consistent with the humility often seen in the gospels, where the authors make little or no reference to themselves (cf. Matthew, Mark, John)
 6. As Jesus joined them in the boat, the wind ceased and they marveled - **Mk 6:51-52**
 - a. Greatly amazed beyond measure, and rightly so!
 - b. For they had yet to grasp the significance of His feeding the 5000
 - c. According to Matthew, they worshiped Jesus and proclaimed Him to be the Son of God - **Mt 14:33**
- **Jesus’ coming had brought great peace and comfort to His disciples**

B. JESUS’ COMING WILL BRING US PEACE...

1. For now, we are like the disciples, rowing our way to the heavenly shore
 2. At times, the stormy seas in our journey will make us afraid and challenge our faith
 3. Remember that He prays for us!
 - a. As He did on the mountain
 - b. So He now does in heaven
 4. When He does come...
 - a. His coming will be with the greatest “storm” ever! - cf. **2Pe 3:10-12**
 - b. But it will bring joy and peace for those who look for Him - cf. **2Pe 3:13; Re 21:1-7**
 5. How we will gladly proclaim Him to be the Son of God!
- **Jesus’ final coming will bring great peace and comfort to those who serve Him**

CONCLUSION

1. As described in the **Believer’s Bible Commentary**...

“The church has seen in this miracle a picture of the present age and its close. Jesus on the mountain represents Christ in His present ministry in heaven, interceding for His people. The disciples represent His servants, buffeted by the storms and trials of life. Soon the Savior will return to His own, deliver them from danger and distress and guide them safe to the heavenly shore.”

2. So while we may struggle at times in our service to the Lord...
 - a. We can take **comfort**, knowing that Jesus is praying for us during the storm
 - b. We can take **courage**, knowing that His coming for us will bring us great peace

But such comfort and courage will come only to those who are willing to serve Him now. Are you in the “boat” and “rowing” in the service of Jesus Christ, the Son of God...? - cf. **Mt 28:18-20**

The Healings In Gennesaret

Mark 6:53-56

INTRODUCTION

1. Following Jesus' walk on water, other miracles soon followed...
 - a. Shortly after anchoring the boat on the shores of Gennesaret - **Mk 6:53**
 - b. When Jesus healed everyone who was brought to Him - **Mk 6:54-56**
2. **"The Healings In Gennesaret"** provide an opportunity to make observations about...
 - a. The **success** of Jesus' healing ministry
 - b. The **purpose** of Jesus' healing ministry

[Similar observations can be made about the healing ministries of **Peter** and **Paul**, which can serve to critique so-called healing ministries today (are they really of God?). So let's begin by noting...]

I. THE SETTING OF THE HEALINGS

A. IN GENNESARET...

1. Where Jesus and His disciples anchored their boat - **Mk 6:53**
2. A densely populated and fertile plain south of Capernaum - **Hendriksen**
3. About 3 miles along the Sea of Galilee (also called the Lake of Gennesaret, **Lk 5:1**) - **ibid.**
4. Its natural beauty and fertility were most remarkable... the plain produced walnuts, palms, figs, olives, and grapes - **Josephus**

B. OTHER OCCASIONS...

1. The healings of Peter - **Ac 5:14-16**
 - a. In Jerusalem
 - b. During the early days of the church
2. The healings of Paul - **Ac 19:11-12**
 - a. In Ephesus
 - b. During his extended stay, while on his third journey

[In both rustic and urban settings, wonderful things happened when true men of God were healing the sick. But now let's consider carefully...]

II. THE SUCCESS OF THE HEALINGS

A. IN GENNESARET...

1. When people heard He was there, they gathered the sick - **Mk 6:54-56**
2. Wherever He went, they brought the sick to Him
 - a. On beds
 - b. Laying them in the market places
3. **Note well:** "as many as touched Him were made well"

B. OTHER OCCASIONS...

1. Peter in Jerusalem - **Ac 5:14-16**

- a. The sick were laid out in the street on beds and couches
 - b. People from surrounding cities were brought the sick and possessed
 - c. **Note well:** “they were all healed”
2. Paul at Ephesus - **Ac 19:11-12**
 - a. God worked unusual miracles by the hands of Paul
 - b. Even handkerchiefs brought from his body to the sick healed them
 - c. **Note well:** implied is that all who received such ministrations were healed

[The crowds that gathered around Jesus, Peter, and Paul were understandable. The success of these three men was remarkable. Now for an observation or two about...]

III. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE HEALINGS

A. IN GENNESARET...

1. The purpose of the healings was to confirm Jesus' claims - cf. **Jn 5:36; 10:25,37-38**
2. People who saw such signs made the connection - e.g., **Jn 3:2; 9:30-33**
3. Jesus did refrain on one occasion from doing miracles for lack of faith - cf. **Mt 13:58**
4. **But note well:** He never failed any miracle that He Himself attempted!

B. OTHER OCCASIONS...

1. The purpose of apostolic miracles was to confirm their message - **Mk 16:17-20**
2. God bore witness to His Word by the gifts of the Holy Spirit - **He 2:3-4**
3. The apostles did not always heal those they knew were sick - cf. **2Ti 4:20**
4. **But note well:** the apostles never failed any miracle they attempted!

CONCLUSION

1. Today, there are self-proclaimed faith healers who say God is working through them...
 - a. Often large crowds attend their meetings, hoping to be healed
 - b. But many people leave such meetings, disappointed that they were not healed
 - c. Despite having such healers lay their hands on them, and pray for them
2. When true servants of God healed, **everyone** was healed...!
 - a. Whether it was Jesus, Peter or Paul
 - b. The purpose of miracles to confirm they were servants of God
 - c. And God left no room for doubt!
3. The fact is, such healing ministries were for **a specific purpose**...
 - a. They were to confirm the message and messengers as being from God
 - b. Once the Word of God was completely revealed and confirmed, there is no longer a need for such miracles of confirmation - cf. **1Co 13:8-10**
 - c. Which explains why such miracles are not being done today
 - d. Contrary to claims made by false teachers who mislead many

When we carefully study the miracles of Jesus and those of His apostles, comparing them with the so-called miracle healers of today, we can easily see the difference...

The Danger Of Traditions

Mark 7:1-13

INTRODUCTION

1. As Jesus went about teaching, He often ran afoul of religious leaders over keeping traditions...
 - a. E.g., plucking heads of grain on the Sabbath - **Mk 2:23-28**
 - b. E.g., eating with unwashed hands - **Mk 7:1-13**
2. In **Mk 7:1-13**, Jesus describes the danger of traditions at length...
 - a. How keeping them can make void the very commands of God
 - b. How keeping them can make our worship vain before God
3. Traditions are very important in some religions...
 - a. In Roman Catholicism, tradition is placed on par with God's Word
 - 1) "It is an article of faith from a decree of the Vatican Council that Tradition is a source of theological teaching distinct from Scripture, and that it is infallible. It is therefore to be received with the same internal assent of Scripture, for it is the word of God." - **Catholic Dictionary**, p. 41-42
 - 2) "Do you have to believe in Tradition? Yes, because it is the Word of God and has equal authority with the Bible." - **Catholic Catechism For Adults**, p. 11
 - b. Protestant churches have their own traditions
 - 1) It is often their traditions that distinguish between the denominations
 - 2) To be a member of a particular denomination, one must accept its traditions
4. In this study, with **Mk 7:1-13** as our basic text, we will address the following questions...
 - a. What are traditions?
 - b. Are traditions always wrong?
 - c. If not, when does a tradition become sinful?

[Let's begin with...]

I. THE MEANING OF TRADITION

A. THE WORD ITSELF...

1. The Greek word is **paradosis**, which means "giving over" or "handing down"
2. It refers to teaching that is handed down either by word (orally) or in writing

B. AS UNDERSTOOD BY THE JEWS...

1. It applied to the oral teachings of the elders (distinguished elders from Moses on down)
2. These traditions were often divided into three classes...
 - a. Oral laws supposedly given by Moses in addition to the written laws
 - b. Decisions of various judges which became precedents in judicial matters
 - c. Interpretations of highly respected rabbis held in reverence along with the OT scriptures
-- **Article on "Tradition", ISBE**
3. Prior to his conversion, Paul was a staunch supporter of Jewish tradition - **Ga 1:13-14**

C. AS UNDERSTOOD BY ROMAN AND GREEK CATHOLICS...

1. Their views appear to be parallel to that of the Jews
2. What they consider “Tradition” is what they believe to be the teachings:
 - a. Of Jesus or the apostles, persevered orally rather than through writing
 - b. Of various councils which have left various decrees
 - c. Of various church leaders (such as the pope) considered to be inspired with later revelations from God
3. Of course, one is expected to take their word for it that these “traditions” were truly from God and have been faithfully transmitted

D. AS FOUND IN THE SCRIPTURES...

1. The word “tradition” as such is not found in the Old Testament
2. It is found thirteen (13) times in New Testament
 - a. Three (3) times it refers to “apostolic teaching”
 - 1) That which had been delivered by the apostles - **1Co 11:2**
 - 2) Whether by word (in person) or epistle - **2Th 2:15**
 - 3) Which Christians were expected to keep - **2Th 3:6**
 - b. Ten (10) times it refers to “the tradition of the elders” or “the traditions of men”
 - 1) As in our text and parallel passages - **Mk 7:3-13; Mt 15:2-6**
 - 2) Of which Paul warned the Colossians - **Col 2:8**
 - 3) From which Jewish Christians had been delivered - **1Pe 1:18; Ga 1:14**
3. Jesus did not feel bound to abide by “the traditions of the elders”
 - a. Some traditions He had no problem with keeping
 - 1) Such as going to a wedding feast - **Jn 2:1-2**
 - 2) Or attending the Feast Of Dedication - **Jn 10:22-23**
 - b. But He just as easily had no problem with violating other traditions
 - 1) Plucking grain on the Sabbath - **Mk 2:23-28**
 - 2) Eating with unwashed hands - **Mk 7:1-5**
4. Evidently Jesus did not subscribe to the view of “traditions” handed down orally
 - a. He never appealed to the traditions of the elders
 - b. He either appealed to the authority of the written Word (the Law of Moses), or to His own authority as the Son of God

[Not all “traditions” are wrong. If they are teachings of God, “handed down” by inspired men, they are to be heeded (**2Th 2:15**). But if they are doctrines or interpretations handed down by uninspired men, like the traditions of the Jews they are suspect. As we return to our text (**Mk 7:1-13**), Jesus points out...]

II. THE DANGER OF TRADITIONS OF MEN**A. THEY CAN LEAD TO HYPOCRITICAL WORSHIP...**

1. Traditions of men tend toward ritualism (just look at the rituals found in many religions that have no scriptural basis)
2. Such ritualism is often done repeatedly, with little thought as to its origin and purpose
3. It is easy to go through such rituals, with the heart and mind on other things
4. Worship without the heart (or mind) of man is hypocritical worship! - **Mk 7:6**

B. THEY CAN LEAD TO VAIN WORSHIP...

1. When traditions of men are taught on the same level as the commands of God, it leads to vain worship - **Mk 7:7**

2. Such worship may appear to be impressive, but it is actually “empty, worthless”
 - a. First, because God did not command it
 - b. Second, because it does not accomplish the good we really need - cf. **Col 2:18-23**

C. THEY CAN MAKE THE WORD OF GOD VOID...

1. Jesus gave the example of honoring one’s parents - **Mk 7:10-12**
 - a. The elders’ tradition taught giving to the temple freed one from giving to one’s parents
 - b. Thus rendering the command of God of no effect
2. There are traditions of men today with similar affect
 - a. Such as the practice of sprinkling for baptism, a tradition of man
 - b. When one keeps the tradition of sprinkling, they make the command of God to be baptized (immersed) of no effect!
3. Through such traditions, one is actually rejecting the command of God! - **Mk 7:8-9,13**

CONCLUSION

1. What are traditions...?
 - a. They are simply teachings that have been handed down
 - b. In the case of inspired men (like the apostles) given in person or through their writings, such traditions are good and to be followed
2. Oral traditions, given through a succession of uninspired men, are at best suspect...
 - a. Jesus did not hold traditions orally transmitted through the Jews on par with God’s written word
 - b. Nor should we hold traditions orally transmitted through men on par with God’s written word
3. At worst, traditions of men can be vain and deadly...
 - a. When their observance leads one to not keep a command of God
 - b. When they are taught as doctrine, on par with God’s word
 - c. When they lead to ritualism, done without engaging the heart and mind of man

From the words of Jesus, let us beware of “**The Danger Of Traditions**”, and make sure that our faith and practice is based upon the written Word of God, not the interpretations and teachings of uninspired men...!

The Source Of True Defilement

Mark 7:14-23

INTRODUCTION

1. When confronted by the Pharisees and scribes regarding eating with unclean hands...
 - a. Jesus described the danger of traditions - **Mk 7:1-13**
 - b. How they can make our worship vain and the commands of God void - **ibid.**
2. Jesus then used the occasion to teach concerning **true defilement**...
 - a. First to the multitude - **Mk 7:14-16**
 - b. Then privately to His disciples - **Mk 7:17-23**

[Having the benefit of both His public and private teaching in Mark's gospel, we can learn "**The Source Of True Defilement.**" From Jesus remarks to both the multitude and His disciples we learn that it is...]

I. NOT THE FOOD

A. DIETARY RESTRICTIONS IN THE PAST...

1. From the Creation, man (and animals) may have been vegetarian - **Gen 1:29-30**
 2. After the Flood, God gave animals as food, but not their blood - **Gen 9:3-4**
 3. With the Law of Moses, Israelites were restricted in their diet - **Lev 11:1-47**
- **In Old Testament times, God did have some stringent dietary guidelines**

B. DIETARY FREEDOMS IN THE PRESENT...

1. Jesus has declared all foods clean - **Mk 7:14-19**
 - a. To the multitude, Jesus hints at the source of true defilement - **Mk 7:14-16**
 - b. To His disciples, He explains His parable - **Mk 7:17-19**
 - c. "...purifying all foods" is likely a parenthetical statement - **Mk 7:19**
 - d. For while the Law of Moses was in force, Jesus observed it in full - cf. **Mt 5:17-18**
 - e. Thus Mark's parenthetical statement was intended for disciples living after the cross
 2. Paul later taught that all food is acceptable
 - a. Teaching to abstain from foods would be a sign of apostasy - **1Ti 4:1-3**
 - b. Nothing is to be refused when received with thanksgiving and prayer - **1Ti 4:4-5**
 3. There are a few exceptions...
 - a. Things offered to idols, blood, and things strangled - **Ac 15:28-29; 21:25**
 - b. Especially when connected to idolatry - **1Co 10:19-23; Re 2:14,20**
 - c. When certain foods becomes a stumbling block to the weak - **Ro 14:14-21; 1Co 8:8-13**
- **From the New Testament, we learn of the dietary freedom we have in Christ**

[From what Jesus taught His disciples, true defilement comes not from food...]

II. BUT THE HEART

A. MAN HAS A HEART PROBLEM...

1. The heart (mind) is a fountain out of which much that impacts life flows - **Pr 4:23**
2. Affected by sin, it becomes deceitful and wicked - **Ec 9:3; Jer 17:9**

3. Thus the heart is a source of much evil that defiles man - **Mk 7:20-23**
- **The heart (or mind) of man is the real source of defilement**

B. EVIL THOUGHTS LEAD TO TRUE DEFILEMENT...

1. Evil thoughts
 - a. The general term translated 'evil thoughts' precedes the verb in the Greek text and is viewed as the root of various evils which follow - **Bible Knowledge Commentary**
 - b. Evil thoughts generated in a heart unite with one's will to produce evil words and actions - **ibid.**
2. Adulteries
 - a. Illicit sexual relations by a married person
 - b. Which Jesus said could occur in the heart - **Mt 5:27-28**
3. Fornications
 - a. Illicit sexual activities of various kinds, prompted by lust - cf. **1Th 4:3-5**
 - b. Including pre-marital sex, homosexuality, etc.
4. Murders
 - a. Taking life intentionally
 - b. Which is connected to hate in the heart - **1Jn 3:15**
5. Thefts
 - a. Stealing
 - b. Including shoplifting, pilfering, etc.
6. Covetousness
 - a. Greediness
 - b. Which makes one an idolater - **Ep 5:5; Col 3:5**
7. Wickedness
 - a. Evil acts
 - b. Done with malice
8. Deceit - acting with guile and intent to defraud
9. Lewdness
 - a. Unrestrained and unconcealed immoral behavior
 - b. Closely related to lust - cf. **Ro 13:13**
10. An evil eye - a Hebrew idiom for stinginess - cf. **Pr 28:22**
11. Blasphemy - slander, verbal abuse against God or man
12. Pride - arrogance, boastful opinion of one's self, often with disdain toward others
13. Foolishness - lack of common sense, with moral and spiritual insensitivity
- **Such sins prompted by evil thoughts are what truly defile us!**

CONCLUSION

1. Today, many people choose to restrict their diet...
 - a. Some for **health** reasons (allowed by the liberty we have in Christ)
 - b. Others for **religious** reasons (not bound by the liberty we have in Christ)
2. From Christ and His apostles, we learn that all foods have been declared clean...
 - a. When received with thanksgiving
 - b. When sanctified by prayer

Thus we learn where our true focus should be: removing that defilement which springs from sinful hearts (**Ep 4:17-24; 1Pe 4:1-3**). It begins with obedience to the gospel of Christ... - cf. **Ac 2:38; 22:16**

A Gentile Blessed For Her Faith

Mark 7:24-30

INTRODUCTION

1. Many Christians today take their faith and its privileges for granted...
 - a. Perhaps it is the old adage, “familiarity breeds contempt”
 - b. But Gentile Christians in particular should never lose sight of the grace shown them
2. I refer to privileges that were long bestowed on the Israelites...
 - a. Such as a covenant relationship with God
 - b. With all the blessings that accompany such a relationship
 - c. Which are now available to all who come to God with faith in Christ

[An incident in the life of Christ reminds me of “**the way we were**”. It involves a Gentile woman who was blessed for her faith. In **Mk 7:24**, we begin as we pick up with...]

I. THE NARRATIVE

A. THE SEARCH FOR PRIVACY...

1. Jesus had travelled about 40 miles from Capernaum
2. He came to the region of Tyre and Sidon, also known as Syro-Phoenecia - **Mk 7:24**
3. He sought privacy, probably needing rest - cf. **Mk 6:31-32**

B. THE REQUEST FOR A MIRACLE..

1. A woman with a daughter possessed by an unclean spirit came to Him - **Mk 7:25**
2. She was a Greek (Gentile), a Syro-Phoenician by birth - **Mk 7:26**
3. She “kept asking” Jesus to cast out the demon - **Mk 7:26**
4. She even acknowledged Jesus as “O Lord, Son of David!” - cf. **Mt 15:22**
5. Matthew reveals that initially Jesus did not speak to her - cf. **Mt 15:23**
6. That she began pestering His disciples - cf. **Mt 15:23**

C. THE REFUSAL TO HEAL...

1. Matthew’s account explains Jesus’ thinking - cf. **Mt 15:24**
 - a. “I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”
 - b. Compare His charge regarding the “Limited Commission” - cf. **Mt 10:5-6**
 - c. His mission was to fulfill prophecy concerning Israel’s Messiah
 - d. He would later expand His ministry to the world - cf. **Mt 28:19; Mk 16:15**
2. Jesus’ response to her suggested as much - **Mk 7:27**
 - a. “Let the children be **filled first...**”
 - b. There were promises to Israel that needed to be filled before those to the Gentiles

D. THE RESPONSE TO FAITH...

1. The woman’s response to Jesus shows her faith - **Mk 7:28**
 - a. “Yes, Lord...” - she acknowledge the right for Him to refuse her request
 - b. “...yet even the little dogs under the table eat from the children's crumbs..” - she would be happy with “crumbs” left over from His ministry to the Jews

2. Jesus admired her faith and healed her daughter - **Mk 7:29-30**
 - a. Matthew adds that Jesus said, "O woman, great is your faith!" - cf. **Mt 15:28**
 - b. And that her daughter "was healed instantly" - cf. **Mt 15:28**

[Thus this Gentile woman was blessed for her faith. With this incident fresh on our mind...]

II. SOME OBSERVATIONS

A. OTHER GENTILES BLESSED BY FAITH...

1. The centurion at Capernaum - **Mt 8:5-13**
2. Cornelius, the first Gentile convert to the gospel - **Ac 10:1-6**
- **The first centurion ate "crumbs", the latter the first to "sit at the table"**

B. GENTILES ARE NOW BLESSED BY FAITH...

1. We are no longer:
 - a. Without Christ
 - b. Aliens from the commonwealth of Israel
 - c. Strangers from the covenants of promise
 - d. Having no hope and without God in the world - **Ep 2:11-12**
2. We are now:
 - a. Brought near by the blood of Christ - **Ep 2:13**
 - b. Reconciled as one body in Christ - **Ep 2:14-17**
 - c. With access by one Spirit to the Father - **Ep 2:18**
 - d. Fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God - **Ep 2:19-22**
- **True to Jesus' promise (Mt 8:11-12), Gentiles can now sit at the table!**

C. ARE WE MAKING GOOD USE OF OUR BLESSINGS...?

1. Not if we refuse to **come** to the table
 - a. By not obeying the gospel
 - b. Jesus now invites everyone - **Mk 16:15-16**
2. Not if we refuse to **eat** at the table
 - a. Through disobedience and neglect
 - b. This was the mistake of many of the Jews - cf. **Mt 8:11-12; 21:43**
3. Not if we eat only the **crumbs**
 - a. Through apathy and neglect
 - b. This was the problem with Sardis and Laodicea - cf. **Re 3:1-2,14-19**
- **If the "sons" will be cast out, how much more ungrateful "dogs"? - cf. Ro 11:21-22**

CONCLUSION

1. This incident, "**A Gentile Blessed For Her Faith**", should remind us of...
 - a. The way we were **before** Christ
 - b. The blessings we **now** enjoy in Christ
2. Do we have her kind of faith...?
 - a. **Persisting** even when first rebuffed?
 - b. **Willing** to accept even the smallest of blessings?

For those who do, a spiritual feast awaits...! - cf. **Ep 1:3**

He Has Done All Things Well

Mark 7:31-37

INTRODUCTION

1. I would like for you to ask yourself: What has Jesus done for you...?
 - a. Anything?
 - b. Something?
2. If Jesus has done anything for you, how would you describe it...?
 - a. More than you expected?
 - b. Less than you expected?

[If less than expected, keep it mind as we begin reading in **Mk 7:31** about Jesus healing a deaf mute...]

I. THE NARRATIVE

A. THE JOURNEY TO THE SEA OF GALILEE...

1. Jesus left the region of Tyre and Sidon - **Mk 7:31**
 - a. Where he had healed the daughter of the Syro-Phoenician woman
 - b. A woman blessed for her faith - **Mk 7:24-30**
2. He traveled through the region of **Decapolis** - **Mk 7:31**
 - a. So called after ten cities in the area, mostly SE of the Sea of Galilee
 - b. Damascus, Raphana, Hippos, Abila [or Canatha], Gadara, Scythopolis, Pella, Dion, Gerasa, and Philadelphia [Amman]
 - c. Predominately Gentile and Hellenistic in their culture
 - d. Where the man healed of legions of demons proclaimed Christ - **Mk 5:20**
3. Matthew's gospel adds a few details - **Mt 15:29-31**
 - a. Jesus went to a mountain and sat down
 - b. Many lame, blind, mute and maimed were brought and healed
 - c. The multitude marveled and glorified the God of Israel (these are likely Gentiles)

B. JESUS HEALS A DEAF MUTE...

1. People bring a deaf mute to Jesus and beg Him to heal him - **Mk 7:32**
2. Aside from the multitude, Jesus begins the healing - **Mk 7:33-34**
 - a. Putting His fingers in the deaf mute's ears, spitting, and touching his tongue
 - b. Looking to heaven, sighing, and saying "Ephphatha" (Aramaic for "Be opened")
3. The healing is instantaneous - **Mk 7:35**
 - a. His ears are opened
 - b. He begins to speak plainly

C. JESUS' REQUEST AND THE CROWD'S RESPONSE...

1. He commanded them to tell no one, but they widely proclaim it - **Mk 7:36**; cf. **Mk 1:44-45**
2. They are astonished, saying "He has done all things well" - **Mk 7:37**

[This is a detailed and rather unusual account of one of Jesus' miracles of healing. The response of the crowd is also worthy of note. Allow me therefore to offer...]

II. SOME OBSERVATIONS

A. REGARDING THE HEALING...

1. Jesus may have been using sign language to explain what He was doing
 2. **The fingers in the ears** - "Something will be done for your ears...and I will do it."
 3. **The touch of the tongue** - "Something will be done for your tongue...and I will do it."
 4. **The spit** - His intention was to heal, as saliva was thought to have medicinal properties
 5. **The look to heaven** - indicating His help came from above
 6. **The sigh** - the sympathizing Jesus, taking the man's condition to heart - cf. **Isa 53:4**
- **William Hendriksen (Baker's New Testament Commentary)**

B. REGARDING THE DECLARATION...

1. "He has done all things well"
 - a. He astonished those who saw His miracles - **Mk 7:37**
 - b. He astonished those who heard His teachings - **Mk 1:22; 6:2**
 - c. This is before His amazing death, resurrection, and ascension to heaven!
 2. Has Jesus done all things well for you?
 - a. Given you rest for your soul? - **Mt 11:28-30**
 - b. Saved you from your sins? - **Mk 16:15-16**
 - c. Given you the peace the world cannot give? - **Jn 14:27**
 3. If not, why not?
 - a. Could it be for lack of faith? - cf. **Mk 6:5-6**
 - b. Could it be your heart is restricted? - cf. **2Co 6:11-13**
 - 1) The Corinthians restricted themselves from receiving Paul's love
 - 2) Might we be guilty of doing the same in receiving Jesus' love and power?
 4. As God has often asked His people:
 - a. "Is anything too hard for the Lord?" - **Gen 18:14**
 - a. "Has the Lord's arm been shortened?" - **Num 11:23**
 - b. "Is My hand shortened at all that it cannot redeem?" - **Isa 50:2**
 - c. "Or have I no power to deliver?" - **Isa 50:2**
 - d. "Is the Spirit of the LORD restricted?" - **Mic 2:7**
- **Think about these things, if your spiritual life is vapid!**

CONCLUSION

1. Jesus has certainly done all things well...
 - a. "He changed sunset into sunrise." - **Clement of Alexandria**
 - b. "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation..." - **2Co 5:17**
2. But has He done all things well for you...?
 - a. If your spiritual life is insipid, remember His words to the Laodiceans - **Re 3:14-22**
 - b. It is most likely you have not been following Jesus as fervently as you should

"What good is having someone who can walk on water if you don't follow in his footsteps?" - Author Unknown

Jesus, who has done all things well, stands ready to **open your eyes** to see the beauty of His salvation, to **open your mouth** to proclaim the glory of His redemption...!

Feeding The Four Thousand

Mark 8:1-10

INTRODUCTION

1. During His earthly ministry, Jesus focused attention on the house of Israel...
 - a. As He commanded when giving the Limited Commission - **Mt 10:5-6**
 - b. As He explained to the Syro-Phoenician woman - **Mt 15:24**
2. Even so, there were occasions when Gentiles benefited from His physical presence...
 - a. The Syro-Phoenician woman's daughter healed - **Mk 7:24-30**
 - b. Healings in the area of Decapolis, including the deaf mute - **Mt 15:29-31; Mk 7:31-37**
 - c. Feeding of the four thousand - **Mk 8:1-10**

[It is the feeding of the four thousand that we now direct our attention, first by taking a closer look at...]

I. THE NARRATIVE

A. THE SETTING...

1. "In those days" - **Mk 8:1**
 - a. Connecting this miracle with those we've just studied - **Mk 7:31-37; Mt 15:29-31**
 - b. Placing it in the area of Decapolis, SE of the Sea of Galilee - **Mk 7:31**
 - c. A prominently Gentile region, where Jesus had healed a demoniac - **Mk 5:1-13**
 - d. Who had broadcast what Jesus did for him throughout Decapolis - **Mk 5:18-20**
2. Other particulars - **Mk 8:1-3**
 - a. A great multitude, who had been with Jesus three days
 - b. In a wilderness region, without food, far from their homes

B. THE MIRACLE...

1. Prompted by Jesus' compassion - **Mk 8:2-3**
2. Unforeseen by Jesus' disciples - **Mk 8:4**
3. Using only seven loaves and a few small fish - **Mk 8:5-7**
4. Occurring after Jesus gave thanks for the bread, and blessed the fish - **Mk 8:6-7**
5. With seven large baskets of leftover fragments - **Mk 8:8**
6. Feeding 4000 men, besides women and children - **Mk 8:9; cf. Mt 15:38**

[After feeding the multitude, Jesus sent them away and got on a boat with His disciples to cross the Sea of Galilee over to Dalmanutha (on the west coast). With the narrative fresh on our minds, here are...]

II. SOME OBSERVATIONS

A. TWO MIRACLES COMPARED...

- | <u>The 5000</u> | <u>The 4000</u> |
|--|---|
| 1. In Galilee | 1. In Decapolis |
| 2. Jews - cf. Jn 6:14-15 | 2. Gentiles (Decapolis) - Mk 7:31; 8:1 |
| 3. With Jesus one day - Mk 6:35 | 3. With Jesus three days - Mk 8:2 |
| 4. Near villages - Mk 6:36 | 4. In wilderness - Mk 8:3-4 |

5. Five loaves, two fish - **Mk 5:41**
6. 5000 men, plus women and children - **Mt 14:21**
7. Surplus = 12 hand baskets - **Mk 6:43**
- * **The large baskets were like hampers, large enough to hide in - cf. Ac 9:25**
5. Seven loaves, few small fish - **Mk 8:5,7**
6. 4000 men, plus women and children - **Mt 15:38**
7. Surplus = 7 large baskets * - **Mk 8:8**

B. THE SATISFYING POWER OF JESUS...

1. We see a **picture of need** - “nothing to eat”
2. We see a **revelation of love** - “I have compassion on the multitude”
3. We see a **consideration of grace** - “if I send them away hungry to their own houses, they will faint on the way”
4. We see a **question of helplessness** - “How can one satisfy these people with bread here in the wilderness?”
5. We see a **command requiring trust** - “He commanded the multitude to sit down on the ground”
6. We see a **manifestation of power** - “those who had eaten were about four thousand”
7. We see a **superabundance of supply** - “they took up seven large baskets of leftover fragments”
- **From Handfuls On Purpose, Smith & Lee**

C. NOT UNLIKE THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST...

1. There is need - **Ro 3:23**
2. There is love - **Ro 5:8**
3. There is grace - **Ro 6:23**
4. There is helplessness - **Ro 3:9**
5. There is a command requiring trust - **Ro 6:3; cf. Mk 16:16; Ac 2:38; 22:16**
6. There is manifestation of power - **Ro 6:4-7; 8:1-2,11-13**
7. There is superabundance of supply - **Ro 8:31-39; cf. Ep 3:20-21**
- **He who fed thousands with bread then feeds millions with the bread of life today!**

CONCLUSION

1. The feeding of the four thousand was a miracle which...
 - a. Was quite different than feeding the five thousand
 - b. Foreshadowed the grace to be offered all men, both Jew and Gentile
2. May it serve to remind us concerning Jesus...
 - a. He knows our every need
 - b. He is touched by our infirmities
 - c. He is able to abundantly supply our need

As Paul wrote to his beloved brethren in the churches at Philippi and Ephesus...

“And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.” - Php 4:19

“Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.” - Ep 3:20-21

The Savior's Sigh

Mark 8:11-13

INTRODUCTION

1. Have you ever considered the Lord's reaction to your behavior...
 - a. When you refuse to believe in Him?
 - b. When you do not follow Him as you should?
2. In this lesson I want us to think how Jesus must feel...
 - a. When we put off obeying the gospel of Christ
 - b. When we fail to trust and obey Him in our daily walk

[In our text (**Mk 8:11-13**) we read of Jesus' response to those who came to test Him. Let's begin by carefully noting...]

I. THE NARRATIVE

A. THE PHARISEES' DEMAND A SIGN...

1. Jesus had just returned to the western shores of Galilee - **Mk 8:10**
2. The Pharisees began to dispute with Him - **Mk 8:11**
 - a. They had challenged Jesus before - **Mk 2:6-7,16; 3:22; 7:1-2**
 - b. Matthew adds that they were joined by the Sadducees - **Mt 16:1**
3. They demanded a sign - **Mk 8:11**
 - a. A sign from heaven, perhaps like Joshua? - cf. **Josh 10:12-14**
 - b. Had they not seen and heard of the many miracles already done?
 - c. They were testing Him, perhaps hoping He would fail and be discredited

B. JESUS' RESPONSE INVOLVED A SIGH...

1. He sighed deeply in His spirit - **Mk 8:12**
 - a. The anguish which Jesus experienced came from deep down inside him - **Hendriksen**
 - b. Here the word "spirit" is used in a sense not much different from "heart" or "inner being." - **ibid.**
2. Similar responses on other occasions
 - a. Grieved by the hardness of their hearts - **Mk 3:5**
 - b. Sighed as He healed the deaf mute - **Mk 7:34**
 - c. Groaned in His spirit seeing the grief of others - **Jn 11:33**
 - d. Wept over the city of Jerusalem - **Lk 19:41-44**

[Because of their hard hearts, no sign such as they were demanding would be given them, except His resurrection (**Mk 8:12-13**; cf. **Mt 12:39-40; 16:1-4**). Now consider whether Jesus might "sigh deeply in His spirit today...]

II. THE APPLICATION

A. JESUS OBSERVES OUR BEHAVIOR...

1. Just as He observed the behavior of Saul of Tarsus - **Ac 9:5**

2. Just as He observed the churches of Asia
 - a. He knew their works - **Re 2:2,9,13,19; 3:1,8,15**
 - b. He found fault where it was due - **Re 2:4,14,20; 3:2,16**

B. WOULD NOT JESUS SIGH DEEPLY...

1. When we refuse to obey His gospel, time after time? - cf. **Mt 11:28-30**
2. When our conduct is not much different than those of the world? - cf. **Mt 5:20**
3. When our love is no different than that displayed by sinners? - cf. **Mt 5:44-48**
4. When the kingdom of God is not our priority in life? - cf. **Mt 6:33**
5. When tribulation or persecution causes us to stumble? - cf. **Mt 13:20-21**
6. When anxiety or materialism makes us unfruitful? - cf. **Mt 13:22**
7. When discouragement leads us to abandon prayer? - cf. **Lk 18:1**
8. When human traditions displace keeping the commands of God? - cf. **Mk 7:7,9**
9. When denominationalism defeats His prayer for unity? - cf. **Jn 17:20-21**
10. When love of the world replaces love for His Father? - cf. **1Jn 2:15-17**

CONCLUSION

1. From the Savior's sigh we learn that Jesus cared deeply...
 - a. For those He was willing to heal (e.g., the deaf mute)
 - b. For those He was willing to save (e.g., the Pharisees)
2. In similar fashion, Jesus stands ready...
 - a. To save us from our sins
 - b. To heal us of our souls' diseases

How will Jesus react to our response to Him? Will it be with great joy, or a deep sigh in His spirit...?

Beware Of Leaven

Mark 8:14-21

INTRODUCTION

1. Following the disputation with the Pharisees, Jesus warned His disciples...
 - a. As they sailed the Sea of Galilee from Dalmanutha to Bethsaida - **Mk 8:10,13,22**
 - b. Charging them to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of Herod - **Mk 8:15**
 - c. Matthew's gospel mentions the Sadducees (often aligned with Herod) - **Mt 16:6,11-12**
2. The disciples at first misunderstood...
 - a. They thought it was because they had forgotten to take bread - **Mk 8:14-16**
 - b. Jesus corrected their misunderstanding, reminding them of His miracles - **Mk 8:17-21**
 - c. Then they understood that "leaven" referred to "doctrine" - cf. **Mt 16:11-12**
3. Leaven is a good metaphor for doctrine...
 - a. Both operate with subtlety
 - b. Both are very potent
 - c. Both gradually spread their influence

[What doctrines or characteristics of the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Herodians might Jesus have been warning about? Are there parallels today that we would should beware today? Let's start with...]

I. THE LEAVEN OF THE PHARISEES

A. THE PHARISEES THEN WERE...

1. A religious and political group noted for its conservatism
 - a. They were strict observers of the Law of Moses
 - b. They also adopted "the traditions of the elders", interpretations of the Law that had been handed down - cf. **Mk 7:1-5**
 2. Jesus described them as "blind leaders of the blind" - **Mt 15:12-14**
 - a. They made the commandments of God of no effect by their traditions - **Mt 15:3-6**
 - b. They were often hypocrites, teaching one thing and practicing another - **Mt 15:7-8; 16:3; 23:1-4, 27-28; cf. Lk 12:1**
 - c. They did their works to be seen of men - **Mt 23:5**
 - d. They loved the attention and special treatment by others - **Mt 23:6-7**
 - d. They wore religious titles - **Mt 23:8-10**
 - e. They prevented others from finding the way to the kingdom of heaven - **Mt 23:13**
 - f. They used their religion to make money and impress others - **Mt 23:14**
 - g. They didn't make people better, they made them worse! - **Mt 23:15**
 - h. They made distinctions where God did not - **Mt 23:16-22**
 - i. Though sticklers for some commandments, they ignored others - **Mt 23:23-24**
 - j. They honored men of God who went before them, but were more like those who persecuted the people of God - **Mt 23:29-31**
- **They were the more conservative religious group in Jesus' day**

B. THE PHARISEES TODAY ARE THOSE WHO...

1. Teach and practice traditions of men, instead of the commands of God
 2. Teach one thing, while practicing another
 3. Do things to be seen of men, wearing special garments, and using religious titles
 4. Do not truly show people the way to the kingdom of heaven
 5. Use religion to make money and impress others
 6. Make distinctions where God has made none
 7. Stress some commands, but neglect others as unnecessary
- **Religious conservatives are susceptible to being like the Pharisees today**

[Now let's consider...]

II. THE LEAVEN OF THE SADDUCEES

A. THE SADDUCEES THEN WERE...

1. A religious and political group noted for its liberalism
 - a. Included many powerful members of the priesthood - **Ac 5:17**
 - b. They insisted only the laws found in the Pentateuch were binding
 - c. They rejected "the traditions of the elders"
 - d. They did not believe in the resurrection, spirits, angels - **Ac 23:8; Mt 22:23**
 - e. They did not believe in rewards or punishment after death, nor in heaven or hell
 2. Jesus charged them with two faults - **Mt 22:23-29**
 - a. They did not know the Scriptures
 - 1) Even those scriptures they held to be true!
 - 2) For Jesus used the Pentateuch to show their error - **Mt 22:31-32; Exo 3:6**
 - b. They did not know the power of God
 - 1) Like many liberals, they were influenced by rationalism
 - 2) They assumed that if they could not comprehend something, it could not be true
 - 3) They failed to believe what Gabriel and Jesus both knew: that with God, nothing is impossible! - **Lk 1:37; Mt 19:26**
- **They were the more liberal religious group in Jesus' day**

B. THE SADDUCEES TODAY ARE THOSE WHO...

1. Take portions of God's word, but reject the rest; such as those who:
 - a. Accept the words of Jesus, but not His apostles - contra **Jn 13:10; Ac 2:42; 1Co 14:37**
 - b. Accept the words of His apostles, but hold that ALL of Jesus' teachings in the gospels are Old Covenant teaching - contra **Mt 28:20; Ac 20:35; 1Ti 5:18b; Lk 10:7**
2. Accept human reason over divine revelation
 - a. Who will not accept a Biblical doctrine unless it makes sense to them
 - b. A dangerous position to hold, since God has chosen to confound the wise and arrogant with the foolishness of the gospel message - cf. **1Co 1:18-31**
 - c. Some doctrines revealed may contain elements beyond man's ability to fully comprehend (such as the mystery of godliness: God manifested in the flesh - **1Ti 3:16**; or the nature of the Godhead itself)
 - d. A child-like trust is more becoming of a Christian - cf. **Mt 18:3; Ps 131:1-3**
3. Rule out the power of God
 - a. Rejecting any doctrine, any promise, of the Scriptures if conceived as not being possible
 - b. Such as the creation, the virgin birth, the miracles of Jesus, the resurrection of the dead
 - c. But once we accept the premise that with God all things are possible, we cannot reject Biblical testimony just because it does not fit our preconceived ideas of what is possible

-- **Religious liberals are susceptible to being like the Sadducees today**

[Finally, let's consider...]

III. THE LEAVEN OF THE HERODIANS

A. THE HERODIANS THEN WERE...

1. Jews who supported the dynasty of Herod, though it was mostly a puppet of Rome
 2. Not a religious sect, but a political party; secular minded rather than spiritually minded
 3. They would align themselves with the Pharisees when convenient - **Mk 3:6; 12:13**
 4. They were often interchangeable with the Sadducees - cf. **Mk 8:15** with **Mt 16:6**
- **They were politicians first, who used religion to promote their cause**

B. THE HERODIANS TODAY ARE THOSE WHO...

1. Believe the solution lies in politics, not the gospel
 2. Are more interested in worldly matters than the kingdom of God
 - a. When the kingdom of God should come first - **Mt 6:33; Php 3:20**
 - b. When we are to be pilgrims and sojourners - **1Pe 2:11-12**
 - c. Where we are to avoid worldly attachments - **2Co 6:14-7:1**
 3. Use religion when convenient to get the support of the masses
- **Political activists are susceptible to being like the Herodians today**

CONCLUSION

1. The parallels between then and now are striking...
 - a. **Pharisees** - religious fundamentalists
 - b. **Sadducees** - religious liberals
 - c. **Herodians** - political activists
2. Jesus' warning is sorely needed today...
 - a. "Take heed, beware of the leaven..."
 - b. For it is so easy to become like those who opposed our Lord

How can we ensure that we do not become like the Pharisees, Sadducees, or the Herodians? Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, with Jesus and His apostles as our spiritual guides and mentors...

The Blind Man At Bethsaida

Mark 8:22-26

INTRODUCTION

1. Among the many people Jesus healed included the blind...
 - a. As foretold by Isaiah - cf. **Lk 4:18**
 - b. Offered as evidence to John the Baptist - cf. **Lk 7:20-22**
2. The healing of a blind man in our text is unique in two ways...
 - a. It is found only in Mark's gospel
 - b. It is the only miracle by that occurs in two stages

[Opening our Bibles to our text (**Mk 8:22-26**), let's first examine...]

I. THE NARRATIVE

A. JESUS ARRIVES IN BETHSAIDA...

1. Bethsaida Julias, near where the 5000 had been fed - **Mk 8:22**; cf. **Lk 9:10**
2. On the NE side of the Sea of Galilee, near the entrance of the Jordan

B. A BLIND MAN IS BROUGHT TO HIM...

1. By those who begged Jesus to touch him - **Mk 8:22**
2. By concerned friends, similar to those who brought the paralytic - cf. **Mk 2:3**

C. JESUS TAKES HIM OUT OF THE TOWN...

1. Leading the blind man by the hand - **Mk 8:23**
2. Similar to what He did with the deaf mute - cf. **Mk 7:33**

D. JESUS HEALS HIM IN TWO STAGES...

1. Stage one - **Mk 8:23-24**
 - a. Jesus spat on his eyes and then touched him
 - 1) Similar to what He did with the deaf mute - cf. **Mk 7:33**
 - 2) Perhaps to convey to the blind man His intentions
 - 3) The spit - His intention was to heal, saliva was thought to have medicinal properties
 - 4) The touch - "Something will be done for your eyes...and I will do it."
 - b. When asked if he saw anything, he looked up and said, "I see men like trees, walking"
2. Stage two - **Mk 8:25**
 - a. Jesus put His hands on his eyes again and made him look up
 - b. His sight was completely restored and saw everyone clearly

E. JESUS SENDS HIM AWAY WITH AN ADMONITION...

1. To his house, not into town, not to tell anyone - **Mk 8:26**
2. Similar to earlier admonitions following His healings - cf. **Mk 1:44; 5:43; 7:36**
3. Undue attention would hinder His ability to travel and do His work
4. Especially by the Pharisees, Sadducees, and the Herodians - cf. **Mk 8:11**

[With the account of this unusual miracle fresh on our minds, allow me to share...]

II. SOME OBSERVATIONS

A. WE DO NOT KNOW WHY JESUS DID IT THIS WAY...

1. Why take the blind man out of the town of Bethsaida?
 - a. To avoid publicity?
 - b. To establish a one-to-one relationship with the man?
 - c. Because Bethsaida had been judged already? - cf. **Mt 11:21-22**
 2. Why didn't the man receive perfect sight immediately?
 - a. Was it the spiritual condition of the man himself?
 - b. Was it to illustrate the slow progress of the disciples' faith? - cf. **Mk 8:18**
- **Any explanation is speculation at best**

B. THE LORD DOES NOT ALWAYS DO THINGS THE SAME WAY...

1. Jesus healed at least eight blind men, using a variety of approaches
 - a. Two men were healed by a simple touch of their eyes - **Mt 9:27-31**
 - b. A blind and mute man was simply healed - **Mt 12:22**
 - c. Two more blind men were healed by a simple touch of the eyes - **Mt 20:30-34**
 - d. In our text, the blind man was healed with touch and spittle, in two stages - **Mk 8:22-26**
 - e. Blind Bartimaeus was healed with but a simple word - **Mk 10:46-52**
 - f. A blind man was healed with the anointment of the eyes with clay and spittle, followed by washing in the pool of Siloam - **Jn 9:1-7**
 2. Similarly, prayer is not always answered the same way
 - a. God may say "yes" and the prayer answer immediately
 - b. God may say "yes, but wait awhile"
 - c. God may say "yes, but not in the way you expect"
- **Faith is content to receive God's working, however He deems proper**

C. SPIRITUAL GROWTH OCCURS IN STAGES...

1. Similar to how this particular miracle occurred
 2. Such was the case with Jesus' disciples - cf. **Mk 8:18**
 3. So we should expect our spiritual growth to take time - cf. **1Co 3:1-2; 2Pe 3:18**
- **Faith is patient, understanding that important things often take time**

CONCLUSION

1. Many commentators have noted our similarity with "The Blind Man At Bethsaida"...
 - a. We are spiritually blinded by sin, in need of "healing" - **Ro 3:23**
 - b. We need the special attention of Jesus to be "healed" - **Mt 11:28-30; Mk 16:15-16; Col 2:11-13**
 - c. When Jesus "heals" us of spiritual blindness, it may take awhile to see clearly - **He 5:12-14**
2. Are you still in sin...?
 - a. Blinded by sin, and alienated from the life of God? - cf. **Ep 4:17-19**
 - b. Then you need Jesus to be renewed in righteousness and holiness - cf. **Ep 4:20-24**

Begin by coming to Jesus through obedience to His gospel, and continue by walking with Him, seeing more clearly day by day...!

Who Do You Say That Jesus Is?

Mark 8:27-30

INTRODUCTION

1. On the road from Bethsaida to Caesarea Philippi, Jesus asked His disciples two questions...
 - a. “Who do men say that I am?” - **Mk 8:27-28**
 - b. “But who do you say that I am?” - **Mk 8:29-30**
2. The responses to such questions concerning Jesus’ identity...
 - a. Have been many and varied
 - b. Both in Jesus’ day and today

[It is the most important question people could ask themselves, for their response determines their destiny both in this life and the life to come. Let’s take a look at...]

I. WHAT PEOPLE SAID THEN

A. JOHN THE BAPTIST...

1. King Herod thought this when he heard about Jesus - **Mk 6:14**
2. Perhaps motivated by guilt for having beheaded John - **Mk 6:16**

B. ELIJAH...

1. Likely based on their misunderstanding of Malachi’s prophecy - **Mal 4:5**
2. Which Jesus explained referred to John the Baptist - **Mt 17:10-13**

C. JEREMIAH...

1. As mentioned in Matthew’s account of this conversation - **Mt 16:14**
2. Who some Jews expected to be resurrected as a precursor to the Messiah

D. ONE OF THE PROPHETS...

1. One of the old prophets risen again
2. As mentioned in Luke’s account of this conversation - **Lk 9:19**

E. BEELZEBUB...

1. Some had identified Jesus with Beelzebub, that is, Satan - **Mt 10:25**
2. So thought some of the scribes and Pharisees - **Mk 3:22; Mt 12:24**

F. MENTALLY DERANGED...

1. So thought some of His family - **Mk 3:21; cf. Jn 7:5**
2. As did many others - **Jn 10:30**

G. CHRIST, THE SON OF THE LIVING GOD...

1. As per Mark’s gospel, Peter said “You are the Christ” - **Mk 8:27**
 - a. Christ (Greek) = Messiah (Hebrew)
 - b. Meaning, “the Anointed One”
2. As per Matthew, Peter added “The Son of the living God” - **Mt 16:16**

- a. God's Son in an unique sense, not true of any mortal
- b. As confessed by others (Nathanael, Martha, John) - **Jn 1:49; 11:27; 20:31**

[Opinions of Jesus' identity were quite diverse during His ministry. Today, it is not much different...]

II. WHAT PEOPLE SAY TODAY

A. FABRICATION...

1. Some skeptics deny He ever existed
2. Yet the Encyclopedia Britannica uses 20,000 words to tell about Jesus and never hints that He did not exist

B. GOOD MAN...

1. Many say He was simply a good man, a good teacher, akin to Mahatma Gandhi
2. Yet the Biblical claims do not leave us this option: "You can shut Him up for a fool, you can spit at Him and kill Him as a demon; or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God. But let us not come up with any patronizing nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to." - **C. S. Lewis**

C. PROPHET...

1. Many believe He was a prophet of God, but not the Son of God
2. So teaches the religion of Islam

D. CHRIST, THE SON OF THE LIVING GOD...

1. As professed by Christians today, and to them He is so much more!
2. As indicated by this list of over 100 names and titles of Jesus:

Advocate (1Jn 2:1)	Last Adam (1Co 15:45)
Almighty (Re 1:8; Mt 28:18)	Life (Jn 14:6; Col 3:4)
Alpha and Omega (Re 1:8; 22:13)	Light of the World (Jn 8:12)
Amen (Re 3:14)	Lion of the Tribe of Judah (Re 5:5)
Apostle of our Profession (He 3:1)	Living One (Re 1:18)
Atoning Sacrifice for our Sins (1Jn 2:2)	Living Stone (1Pe 2:4)
Author of Life (Ac 3:15)	Lord (2Pet 2:20)
Author & Perfecter of our Faith (He 12:2)	Lord of All (Ac 10:36)
Author of Salvation (He 2:10)	Lord of Glory (1Co 2:8)
Beginning and End (Re 22:13)	Lord of lords (Re 19:16)
Blessed and only Ruler (1Ti 6:15)	Man from Heaven (1Co 15:48)
Bread of God (Jn 6:33)	Master (Lk 5:5; 8:24; 9:33)
Bread of Life (Jn 6:35; 6:48)	Mediator of the New Covenant (He 9:15)
Bridegroom (Mt 9:15)	Mighty God (Isa 9:6)
Capstone (Ac 4:11; 1Pe 2:7)	Morning Star (Re 22:16)
Chief Cornerstone (Ep 2:20)	Offspring of David (Re 22:16)
Chief Shepherd (1Pe 5:4)	Only Begotten Son of God (Jn 1:18; 1Jn 4:9)
Christ (1Jn 2:22)	Our Great God and Savior (Tit 2:13)
Creator (Jn 1:3)	Our Holiness (1Co 1:30)
Deliverer (Ro 11:26)	Our Husband (2Co 11:2)
Eternal Life (1Jn 1:2; 5:20)	Our Protection (2Th. 3:3)
Faithful and True (Re 19:11)	Our Redemption (1Co 1:30)

Faithful Witness (Re 1:5)	Our Righteousness (1Co 1:30)
Faithful and True Witness (Re 3:14)	Our Sacrificed Passover Lamb (1Co 5:7)
First and Last (Re 1:17; 2:8; 22:13)	Power of God (1Co 1:24)
Firstborn From the Dead (Re 1:5)	Precious Cornerstone (1Pe 2:6)
Firstborn over all creation (Col 1:15)	Prophet (Ac 3:22)
Gate (Jn 10:9)	Rabbi (Mt 26:25)
God (Jn 1:1; 20:28; He 1:8; Ro 9:5)	Resurrection and Life (Jn 11:25)
Good Shepherd (Jn 10:11,14)	Righteous Branch (Jer 23:5)
Great Shepherd (He 13:20)	Righteous One (Ac 7:52; 1Jn 2:1)
Great High Priest (He 4:14)	Rock (1Co 10:4)
Head of the Church (Ep 1:22; 4:15; 5:23)	Root of David (Re 5:5; 22:16)
Heir of all things (He 1:2)	Ruler of God's Creation (Re 3:14)
High Priest (He 2:17)	Ruler of the Kings of the Earth (Re 1:5)
Holy and True (Re 3:7)	Savior (Ep 5:23; Tit 1:4; 3:6; 2Pe 2:20)
Holy One (Ac 3:14)	Son of David (Lk 18:39)
Hope (1Ti 1:1)	Son of God (Jn 1:49; He 4:14)
Hope of Glory (Col 1:27)	Son of Man (Mt 8:20)
Horn of Salvation (Lk 1:69)	Son of the Most High God (Lk 1:32)
I Am (Jn 8:58)	Source of Eternal Salvation (He 5:9)
Image of God (2Co 4:4)	The One Mediator (1Ti 2:5)
Immanuel (Mt 1:23)	The Stone the builders rejected (Ac 4:11)
Judge of the living and dead (Ac 10:42)	True Bread (Jn 6:32)
King Eternal (1Ti 1:17)	True Light (Jn 1:9)
King of Israel (Jn 1:49)	True Vine (Jn 15:1)
King of the Jews (Mt 27:11)	Truth (Jn 1:14; 14:6)
King of kings (1Ti 6:15; Re 19:16)	Way (Jn 14:6)
King of the Ages (Re 15:3)	Wisdom of God (1Co 1:24)
Lamb (Re 13:8)	Word (Jn 1:1)
Lamb of God (Jn 1:29)	Word of God (Re 19:13)
Lamb Without Blemish (1Pe 1:19)	

* [100 Biblical Names And Titles Of Jesus](#)

CONCLUSION

1. We have seen what people said about Jesus...
 - a. **Then** - during His earthly ministry
 - b. **Now** - by atheist, agnostic, skeptic, and believer
2. But the key question today is this: **“Who do YOU say that Jesus is...?”**
 - b. Your answer will determine your eternity - cf. **Mt 10:32-38; Ac 17:30-31**
 - a. Your answer will determine how you live today - cf. **Mt 28:18-20**

My prayer is that you would join with Peter and countless others and confess to Jesus:

“You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

Why not confess Jesus now, as you obey the gospel of Christ (e.g., **Ac 8:35-38**). For you will either confess Him now, or confess Him later when it is too late...! - cf. **Ph 2:9-11**

Mindful Of The Things Of God

Mark 8:31-33

INTRODUCTION

1. As Jesus travelled near Caesarea Philippi, He made the first of three predictions concerning what awaited Him in Jerusalem... - **Mk 8:31**; cf. **9:31**; **10:33-34**
 - a. He must suffer many things
 - b. He must be rejected and killed, and rise again in three days
2. Peter's response was adamant...
 - a. He took Jesus aside and began to rebuke Him... - **Mk 8:32**
 - b. Peter's words: "Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You!" - cf. **Mt 16:22**
3. In turn, Jesus looks at His disciples and then rebukes Peter...
 - a. "Get behind Me, Satan! For you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men."
- **Mk 8:33**
 - b. Matthew reveals that Jesus also said: "You are an offense to Me..." - **Mt 16:23**

[Peter's outburst of concern for Jesus was only natural. But Jesus' rebuke reveals an important lesson in being "**Mindful Of The Things Of God.**" Let's first consider that...]

I. GOD'S WAYS ARE NOT OUR WAYS

A. AS STATED...

1. "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways" - **Isa 55:8**
2. "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts." - **Isa 55:9**

B. AS ILLUSTRATED...

1. By His view of suffering in the scheme of redemption - **Mk 8:31-33**; **Lk 24:26-27,44-46**
2. By His view of greatness versus ours - **Mk 10:42-45**
3. By His view of beauty versus ours - **1Pe 3:3-4**
4. By His view of money versus ours - **Lk 16:13-15**

[Clearly the mind of God and the things of God come from a higher plane than the mind of man. Peter failed to appreciate this. How can we be sure that we are ever "**Mindful Of The Things Of God**"...?]

II. MINDFUL OF THE THINGS OF GOD

A. WE CANNOT TRUST OURSELVES...

1. Our feelings
 - a. This is often the standard of right and wrong for many people
 - 1) Who go by whatever "feels right"
 - 2) Who place stock in a religion "better felt than told"
 - b. Yet the Bible declares the danger of trusting in our feelings
 - 1) "There is a way which seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death." - **Pr**

14:12

- 2) "He who trusts in his own heart is a fool..." - **Pr 28:26**
2. Our conscience
 - a. "Let your conscience be your guide" is the motto of many
 - b. But consider: "O Lord, I know the way of man is not in himself; It is not in man who walks to direct his own steps." - **Jer 10:23**
 - c. Our conscience is not always reliable
 - 1) Paul had served God with a good conscience throughout his life - **Ac 23:1**
 - 2) Even at a time when he was persecuting Christians! - cf. **Ac 26:9-11**
3. Our wisdom
 - a. Many feel that through their own wisdom they can determine right and wrong
 - b. God has chosen to save man in a manner designed to confound the wise - **1Co 1:18-29**
 - c. For us to know God's will, it was necessary for Him to reveal it to us - **1Co 2:9-12**
 - 1) This He has done through His Spirit-inspired apostles
 - 2) Who in turn shared it with us through their writings - **Ep 3:1-5**

B. WE MUST TRUST IN GOD...

1. In how to be saved
 - a. Some seek to be saved by good works
 - b. Others by faith only
 - c. We must trust in Jesus and His apostles - **Mk 16:15-16; Ac 2:38; 22:16**
2. In how to worship
 - a. Some want to offer what pleases them
 - b. Others want to offer what pleases others
 - c. We must trust in the commands and will of the Lord - **Mk 7:6-7,9; Col 3:17**
3. In how to live
 - a. Some want to make themselves #1
 - b. Others want to make work or family #1
 - c. We must trust Jesus and the Word of God - **Mt 6:33; 1Ti 6:17-19; 2Ti 3:16-17; 2Pe 1:3**

CONCLUSION

1. We can only be "**Mindful Of The Things Of God**" when we...
 - a. Humbly submit to what is revealed in the Word of God
 - b. Refuse to let our feelings, conscience, or wisdom be our guide
2. Otherwise, we are "**Mindful Of The Things Of Men**", where we...
 - a. Become an instrument of Satan! - cf. **Mk 8:33**
 - b. Become an offense to Jesus! - cf. **Mt 16:23**

Have you given much thought as to whether you are "**Mindful Of The Things Of God**"...?

"If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth."
 - **Col 3:1-2**

"And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God."
 - **Ro 12:2**

The Cost Of Discipleship

Mark 8:34-35

INTRODUCTION

1. At the beginning of His ministry, Jesus called people to become His disciples...
 - a. Such as Simon and Andrew - **Mk 1:16-18**
 - b. Also James and John - **Mk 1:19-20**
2. At the conclusion of His ministry, Jesus sent His apostles to make more disciples...
 - a. To make disciples of all the nations - **Mt 28:19**
 - b. Teaching them to observe all that He commanded - **Mt 28:20**
3. In the text for this lesson, we find Jesus discussing the issue of discipleship...
 - a. Having just predicted His own suffering, death, and resurrection - **Mk 8:31**
 - b. Telling His disciples and others what is the cost of discipleship - **Mk 8:34-35**

[A disciple is a **learner**, a **follower**; to be a disciple of Jesus means that we follow Jesus. But as Jesus mentions in our text, such discipleship requires a cost. To be a true disciple of Jesus...]

I. ONE MUST DENY SELF

A. WHAT IT MEANS...

1. To deny sinful self, ungodliness, and worldly lusts; and part with them, and his former sinful companions, which were as a part of himself - **Gill**
 2. To deny righteous self, and renounce all his own works of righteousness, in the business of justification and salvation - **ibid.**
- **To deny self with its self-righteous pride and sinful lust from dominating you**

B. HOW IT'S MANIFESTED...

1. Denying sinful self, expounded by Peter
 - a. Abstaining from fleshly lusts - **1Pe 2:11-12**
 - b. No longer living like the rest of the world - **1Pe 4:1-4**
 2. Denying righteous self, exemplified by Paul
 - a. Who had much about which he could have boasted - **Php 3:4-6**
 - b. But chose to put all his trust in Christ - **Php 3:7-14**
- **In precept and practice, the apostles tell us what it means to deny self**

[Together with denying self, to be a disciple of Christ...]

II. ONE MUST TAKE UP HIS CROSS

A. WHAT IT MEANS...

1. To voluntarily and decisively accept the pain, shame, and persecution that is going to be one's particular—note: his, not someone else's—lot because of his loyalty to Christ and his cause - **Hendriksen**
2. To cheerfully receive, and patiently bear, every affliction and evil, however shameful and

painful it may be, which is appointed for him, and he is called unto; which is his peculiar cross, as every Christian has his own; to which he should quietly submit, and carry, with an entire resignation to the will of God, in imitation of his Lord - **Gill**

3. The cross is to be born “daily”, indicating Jesus was speaking metaphorically - cf. **Lk 9:23**
- **To gladly endure whatever hardship one may receive in service to Christ!**

B. HOW IT'S MANIFESTED...

1. In the case of the apostles
 - a. What they all endured - **1Co 4:9-13**
 - b. What Paul in particular endured - **2Co 11:23-29**
 2. In our case, it may involve being:
 - a. Ridiculed - **1Pe 4:4**
 - b. Reviled (spoken evil of, excluded) - **1Pe 4:4; Mt 5:11; Lk 6:22**
 - c. Reproached - **1Pe 4:14**
- **All the while, rejoicing that one is honored to suffer for Christ - 1Pe 4:16; Ac 5:40-42**

[With a willingness to deny self and bear one's own cross on a daily basis...]

III. ONE MUST FOLLOW JESUS

A. WHAT IT MEANS...

1. To become His disciple, seeking to become like Him - **Lk 6:40; cf. Ro 8:29; 13:14**
 2. To accept Him as Lord, doing what He says - **Lk 6:46; cf. Col 3:17**
 3. To walk in His footsteps, even at great cost - **1Pe 2:21-25**
- **To become a Christian, to let Jesus be your Lord and mentor**

B. HOW IT'S MANIFESTED...

1. Obeying the gospel of Christ - **Mt 28:19; Mk 16:15-16; Ac 2:38; 22:16**
 2. Observing all He and His apostles commanded - **Mt 28:20; Ac 2:42; 1Co 14:37**
 3. Ever growing in the grace and knowledge of Christ - **2Pe 3:18**
- **Putting Jesus on in baptism, and then living with Him - Ga 3:27; 2:20**

CONCLUSION

1. **The cost of discipleship** may seem rather high...
 - a. One must deny self
 - b. One must take up one's cross
 - c. One must follow Jesus
2. But as Jesus explains, **there are only two choices...** - **Mk 8:35**
 - a. One can try to save his life himself, but will end up losing it - cf. **Jn 8:24**
 - b. One can lose his life for Jesus' sake and the gospel's, and wind up saving it! - cf. **Re 2:10**

For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it. - Mk 8:35

In view of eternity, **there is only one viable choice:** endure the high cost of discipleship, and receive the blessings of eternal life...!

The Value Of A Soul

Mark 8:36-37

INTRODUCTION

1. After telling His disciples and others nearby the cost of being His disciple, Jesus asked...

“For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?” - Mk 8:36-37

2. With these words of Jesus we are reminded of the value of the soul...
 - a. It is the most valuable possession one has
 - b. All earthly possessions, position, pleasure, and power are not worth the value of one's soul!

[But perhaps some might wonder...]

I. WHY IS THE SOUL OF MAN SO VALUABLE?

A. IT IS MADE IN GOD'S IMAGE...

1. Man was created in the image of God - **Gen 1:26-27**
 - a. Yet God does not have a physical body like ours - cf. **Jn 4:24; Lk 24:39**
 - b. Therefore it must be our soul, or spirit, that is in God's image
2. This is what enable us to comprehend abstract concepts as:
 - a. Life, death, eternity
 - b. Things of beauty
 - c. A moral sense of ought, right and wrong, good and evil
3. Making us more than just animal creatures - cf. **Ps 8:3-8**

B. IT IS THAT OVER WHICH WE HAVE MUCH CONTROL...

1. The body is mostly the result of genetics
 - a. We might be able to change a little through exercise, plastic surgery, etc.
 - b. But we cannot stop the eventual aging and dying process
2. The soul, however, is different...
 - a. Despite one's genetics, there is much that can be changed
 - b. With God's help, we can change attitudes, character - **Ro 12:1-2; Col 3:12-15**

C. IT DOES NOT CEASE TO EXIST AT DEATH...

1. The body dies, and soon returns back to the dust
 - a. The soul, or spirit, returns back to God - **Ec 12:7**
 - b. Awaiting the resurrection of the body - cf. **1Co 15:35-58**
2. After which comes the Judgment - **He 9:27; 2Co 5:10**
 - a. The soul, in its resurrected body, will bear the brunt of that Judgment
 - b. Either eternal life, honor, glory, and immortality - **Ro 2:7**
 - c. Or indignation, wrath, tribulation, and anguish - **Ro 2:8-9**
3. Which is why we need to evaluate all things (possessions, decisions, actions) from an eternal perspective, from the soul's viewpoint - **Mt 10:28; 16:26**

D. IT REQUIRES A GREAT COST TO REDEEM IT...

1. What price is required to redeem our souls from the wrath of God's judgment?
2. Nothing less than the blood of the Son of God! - **1Pe 1:18-19**
3. Even if we cannot fully comprehend why Jesus had to die, we should be able to see that the souls of men must be extremely valuable if His death was necessary

[So the Bible teaches that the soul is more valuable than the whole world! And yet, many "sell their souls" for what surely are petty bargains. For example, consider...]

II. WHAT WILL ONE GIVE IN EXCHANGE FOR HIS SOUL?

A. FOR SOME IT IS EARTHLY RICHES AND FAME...

1. In their quest for riches, they neglect their service to God - **1Ti 6:10**
2. Yet they've traded their souls for what is corruptible and can be stolen - **Mt 6:19-21**

B. FOR OTHERS IT IS THE PASSING PLEASURES OF SIN...

1. Like the young man tempted by the harlot - **Pr 5:1-14**
 - a. In a moment's passion, lives are destroyed (AIDS, unwanted pregnancies)
 - b. Marriages and families are ruined
2. Young people in the Bible should inspire us to make the right choices
 - a. Like Joseph - **Gen 39:7-9**
 - b. Like Moses - **He 11:24-25**
 - c. Like Daniel - **Dan 1:8**

C. FOR OTHERS IT IS CONVENIENT FALSE DOCTRINES...

1. Of which we need to beware - **Col 2:8,18**
2. For the devil is a master at this - **2Co 11:13-15**
3. Through lack of Bible study, we can lose the most valuable thing we have! - **Hos 4:6**

D. FOR MANY IT IS SIMPLE NEGLECT...

1. They will not use the opportunities the Lord has given them - cf. **Mt 25:24-30**
2. They fail to apply the diligence necessary to grow spiritually - cf. **2Pe 1:5-11**

CONCLUSION

1. How valuable is your soul...?
 - a. Think of what the rich man in Hades would tell you - cf. **Lk 16:22-24**
 - b. Think of what the souls of the redeemed would say to you - cf. **Re 7:13-17**
 - c. Think of what Jesus and God have done to save your soul! - cf. **Jn 3:16**
2. Dear friends and brethren, you don't have to lose your soul...!
 - a. Humbly submit yourself to the will of God
 - b. Let His Word guide you, let no man beguile you of your reward
 - c. Overcome temptations, and suffer for His cause with rejoicing

Implied in all these words is that there will be the Day of Judgment (**Ac 17:30-31**), with possible consequences terrible beyond comprehension (**Re 20:11-15; 21:8**).

Are you willing to risk losing your soul...?

Ashamed Of Jesus And His Words?

Mark 8:38

INTRODUCTION

1. Jesus taught that discipleship can be costly... - **Mk 8:34**
 - a. It requires denial of self
 - b. It demands bearing hardship
 - c. It involves following Jesus despite the cost
2. Following Jesus may be embarrassing for some... - **Mk 8:38**
 - a. For as then, so today, we live in an adulterous and sinful world
 - b. Where others often ridicule you for your faith in Jesus
 - c. As they try to weaken your resolve to follow Jesus

[Yet Jesus warns why we should not be ashamed of Him (in view of His glorious return). In this lesson I hope to encourage you as to why you should never be ashamed of **Jesus** and **His words**...]

I. DO NOT BE ASHAMED OF JESUS

A. CONSIDER WHO HE IS...

1. As confessed by those who saw Him
 - a. **John the Baptist:** “The Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world” - **Jn 1:29**
 - b. **Nathaniel:** “The Son of God, the King of Israel!” - **Jn 1:49**
 - c. **Nicodemus:** “A teacher come from God” - **Jn 3:2**
 - d. **The 5000:** “Truly the Prophet who is to come into the world” - **Jn 6:14**
 - e. **Peter:** “You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God” - **Jn 6:69**
 - f. **Thomas:** “My Lord and My God” - **Jn 20:28**
 - g. **Paul:** “The blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords” - **1Ti 6:15**
 - h. **John:** “The faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, the ruler over the kings of the earth” - **Re 1:5**
 2. As professed by Jesus Himself
 - a. “I am the bread of life” - **Jn 6:35**
 - b. “I am the light of the world - **Jn 8:12**
 - c. “I am the door” - **Jn 10:9**
 - d. “I am the good shepherd” - **Jn 10:11**
 - e. “I am the resurrection and the life” - **Jn 11:25**
 - f. “I am the way, the truth, and the life” - **Jn 14:6**
 - g. “I am the true vine” - **Jn 15:1**
 - h. “I AM” (a declaration that He is the Eternal One, that is, God) - **Jn 8:58**
- **The veracity of such statements has been established by His resurrection! - cf. Ro 1:4**

B. CONSIDER WHAT OTHERS HAVE SAID...

1. “I am an historian, I am not a believer, but I must confess as a historian that this penniless preacher from Nazareth is irrevocably the very center of history. Jesus Christ is easily the most dominant figure in all history.” - **H.G. Wells**
2. **Henry G. Bosch**, author of Our Daily Bread, summed it up nicely:

- a. "Socrates taught for 40 years, Plato for 50, Aristotle for 40, and Jesus for only 3. Yet the influence of Christ's 3-year ministry infinitely transcends the impact left by the combined 130 years of teaching from these men who were among the greatest philosophers of all antiquity."
 - b. "Jesus painted no pictures; yet, some of the finest paintings of Raphael, Michelangelo, and Leonardo da Vinci received their inspiration from Him."
 - c. "Jesus wrote no poetry; but Dante, Milton, and scores of the world's greatest poets were inspired by Him."
 - d. "Jesus composed no music; still Haydn, Handel, Beethoven, Bach, and Mendelssohn reached their highest perfection of melody in the hymns, symphonies, and oratorios they composed in His praise."
 - e. "Every sphere of human greatness has been enriched by this humble Carpenter of Nazareth."
- **Jesus is the most famous person who ever lived, how can we ever be ashamed of Him?**

[We have no reason to be ashamed of Jesus. But it is not only **Jesus** Himself, but **His words**...]

II. DO NOT BE ASHAMED OF HIS WORDS

A. CONSIDER THAT MANY ARE ASHAMED...

1. That Jesus taught and warned about hell - **Mt 10:28; 13:41,47-50**
 2. That Jesus taught He is the only way to salvation - **Jn 8:24; 14:6**
 3. That only few would be saved, not even some who believe - **Mt 7:13-14; 7:21-23**
 4. That He taught one must believe and be baptized to be saved - **Mk 16:15-16**
 5. That He taught there is only one ground for divorce and remarriage - **Mt 19:9**
- **People show their shame when unwilling to believe and stand for what Jesus taught**

B. CONSIDER THE POWER OF HIS WORDS...

1. They are the words of God - **Jn 3:34**
 2. They are spirit and they are life - **Jn 6:63**
 3. They are the words of eternal life - **Jn 6:68**
 4. They are the words by which mankind will be judged - **Jn 12:48**
 5. They are the words by which we enjoy fellowship with God - **Jn 14:21,23**
 6. They are words which when obeyed lead to answered prayer - **Jn 15:7**
 7. They are words which give peace in a troubled world - **Jn 16:33**
- **In light of such power, how can we be ashamed of His words?**

CONCLUSION

1. When properly considered and understood, we have no reason to be ashamed...
 - a. **Of Jesus** - who He is, what He has done, what He is doing, what He will one day do
 - b. **Of His words** - what they are, what they mean, what they can accomplish in our lives
2. When Jesus returns to raise the dead and judge the world...
 - a. If we are ashamed of Jesus, He will be ashamed of us - **Mk 8:38**
 - b. If we live for Him and follow His words, He will glorify us! - **2Th 1:7-12**

May we ever be able to sing the hymn with sincerity: **"I'm not ashamed to own my Lord, Or to defend His cause; Maintain the honor of His Word, The glory of His cross."** (Paul G. Glaser)...

They Beheld His Majesty

Mark 9:1-9

INTRODUCTION

1. In His discussion on discipleship, Jesus makes a remarkable claim...
 - a. He will one day come in the glory of His father with the holy angels - **Mk 8:38**
 - b. A reference to His coming in on the Day of Judgment - cf. **Mt 16:27; 25:31-32**

2. To support His claim, Jesus makes another remarkable statement: “Assuredly, I say to you that there are some standing here who will not taste death till...”
 - a. “they see the kingdom of God present with power.” - **Mk 9:1**
 - b. “they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom.” - **Mt 16:28**
 - c. “they see the kingdom of God.” - **Lk 9:27**

3. To what does Jesus refer? Several interpretations have been given...
 - a. Jesus’ transfiguration on the mount
 - b. Jesus’ resurrection and ascension
 - c. The coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost and beginning of the church
 - d. The destruction of Jerusalem by Rome in 70 A.D.
 - e. The second coming of Christ

4. Note that the gospel writers connect these sayings with an event about to occur...
 - a. Matthew and Mark record “and after six days...” - **Mk 17:1; Mk 9:2**
 - b. Luke writes “about eight days” (“the Jewish equivalent of ‘about a week later’.”) - **Lk 9:28**
 - c. Luke adds “after these sayings”, clearly tying the event to what had just been said

[That event was the transfiguration of Christ on the mountain, which served as a striking preview and guarantee of His future coming in glory (cf. **2Pe 1:16-18**). What happened on the mount? Simply put, **“They Beheld His Majesty”**. Note first of all..]

I. THEY BEHELD THE MAJESTY OF HIS PERSON

A. EVIDENCED BY HIS TRANSFIGURATION...

1. He was transfigured - **Mk 9:2**
 - a. Grk., **metamorphoo** {met-am-or-fo'-o}
 - b. Meaning to change, transfigure, transform
2. This change affected His face and clothing
 - a. His face shone like the sun - **Mt 17:2** (Luke says the appearance of His face was altered - **Lk 9:29**)
 - b. His clothes became as white as the light - **Mt 17:2**
 - 1) Shining, exceedingly white, like snow, more than any launderer can whiten them - **Mk 9:3**
 - 2) White and glistening - **Lk 9:29**
3. Peter later wrote that what he saw was His “majesty” (**2Pe 1:16**); the effulgence of His glory possibly representing His deity as the Son of God - cf. **He 1:1-3**

B. EVIDENCED BY THE PRESENCE OF MOSES AND ELIJAH...

1. They were talking with Jesus - **Mk 9:4**
 - a. They also appeared in glory - **Lk 9:31a**
 - b. Discussing with Jesus about His coming death in Jerusalem - **Lk 9:31b**
 - c. Peter, James, and John had been sleeping, but awoke to see Jesus in His glory, and talking with Moses and Elijah - **Lk 9:32**
 - d. Moses and Elijah then began to depart - **Lk 9:33**
2. That Moses and Elijah would appear with Jesus was not lost on Peter - **Mk 9:5-6**
 - a. Moses and Elijah were the epitome of the Law and the Prophets
 - b. Peter wanted to build three tabernacles, one each for Jesus, Moses and Elijah
3. Jesus had evidently been elevated to the same level as Moses and Elijah in Peter's mind!

[But Peter was soon to learn that Jesus was greater than Moses and Elijah, especially in regards to His authority. Therefore as we continue we note that...]

II. THEY BEHELD THE MAJESTY OF HIS COMING KINGDOM**A. EVIDENCED BY THE VOICE FROM HEAVEN...**

1. While Peter was still speaking, a bright cloud overshadowed them - **Mk 9:7**
2. Peter, James, and John, fearfully entered the cloud - **Lk 9:34**
3. A voice came out of the cloud: "This is My beloved Son. Hear Him!" - **Mk 9:7**
 - a. This terrified the disciples - **Mt 17:6**
 - b. Jesus then sought to comfort them - **Mt 17:7**
4. The command, "Hear Him!" implies...
 - a. That God would now speak through His Son, not the Law (Moses) and the Prophets (Elijah) - cf. **He 1:1-2**
 - b. That the rule and reign of God would be exercised through His Son, as He would be given all authority in heaven and earth - cf. **Mt 28:18**
5. Of course, this rule and reign (i.e., Christ's kingdom) would begin after Christ suffered (i.e., His death) and entered into glory (i.e., His ascension) - cf. **Lk 24:26**
 - a. Which explains why He told them to tell no one the vision until after His resurrection - **Mk 9:9**
 - b. What they witnessed was **a foretaste, a foreshadowing** of His coming glory and rule in His kingdom!

B. EVIDENCED BY THE ABSENCE OF MOSES AND ELIJAH...

1. After hearing the voice, and lifting up their eyes, only Jesus was present - **Mk 9:8**
2. Perhaps symbolizing what the voice clearly declared: that Jesus was the one they were to hear, not Moses and Elijah who likely represented the Law and the Prophets

CONCLUSION

1. Truly "**They Beheld His Majesty**"...
 - a. They beheld the majesty **of His person**
 - 1) Transfigured before them
 - 2) Exalted even above Moses and Elijah
 - b. They beheld the majesty **of His coming kingdom**
 - 1) Acknowledged from heaven as God's beloved Son
 - 2) The One whom all should heed, for all authority would be given to Him

2. What is the significance of this event...?
 - a. I take it to be **the fulfillment Jesus' promise** in **Mk 9:1; Mt 16:28; Lk 9:27**
 - 1) That some would see the kingdom of God "present" with power
 - 2) That some would see the Son of Man "coming" in His kingdom
 - 3) That some would see the kingdom of God (i.e., His rule or reign)
 - b. As such, what they saw was **a foretaste of His kingdom or rule...**
 - 1) Just a foretaste, which is why they were to keep silent for a time - **Mk 9:9**
 - 2) To be fully exercised after His death and resurrection - cf. **Ep 1:20-23; 1Pe 3:22**
 - 3) Which includes that day in which He will judge the world! - cf. **Ac 17:30-31**
3. All the events at the mount contributed to giving Jesus honor and glory from the Father - **2Pe 1:17**
 - a. The glorious transfiguration of Christ
 - b. The presence (and subsequent absence) of Moses and Elijah
 - c. The voice from heaven, acknowledging Christ as God's Son
4. What does God desire of us today...?
 - a. Not tabernacles or temples erected in the memory of His Son
 - b. But for us to simply obey what God said at the mount: **"Hear Him!"**

If we desire to add to the honor and glory that Jesus so richly deserves, and to one day behold His majesty in heaven, then be careful to heed what He himself said regarding His authority:

"All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." - Mt 28:18-20

Disciples Ask Questions

Mark 9:10-13

INTRODUCTION

1. After being told not to reveal what occurred on the mount of transfiguration, Peter, James, and John had questions about what Jesus said... - **Mk 9:10**
 - a. They weren't sure what rising from the dead meant
 - b. Though believing in the future resurrection, they were perplexed by announcements of Jesus' own death and resurrection - cf. **Mk 9:31-32**
2. They then asked a question about what scribes taught concerning Elijah...
 - a. Why Elijah must come first, that is, precede the Messiah - **Mk 9:11**
 - b. Jesus confirms the scribes were correct, Elijah must come first - **Mk 9:12**; cf. **Mal 4:5**
 - c. But that Elijah had already come, in the person of John the Baptist - **Mk 9:13**; cf. **Mt 17:12-13**

[Note that in the first case, the disciples had a question but did not ask, thus remaining in ignorance (cf. **Mk 9:31-32**); in the second case, they had a question, asked and received their answer. Important to discipleship is asking questions! To appreciate why, let's first review...]

I. THE CONCEPT OF DISCIPLESHIP

A. THE WORD "DISCIPLE"...

1. The Greek word is **mathetes** - a learner, pupil - **Thayer**
2. It denotes "one who follows another's teaching" - **Vine's Expository Dictionary**

B. WHAT JESUS EXPECTS OF DISCIPLES...

1. To learn from Him - **Mt 11:28-30**
2. To be taught things He commanded - **Mt 28:19-20**

C. WHAT THE APOSTLES EXPECT OF DISCIPLES...

1. To grow in knowledge - **2Pe 3:18**
2. To increase in the knowledge of God and Christ - **Col 1:10; Php 3:8**

[A disciple of Christ, then, is to be life-long learner, growing in the knowledge of God and those things which He taught Himself and through His apostles. Important to such learning is...]

II. THE ROLE OF QUESTIONS

A. JESUS TAUGHT BY ASKING QUESTIONS...

1. In regards to healing on the Sabbath - **Mt 12:10-12**
 2. In regards to His identity - **Mt 16:13-15; 22:42-45**
 3. In regards to divorce - **Mk 10:3**
 3. In regards to paying taxes - **Lk 20:22-25**
 4. In regards to having authority - **Mt 21:24-25**
- **Asking questions can be a useful teaching tool**

B. DISCIPLES LEARNED BY ASKING QUESTIONS...

1. They asked about His parables - **Mk 4:10; 7:17**
 2. They asked about Elijah - **Mk 9:11**
 3. They asked about their inability to cast out a demon - **Mk 9:28**
 4. They asked about His teaching on divorce - **Mk 10:10**
 5. They asked about the man born blind - **Jn 9:2**
 6. They asked about the destruction of Jerusalem - **Mk 13:1-4**
- **Asking questions is a great way to learn**

C. WE SHOULD LEARN BY ASKING QUESTIONS...

1. Do not hesitate to ask questions
 - a. In Bible classes
 - b. After the sermons
 - c. At any time (in person, via email, by phone)
 2. Do not be afraid to ask questions
 - a. Some fear they will appear ignorant
 - b. Which is better:
 - 1) To appear ignorant temporarily?
 - 2) To remain ignorant permanently?
 3. Besides learning, asking questions is a great way:
 - a. To make Bible classes more interesting
 - b. To help teachers and preachers be more useful (they love questions!)
 4. I had a student who came to class prepared with questions
 - a. He wrote them down prior to class on 3x5 index cards
 - b. His questions encouraged others to ask their own questions
 - c. It provided a great learning experience for all
- **Never underestimate the importance of asking questions!**

CONCLUSION

1. Remember, a disciple is a life-long learner...
 - a. As disciples of Christ, we must always be learning
 - b. Growing in knowledge, understanding, and wisdom
2. There is no better way to learn than to ask questions...
 - a. Ask a brother, a sister, a teacher, a preacher
 - b. Keep asking until you get a Biblical answer

And you certainly do not have to wait until you are a disciple of Jesus to ask questions. Consider the example of the Ethiopian eunuch:

So the eunuch answered Philip and said, "I ask you, of whom does the prophet say this, of himself or of some other man?" Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning at this Scripture, preached Jesus to him. Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, "See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?" - Ac 8:34-36

He asked two questions: one that **began his learning about Jesus**, the other that **led to his being saved by Jesus!** Are you willing to ask questions in order to learn and be saved...?

Jesus Heals A Deaf-Mute Boy

Mark 9:14-29

INTRODUCTION

1. Coming down from the mount of transfiguration with His three disciples...
 - a. Jesus finds His other disciples embroiled in controversy - **Mk 9:14**
 - b. Surrounded by a multitude, disputing with scribes - **ibid.**
2. The controversy apparently involved a failed attempt to heal a deaf-mute boy...
 - a. Who from childhood had been prone to seizures
 - b. Whose father desperately wanted him healed
 - c. Whom the disciples of Jesus had not been able to heal

[The account of this miracle is one of most detailed in the gospels. From it we **can learn valuable lessons**, but must also **be careful not to misapply** what is said. Let's start by examining...]

I. THE NARRATIVE

A. THE FAILURE OF THE DISCIPLES...

1. Jesus finds His disciples embroiled in controversy - **Mk 9:14-16**
2. It appears related to their inability to heal a man's deaf-mute son - **Mk 9:17-18,25**
3. Jesus chides His disciples for their lack of faith - **Mk 9:19**
4. As the boy is brought to Jesus, he has a spirit-induced seizure - **Mk 9:20**
5. The father describes how this has happened often since childhood - **Mk 9:21-22**
6. The father begs for compassion if Jesus can help - **Mk 9:22**
- **A chaotic scene, the disciples' frustration and father's emotions much in evidence**

B. THE SUCCESS OF THE SAVIOR...

1. Jesus responds to the plea of the father - **Mk 9:23-24**
 - a. If the father can believe, all things are possible
 - b. The father professes faith, begs for more faith
2. As the crowd draws closer, Jesus heals the deaf-mute boy - **Mk 9:25-27**
 - a. The demon cast out with a great convulsion, leaving the boy dead-like
 - b. Jesus takes the boy by the hand, lifting him up, and the boy rises
3. Jesus privately informs the disciples as to the reason for their failure - **Mk 9:28-29**
 - a. Jesus explains the need for prayer in a case like this
 - b. Many manuscripts add the need for fasting as well
- **The incident ends with a quiet teaching opportunity for His disciples**

[The record of this miracle provides insight as to the role of faith, prayer, and even fasting. But we must be careful in how we understand what Jesus is teaching. With this in mind, we consider...]

II. THE APPLICATION

A. CAVEATS...

1. Avoid **misapplication**

- a. It can be tempting to take Jesus' words in isolation
 - b. Especially "all things are possible to him who believes"
 - c. Which some have taken literally, without exception
 - d. Giving many people false hope, destroying faith in the process
2. Consider **context**
- a. All things are possible, but must be within God's will - **1Jn 5:14**
 - 1) E.g., Jesus in the garden - **Mk 14:35-36**
 - 2) E.g., Paul with his thorn in the flesh - **2Co 12:7-9**
 - 3) As one brother put it: "All things are possible, but they must be on the menu"
 - b. Some things are not possible, when asked improperly
 - 1) For selfish and sinful reasons - **Jm 4:3**
 - 2) While not keeping God's commandments - **1Jn 3:22**
- **Jesus' words presume God's permission and our obedience**

B. PRINCIPLES...

- 1. The importance of **faith**
 - a. Faith cannot be underestimated - **He 11:6; Mt 8:13; 9:22,29**
 - b. Such faith grows through the Word of God - **Ro 10:17**
 - c. It certainly does not hurt to pray: "Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!" - **Mk 9:24**
 - d. But responses to faith are always subservient to God's will (cf. Paul's thorn)
 - 2. The power of **prayer**
 - a. Our faith, while important, is not always sufficient
 - b. God must be involved, for only with Him are all things possible - **Lk 1:37**
 - c. Thus at time faith must be joined with prayer - e.g., **Jm 5:14**
 - d. But also, responses to prayer are subservient to God's will - **1Jn 5:14**
 - 3. The role of **fasting**
 - a. Fasting was often joined with prayer to incur God's favor - **Ezr 8:21-23**
 - b. Fasting served to humble oneself before God - **Ps 35:13; 69:10**
 - c. Such humility is more likely to incur God's favor - **Isa 57:15; 66:1-2**
 - d. Thus people often served God with fasting and prayer - **Lk 2:36-37; Ac 13:2-3**
- **Faith, prayer, and fasting working together can accomplish more if it be God's will**

CONCLUSION

- 1. Many have misconstrued the words of Jesus...
 - a. "If you believe, you will receive" (gospel of health and wealth)
 - b. "If you can conceive it, you can achieve it" (power of positive thinking)
- 2. But they fail to take Jesus' words in the overall context of the Bible...
 - a. What we seek must be in keeping with the Lord's will
 - b. What we seek must not be for selfish purposes
- 3. On the other hand, many do not fully appreciate...
 - a. The importance of **faith** in God
 - b. The power of **prayer** to God
 - c. The role of **fasting** in service to God

With the aid of the Word of God, we can better know what is in keeping with His will. Then we can better make use of our faith, prayer, and fasting as we seek to do His will...

The Way To Greatness

Mark 9:33-37

INTRODUCTION

1. Quietly passing through Galilee, Jesus and His disciples came to Capernaum...
 - a. On the way, Jesus foretold His suffering a death a second time - **Mk 9:30-32**
 - b. Also on the way, the disciples disputed who would be the greatest - **Mk 9:33-34**
2. Jesus took this opportunity to teach His disciples the way to true greatness...
 - a. A way involving servitude
 - b. A way involving humility

[Like many other paradoxes found in the Scripture (e.g., **Mt 5:4-5**), the way to greatness in the kingdom of God is different than the way to greatness in the kingdoms of men. From Jesus we learn it involves...]

I. THE WAY OF SERVITUDE

A. IMPORTANCE OF SERVITUDE...

1. “If anyone desires to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all.” - **Mk 9:35**
 2. Greatness in Christ’s kingdom is different than kingdoms of men - cf. **Mt 20:20-26**
 3. To be first (great), we must serve, just as Jesus served - cf. **Mt 20:27-28**
- **The way of servitude is the way to greatness!**

B. EXAMPLES OF SERVITUDE...

1. Serve others in **evangelism**
 - a. Someone led you to Christ, can you not lead another to Him? - **Jn 1:35-42**
 - b. Begin by being hospitable, offering acts of kindness and service
 - c. At the very least: invite to services, offer a Bible correspondence course
 - d. Open your home to host Bible studies
 - e. Hone your skills in personal evangelism, seek to improve your ability to share the gospel
 2. Serve others in **edification**
 - a. Many have contributed to your spiritual growth, can you help others? - **Ep 4:16**
 - b. Begin by being present at every service, greeting every one present
 - c. Take special interest in those who are new, encourage them
 - d. Offer to teach the children, even if only to assist another teacher
 - e. Volunteer whatever service you can render in the work and worship of the church
 3. Serve others in **benevolence**
 - a. Has anyone ever showed you kindness? “Be kind to one another” - **Ep 4:32**
 - b. Visit the sick or elderly, at home and in the hospital
 - c. Render service such as cleaning, transportation, errands, etc.
 - d. Minister to the poor, the hungry, or those otherwise in need
- **These are just a few ideas of how we can serve others**

[In order to offer the kind of service that really pleases God, and thereby makes one great in the kingdom of God, the virtue of humility is required. And so Jesus taught His disciples...]

II. THE WAY OF HUMILITY

A. IMPORTANCE OF HUMILITY...

1. Jesus used a little child to teach the importance of humility - **Mk 9:36-37**
 2. The humility of small children provides an example for us - cf. **Mt 18:1-4**
 3. Like servitude, humility is a cardinal virtue in the kingdom - cf. **1Pe 5:5**
 4. When we humbly receive others in Jesus' name, we receive both Him and His Father in heaven - **Mk 9:37**
- **The way of humility is the way to greatness!**

B. EXAMPLES OF HUMILITY...

1. In the area of **evangelism**
 - a. Be open to opportunities to learn how to do personal work
 - b. Ask others if you can accompany them as they teach others
 - c. Reach out to those who are different than you
 - d. Especially those less fortunate than you - cf. **Jm 2:5**
 2. In the area of **edification**
 - a. Gladly accept subservient roles in teaching, preaching, worship
 - b. Encourage and assist those who teach our children
 - c. Warmly welcome those below or above your "social status" - **Jm 2:1-4**
 - d. Help with mundane tasks (e.g., cleaning the building)
 3. In the area of **benevolence**
 - a. Help those less fortunate than you - **Lk 14:12-14**
 - b. Perform menial tasks where needed
 - c. Offer to babysit, provide meals, help with expenses, etc.
- **These are just a few ideas of how we show humility toward others**

CONCLUSION

1. It may not seem like much, but the way to greatness is not possible without...
 - a. A servant heart and servant hand
 - b. A humble heart and humble hand
2. Jesus proved the greatness of service and humility by His own example...
 - a. Coming to this earth in the form of a servant - **Php 2:5-7**
 - b. Humbling Himself to the point of death on the cross - **Php 2:8**
 - c. Thereby being highly exalted by God - **Php 2:9-11**

If we desire to be great in the kingdoms of men, we are setting ourselves up for a fall:

"For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted." - Lk 14:11

If we desire to be great in the kingdom of God, let us humbly serve one another and those in the world...

Principles Of Discipleship

Mark 9:38-50

INTRODUCTION

1. Previously, we saw Jesus teaching His disciples the way to true greatness...
 - a. A way involving servitude - **Mk 9:33-35**
 - b. A way involving humility - **Mk 9:36-37**
 - c. Both important principles of discipleship
2. In response, John brings up what seems to be a totally unrelated subject...
 - a. How the disciples tried to prevent someone who would not follow them - **Mk 9:38**
 - b. Which Jesus answers, relating it to principles of discipleship - **Mk 9:39-50**

[The principles taught may appear unrelated (at least to my mind), but they all relate to the matter of following Jesus as His disciples. Let's consider them one by one, beginning with...]

I. HE WHO IS NOT AGAINST US IS ON OUR SIDE

A. THE PRINCIPLE...

1. Stated in response to John's question - **Mk 9:38**
 - a. The disciples saw a man casting out demons in Jesus' name
 - b. Whom the disciples tried to forbid because the man would not follow them
2. Jesus' response: do not forbid Him - **Mk 9:39-40**
 - a. The man was clearly empowered to do works in Jesus' name
 - b. So empowered, it was unlikely he would speak evil of Jesus
 - c. So while he did not follow the other disciples, he was still on their side

B. THE APPLICATION...

1. A common misapplication
 - a. Many commentators use this passage to decry denominational rivalry
 - b. Which might be appropriate if denominational distinctions were not wrong
 - c. But denominationalism is wrong within itself - cf. **Jn 17:21-23; 1Co 1:10-13; 3:3-4**
2. A more proper application
 - a. Do not fault individuals or churches who may choose to do things differently
 - b. Assuming that what they do is "in His name" (by His authority) - cf. **Col 3:17**
 - c. There are often different ways to do the will of the Lord; if someone prefers not to do something "our" way, we should not forbid them doing it "their" way

[Next, we learn the value of...]

II. A CUP OF WATER IN HIS NAME GIVEN

A. THE PRINCIPLE...

1. He who gives a servant of Christ a cup of water in His Name will be rewarded - **Mk 9:41**
2. The principle further explained in Matthew's gospel - **Mt 10:40-42**
3. Even the smallest acts in helping others serve the Lord will be noticed by Him

B. THE APPLICATION...

1. When we help the brethren of the Lord, He takes notice - cf. **Mt 25:34-40**
2. When we support their ministries, we have fellowship in their work - **Php 1:5; 3Jn 1:5-8**

[Then we are warned of...]

III. CAUSING LITTLE ONES TO STUMBLE

A. THE PRINCIPLE...

1. Causing the little ones who believe to stumble is a great offense! - **Mk 9:42**
2. Again, Matthew's gospel expands on this theme - **Mt 18:6-7,10**

B. THE APPLICATION...

1. We should be very careful about our example and influence on the young
2. Every one is a role model, either for good or evil
3. The best way to show love for the children of God is by loving God and keeping His commandments - **1Jn 5:2**

[Another principle is that sometimes it is necessary to have...]

IV. RADICAL SURGERY TO AVOID HELLFIRE

A. THE PRINCIPLE...

1. Sometimes radical actions are needed to avoid hellfire - **Mk 9:43-48**
2. Eternal life is worth whatever cost it takes - **ibid.**

B. THE APPLICATION...

1. Not to be taken literally, because one could still sin with one hand, one eye
2. But anything close to us (family, job, friends, etc.) that would keep us away from God must be removed if necessary - cf. **Mt 10:37; Lk 14:26,33**
3. Note: Jesus believed and taught the reality of hell! - cf. **Re 20:15; 21:8**

[Finally, Jesus segues from the punishing effects of hellfire to the positive effect of a different kind of fire...]

V. SEASONING EFFECTS OF FIRE

A. THE PRINCIPLE...

1. We are seasoned with fire, like sacrifices are seasoned with salt - **Mk 9:49**
2. The salt makes the sacrifice better, so fire can make one better - **Mk 9:50**

B. THE APPLICATION...

1. Appreciate the purifying nature of trials and difficulties - **Jm 1:2-4**
2. As difficult as it may seem at the time, there can be glory in suffering - cf. **Ro 5:3-4**

CONCLUSION

1. Thus we find in our text **five principles regarding discipleship...**

- a. He who is not against us is on our side
 - b. A cup of water in His name given
 - c. Causing little ones to stumble
 - d. Radical surgery to avoid hellfire
 - e. Seasoning effects of fire
2. Seemingly unrelated perhaps, but **important to serving Jesus with humility...**
- a. Others don't have to follow "our" ministries, plans, etc., to be faithful
 - b. Sometimes we may only help in the smallest of ways, but the Lord notices
 - c. We cannot arrogantly overlook the needs of the little ones around us
 - d. Sometimes we have to deny ourselves those things that mean much to us
 - e. We need to humbly accept the seasoning effects of trials when they occur

Indeed, the way of following Jesus requires much humility on our part. With such humility, we will find ourselves **at peace with one another (Mk 9:50)**. Are we willing to humbly follow Him...?

Jesus On Divorce And Remarriage

Mark 10:1-12

INTRODUCTION

1. A serious problem in the world today is that of divorce and remarriage...
 - a. Its affect on children has been well documented by **Judith Wallerstein**, author of *Second Chance* (Ticknor & Fields, 1988)
 - 1) Almost half of children of divorces enter adulthood as worried, underachieving, self-deprecating, and sometimes angry young men and women
 - 2) Half grew up in settings in which the parents were warring with each other even after the divorce -- Reported in **Time**, 2/6/89
 - b. Parents who divorce are not left unhurt either
 - 1) “A divorce is like an amputation: You survive, but there’s less of you.” - **Margaret Atwood** (*Marriage Partnership*, Vol. 7, No. 4)
 - 2) Average percentage change in a woman’s standard of living the year following a divorce: minus 73% - **Daniel Evan Weiss**, (*The Great Divide*, Poseidon Press, 1991)
 - c. As described by God, divorce is a treacherous, violent act - **Mal 2:16**
2. Remarriage after divorce is not without it problems also...
 - a. It does not always heal the wounds inflicted by the divorce: “I’m lucky my parents have stayed together. Unlike so many of my friends, I’ve never had to cry on a holiday.” - **Tales Out of High School**, *Marriage Partnership*, Vol. 5, no. 6
 - b. Many remarriages are unlawful in God’s eyes, constituting what Jesus called “adultery”
4. While social and psychological effects of divorce and remarriage are serious, it is the spiritual effects that concern me most...
 - a. Too many people are ignorant of what the Bible teaches on this subject
 - b. Such ignorance leads to quick and easy divorces, and to adulterous marriages that are unlawful
5. In **Mk 10:1-12**, we find Jesus discussing divorce and remarriage...
 - a. Jesus had left Capernaum as was teaching by the Jordan river in the region of Judea
 - a. His teaching on divorce and remarriage was occasioned by a challenge from the Pharisees
 - b. He used the opportunity to teach His disciples what people today need to know!

[As we consider this passage carefully, we first read how...]

I. THE PHARISEES’ QUESTION JESUS (2)

A. TO TEST HIM, NOT TO BE TAUGHT BY HIM...

1. Divorce was a touchy issue then, even as it is today
2. Divorce was not uncommon; e.g., King Herod - **Mk 6:17-18**
3. The scribes were divided over the proper grounds for divorce
 - a. The school of **Hillel** taught that a man could divorce for just about any reason
 - b. The school of **Shammai** permitted divorce only in the case of fornication

B. ANY ANSWER JESUS GAVE WOULD OFFEND SOMEONE...

1. If He took the popular lax view, the Pharisees could deride His claim as a teacher of superior morality - cf. **Mt 5:20**
2. If He upheld the stricter view, He would be unpopular with the majority (which the Pharisees could use against Him)

[Of course, Jesus was not concerned with what man thought, but in pleasing His Father in heaven. This becomes evident as we next consider...]

II. JESUS' RESPONSE TO THE PHARISEES (3-9)

A. HE ASKED WHAT MOSES TAUGHT...

1. "What did Moses command you?" - **Mk 10:3**
2. "Moses permitted a man to write a certificate of divorce, and to dismiss her" - **Mk 10:4**
3. They understood Moses to permit divorce if a "certificate of divorce" was given to the wife - **Deu 24:1-4**; cf. **Mt 5:31**
4. Yet a careful reading of that passage reveals:
 - a. Moses forbid remarrying of a spouse, even if her second husband had died - **Deu 24:4**
 - b. The reason was the woman became "defiled" when she remarried - **Deu 24:4**
 - c. The word "defiled" used elsewhere to describe adultery - **Lev 18:20**; **Num 5:13-14**
 - d. She actually became an adulteress by remarriage (despite the certificate!) - cf. **Ro 7:1-3**
5. While they appealed to this passage in divorce (and presumably, remarriage), it actually described the treachery of divorce: defilement of the spouse - cf. **Mt 5:32**

B. MOSES PERMITTED DIVORCE DUE TO THEIR HARD HEARTS...

1. "Because of the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept" - **Mk 10:5**
2. The Jews at that time were a hardened people - cf. **Deu 9:6**; **31:27**
3. Is this not a commentary on the state of one's heart when they desire to divorce?
 - a. It takes a hardhearted person to want to divorce their spouse
 - 1) Either to divorce arbitrarily (for no scriptural grounds)
 - 2) Or to divorce when the guilty person is pleading for forgiveness and reconciliation
 - b. Of course, that is exactly the condition of those in the world (or those in the church who are of the world) - cf. **Ep 4:17-19**

C. IT WAS NOT WHAT GOD HAD IN MIND FROM THE BEGINNING...

1. The permission to divorce was only temporary - cf. **Mt 19:8**
2. "From the beginning it was not so" - **note carefully**:
 - a. **The Law of Moses** (which was temporary) considered the hardness of men's hearts, and permitted hardhearted actions
 - b. **The gospel of Christ** (which replaces the Law) cures the hardness of one's heart!
 - 1) His grace removes the heart of stone, and replaces it with a heart of love!
 - 2) I.e., a heart able to abide by God's original design for marriage
3. Paul made it clear that under normal conditions divorce is not an option - **1Co 7:10-11**

D. JESUS REMINDED THEM OF THEIR GENESIS...

1. "But from the beginning of the creation, God 'made them male and female'" - **Mk 10:6**
2. It is helpful to keep in mind: Where we came from, who created us, what we are
3. For our views on divorce and remarriage will be influenced by our views of ourselves!
 - a. **Are we simply animals**, compelled by instinct?
 - 1) Unable to control fleshly desires?

- 2) Then divorce and remarriage ought to be free and easy
- b. **Or God's highest creation**, made in His image?
 - 1) Able to control fleshly lusts to the glory of God?
 - 2) Then divorce and remarriage ought to reflect God's desire for man's holiness!

E. HE ATTRIBUTED THE INSTITUTION OF MARRIAGE TO GOD, NOT MAN...

1. Notice, it was GOD who said "For this reason..." - **Mk 10:7**; cf. **Gen 2:24**
2. Therefore questions about marriage (such as divorce and remarriage) must be answered by God, not by man (nor by man's laws)!

F. HE EMPHASIZED THAT IN MARRIAGE GOD CREATES A UNION...

1. The two become one flesh - **Mk 10:8**; cf. **Gen 2:24**
2. They are joined by none other than God Himself!

G. HIS CONCLUSION: LET NOT MAN SEPARATE WHAT GOD JOINED...

1. What GOD has joined together, let not MAN separate - **Mt 19:6**
2. Man has no right to separate what God Himself has joined
3. It is clear that God's intention is that marriage is to be for life

[According to Mark's gospel, the disciples later asked Jesus privately more about this subject (**Mk 10:10**). And so we now read...]

III. JESUS' TEACHING TO HIS DISCIPLES (10-12)

A. DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE LEADS TO ADULTERY...

1. Whether the man divorces the wife or vice versa - **Mk 10:11-12**
2. Jesus taught the same consequence of divorce and remarriage in **Mt 5:31-32**
3. **The one exception:** if spouse is put away for fornication - cf. **Mt 19:9**

B. THE DISCIPLES' REACTION...

1. They thought it better not to marry - cf. **Mt 19:10**
2. Jesus described celibacy as a viable option if necessary - cf. **Mt 19:11-12**

CONCLUSION

1. Any divorce must be on the grounds specified by Jesus...
 - a. For marriage is an institution ordained by God - **Mk 10:7-8**
 - b. And man must not separate what God has joined together - **Mk 10:9**
 - c. The only ground specified by Jesus is fornication - **Mt 19:9**
2. A divorce for any other reason...
 - a. Is an attempt to separate what God has joined together - **Mk 10:9**
 - b. Is forbidden by the Lord - cf. **1Co 7:10-11**
 - c. If a couple divorces, they should remain unmarried or be reconciled - **1Co 7:11**
 - d. For it will result in adultery if there is a remarriage - **Mk 10:11-12**

May the Lord bless those with the faith to live according to His word, and may we be diligent in teaching our children what the Bible teaches regarding divorce and remarriage...!

Jesus Blesses Little Children

Mark 10:13-16

INTRODUCTION

1. Jesus had just finished His teachings on the sanctity of marriage...
 - a. As an institution ordained of God
 - b. As a bond that should not be broken
2. When parents brought their little children...
 - a. To be touched by Him - **Mk 10:13**
 - b. To lay His hands on them and pray - cf. **Mt 19:13**

[It begins with frustration and indignation, but ends with valuable teaching regarding discipleship and a touching scene of the Lord holding and blessing the little children. Let's begin by considering...]

I. THE NARRATIVE

A. PARENTS BRING THEIR INFANTS...

1. The verb tense suggest the parents' persistence ("kept on bringing") - **Mk 10:13**
 2. Mark uses a word (**paidia**) that can mean children up to twelve, while Luke uses a word (**brephos**) that indicates infants - **Lk 18:15**
 3. Mark later says Jesus "took them up in His arms", suggestive of infants - **Mk 10:15**
- **The parents desperately wanted Jesus to touch and pray for their babies**

B. DISCIPLES REBUKE THE PARENTS...

1. The disciples rebuke those who were bringing the children - **Mk 10:13**
 2. Perhaps they believed Jesus too important to be disturbed, the infants too insignificant
- **The disciples again show mistaken zeal, as we are all wont to do**

C. JESUS REBUKES HIS DISCIPLES...

1. When Jesus saw what His disciples were doing, He was indignant - **Mk 10:14**
 2. The infants were to be allowed, "for of such is the kingdom of God" - **ibid.**
 3. In fact, one must receive the kingdom "as a little child" to enter it - **Mk 10:15**
- **Jesus was angry with His disciples, but He used the opportunity to teach them**

D. JESUS BLESSES THE INFANTS...

1. He first took them up into His arms, laid His hands on them - **Mk 10:16**
 2. He then blessed them, likely in the form of praying for them - cf. **Mt 19:13**
- **While busy in His ministry, Jesus took time to pray for these babies**

[The scene of Jesus blessing the little children is a touching one. What applications might we draw from this episode in the ministry of Jesus...?]

II. THE APPLICATION

A. BASED ON EISEGESIS...

1. Some use this passage to support infant baptism
 - a. Though the earliest mention of infant baptism is around 200 A.D.
 - b. It began only after the doctrine of original sin developed, that infants are born in sin
 - c. The practice increased as baptism became viewed as a sign or seal of the covenant God has with His people, akin to circumcision - cf. **Gen 17:10-12**
 - d. This connection is further assumed from Paul's mention of baptism as a spiritual circumcision - cf. **Col 2:11-12**
 - e. Yet both here and in Colossians, it is reading into the text (eisegesis) what is not there
 2. Contrary to Biblical evidence regarding baptism and the new covenant
 - a. There is no real evidence of infant baptism in the scriptures
 - b. The guilt of sin is not inherited - **Eze 18:20**
 - c. Baptism requires faith and repentance, of which infants are incapable - **Mk 16:16; Ac 8:37; 2:38**
 - d. In the new covenant, no one has to be taught to know the Lord; unlike the old covenant where infants had to be taught to know the Lord (infant baptism would make that distinction of the new covenant meaningless) - cf. **He 8:6-13**
 - e. Paul's comparison of baptism to circumcision pertains to the act of cutting away, not of being a seal or sign of the covenant - **Col 2:11-12**
- **Reading cherished views into the Scriptures is tempting, but is it rightly handling the Word of God? - cf. 2Ti 2:15**

B. BASED ON EXEGESIS...

1. Receiving the kingdom
 - a. Jesus used the children to teach qualities necessary to enter the kingdom of God
 - b. Childlike virtues like trustful simplicity, unassuming humility - cf. **Ps 131:1-2**
 - c. To receive the kingdom, we must be poor in spirit, meek - cf. **Mt 5:3,5; Mt 18:3-4**
 2. Receiving the children
 - a. Jesus demonstrates His love for children, willingness to take time for them
 - b. His disciples should show similar concern for little children
 - c. Are we willing to make time for children? Be good role models? - cf. **Mt 18:6,10**
 3. Praying for the children
 - a. All children need our prayers, just as the parents requested for their infants
 - b. Even though infants may not be in a state of sin, their time will come soon enough
 - c. Especially in this day and age, where children are bombarded with so much evil
- **Others may read into the scriptures, let's to read out of them what the Lord intended**

CONCLUSION

1. Have we taken to heart the lessons Jesus intended for His disciples...?
 - a. To receive the kingdom of God with a childlike trust and humility?
 - b. To show an appreciation and love for little children?
 - c. To pray for them and their parents?
2. May we as disciples of Christ never be too busy...
 - a. To take time for the littlest of children
 - b. To learn from them as to how we should be in the kingdom of God
 - c. To pray for them, to encourage them in both word and deed

"...for of such is the kingdom of God." - Mk 10:14

The Problem With Riches

Mark 10:17-27

INTRODUCTION

1. In our text, we read of a rich man who was so right, yet wrong...
 - a. He came to **the right person - Mk 10:17**
 - 1) He came to Jesus
 - 2) Who could tell Him the way to eternal life
 - b. He asked **the right questions - Mk 10:17**
 - 1) "What good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?"
 - 2) "What do I still lack?" - cf. **Mt 19:20**
 - c. He certainly received **the right answers - Mk 10:19-21**
 - 1) "...if you want to enter into life, keep the commandments" (suitable for one living under the OT covenant) - cf. **Mt 19:17-19**
 - 2) "If you want to be perfect, go, sell...give to the poor...and come, follow Me" (fitting for one who would become a disciple and follow Jesus during His ministry) - cf. **Mt 19:21**
 - d. But in the end, he made **the wrong decision - Mk 10:22**
 - 1) He went away sorrowful
 - 2) For he had great possessions
2. As the rich man went away sadly, Jesus told His disciples about the difficulty of riches...
 - a. It is hard for those who trust in riches to enter the kingdom of God - **Mk 10:23-24**
 - b. It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle - **Mk 10:25**
3. What is it about being rich that makes salvation so difficult...?
 - a. Are we aware of the dangers of riches?
 - b. Do we have the proper attitudes toward wealth, whether rich or poor?

[Let's first consider...]

I. THE PROBLEM WITH RICHES

A. THE ABSORBING INTEREST OF RICHES...

1. Riches do not satisfy, and we foolishly think that simply more riches will bring satisfaction - cf. **Ec 1:8; 5:10**
2. With riches comes the preoccupation with them: how to use, maintain, store, etc.
 - **Like a black hole, the accumulation of riches can absorb what time and energy we have so that we have little for anything else (such as family, church, the Lord)**

B. THE DECEITFUL PROMISE OF RICHES...

1. Jesus warned about the deceitfulness of riches - **Mk 4:19**
2. Riches promise much, but really offer little in return
 - a. They can easily disappear, rust, or be stolen - **Pr 23:5; Mt 6:19**
 - b. They cannot buy one's salvation - **Ps 49:6-9,16-20**
 - c. Neither can they protect one from God's wrath - **Zep 1:18**
 - **Riches can deceive one into thinking they are in need of nothing; the parable of the**

rich fool illustrates the folly of such thinking - Lk 12:16-21**C. THE FOOLISH PRIDE OF RICHES...**

1. Wealth tends to promote a sense of arrogance and pride - cf. **Deu 8:11-17**
 2. It was such pride that was the downfall of Sodom and Israel - **Eze 16:49-50; Hos 13:4-6**
- **Blinded by such pride, one will not seek God - Ps 10:4**

D. THE HARDENING SELFISHNESS OF RICHES...

1. The wealthy, while in a position to help others, often close their hearts to the cry of the poor
 2. This was one of Israel's sins - **Am 2:6; 5:11-12; 8:4-6**
- **Abusing the poor to make money, failing to respond to their cries for justice, interested more in money than the welfare of the poor, such are the problems that often afflict the rich**

[Certainly not all who are rich are guilty of such things. Some of the most godly people in the Bible were rich (Job, Abraham, Joseph, David, Solomon, Barnabas, Philemon, Lydia). But these are reasons why it is so hard for the rich to enter the kingdom of heaven. If they let mammon become their god, they will not be willing to serve the true God! (cf. **Mt 6:24**) From what we have seen about the danger of wealth, let's now draw some...]

II. LESSONS GLEANED FROM THE PROBLEM OF RICHES**A. THE FOLLY OF COVETOUSNESS...**

1. Why be so anxious to be rich, when riches might prove to be a curse for us?
 2. Besides, covetousness is viewed by God as a form of idolatry - **Ep 5:5; Col 3:5**
 3. It not a sin to be rich, but the **desire** to be rich is wrong
 - a. Those who desire to be rich will fall into temptation, and not go unpunished - **1Ti 6:9; Pr 28:20**
 - b. The love of money is a root of all kinds of evil - **1Ti 6:10**
 - 1) For which some have strayed from the faith
 - 2) And suffered many sorrows
- **Beware of covetousness! - Lk 12:15**

B. THE DUTY OF CONTENTMENT...

1. Contentment along with godliness is true wealth - **1Ti 6:6-7**
 - a. "He is richest who is content with the least." - **Socrates** (470-399 B.C.)
 - b. "Contentment comes not so much from great wealth as from few wants" - **Croft M. Pentz** (The Complete Book of Zingers)
 2. Contentment is a virtue that is learned - e.g., **Php 4:11-12**
 - a. By having a proper perspective on life - **1Ti 6:7**
 - 1) "You can't take it with you"
 - 2) Ever see a hearse pulling a U-Haul trailer?
 - b. By understanding what is truly essential in life - **1Ti 6:8**
 - 1) Food and clothing...anything more is a luxury
 - 2) Realizing this, we will appreciate how blessed we are!
- **Learn to be content! - He 13:5**

C. THE NEED FOR SYMPATHY FOR THE RICH...

1. Jesus loved the rich young ruler - **Mk 10:21**

- a. We should certainly love those who are rich
 - b. We should not be envious, nor despise them
 2. If the rich are overcome by their riches, we should remember...
 - a. That the desire to be rich affects both the rich and those who want to be rich
 - b. That the rich face many temptations that the poor do not
- **The rich are in need of salvation as much as the poorest beggar! - Ro 3:23; 6:23**

D. FAITH IN THE POWER OF GOD...

1. Though it is hard for a rich person to be saved, it is not impossible - **Mk 10:23-27**
 - a. No one can save themselves, whether rich or poor
 - b. But God can save the rich by His own power, through the gospel - **Ro 1:16-17**
 2. There were many rich people who became Jesus' disciples
 - a. Those that supported Him during His earthly ministry - **Lk 8:1-3**
 - b. Others such as Zacchaeus, Matthew, Barnabas, Lydia, Aquila and Priscilla, Gaius, Philemon
 - c. Such people used their riches in service to God and others - cf. **1Ti 6:17-19**
 3. Therefore...
 - a. The rich should have the gospel preached to them
 - b. We should pray for the rich
 - c. We should rejoice greatly that there are rich men and women in the kingdom of God
- **With God, nothing is impossible! - Mk 10:27**

CONCLUSION

1. The issue of wealth is often one of contention...
 - a. The poor are often envious of the rich
 - b. The rich often despise the poor
2. But riches and poverty both have their difficulties...
 - a. Wealth can make one arrogant, less receptive to the gospel and the kingdom
 - b. Poverty can make one bitter, filled with envy of others
3. Whether rich or poor, all should be aware...
 - a. Of our need for salvation that comes only by the grace of God
 - b. That we can share together in the riches of salvation

Have you become an heir to the "unsearchable riches of Christ"...? - **Ep 3:8**

The Cost And Reward Of Discipleship

Mark 10:28-31

INTRODUCTION

1. Jesus had just completed His encounter with the rich young ruler...
 - a. Who sadly left when he chose his possessions over following Christ - **Mk 10:17-22**
 - b. When Jesus then warned His disciples about the difficulty of riches - **Mk 10:23-27**
2. At which Peter began to say, “See, we have left all and followed You...” - **Mk 10:28**
 - a. Matthew adds in his gospel “Therefore what shall we have?” - **Mt 19:27**
 - b. Matthew also mentions the promise of the apostles sitting on thrones of judgment in the regeneration - **Mt 19:28**

[For everyone else who follows Jesus as His disciples, there is the promise of both **cost** and **reward**. With Mark’s account (**Mk 10:28-31**) before us, let’s first examine...]

I. THE COST OF DISCIPLESHIP

A. EARTHLY RELATIONS...

1. Jesus spoke of leaving family - **Mk 10:29**
2. He mentioned wife; not found in some mss of Mark, but is in **Lk 18:29**
3. Not to suggest such is always necessary - cf. **1Co 9:5**
4. But sometimes even one’s family turns against a disciple - **Mt 10:21,34-36**
5. Thus Jesus and His gospel must come before family - **Mt 10:37; Lk 14:26**
- **Sometimes the greatest cost of discipleship is imposed by our own families**

B. EARTHLY POSSESSIONS...

1. Jesus spoke of leaving house and lands - **Mk 10:29**
2. Not to suggest that it is always necessary - cf. **1Co 16:19; Ro 16:5; Col 4:15; Phm 1:2**
3. But disciples often sold lands, opened their homes to others - **Ac 4:36-37; Phm 1:22**
4. Paul certainly gave up much to serve Christ - **Php 3:7-8**
5. Thus Jesus and His kingdom must come before possessions - **Lk 14:33; Mt 6:33**
- **We must be willing to forsake all that is necessary to be a disciple of Jesus**

[The **cost** of discipleship can certainly be great. For some, it is more than others. But for all who are willing to bear the cost of being His disciple, Jesus promises...]

II. THE REWARD OF DISCIPLESHIP

A. ETERNAL RELATIONS...

1. Jesus spoke of hundredfold blessings “in this time” - **Mk 10:30**
2. Of **brothers, sisters, mother, children**
 - a. He likely refers to fellow disciples as family - cf. **Mk 3:31-35**
 - b. Jesus does not mention “fathers”; could it be because God is our Father? - **Mt 23:9**
 - c. The fulfillment of this can be seen in the church, the family of God - **1Ti 3:15; 5:1-2**
 - d. Our spiritual family (the church) is the only one that will survive death

3. Of **houses and lands**
 - a. Perhaps through fellow ties with other disciples - **Ac 4:32**
 - b. Who opened their hearts and homes to one another (Mi casa es su casa)
 - c. Like Aquila and Priscilla - **Ac 18:1-3; 1Co 16:19; Ro 16:5**-- **Even now, through His church, there are great rewards for following Christ**

B. ETERNAL POSSESSIONS...

1. Jesus spoke of **eternal life** “in the age to come” - **Mk 10:30**
2. As Paul described, the gift of God to be received at “the end” - **Ro 6:22-23**; cf. **Mt 25:46**
3. This eternal life includes the “people of God” - cf. **Re 21:3**
4. This eternal life includes spiritual houses and lands
 - a. The Father’s house, in which there are many rooms - **Jn 14:1-3**
 - a. A new heaven and a new earth - **2Pe 3:13; Re 21:1**
 - b. The holy city, New Jerusalem - **Re 21:2,23-27**-- **What glorious rewards await those who follow Jesus to eternal life!**

CONCLUSION

1. In Mark’s account, Jesus also mentioned **persecutions**...
 - a. Together with the rewards of following Jesus - **Mk 10:30**
 - b. Leading some to view them as a reward rather than a cost of discipleship
 - c. Those who suffer persecution are certainly blessed - **Mt 5:10-12; Re 20:4-6**
2. Jesus concludes: “**But many who are first will be last, and the last first**”... - **Mk 10:31**
 - a. Which is followed in Matthew’s gospel with the parable of laborers in the vineyard - **Mt 20:1-15**
 - b. And is repeated again after the parable - **Mt 20:16**
 - c. Thus a cautionary warning not to serve the Lord with a mercenary spirit

Whatever **the cost** of discipleship, whether our service proves to be long and hard or short and easy, **the reward** of discipleship more than makes up for it. As Paul (who suffered greatly for Christ) wrote:

“For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.” - 2Co 4:17-18

May the words of Jesus in our text always remind us of the things that are eternal, some to be enjoyed even in this age, others to be realized in the age to come...

Jesus Predicts His Passion And Resurrection

Mark 10:32-34

INTRODUCTION

1. On three separate occasions, Jesus predicted His passion and resurrection...
 - a. In the region of Caesarea Philippi, He emphasized the **necessity** - **Mk 8:31**
 - b. While traveling through Galilee, He stressed the **certainty** - **Mk 9:31**
 - c. Now on the road to Jerusalem, He describes it in greater **detail** - **Mk 10:32-34**
2. If you have ever faced an impending ordeal...
 - a. You know the anticipation itself adds to the trial
 - b. The anxiety and stress of knowing what it is to come

[As we remember what Jesus did to save us, do not overlook the burden of knowing in advance what He would suffer, and what helped Him to endure. So let's look a closer look, beginning with...]

I. THE SETTING

A. ON THE ROAD TO JERUSALEM...

1. Making their way from beyond the Jordan via Jericho - **Mk 10:1,46**
2. This was Jesus' last trip to Jerusalem

B. THE ORDER IN WHICH THEY WALKED...

1. **Jesus** taking the lead - **Mk 10:32**
2. **The disciples** following behind - **Mk 10:32** (NLT)
3. **The people** further behind - **Mk 10:32** (NLT)

C. THE ATTITUDES AS THEY WALKED...

1. Jesus with steadfast **determination** - cf. **Lk 9:51**
2. The disciples filled with **awe**, perhaps by Jesus' determination - **Mk 10:32** (NLT)
3. The people overwhelmed with **fear**, perhaps knowing the danger Jesus and His followers faced in Jerusalem - **Mk 10:32** (NLT); cf. **Jn 9:22; 11:8,57**

[At some point, Jesus takes the twelve apostles aside and begins to tell them what will happen to Him...]

II. THE PREDICTION

A. HE WILL BE BETRAYED...

1. Betrayed to the chief priests and to the scribes - **Mk 10:33**
2. Referring to the Sanhedrin, the Supreme Court of the Jews
3. Fulfilled - **Mk 14:41-46**

B. HE WILL BE CONDEMNED...

1. Condemned to death and delivered to the Gentiles - **Mk 10:33**
2. Referring to the Romans, who alone had the authority to put to death - cf. **Jn 18:31**
3. Fulfilled - **Mk 14:55-64**

C. HE WILL BE MOCKED...

1. Treated with contempt, ridiculed - **Mk 10:34**
2. To imitate with mockery and derision
3. Fulfilled - **Mk 15:16-20,29-32**

D. HE WILL BE SCOURGED...

1. To be whipped, punished severely - **Mk 10:34**
2. "Under the Roman method of 'scourging,' the person was stripped and tied in a bending posture to a pillar, or stretched on a frame. The "scourge" was made of leather thongs, weighted with sharp pieces of bone or lead, which tore the flesh of both the back and the breast." - **Vine**
3. Fulfilled - **Mk 15:15**

E. HE WILL BE SPIT ON...

1. With saliva or phlegm
2. Done with anger or contempt - **Mk 10:34**
3. Fulfilled - **Mk 14:65; 15:19**

F. HE WILL BE KILLED...

1. Death would follow His mockery and torture - **Mk 10:34**
2. Jesus knew the manner of death: crucifixion! - cf. **Mt 20:19**
3. Fulfilled - **Mk 15:24,37**

G. HE WILL RISE THE THIRD DAY...

1. Resurrected from the dead - **Mk 10:34**
2. Foretold very early in His ministry - cf. **Jn 2:19-22**
3. Fulfilled - **Mk 16:1-7**

CONCLUSION

1. When Jesus predicted His passion and resurrection...
 - a. The first time, Peter took Jesus aside and rebuked Him - **Mk 8:31-33**
 - b. The second time, the disciples did not understand and refused to ask Him - **Mk 9:31-32**
 - c. The third time, there is no dispute (though they may have still been confused)
2. What strikes me about these three predictions...
 - a. Is that it reveals that Jesus **knew** what would happen to Him!
 - b. The stress and anxiety from **anticipation** only added to His suffering for us!
3. How was Jesus able to press on, knowing what was to come...?
 - a. The writer to the Hebrews reveals the answer - cf. **He 12:2**
 - b. He encourages us to "consider Him...lest you become weary and discouraged" - **He 12:3**

Yes, let's consider how He died, but also He faced knowing what awaited Him. As **Erdman** wrote...

"Let us pause to gaze on that face and form, the Son of God, going with unfaltering step toward the Cross! Does it not awaken us to new heroism, as we follow; does it not awaken new love as we see how voluntary was His death for us; yet do we not wonder at the meaning and the mystery of that death?"

The Cup And The Baptism

Mark 10:35-40

INTRODUCTION

1. On the way to Jerusalem shortly before His arrest, Jesus received an unusual request...
 - a. From James and John, together with their mother - **Mk 10:35; Mt 20:20**
 - b. For Jesus to do whatever they ask! - **Mk 10:35**
 - c. In particular, the honor of sitting by Him in His glory (kingdom) - **Mk 10:36-37; Mt 20:21**
2. Jesus' response was two-fold...
 - a. First, about drinking His cup and being baptized with His baptism - **Mk 10:38-39**
 - b. Second, their request was not His to grant, but His Father's - **Mk 10:40; Mt 20:23**

[In this study we shall focus on **the cup** and **the baptism** to which Jesus referred, which is generally understood to be the cup or baptism...]

I. OF SUFFERING

A. EXPLAINED...

1. **To drink a cup**
 - a. Metaphorically, to get one's fill
 - b. Either of good (**Ps 23:5**) or of ill (**Ps 75:7-8**)
 - c. Jesus' cup was one of suffering - cf. **Mk 14:36; Jn 18:11**
2. **To be baptized**
 - a. Figuratively, to be overwhelmed
 - b. In this case, with calamity - cf. **Ps 69:2,15**
 - c. Jesus' baptism was one of suffering - cf. **Lk 12:50**
3. Compare the NLT: "...Are you able to drink from the bitter cup of **suffering** I am about to drink? Are you able to be baptized with the baptism of **suffering** I must be baptized with?"

-- **The cup and the baptism refers to suffering Jesus and His disciples would experience**

B. EXPERIENCED...

1. **By the apostles**
 - a. Foretold by Jesus - **Mk 10:39; Jn 15:20-21**
 - b. Experienced by James (martyrdom) - **Ac 12:2**
 - c. Experienced by John (exile) - **Re 1:9**
 - d. Experienced by the apostles in general - **1Co 4:9-13**
 - e. Experienced by the apostle Paul in particular - **2Co 11:23-28**
2. **By disciples today**
 - a. Many believers in Christ continue to suffer much
 - 1) In Muslim and Hindu nations
 - 2) In communist nations like China and North Korea
 - b. In the USA and other western countries there are forms of suffering
 - 1) Christians and their faith are often ridiculed
 - 2) Many are rejected by co-workers, neighbors, friends, even family

-- **We ourselves may one day have to receive the cup and the baptism of suffering**

[Having considered how **cup** and **baptism** are used in our text to refer to **suffering**, perhaps it would be appropriate to consider **how they are also used in a different context**. There is the cup and baptism...]

II. OF BLESSING

A. THE CUP OF BLESSING...

1. There is a cup which we bless - **1Co 10:16**
2. The fruit of the vine in the Lord's Supper - **1Co 11:23-29**
3. Which represents Jesus' blood of the new covenant - **1Co 11:25; Mt 26:27-28**
4. Which we drink in memory of Him, proclaiming His death - **1Co 11:25-26**
5. Thus participating in the blood of Christ - **1Co 10:16**
- **The cup we bless, is a blessing for those who partake!**

B. THE BAPTISM OF BLESSING...

1. There is a baptism commanded for all by Christ - **Mt 28:19; Mk 16:15-16**
2. For the remission of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit - **Ac 2:38-39**
3. Where penitent believers are commanded to be immersed in water - **Ac 8:35-38; 10:47-48**
4. Where sins are washed away as we appeal to the Lord - **Ac 22:16; 1Pe 3:21**
5. Where we are buried into Christ's death, raised to newness of life - **Ro 6:3-7**
6. Where we put on Christ, becoming children of God through faith - **Ga 3:26-27**
7. Where we undergo the working of God and the Holy Spirit - **Co 2:12-13; Ti 3:4-7**
- **This baptism is a blessing for all who submit in faith and repentance!**

CONCLUSION

1. Jesus foretold that James and John would...
 - a. Drink the **cup of suffering**
 - b. Be baptized with **the baptism of suffering**
2. But suffering did not happen before they...
 - a. Experienced **the baptism of blessing** in being saved
 - b. Partook weekly of **the cup of blessing** in remaining saved

To prepare ourselves for whatever cup or baptism of suffering we might experience for Christ...

- Let us be sure that we have submitted to **the baptism of blessing** in faith and repentance!
- Let us be sure that we drink **the cup of blessing** weekly as faithfully as we can!

Served By Greatness, Serve To Be Great

Mark 10:41-45

INTRODUCTION

1. In our previous study, we saw where James and John made a request...
 - a. For Jesus to do whatever they ask! - **Mk 10:35**
 - b. In particular, the honor of sitting by Him in His glory (kingdom) - **Mk 10:36-37; Mt 20:21**
2. We saw where Jesus' response was two-fold...
 - a. First, about drinking His cup and being baptized with His baptism - **Mk 10:38-39**
 - b. Second, their request was not His to grant, but His Father's - **Mk 10:40; Mt 20:23**
3. This request in behalf of James and John...
 - a. Displeased the other apostles - **Mk 10:41**
 - b. Provided Jesus an opportunity to teach an important lesson - **Mk 10:42-45**
 - c. I.e., to be great in the kingdom one must serve, even as the Son of Man came to serve

[This is a lesson every Christian needs to remember, yet it goes against what the world would have us believe. To encourage us in being willing to serve, perhaps it would help to recall that we have been...]

I. WE HAVE BEEN SERVED BY GREATNESS

A. SERVED BY JESUS...

1. He came to serve, not to be served - **Mk 10:45**
2. He served by giving His life a ransom, dying on the cross for our sins
3. He serves even now, as our High Priest who intercedes for us - **He 7:24-25**

B. SERVED BY THE PROPHETS...

1. The prophets spent their lives in service for our benefit - **1Pe 1:10-12**
2. Thus we have been served by men like Moses, Samuel, David, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel and many other "heroes of faith"!

C. SERVED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT...

1. It was the Holy Spirit who inspired the prophets - **1Pe 1:11**
2. He also inspired the apostles to reveal the gospel - **1Pe 1:12; Jn 16:13**

D. SERVED BY THE APOSTLES...

1. They are the ones who preached the gospel to us - **1Pe 1:12**
2. Through them, we have come to believe in Jesus - cf. **Jn 17:20**
3. Thus we have been served by men like Peter, James, John, and Paul, who suffered greatly in their ministry to us! - cf. **1Co 4:9-13; 2Co 11:24-29**

E. SERVED BY ANGELS...

1. They had a keen interest in the things being revealed - **1Pe 1:12**
2. For they had a part in the process of revelation - cf. **Dan 8, 9; Lk 1:11-19, 26-38**
3. Thus they too have ministered to us - cf. **He 1:13-14**

F. SERVED BY OTHER CHRISTIANS...

1. Someone taught us the gospel, others continue to teach us and our children
2. Some made it possible for us to assemble, and each week clean up what we leave behind
3. In times of sickness, many have prayed and rendered various forms of service

[With so many rendering so much service, it is easy to feel pampered. Indeed, we have been “**served by greatness**”! Do we take it for granted? I hope not. We can show our appreciation by emulating those who served us...]

II. LET US SERVE TO BE GREAT

A. SERVE IN EVANGELISM...

1. Someone led you to Christ, can you not lead another to Him? - cf. **Jn 1:35-46**
2. Begin by being hospitable, offering acts of kindness and service
3. At the very least, invite to services, offer a Bible correspondence course
4. Hone your skills in personal evangelism, seek to improve your ability to share the gospel

B. SERVE IN EDIFICATION...

1. Many have contributed to your spiritual growth, can you help others? - cf. **Ep 4:16**
2. Begin by being present at every service, greeting every one present
3. Take a special interest in those who are new, encourage them
4. Offer to help teach our children, even if it only means to assist another teacher
5. Volunteer whatever service you can render in the work and worship of the church

C. SERVE IN BENEVOLENCE...

1. Has anyone ever showed you kindness? “Be kind to one another” - cf. **Ep 4:32**
2. Visit the sick or elderly in hospitals, and at home
3. Render service such as cleaning, transportation, errands, etc.
4. Minister to the poor, hungry, or those otherwise in need

CONCLUSION

1. The important thing is that we be **people of service**...
 - a. People who serve others, not just benefiting from the efforts of others
 - b. People who are producers, not just consumers
2. Serving is not just the path to greatness in the kingdom, but also to true happiness:

“For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you. Most assuredly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him. If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.” - Jn 13:15-17

“I have shown you in every way, by laboring like this, that you must support the weak. And remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’” - Ac 20:35

Shall we not follow both the example and teaching of Jesus, and live to serve others...?

The Healing Of Blind Bartimaeus

Mark 10:46-52

INTRODUCTION

1. As we continue our studies in the gospel of Mark...
 - a. Jesus and His disciples are making their way toward Jerusalem - cf. **Mk 10:32**
 - b. We now come to the last healing miracle described in the gospel of Mark - **Mk 10:46-52**
2. It involves the healing of a blind man near the city of Jericho...
 - a. Identified by name as Bartimaeus
 - b. Whose persistence, faith, and gratitude can serve as an example for us today

[Let's first take a closer look at...]

I. THE NARRATIVE

A. THE SETTING...

1. **The city**
 - a. Mark reports that the miracle occurred on **the way out** of Jericho - **Mk 10:46**
 - b. Luke says it occurred on **the way to** Jericho - **Lk 18:35**
 - c. There were two Jerichos at the time of Jesus, about 15 miles NE of Jerusalem
 - d. The old Jericho from the days of Joshua was mostly abandoned
 - e. The new Jericho built by Herod the Great was an attractive city
 - f. It may be the miracle occurred as Jesus was leaving one and heading to another
- **Expositor's Bible Commentary**
2. **The crowd**
 - a. Included Jesus' disciples and a 'great multitude' - **Mk 10:46**
 - b. The multitude was likely even greater because it was the time many Jews were on their way to Jerusalem observe the Passover
3. **The blind man**
 - a. Matthew reveals that there were actually two blind men - **Mt 20:29-32**
 - b. Luke focuses his account on "a certain blind man" - **Lk 18:35-43**
 - c. Mark does also, identifying him by name, Bartimaeus - **Mk 10:46**
 - d. Bartimaeus sat by the road, begging - **Mk 10:46**

B. THE MIRACLE...

1. **The desperate plea**
 - a. Learning that Jesus of Nazareth was walking by, Bartimaeus began to cry out
 - b. "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" - **Mk 10:47**
 - c. Many sought to silence him, but he cried out all the more
 - d. "Son of David, have mercy on me!" - **Mk 10:48**
2. **The gracious healing**
 - a. Jesus commanded for Bartimaeus to be called
 - b. Some encourage him: "Be of good cheer. Rise, He is calling you." - **Mk 10:49**
 - c. He throws aside his outer garment (which might hinder his steps) and comes to Jesus
- **Mk 10:50**

- d. Jesus asks Bartimaeus what he wants Him to do - **Mk 10:51**
 - e. “Rabboni (Master, Teacher, cf. **Jn 20:16**), that I may receive my sight.”
 - f. Jesus’ response: “Go your way; your faith has made you well.” - **Mk 10:52**
3. **The new disciple**
- a. Immediately Bartimaeus receives his sight - **Mk 10:52**
 - b. He follows Jesus on the road, glorifying God - cf. **Lk 18:43**

[The people that saw this miracle also praised God (**Lk 18:43**). How might we best praise God for such a miracle? Perhaps by learning from the example of blind Bartimaeus. In that regard, here are...)

II. SOME OBSERVATIONS

A. PERSISTENCE...

- 1. Bartimaeus displayed persistence despite the efforts of others to silence him
- 2. He exemplifies the truth of what Jesus taught about persistence - **Mt 7:7-8**
- 3. Are we willing to be persistent in our prayers? - cf. **Lk 18:1-8**

B. FAITH...

- 1. Bartimaeus was healed because of his faith
- 2. Similar to the woman healed of a flow of blood - **Mk 5:34**
- 3. Do we have the faith to receive what is God’s will for us? - cf. **1Jn 5:14**

C. GRATITUDE...

- 1. Bartimaeus followed Jesus and glorified God
- 2. Like the Samaritan leper, he expressed gratitude - **Lk 17:12-19**
- 3. Do we express gratitude for the many blessings God gives us? - cf. **1Th 5:14**

CONCLUSION

- 1. Bartimaeus, who many sought to silence, has much to teach us about...
 - a. Persistence
 - b. Faith
 - c. Gratitude
- 2. May the healing of blind Bartimaeus serve to always remind us to...
 - a. Persist in our requests to God
 - b. Develop the faith necessary to receive such requests
 - c. Never fail to express gratitude when God answers our prayers

Finally, note that Bartimaeus followed Jesus. Are you willing to show your gratitude to Jesus by following Him as His disciple, responding to the gospel of Christ...? - **Mt 28:18-20; Mk 16:15-16**

The Triumphal Entry

Mark 11:1-11

INTRODUCTION

1. From chapter eleven forward, the events of Mark's gospel take place in or near Jerusalem...
 - a. From His triumphal entry to His resurrection from the dead
 - b. Occurring within the time span of eight days
2. The first day is often remembered as "Palm Sunday"...
 - a. In which Jesus made a triumphal entry into the city
 - b. Accompanied by crowds who laid branches on the road before Him as He road into town on the colt of a donkey

[The significance of this event was not understood by His disciples until later (**Jn 12:16**). With the benefit of hindsight and further revelation, let's first take a closer look at...]

I. THE NARRATIVE

A. THE PREPARATION...

1. Jesus and His disciples draw near to Jerusalem - **Mk 11:1**
 - a. By way of Bethany ("house of dates") and Bethphage ("house of unripe figs")
 - b. Two small villages near the Mount of Olives between Jericho and Jerusalem
2. Jesus arranges for two disciples to get a colt - **Mk 11:1-3**
 - a. A colt on which no one sat
 - b. By foreknowledge or previous arrangement, Jesus knows the owner will consent
3. The disciples get the colt just as Jesus predicted - **Mk 11:4-6**

B. THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY...

1. Jesus mounts the colt - **Mk 11:7**
 - a. It is brought to Him, clothes placed on it, and He sits on it
 - b. Matthew mentions two animals, likely the mother to calm the colt - **Mt 21:2,7**
2. Many spread their cloths on the road, others cut leafy branches and place them on the road before Jesus on the colt - **Mk 11:8**
 - a. The significance of the clothes placed before Him might be found in **2Ki 9:12-13**
 - b. John mentions palm branches - **Jn 12:13**
3. Many praise Jesus as He rides the colt - **Mk 11:9-10**
 - a. Crying "Hosanna!" ("Save!" or "please save!") - **Ps 118:25**
 - b. "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!" - **Ps 118:26**
 - c. "Blessed is the kingdom of our father David that comes in the name of the Lord!"
 - d. "Hosanna in the highest!"
4. Jesus enters Jerusalem - **Mk 11:11**
 - a. He goes straight to the temple, and looks around
 - b. But the hour is late and so He does not stay

C. THE RETURN TO BETHANY...

1. Jesus returns to Bethany with the twelve - **Mk 11:11**

2. Where He likely stays each night during the week (until the Passover)
3. Likely at the home of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus - **Jn 12:1-2**

[With this brief look at the narrative, let's offer...]

II. SOME OBSERVATIONS

A. THE FULFILLMENT OF PROPHECY...

1. Matthew explains that all this was in fulfillment of prophecy - **Mt 21:4-5; Zech 9:9**
2. Some view the short visit to the temple as fulfilling prophecy - cf. **Mal 3:1**

B. THE NATURE OF THE KINGDOM...

1. The actions and words of the crowd reflect Messianic anticipation - **Mk 11:10; Jn 12:12-13**
2. Earlier some had tried to force Jesus to become a king, but He refused - **Jn 6:15**
3. Many were looking for the Messiah to be a physical king, but Jesus made it clear that His kingdom was not of this world (i.e., a spiritual kingdom)
 - a. To the Pharisees - **Lk 17:20-21**
 - b. To Pilate - **Jn 18:36**
4. Paul made it clear that the kingdom was spiritual, not physical - **Ro 14:17; 1Co 15:50**
5. Jesus' selection of the colt indicated the spiritual nature of His kingdom
 - a. Normally kings would ride on a horse, symbolizing war and power
 - b. But the donkey symbolized peace, befitting the nature of His kingdom - cf. **Isa 9:6**

C. THE PRAISE OF THE CROWD...

1. How exciting it must have been on that day! The anticipation! The joy!
2. The praise of Christ reached eternal heights after His ascension - **Re 5:8-14**
3. Today, we can join in the praise of Christ each Lord's day!
4. And we can look forward to praising Jesus when He returns, when we will be glorified together with Him! - **2Th 1:10**

CONCLUSION

1. What a triumphal entry that will be when Jesus returns...!
 - a. Not to offer Himself for sin, as He did with His first coming
 - b. But to offer eternal salvation for those who believe! - **He 9:27-28**
2. But that will be a day of salvation for those who eagerly await Him...
 - a. For others, it will be a day of condemnation - **2Th 1:7-9**
 - b. For others, it will be a day of destruction - **ibid.**

As we await His "triumphal entry" at the last day, let us faithfully serve Him today in His spiritual kingdom of righteousness, joy, and peace...!

***"Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the LORD!
Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!"
Luke 19:38***

Cursing And Cleansing

Mark 11:12-19

INTRODUCTION

1. In our previous study, we saw where Jesus and His disciples arrived in Jerusalem...
 - a. Together with a large crowd coming to observe the Passover week
 - b. With the first day of their visit (Sunday) beginning with the triumphal entry and ending with a quick visit to the temple - **Mk 11:1-11**

2. On the next day (Monday), two things occur which may seem out of character for Jesus...
 - a. The cursing of the fig tree - **Mk 11:12-14**
 - b. The cleansing of the temple - **Mk 11:15-19**

[The two may be related, so let's consider them together beginning with...]

I. THE CURSING OF THE FIG TREE

A. THE NARRATIVE...

1. Having spent the night in Bethany, Jesus and His disciples make their way back toward Jerusalem - **Mk 11:11-12**
2. Hungry, Jesus sees a fig tree with leaves from a distance and approaches to see if there is anything on it - **Mk 11:12-13**
3. There is nothing but leaves, Mark noting that it was not the season for figs - **Mark 11:13**
4. In response, Jesus says to the tree, "Let no one eat fruit from you ever again" - **Mk 11:14**
5. Mark commented that it was heard by His disciples - **Mk 11:14**

B. SOME OBSERVATIONS...

1. In Palestine fig trees produced crops of small edible buds in March followed by the appearance of large green leaves in early April. - **Bible Knowledge Commentary**
 - a. This early green "fruit" (buds) was common food for local peasants - **ibid.**
 - b. An absence of these buds despite the tree's green foliage promising their presence indicated it would bear no fruit that year - **ibid.**
 - c. Thus this fig tree gave the appearance of offering edible food, but did not
2. The way in which Mark organizes his material in these verses (fig tree/cleansing of temple/fig tree) suggests a connection between the cleansing of the temple and the cursing of the fig tree - **ESV Study Bible**
4. The incident of the fig tree both interprets the cleansing of the temple and is interpreted by the latter incident - **New International Biblical Commentary (NIBC)**
 - a. Jesus' disappointment with the fig tree is like his disappointment with Israel and the temple, her chief shrine - **ibid.**
 - b. His judgment pronounced upon the tree is like the threat of God's judgment soon to fall upon the city of Jerusalem, which Jesus' words and actions in **Mk 11:15-19** prefigure - **ibid.**
5. The cursing of the tree (v. 14) is known as a **prophetic sign act**, familiar to readers of the OT, an action in which a prophet demonstrates symbolically his message (e.g., **Isa 20:1-6; Jer 13:1-11; 19:1-13; Ezek 4:1-15**) - **NIBC**

6. The act is not to be taken simply as a rash act of anger, but as a solemn prophetic word pronounced for the benefit of the disciples (and for the readers) - **ibid.**

[Seeing that the two events (the **cursing** of the fig tree and the **cleansing** of the temple) appear related, let's now look more closely at...]

II. THE CLEANSING OF THE TEMPLE

A. THE NARRATIVE...

1. Jesus returns to Jerusalem and enters the temple - **Mk 11:15-16**
 - a. Driving out those who bought and sold in the temple
 - b. Overturning the tables of the money changers, the seats of those who sold doves
 - c. Not allowing any to carry wares through the temple
2. He teaches in the temple - **Mk 11:17-18**
 - a. "Is it not written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations' ? But you have made it a 'den of thieves.'" - cf. **1Ki 8:41-43; Isa 56:7**
 - b. The scribes and chief priests heard this and wanted to kill Him
 - c. They feared Him, for all the people were astonished at His teaching
3. At evening, He left the city, spending the night on Mt. Olivet - cf. **Lk 21:37**

B. SOME OBSERVATIONS...

1. The "temple" was the court of the Gentiles, an outer court where non-Jews were permitted
 - a. Tables were set up to enable pilgrims to change their respective currencies into coins for the annual temple tax, as well as to purchase pigeons, lambs, oil, salt, etc., for various sin and thanksgiving sacrifices - **ESV Study Bible**
 - b. The business activity turns the house of prayer into a den of robbers (**Jer 7:11**); Gentiles in particular were hindered by the temple commerce in the outer court - **ibid.**
2. This may have been the second time Jesus cleansed the temple
 - a. John records a similar incident at the beginning of Jesus' ministry - **Jn 2:13-17**
 - b. Many commentators think it happened only once; but with Jesus' zeal for His Father's house, there is good reason to believe He did it twice
 - c. The cleansing of the temple may have been to fulfill prophecy - **Mal 3:1-3**
3. Was the act of cleansing the temple "out of character" for Jesus? No!
 - a. Jesus had been angry before, and would be again soon - cf. **Mk 3:5; Mt 23:13-36**
 - b. Jesus was filled with righteous indignation, consistent with the qualities of deity - cf. **Ro 2:4-6; 2Th 1:7-9**
4. It may helpful to remember...
 - a. When it came to personal affront, Jesus bore it meekly - cf. **Isa 53:7; 1Pe 2:23**
 - b. But when God or His temple were maligned, especially by hardhearted and self-righteous religious leaders, then Jesus acted with righteous indignation in defense of God's honor
 - c. We tend to defend selves rather than God, displaying self-righteous indignation

CONCLUSION

1. The moral and religious depravity of the religious leaders prompted Jesus' actions
2. Both the cursing of the fig tree and the cleansing of the temple were prophetic sign acts that foretold the impending judgment upon the nation of Israel that would occur with the destruction of Jerusalem (fulfilled in 70 AD) - cf. **Mk 13:1-2**

Faith And Forgiveness

Mark 11:20-26

INTRODUCTION

1. So far in Mark's account of the Last Week, we have considered...
 - a. The triumphant entry into Jerusalem on Sunday - **Mk 11:1-11**
 - b. The cursing of the fig tree and cleansing of the temple on Monday - **Mk 11:12-19**
2. On Tuesday, the day begins with Jesus and His disciples passing by the fig tree...
 - a. Which was withered to its roots - **Mk 11:20**
 - b. Wherein Peter comments, "Rabbi, look! The fig tree which You cursed has withered away!" - **Mk 11:21**

[Jesus uses the opportunity to teach His disciples two important lessons, both related to prayer. We do well to give careful heed to what Jesus taught His disciples, beginning with...]

I. FAITH AND PRAYER

A. THE NARRATIVE...

1. Jesus tells His disciples to have faith in God - **Mk 11:22**
2. He says that with faith and no doubt, a mountain can be cast into the sea - **Mk 11:23**
3. He tells them that if they pray believing they will receive, whatever they ask will be given them - **Mk 11:24**

B. SOME OBSERVATIONS...

1. This passage clearly teaches the importance of faith in prayer, yet many have abused it
 - a. Taking it too literally
 - b. Ignoring what the Bible teaches elsewhere regarding prayer
2. Moving a mountain was a metaphor in Jewish literature for doing what was seemingly impossible (**Isa 40:4; 49:11; 54:10**; cf. **Mt. 21:21-22**). Those who believe in God can have confidence that he will accomplish even the impossible, according to his sovereign will. - **ESV Study Bible**
3. The **ESV Study Bible** offers further insights worth considering:
 - a. God delights to "give good things to those who ask him" (**Mt 7:11**) and is capable of granting any prayer though we must ask with godly motives (**Jam 4:3**) and according to God's will (**1Jn 5:14**)
 - b. Those who trust God for the right things in the right way can have confidence that God will "supply every need ... according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus" (**Php 4:19**), knowing that he will work "all things together for good" and will "graciously give us all things" (**Ro 8:28,32**)
 - c. Some have misused this verse by telling people that if they pray for physical healing (or for some other specific request) and if they just have enough faith, then they can have confidence that God has already done (or will do) whatever they ask
 - d. But we must always have the same perspective that Jesus had—that is, confidence in God's power but also submission to his will: "Father, all things are possible for you... Yet not what I will, but what you will" (**Mk 14:36**)

4. So let us seek to grow in faith as we pray, but also with understanding that what we ask must be in harmony with the will of God
5. If we feel that we lack in faith, there are two things we can do to grow in faith:
 - a. Read the Word of God - cf. **Ro 10:17**
 - b. Pray that the Lord will help increase our faith - cf. **Mk 9:24; Lk 17:5**

[The importance of faith in prayer cannot be overestimated. But neither can the importance of praying with a forgiving spirit...]

II. FORGIVENESS AND PRAYER

A. THE NARRATIVE...

1. Jesus enjoins the need to forgive others as we pray - **Mk 11:25**
2. Without a forgiving heart, we cannot hope to receive forgiveness ourselves - **Mk 11:26**

B. SOME OBSERVATIONS...

1. Forgiving others was very important to Jesus, as stressed time and again
 - a. In the sermon on the mount - **Mt 5:7; 6:12-15**
 - b. In response to Peter's question - **Mt 18:21-22**
 - c. In the parable of the unforgiving servant - **Mt 18:23-25**
 - d. In the sermon on the plain - **Lk 6:37**
 - e. In teaching the disciples how to pray - **Lk 11:4**
 - f. In teaching His disciples to forgive - **Lk 17:3-4**
2. Jesus and His followers demonstrated the forgiving spirit
 - a. Jesus on the cross - **Lk 23:34**
 - b. Stephen as he was being stoned - **Ac 7:59-60**
 - c. Paul when he was abandoned - **2Ti 4:16**
3. We must develop the forgiving spirit, which we can do by:
 - a. Focusing on God's love for us - **Ro 5:8; 1Jn 4:10-11**
 - b. Remembering Christ's willingness to die and forgive - **1Jn 3:16; Lk 23:34**
 - c. Meditating on the passages above about the importance of forgiving others

CONCLUSION

1. We have considered two very important conditions for having our prayers answered...
 - a. **Faith**, that we believe what we ask according to God's will shall be done, for God does not answer the prayers of doubters - **Jm 1:6-8**
 - b. **Forgiveness**, for unless we forgive God will not forgive, and God does not hear the prayers of the unrighteous - **1Pe 3:12**
2. What Jesus teaches about faith and forgiveness is challenging...
 - a. But consider the blessings that will come from acceptable prayer!
 - b. Where we must confess a weak faith and an unforgiving spirit, let us pray that grace will create in us a new heart!

Such grace comes through responding to the gospel of the grace of God... - cf. **Tit 2:11-14; 3:4-7**

Is It From Heaven Or From Men?

Mark 11:27-33

INTRODUCTION

1. Upon return to the temple on Tuesday, Jesus was confronted by the chief priests and elders...
 - a. They questioned His authority - **Mk 11:27-28**
 - b. In response, Jesus challenged them regarding the authority behind the baptism of John - **Mk 11:29-30**
 - c. Since they would not answer, Jesus refused to answer their question - **Mk 11:31-33**
2. In this passage, we find an important principle regarding authority in matters of religion...
 - a. All religious practices must come from one of two sources
 - b. They come either from heaven or from men - **Mk 11:30**
3. What Jesus asked regarding John's baptism, could be asked of many religious practices...
 - a. Infant baptism
 - b. Sprinkling or pouring instead of immersion
 - c. Denominationalism, a clergy-laity distinction
 - d. The impossibility of apostasy, observing the Sabbath
 - e. Instrumental music, burning of incense, etc., in our worship

-- **Are such practices from heaven or from men?**

[In this study we shall consider how one can know whether a particular religious practice is from heaven or from man...]

I. TO BE FROM HEAVEN

A. IT MUST COME FROM JESUS...

1. For He has been given all authority - **Mt 28:18**
 2. Both in heaven and on earth
- **Certainly if Jesus commanded it, it is from heaven!**

B. IT MUST COME THROUGH HIS APOSTLES...

1. For Jesus delegated His authority to His apostles - **Jn 13:20**
 2. They serve as His official ambassadors - **2Co 5:20**
 3. To ensure their reliability, Jesus promised the Spirit to remind them of what He taught, and to guide them into all the truth - **Jn 14:26; 16:12-13**
 4. This is why the church continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine - **Ac 2:42; 1Co 14:37; 1Th 2:13**
- **If the apostles of Christ taught it, it is from heaven!**

C. IT MUST COME ONLY FROM THE APOSTLES...

1. The apostles were given, and proclaimed, the whole counsel of God - **Ac 20:27**
 2. They were given all things that pertain to life and godliness - **2Pe 1:3**
 3. The faith revealed through them was delivered once for all (lit., one time for all times) - **Ju 3**
- **There is no need for modern day revelations, for in the Scriptures we have all we**

need to be “complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work” - 2 Ti 3:16-17

[If a religious practice can be found to be taught by Jesus or His apostles, then it is truly from heaven! Religious practices that are from men, however, might come from a variety of sources...]

II. IT IS FROM MAN

A. IF BASED SOLELY UPON WHAT THE MAJORITY THINKS...

1. Many people will accept whatever most people think about something
 2. Yet Jesus warned against following the majority - **Mt 7:13-14**
 3. If you had followed the majority...
 - a. In Noah’s day, you would have perished in the flood
 - b. In Joshua’s day, you would have perished in the wilderness
- **What the majority believes or does is not likely to be from heaven, but from men!**

B. IF BASED SOLELY UPON WHAT PARENTS TAUGHT US...

1. Some believe “If it was good enough for Mom and Dad, it is good enough for me.”
 2. As much as we may love and respect our parents, Christ must come first - **Mt 10:37**
 3. If every generation had simply followed their parents, then we who are Gentiles would likely still be idol-worshippers and polytheistic!
- **Let us honor our parents, not by following them blindly, but by applying principles they themselves likely taught us, such as seek to do the right thing, obey God, etc.**

C. IF BASED SOLELY UPON WHAT PREACHERS TELL US...

1. It is common for people to place their trust in their “preacher,” “priest,” or “pastor”
 2. They reason that surely these “men of God” could not be wrong or lead them astray
 - a. Yet Paul warned of how we can easily be misled - cf. **2Co 11:13-15**
 - b. And Jesus warned about the “blind leading the blind” - **Mt 15:12-14**
 3. Our attitude needs to be like that of the Bereans, who carefully examined Paul’s teachings in light of the Scriptures - **Ac 17:11**
- **What a preacher teaches is only as good as the authority behind it; unless we wish to be led astray, we have the responsibility to ask “Is it from God, or men?”**

D. IF BASED SOLELY UPON CREEDS AND TRADITIONS OF MEN...

1. This is where the denominations really get most of their authority
 - a. E.g., for such things as infant baptism, pouring or sprinkling instead of immersion
 - b. E.g., for such things as denominationalism, once saved always saved
 2. Indeed, adherence to the creeds of men is what produces denominations
 - a. Accept the Bible only, and you become a Christian only
 - b. Accept some man-made creed or tradition, and you become something else!
 - 1) Accept the Book of Mormon, and you become a Mormon
 - 2) Accept papal authority, and you become a Roman Catholic
 - 3) Accept the Lutheran Catechism, and you become a Lutheran
 3. Creeds are really not even necessary...
 - a. If they say more than what the Bible says, they say too much
 - b. If they say less than what the Bible says, they say too little
 - c. If they say exactly what the Bible says, then why not let the Bible be our creed book?
- **The fact is creeds are filled with the traditions and commands of men, many of which conflict with and displace the commands of God! - cf. Mk 7:6-9**

E. IF BASED SOLELY UPON WHAT YOUR CONSCIENCE TELLS YOU...

1. "Let your conscience be your guide" is the motto of many
 2. But our conscience cannot always be reliable
 - a. Paul had served God with a good conscience throughout his life - **Ac 23:1**
 - b. Even at a time when he was persecuting Christians! - cf. **Ac 26:9-11**
 3. Our conscience is like a clock, which works properly if set properly
 4. Once our conscience has been "set" by the "apostles' doctrine", then it can be a good guide
- **Unless what your conscience is telling you can be confirmed by the Word of God, then what you believe is from man, not God!**

F. IF BASED SOLELY UPON WHAT IS HUMAN WISDOM...

1. Many believe that through their own wisdom they can determine right and wrong
 - a. If it makes sense to them, they reason it must be true
 - b. If it doesn't make sense, they won't accept it
 2. But God's thoughts and ways are not always our own - cf. **Isa 55:8-9**
 3. In fact, God has chosen to save man in a manner specifically designed to confound those who depend solely upon human wisdom - cf. **1Co 1:18-29**
 4. For us to know God's will, it was necessary for Him to reveal it to us - **1Co 2:9-12**
 - a. This He has done through His Spirit-inspired apostles
 - b. Who in turn shared it with us through their writings - **Ep 3:1-5**
- **Appeal to human reason to justify a certain practice, and it will likely be from man, not God!**

G. IF BASED SOLELY UPON FEELINGS...

1. This is often the "standard of authority" for many people
 - a. Who go by whatever "feels right"
 - b. Who place stock in a religion "better felt than told"
 2. Yet the Bible declares the danger of trusting in "feelings"
 - a. "There is a way which seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death." - **Pr 14:12**
 - b. "He who trusts in his own heart is a fool..." - **Pr 28:26**
 - c. "O LORD, I know the way of man is not in himself; It is not in man who walks to direct his own steps." - **Jer 10:23**
- **It should be evident that any religious practice or doctrine based upon "feelings" alone is from man, not God!**

H. IF BASED SOLELY UPON THE OLD TESTAMENT...

1. People will sometimes resort to the O.T. to provide authority for some practice
 - a. When they can't find authority for it in the teachings of Christ and/or His apostles
 - b. For example, a clergy-laity system, burning of incense and use of instrumental music in worship, keeping the Sabbath
2. But the O.T. was designed to be temporary, to fulfill a specific purpose and as a covenant has been replaced by the New Covenant (i.e., the New Testament)
 - a. It was given because of transgressions, till Christ should come - **Ga 3:19**
 - b. For those under the Law (Israel), it was a tutor
 - 1) A tutor designed to lead them to Christ - **Ga 3:24**
 - 2) A tutor that has been taken away - **Ga 3:25**
 - c. When those who were under the Law came to Christ...

- 1) They became dead to the Law - **Ro 7:4**
- 2) They were delivered from the Law - **Ro 7:6**
- d. As prophesied by Jeremiah, God has made a “new covenant” to replace the “first covenant” which is now obsolete - **He 8:7-13**
3. In handling of the issue of circumcision, the apostles demonstrated that one cannot use the O.T. to teach something which the apostles themselves did not command
 - a. Some sought to enforce circumcision and the Law upon Gentile believers - **Ac 15:1,6**
 - b. But the apostles, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, were able to defuse the problem by simply stating they “gave no such commandment” - **Ac 15:22-29**
4. This is not to say the O.T. is not of value to Christians...
 - a. It was written for our learning, to provide patience, comfort, and hope - **Ro 15:4**
 - b. It was written for our admonition, that we not make similar mistakes - **1Co 10:6,11**
 - c. We just can't use it to enjoin religious practices upon others which the apostles themselves did not teach!

CONCLUSION

1. Do we want to avoid being led astray...?
 - a. By “blind leaders of the blind”? - cf. **Mt 15:14**
 - b. By “false teachers...who will secretly bring in destructive heresies”? - cf. **2Pe 2:1**
2. Then we need to know how to ascertain whether a religious doctrine or practice...
 - a. Is from God or from men
 - b. Is based upon what the apostles of Christ taught, or some other “authority”
3. The solution is simple, but requires effort on our part...
 - a. We must “continue steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine” - **Ac 2:42**
 - a. We must “search the Scriptures daily” - **Ac 17:11**

Only then can we be sure that what we believe or someone teaches is truly from God, and not from man!

The Parable Of The Wicked Vinedressers

Mark 12:1-12

INTRODUCTION

1. Reviewing the events of the Last Week recorded by Mark so far...
 - a. **Sunday** - The triumphal entry and brief visit to the temple - **Mk 11:1-11**
 - b. **Monday** - The cursing of the fig tree and the cleansing of the temple - **Mk 11:12-19**
 - c. **Tuesday** - The lesson of the fig tree and the authority of Jesus questioned - **Mk 11:20-33**
2. As we continue our study with chapter twelve, it is still Tuesday of the Last Week...
 - a. In the temple, Jesus begins to speak in parables - **Mk 12:1**
 - b. Matthew records a trilogy of parables, while Mark just one

[Mark records the parable of “**The Wicked Vinedressers**” (**Mk 12:1-12**), its meaning quite clear...]

I. THE MEANING OF THE PARABLE

A. THE PARTICULARS OF THE PARABLE...

1. The **vineyard** immediately brings to mind Israel
 - a. The figure of a vineyard referring to Israel was well-known - cf. **Isa 5:1-7**
 - b. But here it is not Israel as a nation per se...
 - 1) Rather, “**the special advantages and opportunities which were given to the people as the chosen seed**” (W.M. Taylor, The Parables of Our Savior)
 - 2) For later Jesus explains the vineyard (or kingdom of God) will be given to others (“a nation producing its fruit”) - **Mk 12:9**; cf. **Mt 21:43**
2. The **man** who planted the vineyard is God
3. The **wicked vinedressers** represents Israel’s leaders - **Mk 12:12**
 - a. Their chief priests, scribes, elders, and their followers - cf. **Mt 21:45**
 - b. Therefore, the physical nation of Israel as a whole
4. The **servants** who were sent in behalf of the landowner represents the prophets
 - a. As a nation, Israel rejected many of her prophets - cf. **2Ch 36:15-16**
 - b. Note the plaintive cry of Jesus over Jerusalem later on - cf. **Mt 23:37**
5. The **landowner’s son** is Jesus Christ Himself

B. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS REVEAL JESUS’ INTENT...

1. To help them see why God would be just
 - a. In bringing condemnation upon Israel
 - b. In giving the blessings of Israel to those more deserving - cf. **Mt 21:43**
2. Their rejection of Jesus had been foretold - **Mk 12:10-11**; cf. **Ps 118:22-23**
 - a. The “builders” were the religious leaders of the nation
 - b. The “stone” they rejected was Christ
 - c. Yet, this stone would be made a “chief cornerstone” by God Himself
 - 1) In which God would build something new, i.e., the church - cf. **1Pe 2:4-10**
 - 2) Where both Jew and Gentile are members of God’s household - **Ep 2:19-20**

[The main lesson of this parable can be summarized in the words of **Ps 2:12**...

*“Kiss (i.e., pay homage to) the Son, lest He be angry,
And you perish in the way,
When His wrath is kindled but a little.
“Blessed are all those who put their trust in Him.”*

So obvious was Jesus’ meaning and intent in telling this parable, that the religious leaders’ would have arrested Him at that moment had it not been for the people (**Mk 12:12**).

What application can we make from this parable? Is there a lesson for us today that can be drawn...?]

II. AN APPLICATION OF THE PARABLE

A. GOD OFTEN BESTOWS WONDERFUL PRIVILEGES...

1. This He had done with the nation of Israel
 - a. Like a precious vineyard, God planted Israel in Canaan
 - b. He blessed the nation with laws, priests, prophets, and other special privileges
 - c. He eventually sent His only begotten Son as their Messiah
2. **What about us?**
 - a. Have we not received wonderful privileges from God?
 - b. We enjoy free access to the Word of God, and the freedom to worship without fear of persecution; many in the world do not
 - c. We are blessed to hear things that prophets, kings, and saints of old desired to hear and were not able - cf. **Mt 13:16-17**

B. PEOPLE OFTEN MAKE BAD USE OF THEIR PRIVILEGES...

1. The history of Israel as a nation established by God
 - a. They consistently murmured against God in the wilderness
 - b. They turned away from God time and again during the period of the Judges
 - c. They persecuted His prophets, and eventually rejected His own Son
2. **What about us?**
 - a. We have blessings given to us through Christ
 - 1) The forgiveness of sins through His blood
 - 2) The aid of the Holy Spirit in putting to death the deeds of the body
 - 3) The joy of fellowship in the family of God
 - 4) The privilege of sharing the gospel with a dying world
 - b. And yet Christians often turn their back on such blessings
 - 1) They sin, and do not seek forgiveness
 - 2) They do not seek the help God gives to deal with the problem of sin
 - 3) They neglect their brethren by forsaking the assembling, and by not developing close relationships with them
 - 4) They make little or no effort to spread the precious gospel of Christ

C. JUDGMENT COMES ON THOSE WHO MAKE BAD USE OF THEIR PRIVILEGES...

1. Again, the nation of Israel is an example
 - a. They suffered forty years of wandering in the wilderness
 - b. God allowed neighboring nations to be a thorn in their side
 - c. They endured Assyrian and Babylonian captivity
 - d. God destroyed their temple and their religion by the Syrians (167 B.C.) and the

Romans (70 A.D.)

- e. He has indeed taken away the kingdom of God from them, and given it to a nation bearing the fruits of it - cf. **Mt 21:43**
2. **What about us?**
 - a. Consider the words of Jesus - **Jn 15:1-2,6; Re 2:4-5, 16; 3:1-3**
 - b. Consider what was written to the Hebrew Christians - **He 10:26-31**
3. Clearly, if we do not utilize our special privileges...
 - a. God will take away the blessings we have (i.e., the kingdom of God)
 - b. And give it to someone who appreciates it (i.e., bears the fruit of it)

CONCLUSION

1. Truly God has given us wonderful blessings...
 - a. He made us worthy to be “partakers of the inheritance of the saints” - **Col 1:12**
 - b. He “has delivered us from the power of darkness and translated us into the kingdom of the Son of His love” - **Col 1:13**
 - c. In Christ we have “redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins” - **Col 1:14**
 - d. He sent us apostles and prophets of His Son, whose words are in the New Testament
2. Let us be careful how we receive them (cf. **Jn 13:20**), for the next time the Beloved Son is sent, He is coming in terrifying judgment! - **2Th 1:7-10**

Indeed, as Jesus said...

“For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more.” - Lk 12:48

Our Duty To God And Country

Mark 12:13-17

INTRODUCTION

1. Teaching in the temple on Tuesday of the Last Week, we've seen...
 - a. The authority of Jesus questioned by religious leaders - **Mk 11:20-33**
 - b. The parable of the wicked vinedressers, directed toward the religious leaders - **Mk 12:1-12**
2. Jesus is then approached by Pharisees and Herodians...
 - a. Intending to get Him in trouble with the authorities - **Mk 12:13; Lk 20:20**
 - b. Who question Him whether one should pay taxes to Caesar - **Mk 12:14-15**
3. Ever the Master Teacher, Jesus easily dealt with their question...
 - a. Seeing through their hypocrisy, He called for a coin - **Mk 12:15**
 - b. He asked whose inscription was on it, and they answered "Caesar's" - **Mk 12:16**
 - c. His reply cause them to marvel - **Mk 12:17**
4. The reply of Jesus reveals that we have responsibilities to both God and country...
 - a. There are things that we must render to Caesar (country)
 - b. There are things that we must render to God

[What is our duty to God and country? In this study we shall review what the Scriptures tell us about our responsibilities as **citizens** and as **disciples**. We start with...]

I. OUR DUTY TO COUNTRY

A. PAY TAXES...

1. This was the point of Jesus in our text - **Mk 12:14-17**
2. Paul also taught us to pay taxes - **Ro 13:6-7**

B. OBEY LAWS...

1. We are to submit to the ordinances (laws) of the land - **Ro 13:1-5; Tit 3:1**
2. This we do for the Lord's sake, that we might silence foolish men - **1Pe 2:13-16**

C. FEAR AND HONOR...

1. We are to respect and honor those in positions of authority - **Ro 13:7**
 - a. To fear (respect) the king - cf. **Pro 24:21**
 - b. Not to speak evil of our rulers - cf. **Exo 22:28; Ac 23:5; Tit 3:2; 2Pe 2:10; Jude 8-9**
2. Even as we are to honor all and love the brethren - **1Pe 2:17**
-- **Have you noticed that Paul or Peter never had unkind words about Nero?**

D. DO GOOD...

1. We are to be ready for every good work - **Tit 3:1**
2. We are to have conduct that is honorable before all - **1Pe 2:11-12,15-16**

E. PRAY...

1. To make supplications, offer prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks - **1Ti 2:1**
2. To pray for kings and all who are in authority - **1Ti 2:1-3**

[Christians are but **sojourners** and **pilgrims** in this world (**1Pe 2:11**). While our true citizenship is in heaven (**Ph 3:20**), we are to be a blessing to those earthly countries in which we sojourn. Fulfill our God-given obligations, and we will be an asset to any country in which we live! Now let's review...]

II. OUR DUTY TO GOD

A. LOVE GOD WITH ALL OUR BEING...

1. Jesus considered this the greatest commandment of the Law - **Mt 22:34-38**
2. Being the greatest command, I would suggest this is our greatest duty!

B. OBEY GOD FROM THE HEART...

1. If we love God, we will keep His commandments - **1Jn 5:3**
2. Jesus taught that keeping His commandments is evidence of true love - **Jn 14:15,21,23**

C. MAKE GOD OUR PRIORITY...

1. His will, His rule, His righteousness, should be our first priority - **Mt 6:33**
2. Not only over our personal concerns, but even over our duty to country
 - a. When there is a conflict between duty to God and country, God must come first
 - b. As stated by Peter: "We ought to obey God rather than men" - **Ac 5:27-29**
3. This helps to answer questions that often arise regarding the Christian's duty to government
 - a. Can a Christian vote?
 - b. Can one serve in political office?
 - c. Can one serve in the military or other civic duty?
4. If such duties come at too high a price (i.e., placing country before God), a Christian must obey God rather than men
 - a. In some countries, the price may be too high, and Christians could not serve in political office or exercise certain rights as citizens
 - b. Other countries may allow for God to take precedence in one's conduct, permitting Christians to participate in such things

CONCLUSION

1. Christians ought to be a blessing for any country in which they reside...
 - a. A source of revenue, with respect for laws, and reverence for those in authority
 - b. Contributing to the general welfare, through good deeds and fervent prayers
2. Christians can be a blessing to their country.....
 - a. When Christians render first to God what is His due, and then what is due the country
 - b. When the country respects the priority that must be given God by its citizens

While those in authority might not always understand their proper place, and expect more of their citizens than what is right, may we who are disciples of Christ never fail to:

"Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."

The Resurrection Of The Dead

Mark 12:18-27

INTRODUCTION

1. After the Pharisees and Herodians, the Sadducees make their attempt to confound Jesus...
 - a. A sect of the Jews who did not believe in the resurrection - **Mk 12:18; Ac 23:8**
 - b. Who thought they had an unanswerable argument - **Mk 12:19-23**
2. Jesus quickly answered their supposed dilemma...
 - a. Charging them with being mistaken, not knowing the Scriptures or God's power - **Mk 12:24**
 - b. Explaining first that marital relations do not continue in the resurrection - **Mk 12:25**
 - c. Proving the resurrection by the words of God to Moses at burning bush - **Mk 12:26-27**

[The Sadducees were “greatly mistaken” regarding the resurrection (**Mk 12:27**). The same might be said of many people today. Lest we be mistaken about the resurrection of the dead, let's review what is revealed in the Scriptures concerning this wonderful event. Beginning with...]

I. THE FACT OF THE RESURRECTION

A. JESUS TAUGHT THERE WILL BE A RESURRECTION...

1. In which both those good and evil will come forth from the grave - **Jn 5:28-29**
2. Jesus assures those who believe in Him will be raised at the last day - **Jn 6:39-40,44,54**

B. HIS APOSTLES PROCLAIMED A RESURRECTION...

1. Peter and John preached in Jesus the resurrection from the dead - **Ac 4:1-2**
2. Before the Sanhedrin and Felix, Paul confessed his hope in the resurrection - **Ac 23:6; 24:15**
3. To the church at Corinth, Paul asserted the necessity of the resurrection - **1Co 15:12-23**
4. To the church at Thessalonica, Paul taught the doctrine of the resurrection - **1Th 4:16-18**

[Unless one questions the authority of Christ and His apostles, the **fact** of the resurrection is undeniable. But how can such a thing happen? It helps to remember...]

II. THE AGENT OF THE RESURRECTION

A. CHRIST ATTRIBUTED IT TO THE POWER OF GOD...

1. As He reminded the Sadducees, who denied the resurrection - **Mk 12:24**
2. And of course, “with God nothing will be impossible” - cf. **Lk 1:37**

B. PAUL ALSO EMPHASIZED THE POWER OF GOD...

1. The same power that raised Jesus from the dead - **1Co 6:14**
2. He who can raise Jesus from the dead can certainly raise us up at the last day - **2Co 4:14**

[While it may be difficult for us to comprehend **how** the dead can be raised, it is not difficult for God to do it (unless "your" God is too small)! Another question to be addressed concerning the resurrection pertains to **who** will be raised. Therefore we note...]

III. THE UNIVERSALITY OF THE RESURRECTION

A. JESUS TAUGHT ALL WILL BE RAISED...

1. "All who are in the graves will...come forth" - **Jn 5:28**
2. Both "those who have done good" and "those who have done evil" - **Jn 5:29**
3. One to experience a "resurrection of life", the other a "resurrection of condemnation"

B. PAUL TAUGHT ALL WILL BE RAISED...

1. There will be a resurrection "both of the just and the unjust" - **Ac 24:15**
2. "for as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive" - **1Co 15:21-22**

[While there may be a difference in the nature of the resurrected bodies (see below), in some way **everyone** will be raised from the dead! What about the timing of the resurrection...?]

IV. THE TIME OF THE RESURRECTION

A. AT "THE LAST DAY," WHEN THE LORD COMES AGAIN...

1. Jesus spoke again and again of raising the dead at "the last day" - **Jn 6:39-40,44,54**
2. Paul wrote of it occurring when Jesus comes again, to deliver the kingdom to the Father, having destroyed the last enemy, death itself - **1Co 15:22-26**
3. He later says that it will occur at "the last trumpet" - **1Co 15:52**

B. WHAT ABOUT DOCTRINES OF SEPARATE RESURRECTIONS...?

1. Premillennialists (and others) teach that there will be more than just one resurrection
 - a. All Premillennialists teach at least two resurrections:
 - 1) The resurrection of believers at the **beginning** of the millennium
 - 2) The resurrection of unbelievers at the **end** of the millennium
 - b. Dispensational Premillennialists add two more:
 - 1) The resurrection of tribulation saints at the **end** of the seven-year tribulation
 - 2) The resurrection of millennial saints at the **end** of the millennium
2. There are several reasons why the doctrines of several resurrections are found wanting...
 - a. The Bible presents the resurrection of believers and unbelievers as occurring together - **Dan 12:2; Jn 5:28-29; Ac 24:14-15; Re 20:11-15**
 - b. The Bible teaches that believers will be raised at "the last day", not several times (and therefore several days, years, or millennium) before the last day! - **Jn 6:39-40,44,54**
 - c. Passages offered in support of several resurrections do not necessarily teach what Premillennialists say they do
 - 1) **1Th 4:13-16** concerns itself with the resurrection of the righteous, but that does not demand that the wicked are not being raised at the same time
 - 2) **Re 20:4-6** describes a resurrection of "souls", not bodies, and the reigning with Christ is likely to occur in heaven, not on earth - cf. **Re 2:26-27; 3:21**

[One more subject to be considered in this study, and that pertains to...]

V. THE BODY OF THE RESURRECTION

A. THE RESURRECTION BODY OF THE RIGHTEOUS...

1. Will be our physical bodies, but gloriously changed and different! - **1Co 15:35-55**
 - a. By the power of God (**Mk 12:24**), our bodies will serve as the "kernel" from which

- comes incorruptible and immortal bodies in which to house our souls - **1Co 15:35-37**
- b. Our physical bodies...
 - 1) Sown in corruption, will be raised in incorruption! - **1Co 15:42**
 - 2) Sown in dishonor, will be raised in glory! - **1Co 15:43**
 - 3) Sown in weakness, will be raised in power! - **1Co 15:43**
 - 4) Sown as natural bodies, will be raised as spiritual bodies! - **1Co 15:44-49**
 - c. Even those alive at Christ's coming will undergo this "change", in which that which is corruptible and mortal will "put on" incorruption and immortality - **1Co 15:50-55**
2. Will be conformed to the glorious body of our Lord! - **Php 3:20-21**
 - a. That which is "lowly" will be transformed to be like that which "glorious"
 - b. How? "...according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself" - i.e., by the power of God! - cf. **Mk 12:24**

B. THE RESURRECTION BODY OF THE WICKED...

1. Very little is revealed, other than the wicked will indeed be raised from the dead
2. Though the Scriptures only apply the terms "incorruption" and "immortality" to the bodies of the righteous, most understand that the resurrection body of the wicked...
 - a. Is not subject again to death
 - b. Is capable of experiencing eternal suffering
3. There are some, however, who understand that the "second death" will be literal...
 - a. After the resurrection and judgment, the wicked will "die" again (a separation of resurrected "body" and spirit)
 - b. Not that the wicked will be annihilated, but that they will spend eternity as "disembodied spirits" in the lake of fire
 - c. This is not to be confused with those who don't believe in a resurrection of the wicked, or who believe the wicked will be annihilated
4. Since the Bible is relatively silent on this subject perhaps "the best course seems to be simply leave the problem where it was left by the writers of the New Testament." - **Ray Summers, The Life Beyond, p.93**

CONCLUSION

1. There is probably more about the resurrection we would like to know...
 - a. But we can know more than the Sadducees knew or believed!
 - b. If we are willing to accept both the Scriptures and the power of God!
2. From the Scriptures we can know...
 - a. The **fact** of the resurrection
 - b. The **agent** of the resurrection
 - c. The **universality** of the resurrection
 - d. The **time** of the resurrection
 - e. The **body** of the resurrection
3. Which is certainly enough to motivate those who...
 - a. Desire whatever God has planned for those who love and obey Him!
 - b. Are making it their aim to be ready for whatever God has prepared!

Does the **hope** of the resurrection motivate you to abound in the work of the Lord...? - cf. **1Co 15:54-58**

Two Great Commandments

Mark 12:28-34

INTRODUCTION

1. Having silenced the Pharisees, Herodians, and Sadducees, Jesus was approached by a scribe...
 - a. Who asked which is the first (foremost) commandment of the law - **Mk 12:28**
 - b. Jesus replied by offering two great commandments - **Mk 12:29-31**
 - c. With which the scribe agreed with grace and wisdom - **Mk 12:32-33**
 - d. Prompting Jesus' comment: "You are not far from the kingdom of God" - **Mk 12:34**

2. Though part of the Law, these "**Two Great Commandments**" are very important to Christians...
 - a. For they have their counterpart in the New Covenant
 - b. And keeping the commandments of God is just as important now - cf. **1Co 7:19; 1Jn 5:3**

[Therefore it is proper to ask, do we love God and our neighbor? Do we understand what is involved? By reflecting upon these "**Two Great Commandments**" we can find the answer to such questions...]

I. THE COMMAND TO LOVE GOD

A. UNDER THE OLD COVENANT...

1. The Israelites were expected to love God (**Deu 6:5**)...
 - a. "with all your heart"
 - b. "with all your soul"
 - c. "with all your strength"
 - d. "with all your mind"
 - e. Emotionally, physically, intellectually, they were to love God
2. Thus they were to love God with their whole being, **not** like some who...
 - a. Serve God emotionally, while committing intellectual suicide
 - b. Serve God intellectually, but with no emotion
 - c. Serve God emotionally and intellectually, but with no actual obedience requiring the exercise of strength (i.e., action)

B. HOW WE ARE TO LOVE GOD TODAY...

1. Does God expect any less of us? Of course not! We are to love God:
 - a. With all our heart - cf. **1Co 16:22** (note the use the word "phileo")
 - b. With all our soul (body and mind) - cf. **Ro 12:1-2**
 - c. With all our strength - cf. **He 10:36**
 - d. With all our mind - cf. **Col 3:1; Php 4:8**
2. We demonstrate our love for God through keeping His commandments
 - a. This is the love of God - **1Jn 5:3**
 - b. This is evidence that we love Jesus - **Jn 14:15**

C. HOW TO GROW IN OUR LOVE FOR GOD...

1. By letting God's love for us to move us - cf. **1Jn 4:9-10; Ro 5:8**
2. By asking God to help us grow in love - cf. **2Th 3:5**
3. By praying, and growing in love when He answers - cf. **Ps 116:1-2**

4. By keeping the word of God - cf. **1Jn 2:5**

[Do we love God any less than what was expected of the Israelites? We certainly have compelling reasons to love Him even more (e.g., the gift of His Son)! Now let's consider...]

II. THE COMMAND TO LOVE OUR NEIGHBOR

A. ENJOINED UPON CHRISTIANS...

1. We owe it to love our neighbor - **Ro 13:8**
2. When fully applied, it fulfills what the Law required - **Ro 13:8-10**
3. Five of the Ten Commandments spoke to working no ill toward our fellow man
4. If one truly loves his neighbor, he will not kill, commit adultery, lie, steal, etc.

B. ENHANCED BY A NEW COMMAND...

1. Jesus taught us to love one another - **Jn 13:34-35**
2. This new command takes our love to a higher level
3. No longer do we just love one another as we love ourselves
4. We must love one another as Christ loved us! - cf. **Jn 15:13; 2Co 8:9**

C. EXPERIENCED WHEN WE KEEP GOD'S COMMANDMENTS...

1. We demonstrate true love of one another by keeping the commandments of God - **2Jn 1:5-6**
2. This is how we know that we really love one another - **1Jn 5:2**
3. Not by just claiming to love one another
4. But by setting the proper example, and encouraging each other by the example we set!

D. EDUCATED BY THE EXAMPLE OF GOD...

1. We develop love for one another by being taught of God - cf. **1Th 4:9-10**
2. The Thessalonians had been taught of God to love their brethren
3. They did so remarkably, though there was always room for improvement
4. Jesus by His own example demonstrates what true love is - **1Jn 3:16-18**
5. If we wish to learn how to love one another properly, look to God and Jesus!

CONCLUSION

1. How great were these two commandments...to love God, and to love your neighbor?
 - a. "There is no greater commandment than these." - **Mk 12:31**
 - b. "On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets." - **Mk 22:40**
 - c. "Love is the fulfilling of the Law." - **Ro 13:9**
2. When one truly loves God, and loves his neighbor as himself...
 - a. They are on the path that leads to the kingdom of God! - cf. **Mk 12:34**
 - b. They are on the road that leads to eternal life! - cf. **Lk 10:28**

If you wish to receive eternal life, and become a citizen of the kingdom, then demonstrate your love for God by obeying His commands (cf. **Mt 28:18-20; Mk 16:16**), and live a life of faith in Jesus that is focused on loving God and others...!

David's Son And David's Lord

Mark 12:35-37

INTRODUCTION

1. Teaching in the temple on Tuesday of the Last Week, Jesus easily silenced His critics...
 - a. Those who questioned His authority - **Mk 11:27-33**
 - b. The Pharisees and Herodians, regarding taxes - **Mk 12:13-17**
 - c. The Sadducees, regarding the resurrection - **Mk 12:18-27**
 - d. A scribe, regarding the foremost commandment - **Mk 12:28-34**
2. Jesus then asked the Pharisees a question...
 - a. Concerning the Christ (Messiah) as the son of David - **Mk 12:35**
 - b. How could that be if David by inspiration called the Christ "Lord"? - **Mk 12:36-37**
 - c. Seemingly a conundrum they could not answer
3. The passage Jesus referenced was **Psalms 110**...
 - a. The most frequently quoted OT text in the NT
 - b. Quoted or alluded to 33 times in the NT - **D. M. Hay**

[While the Pharisees could not answer, we have the benefit of completed revelation to understand how the Christ could be **both** David's son and David's lord, and how **Jesus** proved to be both...]

I. THE CHRIST IS DAVID'S SON

A. ACCORDING TO PROPHECY...

1. As prophesied to David, with Solomon as a prefigure of Christ - **2Sa 7:12**
2. As promised by the prophets - **Isa 11:1-5; Jer 23:5-6; Ezek 34:23-24; 37:24-25**
- **At the time of the NT, the common Jewish expectation was that the Christ would be a descendant of David**

B. JESUS IS THE DESCENDANT OF DAVID...

1. Jesus was David's son through the royal ancestry of Joseph - **Mt 1:1-17**
 - a. Matthew's gospel shows that Jesus was the royal descendant of David
 - b. Following the lineage of David through his son **Solomon** - **Mt 1:6**
2. Jesus was David's son through the fleshly ancestry of Mary - **Lk 3:23-38**
 - a. Luke's gospel shows that Jesus was the fleshly descendant of David
 - b. Following the lineage of David through his son **Nathan** - **Lk 3:31**
- **Jesus was a descendant of David on both sides of His family (mother and step-father)!**

[Jesus' question was not to cast doubt on Christ as David's son. It served to stump His critics for **they did not comprehend** how David's son could also be David's lord. **Today, we understand how...**]

II. THE CHRIST IS DAVID'S LORD

A. ACCORDING TO PROPHECY...

1. As prophesied by David in the text Jesus quoted - **Ps 110:1-7**

- a. The Christ would be David's lord
 - b. Ruling at God's right hand as both king and priest forever
 - 2. As prophesied by Isaiah - **Isa 9:6-7**
 - a. The Christ would be a Son, Mighty God, Everlasting Father
 - b. Over a government with no end
 - 3. As prophesied by Micah - **Mic 5:2**
 - a. The Christ born in Bethlehem would be a ruler
 - b. Who would be from everlasting!
- **OT prophecy declared the kingship and deity of the Christ!**

B. JESUS IS THE SON OF GOD...

- 1. As accepted and claimed by Jesus
 - a. Jesus accepted the title "Son of God" in worship - **Mt 14:33**
 - b. Jesus referred to Himself as the "Son of God" - **Jn 5:25; 10:36; 11:4**
 - 2. As proclaimed by others
 - a. God called Jesus His Son - **Mt 3:17; 17:5**
 - b. Peter confessed Jesus as the Son of God - **Mt 16:16**
 - c. Mark began his gospel declaring Jesus as the Son of God - **Mk 1:1**
 - d. The angel Gabriel spoke of Jesus as the Son of God - **Lk 1:35**
 - e. John the Baptist testified that Jesus is the Son of God - **Jn 1:34**
 - f. Nathaniel, Martha, and John confessed Him as the Son of God - **Jn 1:49; 11:27; 20:31**
 - 3. Being called the Son of God alludes to His pre-existence
 - a. As expressed in John's prologue to his gospel - **Jn 1:1-2**
 - b. As claimed by Jesus Himself - **Jn 8:56-58**
 - c. As taught by the apostle Paul - **Php 2:5-7**
- **NT scriptures clearly declare the deity of the Christ!**

C. JESUS IS THE KING OF KINGS...

- 1. Jesus now has all authority in heaven and on earth - **Mt 28:18**
 - 2. All things (including David in heaven!) have been subjected to Him - **Ep 1:20-23; 1Pe 3:22**
 - 3. He is the ruler of the kings of the earth - **Re 1:5**
 - 4. The King of kings and Lord of lords - **1Ti 6:14-15; Re 17:14**
 - 5. Who will reign until all enemies are placed under His feet, death being the last - **Ps 110:1; 1Co 15:24-26**
- **NT scriptures clearly declare the kingly reign of the Christ!**

CONCLUSION

- 1. This is the answer to the conundrum posed by Jesus...
 - a. The Christ is **David's son** by virtue of His incarnation in the lineage of David
 - b. The Christ is **David's lord** by virtue of His eternal deity and present reign!
- 2. The apostle Paul would later write that Jesus is...
 - a. The Son of David according to the flesh - **Ro 1:3**
 - b. The Son of God as evidenced by His resurrection - **Ro 1:4**
 - c. "**Our Lord**" - **Ro 1:3**

Not only did David rightly call his Son "lord", but so should we. Have we accepted David's Son (Jesus) as Lord, serving Him as "volunteers in the day of Your power"...? - cf. **Ps 110:3; Lk 6:46**

Beware Of Pretentious Scribes

Mark 12:38-40

INTRODUCTION

1. Teaching in the temple on Tuesday of the Last Week, Jesus has countered the **doctrines** of various religious and political leaders...
 - a. The Pharisees and Herodians
 - b. The Sadducees and scribes
2. Toward the end, He then addressed the **practices** of some of them...
 - a. Especially the scribes - **Mk 12:38-40**
 - b. But also the Pharisees - cf. **Mt 23:1-39**

[Mark's gospel limits Jesus' censure to **pretentious** (self-important and affected, made to look or sound important) **scribes**, which we shall also do in this lesson. Let's begin with what is said about the...]

I. PRETENTIOUS SCRIBES IN JESUS' DAY

A. DESIRED TO WEAR THEIR LONG ROBES...

1. Their "flowing robes" were full-length prayer shawls with tassels attached to the four corners, in contrast to the colorful common Jewish dress. - **J.R. Edwards (PNTC)**
 2. Made of wool or linen, these blanket-like mantles, known as *tallits*, distinguished rabbis and scholars as men of wealth and eminence. - **ibid.**
- **They relished the distinction of their robes and the attention it gave them**

B. LOVED GREETINGS IN THE MARKETPLACES...

1. "... the formal salutations in the market-places, and to have the people address them as 'rabbi.'" - **Hendriksen (NTC)**; cf. **Mt 23:6**
 2. What the men who are here rebuked were always longing for was not a mere token of friendliness but rather a demonstration of respect, a public recognition of their prominence. - **ibid.**
- **They wanted to be addressed by titles that distinguished and elevated them**

C. BEST SEATS IN THE SYNAGOGUES...

1. Refers to the benches along the walls of the synagogues, and especially to the dais at the front of the synagogue, which *faced* the congregation seated on the floor in the middle of the synagogue. - **Edwards (PNTC)**
 2. These "first seats," as they were called in Greek, were reserved for teachers and persons of rank, and afforded the best position from which to address the congregation. - **ibid.**
- **They loved the honor and attention such seats gave them**

D. BEST PLACES AT FEASTS...

1. Seating at banquets was either according to age or according to importance. - **C.A. Evans (WBC)**
 2. Jesus had warned against seeking out the best places at a feast - **Lk 14:7-11**
- **They wanted privileges they felt due their position and stature**

E. DEVOUR WIDOWS' HOUSES...

1. By embezzling funds set up for the care of widows - **Evans (WBC)**
 2. By freeloading on the hospitality of widows - **ibid.**
 3. By mismanaging estates or wills of widows entrusted to them - **ibid.**
- **They took advantage of widows who trusted them**

F. FOR SHOW OFFER LONG PRAYERS...

1. The scribes were capable of lengthy, eloquent prayers - **Evans (WBC)**
 2. But this they did in pretense, consistent with their ostentation in dress and pursuit of honors and recognition - **ibid.**
- **They paraded their religious knowledge and supposed piety**

[Human nature being what it is, it should not surprise us that there can also be...]

II. PRETENTIOUS 'SCRIBES' IN OUR DAY

A. MINISTERS ARE OFTEN ELEVATED...

1. Distinctive clerical garb, without NT authority
 2. Religious titles (Reverend, Father, Pastor, Preacher) - contra **Mt 23:8-10**
 - a. Apostle, prophet, pastor, elder, evangelist, teacher are descriptive terms in the NT
 - b. They are never used as religious titles in the NT
 3. Reserved seating in worship
 4. Preferred treatment at social gatherings
 5. Unaccountable control of financial resources
 6. Always being asked to lead public prayers
- **Even well-intentioned respect can easily lead to pretentiousness**

B. MINISTERS OFTEN ELEVATE THEMSELVES...

1. Preferring to wear distinctive clothing to stand out, gain respect
 2. Expecting others to address them by religious titles
 3. Demanding special seating in worship
 4. Assuming preferred treatment in social settings
 5. Embezzling church funds, taking advantage of widows
 6. Praying long, showy prayers by rote
- **Ministers of Christ are called to be humble servants - Mt 23:11-12**

CONCLUSION

1. The words of Jesus should serve as a warning...
 - a. Not just to those who might be led astray by the pretentiousness of religious leaders
 - b. But by religious leaders themselves, lest they no longer serve as true ministers of Christ
2. It is **not just religious leaders** who can have problems with pretentiousness...
 - a. The average Christian can easily be ostentatious in their conduct and clothing
 - b. Thus we should give careful thought to these words of Jesus:

*And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.
Mt 23:12*

The Widow's Mites

Mark 12:41-44

INTRODUCTION

1. Teaching in the Temple (on Tuesday of the Last Week), Jesus addressed...
 - a. The **doctrines** of the religious leaders
 - b. The **practices** of the religious leaders
2. At the end of the day, with **the last incident of His public ministry**, Jesus...
 - a. Observed people putting money into the treasury of the temple
 - b. Made an observation about the contribution of one poor widow

[Jesus had just warned against pretentious scribes who “devour widows’ houses” (**Mk 12:40**). In contrast, consider the remarkable example of one poor widow...]

I. THE NARRATIVE

A. PUTTING MONEY IN THE TEMPLE TREASURY...

1. Jesus observed people placing money in the treasury - **Mk 12:41**
2. This may have been one of 13 receptacles, in the area known as The Women’s Court
3. These receptacles were marked, indicating how the money would be used (temple tribute, wood, sacrifices, incense, etc.)

B. THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE RICH...

1. Many who were rich gave large amounts - **Mk 12:41**
2. That in itself was commendable, reminiscent of the first contributions for the tabernacle - cf. **Exo 35:20-29; 36:2-7**

C. THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE WIDOW...

1. One poor widow threw in two ‘mites’ (Grk., leptos) - **Mk 12:42**
2. Worth a ‘quadrans’ (Grk., kodrantes), which was 1/64th of a ‘denarius’ (a day’s wage)
3. If a day’s wage was \$25, a ‘quadrans’ would be worth 75 cents, a ‘mite’ 40 cents

D. THE OBSERVATION OF JESUS...

1. The widow gave more than all who had given to the treasury - **Mk 12:43**
2. They gave out of their abundance, she gave all she had, her entire livelihood - **Mk 12:44**

[Jesus was so impressed, He called His disciples. He stressed the importance of His observation by prefacing His remarks with “Assuredly, I say to you”. In the spirit of His observation, here are...]

II. SOME OBSERVATIONS

A. A LESSON FOR DISCIPLES...

1. Note that Jesus “called His disciples to Himself” - **Mk 12:43**
2. This indicates that the teaching was intended for them and for all subsequent disciples - **J.A. Brooks (NAC)**

-- **What can we learn from the example of the widow's mites?**

B. THE VALUE OF A GIFT...

1. It is well to remember that God measures giving, not by what we give, but by what we keep for ourselves; - **R.A. Cole (TNTC)**
2. The value of a gift is not the amount given, but the cost to the giver. - **J.R. Edwards (PNTC)**
3. God measures the gift by the sacrifice involved (cf. **2Sa 24:24**). - **A. Black (CPNIVC)**
4. The Lord estimates giving by our motive, our means, and by how much we have left. This is a great encouragement to those who have few material possessions, but a great desire to give to Him. - **Believer's Bible Commentary**

-- **We learn that the liberality of the poor is often greater than that of the rich!**

C. THE IMPORTANCE OF A PERSON...

1. What matters in God's sight is not what a person has
2. But the devotion which causes one to give even at great personal cost
3. Thus even the poorest of the poor can be "rich" (in faith) - cf. **Jm 2:5**

-- **We learn that people should be measured by their faith, not their wealth!**

D. THE APPROVAL OF VOLUNTARY POVERTY...

1. Many today would criticize the widow
 - a. For not providing for her future
 - b. For her lack of foresight and prudence
 - c. For becoming dependent upon Israel's welfare system - cf. **Deu 24:19-21; 26:12-13**
2. Yet her voluntary poverty is just one example found in the Scriptures
 - a. Jesus chose a life of voluntary poverty - **Lk 9:58**
 - b. He counseled some to do the same in their service as a disciple - **Lk 18:22**
 - c. Teaching His disciples to be trust God's providential care - **Mt 6:31-33**

-- **We learn that voluntary poverty can be a viable option for some disciples**

E. JESUS IS STILL WATCHING HOW PEOPLE GIVE...

1. The 'giving' of Ananias and Sapphira did not go unnoticed - cf. **Ac 5:1-11**
2. Those who give liberally and cheerfully will be noticed - e.g., **2Co 8:1-5; 9:6-7**
3. Just as all that we do is noticed by God - **He 4:13**

-- **We learn that our giving does not escape the careful eye of our Lord!**

CONCLUSION

1. The story of the widow's mites should prompt prayerful reflection...
 - a. Regarding our own giving to the Lord's cause, to charity
 - b. We may think we excel at giving, but do we really?
2. The story of the widow's mites also prepares us for what is to come in Mark's gospel...
 - a. She exemplified sacrificial giving in the service of the Lord
 - b. Soon we will read of the Lord who gave all in service to us!

"For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich."

- 2Co 8:9

The Olivet Discourse - I

Mark 13:1-23

INTRODUCTION

1. A challenging passage in the Bible is Jesus' discourse on the Mount of Olives...
 - a. Given shortly after He left the temple with His disciples
 - b. Recorded in **Mt 24, Mk 13, Lk 21**
 - c. Commonly referred to as "The Olivet Discourse"
 - **Our focus in this study will be primarily on Mark's account**
2. It's difficulty becomes apparent as one considers the diversity of interpretations...
 - a. Some maintain it is entirely about events preceding the Lord's second and final coming
 - b. Others that it is entirely about events related to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.
 - c. Yet others believe it contains reference to both events
3. Even those who say it refers to both events differ as to when a particular event is described...
 - a. Some say that **vs. 5-23** refer to the destruction of Jerusalem, and **vs. 24** begins the discussion about the Lord's second coming - cf. **J.W. McGarvey**
 - b. Others contend that **vs. 32** begins talking about the second coming
 - c. Others say Jesus **switches back and forth** throughout the discourse

[At this time, I view "The Olivet Discourse" in **Mk 13** as depicting the destruction of Jerusalem which occurred in 70 A.D., though it foreshadows His second coming. To see why, let's start with...]

I. THE SETTING OF THE OLIVET DISCOURSE

A. THE WORDS OF JESUS IN THE TEMPLE...

1. **His parables depicting Israel's rejection of Him, and its consequence**
 - a. The parable of the wicked vinedressers - **Mk 12:1-12**; cf. **Mt 21:33-46**
 - b. Matthew includes the parable of two sons - cf. **Mt 21:28-32**
 - c. Also the parable of the wedding feast - cf. **Mt 22:1-14**
2. **His condemnation of the scribes and Pharisees**
 - a. The warning against the pretentious scribes - **Mk 12:38-40**
 - b. Matthew records a more elaborate condemnation - cf. **Mt 23:1-28**
 - c. Who would fill up the measure of their fathers' guilt - **Mt 23:29-32**
 - d. Who kill, crucify, scourge, and persecute the prophets, wise men, and scribes He would send to them - **Mt 23:33-34**
 - e. Upon whom the blood of all the righteous would come, upon that very generation - **Mt 23:35-36**
3. **His lamentation over Jerusalem**, recorded by Matthew
 - a. The city who kills the prophets and stones those sent to her - cf. **Mt 23:37**
 - b. The city unwilling to accept the love shown to her - cf. **Mt 23:37**
 - c. Whose house would be left desolate - **Mt 23:38-39**

B. THE PROPHECY OF JESUS ABOUT THE TEMPLE...

1. After his disciples were showing Him the buildings of temple - **Mk 13:1**

2. Declaring that not one stone would be left upon another - **Mk 13:2**

C. THE QUESTIONS OF THE DISCIPLES...

1. In **Mark's gospel**, two questions are asked - **Mk 13:4**
 - a. "When will these things be?"
 - b. "What will be the sign when all these things will be fulfilled?"
2. In **Luke's gospel**, the two questions are similar - **Lk 21:7**
 - a. "When will these things be?"
 - b. "What sign will there be when these things are about to take place?"
3. In **Matthew's gospel**, the second question is worded differently - **Mt 24:3**
 - a. "When will these things be?"
 - b. "What will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?"
4. **Observations regarding these questions:**
 - a. Only Matthew makes reference to a "coming" and "end of the age"
 - a. **Matthew** wrote his gospel for a **Jewish audience**
 - 1) Who would likely view the destruction of temple as a judgment against Jerusalem and the complete end of the Jewish age (as evidently His disciples did)
 - 2) **Re: the end of the Jewish age** - the end began with the death of Jesus making the OT covenant obsolete (**He 9:15-16**); it ended in fullness with the destruction of the temple and cessation of its OT covenantal sacrifices (cf. **He 8:13**)
 - b. **Mark and Luke** wrote their gospels to **Gentiles**
 - 1) To avoid misunderstanding by non-Jewish readers, the disciples' questions are worded to reflect what the Olivet discourse is about
 - 2) I.e., the destruction of the temple (i.e., "these things") and the sign when its destruction would be imminent

[When **the setting** leading up to "**The Olivet Discourse**" is carefully considered, **the subject** becomes clear. The destruction of the temple is under consideration, not the second coming of Christ. Now let's proceed to examine more closely...]

II. THE OLIVET DISCOURSE

A. WHAT WILL NOT BE THE SIGN...

1. Be careful that none deceive you, claiming to be the Christ - **Mk 13:5-6**
2. Don't be troubled by wars, earthquakes, famines, pestilence - **Mk 13:7-8**
 - a. Such things will come, but the end (destruction of the temple) is not yet
 - b. They are only the beginning of sorrows (not the sign of the end)
3. Anticipate persecution and hard times - **Mk 13:9-13**
 - a. You will be killed and hated for His name's sake
 - b. Many will be offended, betray one another, and hate one another
 - c. False prophets will deceive many
 - d. The love of many will grow cold because of lawlessness
 - e. But he who endures to "the end" will be saved -- "the end" refers here:
 - 1) Not to the second coming (implying one must live until Christ comes again)
 - 2) Nor to the destruction of Jerusalem (implying once one has survived that event, one's salvation is secured)
 - 3) But to the end of one's life - cf. **Re 2:10**
4. The gospel of the kingdom will be preached to all nations - **Mk 13:10**
 - a. As a witness to all the nations - cf. **Mt 24:14**

- b. Then the end (the destruction of the temple) will come - cf. **Mt 24:14**
 - 1) This would end the Jewish sacrifices, and other remnants of OT worship
 - 2) That which was nailed to the cross, abolished by Jesus' death, would pass away - cf. **Col 2:14-17; Ep 2:14-16; He 8:13**
- c. Was the gospel preached to all nations prior to the destruction of the temple?
 - 1) Note what Paul wrote prior to 70 A.D. - **Ro 10:16-18; Col 1:23**
 - 2) Whether we take Jesus' and Paul's words as literal or accommodative, according to Paul it had!

B. WHAT WILL BE THE SIGN...

- 1. **The "abomination of desolation" - Mk 13:14**
 - a. Standing where it ought not (the holy city Jerusalem)
 - b. As foretold by Daniel - cf. **Dan 9:26-27**
- 2. **When you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies - cf. Lk 21:20**
 - a. Luke therefore explains the "abomination of desolation"
 - b. In 70 A.D., Roman armies surrounded Jerusalem prior to destroying it and the temple
- 3. Thus Jesus answers the disciples' question: "What sign will there be when these things are about to take place?"

C. WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU SEE THE SIGN...

- 1. **Those in Judea are to flee to the mountains - Mk 13:14-20**
 - a. Don't delay by going to your homes and getting your clothes
 - b. It will be a difficult time for pregnant and nursing mothers
 - c. Pray that your flight be not in winter (when travel is difficult) or on the Sabbath (when city gates are closed to travel)
 - d. For there will be "great tribulation", though shortened for the elect's sake
 - 1) Luke specifies the nature of this tribulation - **Lk 21:23b-24**
 - 2) A Jewish general taking captive by the Romans just prior to the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 offered this summary:
 - a) All the calamities which had befallen any nation from the beginning of the world were but small in comparison with those of the Jews
 - b) In the siege of Jerusalem, no fewer than 1,100,000 perished (it was during the time of the Passover, when more than 3,000,000 Jews were assembled)
 - c) In surrounding provinces 250,000 were slain
 - d) 97,000 were taken captive, some killed by beasts in Roman theaters, some sent to work in Egypt, others sold as slaves
 - **Flavius Josephus**, Jewish Wars, quoted by **Barnes** on Matthew
 - 3) The "elect" were Christians, spared by a shortened siege
 - a) The Jews in the city engaged the Romans in battle
 - b) Titus, the Roman general, being called to return to Rome, proceeded to end the siege and stormed the city - **Barnes Commentary on Matthew**
2. **Don't be misled by false christs and false prophets - Mk 13:21-23**
 - a. Even those who show great signs and wonders to deceive
 - b. For the coming (judgment) of the Son of Man will be like lightning across the sky
 - 1) Do not expect to find Him in the desert or in inner rooms
 - 2) When He comes in judgment, it will be swift - cf. **Lk 17:22-24**

CONCLUSION (Part One)

1. So far, all this depicts a **local, escapable** judgment...
 - a. Where Jesus warned those in Judea of what is to come - **Mk 13:23**
 - b. Where they are given a sign to let them know when to flee - **Mk 13:14**

2. It does not fit a **worldwide, inescapable** judgment...
 - a. As will characterize the second coming of Christ - **2Pe 3:10-12**
 - b. As Paul taught the Christians in Thessalonica - cf. **1Th 5:2-3; 2Th 1:7-10**

3. Our next study will continue to examine “**The Olivet Discourse**”, starting with **verse 24**...
 - a. Which certainly sounds like the second coming of Christ, but is it?
 - b. Or was Jesus still describing events pertaining to the destruction of Jerusalem?

Eusebius (ca. 300 A.D.) in his “Ecclesiastical History” wrote that Christians heeded the warnings of Jesus in Matthew 24, and fled Jerusalem when it was surrounded by the Roman army.

May we likewise heed the words of Jesus:

- not be misled by false prophets and false christs
- not be troubled by wars, famines, pestilence, earthquakes, or even persecution
- enduring to the end by remaining faithful to Him

...looking forward to His final coming at the Last Day!

The Olivet Discourse - II

Mark 13:24-37

INTRODUCTION

1. In our previous lesson, we covered the first half of Mark 13...
 - a. Commonly called “**The Olivet Discourse**”, delivered by Jesus on the Mount of Olives
 - b. A challenging passage of scripture, believed to discussing either...
 - 1) The destruction of Jerusalem, which occurred in 70 A.D.
 - 2) The second coming of Christ, which is yet to occur
 - 3) Or both events, described either in turn or intertwined

2. I’ve proposed that the discourse foretells the destruction of Jerusalem, based first upon the **setting**...
 - a. Jesus’ words spoken previously in the temple
 - 1) His parables about Israel’s rejection of Him - cf. **Mt 21:28-32,33-46; 22:1-14**
 - 2) His condemnation of the scribes and Pharisees - cf. **Mt 23:27-36**
 - 3) His lamentation over Jerusalem - cf. **Mt 23:37-39**
 - b. Jesus’ prophecy regarding about the temple - **Mk 13:1-2**
 - c. The disciples’ questions, which when Mark and Luke’s account is considered, appear to be:
 - 1) “When will these things be?”
 - 2) “What will be the sign when all these things will be fulfilled?”
 -- Cf. **Mt 24:3; Mk 13:4; Lk 21:7**

3. We then saw that in **vs. 5-23**, Jesus describes...
 - a. **What will not be the sign** (other than the gospel preached to all nations) - **Mk 13:5-13**
 - b. **What will be the sign** - **Mk 13:14**
 - 1) The abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel - **Dan 9:26-27; 12:11**
 - 2) Which Luke explains to be Jerusalem surrounded by armies - **Lk 21:20**
 - c. **What to do** when they saw the sign - **Mk 13:15-23**
 - 1) Those in Judea were to flee to the mountains to avoid a great tribulation
 - 2) They were not to be misled by false christs or false prophets

[Up to **vs. 24**, Jesus described a **local, escapable** judgment to befall Jerusalem. He does not describe the **worldwide, inescapable** judgment taught elsewhere in the Scriptures. But with **vs. 24**, many believe Jesus now addresses His second coming (cf. **J. W. McGarvey’s Fourfold Gospel**). As we continue with our study, I propose that the destruction of Jerusalem is still under consideration...]

II. THE OLIVET DISCOURSE (continued)

D. WHAT WILL HAPPEN NEXT...

1. Events to occur “after the tribulation of those days”...
 - a. Cosmic disturbances - **Mk 13:24-25**
 - 1) The sun will be darkened
 - 2) The moon will not give its light
 - 3) The stars of heaven will fall
 - 4) The powers in the heavens will be shaken
 - b. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory

- **Mk 13:26**
 - 1) The sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven - cf. **Mt 24:30**
 - 2) All the tribes of the earth will mourn - cf. **Mt 24:30**
- c. The elect will be gathered - **Mk 13:27**
 - 1) For with a great sound of the trumpet, angels will be sent - cf. **Mt 24:31**
 - 2) They shall gather the elect from the four winds, from the farthest part of earth to the farthest part of heaven
- 2. Such events certainly sound like the second coming of Christ, but consider two reasons why they may not be referring to Jesus' coming at the Last Day...
 - a. The events were to occur "immediately after the tribulation of those days" ("in those days, after that tribulation") - **Mt 24:29; Mk 13:24**
 - 1) They are connected in time to the tribulation described in **Mk 13:15-28**
 - 2) This "coming" of Jesus was to occur at the conclusion of the siege of Jerusalem
 - b. The events are similar to those used to foretell God's judgment of other nations
 - 1) Babylon - **Isa 13:1,6-13**
 - 2) Egypt - **Isa 19:1-2; cf. Eze 32:2,7-9**
 - 2) Tyre - **Isa 23:1; 24:21-23**
 - 3) Edom - **Isa 34:4-6**
 - 4) Nineveh - **Nah 1:1-5**
 - 5) Israel - **Am 8:9**
 - 6) Judah - **Jer 4:5-6,23-28**
- 3. Jewish prophets foretold God's judgment upon such nations...
 - a. Using figures of worldwide destruction, even though the judgment was local
 - b. Perhaps because such judgments foreshadow God's Final Judgment to come upon the entire world at the Last Day
- 4. Like other Jewish prophets, Jesus used figurative language to depict:
 - a. The judgment to befall the religious leaders of Israel (in terms of worldwide destruction)
 - b. The provision made for faithful disciples of Christ (in terms of the gathering by angels)
- 5. Therefore I suggest that even in **Mk 13:24-27** Jesus refers to the destruction of Jerusalem

E. ADMONITIONS TO BE PREPARED...

- 1. The parable of the fig tree - **Mk 13:28-29**
 - a. New branches and leaves indicate summer is near
 - b. When you see these things (Jerusalem surrounded by armies), the time is near
- 2. It would happen before "this generation" passed away - **Mk 13:30**
 - a. Some define "generation" as a race of people (i.e., the Jews) - cf. **McGarvey, B. W. Johnson**
 - b. But note its use by Jesus just prior to this discourse - cf. **Mt 23:33-36** (esp. **36**)
 - c. The destruction of Jerusalem came to pass within forty years!
- 3. The words of Jesus will come to pass - **Mk 13:31**
 - a. Heaven and earth shall pass away one day - cf. **2Pe 3:7,10**
 - b. But Jesus' words will by no means pass away
- 4. Of that day and hour, only the Father knows - **Mk 13:32**
 - a. Many believe at this point Jesus begins to talk about the second coming - e.g., **France, NIGTC; Short, NIBC**
 - b. The disciples might discern the general timing with the advance of armies toward Jerusalem
 - c. But the day and hour when the siege would begin, only the Father knew
- 5. Therefore, take heed, watch and pray! - **Mk 13:33-37**

- a. You don't know when the time is - e.g., **Ac 1:7**
- b. Don't be caught off guard, like a servant caught sleeping when his master returns
- c. Be ready, for the Son of Man will come when you not expect Him
- d. The siege of Jerusalem might begin promptly, so flee Judea promptly when you see the armies surrounding Jerusalem!

CONCLUSION

1. Admittedly, there is much in **“The Olivet Discourse”** that alludes to our Lord's second coming at the Last Day...
 - a. But it no different than prophecies by other Jewish prophets who foretold God's judgment upon nations and cities
 - b. Such figurative language was a common motif used by Jewish prophets
 - c. We should not be surprised to see Jesus using the same motif in this context
 - **And rightly so, for God's judgments upon nations in the past are types and shadows of the Final Judgment to befall the entire world when Jesus comes again**
2. In addition to the setting leading up to the discourse, there is the natural flow of the discourse itself that leads me to conclude it is entirely about the destruction of Jerusalem...
 - a. Jesus' disciples are told what will not be the sign - **Mk 13:1-13**
 - b. They are told will be the sign that His coming is near - **Mk 13:14**
 - c. They are told what to do when they see the sign - **Mk 13:14-23**
 - d. His coming in judgment (the fall of Jerusalem) is described in terms reminiscent of other Jewish prophets who foretold of God's judgments upon various nations - **Mk 13:24-27**
 - e. Admonitions are given for them to be prepared and watchful, for all these things will happen before the current generation passed away, though the exact time was unknown - **Mk 13:28-37**

So I view **“The Olivet Discourse”** to describe a **local, escapable** judgment which occurred as Jesus foretold in 70 A. D.

However, there is still the **worldwide, inescapable** judgment at the Last Day. Are you ready for that Day? The admonitions to be prepared and productive are very similar:

“But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.”

“Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat?”

“Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless;”

- 2 Peter 3:10-14

Four Preparatory Acts

Mark 14:1-16

INTRODUCTION

1. Following the Olivet Discourse in **Mark 13**, Mark's gospel turns its attention to events that preceded the betrayal and arrest of Jesus...
2. In the **first sixteen verses** of **Mark 14**, we are told of "**Four Preparatory Acts**"...
 - a. Two done in opposition to Jesus
 - b. Two done in service to Jesus

[Once these four preparatory acts are completed, the stage is set for the last night and day of Jesus' earthly life. In **Mk 14:1-2**, we are told how...]

I. LEADERS PREPARE TO KILL JESUS

A. THE PLOT THICKENS...

1. This is not the beginning of their machinations - cf. **Mk 3:6; 11:18; 12:12**
2. But now it is two days before the feast of Passover - **Mk 14:1**
 - a. "It was now two days before..." - **ESV**
 - b. "Now the Passover and Unleavened Bread were two days away..." - **NASB**
3. The plot involves the chief priests, scribes, elders, along with Caiaphas the high priest - cf. **Mt 26:3-4**
4. Their intention is to take Jesus by trickery (stealth)

B. THEIR INTENTION TO DELAY...

1. They did not want to do anything during the feast, lest there be an uproar - **Mk 14:2**
2. For they feared the people - cf. **Mk 11:32; Lk 22:2**
3. Despite their intent, the events are not entirely in their hand - cf. **Ac 2:23**

[Indeed, their plot will be carried out much quicker than intended. But before we see why, we read in **Mk 14:3-9** that...]

II. MARY PREPARES FOR JESUS' BURIAL

A. AT THE HOUSE IN BETHANY...

1. The home of Simon the leper (perhaps father of Mary, Martha, Lazarus) - **Mk 14:3**
2. John identifies the woman as Mary, sister of Martha and Lazarus - cf. **Jn 11:2; 12:2-3**
3. Not to be confused with the woman that anointed Jesus earlier - cf. **Lk 7:36-50**

B. MARY ANOINTS JESUS...

1. Using an alabaster jar of expensive perfume - **Mk 14:3**
2. Breaking the jar, pouring the perfume over His head, anointing and wiping His feet with her hair - cf. **Jn 12:3**

C. THE DISCIPLES' INDIGNATION...

1. They were angry at what they considered wasteful - **Mk 14:4**
2. For the perfume was worth 300 denarii (300 days wages), and they thought it better to have sold it and given the money to the poor - **Mk 14:5**
3. Judas Iscariot especially was angry, not that he cared for the poor, but because he often pilfered from the money box - **Jn 12:4-6**
4. Thus the disciples criticized Mary sharply - **Mk 14:5**

D. JESUS' PRAISE OF MARY...

1. Leave her alone, she has done a good work - **Mk 14:6**
2. There would always be the poor to help, but not so with Jesus - **Mk 14:7**
3. She has done what she could, even anointing Jesus for His burial (once again, predicting His death) - **Mk 14:8**
4. The highest praise? Mary's actions will be memorialized - **Mk 14:9**

[Jesus' prediction of Mary's praise was fulfilled by the inclusion of this story in the gospels of Matthew, Mark, and John. Sadly, Mary's preparatory act is soon followed by a much different one as...]

III. JUDAS PREPARES TO BETRAY JESUS

A. JUDAS GOES TO THE CHIEF PRIESTS...

1. With the intent to betray Jesus to them - **Mk 14:10**
2. Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve apostles - cf. **Mk 10:4**
3. Whom Jesus knew early on would betray Him - cf. **Jn 6:70-71**
4. Luke adds that Satan had entered Judas - cf. **Lk 22:3**

B. THE AGREEMENT IS MADE...

1. The chief priests are glad, and promise to pay Judas - **Mk 14:11**
2. Matthew records the price agreed for betrayal: 30 pieces of silver - cf. **Mt 26:15**
3. Judas had previously manifested his greed for money - cf. **Jn 12:4-6**
4. Judas then sought for a convenient time to betray Jesus - **Mk 14:11**

[What a contrast between the preparatory acts of Mary and Judas! Finally, let's briefly consider the preparatory act of the disciples...]

IV. DISCIPLES PREPARE TO KEEP THE PASSOVER

A. JESUS INSTRUCTS HIS DISCIPLES...

1. The first day of Unleavened Bread arrived - **Mk 14:12**
 - a. When the Passover lamb was to be sacrificed
 - b. The day was likely Thursday, Nisan 14 - **ESV Study Bible**
 - c. His disciples asked where He wanted them to prepare to eat the Passover
2. Jesus gives explicit instructions - **Mk 14:13-15**
 - a. For two of His disciples (Peter and John) - cf. **Lk 22:8**
 - b. With either miraculous foresight, or having made prior arrangements
 - c. To meet a man who will provide a large upper room, furnished and prepared

B. THE TWO DISCIPLES DO AS INSTRUCTED...

1. They go into the city (Jerusalem) - **Mk 14:16**
2. They find it just as Jesus predicted

3. They prepare the Passover

CONCLUSION

1. With these preparatory acts completed, the stage is now set...
 - a. For Jesus to keep the Passover
 - b. For Judas to betray Him to the chief priests
 - c. For the trial, crucifixion, and death that will lead to His burial

2. Perhaps we should ask, **“What sort of preparatory acts are we doing today...?”**
 - a. Are they things that would prove to betray our Lord?
 - b. Or things which would show our love and devotion to Him?

3. Every day we do things, small though they may be...
 - a. That might be preparatory to greater things
 - b. That might prepare us to do good or to do evil

How much better to follow the example of **Mary and the disciples**, rather than the example of **Judas and the chief priests**...!

The Last Supper

Mark 14:17-26

INTRODUCTION

1. We come now to a crucial time in the ministry of Jesus of Nazareth...
 - a. His enemies are plotting His betrayal and death
 - b. His disciples are gathered to observe the Passover
2. It is the occasion commonly referred to as “The Last Supper”...
 - a. For within 24 hours, Jesus will be crucified
 - b. His disciples scattered, hiding in fear for their lives

[Jesus knew what would soon take place (**Mk 10:33**). As we continue our study of Mark’s gospel, let’s first turn to **Mk 14:17** and consider...]

I. THE PASSOVER OBSERVED

A. SPECIAL FEAST FOR THE JEWS...

1. A Jewish feast observed annually - **Deu 16:1-8**
2. Commemorating Israel’s deliverance from Egypt - **Exo 12:1-28,43-49**

B. SPECIAL OCCASION FOR JESUS...

1. He knew His death was imminent (“before I suffer”) - **Lk 22:14-15**
2. He was with those He loved (“He loved them to the end”) - **Jn 13:1**

[As Jesus observed the Passover with His disciples, Mark records two things that occurred during the dinner. First, in **Mk 14:18-21** there is...]

II. THE BETRAYAL FORETOLD

A. THE PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT...

1. To all, Jesus said one of them would betray Him - **Mk 14:18**
2. One by one they begin to ask, “Is it I?” - **Mk 14:19**
3. He confirms it will be one of the twelve who dips with Him - **Mk 14:20**
4. It is part of God’s plan, but woe to one who will betray Him - **Mk 14:21**

B. THE PRIVATE CONVERSATIONS...

1. With Judas Iscariot - **Mt 26:25**
2. With John, prompted by Peter - **Jn 13:23-26**

[Judas Iscariot leaves the supper to betray Jesus (**Jn 13:27-30**). As the rest continue to eat the last supper, **Mk 14:22-25** tells us of...]

III. THE LORD’S SUPPER INSTITUTED

A. JESUS INSTITUTES THE SUPPER...

1. Using the unleavened bread to represent His body - **Mk 14:22**
2. Using the cup (containing the fruit of the vine) to represent His blood, the blood of the New Covenant - **Mk 14:23-24**
3. Stating He would no longer drink of the fruit of the vine until...
 - a. "that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God." - **Mk 14:25**
 - b. "that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom." - **Mt 26:29**
 - c. "it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God." - **Lk 22:16**
 - d. "the kingdom of God shall come." - **Lk 22:18**
4. There are two plausible explanations for what Jesus means:
 - a. Jesus having fellowship with us as we observe the Lord's Supper in the church, which is His kingdom - cf. **1Co 10:16-17**
 - b. The special communion we will have with Jesus in His Father's kingdom, spoken often in terms of a heavenly feast - cf. **Isa 25:6-8; Mt 8:11; 22:2-14; Lk 14:15-24; Re 19:9**

B. PAUL DESCRIBES THE SUPPER...

1. As a memorial - **1Co 11:23-25**
 - a. Of His body whose death makes the new covenant possible - **He 9:16**
 - b. Of His blood shed for the remission of sins - **Mt 26:28; Ep 1:7**
2. As a proclamation - **1Co 11:26**
 - a. Of faith in the efficacy of His death ("you proclaim the Lord's death")
 - b. Of faith in the certainty of His return ("till He come")
3. As a communion - **1Co 10:16-17**
 - a. Sharing in the blood of Christ
 - b. Sharing in the body of Christ
4. As an observance - **1Co 11:27-34**
 - a. With reverence ("in a worthy manner")
 - b. With self-examination ("let a man examine himself, and so let him eat and drink")
 - c. With other Christians ("wait for one another")

CONCLUSION

1. "**The Last Supper**" ended...
 - a. With the singing of a hymn - **Mk 14:26**
 - b. With the walk to the Mount of Olives - **ibid.**
2. Today, "**The Lord's Supper**" is observed...
 - a. On the first day of the week - cf. **Ac 20:7**
 - b. By disciples who commemorate His death, anticipate His return
3. As I think of the two suppers, Jesus earnestly desired...
 - a. To eat the first with His disciples
 - b. His disciples to eat the second together in His memory

Today, Jesus is our "Passover" sacrificed for us (cf. **1Co 5:7**). The Jews show gratitude for their deliverance from Egypt by observing their Passover.

Do we show our gratitude for our deliverance from the bondage of sin by faithfully observing the Lord's Supper each Lord's Day...?

Jesus Predicts Peter's Denial

Mark 14:27-31

INTRODUCTION

1. How well do we know ourselves...?
 - a. Confident that our faith is strong?
 - b. Certain that we would never deny our Lord?
2. In our text (**Mk 14:27-31**) we find examples of over-confidence...
 - a. Not just in Peter who denied the Lord
 - b. But in all the apostles who stumbled and fled

[Let's begin with a reading of our text, with the Lord and His disciples having just completed the Last Supper and on their way to the Mount of Olives...]

I. NARRATIVE

A. DESERTION AND REUNION FORETOLD...

1. Jesus speaks of desertion by His disciples - **Mk 14:27**
2. As foretold by Zechariah - cf. **Zec 13:7**
3. But also of His resurrection and reunion in Galilee - **Mk 14:28**; cf. **Mk 16:7**

B. PETER'S DENIAL FORETOLD...

1. Peter asserts that even if all others stumble, not him! - **Mk 14:29**
2. Jesus tells Peter that he will deny Him three times that night - **Mk 14:30**
3. Peter angrily disagrees, even if it means death - **Mk 14:31**
4. The rest of the disciples all say the same thing - **Mk 14:31**

[Jesus' prediction soon came true (**Mk 14:50,66-72**). What would we have done if we were one of Jesus' disciples at that time? Before answering too quickly, consider a few lessons from the text...]

II. APPLICATION

A. THE LIMITS OF SELF-KNOWLEDGE...

1. How well do we really know ourselves?
 - a. The disciples seem so certain in their faithfulness
 - b. Yet they all stumbled and Peter denied the Lord, just as He said
 - c. Like Hazael, they really did not know their true selves - cf. **2Ki 8:12-13**
 - d. Indeed, can any of us know our true selves? - cf. **Jer 17:9**
2. Then what can we do?
 - a. Acknowledge that only God truly knows us - cf. **Jer 17:10**; **Ps 139:1-16**; **He 4:13**
 - b. Look to the Word of God to see ourselves as we really are - **He 4:12**
 - c. Look to God in prayer for help - **Ps 19:12**; **139:23-24**; e.g., **2Th 3:5**

B. BEWARE OF COMFORT MISSED BY SELFISHNESS...

1. Notice how the disciples ignored Jesus' words of comfort

- a. He spoke plainly of His resurrection - **Mk 14:28**
- b. Yet they focused on defending themselves - **Mk 14:29-31**
2. Might we be guilty of the same?
 - a. We have been given many comforting words - e.g., **Ro 8:31-39**
 - b. We can enjoy comfort from both God and one another - cf. **2Co 1:3-4**
 - c. But we can overlook such comfort when focused on selfish concerns!

C. BE CAREFUL OF PROUD ASSERTIONS...

1. Notice the self-confidence of the disciples
 - a. Peter angrily stating that he would die before denying the Lord - **Mk 14:29-31**
 - b. The rest of the disciples said likewise - **Mk 14:31**
2. Might we be guilty of the same?
 - a. Quick to boast of our faithfulness to the Lord or His church?
 - b. Remember the wisdom of Solomon about pride and a haughty spirit - **Pr 16:18**

CONCLUSION

1. As disciples of Jesus Christ, let us learn...
 - a. From His first disciples
 - b. From those who were even His apostles
2. What can we learn...?
 - a. The limits of self-knowledge
 - b. The danger of missing comfort due to selfishness
 - c. The need to be careful of proud assertions

We can also learn of our Lord's grace and mercy, for He was quick to forgive those who denied Him and fled away. So He will do for us when we stumble, if we are willing to repent and return to Him...!

The Garden Of Gethsemane

Mark 14:32-42

INTRODUCTION

1. Following the last supper, Jesus and His disciples went to Gethsemane... - **Mk 14:32**
 - a. A garden outside the city, across the Kidron brook and on the Mount of Olives
 - b. It's name meaning "olive press", and was possibly a remote walled garden
 - c. A place where Jesus often went with His disciples - **Jn 18:1-2**
2. Note the contrast between the Garden of Eden and the Garden of Gethsemane...
 - a. In Eden, the **first man** (Adam) fell by yielding to temptation and disobeyed God
 - b. In Gethsemane, the **second man** (cf. **1Co 15:47**) conquered by yielding to the will of God

[Yes, "**The Garden Of Gethsemane**" was a place of victory for Jesus (and consequently for us as well). But the victory did not come easy, as we consider first that...]

I. THE GARDEN WAS A PLACE OF SUFFERING

A. WHERE JESUS EXPERIENCED GREAT DISTRESS...

1. He went to pray, accompanied only by Peter, James, and John - **Mk 14:32-33**
2. Before He began praying, He was "troubled and deeply distressed" - **Mk 14:33**
3. Later, Luke records that He was "in agony", and His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground - **Lk 22:44**
5. He was likely troubled for He knew that His hour had come - cf. **Jn 12:27**
6. He knew what was imminent, for He had told His disciples earlier - **Mk 10:32-34**

B. WHERE JESUS ENDURED INTENSE SORROW...

1. He described Himself as "exceedingly sorrowful, even to death" - **Mk 14:34**
2. The writer of Hebrews refers to His "vehement cries and tears" - **He 5:7**
3. His grief and sorrow was partly due to the fact that He was taking upon Himself our own grief and sorrow! - cf. **Isa 53:4-5**

C. WHERE JESUS ENCOUNTERED SOLEMN LONELINESS...

1. He wanted His closest disciples to watch with Him - **Mk 14:33**
 - a. Those who had been with Him from the beginning - **Mk 1:16-20**
 - b. Those who were privy to one of His greatest miracles - **Mk 5:37-43**
 - c. Those who saw Him transfigured on the mountain - **Mt 9:1-2**
 - d. Including the disciple "whom He loved" - **Jn 13:23; 19:26; 20:2; 21:7,20,24**
2. Yet after each episode of praying, He found them sleeping - **Mk 14:37,40,41**
 - a. When He desired fellowship for comfort, there was none to be found
 - b. The Psalmist foretold this would happen - cf. **Ps 69:20**

[Alone in His distress and sorrow, our Lord found "**The Garden Of Gethsemane**" to be a place of great suffering for Him. Then something happened. Before He left to face the mob led by Judas to arrest Him, Jesus found that...]

II. THE GARDEN WAS A PLACE OF STRENGTH

A. WHEN JESUS EXPRESSED AGONIZING PRAYER...

1. The agony in His prayer is:
 - a. Seen by His posture: “He...fell on the ground” - **Mk 14:35**
 - b. Heard in His words: “Abba, Father...take this cup away from Me” - **Mk 14:36**
2. It was “godly fear” Jesus expressed, and for such His prayer was heard - **He 5:7**
 - a. Not that the cup (of suffering) was removed
 - b. But that He would be able to drink it

B. WHEN JESUS EXTENDED ENTIRE RESIGNATION...

1. As evidenced by His words:
 - a. “Not what I will, but what You will.” - **Mk 14:36**
 - b. “if this cup cannot pass away from Me unless I drink it, Your will be done.” - **Mt 26:42**
2. When man first said “My will, not Thine be done...”
 - a. It opened the flood gate of sin
 - b. It turned man out of the Paradise of God
3. But when Jesus said “Not as I will, but as You will...”
 - a. Victory over sin and access to the Tree of Life became possible
 - b. For it prepared Jesus to go to the cross to make it possible

C. WHEN JESUS ENJOYED SPECIAL COMFORT...

1. Jesus received an answer to His prayer - cf. **Lk 22:43**
 - a. Not the answer He requested (let this cup pass from Me)
 - b. But strength from an angel!
2. Like the apostle Paul would pray later - cf. **2Co 12:7-10**
 - a. Asking the Lord to remove his thorn in the flesh
 - b. Receiving an answer different than requested, but sufficient to meet the need!

D. WHEN JESUS EVINCE RENEWED RESOLVE...

1. Strengthened, Jesus was ready to face the hour at hand - **Mk 14:41**
2. He was ready to meet His betrayer and those with him - **Mk 14:42**

CONCLUSION

1. So “**The Garden Of Gethsemane**” was a place of both suffering and strength...
 - a. Jesus entered the garden suffering
 - b. He left the garden strengthened
2. Notice what turned the place of suffering into a place of strength...
 - a. Prayer that was fervent and persistent
 - b. Prayer that submitted to the will of God
 - c. Prayer in which one was strengthened
 - d. Prayer that enabled one to face the cup of life given Him

There will be times when we must enter our “**Garden Of Gethsemane**”: times of distress, sorrow, loneliness. But such times can also be a time of comfort and strength, provided we spend them in prayer, willing to accept the Father’s will in our lives... - cf. **Php 4:6-7**

The Betrayal Of Jesus

Mark 14:43-52

INTRODUCTION

1. Certainly one of the saddest moments in the life of Jesus was His betrayal by Judas...
 - a. One of Jesus' closest disciples, even one of His twelve apostles - **Mk 14:43-46**
 - b. Followed by being abandoned by the rest of the apostles - **Mk 14:47-50**
 - c. And possibly Mark; many think he was the young man that fled naked - **Mk 14:51-52**
2. But our focus is on Judas: What led him to betray his Lord and Savior? How could one who had been with Jesus...
 - a. Seen His miracles, heard His teachings
 - b. Betray Him with a kiss?
3. And what about us, who claim to be Jesus' disciples today...?
 - a. Could we be guilty of betraying Jesus in some way?
 - b. Are there things that misled Judas that could have a similar effect on us?

[What might we learn from “**The Betrayal Of Jesus**”? Lest we follow the same path of Judas, let's reflect for a few moments on what we can glean from the Scriptures...]

I. JESUS WAS BETRAYED BY A CLOSE FRIEND

A. JUDAS WAS NO STRANGER TO JESUS...

1. As already mentioned, he was one of the apostles - **Mk 3:14-19**
2. He was among those whom Jesus loved - cf. **Jn 13:1**
3. Yet as prophesied, Jesus was betrayed by “a familiar friend” - **Ps 41:9**

B. BEING CLOSE TO JESUS IS NO GUARANTEE...

1. Just being His disciples is no assurance we could not betray Him
2. Like several of the churches in Asia Minor, we could...
 - a. Leave our first love - **Re 2:4-5**
 - b. Begin to tolerate false doctrine - **Re 2:14-16**
 - c. Permit false teachers to spread their doctrines - **Re 2:20**
 - d. Fail to perfect our works, and not be watchful - **Re 3:1-3**
 - e. Become lukewarm - **Re 3:15-16**
3. Yes, we can betray Jesus by denying Him who bought us - cf. **2Pe 2:1**

[Therefore we need to heed Jesus' admonition to be “faithful unto death” (**Re 2:10**), and not assume that close proximity to Jesus in the past guarantees faithfulness in the future.]

II. JESUS WAS BETRAYED BY A LOVER OF MONEY

A. MONEY WAS A PROBLEM FOR JUDAS...

1. He often pilfered from the money box of the disciples - **Jn 12:4-6**
2. The opportunity to make some money led him to betray Jesus - **Mt 26:14-16**

B. MONEY CAN BE A PROBLEM FOR US...

1. The deceitfulness of riches can render us unfruitful - **Mk 4:19**
2. The desire for riches and the love of money can lead us to stray from the faith and drown in destruction and perdition - **1Ti 6:9-10**
3. The Laodiceans' preoccupation with wealth made them lukewarm - **Re 3:16-17**

[Could we be guilty of betraying Jesus by our desire for riches, letting such things take precedent over our service to God and His church?]

III. JESUS WAS BETRAYED BY A SHOW OF AFFECTION

A. JUDAS BETRAYED JESUS WITH A KISS...

1. He could have pointed...perhaps he sought to soften the blow of betrayal - **Mk 14:44-45**
2. Jesus noted the obvious contradiction - **Lk 22:48**

B. DISPLAYS OF AFFECTION DON'T ENSURE FAITHFULNESS...

1. Many people are very emotional in their religion
 - a. As displayed in their worship
 - b. Believing it to be evidence of being "Spirit-filled"
2. Yet emotions alone are not a reliable guide
 - a. They can easily mislead us - cf. **Pr 16:25; Jer 10:23; 17:9**
 - b. They are often present in the unstable believer - cf. **Mk 4:16-17**
3. This is not to discount the place and value of emotions
 - a. We are to love God with all our heart and with all our mind - **Mt 22:37-38**
 - b. The Spirit does produce fruit in our lives that affects our emotions - **Ga 5:22-23**
 - c. But we must keep them in the proper order:
 - 1) Our emotions must come from faith, not faith coming from emotions
 - 2) Otherwise we are led by emotionalism, not faith
4. True faith comes from the Word of God - **Ro 10:17; Jn 20:30-31**

[If we believe that displays of affection in our religion can make up for our failure to heed God's Word, we deceive ourselves and betray Jesus in the process!]

IV. JESUS WAS BETRAYED BY A MISTAKEN DISCIPLE

A. JUDAS MISTOOK THE CONSEQUENCES OF HIS ACTION...

1. He evidently didn't think Jesus would be condemned - **Mt 27:3-4**
2. This has prompted some to think that Judas was motivated by more than money
 - a. That perhaps his betrayal would force Jesus to act, show His true power
 - b. That in such a way it would demonstrate who Jesus truly was

B. WE CAN BE GUILTY OF MISTAKEN SERVICE...

1. Thinking our service is acceptable, when it is not - **Mt 7:21-23**
2. Thinking we can improve on God's way, when His ways may not be ours - **Isa 55:8-9**
3. We need to heed the Preacher's advice - cf. **Ecc 5:1-2**
 - a. Come to hear and do what He says
 - b. Not presume to know what pleases God and offer what we think is best

[In our zeal, we may be guilty of acting based on mistaken knowledge (cf. **Ro 10:1-3**). Dare we possibly betray Jesus by presuming we know what is according to His will and plan?]

V. JESUS WAS BETRAYED BY AN OVERWROUGHT FOLLOWER

A. JUDAS REACTED TO HIS SIN THE WRONG WAY...

1. He was overcome with grief - cf. **Mt 27:3**
2. He took the wrong course of action by hanging himself - cf. **Mt 27:5**

B. WE CAN REACT TO OUR SINS THE SAME WAY...

1. There are two kinds of sorrow - **2Co 7:10**
 - a. Sorrow of the world that produces death
 - b. Godly sorrow that produces repentance
 - c. The first sorrow is preoccupied with self; the second is sorrow for sinning against God
2. It is natural to be sorrowful for our sins
 - a. But we should not wallow in our grief
 - b. But repent, as did Peter who denied Christ
3. Paul is another example of one who did not let sins of the past hinder service in the present
 - a. He focused on God's grace which gave him another chance - **1Co 15:9-10**
 - b. He directed his attention on striving for the upward call of God - **Php 3:12-14**

CONCLUSION

1. While Jesus was betrayed by all these things, let's not forget the influence of Satan...
 - a. Satan used Judas to betray Jesus - **Lk 22:3-4**
 - b. Satan put it in Judas' heart to betray Jesus - **Jn 13:2**
 - c. For this reason Jesus referred to Judas as "a devil" - **Jn 6:70-71**
2. Yet how did Satan influence Judas? By some of the very things we've noticed...
 - a. Through his love of money
 - b. Through his emotionalism
 - c. Through his mistaken ideas
 - d. Through his preoccupation with self
 -- Even Peter was influenced by Satan through some of these things (cf. **Mt 16:23**)

And so while we may decry the treachery of Judas, we should humbly learn from his mistakes, taking to heart the words of Peter:

"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world." - 1Pe 5:9-10

Jesus Before The Council

Mark 14:53-65

INTRODUCTION

1. Jesus faced two trials prior to His execution...
 - a. **The ecclesiastical trial**, in three stages
 - 1) The preliminary hearing before Annas - cf. **Jn 18:12-14,19-24**
 - 2) The midnight trial before Caiaphas and the council - **Mk 14:53-65**
 - 3) The morning consultation of the council - **Mk 15:1**
 - b. **The civil trial**, also in three stages
 - 1) Before Pilate, the Roman governor - **Mk 15:2-5**
 - 2) Before Herod, the tetrarch over Galilee - cf. **Lk 23:6-12**
 - 3) Before Pilate again - **Mk 15:6-15**
2. In this lesson we turn our attention to the events of the midnight trial...
 - a. The main stage of the ecclesiastical trial
 - b. Where Jesus appeared before the council (Sanhedrin)

[Turning to **Mk 14:53-65**, let's direct our attention to the details of the trial, starting with...]

I. THE PARTICIPANTS

A. CAIAPHAS THE HIGH PRIEST... - Mk 14:53

1. Served for 18 years (18-36 A.D.)
2. Presided over the council (Sanhedrin)
3. This meeting occurred at his house - **Lk 22:54; Mk 14:54**
4. He had predicted Jesus' death - **Jn 11:49-52**
5. He was involved with the plot from the beginning - **Jn 11:53**

B. CHIEF PRIESTS, ELDERS, SCRIBES... - Mk 14:53

1. Who had plotted to kill Jesus - **Mk 14:1**
2. Those who had sent to arrest Jesus - **Mk 14:43**

C. MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL... - Mk 14:55

1. Also known as the Sanhedrin
2. The supreme ecclesiastical court of the Jews
3. Possibly including Joseph of Arimathea, even Nicodemus - cf. **Mk 15:43; Jn 3:1**

D. FALSE WITNESSES... - Mk 14:55-56

1. From whom the chief priests and council sought testimony
2. But their testimony did not agree

E. OTHERS PRESENT...

1. Peter in the courtyard - **Mk 14:54**
2. Another disciple, known by the high priest (John?) - cf. **Jn 18:15-16**
3. Other servants and officers - cf. **Jn 18:18; Mk 14:65**

[With the majority present predisposed against Jesus, accusations were brought against Him...]

II. THE CHARGES

A. BY FALSE WITNESSES... - Mk 14:57-60

1. Many bore false witness, but could not agree
2. Jesus would destroy the temple and build another in three days without hands
3. A false charge, misrepresenting what He taught - cf. **Jn 2:19-22**
4. Against which Jesus refused to defend Himself - cf. **Isa 53:7**

B. BY THE HIGH PRIEST (CAIAPHAS)... - Mk 14:61-64

1. In response to the question, "Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?"
2. To which Jesus replied, "I am. And you will see the Son of Man sitting..."
3. Greatly angering the high priest, who tore his clothes
4. Leading to the charge of blasphemy, deserving of death

[With the charge of blasphemy against Him, the physical abuse against Jesus began to intensify...]

III. THE ABUSE

A. BY MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL... - Mk 14:65

1. Some began to spit on Jesus
2. He was blindfolded and beaten
3. He was mocked to prophesy

B. BY THE OFFICERS... - Mk 14:65

1. Struck with the palms of their hands
2. As foretold by Isaiah - cf. **Isa 50:6**

CONCLUSION

1. The injustice at this trial is evident...
 - a. The false witnesses and physical abuse
 - b. Many say the midnight setting made it illegal
2. How difficult it must have been for some who were present...
 - a. For fair-minded members of the council (e.g., Joseph and Nicodemus , if they were there)
 - b. For Peter and John as they witnessed or heard the proceedings take place
3. Most importantly, how difficult it must have been for Jesus...
 - a. Who knew what was coming - cf. **Mk 8:31; 9:31; 10:33-34**
 - b. Who kept silent when He could have called a legion of angels - cf. **Mt 26:53**

Isaiah prophesied: "He is despised and rejected by men, A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him." (**Isa 53:3**)

If we had been there, we would have likely been influenced by the religious leaders. But knowing what Jesus went on to do and why, may we resolve never to be ashamed of our Lord...

Peter's Denial Of Jesus

Mark 14:66-72

INTRODUCTION

1. Among the things Jesus suffered was the indignity of Peter's denial...
 - a. Three times, with increasing intensity, Peter denied knowing Jesus - **Mk 14:66-72**
 - b. Peter denied knowing Jesus, despite being with Jesus:
 - 1) From the beginning of His earthly ministry - **Mk 1:16-18**
 - 2) At the healing of his own mother-in-law - **Mk 1:29-31**
 - 3) On the Sea of Galilee, walking on the water - **Mt 14:22-33**
 - 4) On the mount, seeing Jesus with Moses and Elijah - **Mk 9:2-6**
2. How did Peter come to deny his Lord and Savior...?
 - a. What forces were at work, that led to his cowardly deed?
 - b. Might they be forces we face today, encouraging us to do the same?

[From “**Peter's Denial Of Jesus**”, there are important lessons to be gleaned. Indeed, Peter himself can help us to avoid making the mistakes he made when he writes as one who knows the dangers before us. For example, we note first of all that...]

I. PETER WAS BETRAYED BY PRIDE

A. HE BOASTED HE WOULD NEVER DENY JESUS...

1. Proudly proclaiming that even if all left Jesus, not him! - **Mk 14:27-29**
2. In so doing, Peter took the first step in falling away - **Pr 16:18**
3. We can also be overconfident in our service to God - cf. **1Co 10:12**

B. PETER LATER COMMANDED HUMILITY...

1. To be clothed with humility - **1Pe 5:5**
2. To humble ourselves before God - **1Pe 5:6**

[Peter learned the hard way about the danger of pride. Will we learn from the mistake of Peter, and value the importance of humility? Next, notice that...]

II. PETER WAS BESIEGED BY LAZINESS

A. HE KEPT FALLING ASLEEP...

1. At a time when he needed to be watchful - **Mk 14:37-42**
2. His laziness therefore led to lack of preparation
3. The same thing can happen to us!
 - a. Without diligent preparation, we too can be unprepared - cf. **Lk 21:34-36**
 - b. More often than not, we gradually “drift away” because we are too lazy to “give the more earnest heed” - cf. **He 2:1-3**

B. PETER LATER ENJOINED DILIGENCE...

1. Commanding vigilant resistance against the devil - **1Pe 5:8-9**

2. Calling for diligence that we might:
 - a. Grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus - **2Pe 1:5,10**
 - b. Be found in peace, without spot and blameless - **2Pe 3:14**

[Do we allow simple laziness to keep us from careful preparation? Do we fail to attend services, study God's Word, or even pray, because of laziness? If so, how can we hope to stand up for Jesus when put to the test? As we continue, we observe that...]

III. PETER WAS BESET BY COWARDICE

A. HE FOLLOWED JESUS AT A DISTANCE...

1. Peter still followed Jesus - **Mk 14:54**
2. But now that Jesus was unpopular...
 - a. He stays far enough away so not to be identified with Him
 - b. He was unprepared to face the challenge of ridicule and persecution
3. Might we be guilty trying to follow Jesus, but with cowardice?
 - a. Ashamed to be seen carrying a Bible?
 - b. Ashamed to be seen giving thanks?
 - c. Ashamed to be seen with other Christians?

B. PETER LATER EXHORTED GLORIFYING GOD...

1. Charging us not to be ashamed, but to glorify God - **1Pe 4:16**
2. Thinking not of what things mean to us, but what they mean to God! - cf. **Mt 5:16**

[With cowardice keeping him at a distance from his Lord, Peter was a prime candidate for succumbing to what came next...]

IV. PETER WAS BELEAGUERED BY WORLDLINESS

A. HE WAS INFLUENCED BY THE WORLD...

1. By sitting with the servants of the High Priest, and warming himself by their fire - **Mk 14:54**
2. Ashamed to be seen with Christ, it was easy to mingle with those of the world and enjoy their comforts
3. But one cannot be "comforted by the fire" of the world, and not be "burned"!
 - a. E.g., close contact with things that can harm has an effect - cf. **Pr 6:27-29**
 - b. So we cannot flirt with the world and walk away untouched - **1Co 15:33**

B. PETER LATER CALLED FOR US TO BE OTHERWORLDLY...

1. To live as sojourners and pilgrims, abstaining from fleshly lusts and with honorable conduct among the nations - **1Pe 2:11-12**
2. To look for that new heavens and new earth, being diligent to be found by Christ in peace, without spot and blameless - **2Pe 3:13-14**

CONCLUSION

1. When Peter concluded his second epistle, he did so with a warning...
 - a. To beware lest you fall from your own steadfastness - **2Pe 3:17**
 - b. To grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ - **2Pe 3:18**

2. These admonitions come from one who was well qualified to speak...
 - a. For he knew how easy it was to fall through such things as:
 - 1) Pride
 - 2) Laziness
 - 3) Cowardice
 - 4) Worldliness
 - b. But he also knew how one could grow in grace through such things as:
 - 1) Humility
 - 2) Diligence
 - 3) Glorifying God
 - 4) Living as strangers and sojourners

Yes, we know that Peter, though he denied Jesus three times and wept bitterly, received grace when forgiven by Jesus and permitted to fulfill his role as an apostle. If we have been guilty of letting our Lord down, look to Him for the grace to repent and growth that only He can bestow...!

Binding The Hands Of Jesus

Mark 15:1

INTRODUCTION

1. In **Mk 15:1**, we are told the enemies of Jesus bound Him and sent Him to Pilate...

“Immediately, in the morning, the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council; and they bound Jesus, led Him away and delivered Him to Pilate.”

2. As we read this, it is easy for our hearts to be filled with sadness, and even with a touch of “righteous indignation” for that crowd that bound Jesus in such a way
3. And yet, there are few today who are not guilty of binding the hands of Jesus in a figurative way!

[To see what I mean, consider some of the various ways we can be guilty of “**Binding The Hands of Jesus**” today...]

I. BY REFUSING TO OBEY THE GOSPEL

A. JESUS STRETCHED OUT HIS HANDS AND DIED FOR OUR SINS...

1. Today, through His gospel, He pleads with all to take advantage of His vicarious suffering
2. He does not want us to suffer for the guilt of our own sins
3. In truth, then, His “tender invitation” of **Mt 11:28-30** is still being offered today

B. BUT WHEN ONE REFUSES TO OBEY THE GOSPEL...

1. The hands of Jesus are bound!
2. There is no way such a person can then receive the benefits of Jesus death!
3. For him or her, the death of Jesus was in vain!

C. IS THIS TRUE OF YOU...?

1. It will be...if you do not obey the gospel of Christ - cf. **Mk 16:15-16; Ac 2:38**
2. And if so, you will one day have to face His righteous indignation! - **2Th 1:7-9**

[But even those who obey the gospel can be guilty of “**Binding The Hands Of Jesus**”. How...?]

II. BY REFUSING TO BE TRANSFORMED

A. CHRIST’S WILL IS THAT WE BE TRANSFORMED...

1. This transformation involves a renewal of the mind - **Ro 12:1-2; Ep 4:20-24**
2. Through study and meditation upon the Word of God - **1Pe 1:23-2:2; Php 4:8**

B. BUT MANY NEGLECT THE INSTRUMENT OF RENEWAL...

1. We do not “receive with meekness the implanted word...” - **Jm 1:21**
2. Thus we “bind the hands of Jesus” that we do not change!

C. ARE WE GUILTY OF THIS...?

1. We are, if we neglect to study the Bible on our own!
2. We are, if we fail to take advantage of opportunities to study with others!

[Neglect the transforming power of the Word of God, and we are just as guilty of “**Binding The Hands Of Jesus**” as were those who delivered Him to Pilate! We can also bind the hands of Jesus...]

III. BY REFUSING TO PRAY

A. JESUS HAS BECOME OUR HIGH PRIEST...

1. He became man for this very purpose - **He 2:17-18**
2. He’s made it possible for us to boldly approach the throne of grace in prayer - **He 4:14-16**
3. As our high priest...
 - a. He is able to save those who come to God through Him - **He 7:25**
 - b. He “ever lives” to make intercession for us - **ibid.**

B. WHEN WE DON’T PRAY AS WE SHOULD...

1. Jesus cannot be our high priest, our intercessor!
2. Figuratively, we’ve taken the “praying hands” of Jesus and “bound” them behind His back!

C. ARE WE DOING THIS...?

1. If so, what a travesty this is!
2. For here is Jesus...
 - a. Who “lives” to intercede for us
 - b. But Who can’t, because we prevent Him from doing so by our failure to pray!

[Another way to be guilty of “**Binding The Hands Of Jesus**”...]

IV. BY REFUSING TO DO OUR PART IN THE CHURCH

A. THE CHURCH IS DESCRIBED AS THE “BODY” OF CHRIST... - Ep 1:22-23

1. As His body, we are individually members of one another - **1Co 12:27**
2. As members of one another, we are to care for one another - **Ep 4:15-16**
3. It is through such “mutual edification”, that Christ provides much of His help for the members of His body!

B. WHEN WE FAIL TO DO OUR SHARE, AGAIN JESUS IS “BOUND”...!

1. Just as our physical head can do little if our bodily members fail to follow its leading, so it is with Jesus and His church!
2. Jesus could do so much more for His members, if only more of the members did their part!

C. HAVE YOU EVER CONSIDERED...?

1. That by failing to do our part, we “handicap” the body of Christ?
2. That because of neglect or apathy...
 - a. Either the whole body of Christ suffers
 - b. Or others are forced to do “double duty” in order to make up the difference?

[Yes, there are many ways we can be just as guilty of “**Binding The Hands Of Jesus**” today as were the religious leaders who delivered Jesus to Pilate! But consider just one more...]

V. BY REFUSING TO SHARE THE GOSPEL WITH THE LOST

A. DISCIPLES ARE JESUS' "HANDS" TO TAKE THE GOSPEL TO THE LOST...

1. Consider **Mt 28:19-20; Mk 16:15-16; 1Pe 2:9**
2. In every case of conversion recorded in Acts, Jesus used a disciple to tell the good news
3. Jesus works the same way today!

B. TO THE DEGREE WE KEEP THE GOOD NEWS TO OURSELVES...

1. We have "bound the hands" of Jesus once again!
2. We hinder Jesus from telling others of His wonderful grace!

C. ARE WE "BINDING THE HANDS OF JESUS" IN THIS WAY...?

1. Every day, countless souls die with no hope of eternal life
2. This need not be, if more made sharing of the gospel the primary concern in their lives!
3. Sadly, in too many cases the primary concern of Christians is the pursuit of pleasure and acquisition of worldly treasures!

CONCLUSION

1. Yes, one does not have to literally "**bind the hands of Jesus**" to be guilty of the same sort of offense that we read about in **Mk 15:1**; as we have seen, there are many other ways as well!
2. Why not today, resolve to "**loose the hands of Jesus**" so that **in** us and **through** us He may accomplish His full desire? Which is...
 - a. To **save** us!
 - b. To **transform** us!
 - c. To **use** us!

Christ Has No Hands But Our Hands

~ By Annie Johnson Flint ~

Christ has no hands but our hands to do His work today
He has no feet but our feet to lead men in the way
He has no tongue but our tongue to tell men how He died
He has no help but our help to bring them to His side.

We are the only Bible the careless world will read,
We are the sinner's gospel; we are the scoffer's creed;
We are the Lord's last message, given in word and deed;
What if the type is crooked? What if the print is blurred?

What if our hands are busy with other work than His?
What if our feet are walking where sin's allurements is?
What if our tongue is speaking of things His lips would spurn?
How can we hope to help Him or welcome His return?

Jesus Condemned And Mocked

Mark 15:2-20

INTRODUCTION

1. As mentioned previously, Jesus faced two trials prior to His execution...
 - a. **The ecclesiastical trial**, in three stages
 - 1) The preliminary hearing before Annas - cf. **Jn 18:12-14,19-24**
 - 2) The midnight trial before Caiaphas and the council - **Mk 14:53-65**
 - 3) The morning consultation of the council - **Mk 15:1**
 - b. **The civil trial**, also in three stages
 - 1) Before Pilate, the Roman governor - **Mk 15:2-5**
 - 2) Before Herod, the tetrarch over Galilee - cf. **Lk 23:6-12**
 - 3) Before Pilate again - **Mk 15:6-15**
2. We turn our attention to events related to the civil trial as found in Mark's gospel...
 - a. Jesus before Pilate - **Mk 15:2-15**
 - b. Jesus mocked by Roman soldiers - **Mk 15:16-20**

[Beginning with **Mk 15:2**, let's direct our attention to the details of the trial, starting with...]

I. THE PARTICIPANTS

A. PILATE THE ROMAN GOVERNOR...

1. Pontius Pilate, the 5th Roman governor of Judea (26-36 A.D.) - **Mk 15:2**
2. Often harsh, Jewish sources charge him with greed and cruelty - cf. **Lk 13:1**

B. CHIEF PRIESTS...

1. Who had plotted to kill Jesus, and sent to arrest Him - **Mk 14:1,43**
2. Who had tried Jesus at the home of Caiaphas - **Mk 14:53**
3. Who had delivered Jesus to Pilate - **Mk 15:1-3**

C. BARABBAS...

1. The prisoner released in Jesus' stead - **Mk 15:6-15**
2. A rebel guilty of murder, and a robber - **Mk 15:7**; cf. **Jn 18:40**

D. THE MULTITUDE...

1. A crowd who had gathered to ask for the release of a prisoner - **Mk 15:8**
2. Prompted by the chief priests to clamor for Barabbas instead of Jesus - **Mk 15:11**
3. Eventually crying out, "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!" - **Mk 15:13-14**

E. THE SOLDIERS...

1. Who mocked Jesus (see below) - **Mk 15:16-20**
2. Who ultimately crucified Him - **Mk 15:20**

[With such a review of those present during the civil trial before Pilate, let's now consider...]

II. THE CHARGES

A. MADE BY CHIEF PRIESTS...

1. He perverts the nation - **Lk 23:2**
2. He forbids to pay taxes to Caesar - **Lk 23:2**; yet cf. **Lk 20:22-25**
3. He claims to be Christ, a King - **Lk 23:2**
4. He stirs up the people, teaching throughout Judea and Galilee - **Lk 23:5**

B. CONSIDERED BY PILATE...

1. Who asked Jesus, "Are You the King of the Jews?" - **Mk 15:2**
 - a. To which Jesus admitted - **Mk 15:2**
 - b. Though His kingdom was spiritual - cf. **Jn 18:36-38**
2. Who marveled at Jesus' silence regarding the other charges - **Mk 15:3-5**
3. Who ascertained that it was envy that motivated the chief priests - **Mk 15:10**
4. Who did not think Jesus was guilty of death - **Mk 15:14**; cf. **Lk 23:13-15**
5. Whose wife wanted him to release Jesus - cf. **Mt 27:19**
6. Who finally sought to gratify the crowd, to avoid a tumult - **Mk 15:15**; **Mt 27:24**

[Though Pilate considered Jesus innocent, pressured by the crowd he initiated actions that would lead to the crucifixion. Such actions included terrible abuse, which we will now survey...]

III. THE ABUSE

A. JESUS WAS SCOURGED...

1. By the instructions of Pilate - **Mk 15:15**; **Jn 19:1**
2. This involved being "tied to a post and beaten with a leather whip that was interwoven with pieces of bone and metal, which tore through skin and tissue, often exposing bones and intestines. In many cases, the flogging itself was fatal." - **ESVSB**

B. JESUS WAS MOCKED...

1. By soldiers who led Jesus to the hall called Praetorium - **Mk 15:16**
2. Who clothed Him with purple and a twisted crown of thorns on His head - **Mk 15:17**
3. Who saluted Him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" - **Mk 15:18**
4. Who struck Him on the head with a reed - **Mk 15:19**
5. Who spat on Him - **Mk 15:19**
6. Who mockingly worshiped Him - **Mk 15:19**
7. Who stripped Him and put back on Him His clothes - **Mk 15:20**

CONCLUSION

1. Again, the barbarous injustice at Jesus' trials is evident...
 - a. The false charges and physical abuse
 - b. A cowardly governor acquiescing to a manipulated crowd
2. But lest we forget, this was in keeping with God's Divine Providence...
 - a. Which Jesus acknowledged in His predictions and prayers - **Mk 8:31-33**; **14:36**
 - b. Which Peter proclaimed in his first sermon on Pentecost - **Ac 2:22-24**

All in fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy (**Isa 53:4-12**). Shall we not respond accordingly...? - **Ac 8:30-38**

The Crucifixion Of Jesus

Mark 15:21-32

INTRODUCTION

1. Thus far in Mark's account of the passion of Christ, we have seen...
 - a. The agonizing prayer in the garden of Gethsemane - **Mk 14:32-42**
 - b. The betrayal of Judas and arrest in the garden - **Mk 14:43-50**
 - c. The beating and mocking at Caiaphas' house - **Mk 14:65**
 - d. The denial by Peter - **Mk 14:66-72**
 - e. The scourging, beating, and mocking by Roman soldiers - **Mk 15:15-20**
2. By this time Jesus would have been physically exhausted...
 - a. Awake for more than 24 hours
 - b. Suffering from the beatings and scourging already inflicted

[But the worse was yet to come; condemned to death by crucifixion, the Roman soldiers led him to the place where He would be crucified (**Mk 15:20**). With the aid of Mark's text, let us follow Him...]

I. LEADING TO THE CRUCIFIXION

A. SIMON COMPELLED TO BEAR HIS CROSS...

1. Jesus started out bearing His cross - cf. **Jn 19:17**
 - a. Likely the wooden crosspiece (patibulum), weighing 30-40 pounds
 - b. But it proved too much for Him
2. Simon of Cyrene compelled to bear it for Him - **Mk 15:21**
 - a. Mark identifies him as the father of Alexander and Rufus
 - b. The latter possibly known to the church in Rome - cf. **Ro 16:13**

B. BROUGHT TO GOLGOTHA...

1. A place near (outside) the city - cf. **Jn 19:20**
2. Golgotha a modified transliteration of the Aramaic word for "skull" - **Mk 15:22**
3. Calvary comes from the Latin word for "skull" - cf. **Lk 23:33**

C. WINE AND MYRRH OFFERED BUT REFUSED...

1. A narcotic drink was sometimes offered to criminals to deaden the pain of crucifixion
2. Jesus was offered such a drink, but refused - **Mk 15:23**
3. Perhaps choosing to experience the ordeal of crucifixion with His full senses

[Next we read of...]

II. THE CRUCIFIXION OF JESUS

A. AS DESCRIBED BY MARK...

1. "They crucified Him" - **Mk 15:24,25**
2. Amazingly restrained, as are the other gospel writers! - **Mt 27:35; Lk 23:33; Jn 19:18**
3. Especially when it was "the cruelest and most hideous punishment possible" - **Cicero**

B. AS DESCRIBED BY A DOCTOR...

1. Simon is ordered to place the cross beam on the ground, and Jesus is quickly thrown backwards with His shoulders against the wood. The legionnaire feels for the depression at the front of the wrist. He drives the heavy, square, wrought-iron nail through the wrist and deep into the wood. Quickly, he moves to the other side and repeats the action, being careful not to pull the arms too tightly, but to allow some flexion and movement. The cross beam is then lifted in place at the top of the vertical beam. The left foot is pressed backward against the right foot, and with both feet extended, toes down, a nail is driven through the arch of each, leaving the knees moderately flexed. The Victim is now crucified. As He slowly sags down with more weight on the nails and the wrists, excruciating, fiery pain shoots along the fingers and up the arms to explode in the brain--the nails in the wrists are putting pressure on the median nerves.
2. As he pushes Himself upward to avoid this stretching torment, He places His full weight on the nail through His feet. Again there is searing agony of the nail tearing through the nerves between the metatarsal bones of the feet. At this point, another phenomenon occurs. As the arms fatigue, great waves of cramps sweep over the muscles, knotting them in deep, relentless throbbing pain. With these cramps comes the inability to push Himself upward. Air can be drawn into the lungs, but cannot be exhaled. Jesus fights to raise Himself in order to get even one small breath. Finally carbon dioxide builds up in the lungs and in the blood stream and the cramps partially subside. Spasmodically He is able to push Himself upward to exhale and bring in the life-giving oxygen.
3. Hours of this limitless pain, cycles of twisting, joint-rending cramps, intermittent partial asphyxiation, searing pain as tissue is torn from His lacerated back as He moves up and down against the rough timber. Then another agony begins. A deep crushing pain deep in the chest as the pericardium slowly fills with serum and begins to compress the heart. It is now almost over--the loss of tissue fluids has reached a critical level--the compressed heart is struggling to pump heavy, thick, sluggish blood into the tissues--the tortured lungs are making a frantic effort to gasp in small gulps of air. The body of Jesus is now in extremis, and He can feel the chill of death creeping through His tissues. His mission of atonement has been completed. Finally He can allow His body to die. - **C. Truman Davis, "The Crucifixion of Jesus. The Passion of Christ from a Medical Point of View," Arizona Medicine 22, no. 3 March 1965: 186-87 as quoted in The Expositor's Bible Commentary Vol. 8, ed. by Frank Gaebelin ([1984] pp. 779-80.**

[Even the doctor's description cannot adequately express what suffering Jesus endured on the cross for our sins. Before we close, let's summarize what else is revealed surrounding the crucifixion...]

III. SUMMARY OF OTHER DETAILS**A. THE GARMENTS...**

1. When they crucified Him, they divided His garments, casting lots - **Mk 15:24**
2. As foretold by David - **Ps 22:18**

B. THE TIME...

1. Mark says it was the "third hour" - **Mk 15:25**
2. This would be 9am in the morning

C. THE INSCRIPTION...

1. Pilate had the charge or accusation made against Jesus posted on the cross
2. It was written in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin - **Jn 19:20**
3. Each of the gospel writers record the inscription slightly different
 - a. Mark: “The King of the Jews” - **Mk 15:26**
 - b. Matthew: “This is Jesus the King of the Jews” - **Mt 27:37**
 - c. Luke: “This is the King of the Jews” - **Lk 23:38**
 - d. John: “Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews” - **Jn 19:20**
4. Reconciling the apparent discrepancy
 - a. The full inscription may have been “This is Jesus of Nazareth the King of the Jews”
 - b. Written in three languages, it may have been abbreviated, and each gospel writer simply chose that which reflected his purpose in his gospel

D. THE TWO THIEVES...

1. Two robbers were crucified with Jesus - **Mk 15:27-28**
2. Possibly co-insurrectionists with Barabbas who had been released

E. THE BLASPHEMY AND MOCKERY...

1. Those who passed by, with the false charge made against him - **Mk 15:29; 14:57-58**
2. The chief priests and scribes, taunting Jesus to make them believe - **Mk 15:31-32**
3. Even the two thieves, though one later recanted - **Mk 15:32; cf. Lk 23:39-43**

CONCLUSION

1. Thus begins the six hours that will result in the death of Jesus...
 - a. An excruciating death in of itself
 - b. Made worse by the beatings and scourging, the mocking before and during
2. What can we learn from this terrible event? From another lesson...
 - a. The terribleness of the nature of sin - **Ro 3:23; 6:23**
 - b. The greatness of God’s love for man - **Ro 5:6-9; 1Jn 4:9-10**
 - c. The inspiration of Jesus’ sacrifice - **1Pe 2:21-25**

In our next lesson, we shall consider Jesus’ death and burial that followed this terrible crucifixion. But as you reflect on what Jesus’ endured, have you considered what you should do...? - cf. **Ac 2:36-41**

The Death And Burial Of Jesus

Mark 15:33-47

INTRODUCTION

1. Following a night and morning of torture and ridicule, Jesus was crucified - **Mk 14:53-15:25**
2. For six hours as He hung on the cross, the mockery continued - **Mk 15:26-32**

[We come in our study of the gospel of Mark to the time of our Lord's death and burial. Let us use this time to reflect upon the details of those events, beginning with...]

I. THE DEATH OF JESUS

A. THE DARKNESS...

1. Lasting from the sixth hour (noon) to the ninth hour (3pm) - **Mk 15:33**
2. The significance? Several possibilities:
 - a. A sign of mourning
 - b. A sign of judgment
 - c. A veil covering the shame of the crucifixion

B. THE CRY OF AGONY...

1. "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" - **Mk 15:34**
2. A proverbial expression of distress from **Ps 22:1 - ZIBBC**
3. It is possible that citing the first verse of the psalm refers to the entire psalm - **ibid.**
4. Psalms 22 begins with bitter despair, but ends with supreme confidence - **ibid.**
5. This interpretation does not deny the real anguish that Jesus experiences but understands his cry as an expression of trust that God will intervene and ultimately vindicate him - **ibid.**

C. THE MOCKERY AND SYMPATHY...

1. The mockery seen earlier continues - **Mk 15:35-36; cf. Mk 15:29-32**
2. Yet one offers a gesture of sympathy (sponge full of sour wine) - **Mk 15:36**

D. THE DEATH...

1. Jesus cried out with a loud voice, and breathed His last - **Mk 15:37**
2. "Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit" - **Lk 23:46**
3. He "yielded up" His spirit (suggesting a voluntary death) - **Mt 27:50**
4. Some suggest He died from a ruptured heart, others that it was dehydration and loss of blood

E. THE CURTAIN OF THE SANCTUARY...

1. The veil of the temple torn in two from top to bottom - **Mk 15:38**
2. Likely the veil separating the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place
3. Perhaps indicating the end of the Old Covenant, and beginning of the New - **He 10:19-20**

F. THE CENTURION...

1. Observing the manner in which Jesus died, confessed faith in Jesus
2. "Truly this Man was the Son of God!" - **Mk 15:39**

G. THE MINISTERING WOMEN...

1. Looking from afar - **Mk 15:40-41**
 - a. Mary Magdalene
 - b. Mary (wife of Clopas) the mother of James the Less and Joses - **Jn 19:25**
 - c. Salome - the mother of the sons of Zebedee (James and John) - cf. **Mt 27:56**
 - d. Many other women - including Mary the mother of Jesus - **Jn 19:25**
2. Women who had followed Jesus
 - a. Ministering to Him in Galilee - cf. **Lk 8:1-3**
 - b. Coming with Him to Jerusalem

[Jesus is now dead, His body mangled as it hung on the cross. Mark now records for us in his gospel...]

II. THE BURIAL OF JESUS**A. THE TIME OF THE BURIAL...**

1. “when evening had come”, likely late afternoon - **Mk 15:42**
2. “the Preparation Day, that is, the day before the Sabbath”, i.e., Friday - **Mk 15:42**

B. THE REQUEST FOR THE BODY...

1. Made by Joseph - **Mk 15:43**
 - a. From Arimathea (the city of Ramah, city of Samuel)
 - b. Prominent member of the council (Sanhedrin)
 - c. Who himself was waiting for the kingdom of God
 - d. A rich man - **Mt 27:57**
 - e. A disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews - **Mt 27:57; Jn 19:38**
2. Together with Nicodemus - **Jn 19:38**
 - a. A ruler of the Jews who came to Jesus by night - **Jn 3:1-2**
 - b. Also a member of the council - **Jn 7:50**
 - b. Who brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds

C. THE CONFIRMATION AND RELEASE...

1. To convince Pilate that Jesus was dead - **Mk 15:44**
2. Confirmed by the centurion, the body was released - **Mk 15:45**

D. THE BURIAL...

1. The body was wrapped in fine linen - **Mk 15:46**
2. Laid in a new tomb hewn out of rock, located in a garden - **Jn 19:40-42**
3. A stone rolled against the door of the tomb

E. THE WOMEN...

1. Mary Magdalene and Mary of Joses observed where He was laid - **Mk 15:47**
2. They left, prepared spices and fragrant oils, then rested on the Sabbath - **Lk 23:55-56**

CONCLUSION

1. Thus Jesus, the Son of God, gave His life for our sins and was buried; but the story is not over, in our next lesson we will read of His amazing resurrection from the dead...
2. Until then, remember what we should learn from this death of Jesus... - cf. **He 12:2-3; 1Pe 2:21-25**

He Is Risen!

Mark 16:1-14

INTRODUCTION

1. After Jesus was buried, His body lay in the tomb until early Sunday morning...
 - a. On Saturday evening, three women bought spices to anoint Him - **Mk 16:1**
 - b. On Sunday morning, they came to the tomb as the sun was rising - **Mk 16:2**
2. The women were concerned about access to the tomb...
 - a. It had been sealed with a large stone - **Mk 15:46; 16:3**
 - b. But the large stone had been rolled away! - **Mk 16:4**
3. Entering the tomb, they saw a young man...
 - a. Clothed in a long white robe (an angel) - **Mk 16:5; cf. Mt 28:2**
 - b. They were alarmed, but he sought to calm their fears - **Mk 16:5-6**
4. His message to the women...
 - a. "You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. **He is risen!**"
 - b. "See the place where they laid Him."
 - c. "But go, tell His disciples -- and Peter -- that He is going before you into Galilee."
 - d. "There you will see Him, as He had said to you." - **Mk 16:6-7**

[The women left amazed and afraid (**Mk 16:8**). But soon their fear would turn into great joy! Not just for them, but for other disciples as well. To appreciate why, let's survey the appearances of Jesus in all four gospel accounts, plus those listed by Paul...]

I. THE APPEARANCES OF CHRIST TO HIS DISCIPLES

A. TO MARY MAGDALENE...

1. As described in our text - **Mk 16:9-11**
2. Expounded by John in his gospel - **Jn 20:11-18**

B. TO THE OTHER WOMEN...

1. As revealed in Matthew's gospel - **Mt 28:9-10**
2. Where Jesus reiterated what the angel had said - **ibid.**

C. TO TWO DISCIPLES WALKING IN THE COUNTRY...

1. As described in our text - **Mk 16:12-13**
2. Elaborated by Luke in his gospel - **Lk 24:13-32**

D. TO PETER...

1. Reported after the testimony of the two disciples - **Lk 24:33-35**
2. Mentioned by Paul in his epistle to the Corinthians - **1Co 15:5**

E. TO THE APOSTLES WITH THOMAS ABSENT...

1. Possibly the occasion in our text - **Mk 16:14**

2. Described in detail by Luke and John - **Lk 24:36-43; Jn 20:19-25**

F. TO THE APOSTLES WITH THOMAS PRESENT...

1. A week later, as described by John - **Jn 20:26-31**
2. Mentioned by Paul in his epistle to the Corinthians - **1Co 15:5**

G. TO SEVEN DISCIPLES BY THE SEA OF GALILEE...

1. Including Peter, Thomas, Nathaniel, James and John - **Jn 21:1-2**
2. While they were fishing, and then eating together - **Jn 21:3-25**

H. TO FIVE HUNDRED BRETHREN AT ONCE...

1. Recorded by Paul in his epistle to the Corinthians - **1Co 15:6**
2. Possibly in Galilee as directed by the angel and Jesus - **Mk 16:7; Mt 28:10,16-17**
3. Possibly when the Great Commission was first given - **Mt 28:18-20**

I. TO JAMES THE LORD'S BROTHER...

1. Recorded by Paul in his epistle to the Corinthians - **1Co 15:7**
2. Who previously did not believe, but then became a disciple - **Jn 7:5; Ac 1:14**

J. TO THE DISCIPLES WITH ANOTHER COMMISSION...

1. Recorded by Luke in his gospel - **Lk 24:44-49**
2. This time in Jerusalem, shortly before His ascension - **Ac 1:3-8**

K. TO THOSE PRESENT AT HIS ASCENSION...

1. Recorded in Mark's gospel - **Mk 16:19-20**
2. Also by Luke in both of his books - **Lk 24:50-53; Ac 1:9-12**

[These many appearances were claimed by the disciples of Jesus. One might properly ask, "Why should we believe them?" That we might have the same joy in believing that "**He is risen!**", consider...

II. THE STRENGTH OF THE DISCIPLES' TESTIMONY

A. DEMONSTRATED BY THE NATURE OF THEIR TESTIMONY...

1. Their testimony appealed to empirical evidence
 - a. I.e., evidence derived from experiment and observation rather than theory
 - b. They refused to accept second hand evidence - **Mk 16:11,13; Jn 20:25**
 - c. But for forty days they were given infallible proofs - **Ac 1:3; 10:41**
 - d. They saw, heard, and touched Him - **Jn 20:24-28; 1Jn 1:1-2**
2. There is no way they could have been deceived or deluded
 - a. If all they had were individual dreams, visions, or hallucinations...perhaps
 - b. But they testified that Jesus appeared to them in groups as well as to individuals

B. DEMONSTRATED BY THEIR TRANSFORMATION...

1. Prior to the resurrection, Jesus' disciples were afraid and without hope
 - a. They fled at his arrest - **Mk 14:50**
 - b. Peter cowardly denied Him three times - **Mk 14:66-72**
 - c. The women mourned His crucifixion - **Lk 23:27**
 - d. After His death, the disciples were sad - **Lk 24:13-17**
 - e. After His death, the disciples hid behind closed doors, for fear of the Jews - **Jn 20:19**

2. But after the resurrection, they fearlessly praised God and proclaimed Jesus!
 - a. Praising God in the temple - **Lk 24:52-53**
 - b. Proclaiming Christ, despite persecution - **Ac 5:28-32,41-42**
3. This transformation in their lives is strong evidence for the resurrection, as admitted by one Orthodox Jewish scholar:
 - a. “If the disciples were totally disappointed and on the verge of desperate flight because of the very real reason of the crucifixion, it took another very real reason in order to transform them from a band of disheartened and dejected Jews into the most self-confident missionary society in world history.” - **Pinchas Lapide**, former Chairman of the Applied Linguistics Department at Israel’s Bar-Ilan University (TIME, May 7, 1979)
 - b. He concluded that a bodily resurrection could possibly have been that reason!

C. DEMONSTRATED BY THEIR HIGH MORAL STANDARD...

1. They taught others to live holy lives - **1Th 4:1-7; Ep 4:25**
 2. They lived their own lives in unimpeachable way - **1Th 2:3-12**
- **Does this sound like people who propagate lies when they know better?**

D. DEMONSTRATED BY THE PRICE THEY PAID...

1. The apostles endured much suffering because of their testimony - **1Co 4:9-13; 2Co 11:23-28**
 2. All but one died a martyr’s death because of their testimony
 3. Even Jesus’ brother, James, was thrown off the temple and then clubbed to death for his testimony
- **There was no motive for them to persistently lie about Jesus’ resurrection!**

CONCLUSION

1. As revealed in Mark’s gospel and those of Matthew, Luke, and John...
 - a. Jesus Christ rose from the dead
 - b. He appeared to many of His disciples
 - c. Who later became witnesses of the resurrection
2. The nature of their witness does not allow for the option of being deceived or deluded...
 - a. Again, they professed empirical evidence
 - b. They claimed to eat and drink with Him, touch Him, see Him
3. If Jesus was not raised from the dead, there is only one alternative...
 - a. These witnesses were liars, deceivers
 - b. Even Paul freely admits this is the only alternative - **1Co 15:14-15**
4. Is it reasonable to believe they successfully propagated a lie...?
 - a. Too many people attested to the same fact
 - b. They were not the kind of people to fabricate such a falsehood
 - c. They lived noble lives, and were ALL willing to suffer and die for their testimony!

When we carefully examine the lives and testimony of the witnesses of the resurrection, the only reasonable conclusion to draw is that they really saw what they claimed concerning Jesus...

“He is risen!”

Five Views Of Salvation

Mark 16:15-16

INTRODUCTION

1. In Mark's account of the Great Commission, Jesus' words are clear and simple...
 - a. He wanted the gospel proclaimed to everyone - **Mk 16:15**
 - b. Those who believe and are baptized will be saved - **Mk 16:16**
 - c. Those who do not believe will be condemned - **ibid.**
2. Even so, there are at least **five diverse views regarding salvation**...
 - b. One view takes Jesus' words at face value
 - a. Four other views can be summarized by slightly altering the words of Jesus

[One view is held by those who do not profess to be Christians. In essence, they would say...]

I. HE WHO BELIEVES AND IS BAPTIZED WILL NOT BE SAVED

A. THIS VIEW HELD BY TWO SEPARATE GROUPS...

1. Atheists who do not believe in God, heaven or hell, or salvation of any kind
2. All who do not believe in Jesus
 - a. Most **Jews, Muslims, Hindus, etc.** - who believe in God (or gods)
 - b. But who do not believe that salvation is to be found in Jesus

B. THIS VIEW CONTRADICTS THE BIBLE...

1. There **is** a God who offers salvation (contrary to the views of atheists) - **1Ti 2:3-4**
2. Salvation **does** come through Jesus, and through Him only - **1Ti 2:5-6; Jn 14:6**

[I doubt any present actually hold to this view, but many people do, and this begins to illustrate how some are willing to deny the plain statement of Jesus. Consider a second view...]

II. HE WHO DOES NOT BELIEVE AND IS NOT BAPTIZED WILL BE SAVED

A. THIS VIEW HELD BY UNIVERSALISTS...

1. Who believe that God will save everyone eventually
2. To support their view, they will isolate some verses like **1Ti 2:6**

B. THIS VIEW CONTRADICTS THE BIBLE...

1. Jesus Himself told that there would be few who would be saved - **Mt 7:13-14**
2. Paul warned of those who would not be saved, but face the wrath of God - **Ep 5:5-6**

[Most Bible-believing, professing Christians would not accept the two views covered thus far. But there are some who accept a third view that could be expressed as...]

III. HE WHO DOES NOT BELIEVE AND IS BAPTIZED WILL BE SAVED

A. THIS VIEW HELD BY MOST WHO PRACTICE INFANT BAPTISM...

1. By “baptizing” (actually sprinkling, not immersing) infants incapable of faith...
 - a. They (esp. **Catholics**) indicate that faith is not essential to salvation
 - b. Some (esp. **Lutherans**) try to get around this by saying that God imparts saving faith to the infant so baptism can still save
2. By sprinkling or pouring instead of immersion, they also indicate Jesus did not mean what He said (the reason “baptizing” above is in quotes)

B. THIS VIEW CONTRADICTS THE BIBLE...

1. Faith is a necessary prerequisite...
 - a. For baptism - **Ac 8:35-37**
 - b. For salvation - **Ro 10:9-10**
2. Sprinkling or pouring is NOT Bible baptism...
 - a. The Greek word used in the Bible is “baptizo”, and it means “to immerse”
 - b. This is why baptism is described in the Bible as a “burial” - cf. **Ro 6:3-4; Col 2:12**
 - c. Sprinkling or pouring was substituted in the place of baptism (immersion) hundreds of years after Christ and His apostles
 - d. By keeping the “tradition of men” by sprinkling or pouring, we fail to keep the command of God” concerning baptism - cf. Jesus’ condemnation of displacing God’s commands with traditions of men, **Mt 15:3-9**
3. Baptizing infants is without scriptural precedent
 - a. There are no commands or examples of infant baptism
 - b. Since the prerequisites of faith (**Mk 16:16; Ac 8:37**) and repentance (**Ac 2:38; 17:30**) are beyond the infant’s capability, they are not suitable candidates for baptism

[Most who hold to the view of sprinkling infants are honest and sincere. Even so, they are just as guilty of teaching a view of salvation different from Jesus as are atheists, many Jews, Muslims, Hindus, and universalists. But there is another view of salvation held by many, and that is...]

IV. HE WHO BELIEVES AND IS NOT BAPTIZED WILL BE SAVED

A. THIS VIEW HELD BY THOSE WHO BELIEVE IN FAITH ONLY...

1. That one is saved **before** baptism, that baptism is not essential to salvation
2. A view is held for all practical purposes by most evangelical denominations

B. THIS VIEW CONTRADICTS THE BIBLE...

1. For faith “alone” cannot save
 - a. As declared by Jesus - cf. **Mt 7:21; Lk 6:46**
 - b. As taught by His apostles - cf. **Ro 6:17-18; He 5:9; Jm 2:14,17,20,24,26; 1Pe 1:22**
2. For baptism is essential to salvation
 - a. According to Jesus - **Jn 3:5; Mk 16:16; Mt 28:18-20**
 - b. According to His apostles - **Ac 2:38; 22:16; Col 2:12-13; Tit 3:5; 1Pe 3:21**

[Most who hold this view are sincere, and would not knowingly twisting the words of Jesus. I think of such people as Paul thought of his brethren in the flesh (cf. **Ro 10:1-3**). This leads us to the fifth and final view of salvation, one we are compelled to accept if we take Jesus at His word...]

V. HE WHO BELIEVES AND IS BAPTIZED WILL BE SAVED

A. THIS VIEW TAKES JESUS’ WORDS AT FACE VALUE...

1. No explanations are necessary
2. Jesus says what He means, and means what He says

B. THIS VIEW IS CLEARLY WHAT THE BIBLE TEACHES...

1. That one must “believe” - cf. **Ac 8:36-37**
2. That one must be “baptized” to enjoy the forgiveness of sins - cf. **Ac 2:38; 22:16**

CONCLUSION

1. Which one of the five views of salvation do you hold to...?
 - a. He who believes and is baptized “will not” be saved?
 - b. He who “does not believe” and “is not baptized” will be saved?
 - c. He who “does not believe” and “is baptized” will be saved?
 - d. He who believes and “is not baptized” will be saved?
 - e. He who believes and is baptized will be saved?-- **It should be clear there is only view which is in harmony with Jesus’ words**

2. Just as important, with which of these views is your life consistent...?
 - a. One may profess the **fifth** view...
 - 1) But act as though they believed the **second** view
 - 2) How? By never confessing faith in Christ and being baptized!
 - b. One may profess the **fifth** view...
 - 1) But act as though they believed the **third** view
 - 2) How? For though they may have been “baptized”, they are not living the life of faith required of one in Jesus!
 - c. One may profess the **fifth** view...
 - 1) But act as though they believed the **fourth** view
 - 2) How? For while believing in Jesus, they have never submitted to being baptized!

Only those who **come to Jesus in faith** and **act in harmony with His teachings** can have the assurance of salvation. The words of Jesus and His apostles Bible are clear...

“And He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.” - Mk 16:15-16

“Then Peter said to them, ‘Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.’” - Ac 2:38

“And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.” - Ac 22:16

The Signs That Followed

Mark 16:17-20

INTRODUCTION

1. As the gospel of Mark closes, it does so with an amazing promise by Jesus...
 - a. “And these signs will follow those who believe..” - **Mk 16:17**
 - b. That are then summarized as to their nature and fulfillment - **Mk 16:18-20**
2. This passage has often been used to justify various religious practices...
 - a. By many who believe such signs exist today
 - b. By some who practice snake-handling in their services

[In determining whether “**The Signs That Followed**” still exist today, a good place to begin is to carefully notice what the Bible reveals about such things. So let’s first consider...]

I. THE PROMISE OF SIGNS

A. GIVEN TO THE APOSTLES...

1. Power to cast out demons - **Mk 16:17**
2. Speak with new tongues - **ibid.**
3. Take up serpents - **Mk 16:18**
4. Drink anything deadly without harm - **ibid.**
5. Lay hands and heal the sick - **ibid.**

B. EXPERIENCED BY HIS DISCIPLES...

1. Power to expel demons - **Ac 5:16; 8:7; 16:18; 19:12**
 - a. Peter, Philip, and Paul cast out demons or unclean spirits
 - b. With complete success, with no record of failures by these men of God
2. Speak with new tongues - **Ac 2:4-11; 10:46; 19:6; 1Co 12:10,28,30; 14:5-26**
 - a. The apostles and some disciples spoke in tongues
 - b. These were clearly foreign languages, designed to convince unbelievers - **1Co 14:22**
3. Take up serpents - **Ac 28:3-6**
 - a. The only example we have is that of Paul
 - b. In which it was done inadvertently, not as a religious exercise
4. Drink anything deadly without harm - **no record**
 - a. We have no record in the New Testament of this being done
 - b. Neither inadvertently nor as a religious exercise
5. Lay hands and heal the sick - **Ac 3:6-8; 5:15-16; 9:17-18,34,40-42; 19:12; 28:8-9**
 - a. The apostles and some disciples healed the sick
 - b. Again with complete success, with no record of failures

[Clearly the rest of the New Testament record confirms Mark’s account (cf. **Mk 16:20**). To help determine whether such signs continue today, let’s take a close look at...]

II. THE PURPOSE OF SIGNS

A. REVEALED IN MARK'S GOSPEL...

1. The purpose was to confirm the word being preached - **Mk 16:20**
2. Demonstrating that the Lord was working with them - **ibid.**

B. STATED ELSEWHERE IN THE BIBLE...

1. The Lord Himself was bearing witness through such signs - **Ac 14:3**
2. God was bearing witness through such signs, wonders, miracles, gifts of the Spirit - **He 2:4**

C. OBSERVATIONS...

1. Regarding the **purpose** of the signs
 - a. "These gifts were part of the credentials of the apostles as the authoritative agents of God in founding the Church..." - **B. B. Warfield**
 - b. "These extra gifts were given in order to the founding and establishing of the church in the world." - **Jonathan Edwards**
 - c. In other words, to confirm that the apostles were indeed from God and that their message was truly the Word of God
2. Regarding the **duration** of the signs
 - a. Paul wrote that a time would come when such signs would cease - cf. **1Co 13:8-10**
 - b. "...since the canon of Scripture has been completed, and the church fully founded and established, these extraordinary gifts have ceased." - **Jonathan Edwards**
 - c. "That with the passing away of the apostolic age these gifts ceased is also the testimony of Chrysostom and Augustine... Matthew Henry, George Whitefield, Charles Spurgeon, Robert L. Dabney, Abraham Kuyper, Sr., and W. G. T. Shedd." - **William Hendriksen**
 - d. If such signs or spiritual gifts exist today, then we should expect...
 - 1) New revelation from God for the benefit of all
 - 2) Which should be added to the Bible!
 - e. Who would be so bold as to say that their doctrine is from God?
 - 1) Those who have, are eventually exposed as false prophets
 - 2) When their prophecies are proven false, or their doctrine contrary to what has been revealed - cf. **Deut 18:21-22; 13:1-4**

CONCLUSION

1. "**The Signs That Followed**" were important, the means by which the Lord...
 - a. Bore witness to His Word and to His apostles - **Mk 16:19-20; He 2:3-4**
 - b. Provided a full and final revelation of His Will - **2Pe 1:3; Jude 3; 2Ti 3:16-17**
2. Yet such signs were simply a means to an end...
 - a. To produce the Word of God, the sword of the Spirit - **Ep 6:17**
 - b. Which in turn produces the "fruit" of the Spirit - **Ga 5:22-23; Ro 8:5-6**
3. More important than signs (including tongues, prophecy, knowledge, or any other spiritual gift)...
 - a. Are the qualities of love, joy, peace, hope, etc., in the life of the Christian - **Ga 5:22-23**
 - b. I.e., the "fruit" of the Spirit in our life is more important than the "gifts" of the Spirit!

With the aid of the Word of God, including the wonderful **Gospel of Mark**, we can be sure that we will faithfully follow the Lord who died for us and will one day return...