

Suggested Resources

Many Christians fall away from faith because of difficult questions. This is a tragedy because, for most of these challenging questions, there are helpful and clear answers just a few clicks away!
www.thebibleproject.com

Visual storytelling meets the bible! A great way to get an overview of each book we study.

www.openbible.info/topics

This website is perfect for finding bible verses related to almost any topic you can think of. What does the bible say about _____? This website has the answer!

www.gotquestions.org

Here you can find discussions and explanations relating to almost any question you may have in mind. Just type in a question and get ready to learn!

www.realtruthrealquick.com

A series of short videos from Watermark's Senior Pastor, Todd Wagner, that addresses common questions with direct answers from God's Word

The Gospel

The gospel is the epicenter of the Christian faith, the theme of the whole bible, and the only hope of every human soul. Understanding and being able to share the gospel are foundational skills for every follower of Jesus Christ. "What is the gospel?" This is a question that will be asked at the start of each and every Small Group meeting, so be prepared. To learn more, Google "Sharing Your Faith 101" from Billy Graham, "One Verse Evangelism" from the Navigators, or "Romans Road to Salvation" from GotQuestions.org.

Community and Accountability

"Accountability" is not a word that you will find in the Bible but it is a concept that ties together many biblical principles and gives us the opportunity to put them into practice. Accountability allows us to deepen our Christ-centered relationships with others and enhance our personal growth in Christ.

Below are some key questions (and follow up questions) you can use to promote the community and accountability of your Small Group. Remember, every discussion is an opportunity to point each other to Jesus Christ and the truth of God's word.

Key Community and Accountability Questions

1. How has your time with God been this week? What have you learned about God and yourself?
2. What has inspired or encouraged you this week?
3. What has been weighing on you this week?
4. How have you struggled with sin or temptation this week?
5. How have you shared Christ with and/or shown God's love to others this week?
6. How can we pray for you or serve you (advice, encouragement, support) this week?
7. What are your hopes or goals for next week?

Follow Up Questions

1. What does God's word say about that?
2. What do you think God is trying to teach you through that?
3. What do you think God wants you to do next?

Key Passages about Community and Accountability

Proverbs 27:17, Proverbs 28:13, Proverbs 20:5, Proverbs 25:12,

Ecclesiastes 4:8-12, Romans 14:13-23, 2 Corinthians 12:19-13:6, Galatians

6:1-6, Colossians 3:16, Ephesians 4:9-13, 1 Thessalonians 5:14, James

5:15-16, Hebrews 3:13, Hebrews 10:23-25

Why Study Mark?

The first four books of the New Testament are Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. They each describe the life of Jesus Christ from a unique point of view. These four books are called “gospels,” which is a word that means “good news.” The book of Mark was the first gospel written and most Bible scholars agree that Matthew and Luke used it as a major source in writing their accounts. In this respect, Mark is a foundational book for anyone with a desire to learn more about Jesus Christ.

Mark is the shortest of the four gospels and it is a fast-paced account of Jesus’ ministry, emphasizing more of what Jesus did than what he said. The author moves quickly from one episode in Jesus’ life and ministry to another, using the word “immediately” 34 times!

Other books of the Bible tell us that Jesus Christ will reign for all eternity as the King of kings and Lord of lords, but Mark portrays him primarily as a servant who is willing to suffer. As you read, observe Christ’s desire and ability to serve and care for others. Mark describes 27 miracles – significantly more than any other gospel. As you reflect on each chapter, put yourself in the story. Ask, “How am I like the disciples?” “How am I like the religious leaders?” “How am I like the the myriad of people that Jesus encounters, loves, serves, and heals?”

By studying this book, you’ll get a good picture of Jesus Christ as a compassionate miracle worker, eager to serve others, displaying a devotion and power that culminate with a cross and an empty tomb! And that good news should compel each of us to share it and live like Christ!

Suggested Memory Verses

Mark 1:17-18

Mark 2:17

Mark 6:31a

Mark 10:45

Mark 14:38

Mark 1

Key Points

(vv. 1-20) In this section, we are immediately introduced to the story of Jesus by Mark. He doesn't go through Jesus' birth or upbringing because an enduring characteristic of Mark's gospel is the idea of urgency or immediacy. In other words, our time is limited and so we should limit what we do with our time and one of the most important things we can use our time for is to share the good news about Jesus Christ. We see this clearly in John's message, Jesus' baptism, Jesus' message wherever he went and His calling of the disciples.

(vv. 21-34) Here we are introduced to the idea that Jesus was a great teacher that "seemed" to be full of authority from God that was unique to the other teachers of the Law. Jesus wasn't just some new teacher of the Law. He was the Son of God who had come to fulfill the Law and offer a sacrifice for the sin of the whole world. And so, to authenticate his message and mission, Jesus performed miracles where he healed the sick and cast out demons. If someone had this kind of authority, He should be listened to.

(vv. 35-37) Jesus gives us an example of what it looks like to spend time with God the Father. For you and I in 2017, we must make time to get away from the busyness, schedule, and noise of life to commune with the Father. Time with God is essential for your own soul. It is essential for how you will love and serve others. What is your plan for spending time alone with God in prayer, reading, or reflecting on God's work in your life? If you don't have a plan, ask others to help you come up with one.

(vv. 38-45) Miracles were meant to authenticate or verify the message of Jesus. His message was of utmost importance. This is why He often told people to not share how they had been miraculously healed. Jesus wanted to make sure there was no misunderstanding about why He had come to earth in the form of a man: it wasn't to resolve man's physical needs although that happened sometimes. His goal was to resolve man's spiritual need. Forever.

This Week's Assignments

_____ will share the gospel.

_____ will share a 3-minute personal testimony.

_____ will lead the discussion.

Discuss

Questions I want to ask at Small Group about this chapter:

Know and Do

In your opinion, what's the most important idea that you will take away from this chapter?

How does this chapter move you to action? After reading this chapter, what would God have you start doing, stop doing, or keep doing?

Mark 2

Key Points

(vv. 1-12) In this section we learn two very valuable lessons. The paralyzed man's friends saw a need in his life and brought him to Jesus at great cost and effort to themselves. How committed are you to introducing your friends that have a spiritual problem or difficult life circumstance to Jesus? Second, we learn that Jesus was committed to seeing even His enemies come to a greater understanding of who He was. And so, he healed a physical problem to show that He also had power and authority to heal a more important spiritual problem.

(vv. 13-17) Many tax collectors and sinners (the outcasts of society) followed Jesus. They realized He had something that no one else could offer even if they didn't fully believe in Him yet. The lesson here is to invite lost people to spend time with Jesus as they spend time with you, and be patient with them while the Lord works on their hearts.

(vv. 18-22) Jesus makes two points in this section that we would be wise to take note of. On the issue of fasting, Jesus teaches that while the bridegroom is with his people (the disciples) they should be marked by joy because the day will come when He will no longer be with them (His crucifixion). In that day, fasting & sorrow will be appropriate. Then Jesus teaches that trying to combine the newness of the gospel that He was teaching with the system of Judaism that was present would only make matters worse.

(vv. 23-28) The Pharisees were so concerned with holding tightly to their inaccurate view of the Sabbath that they forgot that serving others and meeting needs was something that they were called to no matter the day. Jesus taught them that the Sabbath was created to care for man and His relationship with God as opposed to man being created to obey the Sabbath. What "Christian" activity are you so obsessed with observing that you miss the heart behind why that activity even exists? For example, why do you think you should go to church, read your Bible, live morally upright or attend small group?

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Mark 3

Key Points

(vv. 1-6) The Pharisees' hearts were so hard, they could not see the work that God was trying to do right in front of their eyes. Isn't it crazy to think that the people who were supposed to be leading the nation of Israel in identifying the work of God had become so blinded by their own way of doing things that they weren't open to the work of Christ. How do we avoid this kind of hard-heartedness in our own lives? I think the key is asking God to soften our hearts and open our eyes to his work in our life and the world around us. Right now would be a great time to pray this prayer.

(vv. 7-12) Imagine thousands upon thousands of people following Jesus everywhere He went. Put yourself in the crowd for a second. Why are you following Him? Most were following because Jesus could fix some physical or temporal problem in their lives. But there were a few that followed Jesus because they knew He was much more than their personal genie. Take some time to think of your answer to the question, "Why do I follow Jesus?" I think your answer to that question will reveal something to you.

(vv. 13-19) I love what this section reveals to us about Jesus. He was not interested in being this celebrity that everyone clamored to. Instead, He remained focused on His mission. He selected His disciples and gave them the same authority to preach and cast out demons the He had. He knew that 13 sharing the good news and demonstrating its legitimacy with miracles was better than one. How are you doing at joining Jesus in the cause of sharing the good news?

(vv. 20-34) Jesus' family thought He was out of his mind for preaching, healing, and calling people to repent. The people who were supposed to offer the most support were the most unsupportive. This is just a reality of life. If you are part of a family that is largely non-Christian, they will think you are crazy for living a life honoring to the Lord. In spite of this reality, Jesus reminds us that those who chose to walk with Him are a part of a new family...His family! Who do you know that needs encouragement to keep walking with God?

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Mark 4

Key Points

(vv. 1-25) It's easy to gloss over this section because we've "heard it so much." But I encourage you to stop and ask God to teach you something new. One point to highlight is that some people's lack of understanding of Jesus' teaching in our world is a form of judgment for persistent rebellion and rejection of God. In other words, people in the crowds during Jesus' day had ample opportunities to accept the message of Jesus passed down for generations that was now being communicated by Jesus himself—yet their hearts were hard. So in a sense, a lack of understanding was giving these people what they wanted all along, i.e. no relationship with God. This is scary. I pray you never get to that place. I pray you daily humble yourself and soften your heart and are receptive to Jesus' teaching.

(vv. 26-34) The big idea behind these two parables is that in the most unlikely places and the most unlikely ways, God's kingdom is taking root in the hearts of men. In addition, we are not the ones responsible for the growth of the kingdom. Our call is to faithfully scatter seeds of truth about God's goodness and grace and trust Him with the results. Take some time to pray for God's work in the lives of people you know who are far from God.

(vv. 35-41) This story is such a great reminder of how powerful our God is. No matter what we may go through in this life, if we go through it with Jesus, we have the most powerful, sovereign, and caring King on our side. We can trust Him. He knows, He sees, He cares. And he wants us to believe and rest in those truths more and more everyday. The wind, waves, anxiety, pain, and hardship all bow before the King of kings. Are you currently going through a situation in your life where it seems like Jesus is asleep while you are going through the worst time of your life? If so, you are not alone. The disciples felt like that with Jesus physically on a boat with them. Faith is often mixed with some fear, but the more we realize and trust in Who is with us through the storm, the less we will fear.

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Mark 5

Key Points

(vv. 1-20) The first point noting from this familiar story is that Jesus got into a boat and went into hostile Gentile territory for this one demon possessed man. Jesus cares about the one person with hurts, struggles, and the attacks of our enemy the devil striving to distort and destroy God's image in man. Jesus cared so much about this man's freedom from sin & Satan's control that He got in a boat and went on a long journey knowing he would be kicked out of the area right after healing this man and giving him hope. Jesus will do what it takes to come to you no matter what is going on in your life. Are you availing yourself to be used by God to share the good news?

(vv. 1-20) The demons didn't want Jesus to send them to their ultimate destination (hell) and so begged to take over the pigs and probably return to the Satanic realm. The response of the people in this Gentile region is one of fear and selfishness. They were afraid of Jesus' power and were frustrated at how He had caused them to lose a means of making money through the loss of their pigs. How about you? What is your response when Jesus literally transforms a life? Do you thank God and celebrate or do you respond with ingratitude and a lack of faith? Reflect on what your life would be like without Jesus and share how God has and continues to transform you.

(vv. 21-43) The bleeding woman was committed to her own healing. She was willing to cross social boundaries (she was an outcast), ceremonial uncleanness (she was unclean) and she was willing to risk making Jesus unclean by touching Him. She knew that Jesus was her only hope and so she sacrificed for an audience with Him. How about you? How committed are you to bringing your sin, hurt, shame, frustration, problems, etc. to Jesus? How bad do you want Him to intervene? Just like in this story, He is anxiously waiting to offer you hope and healing.

(vv. 21-43) When all hope was lost, when everyone else thought there was nothing else that could be done for Jairus' dead daughter, Jesus asked Jairus to replace his fear with faith. How about you? What are you fearful of right now? What are you worried will happen in your life? Take some time right now to apply Philippians 4:6-8 to your real situation that God really cares about.

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Mark 6

Key Points

(vv. 1-13) Don't miss the contrast between the works of Jesus in His hometown and the works of the disciples in the surrounding towns. Because of the hard hearts of people that knew Jesus as a kid and their refusal to trust and believe in Him, Jesus could only lay His hands on "a few sick people." In contrast, the disciples were sent out to surrounding villages to preach and heal and we are told that they preached and healed "many sick people." Stop and think about that for a second. Hard hearts bottled up the work of Christ in one area while receptive hearts unleashed the work of God in another. How open and receptive are you to the teachings and work of God?

(vv. 14-29) As a follower of Jesus who speaks God's truth and calls others into relationship with Him, sometimes you end up in prison or even beheaded because of your faith. If you're reading this, you're probably not in danger of having your head cut off for being a believer. But I hope you grasp the truth that following Jesus does not lead to a life of comfort and ease. Life is hard and sometimes hardship is caused by you standing up for what you believe. Are you prepared to be rejected or ridiculed by friends for choosing to walk a different path in life?

(vv. 30-44) The disciples saw the crowd that followed and listened to Jesus as a burden and problem that they needed to send away. Jesus saw the crowd as an opportunity waiting to be taken. How do you see the crowd? How do you see friends that have expressed disinterest in the gospel in the past? How do you see friends that used to follow Jesus, but have decided that the fun of high school is more appealing? I pray that you realize the opportunity you have in front of you every single day to remind those far from God, those indifferent to God, and those callous to the truth that the God of the universe wants a relationship with them.

(vv. 45-56) Much like Jesus came near the disciples in a difficult situation, He wants to do the same for you. In fact, He probably has helped you through a difficult time in your past and He wants you to trust that He can come through now just like He did then. How often do you reflect on what God has done in your life? Reflecting on past works of God is a healthy way to build up your faith and courage in the present.

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Mark 7

Key Points

(vv. 1-13) The Pharisees were so concerned with reputation that they had forfeited the importance of character. For example, they wanted to have a reputation for giving money to the temple, but at the same time, they ignored the fact that if you neglect taking care of your needy parents just so you can be seen as someone who gives to the temple, then you've missed the point of giving to the temple. What rules for Christian living are you following without really understanding the motivation that should accompany them?

(vv. 14-23) Many Pharisees and Jews of the day thought that what made you pure in God's eyes was external behavior modification. That is, "do these things to prove/show that you love God and in doing so, He accepts you." But Jesus came to blow that notion out of the water. He makes the point that even before we do anything good or bad, we are already impure. By nature, we have hard, selfish, and perverted hearts. No amount of looking good by our actions changes this. Our hearts are transformed as we submit our lives to Christ and know that we are accepted by God based on Jesus. THEN, we live differently because His Spirit empowers us to do so.

(vv. 24-30) Jesus wanted to spend some uninterrupted time instructing His disciples, but He couldn't escape being noticed this far away from home. Side note: I hope that people can't help but notice Christ in your life wherever you may find yourself. This Gentile woman demonstrated great faith and humility in interrupting Jesus' time with His disciples to bring her need to Him. The lesson for us to learn is that going to Jesus in faith and humility strengthens and blesses us in some way. James 4:6 & 1 Peter 5:5-6 agree with this point.

(vv. 31-37) The peoples' confession in verse 37 about Jesus doing all things well and helping the deaf hear and the mute speak is a foreshadowing of what Jesus would hope to do in a spiritual sense with His disciples. They still didn't understand who Jesus was, but just like He was patient and compassionate toward this deaf and mute man, Jesus would be patient and compassionate with His disciples until they fully understood who He was and what he came to do.

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Mark 8

Key Points

(vv. 1-13) The disciples still hadn't learned that they were in the presence of the Creator & Sustainer of the world who could multiply little and make it much. Jesus didn't just turn the few loaves and fish into just enough food for everyone. He multiplied it in abundance. Do you trust God to powerfully come through in whatever circumstance you find yourself in? Or do you immediately run to worry and anxiety? God is in the business of turning nothing into something. A healthy practice for you and I is to ask God daily to help us trust His compassion, care, and ability to enter into our everyday circumstances and offer hope, healing, and provision.

(vv. 14-21) Here Jesus warns His disciples to not fall prey to the hard-heartedness of the religious leaders of Israel. In spite of convincing facts and demonstrations of who Jesus was, the spiritual leaders actively decided to reject, rebel, and convict Jesus of being an impostor. The warning is similar for us today, leadership in our world today rejects the way of Christ for the most part. That doesn't mean that you and I have to fall in line. Look around you at the facts of lives being transformed by the power of Christ as a constant reminder of God's activity in our world today.

(vv. 22-30) The reason Jesus takes his time with this healing is to illustrate that spiritual enlightenment doesn't always happen immediately. You can have doubts about your faith. God isn't mad at you for having questions. But the hope would be that you would humbly seek answers to your questions and not just let the fact that you have doubts cause you to reject the Christian faith. What doubts or questions do you have about Jesus or His work in our world?

(vv. 31-38) Jesus wanted His disciples to know without any question that He was going to be crucified, but that He would rise again. He also wanted them to have the confidence that if they gave their lives over for Him and the good news of the gospel, it would be the greatest investment they could ever make. Do you want your life to count for something? Jesus tells you and I that a life surrendered to Christ is the life you've always wanted.

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Mark 9

Key Points

(vv. 1-13) In the transfiguration, Jesus is transformed into a more beautiful, elevated, and glorified version of Himself. One of the goals of this experience for Peter, James, and John was to reassure them as leaders among the disciples and eventually the early church that Jesus really was the Son of God and although He was to die soon, His promise of resurrection could be trusted. The appearance of Moses and Elijah was symbolic of the Old Testament Law and prophets, so that when God says "listen to my Son," there is a clear indication that the Law and the prophets must give way to the Way of Christ.

(vv. 14-29) The disciples were not able to cast out the demon because they thought it depended on them. Jesus cast out the demon and reminded His disciples that prayer was the key to casting out the demon. In prayer, we demonstrate our dependence on God and inability to accomplish something on our own. Jesus was saying that demonic influence can only be beaten by God and so we should look to Him and not trust in ourselves. What do you think prayer is? How often do you do it? Do you think it "works"? Are you more inclined to try to figure stuff out on your own as opposed to appealing to the God of the universe for help?

(vv. 30-41) While Jesus was trying to get His disciples to understand what was about to happen with His death and resurrection, they were confused and preoccupied with who was the greatest and how other people who weren't followers of Christ like them were performing miracles in Jesus' name. Jesus, as patient as ever, reminded them that the Christian life should be a race to the back of the line where we seek to submit ourselves to others and serve them. What "secondary" matters are distracting you from seeking to understand the truth about Jesus?

(vv. 42-50) Jesus issues a severe warning here: Anyone who discourages a disciple of Jesus from following Him faithfully could expect severe treatment from God. Causing someone to doubt or walk away from following Jesus is a serious offense that we should all be mindful of. How are your words, attitudes and actions impacting others who are on the journey of faith with you?

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Mark 10

Key Points

(vv. 1-12) Divorce was acknowledged in the Old Testament Law, but not necessarily instituted or authorized. Because man is broken, selfish, prideful, and has a distorted view of marriage, divorce was and continues to be a destroyer of what God intended to be an unbreakable covenant marked by commitment, love, and an unending pursuit of oneness and holiness. Marriage is supposed to be a reflection of the unconditional love that Christ has for His Church as well as the commitment to daily submit and serve the other. This is the ideal of marriage that you can strive for now as a high schooler by choosing to become a person that follows Christ faithfully in relationships and commitments.

(vv. 13-16) Introducing children to Jesus should be a top priority of every follower of Christ. A child possesses the dependent heart that any person who comes to faith needs to have and so introducing children to Jesus at an early age is a great goal. As a high school student, you have an opportunity to be a part of introducing children to Jesus by serving in the children's ministry at your church. What are you waiting for?

(vv. 17-31) The lesson of the rich young ruler is that the moment you think you have it all together is the moment you are most in trouble. Jesus revealed the brokenness in his heart by identifying something that was more important to him than a relationship with God. You have something that fights for the spot of "most important" in your life. You would do well to find out what it is and surrender it to God. He is interested in your heart, not your modified behavior.

(vv. 32-52) Jesus was on his way to the cross and reminded his disciples of this for the third time. But instead of understanding the gravity of the moment, the boys got caught up in a fight about who would be the greatest among them. It's easy to look at the disciples with frustration and disgust, but I hope we see ourselves in them. Christ has a mission for you and I and far too often, we are way too preoccupied with what we think is important. Even a blind guy could see better than them. A helpful prayer is to ask God to help you stay focused on what matters to Him.

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Mark 11

Key Points

(vv. 1-11) Here, Jesus enters Jerusalem during the Passover Festival when Jews from all over the known world would have come back home to celebrate their nation's exodus from Egypt. As Jesus rides in on a donkey, He fulfills a prophecy foretold by Zechariah centuries before in Zechariah 9:9. Through this simple act of entering Jerusalem in a very specific way, Jesus was fulfilling a prophecy and making a proclamation that He really is the Son of God come to take away the sins of the world. The people see the prophecy being fulfilled before their eyes and so they celebrate, even though it's short-lived. You can celebrate the fact that Jesus was a real man, who really was the Son of God, who really fulfilled the prophecies about Himself and really died and rose for your sin.

(vv. 12-26) These two seemingly random and unrelated stories are actually perfectly purposeful and related. A fig tree has great potential to produce fruit and if it doesn't, it is not fulfilling its purpose. The religious leaders of Israel had great potential to produce fruit by leading the people into a deeper relationship with God. But instead, they were taking advantage of people and making themselves richer while seeming to be more spiritual than all. There was no fruit of God's transforming power evident in their lives even though they had all the potential in the world. You have the potential to be used in amazing ways by God, but you also have the choice to go your own way and be barren in your impact on others. I hope you choose to be used by God.

(vv. 27-33) The religious leaders of the day were so committed to disproving and rejecting Jesus. His power, words, authority and fulfillment of prophecy was undeniable. But they had to deny it because if they didn't,

it would mean they would have to submit to Him and change their way of life as Jesus and His way would be their new standard. They selfishly wanted life to go on as it was before Jesus, full of selfishness, profit, self-righteousness, and adoration by the people. But Jesus ALWAYS changes the course of life. How about you? Are you so committed to your current way of life that you are willing to reject clear evidence of who Jesus is and how He wants to transform your life? What are you avoiding? What are you rejecting?

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Mark 12

Key Points

(vv. 1-12) God is the man who planted the vineyard which represents that nation of Israel through whom the rest of the world was supposed to receive nourishment, blessing, and hope. The tenants are the religious leaders of Israel who become selfish, prideful, and stuck in their ways and in doing so, hinder the vineyard from accomplishing its purpose. Along the way, they beat and kill the servants who represent prophets and priests of God who called the nation back to their purpose. The son in the parable is Jesus who is ultimately killed by the religious leaders of Israel. But the vineyard owner—God—will eventually judge these corrupt leaders and give the opportunity for blessing and hope to non-Israelites.

(vv. 13-17) If Jesus said yes to paying taxes, He would be accused of collusion with Rome, if He said not to pay taxes, He would be accused of treason and rebellion. Jesus wisely responds to a loaded question with an answer that applies to us today. The money of the day bore the image of the emperor and thus should be given to Him, but Jesus goes on. Because human's bear the image of God, we should be surrendered to our Creator for His purposes.

(vv. 18-37) Jesus' goal in this conversation wasn't to give the definitive word on the status of marital relationships in heaven, although that is what this text is usually used for. Instead, Jesus used this debate where a group of people who DON'T believe in the resurrection were arguing about what would happen in the resurrection to teach them that resurrection was a real thing that would happen. Jesus wanted to teach His listeners that those who trust in God will inherit eternal life and those who approach in humility will be met with compassion. This is good news.

(vv. 38-44) The value of a gift is not determined by its amount, but by the spirit in which it is given. The religious leaders gave gifts for recognition and applause while the widow gave her gift sacrificially and gratefully. Do you live your life grateful for what Christ has done for you? Do you make sacrifices to be a blessing and encouragement to others?

This Week's Assignments

_____ will share the gospel.

_____ will share a 3-minute personal testimony.

_____ will lead the discussion.

Discuss

Questions I want to ask at Small Group about this chapter:

Know and Do

In your opinion, what's the most important idea that you will take away from this chapter?

How does this chapter move you to action? After reading this chapter, what would God have you start doing, stop doing, or keep doing?

Mark 13

Key Points

(vv. 1-4) In this chapter, Jesus prophesies about events to happen both in the lifetime of the disciples and at the end of the world as we know it. Some of Jesus' words have to do with the destruction of Jerusalem which happened a couple decades after this conversation with the disciples in A.D. 70. Some of His words have not yet been fulfilled, but we can trust their legitimacy because they came from Jesus Himself first, and second, because some of the events He talked about here have already happened.

(vv. 5-13) Both in the time of Jesus' disciples and in our world today, there are false teachers claiming to be Jesus, others claiming to know when Jesus will return, various wars, natural disasters, and the verbal and physical persecution of believers. When you hear of the false teachers and tragedy in our world, don't be alarmed. God is still in control. Be ready to stand up for your faith in the face of persecution. There are believers all over this world right now who are literally running for or losing their lives because of their faith in Christ. Pray for them often.

(vv. 14-31) This section speaks of the tragedy of the temple and the capital city, Jerusalem, burning to the ground in A.D. 70 by the Roman general Titus. But it also speaks of a future greater tribulation to be experienced by the world in general, but the Jewish people specifically. This time of tribulation will be marked by pain, destruction and death, but will end with Jesus returning to earth to set up His millennial kingdom and subdue evil.

(vv. 32-37) As believers, we have no need to worry about the future Great Tribulation, for we will be raptured right before it begins (I Thessalonians 4:13-18). From scripture, it seems to be the case that thousands of Jews and Gentiles who had rejected Jesus as the Messiah will trust in Him during the tribulation period and experience intense persecution for siding with God. The sign that their season of suffering is ending will be when Jesus appears in the clouds. It would be wise of us all to live as though Jesus could return for His Church at any moment and trigger the beginning of the Great Tribulation, because He could.

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Mark 14

Key Points

(vv. 1-11) For this woman, no price was too large to pay to show honor and worship to Jesus whom she believed to be the Savior that would die and rise from the dead for the forgiveness of sin. In this act, the woman demonstrated utmost love, respect, and devotion to Jesus. What about you? What is a practical way you can demonstrate your love for Christ?

(vv. 12-26) The Passover meal was a reminder and celebration of God's salvation and deliverance. It was a symbol and prophecy of God's plan of salvation through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Christians don't celebrate Passover, but in its place, we take "communion" every time we share a meal together to remember and celebrate what Jesus did for us. One day, we will celebrate God's grace by sharing a meal with Jesus himself.

(vv. 27-31) It's so easy to be over confident of our convictions when we are not in a high pressure situation. Peter and all the disciples were confident they wouldn't desert Christ in a moment of crisis. But they did! Thank God for his mercy, compassion, and patience with us when we fall short of our stated convictions. Let's also be patient with others when they fall short!

(vv. 32-52) Jesus would experience great physical pain, but He knew that the greatest pain would be taking on every sin ever on His own shoulders. With His one act, Jesus would take care of sin but also be separated from His Father as He became sin for us so that we could be in right relationship with God. In addition, He would be betrayed by a man who was there for all the miracles, messages, and missions that the disciples went on.

(vv. 53-72) After a bogus trial, Jesus is sentenced to death. When you read how He is convicted it sounds absolutely ridiculous, but when man is committed to his own way, he will do anything to accomplish it. In Jesus' most difficult moment, he is deserted and disowned by His disciples that had promised that they wouldn't. What a lonely place to be in. If you have ever felt alone and unsupported, so has Jesus and He is with you through whatever dark time you're experiencing.

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Mark 15

Key Points

(vv. 1-15) Pilate was the kind of leader and person that you DO NOT want to be. He chose to appease the crowd with his actions instead of sticking to his conviction. He knew that the accusations against Jesus were bogus, he knew that they wanted him dead for selfish reasons, but still he “wanted to satisfy the crowd.” What about you? Are there times you do or say things that go against what you believe because you want to be accepted by those around you? That is no way to live. Stand strong for what you believe. The crowd isn’t always right.

(vv. 16-32) At Jesus’ crucifixion, we see some common responses to the deity and work of Christ. Some made fun of Him, others insulted Him, and still others remained skeptical that anything He said was even true. Do any of those responses still happen today? You better believe it. You’ve probably seen or experienced mockery, insults, or skepticism from those who want to live their lives their own way and don’t want a guy named Jesus to mess things up and call them to a new way of life. Be patient with them, be prayerful for them, be resilient in speaking truth to them. Who knows what God will do?

(vv. 33-41) Jesus, the Son of God was dead. The punishment for your sin, my sin, and every sin ever committed past, present, and future was placed squarely on the shoulders of Jesus. The perfect, sinless Son of God was for a time separated from His Father because someone had to pay the penalty of sin, which is separation from God. The spiritual alienation from God was the ultimate torture. But Jesus went through with it, because He didn’t want you to have to experience it. This my friend is good news.

(vv. 42-47) Today in an effort to deny the resurrection, some groups argue that Jesus never really died. However from this record, we see that Jesus’ death was confirmed by a centurion, Pilate, Joseph of Arimathea, the religious leaders who went to great lengths to make sure no one could claim that Jesus had risen from the dead and the women who witnessed His death. Jesus was dead, Jesus was buried, and it was the saddest, darkest day in human history.

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Mark 16

Key Points

(vv. 1-6) Mark describes that the very first witnesses of the resurrection were women. By Jewish law, you could have no evidence submitted in court unless it was confirmed by two male witnesses. The fact that Mark boldly lists women as primary witnesses gives us evidence that the story of the resurrection was not fabricated. If the resurrection was a fable and Mark wanted it to be believed, he would have listed male eye-witnesses as his primary sources.

(v. 7) The women were instructed to tell the disciples what they saw. They were specifically told to share with Peter who just had a magnificent, cowardly failure denying Christ several times. The attention given to Peter shows us that God is anxious to demonstrate His grace, patience, and compassion toward us when we mess up. Not only is God anxious to forgive us, He is ready to deploy us to share His message of love and hope with the world.

(v. 8) This scene ends with catastrophic human failure. The women leave the tomb silenced by fear. They put the whole mission at risk by staying silent. But then we get no information as to what the women end up doing. Mark's strategy to leave the story at this cliffhanger moment is for any reader (that means you) to ask themselves the question, "What am I going to do with the good news that Jesus is no longer dead, but has risen from the grave victorious over our sin that He sacrificed Himself for and now offers a reconciled relationship to God to anyone who is willing?"

(vv. 9-20) The earliest manuscripts and some other ancient witnesses do not have verses 9–20. What this means is that the earliest copies of the gospel of Mark do not include these verses, while copies from later on in history include them. In fact, when one examines these verses, it becomes evident that these may very well be extracts from post-resurrection accounts found in the other three gospels that were probably added by scribes later on in history. This reality does not deny the credibility or authenticity of the gospel of Mark, nor does it change the message.

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