



True Jesus Church

Mark



B I B L E S T U D Y G U I D E

Mark

TRUE JESUS CHURCH

Department of Literary Ministry

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Suggestions for Bible Study

Read Carefully

Observation is the most basic step in Bible study. Misinterpretation is often the result of careless reading. Only when we know what the passage says can we interpret what it means. Before each lesson, read the passage closely. Read it a few times until you become familiar with it. Observe words, phrases, paragraph structure, relationships, emphases, as well as anything that seems unusual. In doing so, you will discover things that you could never have if you read it casually.

Use A Pencil

Keep your pen or pencil busy by recording your observations and thoughts as you go through the passage. Mark key words and phrases. Take note of the relationship between words, phrases, sentences, and paragraphs. Jotting your observations down on paper helps you focus your mind on the Bible text and leaves a much deeper impression on your mind. Your notes will also become valuable reference material the next time you come back to the passage.

Study with Prayer

“No one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God” (1Cor 2:11). The guidance of the Holy Spirit is key to understanding and being inspired by God’s word. Pray everyday and ask God to reveal to you the truth in His words. Whenever you come across a difficult passage, rely on the Holy Spirit by putting it in your prayer. Through your life of prayer, God will open your inner eyes to know His will and give you the strength to put it into practice.

Let the Word Speak to You

Bible study is not an intellectual exercise. Its aim is to change the reader in his thoughts, behavior, and lifestyle to conform to God’s will. The final goal of every Bible study is to apply God’s word in our lives. God reveals His will to the humble. So always approach the Bible with an attitude to be taught and corrected. When you are willing to let God’s word be a mirror to reflect your shortcomings and are determined to carry out His command, your Bible study will have achieved its intended purpose.

Using This Guide

Hands On Approach

This guide is not meant to be your coffee-table reading. Use it as a tool to make your study or discussion more effective. Make use of the spaces in the lessons to record your thoughts and observations.

Outline

One of the exercises under the section “observation” is to record an outline of the passage. Spend time to work on this important exercise because it helps you get the big picture of the entire passage as well as see the relationship between the parts. It also trains you to read the passage carefully and thoughtfully. Try to write the outline without copying the headings from your Bible. Each entry in the outline should accurately reflect the main idea of the paragraph.

Key Words

Key words are words that give meaning to the text or are related to the main idea. Key words are often repeated to mark emphasis. Key words tell you about who, what, when, where, why, or how. Since there are no right or wrong key words, your list may be different from the one provided at the end of the book.

Length of Lesson

Although the lessons are also designed for group Bible study, sometimes a lesson may be too long for a study session. If this happens, the Bible study leader who began the lesson should inform the next leader of where the passage was left off and the discussion results from the first study.

Thoughts on Questions

The end of this book contains suggested answers that serve as pointers when you need help. Since many of the questions do not have standard answers, use the answers provided only as reference. With these thoughts on questions as a starting point, you should be able to come up with more complete answers on your own.

Preparing for Group Bible Studies

Before leading a group Bible study, you should go through the lesson in advance to get a good understanding of the material. Then select questions based on the amount of time you have for discussion and the group’s size, makeup, level of biblical knowledge, etc. Try to also

design additional application questions that you think would suit the particular needs of the group.

The Inductive Method

The inductive approach is an effective way to study the Bible. It follows 3 basic steps: observation, interpretation, and application.

- 👁 **Observation**—*What did God say? How did He say it?* This type of questions helps you look at the Bible passage carefully and equips you for a sound interpretation.
- 🔑 **Interpretation**—*What does it mean?* When answering this type of questions, let the Bible interpret itself whenever possible. Look at the immediate context (the surrounding verses) as well as the broader context (the surrounding chapters and the whole Bible) to derive at the intended meaning. Also ask the Holy Spirit to enlighten your heart to know the spiritual things that God wants to convey to you.
- 👣 **Application**—*How can I put this into practice?* Application questions encourage you to think about what God is teaching you personally through your study. What are His commands? What shortcomings in you is He pointing out? What message of encouragement does He have for you today? It is in examining your relationship with God and acting out God’s word that the words of the Bible can truly come to life.

Because the order of the questions in this guide generally follows the order of the Bible text, we did not group the questions according to the 3 steps mentioned above. Instead, we have used symbols to identify the type of question. By helping you become acquainted with these 3 basic types of questions, we hope that you will acquire the ability to develop meaningful questions for future personal studies as well as group discussions.

Footnotes

Two numbers follow each quote, e.g. (4/134). The number before the slash refers to the reference source listed at the end of this book. The second number indicates the page where the quote is located in the reference source.

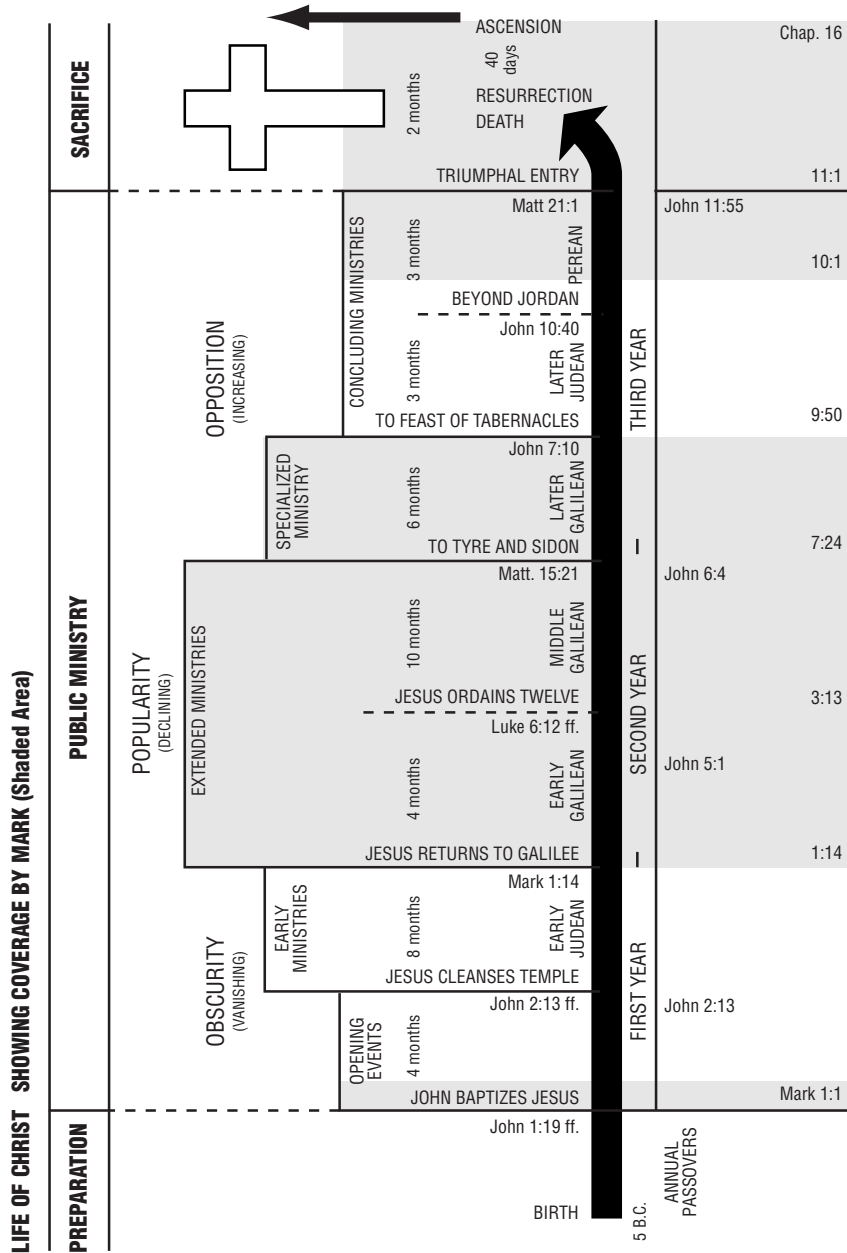


Chart A Life of Christ 13/14



Map A Palestine in the time of Christ

1

Introduction to Mark

The Servant and His Ministry**Author**

Early church tradition suggests that the author of this book was Mark, Barnabas' cousin (Col 4:10).^{1/499} He accompanied Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary trip but abandoned them before it ended (Acts 15:38). However, by the time Paul was imprisoned, Mark had become a trusted co-worker (2Tim 4:11). The author probably got much of his eyewitness accounts from the apostle Peter. His writing, in turn, became a reference for Matthew and Luke.

Recipient

The book was most likely addressed specifically to the Romans, and, by extension, to the Gentiles. In his writing, Mark often explained Jewish customs and translated Jewish terms because his audience was not familiar with them. To someone who is unfamiliar with Christian-Judaic history, the book serves as a concise introduction to the story of Jesus Christ.

Date

Between A.D. 50 to 70.

Place

The book was probably written in Rome. Mark's immediate audience was the believers in the city.

Purpose/Occasion

1. When the book was written, the church was under persecution from the Jewish religious leaders and the Roman government. Mark wrote an account of Jesus to show that He had suffered under the same hands but persevered and accomplished God's salvation work. Jesus' powerful ministry on earth encouraged the believers to continue God's work, to imitate Christ, and to overcome their suffering.

2. The book shows Jesus' divine and human nature. Jesus had boundless power and authority as the Son of God. At the same time, He chose to work as a tireless servant. Through His ministry, Jesus set a perfect example of how to love God and to serve others.

Unique Characteristics

1. Among the four gospel books, only Mark refers to itself as the "gospel" (1:1).
2. In contrast to Matthew and Luke, Mark reads like an abridged version of the gospel. It aims to answer the question, "What did Jesus do?" The author skips Jesus' genealogy and His childhood and goes straight into His work. Also, the proportion of miracles to teachings is much higher than those recorded in Matthew or Luke. Unlike the other gospel books, Mark rarely includes long theological or moral discourses.
3. Mark frequently uses words such as "immediately," "at once," "quickly," etc., which conveys a sense of urgency in Jesus' mission.
4. Mark often explains Jewish customs and Aramaic words. Several Aramaic words in Mark are not found in the other gospel books (5:41; 7:34; 15:34).

Central Verse

"For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many" (10:45).

Survey of Mark

Briefly go through the entire book to get a general overview and fill in Chart B.

Like the other gospel books, Mark proves that Jesus is God who came in flesh to save us. However, Mark takes a bottom-up approach to reach that conclusion. He doesn't tell us that Jesus is descended from the kings, or that angels heralded His birth. Instead, he first gives a picture of a humble servant. This approach gives us a tangible illustration of how "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (Jn 1:14). From Jesus' example, we learn how not to "love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth" (1Jn 3:18).

The first half of Mark focuses more on Jesus' deeds. During this period, Jesus spoke in parables of everyday items (wineskins, bread, seed, lamp, etc.). His power and authority is implied in His words and actions, but He avoided making claims of divine nature. Halfway through the book, there is a distinct shift in focus. After Peter confessed that Jesus was the Christ (chapter 8), Jesus began to assert His divine nature. He spoke plainly about the last days and the heavenly kingdom. He also harshly rebuked the Pharisees and scribes of their hypocrisy. At this time, the twelve apostles began to play a more prominent role, as Jesus prepared them to continue the work of salvation. The narrative builds up momentum and shifts its focus onto Jesus' arrest, crucifixion, and resurrection. After Jesus rose from the dead, He commanded His disciples to continue His work. The same ministry is given to us.

The words of the apostle Paul is a fitting synopsis of the message of the gospel according to Mark:

Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Php 2:6-11).

Themes

Consistent with Mark's focus on Jesus' ministry, its themes are more often illustrated by actions and less by discourses. These themes emerge when we study the details of the events recorded in the book (what Jesus did, how people interpreted His actions, how they responded, etc.).

Servant/Minister

The entire book of Mark is about Jesus the tireless servant (illustrated by the frequent use of the words "immediately," "at once," "quickly," etc.). Jesus set practical examples on the various aspects of service:

- Purpose of serving (1:2-3; 10:45).
- Preparing to serve (1:9-13, 35; 6:46; 7:14-23; 14:35-36).
- Attitude of service (8:34; 9:35-41, 42-50; 10:21,31,38-40,42-45; 13:35).
- Ways to serve - preaching the good news (1:4, 14-15, 38-39; 3:14; 6:12, 34; 13:10-11; 16:14, 19-20); healing, casting out demons (1:34; 3:10; 6:13; 16:17-18); helping people in need (6:41; 8:2).
- Overcoming setbacks and resolving arguments (9:14,36-37,39).
- Responding to those who oppose the gospel (2:13-28; 3:20-30; 6:1-6; 7:1-23; 10:1-12; 11:27-33; 12:13-27).
- Rewards of serving (1:17; 9:1, 41; 10:29-30).

Humility/Meekness

John the Baptist's humble statement (1:7) set the tone of the ministry. He deferred to Jesus, who would baptize with the Holy Spirit (1:8). To save us, God in heaven became "Jesus of Nazareth," a poor carpenter from an unimportant town. He was despised and rejected, even accused of being out of His mind and being in league with the devil (3:21-22). Jesus took it all in stride. As long as He was doing His Father's will, He was content. Through His examples, He taught His disciples to be humble and innocent like little children (10:14-15) and to be lowly servants (10:42-44).

Even though Jesus deserved all power and glory, He chose to be a lowly servant. As the Son of Man, Jesus deferred to God in heaven. He hid Himself from the people's adoration. When unclean spirits recognized Him, He commanded them to be silent (1:25, 34; 3:12). After healing a person, He often commanded them not to tell anyone (1:44; 5:43; 7:36; 8:26).

Jesus was a servant who considered His own needs last. He asked, "What do you want Me to do for you?" (10:36, 51) and never "What will I get in return?" When people asked (sometimes even demanded) Jesus for something, He always patiently listened and did according to their faith. Jesus poured out all of His power to heal and to save. Perhaps that is why He did not have physical beauty (Isa 53:2), and that He died so quickly on the cross.

Jesus' suffering and crucifixion are the best example of His humility. He had the power to save Himself at any time, but He chose not to. When false witnesses accused Him, He did not rebuke them. When

Roman soldiers flogged Him, He did not fight back. On the cross, when people mocked Him and dared Him to come down, He remained silent.

Compassion/Mercy

Mark vividly depicts Jesus' loving emotions. To anyone in need, Jesus always had a kind word and a gentle touch. When a man with leprosy pleaded with Him for mercy, "Jesus, moved with compassion, stretched out His hand and touched him, and said to him, 'I am willing'" (1:41). He called a woman who wanted to be healed His "daughter" (5:34), and He gently called a little girl back from the dead (5:41). He was glad to take little children in His arms to bless them (10:16).

Jesus is always ready and willing to supply our needs. When He saw that the people were like "sheep not having a shepherd," He set His hunger aside and began to teach them (6:31, 34). While Jesus made spiritual matters a priority, He did not neglect the people's physical and emotional needs. After feeding the crowd with the words of God, Jesus fed them with fish and bread (8:2-4). During a storm, when the disciples feared for their lives, Jesus calmed the wind and the waves (4:38-39). When He saw the disciples "straining at rowing" (6:48), He went to them.

The greatest mercy is the forgiveness of sins. Jesus never turns away a repentant sinner (2:17). He ate with tax collectors (2:15). Often He gives us grace beyond what we had asked, such as when He forgave the sin of the paralytic (2:5). He willingly endured the agony of the cross and the consequences of sin so that we can have the hope of salvation.

Suffering/Sacrifice

A servant is required to sacrifice, sometimes painfully. John the Baptist lived a simple life and later died for the Lord (1:6; 6:27; 9:12-13). From the beginning of His ministry, Jesus sacrificed His comforts for the sake of teaching, feeding, and healing (1:13; 3:20, 6:31). But Jesus came not only to help us in this life on earth, but also to save our souls from hell. Doing that required the ultimate sacrifice. Jesus was willing to be persecuted, flogged, and to suffer and die on the cross (8:31; 9:31; 10:33-34, 38-39; 12:6-12; 14:22-24, 34-36, 53-65; 15:12-37). His loving sacrifice compels us to follow His example (1:18; 6:8-9; 8:34-38; 10:21-31; 13:9,12-22; 14:3).

Authority

Jesus' claim that He is the Son of God is grounded in truth. He was prophesied and confirmed by the prophets (1:7-8; 9:4). God in heaven spoke for Him (1:10-11; 9:7). Even the demons recognized His authority (1:24, 34; 3:11; 5:7). When He died on the cross, a Roman centurion was moved to exclaim, "Truly this man was the Son of God!" (15:39)

Jesus' words had authority unlike any others'. Everyone was amazed at His teaching and His deeds (1:22, 27; 2:12, 5:20; 6:2; 10:24; 11:18; 12:17). His wise words silenced even His fiercest critics (12:34). He revealed the mystery hidden in the words of God (2:19-22, 27-28; 3:4; 4:3-34; 7:8). Only the Son of God could speak truthfully and powerfully on the kingdom of God and the last days (4:1-34; 10:1-31; 13:1-37). Only the all-knowing Lord could correctly predict His death and resurrection (8:31; 9:9; 10:34; 10:38; 12:8).

Jesus had authority over everything, including sickness (1:31, 41-42; 5:29, 41; 6:56; 7:37; 8:25), demons (1:25-27, 34; 3:11; 5:7; 7:30; 9:25-26; 10:52) and nature (4:39; 6:41-42, 48; 8:6-8; 11:14,20). He alone had the authority to forgive sins (2:5, 10-11).

Jesus delegated His authority to the disciples and promised to work with them (3:15; 6:7; 16:17-18, 20). He commanded the disciples to keep watch and complete their assigned tasks until the master comes again (13:33-37). When the disciples received the Holy Spirit, Jesus' promise was fulfilled. Today, Jesus gives us the same authority of the Holy Spirit to build up the church and to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ. If we serve Him faithfully, when Jesus comes again with great power and glory (13:36-37), we will inherit eternal life in the kingdom of God.

Hardened Hearts

Ironically, while the demons and nature obeyed Jesus, those He came to help rejected Him. People rejected Jesus for who He was. The Gerasenes feared Jesus and asked Him to leave them (5:17). His own family thought He was out of his mind (3:21). People from His hometown rejected Him due to His humble background (6:3). The scribes from Jerusalem even claimed that He was demon-possessed (3:22). They doubted Jesus' divine authority (2:8). They argued with Him over God's commandments (10:5). They repeatedly tried to catch Him in a mistake (2:18, 24; 3:2; 8:11; 10:2; 11:28; 12:13, 24). When they failed to trap Him, they made false accusations against Him (14:56, 59). While Jesus was suffering, they ridiculed Him (14:65; 15:17-19, 29-32, 35-36).

People refused to accept Jesus’ teachings. When Jesus told a rich young man the one thing he still lacked, he “went away sorrowful” (10:22). The disciples never learned their lesson, in spite of having been with Jesus for three years. Even though Jesus took extra time with them to explain His words (4:11), they continued to draw their own outrageous conclusions (8:15-17, 31-33; 9:5-6). They continued to be amazed in disbelief of Jesus’ power (4:40-41; 6:51-52). They fought among themselves and with others (9:14, 34; 10:13, 41). Even after Jesus plainly told them that He would suffer, die, and rise (9-31,10:34), they did not connect His words with the events. Even after many witnesses told them that Jesus had risen from the dead, they still did not believe (16:11, 13-14).

Jesus warned people of their downfall so that they would repent and change their ways. However, His warning often fell on deaf ears. He warned the disciples about arguing over who was first among them (9:33-37; 10:38). He warned the chief priests, scribes, and elders about the consequences of their hypocrisy (7:6; 12:36-40) and their plan to kill the Son of God (12:7-9). He warned Judas against betraying Him (14:18). He warned Peter about denying Him (14:30). Sadly, they all ignored Jesus’ warning.

Key Words/Phrases

Gospel, amazed, Son of Man, serve, authority, believe, compassion, Son of God, betrayed, condemn, rise

Modern Relevance

To preach to the Romans, who did not have a Jewish religious background, Mark focused on Jesus’ work. Today, when we preach the gospel to someone without a Christian background, often the most effective way is to share a testimony of how Jesus can make our lives better. When the person becomes more familiar with our basic beliefs, then we can get into the deeper spiritual teachings on salvation and the heavenly kingdom.

When we read about how Jesus worked tirelessly, pouring out everything He had until the very end, we can not help but feel compelled to repay His love. The best way to do that is to preach the good news (16:15) and to “be last of all and servant of all” (9:35). With the power and wisdom of the Holy Spirit, we can imitate Jesus’ example as a humble servant.

1:1-13	Desert	Service	Many miracles, few discourses
1:14-20	Galilee		
1:21-2:12			
2:13-3:6			
3:7-19			
3:20-35			
4:1-34			
4:35-5:43			
6:1-6			
6:7-29			
6:30-6:56			
7:1-23			
7:24-8:9			
8:10-21	Caesarea Philippi	“Who do people say I am?”	
8:22-26			
8:27-9:13	Galilee	Sacrifice	Fewer miracles, more direct teachings
8:31-9:1			
9:2-13			
9:14-29			
9:30-50			
10:1-12	Judaea		
10:13-31			
10:32-34			
10:35-45			
10:46-52	Jerusalem		
11:1-26			
11:27-33			
12:1-44			
13:1-37			
14:1-42			
14:43-15:20			
15:21-47			
16:1-20			

Map B Survey of Mark

The Beginning of the Gospel

The Basics

Setting

Mark opens with a bold claim that Jesus is “the Son of God” (1:1). He then gets right into the story of the gospel, starting with John the Baptist, who preached a “baptism of repentance” (1:4) in preparation for the One who was greater. While John was setting the stage, Jesus prepared Himself in the wilderness.

Key Verse

“I indeed baptized you with water, but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit” (1:8).

Did You Know...?

- Gospel** (1:1): The English word comes from an Anglo-Saxon word meaning “the story concerning God.” The Greek word used in the New Testament (*euaggelion*) means literally, “good news.” The term appears frequently in Paul’s epistles.¹¹
- The prophecy in 1:2 (quoting Isaiah 40:3) was written about 700 years before John the Baptist was born.¹¹
- Wilderness/desert** (1:3): The Greek word is used more to convey a sense of a solitary or lonely place.^{2/1037} Here, Mark is referring to the region west of the Dead Sea.
- John** (1:4): The name is derived from the Hebrew expression that means, “the Lord is gracious.” It was given by an angel of the Lord (Lk 1:13).
- Baptize** (1:4): Derived from the Greek word *baptismos*, which means, “to dip,” “to immerse,” or “to submerge.”^{4/142}
- John centered his ministry in the “all the land of Judea” (1:5) in the southern part of Palestine, while Jesus began His ministry around Galilee (1:14) in the northern part of Palestine. Because of John’s work, people later came all the way from Judea to see Jesus (3:8).

- Camel’s hair** (1:6): The poor treated the skin of a dead animal such as a camel and used it as clothing.¹¹
- Locusts** (1:6): Considered clean food under the Mosaic law (Lev 11:21-22), but not part of the everyday diet.¹¹
- Sandal strap** (1:7): Sandals were insignificant things (Gen 14:23). The simplest form consisted of a plain sole of leather, bound to the feet by a leather thong.^{2/224} It was a very lowly task to carry or loosen another’s sandal.
- Nazareth** (1:9): Literally, “Sanctified.” A small town atop a hill (Lk 4:29-30) in the southern part of Galilee. It was Jesus’ hometown (Mt 2:23). It was so obscure that it was never mentioned in the Old Testament.^{2/691}
- Jesus traveled about 18 miles (30 kilometers) to be baptized (from Nazareth to Jordan).
- John the Baptist witnessed the vision of the Holy Spirit appearing like a dove (Jn 1:32).



Observation


Outline



- _____ (1:1)
- _____ (1:2-8)
- _____ (2-3)
- _____ (4-5)
- _____ (6)
- _____ (7-8)
- _____ (1:9-11)
- _____ (9-10)
- _____ (11)
- _____ (1:12-13)
- _____ (12)
- _____ (13)

Key Words/Phrases

General Analysis

1. Describe "gospel" in your own words.  


2. When did your faith in Jesus Christ begin? How did you come to know Jesus? 

3. What did each of the following do to prepare for Jesus' ministry?  

3a. God


3b. John

3c. Jesus


4. In this passage, what are the things and/or events related to the wilderness? 



Segment Analysis


1:1-8

1a. What did John come to do? 

1b. What was the people's response to his preaching? 

2. Compare John's way of dress and diet to that of a prophet. (cf. Lev 11:21-22; 2Kgs 1:8; Zech 13:4). 

3a. What role does prophecy play in this paragraph? Compare "John came" (4) with "Jesus came" (9).  

3b. How does the fulfillment of prophecies help the reader know who Jesus is? 

4a. What does it mean to be baptized with the Holy Spirit? 

4b. What is the difference between Jesus' baptism with the Holy Spirit and John's baptism with water? 🗝️

5. Today, who plays the role of John the Baptist? 🗝️

1:9-11

6. If Jesus had no sins to repent of, why did He let John baptize Him? 🗝️

7a. What happened immediately after Jesus was baptized?

7b. What was the significance of this event?

8a. List the characteristics of a dove. What was a dove used for in the Old Testament? 🗝️

8b. Why does the Holy Spirit appear like a dove (10)? What else does the Holy Spirit appear as in the Bible? 🗝️

8c. What is the Holy Spirit like to you? How would you describe the Holy Spirit? 🗝️

1:12-13

9. Why did the Holy Spirit send Jesus into the desert immediately after His baptism? 🗝️

10. What do the "wild beasts" (13) symbolize? 🗝️

11. Why do you think Mark does not state how Jesus was tempted, nor that Jesus overcame temptation? 🗝️

12a. When you are in a difficult situation, how do you know whether or not it is the will of the Holy Spirit? How do you get through it? 🗝️

12b. What are the "wild beasts" in your faith? How do you overcome them? 🗝️

3

Mark 1:14-45

Jesus Begins His Ministry

The Basics

Setting

After John was imprisoned, Jesus began His ministry in Galilee. After calling His first disciples from the area, Jesus went to Capernaum and began to teach and to perform miracles. Immediately, news about Him spread quickly throughout the whole region, and so many people came to Him that He could not move about freely (1:28, 32, 45).

Key Verse

“Then Jesus said to them, ‘Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men.’ They immediately left their nets and followed Him” (1:17-18).

Did You Know...?

- Galilee** (1:14): The Sea of Galilee is actually a freshwater lake in northern Palestine, fed by the Jordan River. It’s also called “Sea of Tiberias” (Jn 21:1) and “Lake of Gennesaret” (Lk 5:1).^{4/453-454} It is up to 6 miles (10 km) at the widest point and 15 miles (24 km) at the longest.^{3/108} During Jesus’ time, the region around Galilee was surrounded on three sides by a belt of large cities with a large non-Jewish population (Gennesaret, Capernaum, Bethsaida),^{5/449-450} which made it somewhat difficult for Jesus to find a solitary place.
- Fishermen** (1:16): Fishing was a new and prosperous industry during Jesus’ time. Peter, Andrew, James, and John were not poor men but were working in a viable business with above-average income.^{6/55} Note that they did well enough to have hired men (1:20).
- “Casting a net,” “mending their nets”** (1:16, 19): When a school of fish is seen, the net is dropped over them. The weights on the net carried it down, and the fish were trapped underneath. Because the net dragged in everything from the lakebed, when it

was hauled ashore the fishermen separated the good fish from the rubbish, which was then thrown back into the water (Mt 13:47-48). When the fishing was over, the nets were spread out on the shore for drying, and any broken pieces were repaired.

- Capernaum** (1:21): A city on the western shore of Galilee. It was of sufficient size to be called a city, and had its own synagogue, tax collector, and centurion.^{5/199} Peter’s house there became Jesus’ base of operations during His extended ministry in Galilee.^{7/1443}
- Synagogue** (1:21): Derived from the Greek word *sunagoge*, which means “gathering of people”, “congregation,” or “place of prayer.” It was a meeting place on the Sabbath day, in which it was customary to read scriptures, to preach, and to pray.^{4/1229}
- Scribes/teachers of the law** (1:22): In addition to the written law (Mosaic law), the Jews passed down oral law from one generation of teachers to the next. Because the oral law was never committed to writing, constant repetition was necessary to fix it in a student’s memory.^{4/1142}
- Fever** (1:30): Probably refers to malarial fever, which can be fatal (cf. Jn 4:47, 52). It is spread by mosquitoes found in pools and marshes, and is still common around Galilee today.¹¹
- Leprosy** (1:40): The exact meaning of the Greek term for leprosy is uncertain but clearly refers to some form of skin disease.^{4/307} It was greatly feared by the Israelites, not only because of its physical damage, but also because of the strict isolation laws that made the patients outcasts of society. There was no cure for leprosy other than divine intervention.^{8/138-139} If a person was cured, he had to make sacrifices, and the priest would pronounce him clean and allow him to reenter the society.^{7/1494}
- “Show yourself to the priest...”** (1:44): These instructions were in accordance with the laws of Moses on leprosy as recorded in Lev 13:1-3; 14:1-57.

Observation


Outline


_____ (1:14-20)
 _____ (14-15)


- _____ (16-18)
- _____ (19-20)
- _____ **(1:21-28)**
- _____ (21-22)
- _____ (23-28)
- _____ **(1:29-45)**
- _____ (29-31)
- _____ (32-39)
- _____ (40-45)

Key Words/Phrases

General Analysis


1. List the verses in which terms that denote a sense of urgency (“immediately,” “as soon as,” “at once,” etc.) were mentioned in this passage. What does this tell you about Jesus’ ministry? 

2. Based on this passage, list some of Jesus’ tasks during His ministry. 

3. Where is Jesus calling you to begin your ministry? 


Segment Analysis

1:14-15



1a. Why was John put in prison? (cf. Mk 6:17-19). 


1b. Jesus began His ministry after John was imprisoned. Why? How did Jesus know it was the right time? 

2a. Jesus said, “The time is fulfilled” (15). The time for what? 

2b. Jesus said, “Believe in gospel” (15). What is the “gospel” or “good news” (cf. Lesson 2, *Did You Know* 1)? 

1:16-20

3. How were Simon, Andrew, James, and John related? At this time, did they know who Jesus was? (cf. Mt 4:18-22; Lk 5:1-11; Jn 1:35-51).  

4a. What does “fisher of men” mean? Why was it so attractive to the fishermen? (cf. Lk 5:1-11). 

4b. Jesus used the fishermen's occupation as an analogy to the greater tasks He was preparing them for. Think of someone you want to preach the gospel to. What aspects of his or her life can you use to show them how Jesus can do greater things for them?

5a. The fishermen left behind a pretty good living to follow Jesus. What are you willing to leave behind to follow Jesus?

5b. What has Christ called you to do? How are you prepared to follow Christ?

1:21-28

6. How could the people tell that Jesus taught as one who had authority? Compare how Jesus taught to how the scribes taught.

7. Share a Bible verse or passage that carries authority. Why does it impress you?

8. Why did Jesus command the unclean spirit to be quiet?

1:29-39

9a. After Jesus healed Simon's mother-in-law, she served them (31). How has Jesus helped you? How have you served Him?

9b. How can your family help you serve God? How has the Lord taken care of your family?




10a. Why did Jesus get up very early in the morning?


10b. Which hour of the day is a good quiet time for you? How do you set aside a quiet time with God?


11. Explain why Jesus had to leave for the next towns when everyone was looking for Him.



1:40-45


12. List the leper's actions and his words when he asked for healing. What does this tell you about his faith?

13. Observe the Lord’s heart and actions in verse 41. What can you learn from Him?   

14a. Why did Jesus warn the man not to tell anyone (43)? Why did the man spread the news anyway? 

14b. Have you ever hindered God’s work even though you acted with good intentions? What was the outcome? 

15. Jesus must have known that the man would disobey Him and spread the news of His healing, which would make His job more difficult (Jesus even had to stay in the wilderness to avoid the crowd [45]). Why did Jesus heal him anyway? What does this teach us about helping others?  

16. When you preach to someone, which aspect of the gospel do you tell (miracles, life-changing experience, Holy Spirit, sin, etc.)? How do you get him/her to believe you? 

4

Calling the Sick and the Sinners

The Basics

Setting

As word of what Jesus had said and done reached the scribes, they grumbled among themselves. They rejected Jesus because of His words and because He associated with sinners. Their opposition continued to increase until they openly accused Jesus of being demon-possessed (3:22) and plotted to kill Him (3:6).

Key Verse

“Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance” (2:17).

Did You Know...?

1. Jesus probably was teaching in Simon’s house. The house roofs were usually made of wooden beams with thatch and compacted earth in order to shed the rain. Sometimes tiles were laid between the beams and the thatch and earth placed over them. Access to the roof was by means of an outside stairway.^{9/632} The family would sleep there, and use it as a living room during the day, as well as a storeroom, where raisins, figs, flax, were spread out in the sun.^{5/544}
2. **Blasphemy** (2:7): From the Greek *blasphemeo*, which means, “to slander.” Generally, it refers to slandering against God.^{9/222} There are two general forms of blasphemy: one is attributing evil to God, or denying Him glory and praise. The other is claiming a creature to be God. The punishment for blasphemy was death by stoning.^{4/174}
3. **Levi** (2:14): Another name for Matthew (Mt 9:9), author of the first book of the New Testament.
4. **Tax collectors/publicans** (2:15): Local Jewish men employed by Roman tax contractors to collect taxes. Because they worked

for Rome and often demanded unreasonable payments, tax collectors were generally hated and considered to be traitors.^{7/1447} A tax collector was stationed in a tax booth, which brought daily contact with all classes of the population, including the Gentiles,^{4/1254-5} whom many Jews despised.

- 5. **Pharisees** (2:16): Literally, "Separated Ones." They were teachers in the synagogues, religious examples in the eyes of the people and self-appointed guardians of the law and its proper observance. They considered the interpretations and regulations handed down by tradition to be virtually as authoritative as Scripture.^{7/1545}



Observation

Outline

- _____ (2:1-12)
- _____ (1-2)
- _____ (3-4)
- _____ (5)
- _____ (6-7)
- _____ (8-12)
- _____ (2:13-17)
- _____ (13)
- _____ (14-15)
- _____ (16)
- _____ (17)

Key Words/Phrases

General Analysis

- 1. Refer to the passage outline. How are the events in 1-12 and 13-17 similar?  

Segment Analysis



2:1-12

- 1. Why was each of the following in the house?  


- 1a. Jesus



- 1b. Crowd


- 1c. Scribes



- 2a. Who or what prevented the four men from bringing the paralytic to Jesus?  


- 2b. What did the scribes do wrong? What would you have done if you were someone in the crowd?   

2c. What are some difficulties today in asking Jesus for help? How might you be an obstacle to someone who wants to come to Christ? 


3a. Verse 5 says, "Jesus saw their faith." How did the paralytic show his faith? How did the four men show their faith?  


3b. How do you show your faith to Jesus? 


3c. What can we learn from the four men in bringing people to Christ?  

4. What are your weaknesses/shortcomings? How can a brother or sister in Christ help you overcome them? 

5a. Why did Jesus first forgive the paralytic's sins (5)? 



5b. What was Jesus implicitly claiming by forgiving the sins of the paralytic? 



5c. What did the healing of the paralytic prove? 

6. Are miracles necessary to maintain your faith, or to preach to someone? 



7. What does verse 8 reveal about Jesus?  


2:13-17


8. How is Matthew's calling similar to that of Simon, Andrew, James, and John? (cf. 1:16-20).  


9a. What did Matthew leave behind by following Jesus? Compare that to what the fishermen left behind.  

9b. What have you left behind by following Christ? What have you gained?

10. In verse 15, Mark mentions “many tax collectors and sinners.” Is it a derogatory reference? Why or why not?  

11a. In verse 17, who were “the righteous”? Who were “sinners”?  

11b. Have you ever looked down on a person? Why? 

11c. What does Jesus’ words teach us about how we should view ourselves in order to receive His grace? 

The Basics

Setting

The Pharisees had been judging Jesus in their minds (2:6-7) and questioning His disciples (2:16). They now openly accused Him of breaking God’s law. They did not accept the fact that Jesus came to reveal the true meaning of the law. Because both the Pharisees (religious leaders) and the Herodians (political leaders) felt that Jesus threatened their influence, they plotted to kill Him.

Key Verse

“No one sews a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old garment ... And no one pours new wine into old wineskins” (2:21-22).

Did You Know...?

1. **Fasting** (2:18): In Jesus’ day, the Pharisees fasted twice a week, on Monday and Thursday. They adopted a somber or downcast air by not washing and shaving, and sprinkling ashes on themselves to signify self-denial.^{9/175}
2. Some of John’s disciples probably still had not heard of Jesus. In fact, many years later, the apostle Paul discovered some disciples in Ephesus who received only John’s baptism and had never heard of the Holy Spirit (Acts 19:1-7)!
3. Based on their interpretation of the commandment of the Sabbath (cf. Ex 20:9-10; 31:15), the Pharisees specified 39 forbidden acts on the Sabbath. Among them was reaping, which they accused Jesus’ disciples of doing.^{9/637} By the same token, healing (a form of work) was also forbidden on the Sabbath.
4. **Old garment** (2:21): If a new garment patch sewn onto an old garment becomes wet, the new will shrink, pull away from the old, and make a large hole.^{3/114}
5. **Wineskins** (2:22): In ancient times, goatskins were used to hold wine.^{7/1451} Over time, the skin became hard and brittle. If new

wine, still fermenting, were put into such an old skin, the buildup of fermenting gases would split the brittle container and ruin both the bottle and the wine. New wine was placed only in new wineskins still pliable and elastic enough to accommodate the pressure.^{9/227}

- 6. **Abiathar** (2:26): David actually received the consecrated bread from Ahimelech, Abiathar’s father. It was customary to indicate a section of the Old Testament this way. Abiathar became high priest shortly after Ahimelech and was more prominent, thus justifying the use of his name here.^{3/114}
- 7. **Showbread/consecrated bread** (2:26): Twelve loaves of unleavened bread were placed on the table in the holy place, one above the other, in two columns. They remained on the table for a week, then were removed and eaten by the priest in the sanctuary. It was sacrilegious for anyone not a priest to eat the showbread.^{8/421}
- 8. **Herodians** (3:6): A minority Jewish political group that openly supported the reigning family of Herod and its pro-Roman sympathies.^{9/458}

Observations






Outline



- _____ (2:18-20)
- _____ (18)
- _____ (19-20)
- _____ (2:21-22)
- _____ (21)
- _____ (22)
- _____ (2:23-3:5)
- _____ (2:23-24)
- _____ (2:24-28)
- _____ (3:1-3)
- _____ (3:4-5)

_____ (3:6)

Keywords/Phrases



General Analysis


- 1. When was the last time you learned something new in your spiritual knowledge? What did you learn? 
- _____
- _____
- _____
- 2. List your routines in work, in school, and in church. Why do you keep your routines? 
- _____
- _____
- _____
- 3. List the characters in this passage who asked questions. Why did each ask a question?  
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- 4. The Pharisees looked for every opportunity to accuse Jesus. Do you know people who find fault with your faith or with the church? How do you respond? 
- _____
- _____
- _____

5. Read Isaiah 58. What are the teachings on fasting and observing the Sabbath?  

Segment Analysis


2:18-20

1. List the biblical reasons for fasting. (Look up “fast” and “fasting” in a Bible concordance.)  


2. Whom does each of the following refer to? 

2a. Bridegroom (Jn 3:28-30; Mt 25:10-11)

2b. Wedding guests (Mt 22:1-14; Jn 3:29)

3. How does the analogy of the bridegroom and the wedding guests answer the Pharisee’s accusations? (cf. Mt 6:16-18). 

2:21-22

4. What does each of the following represent? 

4a. Unshrunk cloth (Mt 5:17)


4b. Old garment (Ps 102:25-27)


4c. Tear

4d. New wine (Eph 5:18; Song 1:2)

4e. Old wineskins

4f. New wineskins

5. How do the analogies of the cloth and the wineskin answer the Pharisee’s accusations? (cf. Mt 5:17-48; Rom 8:13-16; 1Cor 5:6; Eph 2:11-18; Heb 5:4-6). 

6. Since the new is better than the old, why can’t we adapt biblical teachings to match current values? 

2:23-3:6

7a. Read 1Samuel 21:1-6. Why did David eat the consecrated bread?



7b. Which part of the law did David violate?



7c. What does the story of David eating the showbread have to do with what Jesus said in 2:27? (cf. Mt 12:1-8).



8. What did Jesus mean by the words in 2:28? How did He come to this conclusion (note the word “Therefore”)?



9. What are the implications/consequences of each possible answer to Jesus’ questions (3:4)? If you were one of the Pharisees, how would you have answered Jesus?



9a. “It is lawful to do good.”

9b. “It is not lawful to do good.”

9c. “It is lawful to do evil.”

9d. “It is not lawful to do evil.”

9e. “It is lawful to save a life.”

9f. “It is not lawful to save a life.”

9g. “It is lawful to kill.”

9h. “It is not lawful to kill.”

10. Why were the Pharisees silent?



11. Why did Jesus heal the man with a withered hand?



6

Mark 3:7-35

Jesus' Authority

The Basics

Setting

By now, Jesus was drawing a crowd wherever He went. People came from Judea, Jerusalem, Idumea, across the Jordan, and around Tyre and Sidon. To help Him in His ministry, Jesus appointed twelve apostles and gave them authority. As Jesus' fame increased, so did the opposition. The scribes and even Jesus' own family doubted that His authority was from heaven, and came up with their own explanations for Jesus' actions.

Key Verse

"But he who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is subject to eternal condemnation" (3:29).

Did You Know...?

- 1. **Idumea** (3:8): The Greek form of the Hebrew "Edom," but here does not refer to earlier Edomite territory.^{7/1495} After the destruction of Jerusalem in 587 B.C., the Edomites came from the east and settled in the area south of Hebron, which the Greeks and Romans later called Idumea.^{9/641}
- 2. **Tyre and Sidon** (3:8): Large Phoenician port cities on the Mediterranean coast. They were about 20 miles (32 km) apart, and often mentioned together. The two cities were often denounced by Old Testament prophets for their Baal worship.^{9/273}
- 3. **Disciple** (3:7): Literally, "learner" or "student."¹¹
- 4. **Apostle** (3:14): Literally, "one who is sent." It has the same root as the Greek word for the expression "that he might send" in verse 14. In addition to the original twelve, Matthias was later chosen to replace Judas Iscariot as an apostle (Acts 1:26), and Paul often refers to himself as an apostle in his letters.¹¹

- 5. **Peter** (3:16): Aramaic word for "rock." Peter is also known as "Cephas," which is the Greek word for "rock." The name differentiates him from Simon the Zealot.
- 6. **Simon the Canaanite/Zealot** (3:18): The name is translated as either "Canaanite" (NKJV), which refers to Simon's birthplace, or "Zealot" (NIV), which might refer to his zealous character, or with his association with the party of the Zealots. The Zealots opposed the payment of tributes by Israel to the pagan Roman emperor because they viewed it as treason to God.^{5/1354} To achieve their goals, they did not hesitate to use violence and deception.^{8/1036-7}
- 7. **Judas Iscariot** (3:19): Probably refers to where Judas came from (Kerioth, 12 miles [19 km] south of Hebron), which makes him the only apostle from Judea (the rest were from Galilee).^{7/1496}
- 8. **Beelzebub** (3:22): Might be derived from the Hebrew *baalzebub* ('lord of flies'), a mocking takeoff of *baalzebul* ("Prince Baal"), a pagan deity (2Kgs 1:2-3,16). In the New Testament, the name is identified with Satan, the prince of the demons.^{9/253}
- 9. **Satan** (3:23): Literally, "Accuser." One of the devil's names (Rev 20:2).

Observation

Outline

- _____ (3:7-12)
- _____ (7-10)
- _____ (11-12)
- _____ (3:13-19)
- _____ (13-15)
- _____ (16-19)
- _____ (3:20-35)
- _____ (20-21)
- _____ (22)
- _____ (23-30)

_____ (31-32)

_____ (33-35)

Keywords/Phrases

General Analysis

1. What did each of the following do when they heard what Jesus was doing? Why?  

1a. Crowd

1b. Unclean spirits

1c. Apostles


1d. Jesus' family


1e. Scribes

Segment Analysis



3:7-12

1a. What is the significance of mentioning that the crowd came from Idumea, Tyre, and Sidon? 


1b. Has there ever been an unexpected visitor to your church? How did he/she hear about the church? 


1c. Share a particular testimony that inspired your faith. 

2. Why did Jesus order the unclean spirits not to tell who He was? 

3. What wasn't Jesus able to do because the people crowded Him?  



3:13-19


4a. What is the difference between a disciple and an apostle? (cf. *Did You Know* 3 and 4). 


4b. What did Jesus appoint the apostles to do? 


4c. Why was it important that the apostles be with Jesus (14)? 


5a. Why did Jesus give Simon Peter a name? Why did He give James and John a name? 

5b. Which other biblical characters did God give names to? What was the meaning/purpose of each name?  

5c. If God were to give you a name, what would it be? Why? 


6a. List the former occupations of the twelve apostles. 


6b. Although the apostles differed in their culture, occupation, personalities, and opinions, Jesus appointed them to work together. Who in the church is very different from you? How do you work together with him or her? 


6c. Judas Iscariot was probably the only apostle from Judea. Do you sometimes feel left out in the church? How do you deal with it? 


3:20-35


7a. What did Jesus' family do wrong? How does their error relate to what Jesus said in 34-35?  


7b. Jesus' family let their concerns blind them to God's will. What makes you blind to God's will? 


8. What have you done for the sake of your faith that might have seemed strange to other people? 

9. What do you do when you disapprove of someone's actions in church? 

10a. Why did the scribes claim that Jesus was possessed by demons? 

10b. How were the scribes guilty of blasphemy? (cf. Lesson 4, *Did You Know 2* for the definition of “blasphemy.”) 

10c. How can you tell if something is from God or the devil? (cf. Jn 16:13; 2Tim 3:15; 1Jn 4:1-6). 


11. In the parable, what does each of the following represent? 

11a. Strong man (Rev 20:1-3)

11b. House (1Jn 5:19; Rev 2:13)

11c. Possessions (Rom 6:20-21)

11d. Intruder (Mt 24:43-44; Rev 3:3)

12. What is the meaning of the parable? 

The Basics

Setting

The narrative takes a rare break from its fast-paced action. Here we reflect on four parables about our faith and the kingdom of God. The meaning of these parables was hidden from the people in general, and revealed only when Jesus was alone with His own disciples.

Key Verse

“To you it has been given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God; but to those who are outside, all things come in parables” (4:11).

Did You Know...?

1. **Parable** (4:2): Derived from the Greek word *parabole*, which means, “placing next to something”—a comparison. In the New Testament, it referred to the stories Jesus drew from nature and human life.^{7/1457}
2. **Sower** (4:3): A farmer scattered his seeds over the entire ground, which caused some seeds to land on the wayside, on stony ground, or among the thorns.^{9/648}
3. **Stony ground** (4:5): Not ground covered with small stones, but shallow soil on top of solid rock.^{7/1457}
4. **Lamp** (4:21): In Jesus’ day, people used small clay lamps that burned olive oil drawn up by a wick.^{7/1445}
5. **Mustard seed** (4:31): The smallest of the garden seeds known to farmers at that time. Though its seed is so small, a mustard plant grows to a great height 12-15 feet (5-6 m) in one season, and is a nesting place for the birds of the air.^{3/51}


Observation


Outline


- _____ (4:1-2)
- _____ (4:3-20)
- _____ (3-9)
- _____ (10-20)
- _____ (4:21-23)
- _____ (4:24-25)
- _____ (4:26-29)
- _____ (4:30-32)
- _____ (4:33-34)


Keywords/Phrases


General Analysis


- 1a. In this passage, what common things did Jesus mention in His teaching? Elsewhere in the Bible, what other common things did He mention? 

- 1b. Even though Jesus was brought up in a carpenter's house, He was observant of life outside His circle (evidenced by His familiarity with fishing, farming, shepherding, etc). How can your secular knowledge help you preach the gospel? 

- 2a. Why did Jesus speak in parables? Why did He explain everything only to His disciples (34)? 


- 2b. If Jesus explained everything to His disciples, why are we given the explanation to only one parable? 

- 2c. How can we discern between correct and incorrect interpretations of the Bible? 

3. What is the kingdom of God like to you? How would you describe the kingdom of God? 

Segment Analysis

4:1-20



1. How much is the seed able to grow and produce in each of the following places? 

 - 1a. Wayside/along the path

 - 1b. On stony ground

1c. Among thorns

1d. On good ground

2. What does each of the following represent?  

2a. Sower

2b. Seed

2c. Wayside/path

2d. Bird



2e. Stony ground


2f. Sun

2g. Thorns

2h. Good ground


2i. Crop

3. List examples of “the cares of this world,” “the deceitfulness of riches,” and “the desires for other things” (19).  


4. What are needed for a seed to produce a crop? (cf. Jn 12:24) 


5. How much has the word of God taken root in you? What crops have you produced? 

6. Explain 11-12. Does it mean God does not want everyone to be saved? (cf. Isa 6:9-10). 


7. Who is “he who has ears to hear” (9,23)? (cf. Rev 2-3). 

4:21-23

8. What does the lamp on a stand represent? (cf. Rev 1:20; 2:5; Jn 1:4-5, 9; 1Jn 1:5-7). 



9. Explain verses 22. What does it have to do with the parable of the lamp? (cf. Lk 11:33-36; 12:2-3; Eph 5:3-14; Php 2:15; Rev 2-3) 


4:24-25

10. What is the parable of the measure teaching us? 


11. How do the parables of the lamp and the measure help explain why Jesus used parables? 


4:26-29

12. What is the main point of this parable?  

13. What does the harvest represent? 

4:30-32

14. How is the kingdom of God like the growth of a mustard seed? 

15. What is the meaning of birds perching in the shade of the mustard plant? 

They Were Afraid

The Basics

Setting

After teaching during the day, Jesus went to the other side of Galilee at night. In Mark, this is the first time Jesus visited a Gentile settlement. What happened there shows us how people and unclean spirits were afraid of Jesus for different reasons.

Key Verse

“Why are you so fearful? How is it that you have no faith?” (4:40).

Did You Know...?

1. **Boat** (4:36): A fisherman’s boat was between 20-30 feet (8-11 m) long and 7 feet (3 m) wide.¹¹ It moved through the water either by means of sails (Lk 8:23) or oars (Mk 6:48), and was steered at the stern (rear).
2. **Windstorm** (4:37): Situated in a basin surrounded by mountains, the Sea of Galilee is particularly susceptible to sudden, violent storms.^{7/1499} In spite of the danger, boats were the most convenient mode of transportation to get from one side of the lake to the other.
3. **“Be still!”** (4:39): This is the same expression used (*phimo’o*) as when Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit in Mk 1:25.
4. **Country of the Gadarenes** (5:1): Somewhere on the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee. Several towns with similar sounding names (Gadara, Gerasa, Gergesa) were across the lake from Capernaum.^{10/1426} This region lay in the predominantly Gentile territory of the Decapolis (cf. *Did You Know* 7). The presence of pigs (Mk 5:11), inconceivable in a Jewish settlement, illustrates the region’s Gentile background.^{9/217}
5. **Tombs** (5:2): Often in Palestine people were buried in natural caves or in tombs cut out of the limestone rock. These provided good shelter for anyone desiring to live in them. The demon-

possessed man probably had been driven from ordinary society into the tombs.^{9/657}

- 6. **Legion** (5:9): A main division of the Roman army comprising 3,000 to 6,000 men.^{4/768}
- 7. **Decapolis** (5:20): A league of ten free cities, located in the northeast part of Galilee.^{7/1444} Characterized by high Greek culture, they were a thorn to the Jews because they introduced non-Jewish lifestyle and architecture into Palestine.^{4/295}

Observation



Outline

- _____ (4:35-41)
- _____ (35-36)
- _____ (37-38)
- _____ (39-41)
- _____ (5:1-20)
- _____ (1-7)
- _____ (8-12)
- _____ (13-14)
- _____ (15-17)
- _____ (18-20)

Key Words/Phrases


- _____
- _____
- _____


General Analysis

- 1. Why was each of the following afraid?  
- 1a. Disciples (4:37-38, 41)
- _____
- _____

- 1b. "Legion" (5:7-8, 10)
- _____
- _____


- 1c. Gadarenes (5:15-17)
- _____
- _____


- 1d. Which is a good fear to have? 
- _____
- _____
- _____


- 2. Are you afraid of what Jesus can do? Why or why not? 
- _____
- _____
- _____

Segment Analysis

4:35-41

- 1a. How much time did Jesus wait before the boat ride? 
- _____

- 1b. Do you ever feel rushed? How do you prevent from burning out? 
- _____
- _____
- _____

- 2a. Who went with Jesus? 
- _____
- _____

2b. Suppose you were one of the disciples. What reasons were there for Jesus not to go to the other side of the lake in the evening?

2c. Why did Jesus want to go to the other side of the lake?

2d. Has God put you in a situation where you would rather not be? What do you do about it?

3a. How could Jesus possibly sleep through such a violent storm?

3b. When your life is in turmoil, what do you think Jesus is doing?

4. Why did Jesus rebuke the wind and the waves (39)?

5a. Why were the disciples afraid of the storm? Why did they ask Jesus for help?

5b. Why were the disciples afraid after they saw that the wind and the waves obeyed Jesus?

5c. Did the disciple have no faith? Why or why not?

6. The disciples did not rely on their professional experience to solve their problem. What types of work- or school-related problems can Jesus help you with?

5:1-20

7. What did each of the following plead with Jesus to do?


7a. "Legion" (5:10-12)



7b. Gadarenes (5:17)



7c. Man who had been demon-possessed (5:18)


8a. Why did Jesus ask the unclean spirit its name?

8b. Why did Jesus give the unclean spirit permission to go into the pigs?


8c. Isn't it unfair for the pigs to die? 


9. What does the name "Legion" imply? What warnings does the name give us?  


10a. From the dialog between Jesus and the unclean spirit, what can we learn about Jesus' authority?  


10b. Jesus was unfazed by the legion of unclean spirits. Have you ever felt outnumbered? How did you get through it? 


11a. Why did the Gadarenes want Jesus to leave their region? 

11b. Has there been a time when you wished God would leave you alone? Why? 

12. The pig herders and the healed man both told people what happened. Why did the people react differently (5:14-15, 20)? 

13. This is the first time Mark writes that Jesus commanded someone to tell others what He had done (5:19). Why now, in Gadara? 

14a. The man wanted to follow Jesus, but Jesus told him to do something else. What has Jesus told you to do that you did not originally intend to? 

14b. How does Jesus' command to this man apply to you today? 

9

Mark 5:21-43

Healing His Daughters

The Basics

Setting

Jesus again crossed over the lake, probably back to Capernaum. Through Jesus' healing a woman and a little girl, this passage shows us how the busy servant is also a loving father. The narrative is interesting in its changing viewpoint. First, while Jesus was on the way to heal Jairus' daughter, the healing of the woman interrupts the story. Then, while Jesus was still speaking in regards to the woman, news from Jairus' house brings the focus back to Jairus' daughter.

Key Verse

"Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace, and be healed of your affliction" (5:34).

Did You Know...?

- Rulers of the synagogue** (5:22): Laymen whose responsibilities were administrative, not priestly, and included such things as looking after the building and supervising the worship. Sometimes the title was honorary, given to prominent members of the congregation with no administrative duties attached.^{7/1500}
- "Lay your hands on her"** (5:23): The act of the laying of hands appears in the Old Testament in various contexts, one of which was during the act of blessing (Gen 48:14). In the New Testament, Jesus laid hands on little children (Mt 19:13, 15) and on the sick (Mk 6:5). In Acts, laying of hands was accompanied by prayer (Acts 6:6; 8:15; 13:3).¹¹ In the True Jesus Church, church ministers lay hands on someone as a sign of interceding for God's power. This is often done for someone praying for the Holy Spirit or for healing.
- "Flow of blood"** (5:25): This may have been a chronic menstrual disorder or a uterine hemorrhage. Her condition made her

ritually unclean, excluding her from normal social relations since anyone who came in contact with her would become unclean.^{3/124}

- "Wept and wailed loudly"** (5:38): It was customary for professional mourners to be brought in at the time of death. In this case, however, there might not have been time to hire them, so perhaps these were the girl's relatives.^{7/1501}
- "Talitha, cumi"** (5:41): Mark records the exact Aramaic words Jesus spoke. The word *talitha* ("little girl") is an affectionate term, stemming from a root meaning "lamb."^{5/1236} Aramaic was the language Jesus and His disciples ordinarily spoke. He probably also spoke Hebrew (to read the Old Testament writings) and Greek (the lingua franca of the Greco-Roman world).^{7/1501}



Observation


Outline


_____	(5:21-24)
_____	(5:25-34)
_____	(25-26)
_____	(27-29)
_____	(30-32)
_____	(33-34)
_____	(5:35-43)
_____	(35)
_____	(36-38)
_____	(39-40)
_____	(41-43)

Key Words/Phrases

General Analysis

1a. How were Jairus and the woman similar and/or different in faith?  

1b. When you pray to God for help, do you pray specifically for something to happen, or pray generally for God's will to be done? Compare your prayer to Jesus' prayer (Mk 14:36). 


2. Describe a time when: 

2a. you asked for God's mercy on behalf of someone else.

2b. someone prayed for your needs.

2c. you prayed to God for your own needs.


2d. How often does each type of prayers take place in your life?

3. What does the shift in the story's viewpoint (from Jairus' daughter to the woman and back) tell you about the nature of Jesus' work? 

4. Describe a time when you felt like Jesus' son or daughter. 


Segment Analysis


5:21-24

1. Jairus was a respected member of the community (cf. *Did You Know* 1), but he humbled himself before Jesus. When other people respect you, how do you humble yourself before the Lord? 


2. Why did a large crowd follow and press around Jesus? 


5:25-34


3. Why do you think the woman came up behind Jesus instead of asking Him for help? 



4. Jesus felt power gone out from Him. What does this tell you about the effort needed in His work? 

5. What does the disciples' reaction (31) say about their faith and understanding of Jesus?  



6. Why did Jesus take the time to look around to see who had touched Him and to speak to the woman? 


7. Why did the woman tremble with fear? 



8. The woman was probably older than Jesus. Why did He call her "daughter"? 


9. If you were Jairus, what would you be feeling when Jesus was detained on His way to heal your daughter?  

5:35-43

10. What does the people's reaction (cf. 35, 38, 40) say about their faith and understanding of Jesus? Compare this to Martha's reaction in Jn 11:32.  


11. If you were Jairus, what would you be feeling at this time, knowing that your daughter died while Jesus was delayed? 


12. Jesus said to Jairus, "Do not be afraid; only believe"(36). Afraid of what? Believe in what? How does this relate to what He said in 4:40?  


13. Jesus said, "The child is not dead, but sleeping" (39). What teachings can we draw from this? 

14. Why did Jesus take only Peter, James, and John to Jairus' house? Why did Jesus let only the three disciples and the girl's parents

witness the miracle? Why did He give strict orders not to let anyone know? 

15a. Compare what Jairus had asked Jesus to do for his daughter to what Jesus actually did. 

15b. How has Jesus helped you beyond what you asked for? 

15c. How does Jesus pay attention to the little details of your life? 

A Servant's Encounters

The Basics

Setting

This passage gives three “snapshots” of what a servant of God should be prepared for.

Key Verse

“They went out and preached that people should repent. And they cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many who were sick, and healed them” (6:12-13).

Did You Know...?

1. **“His own country”** (6:1): Nazareth, Jesus’ hometown (cf. Lk 4:16).
2. **Carpenter** (6:3): Of the four gospel books, only Mark refers to Jesus as a carpenter—a common laborer.^{7/1501}
3. Roman Catholics believe that Mary remained a virgin throughout her life, and therefore Jesus’ siblings were from a previous wife of Joseph who died before he married Mary. However, there is no biblical evidence of this. It is reasonable to assume that Mary had children with Joseph after Jesus was born.
4. **James, Judas, and Simon** should not be confused with three of the twelve apostles by the same common names.^{3/53}
5. **Staff, sandals, tunic** (6:8-9): Travel accessories. A staff (walking stick) and sandals aided walking, while a tunic (inner garment) provided covering from the cold night air.^{3/128}
6. **“Shake off the dust under your feet”** (6:11): The act symbolized that there would be no further contacts, similar to today’s, “washing your hands of him.” Paul and Barnabas did the same when they were rejected (Acts 13:50-51). The Pharisees did this when they passed from Gentile to Jewish soil because rabbinical doctrine taught that the dust of a heathen land defiles.¹¹

- 7. **“Anointed with oil”** (6:13): Probably olive oil, which was widely used as a medicine.^{7/1502}
- 8. **King Herod** (6:14): Herod Antipas—the Herod who judged Jesus (cf. Lk 23:7-11). His father Herod the Great killed the babies in Bethlehem (Mt 2:16). Although popularly known as a “king,” he was technically a “tetrarch,” ruling over a fourth of Palestine (including Galilee).^{3/53}
- 9. **Herodias** (6:17): A granddaughter of Herod the Great. She and Herod Antipas both divorced their spouses in order to marry each other. (Mosaic law forbids marriage to one’s brother’s wife while the brother is still living).^{7/1459-1460}
- 10. **Herodias’ daughter** (6:22): Possibly Salome, Herodias’ daughter from her former marriage. She was between twelve and fourteen years of age.^{9/338} Though a daughter of kings, she condescended to dance before Antipas and his guests. The dancing in vogue at the time was very similar to our modern ballet.^{4/1113} However, given the questionable morals of the Herodians, the dance may have been very sensual.^{9/338}
- 11. **“Up to half my kingdom”** (6:23): This expression is not to be taken literally. It was spoken by kings to signify their magnanimity (cf. Est 5:3, 6; 7:2).

Observation

Outline

_____ (6:1-6)

_____ (1-2)

_____ (3-4)

_____ (5-6)

_____ (6:7-13)

_____ (7-11)

_____ (12-13)

_____ (6:14-29)

_____ (14-16)




_____ (17-20)

_____ (21-26)

_____ (27-29)



Key Words/Phrases



General Analysis

- 1. From what happens to each of the following, what can we learn about a servant’s life?   
- 1a. Jesus
- _____
- _____
- 1b. Disciples
- _____
- _____
- 1c. John the Baptist
- _____
- _____

Segment Analysis

6:1-6

- 1a. List the characteristics of Jesus’ family that made it ordinary. 
- _____
- _____
- _____
- 1b. List the characteristics of Jesus’ that made Him ordinary. 
- _____
- _____
- _____


1c. Compare 6:1-2 to 1:21-22. Why did the Nazarenes end up rejecting Him?  




2a. How would the Nazarenes answer their own questions? How would you answer them?  


“Where did this Man get these things?”

“What wisdom is this which is given to Him?”

2b. What can we learn from the Nazarenes’ rhetorical questions in verse 3?  


3a. What did Jesus mean in verse 4? (cf. Lk 4:22-27). 


3b. Why was Jesus amazed at the people’s lack of faith? What does this warn us about rejecting Jesus?   

4. Why does there seem to be less miracles today than in the early days of the church? 


5. What do your family members say when you preach to them? How can you lead them to Christ? 

6:7-13

6a. What were Jesus’ instructions to the twelve apostles? 

6b. Who is your partner in faith? How is two better than one? 

6c. What did Jesus give the disciples, besides instructions? 

6d. Why should the disciples not bring food, money, or extra supplies? 

7. It was customary for believers to support the livelihood of God’s workers (cf. 1Kgs 17:9; 2Kgs 4:9-10). How do you support the church workers? 🦶

8. What do you do when a person says, “No” when you preach to him or her? 🦶

6:14-29

9. Who did Herod think Jesus was? Why 👁️ 🔑

10. Jesus likened John the Baptist to Elijah (Mt 11:13-14). Compare the way John died to how Elijah was taken up to heaven (2Kgs 2:11-12). What does this teach us about being a servant of God? 👁️ 🦶

11. Why did Herod like to listen to John? 🔑

12. Why did John continue to speak to Herod? Compare him to Jesus, who remained silent before Herod (Lk 23:9-10). 👁️

13. Herodias bore a grudge against John the Baptist (19). What does the Bible teach about grudges? 👁️ 🔑

14. In a festive mood, Herod made a promise without thinking, which he later regretted (26). Describe a time when you made a similar mistake. 🦶

15. Describe Herod’s family. What does this tell us about the importance of religious education in a family? 👁️ 🦶

11

Mark 6:30-56

Feeding Five Thousand, Walking on Water

The Basics

Setting

Following John’s death, the narrative cuts back to the excited apostles returning from their mission. However, they still had much to learn. In this passage, Jesus performed two great miracles, but they still did not understand His purpose.

Key Verse

“And they were greatly amazed in themselves beyond measure, and marveled. For they had not understood about the loaves, because their heart was hardened” (6:51-52).

Did You Know...?

1. **“Sheep not having a shepherd”** (6:34): Domesticated sheep suffer from a lack of initiative, and so are easily lost and injured. Without a shepherd, they are helpless.^{5/1174}
2. **Two hundred denarii/eight months wages** (6:37): Not even that amount of money would buy enough bread for all to eat.^{9/673}
3. **Loaves, fish** (6:41): Staples in Galilee, especially for the poor. In 6:9,13 specifies barley loaves—the cheaper, coarser bread.^{9/341}
4. **Baskets** (6:43): A two-gallon basket (*kophinos*), different from the ones in Mk 8:8. It has a cord for a handle, used for carrying provisions on the back.¹¹
5. **Five thousand** (6:44): This does not include women and children, who were grouped separately for the meal, according to Jewish customs.^{3/131} The size of the crowd is amazing in light of the fact that the neighboring towns of Capernaum and Bethsaida had a population of only 2,000 to 3,000 each.^{7/1503}
6. **Bethsaida** (6:45): Literally, “House of Fishing.” A city on the north coast of Galilee. Like Capernaum, it was a fishing town.^{4/166}
7. **Fourth watch** (6:48): 3:00 to 6:00 A.M.

8. **Ghost** (6:49): Jewish superstition held that the appearance of spirits during the night brought disaster. The disciples were terrified because they thought they were seeing a water spirit.^{7/1504}
9. **Gennesaret** (6:53): Literally, “Garden of Riches.”^{4/465} A fertile plain, about four miles long and less than two miles wide, on the northwest side of Galilee.^{7/1461}

Observation

Outline


- _____ (6:30-45)
- _____ (30-32)
- _____ (33-34)
- _____ (35-37)
- _____ (38-45)
- _____ (6:46-52)
- _____ (46-47)
- _____ (48-49)
- _____ (50-52)
- _____ (6:53-56)

Key Words/Phrases

- _____
- _____
- _____

Segment Analysis

6:30-45

1. Describe the apostles’ mood when they reported to Jesus. What had they done and taught? 

- _____
- _____
- _____

2. Verse 31 says, “For there were many coming and going, and they did not even have time to eat.” How does this explain why Jesus said, “Come aside by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while”?

3a. Suppose you tried to get some rest, but people still come to you for help, how would you feel?

3b. What did the Lord do when the multitudes disrupted His rest? What can we learn from Him?

4a. On Chart B below, paraphrase the dialog between the disciples and Jesus (35-38).

What the Disciples Said	What Jesus Said

Chart B Dialog between Jesus and His disciples

4b. When you pray to God for help, do you suggest a solution to Him? Why or why not?



4c. The disciples thought Jesus was asking for the impossible when He said, “You give them something to eat” (37). Do you sometimes feel like God makes unreasonable demands of you?


4d. Jesus asked the disciples to count the number of loaves. Why did they also come back with two fish?

5. What does this miracle teach us about what to do when we ask for God’s help?


6. Mark writes that the crowd was “like sheep not having a shepherd” (34), and that they sat down on the “green grass” (39). Compare this scene to Ps 23 and Jn 10:11-14.


7. What did Jesus do after He fed the people? What does this teach us about our responsibilities?


8a. Notice how Jesus “immediately” “made” the disciples get into the boat and sent the multitude away Himself (45). Why such haste, and why did the disciples seem reluctant? (cf. Jn 6:15)  


8b. What is the lesson for us today? 

6:46-52


9. How long had the disciples been in the boat before Jesus went out to them? 




10. When the disciples were terrified, Jesus immediately revealed Himself (50). How does Jesus make Himself known to you when you are afraid? 

11. How is this incident different from what happened in Mk 4:35-41? 

12. Explain verse 52. What do the loaves have to do with the disciples’ amazement? How is “their hearts were hardened” an explanation to their amazement? 

6:53-56

13. Compare the people’s reaction when they recognized Jesus (54) to the Nazarenes’ reaction (6:3). 

14. Compare 2:3-4 and 5:27-29 to 6:55-56. What does the similarity of these events teach us?   

The Basics

Setting

Once again the Pharisees and the scribes accused Jesus of breaking the law, this time of being unclean. Unlike before, this time Jesus rebuked them openly and harshly.

Key Verse

“For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men” (7:8).

Did You Know...?

1. **“Wash their hands in a special way”/Ceremonial washing (7:3):** Washing of one’s hands with a handful of water, a formal practice required before eating. This was especially important after a trip to the marketplace, where a Jew would likely come in contact with an “unclean” Gentile or such things as money or utensils.^{3/132-133}
2. **Tradition of the elders (7:3):** Oral teachings that commented on the law and interpreted it in detailed rules of conduct, often recording the diverse opinions of competing rabbis. The Pharisees viewed it as having authority almost equal to the Old Testament writings.^{9/348}
3. **Corban (7:11):** A vow dedicating money or property to the temple. Technically, after such a vow, what’s dedicated could be used only for religious purposes.^{3/133} In practice, the money didn’t necessarily go to the temple, nor was it prevented from personal use.^{9/679} A person could use this practice to legally exclude others from his earnings, thus circumventing his responsibilities.^{7/1504}

Observation


Outline


- _____ (7:1-5)
- _____ (7:6-13)
- _____ (7:14-23)



Key Words/Phrases



Segment Analysis


7:1-5

- 1a. Why did the Pharisees and scribes gather around Jesus? 


- 1b. When was the last time someone came down from Jerusalem to accuse Jesus? 



- 2a. Read the accusations in 2:18, 24, and 7:5. What word do the questions have in common? What does this tell you about the reasoning behind the accusations?  

- 2b. What do the accusations of the Pharisees and scribes tell you about their values? How were they mistaken?  

3. Why didn't the disciples wash their hands? 

7:6-13

4a. Read God's command in Deuteronomy 12:32. Which part of it did the Pharisees disobey?  

4b. Jesus said to the Pharisees, "And many such things you do" (13). On Chart C below, next to each of the Pharisees' traditions, list the commandments they set aside in favor of that tradition. (cf. Mt 6:1-18; 23:1-35; Lk 18:9-14).  

Teachings/Traditions of Men	Teachings/Commandments of God

Chart C Man's traditions vs. God's commands

5a. Are all traditions bad? When does a tradition become a stumbling block to our faith? 🐾

5b. Have you ever made the same mistake as the Pharisees have? How might we lay aside the commandment of God in order to hold on to our traditions? 🐾

5c. List examples of “tradition of men” among Christians today. 🐾

7:14-23

6. How is what Jesus said in verses 14-16 a parable (cf. 17)? Compare it to the parables in 4:2-32. (For a definition of “parable,” cf. Lesson 7, *Did You Know* 1). 👁️ 🔑

7. What does Jesus’ comment in verse 18 tell us about the disciples’ understanding? 👁️ 🔑

8a. Under each column on Chart D, list the corresponding characteristics from Mk 7:21-22 and Gal 5:19-21, 5:22-23. 👁️

Evil that Comes from Inside/ Works of the Flesh	Fruit of the Spirit

Chart D Evil from Within vs. Fruit of the Spirit

8b. How does each of the characteristics in the left column defile a person? Give a modern day example of each. 🔑 🐾

8c. Pick a few of the evils that you are guilty of. How does the fruit of the Spirit help you clean up each of them? 🧼

9. If food doesn't defile us (19), then why does the church forbid certain foods (cf. Acts 15:29)? 🗝️ 🧼

A Miraculous Sign

The Basics

Setting

Jesus' ministry in Galilee was coming to an end. Through what He has done, His divine nature was becoming clearer. Nevertheless, the Pharisees continued to test Him, asking Him for a sign from heaven.

Key Verse

"But He sighed deeply in His spirit, and said, 'Why does this generation seek a sign? Assuredly, I say to you, no sign shall be given to this generation'" (8:12).

Did You Know...?

1. **Greek** (7:26): The woman was not from Greece, but a Gentile by culture and religion.^{3/135} Matthew calls the woman a Canaanite, referring to her nationality.^{4/1236} Jesus almost certainly spoke Greek to her.^{9/684}
2. **Syro-Phoenician** (7:26): An inhabitant of Phoenicia, which in New Testament times was part of the Roman province of Cilia and Syria.^{5/1230}
3. **Dogs** (7:27): Wild dogs in Syria resemble jackals—nocturnal scavengers. In biblical times, and in many cultures, calling someone a dog was a great insult.¹¹
4. **"Ephphatha!"** (7:34): An Aramaic expression, which might imply that the man was not a Gentile.^{3/136}
5. **Basket** (8:8): A large basket (*spuris*), different from the ones in Mk 6:43. It is more like a hamper, big enough to hold a man (cf. Acts 9:25).¹¹
6. **Dalmanutha** (8:10): Also called Magdala or Magadan, it was the home of Mary Magdalene. It was likely south of Gennesaret.^{7/146}
7. **Leaven/yeast** (8:15): Leaven played an important part, not only in bread making but also in law, ritual, and religious teaching.

Leaven was produced from bread flour kneaded without salt and kept until it fermented.^{5/725-726} Yeast doesn't grow, it permeates the dough. Only a small quantity is needed to make dough grow.^{9/319}



Observation

Outline

- _____ **(7:24-30)**
- _____ (24-26)
- _____ (27)
- _____ (28)
- _____ (29-30).
- _____ **(7:31-37)**
- _____ (31-32)
- _____ (33-35)
- _____ (36-37)
- _____ **(8:1-9)**
- _____ (1-5)
- _____ (6-9)
- _____ **(8:10-21)**
- _____ (10-11)
- _____ (12-13)
- _____ (14-18)
- _____ (19-21)
- _____ **(8:22-26)**
- _____ (22)
- _____ (23-25)
- _____ (26)





Key Words/Phrases


General Analysis

1. How are the three miracles in 7:24-30, 7:31-37, and 8:22-26 different from other miracles? 
2. What signs from God do you ask for? 

Segment Analysis

7:24-30

1. What is the significance of the woman's ethnic and cultural background (7:26)? 
2. What did the woman mean by her reply (7:28)? 
3. What was commendable about the woman?  

4. Jesus usually was gentle with people who came to Him. Why did He insult the woman (cf. 7:27)? 


5. What does each of the following represent? 

5a. Children

5b. Bread

5c. Dogs



5d. Crumbs



6. What does this parable teach us about God's salvation plan? 



7:31-37

Questions combined with 8:22-26. See below.



8:1-9

7. Why did Jesus wait three days before feeding the crowd? What does this teach us about waiting for God?  

8. What does the disciples' question in 8:4 tell you about their faith?  

9. Compare the feeding of four thousand to the feeding of five thousand (Mk 6:35-44). In which scenario was the crowd hungrier? Which had more leftovers? What does this teach us?  

8:10-21


10. The following is a partial list of "signs from heaven" (8:11) found in the Old Testament. For each, list a similar sign given to prove Jesus' divine nature. (cf. Mt 3:11; 28:2; Mk 1:11; 9:7; Lk 1:28; 2:10; Jn 6:33-35, 51; 12:28; 20:12).  







10a. Angel (Gen 22:11; 2Kgs 6:17)

10b. Bread (Ex 16:4)


10c. Fire (Ex 19:18; 1Kgs 18:38, 2Chr 7:1)

10d. Voice (Ex 19:19; Dan 4:31)

11. Why was it a test to ask Jesus for a sign? 





12. What does “this generation” (8:12) refer to? 
-
13. What did Jesus mean by, “No sign shall be given to this generation” (8:12)? 
-
-
-
14. What were the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod (8:15)? (cf. Mt 16:12; Lk 12:1; 1Cor 5:6,8) 
-
-
15. Why did Jesus specifically remind the disciples of the leftovers? What did the two miracles of the loaves have to do with leaven? 
-
-
-
-
16. What does the disciples’ discussion (8:16) teach us about interpreting the Bible?  
-
-
-
-

7:31-37, 8:22-26

17a. Compare the healing of the deaf man in 7:31-37 with the healing of the blind man in 8:22-26. List the sequence of events for each miracle on Chart E below. 

Healing the Deaf Man	Healing the Blind Man

Chart E Healing the deaf man and healing the blind man

- 17b. How are the events similar? How are they different? What do the similarities and differences tell us about sharing our testimonies with others?  
-
-
-
-
18. Why did Jesus take the deaf man and the blind man away from the crowd? 
-
-
19. Why did Jesus use His spit to heal? 
-
-

20a. How are these two miracles related to what Jesus said in 8:17-18?



20b. Why do you think Jesus sighed (7:34)? Compare this to His reaction in 8:12.  

The Basics

Setting

Everything Jesus had done so far hinted at His identity and the purpose of His mission. Now, the humble servant was clearly identified as the King and Savior. First, Peter was moved to confess that Jesus is the Christ. Then, in the transfiguration, Jesus revealed His divine glory. He also began to teach harder lessons, such as denying oneself, taking up one’s cross, and losing one’s life for the gospel.

Key Verse

“Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. 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” (8:34-35).

Did You Know...?

1. **Caesarea Philippi** (8:27): A town in the tetrarchy of Herod Philip, Antipas’ brother.^{3/57} It was 30 miles from Tyre and 25 miles north of Galilee. The region was especially pagan. It was a Canaanite sanctuary for the worship of Baal. The Greeks called it Paneas in honor of the god Pan.^{7/1462, 4/191}
2. **Christ** (8:29): From the Greek word meaning, “the Anointed One.” In Hebrew, it is “Messiah.”^{3/139} The title had a political connotation because it denoted an ideal king empowered by God to deliver his people and to establish his kingdom.^{9/693}
3. **“Son of Man”** (8:31): Jesus’ favorite self-designation in the gospel books. We can derive two meanings from the Old Testament. First, the prophet Daniel saw a vision of “One like a Son of Man” who was given an everlasting kingdom (Dan 7:13-14). This identifies Jesus as a king—a theme explored more fully in Matthew. Second, the prophet Ezekiel used the phrase “the

son of man” at least 90 times, referring to himself and his mission. Therefore, the phrase also identifies Jesus as a servant of God.¹¹

- 4. **Cross** (8:34): An instrument of death. It was detested by both the Jews (cf. Deut 21:22-23) and the Romans as a shameful way to die.¹¹ Crucifixion was reserved for the worst criminals and the lowest class; a Roman citizen could not be crucified except by direct order of Caesar.¹²
- 5. **Rabbi** (9:5): A respectful term used by the Jews to address their spiritual instructor.^{4/1058-1059}

Observation

Outline

_____ (8:27-30)

_____ (27-28)

_____ (29)

_____ (30)

_____ (8:31-9:1)

_____ (31)

_____ (32-33)

_____ (34)

_____ (35-37)

_____ (31-9:1)

_____ (9:2-13)

_____ (2-3)

_____ (4)


_____ (5-6)


_____ (7)

_____ (8-13)

Key Words/Phrases


General Analysis



- 1. What is the best part about believing in Jesus Christ? What is the toughest? 


- 2. Share a moment when you were inspired spiritually. How did that experience help you grow in faith? 

Segment Analysis


8:27-30

- 1. Why did Jesus ask the disciples about the people’s opinion of Him? 



- 2. What does the people’s opinion tell you about their understanding of Jesus?  


3. How did Peter know Jesus is the Christ? Does this mean the disciples finally understood who Jesus is? 


4. Why did Jesus want to keep His identity as the Christ a secret (8:30; 9:9)? 


5. Who do you say Jesus is? 


8:31-9:1



6. Why did Peter rebuke Jesus? What does this teach us about jumping to conclusions?  


7. Why did Jesus call Peter "Satan"? 


8a. Peter took Jesus aside privately to rebuke Him. Why did Jesus rebuke him publicly before the other disciples? 


8b. Share one of your past mistakes that can be used to teach other believers. 

9a. What is your cross? How do you take up your cross? 


9b. What does it mean to save or lose one's life in this world?  

10. What tempts you to exchange your soul? 


11. Give examples of being ashamed of Jesus. 

12. Explain 9:1. (For teachings on the kingdom of God, see Lesson 7). 


9:2-13

13. Why was it Elijah and Moses who appeared? (cf. Mal 4:4-6). 


14a. Were Peter's words (9:5) appropriate? Why or why not? 

14b. Have you ever spoken something hastily? What was the result? 

15. What is the purpose of the transfiguration? Compare it to what Jesus said in 9:1.  

16. After the transfiguration, "suddenly, when they had looked around, they saw no one anymore, but only Jesus with themselves" (9:8). What does the disappearance of Moses and Elijah teach us about the role of God's workers? 

17. While discussing the meaning of "rising from the dead," Peter, James, and John asked about Elijah. Why? (cf. Mal 4:5). 

18. The disciples obeyed Jesus, even while trying to figure out what He meant (9:9-10). Share an example of how you obeyed the word of God even though you did not fully understand. 

The Basics

Setting

The twelve apostles had been given great authority, but still they encountered problems, both external and internal. Jesus taught them about dealing with setbacks and conflicts in the ministry. He also warned them against causing anyone (including themselves) to sin.

Key Verse

“If anyone desires to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all” (9:35).

Did You Know...?

- Child** (9:36): The Jews regarded the presence of children in the family as a sign of divine favor and greatly to be desired. Children were subject to the father, who in turn was bound to protect them.¹¹
- Hell** (9:45,47): “The word translated ‘hell’ is *gehenna*, a Greek form of the Hebrew words *ge hinnom* (“Valley of Hinnom”). This was the valley along the south side of the city of Jerusalem, which was used in OT times for human sacrifices to the pagan god Molech (cf. Jer 7:31; 19:5-6; 32:35). King Josiah put a stop to this dreadful practice (2Kings 23:10); and the Valley of Hinnom came to be used as a place where human excrement and rubbish, including animal carcasses, were disposed of and burned. The fire of gehenna never went out, and the worms never died.”^{9vol8/708}
- Salt** (9:49): Salt was often used for ratifying agreements, and became a symbol of friendship and faithfulness. It was plentiful along the shores of the Dead Sea and in Jebel Usdum, a mountain of rock salt.^{5/1125} When rock salt is exposed to air and heat, its impurities cause chemical changes that gradually make it bitter.¹¹

Observation

Outline

- _____ (9:14-29)
 - _____ (14-18)
 - _____ (19-20)
 - _____ (21-24)
 - _____ (25-29)
- _____ (9:30-32)
 - _____ (9:33-41)
 - _____ (33-35)
 - _____ (36-37)
 - _____ (38-41)
- _____ (9:42-50)
 - _____ (42)
 - _____ (43-38)
 - _____ (49-50)



Key Words/Phrases



General Analysis




- What setbacks and conflicts have you experienced when working for God? How was your faith affected? How did you overcome them? 🐾


Segment Analysis


9:14-29


1. Peter, James, and John came down from the mountain and saw the other disciples arguing. How do you deal with everyday problems after being inspired spiritually?  



2. What were the disciples arguing with the scribes about?  

3. Compare the people's reaction when they saw Jesus (15) to the Israelites' reaction to Moses coming down from Mount Sinai (Ex 34:29-30). What does this teach us about the effects of spending time with God?   


4. Compare this unclean spirit's behavior to those of the other spirits. 

5. The unclean spirit had tried to throw the boy into fire or water to kill him (22). What extreme situations has the devil put you in to harm you? 


6a. What did the boy's father do after Jesus' disciples failed to drive out the unclean spirit? 

6b. Read verse 24. What did the father believe? What was his unbelief?  

6c. What do you believe about Jesus? What is your unbelief? 


7. For a moment, the boy appeared dead. Share a time in your life when things seemed to get worse after you had prayed to God. What happened in the end? 

8a. Why couldn't the disciples drive out the unclean spirit?  


8b. How does a habit of prayer help you? Have you ever prayed with fasting against the evil spirit's work? 


9:30-32




9a. Why do you think the disciples were afraid to ask Jesus when they didn't understand? 


9b. When you don't understand certain biblical teachings, what do you do? 


9:33-41

10. The disciples argued over who was the greatest. What does this tell you about their relationship with each other? 



11. Explain verse 35. How can you be first by being the very last? 


12. What phrase do verses 37 and 41 have in common? What does this teach us about serving others?   

13a. Why did Jesus have a little child stand among them? 

13b. List examples of welcoming one of the little children. 

13c. Identify one of the little children around you. How can you help him or her? 

14a. Why did the disciples stop a man driving out demons in Jesus' name?  

14b. Today, who are those working in Jesus' name and yet are not one of us? How do we associate with them? 



9:42-50

15. How does each of the following cause you to sin? 

15a. Hand


15b. Foot

15c. Eye



15d. What did Jesus mean by “cut it off” and “pluck it out”?  


16. Read verse 48 and visualize hell. What do you see?

17a. In verse 49, what does salt represent? (cf. Mt 5:13; Col 4:6). 

17b. In verse 49, what does fire represent? 

17c. Explain verses 49-50. 

18a. How might have the disciples’ actions (cf. 14, 34, 38) have caused others to sin?  

18b. In our zeal to serve God, how might we cause others or ourselves to sin? 

The Basics

Setting

Jesus concluded His ministry in Galilee. He headed south towards Jerusalem, first returning to the Jordan River, where He had been baptized. Jesus now focused His teachings on the things to look forward to: the kingdom of God, eternal life, the resurrection, and the last days.

Key Verse

“Let the little children come to me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God” (10:14).

Did You Know...?

1. **Judea** (10:1): The Greek and Roman equivalent to the Old Testament land of Judah the southern kingdom.^{7/1510}
2. **Certificate of divorce** (10:4): The Old Testament law (cf. Deut 24:1-4) required a husband to clearly state the reasons for divorcing his wife in a public document. It was meant to protect a wife from hasty divorce and to absolve her of legal penalties.^{10/1420} However, there were various interpretations to what were legitimate reasons for divorcing one’s wife. On one extreme, Shammai and his followers maintained that nothing less than adultery justified a man in divorcing his wife. On the other, Hillel and his disciples contended that divorce should be granted for any reason, however small, such as the wife burning a dish or going out with loose hair.¹¹
3. **“From my youth”** (10:20): “This probably refers to the age of thirteen, when a Jewish boy became *“bar mitzvah”* (“son of the commandment”). At that point, the boy became responsible to live by God’s commands.”^{9/715}
4. **Camel** (10:25): The largest animal in Palestine at that time.^{3/151}

- 5. **Eye of a needle** (10:25): Some identify this as a small gate in Jerusalem’s city wall. However, there is no evidence that such gates existed at that time.¹¹ The vivid contrast between the largest animal (camel) and the smallest opening (eye of a needle) represents what, humanly speaking, is impossible.^{7/1512}

Observation

Outline

_____ (10:1-12)

_____ (1-2)

_____ (3-4)

_____ (5-12)

_____ (10:13-16)

_____ (13)

_____ (14-16)

_____ (10:17-31)

_____ (17)

_____ (18-20)

_____ (21-22)

_____ (23-27)


_____ (28-31)

Key Words/Phrases

Segment Analysis


10:1-12

- 1. How was the Pharisees’ question a test? (cf. *Did You Know* 2).





- 2a. Contrast the Pharisees’ question with Jesus’ answer. What does this teach us about marriage?   

- 2b. What is the difference between “command” (3) and “permit” (4)?



- 2c. How does Jesus harmonize Moses’ law on divorce with God’s command on marriage?  

- 3. What is the danger of focusing on what is permitted or not? 



4a. Describe the ideal marriage. How does your description correspond to biblical teachings? 🗝️

4b. How does/would your marriage help you serve God? 🐾

5. What does each of the following represent in the spiritual sense? What do they teach us about our relationship with God? 🗝️ 🐾

5a. Marriage (Hos 2:19-20; Jn 3:29; Eph 5:22-33; Rev 21:2)

5b. Adultery (Ezek 6:9; Mk 8:38; Jas 4:4)

5c. Divorce (Isa 50:1-2; Jer 3:8)

10:13-16

6a. Why did the disciples rebuke people who brought little children to Jesus? Why was Jesus indignant at them? 🗝️

6b. How might we make the same mistake as the disciples? 🐾

7a. How would a child react to the issue of divorce (2) or selling one's possessions (21)? 🗝️

7b. List the qualities of children that we should keep as adults. 🗝️ 🐾

8. What is the difference between receiving and entering the kingdom of God (15)? How do we receive the kingdom of God like a little child? 🗝️ 🐾

9. How do you bring children to Jesus? 🐾



10:17-31



10. What does each of the following believe about the requirements of salvation? 👁️ 🗝️

10a. Rich man



10b. Disciples

10c. Peter


11. How do you explain Jesus' words in verse 18? Was Jesus denying His goodness or divinity?  


12. Based on this passage, what does Jesus teach about the requirements of salvation?  



13. What are the rich man's strengths and weaknesses?  


14a. Jesus loved the rich man (21). How did Jesus show his love toward the man?  

14b. Why did the man go away sad? What could he have done differently?

14c. What are your spiritual weaknesses? What can you do about them? 

15a. How might one conclude that it is easier for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God? 

15b. Compare what Jesus said in verses 23 and 24. Why were the disciples amazed by what Jesus said? How does Jesus' response (24) answer their amazement?  

15c. Why is it humanly impossible for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God? 

15d. Name one thing that you cannot give up. Why not? How do we apply Jesus' command to "sell whatever you have and give to the poor" (21)?

15e. How does God make it possible for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God? List examples of rich men who belong to the kingdom of God.

16. What is the hundred-fold reward in the present age?

17. How is persecution a reward?

18. Who are the first and the last?

The Basics

Setting

Jesus continued His journey to Jerusalem. On the way, He repeated in greater detail the prophecy of His suffering, death, and resurrection (compare 10:33-34 to 8:31; 9:31). Still, the twelve disciples were blind to the fact that Jesus "did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many" (10:45).

Key Verse

"For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many" (10:45).

"What do you want Me to do for you?" (10:36, also 10:51)

Did You Know...?

- 1. Gentiles (10:33): Non-Jews in general. In this verse, it refers specifically to the Romans because the Jews lacked political power to exercise capital punishment and must defer to the Roman government.
2. Chief priests (10:33): Also called "high priests." They were revered civil and religious dignitaries. Aside from his religious office, a chief priest was also the chairman of the Sanhedrin (Jewish high court) and head of political relations with the Roman government.
3. "Drink the cup" (10:38): The cup was a common Jewish metaphor either for joy (Ps 23:5) or for divine judgment (Jer 25:15).
4. Jericho (10:46): A very ancient city located 5 miles (8 kilometers) west of the Jordan and about 15 miles (24 kilometers) northeast of Jerusalem. In Jesus' time, the Old

Testament Jericho was largely abandoned, but a new city, south of the old one, had been built by Herod the Great.^{7/1513}

- 5. **Begging** (10:46): Beggars were commonly found in public places. The prevalence of begging was due to the lack of a relief system, to the lack of a cure for common diseases, and to the impoverishment under the excessive taxation of the Roman government.¹¹

Observation



Outline

- _____ (10:32-34)
- _____ (10:35-45)
 - _____ (35-37)
 - _____ (38-40)
 - _____ (41-45)
- _____ (10:46-52)
 - _____ (46-48)
 - _____ (49-51)
 - _____ (52)

Key Words/Phrases



- _____
- _____
- _____


General Analysis


- 1a. List the titles used to identify Jesus in this passage? How does each illustrate Jesus' character?  
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

- 1b. How did Jesus demonstrate His identity as a servant in this passage? In the book of Mark? In the Bible? In your life? 

- 1c. What do you identify yourself as? How does your identity influence what you do? 


- 2. Contrast James and John's initial request (35) to Bartimaeus' (47). Compare them to the Pharisee and the tax collector in Luke 18:9-14.  

- 3a. Why should we ask, "What do you want me to do for you?" To whom can you ask this question? 

- 3b. What is your answer when Jesus asks, "What do you want Me to do for you?" 



Segment Analysis


10:32-34

1. In the NKJV, verse 32 implies that the disciples were also amazed and afraid. Why do you think the disciples were amazed and afraid? 


2. Why did Jesus tell the twelve disciples what would happen to Him? 


10:35-45




3. What does James' and John's request for glory (37) tell you about their self-identity? What does this teach us about our attitude in serving God?  


4a. What did James and John think was Jesus' glory? 


4b. What is the true meaning of sitting at Jesus' right and left? (cf. Rom 8:17; 2Tim 2:12). 

5a. What did James and John think was Jesus' cup and baptism? 



5b. What was Jesus' cup and baptism? (cf. *Did You Know* 3). 


6. Based on verses 42-44, how should church organization be different from secular organization?   



7. How does Jesus give His life as a "ransom for many" (45)? A ransom for what? 



8. Verse 43 repeats the lesson Jesus taught in 9:35. How many times does Jesus repeat a lesson before you understand? What does this tell you about your faith? 

10:46-52

9. Why do you think the people rebuked Bartimaeus (48)? Compare them to the disciples who rebuked those who brought little children to Jesus (10:13).  

10. Bartimaeus called Jesus “Son of David.” What does this tell you about his faith? 

11. Bartimaeus said to Jesus, “I *want* to see” (NIV; emphasis added) as opposed to, “I hope I can see” or “It would be nice if I could see.” Why did he dare to ask so forcefully? What does this teach you about praying for God’s mercy?  

12. Contrast this healing to the one in 8:22-26. What do the differences tell you about Jesus’ ministry at this point in time?  

13. What can we learn from Bartimaeus’ persistence? 

The Basics

Setting

It was now the final days of Jesus’ ministry on earth. Five days before his arrest during the Passover (cf. Jn 12:1,12), Jesus entered Jerusalem. He had been in the city before (cf. Lk 2:43; Jn 5:1), but never with such fanfare. People welcomed Him as their king and savior. In this passage, Jesus showed us how to be put to good use for God’s work.

Key Verse

“The Lord has need of it” (11:3).

Did You Know...?

1. **Jerusalem** (11:1): Herod the Great had restored much of the city’s former magnificence. He built a vast palace and rebuilt its fortresses, amphitheater, and temple.¹¹
2. **Bethphage** (11:1): Literally, “House of Unripe Figs.” It is not mentioned in the Old Testament. In the New Testament, it is mentioned only in connection with Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem. It was located close to Bethany, on the Mount of Olives, between Jerusalem and Jericho. No trace of it remains today.^{4/166}
3. **Bethany** (11:1): Literally, “House of Dates,” referring to the palm trees that grew there. A village on the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives, about two miles from Jerusalem and the final station on the road from Jericho to Jerusalem.^{7/1469} It was the home of Martha, Mary, and Lazarus (cf. Jn 11:1), and became the base of Jesus’ ministry in Judea (cf. Mk 11:11-12; 14:3).
4. **Colt** (11:2): A young donkey. Jesus rode on a colt to fulfill the prophecy recorded in Zech 9:9 (Jn 12:14-16).
5. **Branches** (11:8): These were palm branches (cf. Jn 12:13). A palm branch was associated with rejoicing (cf. Lev 23:40). It also symbolized the “head,” the highest of the people (cf. Isa 9:14).

Later, it represented triumph and victory. In the New Testament, the apostle John witnessed a vision of all people holding palm branches, praising God (Rev 7:9-10).¹¹

- 6. **“Hosanna!”** (11:9): Hebrew expression meaning literally, “Save us now!” (cf. Ps 118:25-26). It was an exclamation of praise, much like today’s “God save the king!” or “Hail to the chief!”^{10/1452}
- 7. **Fig tree** (11:13): Fig is a common food in the region. Its green fruit is concealed among leaves until near the time of ripening; its flowers are hidden inside the fruit.^{4/1331} Fig trees around Jerusalem normally begin to grow leaves in March or April but do not produce fruits until their leaves are fully grown in June. This tree was unusual in that it was already full of leaves near the time of Passover (mid-April).^{7/1514}
- 8. In the temple’s outer court (the furthest into the temple the Gentiles were allowed), the chief priest Caiaphas had authorized a market for the sale of kosher (ritually clean) items necessary for temple sacrifice.^{3/157} It was far easier for a pilgrim to purchase items that were guaranteed kosher than to bring them with him and have them inspected for meeting the requirements.^{9/727}
- 9. **Money changers** (11:15): In New Testament Palestine, there were three forms of currency: imperial (Roman), provincial (Greek), and local (Jewish). In exchange for Greek and Roman currency, money changers provided pilgrims the required Jewish coinage for the annual half-shekel temple tax. Though a small surcharge was permitted, these transactions were sources of extortion and fraud.^{3/157-158}

Observation

Outline




- _____ (11:1-6)
- _____ (1-3)
- _____ (4-6)
- _____ (11:7-11)
- _____ (7-10)
- _____ (11)

- _____ (11:12-14)
- _____ (12-13)
- _____ (14)
- _____ (11:15-18)
- _____ (15-16)
- _____ (17-18)
- _____ (11:19-26)
- _____ (19-21)
- _____ (22-24)
- _____ (25-26)

Key Words/Phrases

- _____
- _____

General Analysis

- 1. For each of the following, what did Jesus need it for, and how was it actually used?  
- 1a. Colt
 - _____
 - _____
- 1b. Fig tree
 - _____
 - _____
- 1c. Temple
 - _____
 - _____
- 2. Why did Jesus come to Jerusalem? 
- _____
- _____

3. What is your God-given purpose? Why are you here, at this time?

Segment Analysis

11:1-6

1. Jesus borrowed a colt. What are other things Jesus used that He did not own? What does this tell you about getting the things we need?

2. What do you have that Jesus can borrow? What does He return to you?

3a. What are the characteristics of a colt that no one has ridden?

3b. Share an example of how God used someone who did not appear useful.

4. What does the disciples' obedience tell you about their faith?

11:7-11

5. List the things people did when Jesus rode into Jerusalem.

6. What was going through the mind of each of the following?

6a. Crowd

6b. Disciples


6c. Jesus


7. Why did Jesus go to the temple even though it was already late (11)?


11:12-14, 20-21



8. Why did Jesus go to find out if the fig tree had any fruit? Didn't He already know?


9a. What does the fig tree without fruits represent?

9b. Name someone in the Bible who was like a fig tree with nothing but leaves. Name someone who was the opposite. 


9c. How might a believer become like the fig tree without fruits? 


10. Is it fair for the fig tree to die? Why or why not? 


11. Why didn't the fig tree wither right away? Compare this to the parable of the fig tree in Lk 13:6-9.  


12. Contrast the colt and the fig tree. Which served its purpose? 

11:15-18



13a. What is wrong with selling items required for sacrifice? Are the merchants not providing a convenience to the pilgrims? 


13b. How is convenience sometimes a danger to our faith? 

14a. How had the buyers and sellers made the temple "a den of thieves"? (cf. Jer 7:10-11,17-18). 


14b. How was the temple at that time like the fig tree without fruits? 


14c. How might the church today become "a den of thieves" or like the fig tree without fruits? 


15a. Why did the chief priests and scribes want to kill Jesus?  


15b. How were the chief priests and scribes like the fig tree without fruits? 

11:22-26

16. Explain verse 24. Can we pray for anything as long as we believe? 

17. How do we have a faith that can move a mountain? 

18. How is faith (22-24) related to forgiveness (25-26)? (cf. Jas 1:5-6; 5:15-16). 

19. Do you have anything against another person? What is your incentive to forgive him or her? 

19

Confronting the Opposition (1)

The Basics

Setting

Jesus was stirring up much attention from the rulers. One after another, every faction that opposed Jesus came to attack Him with difficult questions. In response, Jesus amazed them all with His wise answers.

Key Verse

“Have you not even read this Scripture: ‘The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone. This was the Lord’s doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes?’” (12:10-11).

Did You Know...?

1. **Elders** (11:27): Non-clergy members of the Sanhedrin (Jewish high court).^{7/1508}
2. **Vineyard** (12:1): A vineyard’s preparation was the most costly and troublesome of all the agricultural operations in Palestine.^{4/1353}
3. **Wine vat/winepress** (12:1): The Greek word refers to a winepress’s receiving vat, which was used to hold the rapidly fermenting juice. After about a week, the wine was transferred to wineskins for storage (cf. Lesson 5, *Did You Know* 4).¹¹
4. **Tower** (12:1): Used for shelter, storage, and security.^{3/160}
5. Wealthy landowners leased their large estates to vinedressers (tenant farmers). The tenants were allowed to cultivate the land and to care for the vineyards. In return, at harvest time, they paid a portion of the crop as rent.^{3/160}
6. According to Jewish law, a piece of property unclaimed by an heir was declared ownerless and could be claimed by anyone.^{7/1515}

- 7. **Chief cornerstone/capstone** (12:10): The most important stone of a building.^{3/161} It held together the corner of two adjoining walls, which might otherwise fall apart.^{5/258}
- 8. **Herodians** (12:13): See Lesson 5, *Did You Know* 8 and Lesson 10, *Did You Know* 8-10 for a description of the Herodians and the behaviors they condoned.
- 9. **Caesar** (12:14): A title of Roman emperors, analogous to Pharaoh in Egypt.^{4/190}
- 10. **Taxes** (12:14): Jews in Judea were required to pay tribute money to the emperor. The tax was highly unpopular; some refused to pay it.^{7/1516} The Pharisees (cf. Lesson 4, *Did You Know* 5) privately objected to the tax for religious reasons, while the Herodians favored the tax for political reasons.^{3/161}
- 11. **Denarius** (12:15): A Roman silver coin worth a laborer's daily wage.^{3/63} It was used for paying tax to Caesar.^{7/1471} The coin probably had an image of Tiberius Caesar. Its inscription described the emperor as divine, which to the Jews was a repulsive claim.^{10/1499, 3/162}
- 12. **Sadducees** (12:18): A Jewish political party composed of mostly priests and the upper class. Though smaller and less popular than the Pharisees, they occupied influential positions on the Sanhedrin and generally cooperated with the Roman authorities. Because they accepted the authority of only the five books of Moses, they rejected the Pharisees' oral traditions (cf. Lesson 4, *Did You Know* 5) as well as the doctrines of the resurrection, future judgment, and angels and spirits.^{3/162}

Observation

Outline





- _____ (11:27-33)
- _____ (27-28)
- _____ (29-30)
- _____ (31-33)
- _____ (12:1-12)
- _____ (12:13-17)
- _____ (13-14)

- _____ (15-17)
- _____ (12:18-27)
- _____ (18-23)
- _____ (24-27)



Key Words/Phrases



- _____
- _____
- _____



General Analysis


- 1a. List the parties who came to question Jesus. 
- _____
- _____
- 1b. Considering the conflicting beliefs among these parties, what does their alliance tell you about the enemies of the gospel? 
- _____
- _____
- _____
- 1c. Contrast the alliance of the chief priests, scribes, etc. to the unity of the twelve disciples. What does this tell you about standing up for the gospel?  
- _____
- _____
- _____


Segment Analysis

- 11:27-33**
- 1. How was the question on Jesus' authority a trap?  
- _____
- _____


2. Why did Jesus ask about John’s baptism? What does His response (11:33) tell you about His wisdom?  



3. What does the discussion among the chief priests, scribes, and elders (11:31-32) tell you about their values? What does their answer tell you about their wisdom, or lack thereof?  


4. Why did Jesus refuse to answer their question? 


5. When someone questions the church’s authority and doctrines, how should you answer? 

12:1-12

6. List the landowner’s actions. What do they tell you about the vineyard’s importance?  

7. List the tenants’ actions. What do they tell you about the tenants’ intentions?  

8. Why did the tenants kill the son? (cf. *Did You Know* 6).  

9. What does each of the following represent? 

9a. Vineyard (Isa 3:14; 27:2)



9b. Landowner (Mt 20:1; 25:14)

9c. Tenants (Mk 10:12)


9d. Servants sent to collect (Acts 7:51-52)



9e. Landowner’s son (Acts 7:52)


9f. Others who are given the vineyard (Acts 13:46; Rom 11:11)



10. Read 12:10-11. How is Jesus like the stone? How has the Lord done this? How is it marvelous in our eyes? (cf. Zech 10:4; Acts 4:11-12; 1Pet 2:4-8).  

12:13-17

11a. Why did the Pharisees and Herodians praise Jesus? 


11b. What is the biblical attitude toward praises?  


12. How was the question on paying taxes to Caesar a trap? (cf. *Did You Know* 9). 


13. What does Jesus' reply (12:17) tell you about His wisdom?  



14. What is the biblical teaching on paying taxes?  

12:18-27


15. How was the question on resurrection a trap? 

16. How were the Sadducees "greatly mistaken" (12:24, 27)? 

17. How is Exodus 3:6 (quoted in 12:26) a proof of resurrection? 

18. What does Jesus' reply (12:24) tell you about His wisdom?  

19. List examples of puzzles intended to disprove our faith. What is the biblical view to these? 

20. When someone presents a puzzle to question your faith, how should you answer? 

20

Confronting the Opposition (2)

The Basics

Setting

After Jesus had wisely defended Himself, He turned the offensive against His attackers. He used the word of God to reveal their hypocrisy.

Key Verse

“And to love Him with all the heart, with all the understanding, with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love one’s neighbor as oneself, is more than all the whole burnt offerings and sacrifices” (12:33).

Did You Know...?

1. Jewish rabbis had counted 613 individual statutes in the law and attempted to differentiate between “great” and “little” commands.^{7/1516}
2. **Burnt offerings** (12:33): Performed by the priests for the atonement of sins (Lev 16:24). The procedure is described in Ex 29:1,15-18.
3. **“Long robes”** (12:38): The scribes wore long, white linen robes that were fringed and almost reached to the ground.^{7/1517}
4. **“Best seats”** (12:39): Seats reserved for dignitaries, in front of the chest containing the sacred scrolls, facing the congregation in the synagogue.^{3/165}
5. The scribes asked for donations for their livelihood because they were not paid a regular salary. Such a system was open to abuses, of which widows were especially vulnerable.^{7/1517}
6. **Treasury** (12:41): In the temple, there were 13 horn-shaped receptacles for receiving freewill offerings.^{3/165-166}
7. **Widow** (12:42): In biblical times, widows (along with orphans) were the most helpless members of society. Because they did not

have the means to sustain their lives, God commanded the people to take special care of them (cf. Ex 22:22-24; Deut 24:19-21; Acts 20:35).

8. **Mites/copper coins** (12:42): “Two lepta” in the original Greek. One lepton (singular), which was 1/128 of a denarius (cf. Lesson 19, *Did You Know* 10), was the smallest currency value. For his Roman readers, Mark stated the value in terms of Roman coinage (kodrantes/quadrans)^{3/166}, which has been translated into different English words (“farthing,” “cent,” “fraction of a penny,” etc).

Observation

Outline

_____	(12:28-34)
_____	(28)
_____	(29-31)
_____	(29-31)
_____	(29-31)
_____	(12:35-40)
_____	(35-37)
_____	(38-40)
_____	(12:41-44)
_____	(41)
_____	(42-44)

Key Words/Phrases

General Analysis

1. Why was Jesus so harsh on the scribes, the elders, the chief priests, the Pharisees, etc.?

2. When you hear or read a biblical teaching that seems harsh, how should you react?

Segment Analysis

12:28-34

1. How was this scribe different from the others who challenged Jesus with questions?

2. How does the fact that the Lord is one (29) relate to loving the Lord (30)?

3. Give an example of loving the Lord ...

3a. with all your heart

3b. with all your understanding/mind

3c. with all your soul

3d. with all your strength

4. Who is your neighbor? Give an example of loving your neighbor as yourself.

5a. What was the purpose of burnt offerings and sacrifices? Today, how do we live out the spirit of burnt offerings?

5b. How are the commandments of loving God and your neighbor more important than burnt offerings and sacrifices?

6. What does it mean to be "not far from the kingdom of God" (34)?

7. Jesus quoted two commandments from the Old Testament (Deut 6:4-5; Lev 19:18) as the most important. Give examples of other Old Testament teachings that are still applicable today. 🔑

8. Why did no one dare to ask Jesus any more questions (34)? 🔑

12:35-40

9. Was Jesus disagreeing with the scribes' teaching that the Christ was the Son of David? What was He trying to show? 🔑

10a. How have the scribes disobeyed the most important commandments (cf. 12:29-31)? 🔑

10b. How do we avoid becoming like the scribes? 🦶

10c. In church, how should we associate with those who act like the scribes? 🦶

12:41-44

11a. Why did Jesus watch the crowd putting money into the temple treasury? 🔑

11b. Give an example of a real-life observation that taught you something about your faith. 🦶

11c. Today, Jesus also watches everything we do. How does this knowledge affect your actions? 🦶

12. How did the widow obey the greatest commandments (cf. 12:29-31)? 🔑

13. What is the biblical attitude we should have toward the rich and the poor? 🦶 🔑 🦶

14a. What is the smallest amount you've ever offered? The largest? How were those amounts appropriate to your situation? 🙏

14b. What does your offering say about your faith? 🙏

15. When you do not feel like praying or reading the Bible, how much effort do you put in to try? How does it compare to the widow's offering? 🙏

The Basics

Setting

In the last days of Jesus' ministry on earth, He focused on preparing His disciples for the things to come. Watch for the signs, He said. There would be tribulation and false christs and false prophets. Jesus promised that He would come again. A servant of God must remain faithful until that day.

Key Verse

"When you see these things happening, know that it is near—at the doors! Take heed, watch and pray; for you do not know when the time is" (13:29, 33).

Did You Know...?

1. **Temple** (13:1): The temple, which was part of Herod the Great's reconstruction of Jerusalem, was an architectural wonder. A huge platform was erected over the sharp drop of the terrain to enlarge the grounds to 330 by 500 yards.^{3/167} It was supported by a retaining wall made of massive stones. On the platform stood the temple building, porches, and courtyards flanked by beautiful colonnades. The temple itself, which was not fully completed until A.D. 64, was built with large white polished stones (some were 37 feet [14 m] long, 12 feet [5 m] high, and 18 feet [7 m] wide)^{7/1517} and was generously decorated with gold.
2. **"Not one stone shall be left upon another"** (13:2): Jesus' prophecy was fulfilled literally in A.D. 70, when Titus completely destroyed Jerusalem and the temple buildings. Stones were pried apart to salvage the gold that had melted when the temple was set on fire.^{7/1474}
3. **Mount of Olives** (13:3): A mountain range directly east of Jerusalem, running north to south. In Jesus' time, it was rich in olives; but later was stripped bare of trees.^{5/907} The tallest

mountain rose to about 2,700 feet (1040 m), providing an impressive view of the city and the magnificent temple.^{7/1513}

- 4. **Sorrow** (13:8): The NIV translates this as “birth pains,” which is a frequent analogy of the day when the Lord shows His power and exercises His justice (cf. 1Thess 5:1-3; Isa 13:6-11; Rev 12:1-2).
- 5. **Councils** (13:9): The Jewish court system consisted of the Sanhedrin (the highest court) and the lesser courts, of which there were two in Jerusalem and one in each town of Palestine.^{4/258} Each court, which was made up of Jewish elders, was granted legal and religious authority to judge local matters.^{10/1501}
- 6. **“Beaten in the synagogues”** (13:9): Synagogues were used not only for worship and teaching, but also for confinement before trial.^{7/1581} Sometimes the Jews flogged the prisoner up to 40 times.^{9/571} Jesus, however, endured a more severe flogging at the hand of the Romans (cf. Lesson 23, *Did You Know* 8).
- 7. **“Abomination of desolation”** (13:14): Jesus was referring to Daniel’s prophecy (Mt 24:15) that the temple would be desecrated (Dan 9:27; 12:11). This was fulfilled when the temple was destroyed in A.D. 70. It may also point to the rise of the antichrist in the future (cf. Mk 13:5,6; 1Jn 2:18,4:3).
- 8. **Housetop/Roof** (13:15): People often relaxed on the flat roofs, where it was pleasant and cool (cf. Lesson 4, *Did You Know* 1).^{9/501}
- 9. **Clothes/Cloak** (13:16): An outer garment that protected against cold night air.^{3/170} Jesus’ warning in this verse echoes His command to the twelve disciples (cf. Mk 6:9).
- 10. **Four winds** (13:27): Refers to the boundaries of the physical world, most often in the context of describing the Lord’s mighty works (cf. Ezek 37:9; Dan 11:4; Zech 2:6; Rev 7:1).

Observation

Outline

_____ (13:1-20)

_____ (13:21-23)

_____ (13:24-27)

_____ (13:28-37)

_____ (28)

_____ (29-31)

_____ (32-37)

Key Words/Phrases

General Analysis

1. How do you stay on top of current events? How does the knowledge benefit your faith? 🗝️

2. What should be the correct attitude in interpreting the signs of the last days? 🗝️ 🗝️

Segment Analysis

13:1-20

1. What were the disciples’ two questions (4)? To them, which was the more important question? In what order did Jesus answer their questions? To Jesus, which was the more important question? 🗝️ 🗝️

2. Ask a mother about experiencing birth pains. Why did Jesus compare the signs to birth pains (8, NIV)? 🔑

3. List the sequence of signs recorded in verses 5-23. For each sign, if it has already taken place or is taking place, how? If not, how will it? 👁️ 🔑

4. Explain verse 12. Why will family members betray each other? 🔑

5. What are we the readers supposed to understand about the “abomination of desolation” (14)? 🔑

6a. How does the description in 14-17 add to the impact of Jesus’ warning? 👁️ 🔑

6b. What does “flee to the mountains” mean (14)? 🔑

7. How do we prepare ourselves for the coming tribulation? 👣

13:21-23


8a. Give examples of false christs and false prophets. 👣



8b. How do false christs and false prophets deceive? 👁️ 🔑


8c. How do we guard against false christs and false prophets? 👣


13:24-27

9. List the signs of the Lord’s Second Coming recorded in verses 24-27. 👁️

10a. When will Jesus come again? 


10b. Why will Jesus come again?  


11. What do you feel when you think about the Lord's Second Coming? Why? 


12. In light of the fact that the world will end, what are your plans and objectives? 

13:28-37


13. Who is "this generation" (30)? 

14a. How many times did Jesus mention that no one knows when the time will come? 

14b. Why didn't Jesus ("the Son") know the day or hour (32)? 

14c. Why doesn't God reveal the time to us? What is the danger of trying to pinpoint the exact time of the end of the world? 

15. How is the fig tree growing leaves in summer a lesson? 

16. Why did Jesus stress that His words will never pass away (31)? 


17. What does each of the following in the parable (34-36) represent? 

17a. Owner of the house (Mk 12:1; Mt 25:14)

17b. House (1Tim 3:15; Eph 2:19; Heb 10:21)

17c. Servants (1Pet 2:16; 2Cor 4:5)

17d. Doorkeeper (Ezek 33:6; Jer 6:17; Jn 10:3)

18. Explain this parable. 

19. Compare the parable in 34-36 to the three parables in Mt 25:1-13, 45-51, and 25:14-30.  

Preparing for His Death

The Basics

Setting

Jesus knew that the chief priests and the scribes were conspiring to kill Him, and that His own disciple Judas Iscariot would betray Him. He prepared Himself and His disciples for His suffering and death. Hours before He was arrested, He “eagerly desired” (Lk 22:15, NIV) to eat the Passover with them. During the meal, He established the sacraments of Holy Communion (Mk 14:22-24; Lk 22:17-20) and footwashing (Jn 13:3-17). In Gethsemane, in great distress and sorrow, He prayed for strength to serve the Father until the very end.

Key Verse

“My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch” (14:34).

Did You Know...?

1. **Simon the leper** (14:3): Probably a well-known victim of leprosy who had been healed by Jesus.^{7/1481} He was likely a friend or relative of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus (cf. Jn 12:2).^{10/1464}
2. **The woman who anointed Jesus** (14:3) was Mary, sister of Martha and Lazarus (cf. Jn 12:3).
3. **Alabaster flask** (14:3): Alabaster is a mineral with layers of slightly varying shades and colors, often very delicate and beautiful.^{4/856} The jar had a thin, long neck which was snapped off when the contents were used for special occasions.^{9/625, 5/1210}
4. **Spikenard/Pure nard** (14:3): Aromatic oil from a rare plant root native to India, where it is still used as a perfume for the hair.^{3/175, 5/1210}
5. **Three hundred denarii** (14:5): About a year’s wage for a laborer (one denarius was a day’s wage).
6. **“Given to the poor”** (14:5): It was a Jewish custom to give gifts to the poor on the evening of the Passover.^{7/1519}

7. **“For burial”** (14:8): It was a Jewish custom to anoint the body with aromatic oils when preparing it for burial.^{7/1519}
8. **Day of Unleavened Bread/Passover** (14:12): A commemoration of the time when the angel of the Lord passed over the homes of the Hebrews when he killed all the firstborn in Egypt (cf. Ex 12:1-27).^{7/1519} The eight-day celebration of the Feast of Unleavened Bread takes place sometime between March and April.^{3/82} On the Passover, the first day, the sacrificial lamb is slaughtered. After sunset, the family gathers to eat the meal, which consists of bitter herbs, unleavened bread, and roasted lamb, interspersed with four cups. Thanksgiving prayers are offered. During the meal, it is customary for a boy to ask the meaning of all this, and the head of the household would explain the symbols in terms of the Exodus.^{9/523,533} Jesus and His disciples celebrated the feast as a family.^{5/938}
9. **“A man carrying a jar of water”** (14:13): Usually it was women who carried water jars (men carried wineskins).^{3/176}
10. **Guest room** (14:14): It was a Jewish custom that anyone in Jerusalem who had a room available would give it upon request to a pilgrim to celebrate the Passover.^{7/1522}
11. **Hymn** (14:26): During the Passover meal, the household would sing the *Hallel*—Psalms 113-118. The leader would sing the lines, and the rest would respond with “Hallelujah!” (“Praise the Lord!”).^{9/539}
12. **Gethsemane** (14:32): Literally, “Oil Press.”^{3/83} It was an olive grove where Jesus had often met with His disciples (cf. Jn 18:1-2).
13. **“Abba”** (14:36): Aramaic word for father.^{10/1694} The word conveyed a sense of intimacy and familiarity, and was a common way young Jewish children addressed their fathers. The Jews would consider it an inappropriate way to address God in prayer.^{3/180}

Observation




Outline


- _____ (14:1-2)
- _____ (14:3-9)
- _____ (14:10-11)
- _____ (14:12-26)
- _____ (14:27-31)
- _____ (14:32-42)

Key Words/Phrases

General Analysis

1. What is the most difficult challenge you have ever faced? Did you have time to prepare for it? 🧠
- 2a. If you knew you had only five more days to live, how would you prepare yourself? How did Jesus prepare Himself when He entered Jerusalem (Mk 11:7-10), five days before His crucifixion? 👁️ 🔑 🧠

2b. If you knew you would die in 24 hours, how would you prepare yourself? How did Jesus prepare Himself before the Passover, one day before His crucifixion?   

3. What did each of the following do before Jesus' arrest and crucifixion? 


3a. Woman



3b. Jesus

3c. Disciples


Segment Analysis


14:1-2, 10-11


1. Why did Mark put the account of Jesus' anointing in-between the plot to kill Him and Judas' betrayal? 

2. What was the price of Judas' betrayal? Why did he betray Jesus? (cf. Mt 26:15, 23-25; Lk 22:6; Jn 12:6; 13:27).  



14:3-9



3a. Why were people indignant at the woman? What does the word "wasted" (4) tell you about their values? 


3b. Do you ever become upset over someone else's offering or how he or she does church work? Why? 


4. Why would the woman's deed be told wherever the gospel is preached (9)? 


14:12-26

5. Compare 12-16 to 11:1-6.  


6. Read Exodus 12:5, 21-23. Compare the Passover's sacrificial lamb to Jesus Christ.  



7. Explain verse 21. How does it relate to Judas? 


8. How is this Passover meal significant in light of Jesus' impending death? 

9a. Are the unleavened bread and the cup only symbolic of Jesus' body and blood? Why or why not? 


9b. Why do we partake the Holy Communion? (cf. Jn 6:51, 53-56; 1Cor 11:24-26).  

9c. What is the "new covenant" that is made effective by the blood of Jesus Christ? 



10a. Read Psalms 113-118 (likely the hymn Jesus sang with His disciples). How do the lyrics describe salvation through Jesus Christ?  


10b. What is your favorite hymn? Why? If the hymn is based on a biblical passage, read the passage and meditate on its meaning. 

14:27-31

11a. Read verses 18-19 and 31. Why did each of the twelve disciples wonder if he would betray Jesus, and yet was so adamant that he would not deny Jesus? 

11b. What mistakes will you never make? Why are you so sure? 

12a. What do Peter's words tell you about him?  

12b. Have you ever made a sincere promise that you failed to keep? Why did you make the promise? Why did you fail? 

14:32-42

13. Why did Jesus tell His disciples that He was “exceedingly sorrowful” (34)?

14a. Why did the disciples fall asleep?

14b. Why did Jesus single out Peter for falling asleep (37)?

14c. Have you fallen asleep during a sermon, Bible study, or prayer? Why?

14d. List the characteristics of sleep. Compare them to falling asleep in faith.

15a. Why did Jesus return to Peter, James, and John three times? How did they disappoint Him?

15b. How have you disappointed Jesus when He needed you?

16a. Compare Jesus’ words in 14:37-38 to His words in 13:35-37. What does this tell you about the three disciples?

16b. What are some things that your spirit is willing to do but is unable to because of your flesh? How do you overcome this obstacle?

17. How does the fact that God is our “Abba” (cf. *Did You Know* 13) help us to pray to Him?

18a. What was the Father’s answer to Jesus’ request to take the cup away? What does Jesus’ statement in 41-42 tell you about His response to the answer?

18b. How should you respond when God does not do as you requested?

23

Jesus Betrayed and Condemned

Mark 14:43-15:20

The Basics

Setting

In contrast to Jesus' popular support when He entered Jerusalem (11:8-10), now He was alone and rejected. Everyone, from the crowd to His own disciples, either turned against Him or deserted Him. Just as Jesus had predicted (10:33; 14:41), the humble Servant, the Son of God, was judged and condemned by sinners.

Key Verse

"So they cried out again, 'Crucify Him!' Then Pilate said to them, 'Why, what evil has He done?' But they cried out all the more, 'Crucify Him!'" (15:13-14).

Did You Know...?

1. **Kiss** (14:44): A kiss on the cheek or hand was a common gesture of affection and reverence given to a rabbi by his disciples.^{3/181}
2. **The one who cut off the ear of the servant of the high priest** (14:47) was Simon Peter (cf. Jn 18:10). He was probably one of the disciples who took a sword with him in response to Jesus' words during the Passover meal (cf. Lk 22:36-38; for what Jesus had meant, read the Luke Bible Study Guide, Lesson 29, Questions 16-17).
3. **The young man who fled naked** (14:51) is mentioned only in the gospel according to Mark, and is very likely to be Mark himself. Perhaps he was in such a hurry to warn Jesus about the crowd that he did not have time to get dressed properly (wearing only a sleeping garment). His linen garment suggests that he was from a wealthy family (more common garments were made of wool).^{3/181}
4. **Sanhedrin** (14:55): The 71-member Jewish high court, which originated from the council of Moses and the 70 elders (cf. Num 11:16-17). It was composed of chief priests, elders, and scribes,

and was headed by the high priest. The Sanhedrin was given much authority in religious and civil affairs, including the power to sentence a person to death. However, it was required to submit the sentence to the Roman governor for approval and execution.^{7/1524, 5/1142}

5. **"Tore his clothes"** (14:63): A sign of grief or shock; it became a formal judicial act of the high priest expressing the opinion that he has heard blasphemy, which was a capital crime according to Jewish laws.^{7/1524}
6. **Pilate** (15:1): A Roman of the upper middle class and governor ("praetor") of Judea and Samaria from A.D. 26-36. He commanded a cavalry of 120 and an infantry of 2,500-5,000. As the governor, he had the power to approve or reverse a capital sentence passed by the Sanhedrin.^{5/996}
7. **Barabbas** (15:7): An insurrectionist against the Romans, which probably made him a hero among the Jews.^{7/1484}
8. **Scourged/flogged** (15:15): The Jews limited flogging to forty lashes, but the Romans were restricted by nothing but their strength and whim. Flogging was used to weaken a prisoner before crucifixion (although many did not survive the ordeal itself). The prisoner was stripped, tied to a post, and whipped. The leather whip, known as the "scorpion," had sharp pieces of bone or lead, which reduced the flesh to a bloody pulp, often exposing the victim's bones and innards.^{4/1141,9/571}
9. **Praetorium** (15:16): The Roman governor's residence, which also functioned as his headquarters.^{10/1467}
10. **Purple robe, crown of thorns** (15:17): These were used to mock Jesus' claim to be a king. The robe was probably an old military cloak, whose purple color suggested richness and royalty.^{7/1525} The crown was pressed into Jesus' scalp (which has many blood vessels), which caused severe bleeding.^{9/777}

Observation

Outline

_____ (14:43-52)
 _____ (14:53-65)

- _____ (14:66-72)
- _____ (15:1-15)
- _____ (15:16-20)

Key Words/Phrases


General Analysis


1a. List the characters that betrayed and/or rejected Jesus. How did they betray or reject Him? 

1b. What do you do when many people are against you? What can you learn from Jesus? 


Segment Analysis


14:43-52


1. Why did the arresting party come armed with swords and clubs? 

2. Judas needed a signal to identify Jesus. What does this tell you about Jesus' physical appearance? 

3a. What was Jesus' reaction to Judas' kiss? 

3b. Have you ever felt betrayed? How did you react? What can you learn from Jesus' reaction to Judas' betrayal? 

4a. Why did Peter draw his sword? 

4b. What might have happened if Jesus had allowed His disciples to fight with swords? 

4c. Do you ever feel like you need to take immediate action? Compare this to Peter’s reaction? What would Jesus tell you? (cf. Mt 26:52; Lk 22:51; Jn 18:11) 🗝️

5. Explain 14:48-49. Why did Jesus tell those who came to arrest Him these words? How do the words “the Scriptures must be fulfilled” (14:49) explain why the crowd was arresting Him now? 🗝️

6. Who were the only ones mentioned who followed Jesus after He was arrested? 👁️

14:53-65

7. What do the false testimonies tell you about the people’s understanding of Jesus? 👁️ 🗝️

8. How did Jesus answer His accusers? What does this teach you about dealing with those who attack the true gospel? 👁️ 🗝️

9a. List common misconceptions about Jesus, Christianity, and the True Jesus Church. 🗝️

9b. When someone says something false about your faith, how should you answer? 🗝️

10. List the terms used to describe God in verses 14:61-62. Why were there so many? 👁️ 🗝️

11. Why did the high priest ask Jesus if He is the Christ? 🗝️

12. For what charge did the Sanhedrin sentence Jesus to death? 👁️

13. Have you ever been falsely accused of something? How did you react? What can you learn from Jesus’ reaction to the false testimonies against Him? 🗝️

14. Have you ever felt under-appreciated? How did you react? What can you learn from Jesus' reaction to how the people repay Him for His ministry? 🐾

15. Have you ever falsely accused or jumped to conclusions about a person? What were the consequences? How do you avoid making the same mistake again? 🐾

14:66-72

16. Contrast Peter when he drew his sword to protect Jesus to when he denied Jesus three times. How are we like Peter? 👁 🐾

17. When a stranger asks if you are a Christian or a True Jesus Church member, what is your reaction? How should you answer? 🐾

15:1-15

18. When Pilate asked, "What evil has [Jesus] done?" (15:14), what was the crowd's answer? 👁

19a. What was on the mind of the crowd at this time? Why were the people so against Jesus? 🔑

19b. How do we avoid being easily stirred up? 🐾

20. Jesus was sentenced to die, while a murderer (Barabbas) was set free. How is this an analogy of our salvation through Jesus Christ? 🔑 🐾

15:16-20

21a. Why did the Roman soldiers mock Jesus? 🔑

21b. Have you ever bullied or made fun of someone? How did it affect that person and yourself? 🐾

21c. What is the worst insult you have ever received? How does it compare to the soldiers' mockery of Jesus? What is the Christian teaching on dealing with insults? 🔑 🐾

Jesus Crucified and Buried

The Basics

Setting

After the soldiers tortured Jesus, they crucified Him between two robbers (15:27). The Jews and the Romans continued to ridicule Him while He was suffering on the cross. In spite of the people's rejection of Jesus, dramatic events during His crucifixion proved that He was unlike any other man. Finally, "Jesus cried out with a loud voice, and breathed His last" (15:37). His disciples buried Him, not knowing that a greater miracle would soon take place on the third day.

Key Verse

"Truly this Man was the Son of God!" (15:39).

Did You Know...?

1. **Simon** (15:21): From Cyrene, an important Libyan city with a large Jewish population.^{7/1526} He was probably a Jew who was in Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover.^{7/1526} His sons Alexander and Rufus were probably well known to the early Christians. The two names are also mentioned in Acts 19:33 and Rom 16:13, respectively. However, these were common names and might belong to other men.^{9/575}
2. **"Bear His cross"** (15:21): A condemned man was usually forced to carry the crossbar (which weighed 30-40 pounds [14-18 kg]) on the shoulders to the place of crucifixion.^{7/1526} Jesus must have been too weak to carry the cross; therefore, the soldiers forced a bystander to do it for Him.
3. **Golgotha** (15:22): Literally, "Skull." The Aramaic word referred either to the place of execution or to a hill that resembled a skull.^{3/89} The English name "Calvary" comes from the Latin word for skull ("*calva*").^{5/181}
4. **Myrrh** (15:23): The dried resin of balsam wood. It was used as medicine, and was mixed with wine to make an anesthetic.¹¹

Myrrh happens to play a role in the important episodes of Jesus' life: His birth (cf. Mt 2:11), His death (cf. Mk 15:23), and His burial (cf. Jn 19:39).

5. **"Divided His garments, casting lots for them"** (15:24): The clothes were the soldiers' bonus for guarding the cross. Often they played a game of dice to determine who got which piece.¹²
6. **Crucified** (15:24): A condemned man was stripped naked and laid on the ground with the crossbar under his shoulders. The hands were nailed to the crossbar, which was then lifted and secured to an upright post. The feet were then tied to the post.^{5/279} A peg beneath the feet supported the weight of the body to prevent it from tearing the hands free. The victim was probably no more than a few feet above the ground (suggested by the fact that Jesus spoke with the bystanders and a sponge tied to a stick was offered to him). The pain was obviously intense, as the whole body was strained. After a while, the arteries in the head and stomach were filled with blood, causing a throbbing headache. Eventually, fever would set in. When for any reason it was decided to put the victim out of his misery, his legs were shattered with a club or hammer, as if to compensate for the act of mercy.^{5/281} It usually took at least 36 hours (sometimes as long as 9 days) for a crucified man to die. It was unusual that Jesus died so soon (about six hours), which might explain Pilate's surprise (cf. 15:44).^{5/279}
7. **Third, sixth, ninth hour** (15:25,33): 9 A.M., 12 P.M., 3 P.M., respectively.
8. **Veil/curtain** (15:38): An elaborate curtain separated the Most Holy Place from the Holy Place (cf. Ex 26:31; 2Chr 3:14).
9. **Sour wine/vinegar** (15:36): A common inexpensive beverage (when mixed with eggs and water) drunk by laborers and soldiers.^{3/189, 7/1526}
10. **Centurion** (15:39): A Roman army officer theoretically in charge of 100 men.^{10/1425} He and his soldiers were guarding the cross against a rescue.^{5/279}
11. **Preparation Day** (15:42): The day to prepare for the annual Passover festival.^{5/1026} Because it was late Friday afternoon, there was an urgency to get Jesus' body down from the cross before the Sabbath (during which they could not do any work).^{7/1527}

- 12. **Joseph of Arimathea** (15:43): A prominent and wealthy member of the Sanhedrin who was against the decision to crucify Jesus (Lk 23:50-51). He had become a disciple of Christ (Mt 27:57).
- 13. **Tomb/sepulchre** (15:46): Either a natural or man-made cave in the rocks. After a body was placed in a tomb, a large circular stone was rolled over it. To prevent anyone from stealing Jesus' body, Pilate ordered that Jesus' tomb be sealed and guarded (Mt 27:62-66).¹¹



Observation


Outline

- _____ (15:21-22)
- _____ (15:23-28)
- _____ (15:29-36)
- _____ (15:37-41)
- _____ (15:42-47)

Key Words/Phrases

General Analysis

- 1. List how Jesus' suffering, death, and burial fulfilled the prophecies in Psalm 22:1-18 and Isaiah 53:1-9.  


- 2. What is the greatest physical and/or mental pain you have suffered? How does the knowledge of Jesus' suffering help you overcome your pain? 

Segment Analysis


15:21-22

- 1a. What might have been on Simon's mind when he was carrying the cross for Jesus? 

- 1b. Have you ever been "compelled" to work for God? How did you react? What can you learn from Jesus' example as a servant? 

- 2. Contrast the procession to Golgotha (cf. *Did You Know 2*) to Jesus' entry into Jerusalem (cf. Mk 11:8-10). 

15:23-28

- 3a. Why did Jesus refuse the wine mixed with myrrh (cf. *Did You Know 4*)? (Read what He did while He was on the cross in Lk 23:34, 40-43; Jn 19:25-27). 

3b. Jesus accomplished God’s work even while hanging on the cross. How do you serve God and help others, in spite of your own limitations and troubles? 🦶

4. What did the charge “The King of the Jews” (26) mean to those who crucified Jesus? What does it mean to a Christian? Compare it to the symbolism of the cross. 🔑 🦶

5. How might a person “crucify” Jesus today? (cf. Heb 6:4-6). 🦶

15:29-32

6a. List the insults hurled at Jesus. 👁

6b. How did the people’s insults show their ignorance? 🔑

7. Would the chief priests and the scribes have believed if Jesus had come down from the cross, as they claimed they would (32)? 🦶


8. Why didn’t Jesus save Himself and come down from the cross? 🔑


9. How is the cross a “stumbling block” (1Cor 1:23) to the people who rejected Him? 🔑


10. Whom did Jesus forgive while He was on the cross? (cf. Lk 23:34, 40-43). What does this teach you about forgiveness? 👁 🦶



11. Although both of the robbers heaped insults on Jesus (32), one of them later repented (cf. Lk 23:40-42). What does this tell you about how a person might come to Christ? 🦶



15:33-41


12a. What miraculous signs occurred while Jesus was on the cross? 


12b. What did these signs mean? (cf. Amos 8:9; Heb 10:19-20). 

13. Contrast Jesus' cry ("My God") with His prayer ("Father") in Gethsemane (Mk 14:36). How was Jesus forsaken by God (34)? 


14a. Contrast the centurion's faith to that of the Jews.  


14b. The centurion used the past tense when he exclaimed, "Truly this man was the Son of God!" What does this tell you about his understand of Jesus Christ? From the centurion, what can you learn about growing in spiritual knowledge?  

15. What does Jesus' death mean to you? (cf. Heb 10:19-31, 2Cor 5:14-15; 1Jn 3:17-19). 

16. Are you afraid to die? Why or why not? 

15:42-47

17. Jesus was on the cross for a relatively short time before He died (cf. the last part of *Did You Know* 6). What does this unusual fact tell you? (Think in terms of Jesus' physical suffering). 

18. What did Joseph of Arimathea do after Jesus died? What does this teach you about having faith with deeds (Jas 2:14-26)? 

The Basics

Setting

If Jesus' burial had been the end of the story, then His work would have amounted to nothing. However, Jesus Christ rose from the dead, just as He had predicted! His resurrection marks the beginning of a life-transforming experience, for the disciples then and for us now. In the epilogue, Jesus appeared to the disciples and charged them to continue His ministry. Today, our work is not over until Jesus comes again.

Key Verse

"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" (16:15-16).

Did You Know...?

1. **Spices** (16:1): Aromatic oils were poured over a dead body to counteract the odors of decay. The anointing was a symbolic expression of loving devotion.^{3/192}
2. **"Who will roll away the stone?"** (16:3): After a large stone was slipped into the groove at the entrance of the tomb, it was very difficult to remove (cf. Lesson 24, *Did You Know* 13).^{7/1527}
3. **"See the place where they laid Him"** (16:6): The women and the young man were in the tomb's outer room. At the back was a low rectangular opening that led to the burial chamber.^{7/1527}
4. **"Right hand of God"** (16:19): A symbol of God's righteousness and strength (cf. Ps 48:10; Isa 41:10).

Observation



Outline

- _____ (16:1-8)
- _____ (1-3)
- _____ (4-6)
- _____ (7-8)
- _____ (16:9-20)
- _____ (9-13)
- _____ (14)
- _____ (15-18)
- _____ (19)
- _____ (20)



Key Words/Phrases


- _____
- _____
- _____


General Analysis

1. Matthew 28, Luke 24, John 20-21, and Acts 1:1-11 each presents a different facet of the events after Christ's resurrection. Together with Mk 16, they form a vivid picture. Take the time to read those passages and answer the questions in the corresponding Bible Study Guides.
2. To whom did Jesus appear after His resurrection? Why is it important to list the witnesses?  

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____


3. Why is the certainty of Jesus' resurrection so crucial to our faith? (cf. 1Cor 15:14-28).  



4. What evidences convince you that Jesus is alive? 

5. Is it okay to celebrate Christ's resurrection on Easter? Why or why not? 



Segment Analysis

16:1-8


1. After Jesus died, what was on the mind of the women and the disciples? 

2a. What do the women's actions tell you about their devotion to Jesus?  



2b. How do you show your devotion to the Lord Jesus? 


3. In verse 6, how did the young man describe Jesus? What does his words tell us about Jesus' resurrection?  



4. Why did the young man specifically mention Peter (7)? 

5. Why didn't the women say anything to anyone? (cf. Jn 20 1-2, 11-18). 



16:9-20


6. Why did Jesus rebuke the eleven disciples (14)?  


7a. What did Jesus command the disciples to do? 

7b. How does Jesus confirm what we preach (17-18)?  

7c. How do you accomplish Jesus' commission to preach? 

8. What must we do to be saved?  

9a. What does it mean that Jesus sat down at the right hand of God? 

9b. What is Jesus doing in heaven today? 

Thoughts on Questions

Lesson 2

Observation

Outline

- Beginning of the Gospel of the Son of God (1:1)
- John the Baptist (1:2-8)
 - Prophesied to prepare a way for the Lord (2-3)
 - Baptism of repentance (4-5)
 - John's dress and diet (6)
 - Preached about one who is greater (7-8)
- Baptism of Jesus (1:9-11)
 - Heaven opened and Holy Spirit descended like a dove (9-10)
 - A voice from heaven: "You are My beloved Son" (11)
- Temptation of Jesus (1:12-13)
 - Holy Spirit sends Jesus into the desert (12)
 - 40 days in the desert with wild animals; angels attended him (13)

Key Words/Phrases

Gospel, Son of God, wilderness, way, mightier, baptize, Holy Spirit, tempted

General Analysis

- 3a. God—He sent John the Baptist to prepare the way for Jesus; acknowledged Jesus as His son; the Spirit descended upon Jesus and was with Jesus; He sent angels to attend to him
- 3b. John—He prepared the people for Jesus' coming; he preached that Jesus was greater and baptized those who repented; he baptized Jesus
- 3c. Jesus—He set an example of baptism; He submitted to the Holy Spirit to go to the desert to be tempted.
- 4. Voice crying in the wilderness; baptizing in the wilderness; locusts; wild honey; the spirit drove Jesus into the wilderness; Jesus was tempted by Satan in the wilderness; Jesus was with wild beasts.

Segment Analysis

- 1a. See verse 4.
- 1b. See verse 5.

2. John's dress and diet indicate that he lived a simple life and survived on the bare minimums (whatever was available to him). John the Baptist lived like a typical prophet, and this lifestyle was not typical of an average person.
- 3a. From the sequence and wording of the narrative, we see that prophecy plays a key role in bringing Jesus Christ onto the center stage.
The author introduces John by first quoting the the words of the OT prophets about the voice of the wilderness. This prophecy was fulfilled when John came. Now, John, in turn, took on the role of a prophet, and the author's description of him in verse 6 underscores that role. John prophesied about the One coming after him, and his prophecy was fulfilled when Jesus came.
- 3b. Jesus' coming was prophesied by all the prophets, including John the baptist. This demonstrates that Jesus was no ordinary historical figure. Jesus' coming was a very significant event in history and God's timetable. It was so important that God sent one prophet after another to announce it and finally sent John to prepare the way. Now, Jesus had finally come to fulfill the greatest divine plan, bringing redemption to mankind.
- 4a. To be baptized with the Holy Spirit means to receive the Holy Spirit of God (Acts 11:15-16; cf. 10:44-46). This is the promise that our Lord Jesus Christ gives to all believers—that God's Spirit Himself will dwell in our hearts forever as a personal Helper (Jn 14:16-17; 7:37-39).
- 4b. John's baptism was "of repentance for the remission of sins" (1:4). However, it ultimately served as a pointer to the One coming after John, Jesus Christ (Acts 19:4).
Jesus' baptism with the Holy Spirit, on the other hand, is not a foreshadow. It actually changes the lives of believers and prepares them for the heavenly inheritance. Through the baptism of the Holy Spirit, our Lord seals us as His heir (Rom 8:16-17; 2Cor 5:5; Eph 1:13-14; 4:30). Through the Holy Spirit Who lives in us, He teaches us (Jn 14:26; 16:13), renews us (Tit 3:5), quenches our inner thirst (Jn 4:38-39), intercedes for us (Rom 8:26-27), and empowers us (Acts 1:8; Rom 8:9-11).
5. Just as John prepared the way for Jesus, many Christian workers have prepared the way for the True Jesus Church. The true church reaps the fruit of their labor (Jn 4:37-38). Christian missionaries have gone to far-off places to preach. Bible scholars have translated the Bible into many languages. Countless hymns written in the past still move us today. All of these works prepared the world for the true gospel. The True Jesus Church is prophesied in the Bible, and is entrusted to preach the gospel to the world. She preaches the complete and perfect gospel, fulfilling the promises written in the Bible.

At the same time, the church also plays the role of John the Baptist. We are preparing the believers for Jesus' Second Coming, when the heavenly kingdom is fulfilled.

6. "To fulfill all righteousness" (Mt 3:15). Jesus sets an example in everything He commands us to do. (cf. Matthew Bible Study Guide, Lesson 4, Questions 10a and 10b).
- 7a. See verses 10-11.
- 7b. The parting of the heavens, the descent of the Holy Spirit, and the voice from heaven all serve as a testimony from God to all the people that Jesus was the Son of God. They also reinforced what John the Baptist had prophesied about Jesus.
Furthermore, the anointing of the Holy Spirit on Jesus was a sign that God had sent Him to the ministry (cf. Lk 4:18).
- 8a. Innocent (Mt 10:16); needing protection (Ps 74:19).
In the Old Testament, doves were used in a burnt offering (Lev 1:14). Also, those who couldn't afford to buy lamb offered doves instead (Lev 12:8).
- 8b. The passage says, "like a dove." John did not literally see a dove, but something like it. Often, it is difficult to describe a vision in words. This is true for biblical writings and in testimonies today. What is important is the meaning behind the vision.
A dove is a lowly creature. The Holy Spirit appears like a dove to teach us a lesson in humility. Likewise, even though Jesus had great authority, He "made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant" (Php 2:7, NIV). As servants, we offer ourselves as living sacrifices to God (Rom 12:1).
The Holy Spirit also appears as a tongue of fire (Acts 2:4). John prophesied that Jesus would baptize with the Holy Spirit and with fire (Mt 3:11). The Holy Spirit gave the apostles power and courage to serve the Lord (2Tim 1:7).
9. Jesus went into the desert to be tempted. His temptation is an important part of God's salvation plan; it was necessary before He could teach and understand people's suffering (Heb 4:15; 2:18). After we give our lives to Christ, things may not magically go well. In fact, "the Lord weighs the heart" (Prov 21:2). However, Jesus' firsthand experience assures us that "God is faithful, He will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, He will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it" (1Cor 10:13, NIV).
10. They signify danger and works of the evil one (Dan 6:4-7,16,21; 1Pet 5:8). They might also refer to continuous opposition to God's work (1Cor 15:32; Acts 19:23-41).

11. Instead of whether or not Jesus overcame the temptation, Mark states that the angels attended him. He emphasizes that Jesus was not alone when He faced the temptations and wild beasts. No matter the temptation, God is always there to help us.

Luke 4:13 tells us, “When the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from Him until an opportune time.” Similarly, Mark could be portraying this temptation as the first in a series of attacks (from Pharisees [Mk 2:15-22], from His own people [Mk 3:21,31-34], etc.)

Lesson 3

Observation

Outline

- Jesus Begins His Ministry (1:14-20)
 - Jesus preaches in Galilee (14-15)
 - Calling of Simon and Andrew (16-18)
 - Calling of James and John (19-20)
- Jesus in the Synagogue (1:21-28)
 - Teaches with authority (21-22)
 - Casts out unclean spirit (23-28)
- Ministry in Capernaum and Galilee (1:29-45)
 - Heals Simon’s mother-in-law (29-31)
 - Crowd gathers to seek help (32-39)
 - Heals a man with leprosy (40-45)

Key Words/Phrases

Kingdom of God, good news, time, kingdom of God, immediately, at once, without delay, followed, Jesus of Nazareth, Holy One of God, immediately, be quiet, crowd, wilderness

General Analysis

1. 15, 18, 20, 28, 29, 30, 42, 43. Mark gives us a sense of the urgency of Jesus calling the disciples and beginning His ministry.
2. Preach (14,38-39); call (20); teach (22); cast out unclean spirits (25, 34); heal (31, 34, 41); pray (35)

Segment Analysis

- 1a. John rebuked Herod for marrying his brother’s wife. John was never released from prison, and was later beheaded.

- 1b. It is reasonable to conclude that because John was in prison, his work was done. It was time for Jesus to start on the path John had prepared. More important, Jesus knew it was the right time because He was filled with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit lets us know where to go, at what time (Mk 1:12; Acts 16:6-8).
- 2a. The time to repent; the time to believe. The Old Testament stage of God’s salvation plan had been completed, and the New Testament had begun. The Old Testament laws make us conscious of our sins (Rom 3:19-20); the only way to be saved is to repent and to believe in Jesus. Because Jesus had come to fulfill the law, we can today observe God’s laws under grace (Rom 2:28-29).
- 2b. The good news is that we are saved through Jesus Christ. Jesus came to set an example of how to obey God’s commandments in faith. He also came with the power to heal and to forgive sins.
3. Simon and Andrew were brothers. They had been disciples of John the Baptist, and John pointed them to follow Jesus. Also, before calling Simon, Jesus had used his boat to teach. James and John were Simon and Andrew’s fishing partners.
- 4a. By obeying Jesus’ command, Simon caught a lot of fish. It was then that Jesus said, “From now on you will catch men” (Lk 5:10). So Simon understood that Jesus was telling them that they would gain even more by following Him (even though he probably did not know what exactly it was).
Before Jesus’ crucifixion and resurrection, the disciples did not understand His message (Mt 19:27; Mk 10:37). The words “fishers of men” themselves might not have had much meaning to them. Most likely, they were attracted to Jesus Himself. They followed in faith. The fishermen followed Jesus not necessarily because He said this or that. They followed simply because Jesus called.
6. The scribes taught by repetition, which often became an exercise of memorization (cf. *Did You Know* 6). They became obsessed with the letters of the law, instead of the true meaning behind those words. As a result, they created religious laws and restrictions for themselves, which they later accused Jesus of offending (Mk 2:18, 24). On the other hand, Jesus taught something new that challenged their preconceived notions (Mk 2:21-22). He was interesting. He used everyday examples and told stories (Mt 13:1-52). He asked thought-provoking questions (Mk 3:4). Most importantly, Jesus spoke the words of God (Jn 14:24-25). He taught with the power of the Holy Spirit (1Cor 2:4-5), who confirmed what He said with signs and miracles (Mk 16:17-18; Rom 15:18-19).
8. Jesus knew the unclean spirit’s intentions. At this time, when He was just beginning His ministry, it was not the right time for people to hear that

Jesus is the “Holy One of God.” He let His actions speak to who He was. He did not directly proclaim His deity, even to His disciples, until much later (Mt 16:15-17). When He finally did, the opposition intensified (Jn 8:58-59).

- 9a. She served “them,” not just Jesus alone. Serving other people is a way to repay God’s mercy (1Pet 4:9-10).
- 9b. Simon left everything to follow Jesus, but it did not mean that he severed his ties with his family. Jesus used Simon’s house and boat (Mk 1:29; Lk 5:3) and took care of his family. It is not God’s will for us to abandon our families and our earthly responsibilities when we dedicate our lives to Him. God helps us to wisely divide our time and effort, and He steps in to help whenever necessary. “Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you” (Mt 6:33).
- 10a. The day before, he must have worked all day and late into the night (32). Because the Sea of Galilee was surrounded by many cities, it took some time to walk to a solitary place. Early in the morning was the only time when Jesus could pray and have some quiet time alone. He sacrificed time and sleep to prepare Himself spiritually. However, even then, people wouldn’t leave Him alone (37).
11. While Jesus had compassion on the people and often met their physical needs, His primary purpose in His ministry was to bring people back to God and save souls. If He had remained in the same town and continued to do nothing but healing, He would have been no more than a miracle worker. Jesus knew that there were many other people in other towns who needed to hear the good news of God’s Kingdom. So He chose to move on to the next towns to preach the gospel even though many people were coming to Him with physical needs.
12. He “came to [Jesus], imploring Him, kneeling down to Him” (40). His faith was one of certainty and humility. He was sure that Jesus could heal him, but he also humbly looked to Jesus for mercy. He did not demand Jesus to heal him, but only prayed and hoped that He would be willing to do so. Touched by his faith, Jesus replied, “I am willing.”
13. Compassion was the motivation behind Jesus’ healing. He did not heal the sick just to fulfill some responsibility or to show off His power. He genuinely loved the people He healed. This is the heart we need to have toward those whom we serve.

Jesus did not stand at a distance and just speak some words to heal the man. He stretched out His hand and touched this unclean person. If we are truly moved with compassion, we will draw close to those in need, even when others despise them, and stretch out our hands to help and comfort them.

- 14a. Jesus asked the man only to show himself to the priest and offer sacrifice as a testimony to glorify God. The man probably decided that it was good to tell others. But because he talked freely, the crowd became a distraction to Jesus. Maybe the man cannot be blamed for acting out of ignorance. However, he disobeyed a direct command from Jesus (44).
- 14b. Sometimes we let our emotions and reasoning override God’s will (like Peter in Mk 8:31-33). In doing so, we do more harm than good.
15. The passage says specifically that Jesus was “moved with compassion” (41). Jesus loved him, and was willing to be inconvenienced. Jesus went out of his way to give the man what he needed the most. His small sacrifices for us led to the biggest sacrifice of all: dying on the cross.
Often we are reluctant to help if we must give up something or be inconvenienced in some way or change our patterns. It is harder to sit down to talk to a homeless person than to throw him some spare change. Sometimes we also overlook the needs of others for the sake of completing some work. To Jesus, however, the man was more important than any work.

Lesson 4

Observation

Outline

Healing A Paralytic (2:1-12)

Jesus teaches a crowd (1-2)

Four men lower a paralytic down from the roof (3-4)

Jesus forgives the paralytic’s sins (5)

The scribes grumble (6-7)

Jesus rebuffs the teachers and heals the paralytic (8-12)

Calling the Sinners (2:13-17)

Jesus teaches a crowd (13)

Jesus calls Matthew and eats with the tax collectors and sinners (14-15)

The scribes grumble (16)

Jesus rebuffs the teachers (17)

Key Words/Phrases

Crowd, preached, teach, sick, physician, righteous, sinners

General Analysis

1. There is a similar pattern:

1. Jesus teaches a crowd.
2. Jesus shows His compassion and power to sinners (to the paralytic and to Levi/Matthew and the tax collectors).
3. The scribes accuse Jesus of a serious violation (blasphemy, and eating with sinners).
4. Jesus immediately rebuffs the teachers.

Segment Analysis

- 1a. Jesus—He preached the word.
- 1b. Crowd—They came to see Jesus, perhaps to seek healing and miracles (Mk 1:32), perhaps to listen to the word of God.
- 1c. Scribes—They probably to judge Jesus, to see why he was drawing a crowd (6).
 - 2a. The crowd inside and outside the door (2, 4), the scribes sitting inside (6), the roof (4)
 - 2b. The crowd must have noticed the four men carrying the paralytic. They could have moved out of the way. Someone could have passed a message to Jesus. However, no one did. They only thought about seeing Jesus themselves. The scribes were there to pass judgment on Jesus, and basically took a space away from someone who truly wanted to hear the word.
 - 3a. The fact that Jesus forgave the paralytic's sins is an indirect proof that he had faith, because we are justified by our faith (Rom 3:28). Also, the paralytic remained silent throughout, and simply obeyed Jesus (11-12). He saw the faith of his four friends and let them help him. The four men did not give up, in spite of the obstacles (many people blocked their way; they also must have need to find ropes to lower the paralytic). They even risked upsetting the owner of the house and the crowd by taking apart the roof and making a commotion by lowering the paralytic into the house.
 - 3c. Just as the four men's faith played a part in the healing, our faith in the Lord is also essential in allowing the people we bring to Christ experience God's grace. The Lord not only looks at the faith of the person in need, but also the faith of those who help this person. So we ought to trust and believe in God's mercy and power when we are helping someone in need.

The actions that accompanied these four men's faith are truly remarkable. Because of their faith, they were willing to go through all that trouble to bring the paralytic to Jesus. Likewise, our faith is demonstrated when we are willing to invest our time, money, thoughts,

and energy in helping the spiritual needs of others. God recognizes and responds to this kind of faith.

- 5a. Jesus came to preach (Mk 1:38) and to call sinners (17). It was more important to forgive a person's sins so that his soul is saved. However, Jesus also has compassion on our sufferings (Mk 1:41) and heals our illnesses to prove His authority to forgive sins (10). (This implies that sometimes an illness is caused by our sins [Jas 5:15]).
- 5b. He was claiming to be God, for only God alone can forgive sins (7). This was why Jesus' words upset the scribes.
- 5c. Jesus' divine power to heal proved that He also had the divine power to forgive sins (10). Furthermore, it proved that Jesus was indeed God, who alone can forgive sins.
6. Many miracles and signs are witnessed in the True Jesus Church. However, we must have the correct priorities. Like the crowd, sometimes we are more amazed by earthly blessing (healing) than by spiritual mercy (forgiveness of sins). Jesus tells us that the greater and more powerful work is the forgiveness of sin (9). We must seek the greater, spiritual blessings.

Daniel's three friends believed God would perform a miracle and save them from the furnace. However, they also said, "But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up" (Dan 3:18). They knew that to obey God was more important than anything else.
7. Jesus was able to perceive in His spirit what the scribes were reasoning in their hearts. This supernatural power shows that He was from God, for only the Spirit of God can search and perceive the secret thoughts of men.
8. In both, they were at their jobs when Jesus called them. Jesus said, "Follow me," and they followed Him. Because Matthew followed Jesus just as quickly as the fishermen did, he probably also knew about Jesus. (cf. Lesson 3, Question 3).
- 9a. Matthew gave up a profitable job. The fishermen also gave up a profitable job. Matthew's job made him a target of hatred. On the other hand, the fishermen's job was respectable. Often God calls us out of the status quo to make a change in our lives. Sometimes it means leaving some comforts behind. Sometimes it means making a determination to overcome our shortcomings.
10. It is not derogatory. Matthew himself uses the same description (Mt 9:10). The NIV puts the word "sinners" in quotes, implying that the term was used not in the usual context. The fact that Jesus ate with them shows that He did not despise them. In this case, the Bible is just stating

a fact, without a sense of condemnation. We are all sinners, “for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Rom 3:23). We must confess that we are sinners before we can believe and repent.

- 11a. “The righteous” referred to the scribes who thought that they were righteous and looked down on others. Jesus did not call them because they had already rejected His message. The “sinners” were the ones who humbled themselves and followed Jesus.
- 11c. While everyone has the need of God, not everyone recognizes or acknowledges that need. All are sinners, but Jesus Christ will heal only sinners who see themselves as sinners, not sinners who think that they are righteous. So it is important for us to humbly confess our need of God and our unworthiness in order to receive Christ’s spiritual healing (cf. Lk 18:9-14; Jn 9:39-41; Jas 4:6).

Lesson 5

Observations

Outline

- Fasting (2:18-20)
 - People ask Jesus why His disciples are not fasting (18)
 - Analogy of the bridegroom (19-20)
- The New and the Old (2:21-22)
 - Unshrunk cloth on old garment (21)
 - New wine in old wineskins (22)
- Sabbath (2:23-3:5)
 - Pharisees accuse the disciples of breaking the Sabbath (2:23-24)
 - “The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath” (2:24-28)
 - Pharisees waiting to accuse Jesus of breaking the Sabbath (3:1-3)
 - Jesus rebukes the Pharisees and heals the man with a withered hand (3:4-5)
 - Plotting against Jesus (3:6)

Keywords/Phrases

Fast, bridegroom, new, old, lawful, unlawful, Sabbath

General Analysis

3. People asked about fasting (2:18). They asked because Jesus’ disciples were not doing what other respected religious figures were doing.

The Pharisees asked Jesus why His disciples were doing what was not lawful on the Sabbath (2:24). They asked in order to discredit Jesus for condoning His disciples’ breaking the law.

Jesus answered the questions/accusations with questions of his own (2:19; 2:25; 3:4). He often taught by asking the right questions. It is more effective to let a person come up with the answer, instead of just telling him. Even the Pharisees knew what was right and wrong. However, they chose to ignore the truth (3:4-5) and instead acted out of their evil intentions (3:6).

Segment Analysis

1. To humble oneself, to repent (Ps 69:10); to pray for someone else (Ps 35:13); to cast out unclean spirit (Mk 9:29); to seek God’s guidance and revelation (Acts 10:30); to pray for God’s workers (Acts 14:23); to prepare against temptation (Mt 4:1-3). Note that in each case, fasting goes together with praying.
- 2a. Bridegroom—Jesus
- 2b. Wedding guests—the disciples; the believers
3. The purpose of fasting is to strengthen us spiritually to pray and to be closer to God. It was also a sign of mourning and contrition. Since Jesus was there with the disciples everyday, living with them and sharing with them the gospel, fasting at this time would have been out of place. In fact, it was right for them to rejoice while Jesus was still with them.

On the other hand, the Pharisees had twisted fasting into a sign of meaningless suffering, even using it to put on a devout appearance. They stayed true to their routine of fasting but failed to rejoice at the coming of the Son of God!
- 4a. Unshrunk cloth—Jesus’ fulfillment of the Old Testament laws
- 4b. Old garment—rigid formalities of the Pharisees’ rules; the physical world (as opposed to the spiritual world)
- 4c. Tear—failure to observe God’s laws
- 4d. New wine—Jesus’ new teaching; the Holy Spirit; God’s love
- 4e. Old wineskins—the Pharisee’s stubbornness.
- 4f. New wineskins—the new self, willing to accept Jesus
5. Jesus taught that the spirit of the law is more important than the letter of the law (Mt 5:17-18). We must go beyond technicalities (Mt 17:20). For example, the law says, “Thou shall not murder,” but we must not be proud just because we do not murder anyone. Jesus teaches us that hatred is equivalent to murder (Mt 5:22).

Through Jesus Christ, God has made a new covenant with us (Heb 8:10-13; 9:15). When we are baptized, Christ is our new garment (Gal 3:27). Jesus' teachings (unshrunk patch) can mend our imperfections (tear) only if we leave our old assumptions behind (replace the old cloth with the new). The Pharisees clung to their traditions (2Cor 3:14-15), and Jesus became their stumbling block (1Pet 2:8), like unshrunk cloth that makes a tear worse on old garment. They ruined themselves like the old wineskins, and wasted God's grace (Heb 10:29) like ruined new wine.

Through the blood of Christ, we enjoy the same covenants God made with the Israelites (Eph 2:12-13). The Old Testament laws are now obsolete. Today, the Holy Spirit teaches us how to turn these biblical principles into everyday practice, beyond the written regulations (Eph 2:14-16). Jesus probably never asked Himself, "Should I fast today or not?" "Can I heal on the Sabbath or not?" He naturally knew what to do and what not to do. When the Holy Spirit lives in us, we too can live as Jesus lived (Rom 8:10-11).

6. Jesus was not teaching that anything new is necessarily better. He was simply using the analogy of the new and the old to compare His teachings to the traditions of the Pharisees. He was not talking about contemporary values of men being better than age-old truths of the Bible.

God's word is applicable anytime, anywhere. God's word also never changes, and it does not need to be changed. We must not modify biblical teachings to suit our ideas. Rather, we must change ourselves to accept the Holy Spirit's guidance (Rom 8:5-7).

- 7a. He was running for his life. It is reasonable to assume that he did not bring much food (if at all). Jesus said that David and his companions were hungry and in need.
- 7b. The only law David broke was eating the consecrated bread, which was supposed to be for the priests only. Otherwise, David complied with the law as best as he could. He asked the high priest for bread, and did not take it by force. His men had kept themselves from women (1Sam 21:4-5). The priest gave him the bread that had been removed from the table, not the bread that was still dedicated to the Lord (1Sam 21:6).
- 7c. Jesus pointed out the order between man and the Sabbath. God did not create man to observe arbitrary laws. He created the Sabbath for man to rest, to supply our physical and spiritual needs. It was the Pharisees who made the Sabbath into a burden.

David ate the bread because he needed to. The disciples ate also because they needed to. Helping someone's physical and/or spiritual needs is more important than observing religious regulations. In Mt 12:5, Jesus pointed out the fallacy in the Pharisees' reasoning. If it was

lawful for a priest to serve in the temple on the Sabbath, then it was lawful to serve man and God.

8. Jesus is the Lord of mankind, and He was the One who made the Sabbath for man. Therefore, He is also the Lord of the Sabbath. Since Jesus is the Lord of the Sabbath, He decides what is lawful on the Sabbath. If even the Lord of the Sabbath did not charge the disciples of desecrating the Sabbath, how could the Pharisees condemn them?
- 9a. "It is lawful to do good."—This implies human benefit takes precedence over regulations. Then it would be lawful for the disciples to pick grains to eat, because it was a human need (hunger), just like David eating the consecrated bread because it was necessary. Also, Jesus could not be accused of healing on the Sabbath.
- 9b. "It is not lawful to do good."—If that is the case, then priests should not be allowed to work on the Sabbath, and the Pharisees and scribes should not be allowed to teach on the Sabbath.
- 9c. "It is lawful to do evil."—It is clearly against God's law.
- 9d. "It is not lawful to do evil."—The Pharisees wanted to trap Jesus and accuse Him (and, later, to kill Him). Also, it is evil to withhold help to someone in need (Jas 2:14-17). They had evil intentions in their hearts. So they would be condemning themselves if they said this.
- 9e. "It is lawful to save a life."—Then it is lawful for Jesus to heal, and for the disciples to pick grains to eat so that they do not starve.
- 9f. "It is not lawful to save a life."—In Mt 12:11-12, Jesus asked the Pharisees if they would not save their sheep on the Sabbath if it fell into a pit. If they would save an animal, how could they not save a man?
- 9g. "It is lawful to kill."—It is clearly against God's law, and against the Pharisees' own regulations.
- 9h. "It is not lawful to kill."—At the same time the Pharisees harbored thoughts of killing Jesus.
10. The only way to answer Jesus' questions was to admit that Jesus was right. The Pharisees were silent (3:4) because they refused to confess that they had been wrong. Instead, they went out and committed a much greater offense (plotting to kill Jesus) than not observing the Sabbath laws.
11. Jesus answered His own question through His action. By healing the man on the Sabbath, He showed that it is lawful to do good, and to save life. Moreover, the fact that God gave Jesus the power to heal on the Sabbath confirmed that His teaching is true (cf. 16:20).

Lesson 6

Observation

Outline

- Jesus' Fame Increases (3:7-12)
 - Crowd follows Him (7-10)
 - Unclean spirits cry out (11-12)
- Jesus Appoints the Twelve Apostles (3:13-19)
 - Purpose and authority of appointing the apostles (13-15)
 - The names of the apostles (16-19)
- Opposition (3:20-35)
 - Jesus' family goes to take charge of Him (20-21)
 - Scribes accuse Jesus of being possessed by Beelzebul (22)
 - Parable of a house against itself (23-30)
 - Jesus' family arrives (31-32)
 - Jesus emphasizes doing God's will over family relationships (33-35)

Keywords/Phrases

Crowd, appointed, designating, given authority, out of His mind, possessed, blaspheme, family

General Analysis

- 1a. Crowd—gathered around Jesus and followed Him. They came mostly for healing, because they heard “how many things He was doing,” not what He was teaching. They were so anxious for miracles that they pushed against each other and Jesus (10, 20). (But because the crowd was there all the time, Jesus had to take extra time and effort to accomplish anything else [9, 13, 20].)
- 1b. Unclean spirits—They cried out “You are the Son of God.” They knew that Jesus had God's authority and power, and feared Him (Jas 2:19).
- 1c. Apostles—They came to Jesus when He called them to the mountainside. At this point they probably knew that Jesus was not an ordinary teacher (especially when He gave them the authority to drive out demons).
- 1d. Jesus' family—They were worried for His physical and mental wellbeing (They knew that He had not had the time to eat, and they also thought he was out of His mind). Perhaps they were embarrassed because they did not believe Jesus deserved so much attention. They might have thought they could put Jesus in His place, so they went to take charge of Him.

- 1e. Scribes—They came from Jerusalem to oppose Jesus because they claimed that Jesus was demon-possessed and that He was given power by Beelzebul.

Segment Analysis

- 1a. In addition to the Jewish population, pagan worshippers also came. They probably had not witnessed many of Jesus' miracles (Mt 11:20-21), and had only heard of what Jesus was doing. However, just hearing about Jesus gave them enough faith to come.
2. cf. Lesson 3, Question 8.
3. Because the crowd was pushing up against Him and each other, Jesus had to separate Himself in a small boat. This made it much more difficult for Jesus to heal, spend time alone, pray, or teach. He did not even have time to eat. He had to take extra effort to accomplish his work. By crowding up against Jesus, the crowd thought of only their own needs (miracles), which was only a small part of Jesus' ministry.
- 4a. A disciple is on the receiving end, learning and preparing for the work ahead. An apostle is sent to work for God. Note that the Bible continues to refer to the twelve apostles as “disciples,” which implies that the learning process never ends. Jesus sent them out when they were still spiritually immature (cf. Mk 8:17-18), but He was patient with their shortcomings. Eventually these apostles became God's mighty workers.
- 4b. To be with Jesus; to preach; to heal; to drive out demons (14-15). Jesus needed help. Just healing the crowd took up all of Jesus' time; He couldn't accomplish other things He needed to do.
- 4c. The apostles were selected to be witnesses “beginning from John's baptism to the time when Jesus was taken up” (Acts 1:21-22, NIV). God continued to build them up spiritually until they were prepared to become the foundation of the church (Eph 2:20). In Mark, we see how they learned from Jesus by observing His actions.
The apostles' primary task was to be with Jesus. Likewise, before we do God's work, we must first cultivate ourselves spiritually through prayer and God's word. We must understand and obey God's will as well as experience His power (Lk 10:21-23). Otherwise, we will be unable to be witnesses for Christ and even risk being rejected by God (1Cor 9:27).
- 5a. Peter used to be a fisherman, and Jesus promised that he would become a “fisher of men” (Mk 1:17). His new name signifies his new identity. Jesus gave him great authority and responsibility, for he, along with the other apostles, had been entrusted with the authority from Christ to establish the church (Mt 16:18-19). For the sake of the gospel, Peter would eventually lose his freedom and his life (Jn 21:18-19). Changing

Simon's name to "rock" also reminded him that he was built on Jesus Christ, who is the true foundation of the church (Eph 2:20; 1Pet 2:4-8).

"Boanerges," as Mark explains, means, "Sons of Thunder" (17). This might describe James and John's zeal and energy, and possibly their violent nature (Lk 9:51-55). Jesus might have used this nickname to remind them to overcome their shortcoming. Like the other apostles, after they received the Holy Spirit, James and John were transformed into great workers of God. James was killed for his faith (Acts 12:1-2). John eventually became known for his gentle exhortation to love one another (1Jn 4:7-21).

- 5b. Abraham—to confirm God's promise that he would be "a father of many nations" (Gen 17:5)

Sarah—she would become "a mother of many nations" (Gen 17:15).

Isaac—means "he laughs"; a reminder of Abraham's laughter when hearing the promise of God (Gen 17:19).

Jacob ("Israel")—to remind Him how he struggled with God and with men and had prevailed (Gen 32:28)

Magor-Missabib—means "terror on every side"; a name that pronounces divine judgment on the wicked servant of God (Jer 20:1-6).

Jezreel, Lo-Ruhamah and Lo-Ammi—to depict the broken relationship between God and His people (Hos 1:4-9).

John the Baptist—a prophecy that he will do great work for the Lord, "in the spirit and power of Elijah" (Lk 1:13-17). His naming also broke with family tradition (Lk 1:60-61) to show that God was greater than human tradition.

Jesus—He is the Son of God, the king of kings (Lk 1:31-33).

- 6a. Fishermen (Peter, Andrew [Mk 1:16], James, John [Mk 1:19], Thomas, Nathanael [Jn 21:2-3]), tax collector (Matthew [Mt 10:3]), political activist (Simon the Zealot [Lk 6:15]). Note that Matthew and Simon the Zealot were on opposite extremes in the political spectrum. Simon viewed paying taxes to the Roman government as treason to God, while Matthew's very job was to collect taxes!
- 7a. Jesus' family should have known from their experience that Jesus was not an ordinary man (Lk 2:19, 50-51; Jn 2:3-5). However, they were focused on the rumors they had heard, and what they considered to be peculiar behavior on Jesus' part, rather than what God had revealed to them.

In trying to help Jesus, Jesus' mother and brothers were acting against God's will. Our relationship with our family members must reflect our relationship with God, but God must come first. For example, Paul

teaches us to "obey your parents in the Lord" (Eph 6:1). If we obey God, we become members of one family, connected through Jesus Christ (Eph 5:30). Our spiritual relationship is better than mere blood relations. Here, Jesus extends His love to all those who believe.

However, Jesus does not downplay the importance of our earthly family. Jesus showed His love for His mother while on the cross. During the most desperate moments in His life, Jesus made sure that His mother would be taken care of (Jn 19:25-27).

- 10a. The scribes should have known from their knowledge that Jesus was not an ordinary man. They were familiar with the prophecies of the Messiah, and could not overlook everything Jesus had said and done. John the Baptist had confirmed that Jesus is from heaven (Mk 1:8). God Himself said Jesus is his Son (Mk 1:11). Jesus had proven His authority to forgive sins (Mk 2:10-11). People were amazed by Jesus' teachings (Mk 1:22). In spite of all this, the scribes wanted to assert their authority in the spiritual matters. Since they continued in their unbelief, the only "reasonable" explanation for them was that Jesus received His authority from the demons.
- 10b. They claimed that Jesus had a demon, therefore attributing evil to God.
- 10c. The Holy Spirit (Jn 16:13); biblical knowledge (2Tim 3:15); acknowledging Jesus Christ (1Jn 4:2-3); speaks of the truth, not of the world (1Jn 4:5); how it is accepted by the people of God (1Jn 4:6).
- 11a. Strong man—Satan. God binds him in order to save our soul (Rev 20:2-3).
- 11b. House—kingdom of Satan; the world; opposition, persecution
- 11c. Possessions—people under Satan's control
- 11d. Intruder—Jesus. Only He has power over Satan and his dominion.
12. Satan does not plunder himself. If he did, his kingdom would fall. The demons are all working together against God, so it is illogical to conclude that you can drive out a demon by the power of Satan.
- There are many testimonies in the True Jesus Church about people who were demon-possessed. When they try to get help from the idols or exorcists, their conditions became worse. We can only drive out unclean spirits by the power of the Holy Spirit.
- Likewise, if the church is divided against itself, it cannot stand. In a sense, we would be worse than the demons. That is why the devil tries to split the church apart (1Cor 1:10-13; 3:3-5).

Lesson 7

Observation

Outline

- Jesus Teaches in Galilee (4:1-2)
- Parable of the sower (4:3-20)
 - Seeds sowed on four types of soil (3-9)
 - Parable of the sower explained (10-20)
- Parable of the Lamp (4:21-23)
- Parable of the Measure (4:24-25)
- Parable of the Growing Seed (4:26-29)
- Parable of the Mustard Seed (4:30-32)
- Jesus Explains the Parables Only to His Own Disciples (4:33-34)

Keywords/Phrases

Parable, understand, seed, soil, root, thorns, crop, word, light, ear, hear, kingdom of God, harvest

General Analysis

- 1a. Seeds, birds, soil, wayside/road, stony ground, thorns, lamp, stalk, head, kernel, sickle, mustard garment (Mk 2:21), wineskins (Mk 2:22), leaven (Mk 8:15), salt (Mk 9:50), camel, eye of a needle (Mk 10:25), fig tree (Mk 11:20-22), vineyard (Mk 12:1-9), sheep (Mt 18:12-13)
- 1b. Paul writes about accommodating people's weaknesses and different customs for the sake of saving their souls (1Cor 9:19-22). As long as it does not weaken our own faith in God, it is important to know what is going on around us. Knowing current world events helps us understand biblical prophecies and the world under the devil's control. Knowing what teenagers face in school (what they do for fun, what music they listen to, what TV shows or movies they like, etc.) helps us counsel them by speaking at their level instead of talking down to them. Jesus knew His audience. To some, you need to talk about deep spiritual teachings. To others, it is better to tell a story in simple language.
- 2a. God chooses to reveal His truth in His time, when we are able to accept it. Until this time, Jesus had commanded others not to tell anyone who He was (Mk 1:34, 44; 3:12); it was not yet time for His identity to be revealed. He prophesied that the truth will be spoken in parables (Ps 78:2). Those who did not have the heart to seek the truth would not understand. But Jesus has compassion on those who want to learn. In

this passage, "His disciples" does not refer only to the twelve disciples, but also to those who stayed behind and asked Him about the parable (10).

There are many things we still don't understand. Some biblical passages still confound us. But our job is to strive to learn "what is acceptable to the Lord" (Eph 5:10) and do as much as we know. Ultimately, when we go to heaven, we will "see Him as He is" (1Jn 3:2) and understand everything.

- 2b. Verse 13 implies that the parable of the sower was the easiest to understand. Jesus explained everything to His disciples because they were not equipped to learn on their own. Throughout Jesus' ministry, the disciples continued to misinterpret Jesus. They did not truly understand until after Jesus' resurrection and ascension and they received the promised Holy Spirit. The Bible does not give us an explanation to the other three parables because we also have someone to help us explain them: the Holy Spirit. The spirit of Jesus helps us think through the word of God (Jn 16:12-15). The thought process is as important as the answer. (That is the purpose of these Bible study guides).
- 2c. God's word is alive; we constantly discover new teachings in the same passage. At the same time, a new idea or interpretation that sounds logical (at least at first) is not necessarily correct. We can never understand the Bible through human reasoning alone (1Jn 4:5-6). The only way to learn God's word is to be filled with the Holy Spirit (1Cor 9-16) and to know the Bible well (2Tim 3:14-17). The truth is always confirmed by the Holy Spirit and biblical verses. When listening to sermons or reading a Bible study guide, analyze the message and keep the word of God in your mind. Pray over what you read and hear. Discuss it with church ministers and members (Col 3:16).
3. The kingdom of God is not only the heavenly kingdom. It is also on earth today, in the church, and in our hearts (Lk 17:21). Jesus even taught us to pray, "Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven" (Mt 6:10).

Segment Analysis

- 1a. Wayside/along the path—none; the birds ate it up before it could grow at all.
- 1b. On stony ground—the seed sprang up quickly, but withered easily because it had no root.
- 1c. Among thorns—the seed grew up, but did not bear grain because it was choked by the thorns.

- 1d. On good ground—the seed came up, grew, and produced a crop of 30, 60, or 100 times.
- 2a. Sower—Jesus (cf. Mt 13:37)
- 2b. Seed—the word
- 2c. Wayside/path—person who hears the word, but the word does not have a chance to take root.
- 2d. Bird—Satan
- 2e. Stony ground—person who hears the word and receives it with joy, but the faith has no root.
- 2f. Sun—trouble or persecution because of the word
- 2g. Thorns—worries of this life, deceitfulness of wealth, desires for other things
- 2h. Good ground—person who hears the word, accepts it, and produces a crop
- 2i. Crop—the word of God manifested in our lives; the kingdom of God (30-32); fruit of the Holy Spirit (Gal 5:22-23)
3. Worries of this world—job/financial security, becoming successful, peer pressure
Deceitfulness of riches—the more money, the better; money will improve my life
Desires for other things—new clothing, new car, bigger house, physical lust
4. Good ground; hear the word; accept the word; the seed must die; understanding God’s word means understanding and accepting the sacrifices necessary to our faith
6. According to the Lord Jesus, the purpose of parables is to conceal the mystery of the kingdom of God. However, when quoting the prophecy from Isaiah, Jesus had in mind those who were callous in their hearts (“those who are outside”), not everyone in general.
Those who are unbelieving may see but not perceive, hear and not understand. As a result, their sins remain. In other words, the inability to understand the mystery of the kingdom of God is the result of man’s callousness. Through the use of parables, God conceals the truth from the hard-hearted. But God does not intend to withhold the truth from those who humbly and sincerely seek His will (cf. Mt 11:25). Instead, He lets them know the mystery of God’s kingdom, as He did for the followers mentioned in verse 10.
7. Jesus quoted Isaiah, saying, “they may hear and not understand” (12). He spoke the word of God through parables, “as much as they could

understand” (33, NIV). It implies that some people understood the parables more than others. Some took the time to ask Jesus about the parables (10). When Jesus was alone with them (34), He explained everything about “the mystery of the kingdom of God” (11). So “he who has ears to hear” refers to those who are willing to open their ears to learn about God’s spiritual teachings. We must dedicate time for our spiritual cultivation, to be alone with Christ. Only then can we grow in faith and knowledge (Heb 5:12-14), like the seed on good ground.

The same expression also appears in the letters to the seven churches. In those letters, the Holy Spirit addresses the virtues and shortcomings of each church. The passage in Revelation describes what happens once the word of God (the seed) takes root in the different churches.

8. 1. Jesus Christ and His word (Jn 1:4-5,9; Ps 119:105).
2. The believers (Mt 5:14-16; Rev 1:20)—Like a lamp that is placed on a stand to give off light, we believers must walk in the light and shine as lights in the world by living out Jesus’ example and teachings (Mt 5:14-16; 1Jn 1:5-10; Php 2:15-16).
9. 1. Our Lord Jesus and His word bring to light our deeds of darkness, even the secret thoughts and intentions. Nothing can escape from the light of God, which searches our hearts and convicts us of our sins (Eph 5:11-14; Heb 4:12-13). One day, God will also judge the secrets of men through Jesus Christ, and everything will come to light (Rom 2:16).
2. Believers, in turn, serve as lights in this dark world. By imitating the examples of Jesus Christ, they lead good lives among unbelievers and thereby expose and condemn the wickedness of this world (Eph 5:11; 1Pet 2:12, 15; 3:16; 4:4).
10. Measuring represents giving. In this context, it means devoting ourselves to hearing and practicing the words of Christ. The more we put into living out God’s word, the more God will enable us to understand and benefit from His word (cf. Mt 13:12; 25:29).
11. The parable of the lamp teaches us that God’s word is so pervasive that it exposes man’s secrets. Thus, the parables of Jesus Christ will reveal the hearts of the listeners. Those who are humble and sincere will understand the truth behind the parables and come to the light. But those who are hard-hearted will be confounded and keep away from the light.
The parable of the measure teaches us that the more eager a person is to seek God’s will and to practice it, the more he understands the parables of Jesus. Through the use of parables, God measures to each person according to his heart.

12. If the seed represents the word of God, then the sower represents the person who preaches the gospel. The first parable focuses on what happens to the seed, while this one focuses on the worker. The sower does not know how the seed grows; he simply does his job, night and day. The kingdom of God is advancing, with or without us. We decide whether or not we want to be part of the mission. Today, it might be hard to comprehend how the gospel can be preached to the ends of the earth, but we just need to preach (as Jesus commanded us to do); it is up to God to make the seed grow (1Cor 3:6).
13. The word of God grows in the hearts and transforms us so that we might be saved. Many have worked before us (sowing the seed). Today we reap the fruit of their labor (Jn 4:37-38). We continue the work of the early workers. In the last days, Christ will harvest the earth (Rev 14:14-16, 18).
14. This parable focuses on the seed that takes root and grows to produce a crop. The kingdom of God might appear small and lowly at first. The first church also appeared weak and small. It was even viewed as a small sect of Judaism. However, when the believers were scattered due to persecution, the gospel was preached to other parts of the world, and the church grew rapidly.
- God continued to carry out His salvation plan. He established the True Jesus Church to take up the task. Now the church is small compared to other Christian denominations, and some Christians fiercely oppose our doctrines. However, when we humble ourselves and submit to the Holy Spirit's guidance, we recognize that the church preaches the perfect gospel, which has been hidden to so many.
15. Birds find shelter beneath God's altar (Ps 84:3), so it might describe God's kingdom as a refuge.
- However, if we draw a parallel between this parable and the parable of the seed, then the birds represent Satan (1Jn 2:18-19). When the church grows and prospers, Satan tries to corrupt it from within (1Jn 2:18-19). However, the parable of the mustard seed tells only part of the story. The parable of the weeds (Mt 13:24-30, 38-42) tells us that God will weed out evil from His kingdom.

Lesson 8

Observation

Outline

- Jesus Calms the Storm (4:35-41)
- Jesus and the disciples go to the other side of the lake (35-36)

- Disciples are afraid of the storm (37-38)
- Jesus rebukes the storm, and then the disciples (39-41)
- Jesus Casts out "Legion" (5:1-20)
 - The demon-possessed man comes to Jesus (1-7)
 - The unclean spirits plead with Jesus (8-12)
 - The unclean spirits come out of the man and go into the pigs (13-14)
 - The people plead with Jesus to leave them (15-17)
 - Jesus tells the man to testify the miracle (18-20)

Key Words/Phrases

Windstorm, sleep, "don't you care?", rebuked, calm, fearful, Legion, pleaded, permission, pigs, tell

General Analysis

- 1a. disciples—They were afraid for their lives when a violent storm hit them; afraid of Jesus when He calmed the storm.
 - 1b. "Legion"—They afraid of Jesus' power over them, and that Jesus would send them out of the region of the Gadarenes.
 - 1c. Gadarenes—They were afraid of Jesus because of what had happened to the man and to the pigs.
 - 1d. The only good fear is the fear of God (Prov 9:10). The disciples feared Jesus when they witnessed His almighty power. When we fear the Lord, we learn to completely rely on Him.
- When we have God's wisdom to guide us, there is no need to fear our surroundings. We can sleep calmly through the storms in our life, like Jesus did (Prov 3:19-26).
- The love of God drives out fear of punishment and suffering (1Jn 4:15-18). If our fears hinder us from living for God, we can ask Him to help us (like the disciples did during the storm). Even Jesus experienced fear when He was in the Garden of Gethsemane because of the bitter cup that He was about to drink. But He prayed earnestly, and God helped Him by sending an angel to strengthen Him (Lk 22:42-44).
- As God's children, we do not fear Him like the demons do (Jas 2:19). There's no need to be afraid of what God can do to us. When we strive to obey his will, He works out everything for our good (Rom 8:28). When we suffer loss, the last thing we would want is for God to be away from us. It was foolish of the Gadarenes to ask Jesus to leave because they feared Him.

Segment Analysis

- 1a. No time at all. He was probably on the same boat he sat in when He was teaching the crowd (Mk 4:1). The disciples took Him along, “even as He was in the boat” (36). This implies that He did not take the time to wash up or to rest, even though He must have been tired (He fell asleep in the boat).
- 1b. Although Jesus did not pamper Himself, He still needed to rest before continuing. For example, He used the time in the boat to sleep. He also retreated to the wilderness to be alone, to rest, to pray, and to meditate on the word of God (Mk 6:31,46).
- 2a. The twelve apostles, other boats (36), possibly the people who had stayed behind to ask Him about the parables.
- 2b. He was tired, and should rest; the likelihood of a storm; on the other side were mostly Gentiles, with whom the Jews didn’t like to associate.
- 2c. There was work to do on the other side. Casting out the unclean spirit was the first step in spreading the gospel throughout Decapolis (5:20), among the Gentiles.
- 2d. There are times for us to be on dry land, listen to the word of God, and cultivate our spirituality. There are also times when we have to brave the storm.
God lets us decide whether or not we want to go. We decide whether we want to face a difficult situation with God on our side, or refuse to obey and face the consequences ourselves. Do we want to submit to God? These are the times when we expose our vulnerability in order to experience God’s mercy (2Cor 12:9-10).
- 3a. Jesus must have been exhausted. Also, because He was the Lord of all creation, the wind and the waves did not bother Him, no matter how strong they were. He could have stopped the storm at any time (although He deliberately did not do so until the last moment).
- 3b. Sometimes it feels like Jesus is sleeping, not caring about us. It feels like God has forgotten about us (Ps 13:1). But if we cry out to Him, like the disciples cried out to Jesus, He will do what we ask, or give us a better answer (2Cor 7:9).
4. The same rebuke was used to quiet the unclean spirit and the storm (cf. *Did You Know* 3). Jesus also rebuked the fever of Simon’s mother-in-law (Lk 4:39). It is possible that the devil had brought the storm upon Jesus and the disciples. If this is so, then this was another one of his attempts to stop Jesus’ ministry. Jesus saw through the devil’s tricks.
- 5a. Many of the disciples were experienced fishermen, yet the storm was so strong (4:37) that they were afraid for their lives. Their large boat (cf.

Did You Know 1) was quickly filled with water. Perhaps they had tried to row away from the storm but failed. Perhaps the other boats with them were also in danger of sinking. Clearly, the storm was so overwhelming that there was nothing they could do but ask Jesus for help.

- 5b. Maybe they had only expected Jesus to help them steer or dump water out of the boat. They had not expected Jesus to rebuke the storm, much less the wind and the waves to obey Him. They saw Jesus’ anger when He rebuked the storm. Jesus also revealed their lack of faith. Moments before they were afraid of the storm, but now they were more terrified of Jesus’ power. This experience taught them about Jesus and about themselves.
- 5c. In desperation, they cried out to Jesus for help. They believed that Jesus could somehow save them. However, because Jesus seemed to be ignoring them during the emergency, they accused him of not caring (4:38). The danger was so immediate that they did not bother to think why Jesus was sleeping through all of this. Afterwards, they were afraid of His power. They had witnessed Jesus casting out demons and healing, and still they underestimated Jesus. In that sense, they had no faith.
6. God helps us not only in the general sense. We do not need to hesitate to ask Him to help us solve a math problem, write an essay, or finish a project.
- 7a. “Legion”—not to send them out of the area; to send them among the pigs
- 7b. Gadarenes—for Jesus to leave their region
- 7c. Man who had been demon-possessed—to go with Jesus
- 8a. It was for the listeners’ benefit. The dialog between Jesus and the unclean spirit teaches us many important lessons. Jesus intended for the people to hear exactly what was taking place (5:16).
- 8b. In other times, when Jesus cast out an unclean spirit, it just left. But this time Jesus allowed the unclean spirit to go into the pigs. One possible teaching is that if our hearts are unclean (according to the Mosaic laws, pigs are unclean animals), we give the devil a chance to work within us (Eph 4:27).
- 8c. God created everything in the universe for our benefit (Gen 1:28). If He can use something to teach us and to save us, He will. (cf. Mk 11:12-14, 20-22).
9. “Legion” implies a great army of unclean spirits.
The devil always seeks to attack us in many ways, physically and spiritually.

- 10a. Even though the unclean spirit had power over people and the physical world (5:3-5), it was terrified of Jesus (5:7). There were many unclean spirits working together (they were named “Legion,” and there were enough of them to kill 2,000 pigs; Matthew tells us that there were actually two demon-possessed men [Mt 8:28]). Still, the demon had no power over Jesus, even though He was just one man, because He was God. Before Jesus said or did anything, the unclean spirit came to plead with Him. They even needed Jesus’ permission to stay or go (5:10, 12-13). Jesus alone has the power to bind the unclean spirits (cf. Mk 3:24-25); the devil cannot do anything without His permission (Job 1:12; 2:6). The unclean spirit might look strong to us (like the storm on the lake), but God is much greater.
- 11a. They lost 2,000 pigs, and did not want Jesus to do any more “damage” in their area. They placed more value on their pigs than on the man who was possessed. By asking Jesus to leave, the Gadarenes got in the way of Jesus’ work and missed a chance to receive greater blessings. Note that they were afraid of Jesus (5:15), and did not dare to use force.
12. The man told how much the Lord had mercy on him (5:19-20), whereas the pig herders probably told about how Jesus spoke with the unclean spirit and killed 2,000 pigs. The man told his family about Jesus so that they too would believe. In fact, the man himself was a testimony for God; just by looking at him, the people saw that he was healed. On the other hand, the pig herders told the townspeople to make sure people knew it was not their fault that the pigs had drowned; to them, Jesus was the troublemaker. We must ask God for wisdom to see the entire picture of His will.
13. This was an area of mostly Gentiles (cf. *Did You Know* 4), so the scribes and the Pharisees did not have the influence to oppose the gospel. There is a time and place for everything. Paul counsels Timothy to “be prepared in season and out of season” (2Tim 4:2). For example, the church in communist China must be discreet in order to avoid government interference. But in countries where there is religious freedom, we must freely preach the complete gospel entrusted to us.

Lesson 9

Observation

Outline

- Jairus Pleads with Jesus to Heal his Daughter (5:21-24)
- A Woman Healed from Bleeding (5:25-34)
 - She suffered for 12 years (25-26)

- She touches Jesus’ cloak (27-29)
- Jesus feels power gone out from Him (30-32)
- Woman tells the truth (33-34)
- Jesus Raises Jairus’ Daughter from the Dead (5:35-43)
 - Men bring news that the girl is dead (35)
 - Jesus goes to Jairus’ home (36-38)
 - People laugh at Jesus (39-40)
 - “Talitha cumi!” (41-43)

Key Words/Phrases

Fell at His feet, pleaded, crowd, power, touched, believe, dead, asleep, laughed, follow

General Analysis

- 1a.
 1. Jairus’ daughter was too sick to come to Jesus, so he begged Jesus to go to her. The woman had faith in Jesus, and took action on her own.
 2. Both were certain that Jesus could help (“she may be healed, and she will live” [23], “I shall be made well” [28]).
 3. They both worked their way through the crowd to be near Jesus.
 4. Jairus fell before Jesus publicly, while the woman came up behind Jesus in secret.
 5. Jairus specifically asked Jesus to lay hands on his daughter, which implies some assumptions on his part (“you should lay hands on someone in order to heal her”). On the other hand, the woman’s faith was so strong that she believed she would be healed simply by touching Jesus’ cloak. Jesus Himself is the source of power; how He heals is of secondary importance.
3. It shows us how Jesus managed His pace in spite of His hectic life. With so many people around Him, with overlapping requests, Jesus still took the time to talk to those who put their faith in Him.
1. People respected Jairus, but he did not abuse his authority like the scribes did. Also, he was not ashamed to plead for help. The apostles set an example of humility, even though they were in a position of power. They did not pretend to know everything, but did their best to pass on their experience and understanding of God (1Cor 15:9; 2Pet 3:15-16). They also were not ashamed to admit their weakness (2Cor 12:7-8).
2. Like the other times, the crowd was probably there mostly to see and experience miracles. Because Jairus came to Jesus publicly, they followed Jesus to see what would happen.

3. The woman must have thought she would be hidden in the crowd; she thought she could be healed without anyone knowing about it. Perhaps she was tired from twelve years of suffering at the hands of many doctors. She had used up all her resources, yet her illness had worsened. Perhaps she did not want to bother Jesus, who was on His way to heal Jairus' daughter.
4. Even though Jesus had unlimited power, He was limited in the body of a man. It was not effortless for Him to heal someone or to cast out demons. That is why he needed to rest physically and spiritually.
Our Lord Jesus paid a price to save us. Every time we ask Him for forgiveness, His blood washes away our sins. When He suffered and died on the cross for our sins, His sacrifice covered up all of our sins (Heb 13:12; 10:12). Imagine how draining that must have been.
5. It seemed to them that Jesus had asked a silly question. The disciples often assumed they knew the answer, when they could not have been more off base (Mt 16:5-8; Jn 4:31-34). There was a reason and purpose to every word Jesus spoke. He uses our life experiences to teach us. The teaching might not be obvious at first, but we must take the effort to find out. After all, Jesus always takes the time to find out about our situation.
6. Jesus always takes the time to find out who we are and what we need. He made the woman come forward so that He could comfort her and strengthen her faith (34). Jesus shows everyone His personal attention. Today, He personally listens to our prayers. He also gives us His Holy Spirit to pray for exactly what we need (Rom 8:26-27; 1Cor 14:2).
7. It is human reaction to be afraid when your secret is exposed. Perhaps she was afraid that Jesus would rebuke her for touching Him. To her credit, once she realized that Jesus knew the truth, she came forth and confessed everything (Mk 5:33; Lk 8:47). This was her chance to speak with the Lord. Because Jesus helped her overcome her shame, she became a wonderful living testimony for God.
8. That one word must have removed the fear from the woman. Jesus is our "Everlasting Father" (Isa 9:6). He loves us even when we become like the prodigal son (Lk 15:20-24). Jesus even likened his love to that of a mother hen (Mt 23:37).
9. He must have been anxious. His daughter was not just seriously ill. She was "at the point of death" (23). It would not have been surprising if Jairus became upset at the woman for detaining Jesus, or perhaps even at Jesus for stopping to talk to the woman. However, the Bible doesn't tell us that Jairus ever became upset. After he asked Jesus to come help his daughter, he remained quiet for the rest of the story.
10. Like Martha, the men from Jairus' house thought that God's power is somehow limited by time. To them, there is such a thing as "too late,"

even for God. The men and Martha both believed that it was required for Jesus to get there soon because there was nothing one could do once a person has died. The men also assumed that, now that the girl was dead, it was pointless for Jesus to go.

The people in the house let their emotions overcome them. They wept and wailed, even when Jesus had arrived. They then laughed at Jesus because they thought He was out of his mind. Unlike Jairus, they did not believe in Jesus, so Jesus did not let them witness the wonderful miracle.

11. Perhaps Jairus had a moment of doubt, afraid that it was too late (that might be why Jesus told him not to be afraid). Like before, he let Jesus do the talking. He just followed Jesus quietly and obeyed what Jesus said.
12. Afraid of death; afraid that it was too late; afraid that Jesus could do nothing for his daughter.
Believe in Jesus; believe what he's believed all along, that "she may be healed, and she will live" (23).
Note that Jesus spoke those words to Jairus (and not to the men from his house). With a few words, Jesus strengthened Jairus. If we maintain our simple faith, the faith that we originally had when we decided to follow Christ, then we will never be afraid of storm, death, or anything else.
13. The Bible teaches us that the death of our physical body is not final. In the New Testament, death is often referred to as "sleep" (cf. Acts 7:60; 1Cor 11:30). Jesus has triumphed over death. When we believe in Him, death no longer frightens us (1Cor 15:55).
Furthermore, Jesus promises that we shall be resurrected in a spiritual body (1Cor 15:22, 43-44). In the last days, some will not even go through death, but will be transformed in a flash (1Cor 15:51-54). All will be raised from the dead to be judged (Rev 20:12-13). Since we will all wake up again, death on earth is like sleep.
14. Jesus initially let the crowd follow Him when He went with Jairus (24). Because people crowded around Him, they heard the woman's testimony. Jesus used that opportunity to teach them about the power of faith (34). The crowd had already learned an important lesson through the woman. If they also had the faith of the woman, they too could be healed by touching Jesus' cloak.

However, when He heard that the girl had died, Jesus did not let the crowd follow Him anymore. Those who were inside the house were only making the situation worse with their crying and wailing. They cried because they did not understand. They then laughed at Jesus because they did not understand. That was why Jesus had to put out everyone

who had been inside Jairus' house. Only a select few were allowed to witness the miracle.

- 15a. Jairus asked Jesus to lay hands on his daughter. Laying of hands was the expected way to pray for healing and blessing. But Jesus did more than what Jairus had asked for. He took the dead girl's hand and lovingly called her "talitha" (cf. *Did You Know* 4). Not only was the girl brought back from death, immediately she was strong enough to stand up and walk around. We ask God for help according to the best of our understanding, but God often answers with much more. Jesus reminded them to give the girl something to eat, which shows us how Jesus does not overlook even the little details of our lives.
- 15c. We can pray to God for anything. Nothing is too great for Him, and nothing is too insignificant to him. We pray to God not only for Him to raise the dead or to heal someone's cancer or to find a job. It can be a simple matter of starting our car, finding our luggage at the airport, or even swatting a fly. God listens to every prayer, and He answers according to our faith and our individual needs.

Lesson 10

Observation

Outline

Jesus Despised in His Hometown (6:1-6)

People amazed by Jesus' teachings and miracles (1-2)

People reject Jesus because of His background (3-4)

Jesus leaves for other villages (5-6)

The Twelve Apostles Sent (6:7-13)

Jesus gives them authority and instructs them on what to do (7-11)

The apostles do as Jesus says (12-13)

Death of John the Baptist (6:14-29)

Rumor of John raised from the dead (14-16)

John the Baptist jailed (17-20)

Through her daughter, Herodias asks for John's head (21-26)

John beheaded and buried (27-29)

Key Words/Phrases

Amazed, wisdom, miracles, carpenter, took offense, authority, preached, repent, anointed, grudge, distressed, beheaded

General Analysis

- 1a. Jesus—He was rejected in His hometown and treated with contempt.
- 1b. Disciples—Practical experience; preacher; traveled in pairs; not settled in one place; relied on hospitality of others; learned what to and what not to bring.
- 1c. John the Baptist—After the end of a powerful ministry, he died without fanfare.

Segment Analysis

- 1a. Many brothers and sisters; common names; Jesus' sisters still lived there; three of His brothers even had the same common name as three of His disciples!
- 1b.
 1. He grew up with the people of His hometown, and was considered one of their own
 2. He was a carpenter.
 3. He did not receive formal religious training.
- 1c. People had been amazed by Jesus when He had a smaller following (Mk 1:21-22 took place in the beginning of His ministry). Now, Jesus was well known for His wisdom and power, and He had a large crowd following him (including an impressive tally of twelve apostles). Perhaps that was why the Nazarenes initially permitted Jesus to teach in the synagogue. But, later, they recognized Him. The harder they looked, the less impressive He seemed to them. And they took offense at such an ordinary man daring to teach them about the kingdom of God.
- 2a. The Nazarenes had no answer. They rejected the only reasonable answer, that Jesus received His power and wisdom from God. The only other possibilities were that Jesus was mad (which was what His own family had thought [Mk 3:21]) or that he was demon possessed (which was what the scribes had claimed [Mk 3:22]).
- 2b. They had already concluded that Jesus was not someone special. Their questions were meant to demean Him. These irrelevant questions made them blind to the truth about Jesus (cf. 1Cor 4:13).
- 3a. Jesus rebuked them for their lack of faith. In Lk 4:23, Jesus exposed what the Nazarenes were thinking. In spite of Jesus' powerful words, they were skeptical of His miraculous powers. They perhaps thought what they heard from Capernaum was exaggerated. They expected Jesus to perform miracles for them, as if He was a magician (cf. Mt 12:38-39).
- 3b. Luke 4:28-29 tells us that after Jesus rebuked the Nazarenes, they became so upset that they wanted to throw Him off the cliff. They did not

repent when Jesus warned them of the consequences. Because of their unbelief, Jesus went to other villages, just as Elijah had gone to Zarephath (Lk 4:25-26). God's work cannot be stopped. If we reject His salvation, He will go elsewhere (Acts 8:1-4; Rom 11:11-12). Note that Jesus still healed a few people—the minority who had faith in Him.

4. We should not jump to conclusions like the Nazarenes did. Just because we don't witness miracles locally doesn't mean that God is not working elsewhere. We still read and hear testimonies from other places. If God truly is not working in the church or in our personal lives, then it is time to examine our faith in Him. Jesus does not leave us unless we reject Him.
- 6a.
 1. Go two by two
 2. Take nothing except a staff
 3. Wear sandals
 4. Do not bring bread, bag, money, or extra tunic
 5. Enter a house and stay there until you leave town
 6. If any place does not welcome you or listen to you, shake the dust off your feet when you leave. This also seems to be an implicit rebuke on the Pharisees' arrogance and unbelief (cf. *Did You Know* 6).
- 6c. Power over unclean spirits (7). Not only did the Lord command them to go and preach, He also equipped them with divine power to win the spiritual battle.
- 6d. Not bringing along many possessions allowed them total dedication to the task at hand (cf. 2Tim 2:4). It also trained the apostles to trust that God will provide for their needs if they are faithful to His work (e.g. Elijah was being provided for by ravens and the widow of Zarephath [1Kgs 17:1-16]).
7. Financially support the church (1Cor 16:1; 2Cor 8:2-5; 11:8-9; Php 4:15-17).
9. Herod believed that Jesus was John the Baptist risen from the dead because he had heard of Jesus' miraculous powers (14, 16).
10. The description of John's death sounds somewhat like an aside. John had been compared to Elijah, and yet his life ended so differently. He died alone, without fanfare (his disciples heard about his death afterwards [Mk 6:29]), whereas Elijah was taken up in a chariot of fire. While in prison, John despaired, and questioned if his work had meaning (Mt 11:2-3). However, our lives are not judged by our earthly glory, but by how God views us when we die. As a prophet, John's job was to speak the word of truth. He continued to do so until the end of his life (cf. 2Cor

13:8). A great reward awaits us when we die in the Lord and rest from our labor (cf. Rev 14:13).

11. Herod did not seem to be upset when John rebuked him for marrying his brother's wife. He seemed to be amused at what John had to say (see his reaction to Jesus in Lk 23:8). Perhaps it was intellectually stimulating. He heard the teaching, understood it, but did not believe. To him, it was only interesting philosophy, not to be practiced in his life. He chose to obey Herodias instead of God, first imprisoning and then beheading John.
12. John did what he could. As long as Herod was willing to listen, John kept teaching Herod to repent. Herod did not believe. By the time Jesus was standing before him, the opportunity for repentance was past. Jesus remained silent because Herod's heart was hard. Likewise, if we do not repent in spite of repeated warnings, God will let us go (see Mt 18:15-17).
13. The Bible teaches us not to let our anger remain (Eph 4:26). Not only should we not hold a grudge, Jesus teaches us to go one step further. If a brother has a grudge against us, we must go and be reconciled with him (Mt 5:23-24).
15. This family is a good example of how not to bring up a child. Their relationship was complicated and not God-centered (Herodias was Herod's niece, and she divorced Herod's brother in order to marry Herod). Herod and Herodias clearly influenced the daughter's morals (the girl asked for her mother's advice when Herod offered her a reward). Perhaps Herodias had taught her to hate John. Still, her behavior was outrageous for a child of her age. She had no qualms about asking for John's head, even hurrying back to the king to ask him for it (25). John's head on a platter did not seem to frighten her (28). Children learn much from their parents' behavior.

Lesson 11

Observation

Outline

Feeding Five Thousand (6:30-45)

After the disciples return, Jesus goes to a solitary place with them (30-32)

A crowd is waiting for them; Jesus teaches the crowd (33-34)

The crowd needs to eat (35-37)

Jesus feeds the crowd with five loaves and two fish (38-45)

Walking on Water (6:46-52)

Jesus alone on land (46-47)

Jesus walks past the disciples' boat, which frightens them (48-49)

Jesus gets into the boat (50-52)

In Gennesaret, People Come to Be Healed (6:53-56)

Key Words/Phrases

Quiet place, rest, compassion, "sheep without a shepherd", green grass, bread, fish, "straining at the oars", terrified, amazed, not understand, hearts hardened

Segment Analysis

1. They must have been excited over how much they could do (12-13). The more miracles they performed, the more confident they were in preaching that people should repent. The many people coming and going proved that people needed Jesus' teaching and power. However, they still did not understand Jesus' entire message; Mark tells us "their heart was hardened" (52).

2. If verse 31 refers to while the apostles were out preaching, this shows how Jesus cared a lot about their wellbeing. Jesus acted like a loving father, taking them to get some rest after they had worked long and hard.

If it refers to after the disciples had returned to Jesus, it implies that many people were following the apostles. This was the fruit of their labor, to bring many people to the Lord. However, it meant that once again Jesus did not have time to eat (cf. 3:20). He was just like His disciples. He also needed rest.

3b. The Lord loved the people so much that He set aside His own needs to care for them. He was moved with compassion when He saw their desperation. He began to "teach them many things" (This takes much time and effort). Even after teaching the multitudes, He did not send them away (although that was what the disciples wanted Him to do). Instead, He made sure that they were also filled physically.

It can be quite annoying when our rest is interrupted by others' requests. But we can learn from the Lord's selfless compassion and great patience. In Him we see an example of genuine and sacrificial love. We ought to also learn to place the needs of others above our own needs.

4a.

What the Disciples Said	What Jesus Said
"This is a deserted place."	
"The hour is late."	
"Send the people away to buy food."	"You give them something to eat."
"We don't have that much money!"	"How many loaves do you have?" "Go and see."
"We have five loaves -- and two fish."	

4d. They did what Jesus commanded (counting the loaves), but they also put in a little more effort and ingenuity. They did not insist that Jesus use the fish. They only showed Jesus what else they found, and let the Lord decide.

5. When we pray to God for help, often we have our own ideas on how to solve the problem. Sometimes God's reply is unexpected, even unreasonable. His solution does not seem to help us at all. But Jesus tells us to "go and see" (38) what and how much we have. That's how we show our faith. We put in everything we have, however little. Jesus puts in the rest. His power is made perfect in our weakness (2Cor 12:9). This principle is true for solving our earthly problems and for working out our salvation (Php 2:12).

6. Mark compares the crowd to sheep resting on green grass (Ps 23:2). Jesus taught them many things (34) to guide them in paths of righteousness (Ps 23:3). He fed them when they were hungry. Jesus the good shepherd took care of their every need, and they were content. Little did they know that Jesus would give up His life for them.

7. Jesus stayed behind to dismiss the crowd. Before sending them away, He made sure they got what they needed (the people were satisfied and did not chase after Him again). Follow-up is important. The church must satisfy a person's spiritual needs first and physical needs second. We can not ignore a person after he or she is baptized. At some point, everyone

needs some words of concern and encouragement, no matter how long we have believed in Jesus Christ.

A servant stays behind after everyone has left. There are many testimonies of church members who stay after service or come during off-hours to clean up the church premise.

- 8a. From the account in John, we understand that the crowd, having witnessed such a great miracle, intended to make Jesus king by force. This was a temptation for Jesus and the disciples. Jesus was able to discern the spiritual danger, but the disciples, who lusted for power and greatness, would easily fall for such a trap. In fact, the fact that Jesus had to “make” them get into the boat suggests that they were already basking in the crowd’s adulation.
- 8b. As soon as we have completed some works of service, we need to withdraw from people’s admiration and praises. This is especially necessary when God has just manifested His great power through us. Resist the temptation of enjoying popularity as a result of our service and quickly find time to be with God alone to prepare for the next task that God has in store for you.
9. After supper, Jesus had sent the disciples to Bethsaida. “When evening came” (47), He saw them straining at rowing (it’s amazing that Jesus saw them in the middle of the lake while He was still on land). Jesus waited a while longer, until at least 3:00 A.M. (cf. *Did You Know* 8), before going out to them. It was quite a few hours, depending on how long Jesus had been praying on the mountainside.
11. Jesus calmly walked on water through the strong wind. Also, the wind died down without Jesus’ rebuke. If the storm was again the devil’s work, it seems to have weakened compared to the last time. Although the disciples were straining against the wind, they were no longer terrified of the storm. However, their superstition overshadowed their faith in Jesus; they were terrified when they mistook Jesus for a ghost.
12. The disciples did not recognize that the miracle of the loaves was unlike any of the previous miracles. Jesus repeatedly confirmed his divine nature through His teachings and miracles, but their hearts were hardened. They had not “considered” (KJV) nor “understood” (NKJV). They were surprised that Jesus could walk on water, as if it was the first time Jesus did something beyond their imagination. Their fear and amazement is similar to that of the women who could not believe that Jesus had risen from the dead (cf. 16:5, 8).

To be “awed” and to be “surprised” are quite different reactions. We limited human beings will never cease to be awed by what God can do. However, if we are ever surprised, that means we have underestimated

His power. Nothing is too difficult or marvelous for the Almighty God (Gen 18:13-14; Jer 32:27; Zech 8:6).

13. The people of Gennesaret recognized that Jesus was their Savior. They “ran” (55) and “begged” (56) Jesus to help them. They followed Jesus wherever He went. Because of their faith, “as many as touched him were made well” (56). In contrast, the Nazarenes treated Jesus with contempt and even tried to throw Him down a cliff (cf. Lk 4:29).
14. Like the men who carried a paralytic on a mat (2:3), the people of Gennesaret also overcame physical inconveniences and carried the sick on mats to Jesus (6:55). Like the woman who suffered from bleeding (5:28), they also believed that they would be healed just by touching Jesus’ cloak (6:56).

The people of Gennesaret might have been following the examples of others who have been healed by Jesus. Whether from testimonies or from Bible stories, we learn from other people’s experience and teachings (Heb 6:12; 13:7). We see how they received God’s grace and follow their examples. And when we experience God’s grace (Jn 4:42), we will have our own experience to share with others.

Lesson 12

Observation

Outline

- Pharisees and Scribes Confront Jesus (7:1-5)
- Jesus Rebukes the Pharisees and Scribes (7:6-13)
- Further Explanations on Cleanliness (7:14-23)

Key Words/Phrases

Defiled, unwashed, clean, traditions, hypocrites, lips, hearts, worship, rules, clean, goes into, comes out, evil

Segment Analysis

- 1a. To question Him (11:27-28); to find fault so they could accuse Him (3:2); to plot to kill Him (3:6).
- 1b. In 3:22, the scribes came to accuse Jesus of being demon-possessed. This time, the Pharisees came with the teachers.
- 2a. “Why?” The Pharisees and the scribes asked Jesus why He broke God’s law. They assumed Jesus’ guilt. It is like asking an innocent man, “Why did you steal?”
- 2b. The Pharisees and scribes were very particular about their outward cleanliness. However, true cleanliness does not come from a godly

appearance but from a God-fearing heart. This is why Jesus later rebuked them for letting go of the commands of God and holding on to the traditions of men.

3. The disciples were not thinking about the meaning of true cleanliness when they ate without having washed their hands; they asked Jesus to explain the teaching to them later (17). Perhaps they never had a habit of strictly observing the “tradition of the elders” (cf. 2:23). They were not educated like the Pharisees, who prided themselves in observing every law to the letter (cf. Mt 23:5-7; Lk 18:11-12).
- 4a. They added their own rules to God’s commands and turned God’s commands into a burden to the people.

4b.

Teachings/Traditions of Men	Teachings/Commandments of God
Perform ceremonial washing before eating (Mk 7:3-4).	Evil from your heart makes you unclean (Mk 7:20-23).
Corban is inviolable; dedicated money can not be used for other purposes such as supporting your parents (Mk 7:11).	Honor your father and mother (Ex 20:12). Do not curse your father or mother (Deut 5:16).
Announce charitable works with trumpets (Mt 6:2).	Give to the needy in secret (Mt 6:3-4).
Disfigure your faces to show that you are fasting (Mt 6:16).	Do not let it be obvious that you are fasting (Mt 6:17-18).
Seek honor at public places (Mt 23:5-7).	You are all brothers (Mt 23:8). The greatest among you will be your servant (Mt 23:11). Whoever exalts himself will be humbled (Mt 23:12).
Lengthy prayers in public (Mt 6:5, 23:14).	When you pray, go into your room and close the door (Mt 6:6). Do not be hypocrites (Mt 23:14).
If anyone swears by the gold in the temple, he is bound by his oath (Mt 23:16). If anyone swears by the gifts on the altar, he is bound by his oath (Mt 23:18).	If you swear by anything, you swear by God Himself (Mt 23:20-22). We have no authority to swear by (Mt 5:33-36). Do not swear. Let your “Yes” be yes and your “No,” no. (Mt 5:37, Jas 5:12).
Offer tithes (Mt 23:23).	Practice justice, mercy, and faithfulness, without neglecting the tithes (Mt 23:23). To obey is better than sacrifice (1 Sam 15:22).
Clean your cups and dishes (Mt 23:25, Mk 7:4).	Clean the greed and self-indulgence from inside you (Mt 23:26).
Build tombs for the prophets and decorate the graves of the righteous (Mt 23:29).	You are being condemned to hell for shedding righteous blood (Mt 23:33-35).
Count your righteousness before God (Lk 18:11).	Ask God to have mercy on you, a sinner (Lk 18:13). Whoever exalts himself will be humbled (Lk 18:14).

- 5a. Jesus does not condemn traditions in general, but traditions that take precedence over God’s commandments. Religious traditions are beneficial if they help us worship God and do good deeds. However, when traditions become habits without meaning, we are in danger of becoming hypocrites. Worse, the Pharisees twisted religious rules for their personal advantage, and oppressed the less fortunate. Jesus rebuked them for the evil that came out of their hearts. (cf. Matthew Bible Study Guide, Lesson 22, Question 4).
- 5b. Sometimes we have strong opinions on issues that have nothing to do with our salvation. If we insist on our views, we are setting aside the commands of God to love one another. Many controversies arise in the church because of this. Members argue over the format of worship or having certain decorations in the chapel. In the apostolic church, there was an argument over food. In response, Paul wrote that even though the truth is that all food is clean, he would not eat meat or drink wine if it would cause a brother to fall (Rom 14:20-21; 1Cor 8:13).
- 5c. Observing the Sabbath on Sunday; celebrating Easter, Christmas, Chinese New Year
- 6. Jesus compared the damage from food to the damage from the evil in our hearts. While speaking these parables, Jesus repeatedly said, “If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear!” (4:9; 4:23; 7:16). He urges us to pay attention to the spiritual teachings. Like before, Jesus explained this parable to his disciples.
The parable of cleanliness is abstract, not in the form of a story like the earlier parables. While not everyone had understood Jesus’ earlier parables (4:12), this time Jesus called the crowd and told them to “understand” (7:14).
- 7. Jesus said, “Are you thus without understanding *also*?” [emphasis added], implying that the disciples were no better than the Pharisees. They were bound by their (different set of) traditions just as much as the Pharisees were by theirs.

8a.

Evil that Comes from Inside/ Works of the Flesh	Fruit of the Spirit
evil thoughts	love
adulteries	joy
fornications	peace
murders	longsuffering/patience
thefts	kindness
covetousness/greed	goodness
wickedness/malice	faithfulness
deceit	gentleness
lewdness	self-control
evil eye/envy	
blasphemy/slander	
pride/arrogance	
foolishness	
uncleanness/impurity	
debauchery	
idolatry	
sorcery/witchcraft	
hatred	
contentions/discord	
jealousy	
outbursts of wrath/fits of rage	
selfish ambition	
dissensions	
heresies/factions	
drunkenness	
revelries/orgies	

- 8c. Although the evil things in our hearts outnumber the fruit of the Spirit, God’s power is more than sufficient to overcome them. (cf. Lesson 8, Questions 10a-b).
- 9. Acts 15:29 lists three foods that we should abstain from. They are forbidden because of their spiritual significance.
 - 1. Food sacrificed to idols—If we eat it, we are participants with demons (1Cor 10:14-22).
 - 2. Blood—This commandment was given long before the Mosaic law was given (Gen 9:4); we must still obey it. It carries spiritual teachings on the relationship between blood and life. Life is in the

blood. Therefore, God has reserved blood for the purpose of atonement (Lev 17:11). The blood that was shed for atonement was a foreshadow of the precious blood of Jesus, which was poured out for the remission of our sins.

3. Meat of strangled animals—Blood of strangled animals has not been let out of the flesh.

Furthermore, Paul teaches us that although all things are permissible, not all things are beneficial. We must act from our conscience and spiritual knowledge. Even in small matters such as food and drink, we must not cause anyone to stumble (1Cor 10:23-33).

Lesson 13

Observation

Outline

Healing A Syro-Phoenician Woman's Daughter (7:24-30)

A woman asks Jesus to drive the demon out of her daughter (24-26)

Jesus refuses (27)

The woman persists (28)

Jesus casts out the demon (29-30).

Healing A Deaf Man (7:31-37)

People bring a deaf man to Jesus (31-32)

Jesus restores the man's hearing (33-35)

People spread the news, in spite of Jesus' instructions (36-37)

Feeding Four Thousand (8:1-9)

Jesus tells the disciples that they need to feed the crowd (1-5)

Jesus feeds the crowd with seven loaves and a few small fish (6-9)

Pharisees Question Jesus (8:10-21)

Pharisees ask for a sign (10-11)

Jesus refuses (12-13)

Jesus warns the disciples (14-18)

Jesus explains with the miracles of the loaves (19-21)

Healing A Blind Man (8:22-26)

People bring a blind man to Jesus (22)

Jesus restores the man's sight (23-25)

Jesus tells the man to go home (26)

Key Words/Phrases

Children, dogs, crumbs, spit, bread, sigh, test, sign, leaven, eyes, see, ears, hear, understand

General Analysis

1. Through these miracles, Jesus showed even greater power than before. With a word, He cast out the demon from the woman's daughter, even though He was not at her house. In both healing, Jesus led the men away from the multitudes instead of healing them in public. He also did more than just lay His hands on the man; he used His spit.

Segment Analysis

1. She overcame the prejudice between Jews and Gentiles (cf. Jn 4:9). Even though she was a Gentile, she showed more faith and understanding than the disciples.
2. God's mercy is great enough to satisfy both the children and the dogs. If she was as lowly as a dog, she was content to receive even a little bit of God's power.
3. The woman was persistent (cf. Mt 15:22-23). She did not demand Jesus to take certain actions (like laying His hands on her daughter [5:23]), nor did she take matters into her own hands (like the woman who suffered from bleeding [5:27]). She just fell at His feet and begged Him. Not only did she understand what Jesus meant (which is more than what you can say about the disciples), she answered humbly and wisely. She did not care if Jesus called her a dog, as long as her daughter would be healed. She also showed great faith. When Jesus told her to go, she went home without question.
4. One possible answer is that Jesus spoke according to the woman's faith. He spoke harsh words to her because she had such an extraordinary faith and humility that she was able to overcome all hindrances. God does not give us a trial beyond what we can bear (1Cor 10:13). After this conversation, the woman must have grown in her faith and understanding of Jesus. In fact, her great faith as a Gentile served as a witness against the many faithless Jews.
- 5a. Children—the Jews—"the lost sheep of Israel" (Mt 15:24)
- 5b. Bread—God's mercy; Jesus Christ (Jn 6:33-35)
- 5c. Dogs—the Gentiles
- 5d. Crumbs—the leftovers; what the children do not want
6. In the Old Testament, the Israelites were God's chosen people. While Jesus never refrained from saving the Gentiles, He focused His ministry on the Jews. At this time, the Gentiles received only a small part of God's

grace, much like crumbs that fall off the table. However, like the Pharisees and the scribes, not all the Jews believed in Jesus (Rom 10:16).

God wants all to be saved (1Tim 2:4). He is the God of both the Jews and the Gentiles (Rom 3:29). Jesus commanded His disciples to preach the gospel “to the end of the earth” (Acts 1:8). Peter saw a vision telling Him to preach to the Gentiles (Acts 10:34-35). Today, all believers are God’s chosen people (Col 3:12; 1Pet 2:9), with the same blessings and responsibilities as the Israelites.

7. Perhaps it was a test. As we mature in faith, God gives us tougher lessons. He makes us wait longer, to see if we will continue to trust in Him. Many in the crowd were starving (8:2-3), but they did not leave. Jesus was aware of this. At the right moment, He fed them until they were satisfied, just like the time when He fed five thousand. Also, note that Jesus also had not eaten for three days; He suffers with us.
8. They seemed to have forgotten that Jesus fed five thousand men with five loaves and two fish. They still had not made the connection between Jesus’ miracles and His divine nature. Like Jesus said, their hearts were still hardened.
9. The five thousand were with Jesus for less than a day, while the four thousand were with Jesus for three days with nothing to eat. Jesus rewarded their greater faith with greater blessings. The five thousand had twelve two-gallon baskets (cf. Lesson 11, *Did You Know 4*) of leftovers, while the four thousand had seven man-sized baskets. Jesus gave them enough food to take with them on their long journey home (3). While God tests us according to our faith, He also supplies us according to our needs.
- 10a. Angel—Jesus’ birth (Lk 1:28; 2:10); Jesus’ resurrection (Mt 28:2; Jn 20:12)
- 10b. Bread—Jesus’ body (Jn 6:33-35, 51)
- 10c. Fire—Jesus’ Holy Spirit (Mt 3:11)
- 10d. Voice—Jesus’ baptism (Mk 1:11); Jesus’ transfiguration (Mk 9:7); Jesus’ crucifixion and coming glory (Jn 12:28)
11. The Pharisees did not come to Jesus to beg Him for help, but to accuse Him. They came “seeking from Him a sign from heaven, testing Him” (8:11). This implies they still believed that Jesus’ miracles were not signs from heaven (cf. 3:22). Their questions echo the devil’s first temptation of Jesus (Mt 4:3, 6).
12. Those who rejected God’s counsel (Lk 7:30-35), including the Pharisees.
13. Before and after this, Jesus performed undeniable miracles, and the Pharisees still did not believe. Furthermore, they did not realize that

Jesus embodies every sign and miracle from heaven; Jesus is the one and only sign given. Through Jesus Christ, we receive the greatest miracle – the forgiveness of our sins (Lk 11:29-30, 32). To those who reject Jesus without a second thought, no sign will be given. They will be “ever seeing but never perceiving, and ever hearing but never understanding” (Isa 6:9, NIV).

14. Their teachings, hypocrisy, old self, malice and wickedness
15. Jesus took the opportunity to warn the disciples about the leaven of the Pharisees (7:6-9) and of Herod (6:14-29). It is more important to guard against false teachings and sinful living than to be worried about filling our stomachs. However, the disciples were so preoccupied with having no bread that they missed the point.
Jesus did not rebuke the disciples for having forgotten to bring bread. But the disciples saw only the fact that they had only one loaf to split among them. Couldn’t Jesus have fed them with that one loaf?
16. The disciples were maturing in faith. Instead of panicking, they discussed what Jesus said, trying to figure out what He meant. It is good to share our interpretations with each other when we study the word of God. The disciples reached the wrong conclusion, and Jesus corrected them. When we study the Bible, it is also important to have proper guidance, from more experienced believers and the Holy Spirit.
- 17a.

Healing the Deaf Man	Healing the Blind Man
People bring the man to Jesus (7:32).	People bring the man to Jesus (8:22).
They ask Jesus to lay His hand on the man (7:32).	They ask Jesus to touch the man (8:22).
Jesus takes the man aside, away from the crowd (7:33).	Jesus takes the man outside the village (8:23).
Jesus puts His fingers into the man’s ears and spits and touches the man’s tongue (7:33).	Jesus spits on the man’s eyes and put His hands on Him (8:23).
Jesus sighs and says, “Be opened!” (7:34).	Jesus asks if he see anything (8:23)
The man’s hearing is restored (7:35).	The man regains limited vision (8:24).
Jesus tells them not to tell anyone (7:36).	Jesus put His hands on the man’s eyes again (8:25).
People keep talking about the miracle (7:36-37).	The man’s sight is restored (8:25). Jesus sends the man home and tells him not to tell anyone (8:26).

- 17b. The events are very similar. By the same token, our faith is strengthened when we hear a testimony that we can relate to.
- One notable difference is that the deaf man's hearing and speech were immediately restored, whereas Jesus restored the blind man's vision in two stages. God has a different timetable for each of us, but in the end, we all receive what we need.
18. The people who brought the man to Jesus had their expectations on what should happen (they asked Jesus to lay His hand on the man). Jesus took the man away from the commotion. Also, He did not want the news of the miracle to spread (7:36; 8:26).
19. Jn 9:1-12 is the only other record of Jesus healing with His spit. In that miracle, Jesus "anointed" (Jn 9:6, NKJV) the blind man's eyes. Jesus used His spit perhaps to show that God uses the foolish and weak to do great things (1Cor 1:27-29). If the power comes from Jesus Christ, even something lowly and despised (like spit) can be used for noble purposes. Likewise, the humble servant shamed the educated Pharisees and scribes.
- 20a. Deafness and blindness are a loss of our sensory perceptions. A greater disability is our hardened hearts (8:17). Jesus compared His disciples to the deaf and the blind because they did not understand nor remember. They remained oblivious to the miraculous signs.
- God uses miracles and signs to strengthen our faith. However, our stubbornness makes us spiritually deaf and blind (Jn 12:37). For example, the Holy Spirit is manifested in ways we can see and hear (Acts 2:33), when we pray in tongues. Still, not everyone will believe when he or she witnesses the power of the Holy Spirit. Some might even mock praying in tongues (Acts 2:13).
- 20b. Jesus sighed perhaps because the man's physical deafness reminded Him of the spiritual deafness of the Pharisees (cf. Jn 9:39-41) and the disciples. Jesus was sad that the Pharisees continued to tempt Him. He must have been sadder that even His own disciples were deaf and blind to what He had been doing.

Lesson 14

Observation

Outline

- Jesus Reveals Himself as the Christ (8:27-30)
- Jesus asks the disciple about the people's opinion of Him (27-28)
- Peter confesses Jesus is the Christ (29)

- Jesus warns the disciples not to tell anyone (30)
- Jesus Teaches about the Things to Come (8:31-9:1)
- His death and resurrection (31)
- Peter rebuked (32-33)
- The cost of following Jesus (34)
- Saving one's life/soul (35-37)
- Coming of the Son of Man and the kingdom of God (31-9:1)
- The Transfiguration (9:2-13)
- Jesus appears dazzling white (2-3)
- Moses and Elijah appear (4)
- Peter's reaction (5-6)
- A voice from the cloud (7)
- The disciples try to figure out what they saw (8-13)

Key Words/Phrases

Christ, suffer, rejected, killed, rise, cross, life, soul, save, lose, ashamed, glory, power, transfigured, dazzling white

Segment Analysis

1. It was important for the disciples to know whom they were following and what they were getting into. They had to evaluate their own beliefs ("Who do you say that I am?" [8:29]) against what other people believed. The disciples must be certain of their beliefs in order to stand against the persecutions that would soon come.

Being aware of other viewpoints helps to strengthen our faith and to preach the gospel. We can see for ourselves how the gospel is unique among all religions. We do not believe blindly because the true gospel can withstand all other teachings. Knowing what other people believe helps us find a common ground. From there, we can gradually lead them to the correct teachings in the Bible.

2. Although the people came up with many possible answers, they were all wrong. They thought of Jesus as a man and could not accept Him as God. Today, there are many schools of religious thoughts, but they are all wrong if their ideas contradict the word of God.
3. God revealed the truth to him (Mt 16:17). However, the disciples had a different concept of the Christ/Messiah prophesied in the Bible. They expected Jesus to reign in the world (Mk 11:6-10, Acts 1:6). They did not truly know the kingdom of God until they received the Holy Spirit (Acts 3:18-20).
4. It was not yet time. The people were blinded by their own expectations. Jesus commanded His disciples to wait. After His resurrection, the truth

would become clear. Even though the disciples did not understand at this time, they obeyed.

6. This was the first time Jesus spoke in detail about His suffering. It must have shocked the disciples. Peter did not think Jesus could be rejected and killed (Mt 16:22). He probably ignored the part about Jesus rising again because he did not understand it. But the resurrection is a significant part of God's plan. Peter saw only Jesus' suffering and not the fulfillment of salvation. By ignoring parts of God's teaching, we might also jump to the wrong conclusion.
7. Because he was "not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men" (8:33). The things of men come from Satan. Perhaps Satan used Peter's love for Jesus to tempt Him to give up His mission. But Jesus knew He must put God's will above all.
- 8a. Perhaps it was out of respect that Peter rebuked Jesus in private. However, by contradicting Jesus' words, Peter showed great disrespect to God. Jesus rebuked Peter before the other disciples to teach them the great cost and the greater reward of following Him.
- 9a. The cross was a symbol of suffering and shame (cf. *Did You Know* 4). But Jesus warns us that if we are ashamed of Him and His words, He will be ashamed of us when He comes again (8:38). We must live and die for Jesus and the gospel (8:35).
- 9b. To save our lives means to be mindful of the "things of men" rather than to the "things of God" (33). In other words, a person who saves his life in this world yields to his own desires and ambitions. Subsequently, he will lose his eternal life.
On the contrary, losing our lives means submitting to God's will, denying our ego and selfish desires, taking up suffering and shame for the sake of Christ and for the gospel, and following the footsteps of our Lord (34). If we lose our lives in this world, we will preserve our everlasting life.
10. The Bible puts the things in the world into three categories: lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and pride of life (1Jn 2:16). When we give into these sinful pleasures, we give up our soul. It is not an even exchange because earthly pleasures are temporary, while our soul will suffer the consequences forever.
11. Peter denied Jesus three times. Today, we might be ashamed to let others know we are Christians. We might be uncomfortable reading the Bible in public. We might shy away from talking to others about our beliefs.
12. Some of the disciples did indeed see the kingdom of God before their death. The kingdom of God is a spiritual one. Jesus said that the kingdom of God is within and among us (Lk 17:21). When the disciples

received the Holy Spirit, they experienced the kingdom of God. When the apostolic church was established, the believers also saw the power of the kingdom of God. They were not ashamed of Jesus, and Jesus worked with them.

13.
 1. Their appearance tells us who Jesus was. Both were great prophets and mighty workers in the Old Testament. Moses represented the Law and Elijah the Prophets, both of which Jesus fulfilled (Mt 5:17; 11:12-13). The transfiguration teaches us that Jesus, being greater than Moses and Elijah, was the one all the prophets had been waiting for.
 2. Elijah and Moses both played an important role in God's salvation plan. It was appropriate for them to appear to discuss Jesus' impending death on the cross (Lk 9:31). Elijah's ministry shows us God's grace in spite of our rebellion (Rom 11:2-5). Jesus knew that many (even one of His disciples) were conspiring to kill Him, but He continued to love them. Moses chose to suffer "disgrace for the sake of Christ" (Heb 11:26, NIV) in exchange for the greater reward in heaven. His ministry prefigures our journey of faith. The laws given through Moses prefigure Jesus' doctrines and sacraments. By shedding His blood on the cross, Jesus fulfilled the Mosaic laws and completed God's salvation plan.
- 14a. Six days earlier Jesus had rebuked Peter for speaking rashly. Here, Peter blubbered out of fear even though "he did not know what to say" (9:6). Why would Elijah and Moses, much less Jesus in glory, need a tent?
Peter's words showed a lack of understanding of Jesus' identity and mission. The focus of the transfiguration was the Lord Jesus Christ, not Elijah or Moses. Also, Jesus' final goal was suffering in Jerusalem and the resurrection, not staying in a tent on the mountain to enjoy glory.
Peter's nonsensical words teach us a lesson in self-control. The Bible teaches against speaking hastily (Prov 29:20; Jas 1:19).
15. Jesus gave the disciples a preview of how He would appear in glory, thus proving His words in 9:1. Not only so, the transfiguration, and appearance of Elijah and Moses, and the voice from heaven all confirmed for the disciples Jesus' identity as the Christ and the beloved Son of God.
Peter in his old age vividly recalled the transfiguration when he wrote about the coming of the Lord (2Pet 1:16-18). The experience must have made a deep impression and confirmed his faith in Christ.
16. As important as Moses and Elijah were, they were merely servants. The voice from the cloud reminded the disciples to listen to Jesus, God's beloved Son. Likewise, our faith must be set on Jesus alone. No worker of God, however gifted, is comparable to Him.

17. Mal 4:5 prophesied that God would send Elijah before the day of judgement. Perhaps the disciples understood this as Elijah coming back from the dead. They were doing their best to connect what Jesus said to what they knew. After Jesus pointed them in the right direction, they understood that John the Baptist was the prophesied Elijah (cf. Lk 1:16-17; Mt 17:13).

Lesson 15

Observation

Outline

Jesus Drives out An Unclean Spirit (9:14-29)

The disciples fail to drive out an unclean spirit (14-18)

The unclean spirit defies Jesus (19-20)

The father's faith (21-24)

Jesus rebukes the unclean spirit (25-29)

Jesus Teaches the Disciples about What Is to Come (9:30-32)

A servant's proper attitude (9:33-41)

The first must be the very last (33-35)

Serving the children (36-37)

Do not forbid others from working in Jesus' name (38-41)

Warning against Causing to Sin (9:42-50)

Warning against causing a little one to sin (42)

Better to enter life with a body part missing (43-38)

Teachings from salt (49-50)

Key Words/Phrases

Believe, unbelief, convulsion, prayer, fasting, betrayed, kill, rise, greatest, first, last, child, "in My name," little ones, causes to sin, cut it off, hell, worm, fire, salt

Segment Analysis

1. Their experience of heavenly glory eventually came to an end. It was not yet their time to leave the world, and they had to return to their everyday problems. Likewise, we must not let our minds be stuck in a particular miracle, a powerful sermon, or spiritual experience. God inspires us spiritually to help us grow in faith and understanding, so that we can move on with our lives and face their challenges.
2. The disciples must have been very confident when the father asked them to drive out the unclean spirit. They had done it many times before,

with great success. However, this time they could not drive out the unclean spirit. Perhaps the scribes were claiming again that Jesus' authority was not from God. The disciples must have been frustrated at their inability, and tried to come up with reasons why. But arguing with the scribes probably made things worse. They were neither as educated nor as eloquent.

3. Moses' face was so radiant that the people were afraid to come near him, and that was just a reflection of God's glory, which probably had resulted from Moses speaking with God face to face (Ex 33:11; 34:29,30). In the high mountain, Jesus showed His glory (9:3). As He was coming down from the mountain, some of that radiance might have remained in His appearance. Likewise, if we let God's word and spirit fill us, others can see the glory of the Lord through us (2Cor 3:18).
4. This unclean spirit dared to defy Jesus. It did not beg Jesus nor acknowledge His authority. When it saw Jesus, it lashed out (20). Even after Jesus rebuked it, it convulsed the boy one last time before coming out (26).
- 6a. Because of the disciples' failure, perhaps the father's faith had wavered. Still, he remained in the crowd, probably to listen to the argument between the disciples and the scribes. Although he did not understand, he earnestly sought the answer.
- 6b. He believed that Jesus would take pity and help them, if He could do anything. He believed in Jesus' compassion, but was unsure of Jesus' power. The disciples' failure and subsequent argument with the scribes probably did not help the father's faith in Jesus. But after Jesus had spoken to him, he realized that only Jesus could make him believe completely, and that only Jesus could help his son.
Jesus later taught the disciples the power of faith as small as a mustard seed (Mt 17:20). It tells us how small our faith is. We receive grace through faith; but only Jesus can give us the perfect faith (Acts 3:16).
- 8a. Jesus said that the unclean spirit could be driven out only by prayer and fasting (cf. Mt 17:21). Prayer was always a part of Jesus' habit (cf. 1:35; 6:46). He was always prepared against the devil, and did not have to make a special prayer just for a miracle. On the other hand, the disciples' argument with the scribes shows their lack of faith, understanding, and power.
- 9a. They were filled with grief (Mt 17:23). Also, Jesus had rebuked them several times before (cf. 4:40; 7:17-18; 8:16-17), so they would rather not ask Him another question.
10. We don't know who started the argument, but perhaps Peter, James and John were thinking highly of themselves because Jesus had taken only the three of them to Jairus' daughter's bedside (5:37) and to the

transfiguration (9:2). Even though Jesus had sent the twelve disciples out in pairs (6:7) to teach them how to work together, each one still had selfish ambitions (later, James and John asked Jesus for glory for themselves [10:35-37]). It is also probable that their different backgrounds made it difficult for all of them to get along with one another.

11. Jesus was speaking about being the greatest in the kingdom of heaven (Mt 18:4). Heavenly authority is different from earthly authority (Lk 22:25-27). While acquiring earthly authority requires ambition and self-promotion, heavenly authority starts with humility. If we humble ourselves, God will exalt us (1Pet 5:5-6). Jesus Himself set an example of this lesson (Php 2:6-7).
12. "In my name"—the phrase reminds us of our roles as God's servants. We do everything for Jesus. We express Jesus' teachings in our lives. Like our Lord Jesus, our goal must always be to edify others physically and spiritually. Jesus warned the disciples against causing anyone to sin. If we truly follow His example, our actions would not cause anyone to fall (1Cor 8:13).
- 13a.
 1. Jesus wanted to remind them of a parent's love. A parent is concerned only for the child's wellbeing. A parent is never jealous of a child who is greater and more successful than him or her. Jesus was probably also pointing to the small child when he was warning the disciples against causing "one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble" (42). If we love others like our own, we will do everything in our power to keep them away from sin, much less cause them to sin.
 2. True humility is expressed in our attitude towards the least of our brothers. If we are willing to serve even the little children and those who tend to be despised among us in the name of Christ, then Christ Himself will reward us and make us great (cf. Mt 18:1-6, 10-14).
- 13b. feeding the hungry, giving a drink to the thirsty, providing hospitality, clothing the naked, looking after the sick, visiting those in prison (Mt 25:35-36).
- 13c. A little one is anyone in need. It might be an elderly believer or a young child. It might be a minister or a religious education teacher. It might be your spouse, your parent, or your sibling. It might be a friend or a stranger. While what we can give might seem insignificant, it can bring unexpected comfort to someone in distress (like a simple cup of water for someone in thirst [41]).
- 14a. "Because he does not follow us" (38). Perhaps the disciples assumed that Jesus gave authority only to them. Perhaps they thought it was their exclusive right to preach, to heal, and to drive out demons. They thought

highly of themselves, and forgot the fact that they could not drive out the epileptic demon (18).

- 14b. Jesus lay down His life for His sheep, but not all of them are yet of His fold (Jn 10:16). Today, there are many devout Christians who are doing their best to live for Christ and to search for the perfect gospel. Instead of rejecting their efforts, we must bring them into the true church, "till we all come to the unity of the faith" (Eph 4:13), in "one Lord, one faith, one baptism" (Eph 4:5).
- 15a. Hand—We do things against God's teachings. Examples are: stealing, hitting, gambling, touching inappropriately, laboring for earthly possessions (Eccl 2:11). When we surf the Internet, our hands may click on sites that cause our eyes to sin.
- 15b. Foot—We walk into places where temptation awaits us. We go to parties that do not edify our spirituality. We go with our worldly friends instead of walking with the Lord.
- 15c. Eye—Our eyes are the windows to our hearts (Mt 6:22-23). What we see affects our thoughts and imagination. Sometimes we look at sinful things out of curiosity or our fleshly desires. Or we may stare hatefully or jealously at others.
- 15d. To cut off the body part that causes us to sin refers to our resolve. We must find the culprit and ask God to take our sins away.
- 17a. Salt is a humble but useful and essential material. It symbolizes hospitality and faithfulness (cf. *Did You Know* 3). Paul compares speech that is full of grace to that which is seasoned with salt. Jesus also teaches us to be the salt of the earth to show these qualities.
- 17b. Jesus contrasts hell's unquenchable fire to the greater fire of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit appears as a tongue of fire (Acts 2:4). John prophesied that Jesus will baptize with the Holy Spirit and with fire (Mt 3:11). The Holy Spirit gave the apostles power and courage to serve the Lord (2Tim 1:7).
- 17b. Hell is horrible; we must avoid it at all cost. However, cutting off the offending parts of our body does not destroy the source of sin. Without Jesus Christ, our entire body is a slave to sin (Rom 7:18). The only way to be saved from hell is to be salted with the fire of the Holy Spirit (Isa 4:3-4). The Holy Spirit gives us the spiritual qualities of salt and leads us into life (Rom 8:5-6). Through Jesus Christ, we can do all good things (Php 4:13).
If we continue to reject the Holy Spirit's guidance, we lose our saltiness, and will be "thrown out and trampled underfoot by men" (Mt 5:13). If we deliberately keep on sinning, no sacrifice for sins is left (Heb 10:26-27); we cannot be made salty again.

If we strive to obey the Holy Spirit, we will naturally be at peace with those around us (Heb 12:14). Had the disciples been salted with the Holy Spirit, they would not have argued or acted arrogantly.

- 18a. Their argument with the scribes might have caused some in the crowd to lose faith in Jesus. By arguing, they did not appear to be wise or gentle, which reflected poorly on Jesus.

Their argument over who was the greatest caused discord among them (Mk 10:41). In spite of Jesus' teachings on forgiveness (Mt 18:15-35), it probably took some time before the disciples forgave each other.

One thing the disciples agreed on was that they were greater than other people by virtue of being Jesus' chosen disciples. They forbade someone else from working in Jesus' name simply "because he does not follow us" (38). Their arrogance might have caused confusion among the believers, and caused other workers to lose heart or even turn away from God.

- 18b. Church work should not take precedence over a member's needs. We must be careful not to become hypocrites like the Pharisees. The devil often concentrates his attacks on church workers. If a worker is not faithful, it is easy to strike down God's sheep (Jn 10:12). Also, God's work does not prosper in a divided church (1Cor 3:3). We must understand that God's work belongs to God, not any one person. Remember that we have been "hired" by God to build up His church (1Cor 3:9-10).

Lesson 16

Observation

Outline

Divorce and Marriage (10:1-12)

Pharisees test Jesus on divorce (1-2)

Moses' law on divorce (3-4)

God's teaching on marriage (5-12)

Little Children and the Kingdom of God (10:13-16)

The disciples rebuke people who were bringing little children to Jesus (13)

Teachings from little children (14-16)

To Enter the Kingdom of God (10:17-31)

A rich man asks about eternal life (17)

Keeping the commandments (18-20)

Selling everything and follow Jesus (21-22)

Hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God (23-27)

The rewards of following Jesus (28-31)

Key Words/Phrases

Divorce, permitted, hardness of heart, one flesh, adultery, children, kingdom of God, eternal life, commandments, sell everything, treasure, follow, impossible, possible, hundred-fold, first, last

Segment Analysis

1. As was their custom, the Pharisees came up with a question to trap Jesus. If Jesus said, "It is not lawful," He would be contradicting the Mosaic law. If He said, "It is lawful," He would be in conflict with those who believed that divorce was not permissible except for sexual sins.
- 2a. The Pharisees asked about divorce, but Jesus answered them with teachings on marriage. Instead of contemplating the possibility of divorce, we must live up to God's intention for the institution of marriage.
- 2b. God commands us to do certain things that are good for us. But He knows our struggle with our flesh, and permits certain things in forbearance of our weakness (Rom 3:25-26). However, even if everything is permissible, not everything is beneficial (1Cor 10:23-24). If we do not strive to live by the Holy Spirit, we "fall short of the glory of God" (Rom 3:23).
- 2c. God commanded that a man be "joined to his wife" (Gen 2:24). Jesus clarified the command—"What God has joined together, let not man separate" (9). God says unequivocally that He hates divorce (Mal 2:16). Paul also taught against divorce (1Cor 7:10-11). The Pharisees, on the other hand, emphasized what was permitted rather than what God had originally commanded.

The law (cf. Deut 24:1-4) actually made divorce a serious, irrevocable decision. In fact, the thrust of the passage in Deuteronomy is not on divorce, but on the prohibition against remarriage in the event of a divorce. This Mosaic provision was God's forbearance with (and not His endorsement of) "the hardness of your heart" (5).

3. When we get caught up in what is permitted and what is not, we become preoccupied with the letter of the law, instead of focusing on what God has commanded us to do in the first place. We would be like the Pharisees, arguing over "loopholes" in biblical teachings. Rather, we must strive to live by the two commandments that incorporate "all the law and the prophets"—to love God, and to love our neighbor (Mt 22:37-40).

- 5a. Marriage—Our relationship to God is one of everlasting commitment. God will not break His vow with us as long as we stay faithful. We must obey our Head Jesus Christ. As a bride preparing for the groom, we must be prepared to meet Him in the future.
- 5b. Adultery—We worship God but we still hold on to the world. God is a jealous God who wants us to be faithful to His teachings and commandments with all our hearts. However, sometimes we want to serve two masters (Mt 6:24) and commit adultery against Him.
- 5c. Divorce—Our severance from God when we sin and turn away from Him. When our sins fill His wrath, God will reject us and divorce us. It would be like the Israelites who turned away from God; they lost God's protection and became captives.
- 6a. They probably thought Jesus had more important things to do than to be bothered by children. Jesus was angry because they forgot His teachings on welcoming the little children (9:37).
- 6b. In our zeal to serve God, it is easy to lose sight of why we serve. In the interest of efficiency, we might neglect the needs of those who seem unimportant. Getting things done might become more important than caring for the needs of the believers. Jesus warns us against looking down on the little ones (Mt 18:10).
- 7a. These are non-issues to a child. A young child probably does not even comprehend the concept of divorce, let alone think about whether or not it is lawful. A little child just wants his mommy and daddy to be together. Also, a child has few, if any, possessions. It is not as difficult to give up what little he or she has in exchange for something much better ("treasure in heaven" [21]). That is why Jesus teaches us to become like little children (Mt 18:3).
- 7b. innocent, trusting, owns few things, etc. Also, Paul teaches us to live as children of light (Eph 4:25-32). The qualities he describes are the ones we used to have as children or new believers but often lose when we grow up.
8. God wants all to be saved (1Tim 2:4). When we hear the gospel of Jesus Christ, we receive the kingdom of God. How we respond to God's message determines whether or not we can enter that kingdom. "Many are called, but few are chosen" (Mt 22:14).
- We must adopt the qualities of a child. When we humble ourselves before God, He will guide and protect us, like a father cares for his child. The kingdom of God is revealed to the little children (Lk 10:21). With the help of the Holy Spirit, we can continue to aim for the goal (Php 3:14) until we enter the kingdom of God.
9. Children need to know Jesus just as much as adults. Whether you are a parent or a religious education teacher or a big brother or sister, it is your job to plant God's teachings into your children's heart (Deut 6:6-7; Prov 22:6). We must teach the Bible to our children at home, and take them to church services even when they are little.
- 10a. Rich man—Obey the commandments (20); find a good teacher (17).
- 10b. Disciples—Jesus requires impossible sacrifices.
- 10c. Peter—Proud that he had already left everything and followed Jesus (28). Perhaps he feels that he deserved to be saved.
11. 1. The ruler addressed Jesus as a good teacher probably because he measured Jesus' goodness with human standards. Because of his misunderstanding of goodness, the ruler believed that he may inherit eternal life with the good deeds that he had done. So the Lord corrected him by referring him to God's goodness, emphasizing that no one is "good" except God alone. In other words, no one can be justified before God by his goodness.
2. Jesus might have wanted the man to recognize Him for who He really was. Jesus was not just another "good teacher" ("good" by human standards). Jesus' goodness transcended all human goodness. The man should have recognize that Jesus was God Himself, and the goodness that he saw in Jesus could only be attributed to Jesus' divinity.
12. Keep all the commandments (18-19), sell everything and give to the poor (21), take up the cross and follow Jesus (21). If it sounds impossible, remember that all things are possible with God (27). Today, with the help of the Holy Spirit, it is possible to live up to God's higher standards.
13. Strengths: managed his life well, in spite of his young age (Mt 19:20), eager to seek the truth (ran after Jesus as Jesus was leaving), humble (fell on his knees before Jesus), knew the importance of eternal life, kept the commandments
- Weaknesses: saw Jesus only as a good teacher; could not give up his many possessions
- 14a. Jesus told him what he lacked and provided a solution for his deficiency. (In the same way, the Lord Jesus has also sent His Holy Spirit to us to reveal our sins to us and to teach us how to live by the truth [Jn 16:7,13]).
- 14b. The man had accomplished much on his own; he managed his wealth and he kept God's commandments. But he left because Jesus exposed a void in his character (he could not give up his wealth). It was beyond his abilities. However, he could have asked Jesus to help him overcome his

weakness (cf. 9:24). If he had spent more time with Jesus, he would have learned about how much he would be blessed if he followed Christ (30).

- 15a. We reason that if we don't have to worry about our livelihood, it would be easy for us to obey God's commandments. Common excuses we hear are: "If I didn't have to work so hard, I'd come to church more often." "If I were rich, I'd offer more money to the church." "I'll do more church work after I retire."
- 15b. Jesus first said how hard it is for those "who have riches" (23) to enter the kingdom of God. In response to the disciples' amazement, Jesus said how hard it is for those "who trust in riches" (24) to enter the kingdom of God. This seems to imply that the disciples were the ones who trusted in riches; they assumed it was easier for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God. Jesus taught them that it was the opposite.
- 15c. A person's riches do not disqualify him from eternal life. However, the more we have, the harder it is to give up everything for Jesus. It is impossible to serve God and money at the same time (Mt 6:24). "Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Mt 6:21). If the world is too valuable to us, it is impossible to enter the kingdom of God (Lk 9:57-62).
- In fact, without Jesus Christ, it is impossible for anyone (rich or poor) to be saved. The rich man appeared blameless in the eyes of men, but he fell short by Jesus' standards. No one is righteous before God (Rom 3:10-11).
- 15d. We tend to cherish our desires, but being a disciple of Christ requires us to forsake what is valuable to us. We must give up our claim of ownership. We are just managers who have been put in charge to use God's possessions at the proper time (Lk 12:42-44).
- Peter did not literally sell everything he had, but he did leave his possessions behind to follow Jesus (1:18). He offered what he had to Jesus; his house became a place where Jesus taught and healed. Likewise, before we can claim to lay down our life for a brother, we must first help him meet his daily needs (1Jn 3:16-18).
- 15e. Jesus teaches us to have the correct priorities. If we seek first the kingdom of God, there is no need to worry about our life (Mt 6:25, 33). The Holy Spirit gives us the insight that only Jesus Christ has surpassing value (Php 3:7-8). Having riches in life is a means to an end, not the end itself. We must not trust in riches, but use them wisely to serve God.
- Abraham (Jas 2:23), Job (Job 1:8), and Cornelius (Acts 10:4) are examples of rich men who nurtured a relationship with God and used their resources to help those around them.

16. There are many testimonies of believers who choose to honor God above their income. They close their businesses on Saturdays (the most profitable days) so that they can observe the Sabbath service. Not only did God spare them from financial hardship, He actually increased their income. Other kinds of present rewards for keeping God's command include a close daily walk with Christ, a blissful family, fellowship with other believers, peace and joy in our hearts, meaning in life, mature spiritual character, etc.
- Even greater are the blessings that await us. Abraham obeyed God and left his homeland because God promised to make him into a great nation (Heb 11:8). Because he walked by faith, God gave him countless earthly and spiritual descendants. Not only is he the father of the circumcised Jews, he is also the father of everyone who shares his faith (Rom 4:11-12). Like Abraham, we must understand that we are "strangers on earth" (Heb 11:13). Then we can look forward to "a better country" (Heb 11:16), where we will enjoy the greatest blessing - eternal life.
17. Jesus is with us when we are persecuted because of our faith (Mt 5:10-12; 1Pet 4:13-14). Our suffering has value when we see the church grow (Col 1:24). Through suffering, we learn to turn to God (Zech 13:9). God uses persecution to refine our faith (1Pet 1:7).
18. In this context, the first and the last refers to our priority on earth, and our reward in heaven. Those who are first on earth will be last in God's kingdom—those who value what they own will be last to enter the kingdom of God (if at all). If we have riches and honor but not spiritual understanding, we are "like the beasts that perish" (Ps 49:20). On the other hand, those who are last on earth will be first in God's kingdom—those who are willing to give up everything to follow Christ will be first to enter God's kingdom. Like little children, they might seem insignificant or even foolish in the world, but they will receive great rewards on earth and eternal life in heaven.

Lesson 17

Observation

Outline

Jesus again Predicts His Death (10:32-34)

The Cup and Baptism of Jesus (10:35-45)

James and John ask for glory for themselves (35-37)

Jesus promises them the same cup and baptism that He would be receiving (38-40)

Teachings on serving (41-45)

Jesus Heals Blind Bartimaeus (10:46-52)

Bartimaeus cries out to Jesus (46-48)

Jesus speaks to Bartimaeus (49-51)

After Bartimaeus receives his sight, he follows Jesus (52)

Key Words/Phrases

Amazed, afraid, betrayed, condemn, mock, spit, flog, kill, rise, glory, cup, drink, baptism, great, servant, minister, slave, ransom, Jesus of Nazareth, Son of David, followed

General Analysis

- 1a. Son of Man (33), teacher (35), Jesus of Nazareth (47), Son of David (47), rabboni/rabbi (51)

These terms identify Jesus' various status and responsibilities. He was both a humble servant ("Son of Man") and a king ("Son of David"). He was both a simple carpenter ("Jesus of Nazareth") and a wise teacher ("rabboni").

- 1b. Jesus did not lord His authority over the others. Instead, He asked, "What do you want Me to do for you?" first to James and John, and then to Bartimaeus. He stated clearly that He came to serve (45). The book of Mark describes Jesus' busy life as a servant. He hurried from one place to another. Many people came to Him and asked Him to do what they desired. Jesus continues to serve us by being the mediator between God and men (1Tim 2:5). His Holy Spirit searches our hearts and intercedes for us (Rom 8:27).
2. James and John dared to say to Jesus, "We want you to do for us whatever we ask." It is interesting that they used the first-person pronoun not one, not two, but three times in one simple sentence. They were proud of their closeness to Jesus and what they have done in His name. In this sense, they were like the Pharisee (Lk 18:9,11,12) and the rich man (Mk 10:20) who were confident of their own righteousness. They knew exactly what they wanted and demanded Jesus to give it to them. If you read only 35-36, it almost seems as though James and John were the masters, and Jesus was their servant.
- In contrast, Bartimaeus cried out to his God and king, "Have mercy on me!" He did not dare to specify what Jesus should do. Like the tax collector, he was just a lowly servant pleading for his master's help (cf. Lk 18:13).
- 3a. It is our duty to find out what we can do for other people. It is natural for a servant to ask and fulfill the needs of another person. We must learn from Jesus' spirit of a servant (Rom 15:1-3).

- 3b. Before we can answer this question, we must first understand ourselves. We must truly know what we need the most to serve God in our different capacities. Elisha asked for the power of the Holy Spirit (2Kgs 2:9). Solomon asked for wisdom to lead the people of God (1Kgs 3:5-9).

Segment Analysis

1. They were amazed because Jesus was breaking from His usual patterns. This time, He was leading the way, whereas He had often withdrawn Himself from the crowd (1:35; 3:7; 6:32; 7:24). Perhaps they were amazed by His powerful teachings on entering the kingdom of God. Perhaps they were amazed by their Master's resolve. Jesus' predictions of His death probably confused and frightened them because they did not understand.
2. Jesus wanted to prepare them for the persecution ahead. He told them so that they might remember and believe when all these things have taken place (Jn 14:29; 16:4).
3. For three years, they had followed Jesus and preached and healed in His name. They were His close disciples. Surely that was enough to deserve a piece of Jesus' glory? They wanted to rule over everyone else, including the other ten disciples. They were still short on the spirit of sacrifice.
- We must not make the mistake of James and John. We rejoice in saving souls, not in performing miracles or preaching powerful messages (Lk 10:20). Just because we have believed in Jesus longer or have done more church work does not mean we deserve more honor. We must do everything for the glory of God. Otherwise, we would be hypocrites (cf. Mk 12:38-39).
- 4a. Even after Jesus had clearly spelled out what would happen to Him, the disciples still did not understand. They believed that Jesus would receive glory in this world, perhaps as the king of Israel in the political sense.
- 4b. Jesus told James and John clearly, "You do not know what you ask" (38). To share in Jesus' glory means to be the greatest in the kingdom of God. And, according to Jesus, one who is the greatest in the kingdom of God must be the servant of all (Mk 9:35; 10:43). Moreover, suffering comes before glory (Lk 24:26; Heb 2:10). In order to share in Christ's glory, we must first suffer with Him. When we testify for the Lord, we suffer for His sake (2Tim 1:8).
- 5a. It follows from their interpretation of Jesus' glory that the cup must be a cup of blessing. Perhaps they interpreted the baptism as Jesus' baptism in the Jordan. Their own baptism probably appeared similar to Jesus' baptism in the Jordan, so of course they could be baptized with the

- baptism Jesus was baptized with. These sounded like good, easy things. They neglected Jesus' words: "You do not know what you ask" (38).
- 5b. Jesus knew that the cup contained God's wrath upon the sinners (Mt 26:39). He was to take our place. He died so that we are saved from God's wrath (Rom 5:8-9).
- The baptism Jesus was baptized with was one of suffering and death. Christ paid a great price to save us. Today, when we are baptized into Jesus, we bury our sins so that we can live a new life (Rom 6:3-4).
6. All church workers are servants who care for the members' physical and spiritual needs (Acts 6:3-4). Each of us serves in different capacities, according to the gifts given by the Holy Spirit (1Cor 12:4-10). No one person has a claim of authority or respect over another because Christ is the head of all (Eph 4:15; Col 2:10).
- By the same token, the church must not become a hierarchy in which one segment rules over another. Rather, we should all serve one another for the faith of the gospel (Phil 1:27).
7. The word "ransom" (*lytron* in Greek) means "the price of release." Jesus died and poured out His blood as the price to set us free from our sins, so that we may receive the "eternal inheritance"—the kingdom of God (Heb 9:15). The Old Testament laws prove that no one is perfect; under the law, we are all condemned sinners (Rom 3:19-20). But, in our place, Jesus drank the cup of judgement and was baptized with the baptism of suffering.
9. Perhaps the people did not want him to disturb the solemn atmosphere. Perhaps they wanted healing and/or food from Jesus, and did not want a blind man to delay them. Perhaps his loud shouting was irritating to them. They were more concerned with their interests and ideas. Like the disciples, they were "not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men" (8:33).
10. In Matthew, "Son of David" appears frequently, emphasizing Jesus' identity as a king. Bartimaeus is the only person recorded in Mark who called Jesus "Son of David." He knew that Jesus was more than just "Jesus of Nazareth" (47). He believed that Jesus was more than a servant or a teacher. His faith compelled him to plead for Jesus' mercy.
11. How we ask says a lot about how anxious we desire what we ask. We can be confident and forcefully as long as we are asking according to God's will. For example, when we pray for God to fill us with his Holy Spirit, we can pray without fear or hesitation, "Lord, I want the Holy Spirit" instead of, "Lord, it would be nice if you would give me your Holy Spirit, but if not, that's okay, too."

12. Jesus healed Bartimaeus in front of the crowd instead of taking him outside of town. Also, Jesus allowed Bartimaeus to follow Him instead of sending him away. This tells us that Jesus was no longer hiding His authority. After all, He was heading to Jerusalem to confront the chief priests and scribes. In the end, He would accomplish His mission to die on the cross and draw all men to Him (Jn 12:32).
13. He did not give up when people warned him to be quiet. Instead, he cried out all the more. He knew that was probably his only chance of being healed, and he overcame all obstacles in the way until Jesus answered his plea. True faith requires persistence and courage in the face of obstacles. If we yearn for God's help and know that He is our only answer, we need to keep crying out to Him until He answers us. We should not let anyone or anything discourage us while we seek the Lord's mercy.
- For those who still have not accepted the gospel, we ought to learn from Bartimaeus, who seized the precious opportunity and cried out to the Lord. We need to realize that spiritually, we are poor and blind like Bartimaeus, and we desperately need the Lord's mercy. So let us quickly cry out to the Lord, acknowledge Him as the Son of David (our King), and ask Him to save us. Do not let Him pass us by because we may not have another chance.

Lesson 18

Observation

Outline

Teachings from A Colt (11:1-6)

Jesus sends two disciples to fetch a colt (1-3)

The disciples do as Jesus said (4-6)

Entry into Jerusalem (11:7-11)

People praise Jesus (7-10)

Jesus enters Jerusalem and rests in Bethany (11)

Teachings from A Fig Tree (11:12-14)

Jesus cannot find any fruit on the tree (12-13)

Jesus curses the fig tree (14)

Teachings from the Temple (11:15-18)

Jesus drives out those who were buying and selling (15-16)

The chief priests and the scribes plot to kill Jesus (17-18)

Teachings on Prayer (11:19-26)

The curse on the fig tree fulfilled (19-21)

The power of faith in God (22-24)

Forgive others in prayer (25-26)

Key Words/Phrases

Hosanna, blessed, kingdom, fruit, house of prayer, den of thieves, faith, pray, forgive

General Analysis

- 1a. Colt—Jesus needed to ride into Jerusalem. No one has ever ridden on this colt (2), implying that it was perhaps untamed and/or had a bad temperament. So it was a miracle that Jesus could ride the colt without trouble.
- 1b. Fig tree—Jesus was hungry and needed something to eat. It withered because it did not have any fruit.
- 1c. Temple—A house of prayer. However, the people turned it into a market.
2. To fulfill His purpose of coming to earth, to teach about the heavenly kingdom and the last days, to reveal the hypocrisy of the religious establishment, to be persecuted, to die on the cross

Segment Analysis

1. Jesus taught in a borrowed boat (Lk 5:3), ate the Passover meal in a borrowed room (Mk 14:12-15), and was buried in someone else's tomb (Mt 27:59-60). Jesus owned nothing (Lk 9:58), yet everything He needed was provided for Him. If we serve God and put Him first, He will always provide for our needs, even when we seem to have nothing (2Cor 6:10).
2. Jesus promised that whatever we give up for Him and the gospel will be returned one hundred times (Mk 10:29-30).
- 3a. not respectable; not calm; it's hard to look dignified, riding on a colt that is trying to throw you off.
4. Unlike before, they did not question Jesus. They did not worry that people would accuse them of stealing the colt, or why Jesus wanted to ride an untamed colt. They did as He said. They showed the same faith while preparing the Passover meal (Mk 14:12-16).
5. spread their cloaks on the road, spread branches, went ahead and behind Jesus, shouted "Hosanna!"
- 6a. Crowd—He was their hero. His miracles and His words amazed them. The people thought Jesus was the king who would restore Israel (10). They had tried unsuccessfully to make Him king (Jn 6:15), but this time, they thought, He was coming to do what they wanted.
- 6b. Disciples—They must have been quite proud of the attention they were getting. Perhaps they were basking in the glory the crowd was

showing upon Jesus. Perhaps they took the people's support as motivation to confront the leaders in Jerusalem. They might have ignored or forgotten Jesus' prophecy that He would be persecuted and killed.

- 6c. Jesus—He was silent when He entered the city. He knew that everyone, including His own disciples, did not understand what was about to take place. The same people who were cheering and following Him would soon condemn and betray Him. Jesus was preparing Himself to drink the bitter cup.
7. Perhaps Jesus went to the temple to pray (cf. 11:17). When He was there, "He looked around at all things." He wanted to see for Himself how the temple was being used.
8. Jesus often used everyday activities to teach us spiritual lessons. He used His hunger as a starting point to teach the disciples how to be useful to God. Perhaps the disciples were impressed by the leaves because they assumed the tree had fruits to eat. Instead of telling them otherwise, Jesus inspected the tree so that the disciples could see for themselves. Jesus does not jump to conclusions. He does not condemn us rashly. We also should not show favoritism based on someone's appearance (Jas 2:1-4).
- 9a. The flowers and the fruits of a fig tree are hidden, which represent a spirit of humility. In contrast, this fig tree with full leaves advertised itself ahead of time, when it had no fruit to give (Mic 7:1). This tree represents those who have the appearance of godliness, when, in fact, they do not live up to what they profess and are useless in God's eyes (like the unbelieving Jews of Jesus' time). It can also represent people who want to stand out among the crowd, to defy the norm, when, in fact, there is no substance in their actions and words. We must bear fruit for God by practicing God's word and nurturing our spiritual lives instead of putting on a superficial religion or trying to impress people with external things.
- 9b. King Solomon had great wisdom, riches, fame, and power (1Kgs 10:14-29), but he turned away from God (1Kgs 11:6). In the end of his life, he realized that all his accomplishments were meaningless (Eccl 1:17; 2:11). John the Baptist lived a simple life (Mk 1:6). He called himself "a voice in the wilderness" (Jn 1:23) and turned the attention away from himself to Jesus Christ (Mk 1:7). Jesus had no physical beauty (Isa 53:2), but He lived a perfect life to show us how to serve God and man.
- 9c. Having an appearance of godliness but indulging in sin (2Tim 3:5), performing religious duties without sincerity to obey God's will (Mk 7:6), using religion for self-interest (1Tim 6:3-5), preaching false doctrines in the name of Christ (2Cor 11:13; 2Jn 7).

10. The fig tree without fruits was a “performed” (as opposed to spoken) parable. Jesus cursed the tree not because it did not have fruit, but that it grew leaves without having any fruits. The leaves made the tree stand out from the other fig trees. It misled people into thinking it had figs to satisfy their hunger (cf. *Did You Know* 7).

Nevertheless, God does not enjoy punishing the wicked (Ezek 18:23). Jesus did not say to the tree, “You will wither and die.” Rather, He said, “May no one ever eat fruit from you again.” (14). It was a statement of the consequence of the tree’s “hypocrisy.” A tree that did not serve its purpose (producing fruits) no long had a reason to live, so it withered.

11. Jesus waited to test the disciples’ faith. When Peter saw the withered fig tree, he pointed out the obvious to Jesus. It seems like Peter was amazed that what Jesus said came true. Because Jesus did not specifically say the tree would die, perhaps the disciples did not expect it to happen.

Also, Jesus waited a day to symbolize God’s mercy in this “parable.” In Lk 13:6-9, the master waited three years before deciding to cut down the fig tree without fruits. He even agreed to wait one more year so that the gardener could fertilize it more. We decide what to do in light of God’s mercy. Losing our soul is a gradual process. When we give in more and more to the desires of our flesh, we stray further and further away from God. If we do not repent, eventually we must face the consequences (Mt 7:19).

12. The colt was an ignoble creature. No one had expected it to be ridden. However, it submitted to Jesus, and played a noble role of carrying Jesus into Jerusalem. God chooses the foolish (1Cor 1:27). Even though we are lowly jars of clay, God can shine out His glory through us (2Cor 4:7).

The fig tree could have contributed to Jesus’ ministry by supplying Him food. However, it was all show and no substance. God is not impressed by external appearance (Gal 2:6); He judges our hearts (Heb 4:12). Our worldly accomplishment is irrelevant. What is important is whether or not we practice God’s commandments. Our work for the Lord will follow us when we die (Rev 14:12-13).

- 13a. The merchants degraded the act of offering into something that can be made easy by paying money. They forgot that the items used for sacrifice were secondary. God desires what is in our hearts, not burnt offerings (Hos 6:6). Furthermore, when the money changers cheated people (cf. *Did You Know* 9), they sinned against God in a place of worship.

Secondly, they had robbed the Gentiles of the opportunity to worship at the “house of prayer for all nations.” With all the business activities and traffic in the court of the Gentiles, how could a Gentile worshipper even offer a prayer here without interruption?

- 13b. The Israelites were persuaded to worship in their own ways because it was convenient (1Kgs 12:28). Likewise, sometimes we set our principles aside for convenience’s sake. We do not attend services because the church is too far away. We do not help others if it would take too much time. We tell “white lies” to avoid small inconveniences. Jesus cleared the temple to teach us that our faith is a matter of our heart, not of convenience.

- 14a. The outer court was turned into a market, creating a noisy atmosphere. How could anyone worship God in the midst of all the commotion? Also, the court was as far as a Gentile was allowed, so this was a Gentile’s only impression of how the “chosen people” worshiped God. The buying and selling blasphemed God’s name among the Gentiles (Rom 2:24).

- 14b. The temple looked prosperous, with many people coming and going, but it no longer served its spiritual purpose. It was supposed to be a place declaring God’s name, a place to pray for His protection and forgiveness (1Kgs 8:28-30). But the Israelites forsook God, and His glory departed from the temple (Ezek 10:18). Without God’s abidance, the temple was only a shell. In Jesus’ day, the people’s faith had become such a formality that the temple was turned into a market. It might be why the temple would be destroyed (Mk 13:2), in the same way that the fig tree was cursed and withered.

- 14c. If the church does not glorify God, it becomes “a den of thieves.” It might use its authority to take advantage of people. It might become a place to socialize or to do business, where worship is secondary and superficial.

We must look beyond the appearances. Just because a church has many members and seems active (many leaves) does not necessarily mean it has the fruit of the Holy Spirit. The church must be a solemn and spiritual body of Christ. If it does not reflect the love and peace of Christ, it causes its members and the non-believers to stumble. For example, Paul rebuked the Corinthian church for bringing their disputes outside the church (1Cor 6:4-6).

- 15a. Jesus equated them to robbers, which was a severe insult. Moreover, Jesus’ fame and influence had spread from Galilee to Judea to Jerusalem, and now He was here in person, threatening their authority. They feared that Jesus would either take over their positions, or cause a revolt that would bring the wrath of the Roman government upon them. They had to act quickly to protect themselves; all they needed was a way to turn the people against Him.

Also, by quoting Isaiah 56, Jesus was implying that He was the Lord God, and the temple was “His” house. The scribes and chief priests were probably incensed by this implicit claim.

- 15b. Like the fig tree, they were full of beautiful green leaves but had no fruit. Jesus rebuked them for putting on a show of piety to gain respect, while cheating the poor when people were not looking (Lk 20:46-47). He also compared them to whitewashed tombs, “which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of dead men’s bones and everything unclean” (Mt 23:27). The religious leaders were supposed to guide the people’s spiritual growth. However, not only were they blind to God’s will, they led the people down the same stray path (Mt 15:14; 23:15). Allowing a market in the temple was one such example.
16. We must first examine our motives and ask that God’s will be done (Mk 14:36; Rom 12:2; 1Jn 5:14). If our request is for the purpose of indulgence, we will not receive what we ask for (Jas 4:3-4). Paul did not receive what he prayed for, because God had a better purpose for him (2Cor 12:7-9).
17. Having faith means believing that God rewards those who seek Him (Heb 11:16; Rom 8:32). It means believing that we have already received His answer even while we pray (Mk 11:24; Heb 11:1). We must trust that God will do what is best in the right time (Rom 8:28). Also, we must show our faith by what we do (Jas 2:22). While waiting for God to act on our behalf, we must continue to obey Him (Jas 4:7-8).
18. Faith and forgiveness go hand-in-hand. The book of James parallels this teaching. First, we must believe in what we pray for (Jas 1:5-6). In the meantime, we must bear fruit to show our faith (Jas 2:17-18). Finally, the power of prayer comes from the forgiveness of sins—from God (Jas 5:15) and from each other (Jas 5:16).
19. “While we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Rom 5:8). We forgive others because Jesus forgave us first. And if we show mercy, we will be shown mercy (Jas 2:13). If not, God will demand that we repay all the debts we owe Him (Mt 18:34-35).

Lesson 19

Observation

Outline

- The Chief Priests, Scribes, and Elders (11:27-33)
 - Questioning Jesus’ authority (27-28)
 - Jesus asks about John’s baptism (29-30)
 - The rulers avoid answering Jesus’ question (31-33)
- Parable of the Tenants (12:1-12)
- The Pharisees and Herodians (12:13-17)

Questioning Jesus on paying taxes to Caesar (13-14)

“Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s” (15-17)

The Sadducees (12:18-27)

Questioning Jesus on resurrection (18-23)

Jesus points out the error in their question (24-27)

Key Words/Phrases

Authority, heaven, men, vinedressers/tenants, beat, son, killed, rejected, chief cornerstone/capstone, taxes, hypocrisy, tempt, resurrection, heaven, “God of the living”

General Analysis

- 1a. chief priests, scribes, elders (27), Pharisees, Herodians (13), Sadducees (18)
- 1b. The alliance was a marriage of convenience. They were united against Jesus in spite of their own quarrels (Pharisees vs. Sadducees [cf. Acts 23:6-8], scribes vs. Herodians [strict observance of the Mosaic law vs. condoning loose morals]). The conspiracy had started long before Jesus entered Jerusalem; the Pharisees had been planning with the Herodians to kill Jesus (cf. Mk 3:6). Jesus was their greatest threat, and, as the saying goes, “The enemy of my enemy is my friend.” Instead of obeying God’s teachings, they would rather get rid of Jesus and fight to keep power for themselves.
- 1c. The chief priests, scribes, etc. temporarily set aside their differences to oppose the gospel. They were a powerful force because they controlled many classes and groups in society (conservative and liberal, rich and poor, Jewish patriots and Roman sympathizers, etc.) They were like the strong man Jesus spoke of (Mk 3:27). On the other hand, the twelve disciples were still fighting among themselves (Mk 9:34; 10:37). They seemed incapable of overcoming the opposition. However, “with God all things are possible” (Mk 10:27); after the disciples received the Holy Spirit, they were more than capable of standing up against persecution from the same people (Acts 4:8, 13, 18-20; 5:27-29).

Segment Analysis

1. Before, the scribes openly accused Jesus of being demon-possessed (Mk 3:22). Now, because of Jesus’ popularity, they couched their accusation indirectly in the form of a question. The question was intended to force Jesus to incriminate Himself. If Jesus answered, “From heaven,” they would accuse Him of blasphemy (cf. Mk 2:7). If He answered, “From men,” they would accuse Him of insurrection against the Roman government.

2. Jesus knew that the elders, scribes, etc. dared not say anything bad about John the Baptist (11:32). In response to their trap, He used John's authority from heaven to catch them at their words. Asking about John's baptism served two purposes. First, as the ensuing discussion shows (11:31-32), the answer to Jesus' question is also the answer to their question. Second, John's baptism (cf. Mk 1:4) was a reminder that they should repent.
3. They were interested only in preserving their power. They refused to answer Jesus' question because the truth would hurt their standing among the people. In the eyes of the world, their answer might seem wise (refusing to acknowledge Jesus' question). However, while Jesus' words had spiritual wisdom, their answer actually meant nothing.
4. Jesus actually had already answered their question (cf. Question 2). They knew the answer, but refused to accept it. They were blinded by their own self-righteousness. They questioned Jesus not because they wanted to know the truth, but because they wanted an excuse to accuse Him. Jesus rebuked them for their hypocrisy in the parable of the tenants. They understood His meaning, but did not repent (cf. 12:12).
5. People might be offended by the doctrine of the one true church or claim that praying in tongues is not the work of the Holy Spirit. We must learn from Jesus, who did not directly confront His accusers, but referred to the word of God.
6. planted a vineyard, put up a hedge/wall, dug a wine vat, built a tower, rented the vineyard, went away
The landowner's actions show how much he valued the vineyard (cf. Isa 5:1-2). The wall and watchtower protected his property. He would use the pit for the winepress to hold the fruit of the vineyard. He entrusted other farmers to work in his vineyard so that these tenant farmers could also reap the benefits of his riches. At the same time, he kept possession of the vineyard because he was the one who had put all that effort into it (cf. *Did You Know 2*).
7. Took/seized, beat, sent away, wounded in the head, threw stones, treated shamefully, killed
The tenants never intended to pay. All along, they had wanted to take the vineyard for themselves. When the landowner continued to send his servants to collect, the tenants became increasingly vicious, to the point of murder.
8. The tenants' greed for the vineyard dictated their actions. At this point in the story, they had killed many servants (12:5). Perhaps they had grown so bold that killing a man meant nothing to them anymore. Perhaps they felt they had nothing to lose. To them, the landowner's son was just another obstacle to be gotten rid of so they could gain the inheritance

(12:7). They did not recognize that the landowner had the final say on who receives his vineyard.

- 9a. Vineyard—Israel, God's people, the church
- 9b. Landowner—God
- 9c. Tenants—unfaithful and treacherous workers; the chief priests, scribes, and elders;
- 9d. Servants sent to collect—prophets. Many workers bravely spoke for God, even though many before them had been killed doing the same. John the Baptist is an example (Mk 6:27).
- 9e. Landowner's son—Jesus
- 9f. Others who are given the vineyard—the Gentiles; those who are faithful to God
10. Jesus was rejected by the chief priest, etc. (the builders) as useless. Their unbelief would cause them to fall and be crushed (Lk 20:18). Jesus is the capstone of the church because salvation is found in no one else. The Lord promised salvation. At the appointed time, He came to earth to save us. The more we understand God's plan, the more wonderful He is to us (Rom 11:33-36).
- 11a. It was part of their hypocrisy, which Jesus saw through (12:15).
- 11b. What is the most important is for us to praise God (Mt 5:16) and for God to praise us. We must not make the mistake of loving praise from men more than praise from God (Jn 12:43; 1Thess 2:6).
12. The question was designed to trap Jesus in a religious and political dilemma. If He answered, "Yes," the Pharisees would claim that Jesus was a Roman collaborator and turn the people against Him. If He answered, "No," the Herodians would use that as an excuse to ask the Romans to arrest Him.
13. Jesus transcended the issue of paying taxes. He teaches that we must fulfill both our earthly and spiritual responsibilities. It is not a matter of choosing one over the other. We must not use our religion as an excuse to avoid our responsibilities to society (cf. Mk 7:11-12). More importantly, we must honor God above all because He has given us everything. We must put our faith into practice, so that we can glorify God in a sinful world (Php 2:15).
14. It is our duty to submit to our government "for the Lord's sake" (1Pet 2:13-14). We must obey the laws of the country we live in, as long as we do not disobey God's commandments. This includes paying taxes according to the law (Rom 13:5-7). More important, though, is our debt to God, and "the continuing debt to love one another" (Rom 13:8 NIV).

15. The Sadducees asked about a very specific scenario. They wanted to limit the scope of the debate on their own terms. But Jesus would not play their game. Instead of addressing their question, Jesus revealed their error.
16. Because their goal was to catch Jesus in His words, they lost sight of the big picture. Their scenario was so contrived and unrealistic that it was meaningless. Therefore, Jesus rebuked them for not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God (12:24). They had failed to understand from the Scriptures that there would indeed be a resurrection of the dead, and they had failed to trust that God had the power to establish a new order of existence in the resurrected life beyond what we can imagine with our limited understanding.
17. God is “the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.” God is also the God of the living. These two facts imply that although Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob died, they will be raised to life in the future, and they were in fact alive in God’s eyes (cf. Lk 20:38).
18. Because the Sadducees gave Jesus a logical puzzle, Jesus gave them a logical response. Jesus reasoned from the Bible (which they claimed to believe) to disprove their conclusion. They could not deny that God Himself said, “I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob” (12:26). They also could not deny that God is the God of the living. These two beliefs imply that there will be resurrection.
19. “Can God create a rock so big that He can’t lift?” “Can God do evil?” “How can a person be resurrected if his body is cremated and the ashes are scattered?”
- These questions reveal the hearts of the people who ask them. Like the Sadducees, they want to discredit God with logical difficulties. This was the same reasoning of the people who mocked Jesus on the cross (cf. Mk 15:30-32). It made more sense to them for Jesus to come down from the cross. They did not understand that Jesus had to die on the cross to redeem the sins of mankind. When a person chooses to reject Jesus in spite of the overwhelming evidence of His divine authority, he or she is “greatly mistaken” (12:27).
20. It is a losing battle trying to solve these puzzles. Jesus did not directly answer the Sadducees’ question. Instead, He used the Bible to reveal a fallacy in their reasoning. If a person only wants to cast doubts on your faith, you don’t have to spend too much time with a puzzle. If a person is earnestly seeking the truth, we can refer to biblical verses to show that God is beyond our understanding (Job 36:26; Rom 11:33). God would not be truly God if He can be completely figured out.

Lesson 20

Observation

Outline

- A Wise Scribe (12:28-34)
 - A scribe asks Jesus about the most important commandment (28)
 - The two greatest commandments (29-31)
 - The scribe understands Jesus’ answer (29-31)
 - Jesus praises the scribe (29-31)
- Jesus Rebukes the Scribes (12:35-40)
 - Jesus questions the scribes on the lordship of Christ (35-37)
 - The hypocrisy of the scribes (38-40)
- Jesus rebukes the rich men (12:41-44)
 - Jesus watches the crowd at the temple treasury (41)
 - The poor widow offers more than all the others (42-44)

Key Words/Phrases

Commandments, love, heart, soul, mind, strength, neighbor, understanding, son of David, devour, punished

General Analysis

1. Judgment begins with the family of God (1Pet 4:17). The scribes, elders, chief priests, and Pharisees were respected leaders of God’s chosen people. Jesus rebuked them more harshly because they attacked the gospel so ferociously. “With the same measure you use, it will be measured to you” (Mk 4:24). They were educated in God’s law and were proud of their righteousness (Mt 23:29-32). In reality, they practiced ritual cleanliness while rejecting love and spiritual purity (Mt 23:4, 23-28). Jesus had to denounce them in public. Otherwise, their false teachings would prevent others from entering the kingdom of God (Mt 23:13, 15).
2. We must listen, think it over, and let the word of God take root in our heart (Jas 1:18-21). If we insist on our own righteousness, we’d be easily offended, and Christ becomes our stumbling block (Rom 9:32-33).

Segment Analysis

1. Matthew tells us that this scribe also started out with the intention to test Jesus (Mt 23:35). But from his response as well as Jesus’ comment about him, we know that he actually listened to what Jesus had to say. He did not join with those who wanted to trap and destroy Jesus. He tested

- Jesus more on the basis of being very much impressed by Jesus' answers (Mk 12:28; although this attitude was not completely right either). But over the course of Jesus' response, this scribe opened up his heart and humbly acknowledged that Jesus was right. His words also show that he had been carefully reflecting on God's commandments.
2. There is only one God, so there is no need to share your love with any other. Deut 6:3-5 (which Jesus quoted) tells us that we are blessed if we listen and obey completely. Therefore, the church, the one body of Christ, must have the "same love, being one in spirit and purpose" (Php 2:2).
 - 3a. With all your heart—like the love between a husband and his wife (Song 6:2-3; Ps 84:2; Eph 5:24-25, 32); trust in the Lord (Prov 3:5); keep God's commands (Prov 4:4); seek God (Jer 29:13); repent (Joel 2:12); be a faithful servant (Jer 3:15; Col 3:23)
 - 3b. With all your understanding/mind—increase our spiritual knowledge (1Cor 1:5; 2Cor 8:7; Php 1:9); wisdom refreshes our heart and soul to love God (Prov 2:10); spread the message of Jesus Christ (1Cor 2:14); teach the truth (2Tim 2:25); grow and be united in true knowledge (Eph 4:13); bear fruit according to our knowledge (Col 1:9-10)
 - 3c. With all your soul—pour out our innermost thoughts to God (Ps 42:4; 1Sam 1:15); lift up our desires and praises to God (Ps 25:1); boast in the Lord and glorify Him (Ps 34:2-3; Lk 1:46-47); rejoice in the Lord and His salvation (Ps 35:9; 62:5); desire and thirst for God (Ps 42:1-2)
 - 3d. With all your strength—give to the Lord everything within our means (like the widow [42-44]); ask for power from God to serve Him (1Pet 4:11); follow the examples of Jesus Christ, the prophets, and the apostles, who served until the last moment of their lives
 4. In Jesus' parable of the good Samaritan (Lk 10:29-37), He actually answers the question, "To whom am I a neighbor?" It is more important to examine yourself to see whom you can serve instead of trying to figure out if a person fits the criteria of being your neighbor.
Jesus said, "...just as you want men to do to you, you also do to them likewise" (Lk 6:31). Some examples of loving your neighbor as yourself: show mercy like the good Samaritan; do not bear a grudge or take revenge (Lev 19:18); welcome strangers, including people new to the church (Lev 19:34); do not show favoritism (Jas 2:8-9)
 - 5a. In the Old Testament, the priests made burnt offerings and sacrifices for the atonement of sins (cf. *Did You Know* 2). In the New Testament, Jesus is the High Priest (Heb 4:14) who sacrificed Himself to atone for our sins. In response to His sacrifice, we must offer what we have to the Lord. The most important is to offer our bodies as living sacrifices (Rom 12:1). When we serve God, we must be prepared to be refined by the fire of trials (Heb 13:11-13; 1Pet 1:7). We must spread the fragrance of Christ (2Cor 2:15), an aroma pleasing to the Lord (Lev 1:9). Another offering is our financial support to the church, which is compared to a fragrant offering (Php 4:18).
 - 5b. God desires mercy, not sacrifice on the altar (Hos 6:6). We can offer a better sacrifice only if we love God and our neighbors. "Love will cover a multitude of sins" (1Pet 4:8). "He who loves God must love his brother also" (1Jn 4:21).
 6. The wise scribe listened, understood, and believed the words of Christ. Thus, he was near the kingdom of God. However, he was not yet in the kingdom of God because this was only the beginning of his walk with Christ. He had to practice what he learned, to continue to follow Christ, and to work out his salvation with the help of the Holy Spirit (Php 2:12-13).
 7. The Ten Commandments (Ex 20:3-17); act justly, love mercy, walk humbly with God (Mic 6:8); offer tithes (Mal 3:8, 10)
 8. The more they asked, the more Jesus appeared wise and authoritative. Even one of their own (a scribe) confessed that Jesus spoke the word of God. Because they could not defeat Jesus with questions, they plotted against Him in secret (Jn 11:53,57; Mk 14:1-2), to get Jesus through someone close to Him (Mk 14:10-11).
 9. In flesh, Jesus was the son of David. In spirit, He is the Son of God (Rom 1:3-4). The prophecy about Jesus' authority and resurrection (Acts 2:31-35) shows that Jesus is greater than David. The scribes had a limited understanding of the Christ. They did not know that the Christ was the Son of God. So Jesus confounded them by pointing out that Christ was actually greater than David (spiritually) even though He was also David's descendant (genealogically).
 - 10a. They taught the letter of the law, while neglecting "the weightier matters of the law" (Mt 23:23). They honored the law more than they honored God. Therefore, they hardened their hearts against Jesus. Also, they emphasized physical observance of the law above helping the poor. They loved neither God nor men, only themselves.
 - 10c. When we see those who do not practice what they preach, we should neither completely reject what they teach because of their bad behavior nor imitate everything they do just because they are well-versed in the Bible. We need to have a discerning heart. Our Lord Jesus teaches us that in such a situation, we should do what they teach if it is according to God's word, but not do according to their works (Mt 23:3).
 - 11a. Like when He examined the fig tree that was full of leaves, Jesus wanted to examine the people in the temple. As with the fig tree with nothing

but leaves, He used a real-life observation to teach the disciples a lesson—this time on offering (43).

12. Unlike the rich men who gave out of their wealth (the leftovers), the widow gave all she had to live on. Even though she was entitled to charity (cf. *Did You Know* 7), she chose to give rather than to receive. She loved God with all her heart and all her strength. Like Mary, who anointed Jesus, “she has done what she could” (Mk 14:8). That was why Jesus considered her offering to be more than all the others.
13. Do not show favoritism, neither to the rich (Jas 2:3-4) nor to the poor (Ex 23:3). We must treat each person fairly, because God judges each person fairly (Lev 19:15); He looks at the heart (1Sam 16:7).
15. When our faith is strong, it might be easy to pray for an hour or to read five chapters of the Bible everyday. It is not so easy when we are spiritually weak. When we do not feel like it, it is even more important to try (even forcing ourselves; stick to a schedule if you have to) to draw close to God. Jesus teaches us that offering pennies in poverty is more than offering a lot in wealth. Likewise, when we feel down and far from God, even a few minutes of prayer or Bible reading becomes more valuable.

Lesson 21

Observation

Outline

The Signs Preceding the End (13:1-20)

False christs and False Prophets (13:21-23)

Jesus' Second Coming (13:24-27)

Watch and Pray (13:28-37)

Lesson from the fig tree (28)

The immediacy of the things to come (29-31)

No one knows the day or hour (32-37)

Key Words/Phrases

Sign, deceive, wars, against, gospel, betray, rebel, abomination, flee, distress, false christs, false prophets, great power and glory, “it is near,” “no one knows,” watch, pray

General Analysis

2. We should be aware of what is happening around us. The signs of wars, famines, earthquakes, and suffering (which Jesus predicted) all remind us that the Lord Jesus is coming soon. Similarly, the imagery in the book

of Revelation gives us both a sense of alarm and of hope. However, we should not get caught up in the exact meaning and the timing of the events. While Jesus tells us about the signs, He emphasizes that no one knows when the Lord will return.

Segment Analysis

1. “When will these things happen?” “What will be the sign when all these things will be fulfilled?”
 Jesus answered the second question first by giving a detailed description of the signs. He did not address the question of “when” until the end of His talk (28-37). No one knows when these things will happen. The timing is not important. What is important is that we are aware of the signs and that we watch and pray.
2. When you compare the experiences of different mothers, you’ll find a range of the severity and frequency of birth pains. Some mothers feel the first pain and give birth very soon after. Some mothers feel the initial contraction and have time to get ready to go to the hospital. Some mothers do not feel much at all (at least at first). What they have in common is that eventually, they all feel immense pain (if they refuse epidural) when the baby is delivered. This is how it will be before the end of the world and the coming of the kingdom of God (Rev 12:1-5).
 The tribulation, like birth pains, will come without warning (1Thess 5:1-3). Jesus also uses birth pains as an analogy to impending sufferings (Jn 16:20-22). Birth pains come in successive phases, growing more and more intense, which might imply that signs will appear more frequently, and suffering will increase before Jesus comes again. In one moment, everything seems fine. The temple stands beautifully in the city, and people go about their lives, working and resting. In the next, there is great turmoil, leaving no more time for preparations. That is for certain. However, no one sign or group of signs can tell us that Jesus is coming for sure tomorrow, or next week, or next year.
3. False christs and false prophets (6, 21-22)
 Wars and rumors of wars (678)
 Earthquakes (8)
 Famines (8)
 Disciples judged and flogged (9,11)
 Gospel preached to all nations (10)
 Holy Spirit speaks through the disciples (11)
 Disciples betrayed and hated (12-13)
 Appearance of the “abomination of desolation” (14-20)

4. Jesus' statement must be read in the context of 9-13. He was describing what must happen before the gospel is preached to all nations. For preaching the gospel, the disciples will be arrested and tried and beaten. For the sake of Jesus, we will be hated by those who deny Him, including our own family (Mt 10:36). But the Holy Spirit will be with us (Mk 13:11; Jn 16:13). Jesus' prediction has proven true in church history and in testimonies of many believers whose family members do not believe in Jesus.
5. The expression "let the reader understand" stresses that we must correctly interpret what we see. Just as there will be many false christs and false prophets, there will be false alarms that deceive us. We must pray for spiritual wisdom to recognize the abomination when it truly appears and not fall for its deception.
- 6a. It adds a sense of danger and urgency. The tribulation will come when people least expect it. It will come while people are carrying out their daily routines. It will be so urgent that the best course of action is to leave everything behind and flee.
- 6b. Jesus warned us to leave everything behind and run. That is why pregnant and nursing mothers would suffer more in the chaos, because they carry greater burdens. Jesus teaches us not to love the world (Mk 13:15-16; 1Tim 6:6-10). We must be ready to abandon what we have and seek shelter in the Lord.
7. Do not be preoccupied over when it will come. Watch and pray (33), fulfill our God-given duties (34), and remain faithful to the Lord (13, Rev 3:10). God will give us the wisdom to recognize the signs and to know what to do when these things happen.
- 8a. They look like Christ but speak the words of the devil (2Cor 11:13-14; Rev 13:11). Various false teachings have arisen ever since the apostolic church. Some preached that the only way to be saved is to live an ascetic life (Col 2:20-23). Some said there is no resurrection of the dead (1Cor 15:12). Some preached a different Jesus and a different gospel (2Cor 11:4; Gal 1:6-9; 1Jn 2:22). Some might even perform signs and miracles (22).
- 8b. Claim that they are the Christ (6); point people to the false christ (Mk 13:21; Rev 13:11-12); perform signs and miracles (22)
- 8c. Today, the devil continues to send false christs and false prophets to deceive the believers. Some come from outside the church. Some come from within the church. We must discern them through the Holy Spirit and the word of God (Gal 1:6-9; 1Jn 4:1-6). If they do not preach or follow the teachings given to the apostles, we must not listen to them.
9. sun and moon darkened; stars fall from the sky; heavenly bodies shaken; Jesus coming in clouds with great power and glory; angels gather the elect from the four winds
- 10a. No one knows when Jesus will come again (32). The more important question is "Why will Jesus come again?"
- 10b. to shorten the distress (20); to gather the elect (27); to redeem (Lk 21:28); to judge (Rev 20:11-15)
13. 1. It refers to those living during Jesus' time. If this is the case, then "all these things" would mean the things that precede the coming of Christ (5-23). The contemporaries of Jesus would experience all of the things that our Lord was predicting, although subsequent generations until Christ's return would continue to experience them.
2. "This generation" might also refer to the human race, which will pass away when a new heaven and a new earth appear (2Pet 3:12-13).
- 14a. Three times (twice in 32, once in 35).
- 14b. Jesus was emphasizing God's supremacy. He was speaking as one of the servants who were put in charge of the house (34). As a man, He was just like us, and did not know the Father's timetable.
- 14c. The timing is irrelevant to our faith. We must be ready at all times. Many people claim to know the exact time of the end of the world. These "doomsday cults" deceive people to give up their lives for a false warning. In the church, we must be careful of visions and prophecies that point to a specific year or date of when Jesus will come. Jesus reminded us that we don't know, "whether in the evening, or at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or at dawn" (35). We must watch and pray so that our master will not catch us sleeping when he comes (36).
15. A fig tree growing leaves was a sure sign of summer (cf. Lesson 18, *Did You Know* 7). Likewise, the signs Jesus talked about will tell us that His coming is closer and closer. When the time has come, Jesus will come to fulfill His promise to take us to the heavenly kingdom.
16. He was stressing the certainty of His predictions. There will be drastic changes and chaos in the world. False christs and false prophets will try to deceive us. But Christ's words will always be true. He is always the same. As we watch and pray, waiting for His coming, we must remind ourselves of His promises and warnings.
- 17a. Owner of the house—the Lord Jesus
- 17b. House—the church, God's household
- 17c. Servants—believers, members of the church, workers of God
- 17d. Doorkeeper—prophets, ministers, preachers

- 18 God has given us authority in the world to work for Him (1Cor 4:1-2). We are assigned different tasks. Some are entrusted as doorkeepers or watchmen, whose primary duty is to relay God's message. That's why the spiritual leaders of the church must be especially alert. In addition, the entire church must watch and pray, waiting for the Lord Jesus to return.
19. Each of these parables shows us different things we must do while we wait for Jesus' Second Coming. Mk 13:34-36 reminds us to perform the duties given to us (1Cor 3:8; 12:4-6). Mt 24:45-51 teaches us how to be leaders who take care of God's household ("give them food in due season" [Mt 24:45]). The parable of the ten virgins (Mt 25:1-13) teaches us to be filled with the Holy Spirit and spiritual qualities (oil in the lamp) in case the master delays his arrival. The parable of the tenants (Mt 25:14-30) teaches us to use our God-given talents to serve Him to the best of our abilities. The lessons can be summarized as "Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming ... lest, coming suddenly, he find you sleeping" (Mt 24:42; Mk 13:36).

Lesson 22

Observation

Outline

- Plot to Arrest and Kill Jesus (14:1-2)
- Jesus Anointed at Bethany (14:3-9)
- Judas Iscariot Betrays Jesus (14:10-11)
- The Passover Meal (14:12-26)
- Jesus Predicts Peter's Denial (14:27-31)
- Jesus Prays in Gethsemane (14:32-42)

Key Words/Phrases

Arrest, kill, perfume, burial, betray, body, blood, fruit of the vine, fall away, deny, pray, watch, Father, "what You will", asleep, temptation

General Analysis

- 3a. Woman—poured pure nard on Jesus' head to prepare Him for His burial (3, 8)
- 3b. Jesus—forgave Judas (by washing his feet [Jn 13:1-5]); repeatedly warned His betrayer (Jn 13:11, 18, 21, 26); told His disciples how He felt (34); asked them to keep watch and pray with Him (38); fell to the ground and prayed to God (35)

- 3c. Disciples—saddened (19); determined to stand by the Lord (31); fell asleep (37, 40)

Segment Analysis

1. It was a contrast between a "beautiful thing" (6, NIV) and the hidden evil that would soon manifest itself.
2. Judas betrayed Jesus for 30 silver coins. He had been a thief, and Satan worked through his greed. He did not confess his sins when Jesus gave him a chance to repent. Instead, he plotted to hand Jesus over when no crowd was present.
- 3a. To them, the perfume's monetary value was greater than its function. In their eyes, Jesus was not important enough to spend that money on. They self-righteously believed that they had a better use for the perfume and judged the woman with their own values. In fact, they probably wished that they could have the money themselves (cf. Jn 12:4-6). However, the woman used the perfume as it was intended, and she used it on the best possible recipient—Jesus.
4. The woman's deed was the only one in the four gospel books that Jesus praised as "beautiful" (NIV) or "good" (NKJV). It was evidence of her spiritual wisdom; she knew more about the Lord's suffering than the disciples did. The Holy Spirit worked through her faith to prepare Jesus for His burial. Just as Jesus said, today we have much to learn from the woman's beautiful offering to Jesus Christ.
5. In both cases, God prepared the materials beforehand. The disciples' job was to obey and go, as the Lord commanded. They did not doubt Jesus' words and did not fear embarrassment for asking a stranger for something. Because they obeyed without question, they enjoyed the fruit of their labor (sharing Jesus' glory when they entered Jerusalem; dining with Him during Passover).
6. The sacrificial animal was without defect. Similarly, our Lord Jesus was without sin. The lamb was slaughtered, and its blood was put on the doorframe so that the people inside would be spared. Like the lamb, Jesus became the sacrifice of atonement to spare us from sin and death (Rom 3:25).
7. Jesus wanted Judas to know the severity of his actions, and warned him clearly (Mt 26:25). The man who betrayed the Lord would bear a sin so great that "it would have been good for that man if he had not been born" (Mt 26.24). Prophecy must be fulfilled; Jesus must be betrayed and crucified. However, God does not cause anyone to sin (Jas 1:13-15). The one who betrayed Him could not use prophecy as an excuse. Judas bore the great sin and responsibility because it was his decision to go to the chief priests.

8. The Passover meal had been a symbol of the Hebrews' salvation from Egypt. During the Last Supper, Jesus revealed the deeper spiritual meaning behind it. His words were soon fulfilled when He died on the cross. Today, the Passover has taken on a new meaning. During the Holy Communion, the bread and the cup are Jesus' body and blood. When we eat and drink the Holy Communion, we have the promise of eternal life, which was made possible through the suffering and death of Jesus Christ.
- 9a. Jesus made it clear that the Holy Communion is more than symbolism. He did not say, "My body is like this bread" or "My blood is like this cup." He said, "This is My body" (22) and "This is My blood" (24). And He said clearly, "Whoever eats My flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life" (Jn 6:54). This is a spiritual mystery that we must accept by faith.
- 9b. remember Christ (Lk 22:19); proclaim His death; remember how Christ shed His blood to forgive our sins (Mt 26:28); renew the hope of resurrection and eternal life; await for the coming of the kingdom of God (25)
- 9c. This new covenant is the fulfillment of God's promise in Jer 31:31-34, i.e. the forgiveness of sins, God's acceptance of believers as His own, and the inner workings of God in the hearts of His people. Through the atoning blood of Jesus Christ, we have entered into a new relationship with God.
- 10a. We praise the Lord for raising us to sit with Jesus Christ (Ps 113:7-8). Jesus leads us out of sin ("Egypt") to the one true God (Ps 114:1; 115:3-7). Because Jesus died and was resurrected, death no longer has power over us (Ps 116:3-6; Rom 8:34).
- 11a. When Jesus told the twelve disciples, "One of you will betray me" (18), they seemed to assume that the betrayal would take place further down the road; they had no idea that Jesus would be arrested that very night (Jn 13:25-29). At that moment, it did not seem possible that one of them would betray Jesus. In this case, although the disciples did not have the spiritual wisdom to understand, at least they showed spiritual maturity. They looked at themselves first (asking, "Is it I?" [19]) instead of blaming each other.
- However, when Peter said emphatically, "If I have to die with You, I will not deny You" (31), each of them followed suit. They were caught up in the moment and made promises they could not keep. In not wanting to appear cowardly, disloyal, or, worse, like a traitor, they lost the humility and the heart of self-examination that they had in the Passover meal.
- 12a. He was confident in his own strength. He was sincere, but did not know his weakness. He claimed that he would die with Jesus. A few moments later, he fell asleep in Gethsemane. Later, when he was questioned about Jesus, he emphatically denied that he knew Jesus (Mk 14:71).
13. This was the only time recorded in the Bible when Jesus told His weakness to His disciples. The bitter cup was too much for Him. His human weakness was too much for Him to handle. He knew His closest disciples would soon betray, deny, and desert Him. The people who cheered Him a few days before would soon be yelling, "Crucify him!" To save us, He had to take on the sins of the world upon Himself.
- 14a. their eyes were heavy (40); they expected that Jesus would still be with them the next day; they did not know that Jesus would be arrested soon
- 14b. Peter was the one who was so sure that he would not fall away. He turned out to be the first to fall into temptation to deny Jesus. Jesus had specifically warned Peter that Satan would tempt him (Lk 22:31-32), and still Peter did not remain alert.
- 14d. comfort, warmth, not aware of surroundings; random, uncontrolled dreams; don't remember the dreams when you wake up.
- Similarly, if we do not keep watch (Mk 13:36-37), we would become blind to the signs of the times and God's will in our life. We would lose our sense of direction, swayed by false teachings (Eph 4:14). We would rather hide in the world's comforts, even though we know it will end when Jesus comes again.
- 15a. Jesus came to see if they'd learned their lesson, to see if they were alert and praying. In His most distressing moment, Jesus needed His disciples to support Him, but He had none. Even though they were physically there with Him, they had already deserted Him emotionally and spiritually.
- 16a. The disciples either did not take Jesus' words to heart or did not have the power to overcome their physical tiredness.
17. There are times when no one but God can help us. Not our friends, not our spouse, not our earthly father and mother. God "is not far from each one of us" (Acts 17:27). He is not apathetic to our needs. He is always ready to listen to us and help us. We can tell Him everything, and trust Him like a small child having complete faith in her parents. God loves us with a love that is purer and greater than the love of our earthly parents (Mt 7:11). His Holy Spirit lives in our hearts to guide and comfort us. Today, we too can cry to Him, "Abba, Father!" (Rom 8:15-16)
- 18a. God the Father probably said to Jesus as He did to Paul, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is made perfect in weakness" (2Cor 12:9). Through Jesus' death, God would decisively defeat sin and death (1Cor 15:55-57). After praying three times, Jesus said to His disciples,

“Rise, let us be going” (42), not “Rise, let us flee!” Once He knew God’s will, He took action to face the persecution.

- 18b. If God’s answer is contrary to our wishes, we must still obey and act accordingly, just like Jesus did. We must believe in faith that He does not give us more than we can bear (1Cor 10:13). He loves us and makes all things work to our benefit (Rom 8:28).

Lesson 23

Observation

Outline

- The Multitude Arrests Jesus (14:43-52)
- The Sanhedrin Judges Jesus (14:53-65)
- Peter Denies Knowing Jesus (14:66-72)
- Pilate Judges Jesus (15:1-15)
- The Soldiers Mock Jesus (15:16-20)

Key Words/Phrases

Kiss, seized, deserted, fled, blasphemy, denied, crucify, mocked

General Analysis

- 1a. 1. Judas—betrayed Jesus for money (14:10-11); gave a signal to those who came to arrest Jesus (14:44)
2. Chief priests, scribes, elders—looked for an excuse to put Jesus to death (14:55, 64); spat at him, beat him, mocked (14:65); stirred up the crowd (15:11)
3. Arresting party—armed with swords and clubs to arrest Jesus (14:43)
4. Disciples—deserted Jesus and fled (14:50)
5. Young man—fled (14:51)
6. Witnesses in the Sanhedrin—testified falsely against Jesus (14:56-59)
7. High priest—condemned Jesus of blasphemy (14:63)
8. Peter—disowned Jesus three times (14:68, 70-71)
9. Pilate—ordered Jesus to be crucified and flogged to please the crowd (15:15)
10. Crowd—demanded that Jesus be crucified (15:13-14)
11. Soldiers—mocked Jesus (15:17-19)

Segment Analysis

1. Weapons are common in a mob scene. Perhaps they expected resistance and wanted a show of force. Perhaps the chief priests and scribes had stirred up their thirst for blood.
 2. It indicates that it was not easy to tell Jesus apart from His disciples. There was nothing in His physical appearance that identified Him as a leader, much less a king (Isa 53:2). He looked more like a common servant. Those who had never heard Jesus’ words or witnessed His power could not tell who He was.
 - 3a. Jesus accepted Judas’ kiss without question. He did not rebuke Judas or push him away. Jesus accepted Judas with love, as He had done when He washed His disciples’ (including Judas’) feet (Jn 13:1-17).
 - 4a. Moments before, Peter had proclaimed that he would die with the Lord (14:31). Now he was ready to stand by his words. Peter took action to protect his Lord against the hostile crowd. Note that Peter asked for Jesus’ permission, but did not wait for an answer (Lk 22:49-50). He reacted to the situation without thinking.
 - 4b. There would have been serious repercussions on the early church. The disciples might have killed some of the men sent from the chief priests, or be killed. A riot might have resulted. The Roman government would’ve cracked down on the Jews, imprisoning and executing the remaining disciples. If these things had happened before the disciples received the Holy Spirit, they would not have been able to withstand the persecution, and the church would have been defeated even before she began.
 5. Jesus first rebuked them for coming to arrest Him for no legitimate reason. They came with violent intent, even though Jesus never promoted rebellion or violence (He rebuked Peter for drawing his sword [Mt 26:52] and healed the servant of the high priest [Lk 22:51]). Jesus also pointed out the fact that they did not arrest Him when He was teaching every day in the temple courts. Perhaps it was because they had been amazed at His teaching (Mk 11:18). Perhaps they had been among the crowd who cheered Jesus when He entered Jerusalem!
- The words “the Scriptures must be fulfilled” reminded the crowd that every event was under God’s control. Before the appointed time, no one could take Jesus by force or kill Him (Lk 4:28-30; Jn 7:43-44). Jesus could have asked the Father to send twelve legions of angels to fight for Him (Mt 26:53), but He did not. Instead, in order to fulfill God’s will, “He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth. He was led as a lamb to the slaughter” (Isa 53:7).

6. the young man who later fled naked (14:51); Peter, albeit “at a distance” (14:54).
7. They distorted Jesus’ teachings and accused Him of things He did not say (for example, about the temple [14:58; cf. Jn 2:19-22 for what Jesus really said]). It was obvious even to the accusers that their testimonies did not agree.
8. Jesus remained silent. There was no need to refute the false testimonies because it was pointless. The Sanhedrin was looking for any excuse to put Him to death. The only time Jesus spoke was to testify to His divinity and prophesy His Second Coming.
- Many people ask us questions regarding our faith because they earnestly seek the truth. There are others who have already made up their mind against the true gospel and are only trying to find faults in our faith. Often their arguments do not make sense. If a person only wants to argue, we do not have to fight back with words. We can listen and remain silent, as Jesus did. When necessary, we can point out what the Bible says. At all times, we must remember that only the Holy Spirit can give us spiritual wisdom to understand God’s words.
- 9a. “Jesus is a Jew and not a savior of mankind”; “Christians look down on other religions”; “The True Jesus Church is a cult.”
- 9b. We must first have a clear understanding of biblical teachings. We have to know why we believe. When we share our faith, we do not have to argue or be condescending. Our job is to calmly and humbly show what the Bible says about our faith.
10. Christ, Son of the Blessed One, Son of Man, Mighty One
- The various terms show us a different aspect of God. Both the high priest and Jesus used different terms, which implies that they both had a profound understanding of God’s nature. However, the high priest’s knowledge did not help him. He did not believe what he saw, and ended up condemning the Savior.
11. Jesus had remained silent throughout the trial. The high priest wanted to force Him to say something self-incriminating. He knew Jesus would not deny that He is the Son of God. The high priest used that as an excuse to sentence Jesus to death. (The chief priests later piled on more charges before Pilate [15:3] because they knew Jesus would not contest them).
12. They condemned Jesus of blasphemy, based on His words that He is the Christ, the Son of God, and that He will come again from heaven. It is a sad irony that the sinners used God’s truth to condemn a sinless man.
16. When confronted with a great opposition (men from the chief priests armed with swords and clubs), Peter was prepared to fight and maybe

die a heroic death. However, when the commotion was over, he lost the passion. Now that Jesus was arrested, Peter was more interested in preserving his life.

Often, our faith is strong when we are under great persecution or trial because we realize that only God can help us. However, when all is calm, we relax our vigilance and give the devil a foothold (Eph 4:27). Sometimes it is the small temptations that make us stumble.

18. They repeatedly cried out, “Crucify him!” (15:14)
- 19a. The people wanted a savior who would overthrow the Roman government and restore the nation of Israel on earth. To them, the Bible promised them a mighty and glorious king (Isa 11:1-16). They were ignorant of the prophecies of the savior’s meek appearance and suffering (Isa 53:1-10).
- Jesus looked pathetic in their eyes. He was not the king they had been waiting for. Furthermore, the chief priests stirred them up. As more people gathered against Jesus, disappointment turned into rage. In the end, they wanted to kill Jesus for not fulfilling their expectations. They would not listen to reason. Their desire for blood was so fierce that Pilate gave into their wishes (15).
- 19b. We must remember that we often see only part of the truth. If we make up our mind before we see the whole picture, then every little thing becomes “proof” that we are right. In that case, anything can trigger us to act out.
20. Like Barabbas, we are freed from our death sentence because Christ died in our place. We deserved to die because of our sins, but now have eternal life through Jesus Christ (Rom 6:23).
- 21a. The Roman soldiers despised Jesus first as a Jew and second for His unsubstantiated and ridiculous (in their minds) claim to be “the King of the Jews” (15:2,9,12). They were accustomed to torturing a convict (cf. *Did You Know* 8), and gave no second thoughts to amusing themselves at Jesus’ expense.
- 21c. Jesus remained silent and did not fight back. In this, He showed us God’s infinite love. He set an example of “turning the other cheek” (Mt 5:38-42). We also need to have this non-retaliatory attitude when suffering for doing good (Rom 12:17-21; 1Pet 2:20-25). While this is a hard teaching to live by, we must never give up trying. The Holy Spirit will help us to love others like Jesus did.

Lesson 24

Observation

Outline

- Going to Golgotha (15:21-22)
- Jesus Crucified (15:23-28)
- Jesus Mocked (15:29-36)
- Jesus Dies (15:37-41)
- Jesus Buried (15:42-47)

Key Words/Phrases

Cross, insults, mocked, King of the Jews, King of Israel, forsaken, Son of God, women

General Analysis

1. forsaken by God (Ps 22:1; Isa 53:4, 6); rejected and ridiculed (Ps 22:7-8,17; Isa 53:3); torture and persecution (Ps 22:12-13; Isa 53:7-8); physical agony (Ps 22:14-15); pierced (Ps 22:16; Isa 53:5); dividing His garments (Ps 22:18); buried (Isa 53:9); (Note that Jesus' resurrection, glory, and salvation are also prophesied in Ps 22:19-31 and Isa 53:10-12)
2. Jesus was tempted throughout His ministry, even while He was on the cross. The devil attacked Him with physical torture (flogging, crucifixion) and mental anguish (forsaken, ridiculed). That is how we are assured that He knows our weakness (Heb 4:15). When we rely on the Lord Jesus, we can overcome our suffering, like He did.

Segment Analysis

- 1a. Because Simon was "compelled" (21) to carry the cross, he was not a willing participant. He was just passing by, and did not expect to get involved. He probably did not consider it an honor to carry the cross, a symbol of shame (cf. Lesson 14, *Did You Know* 4). Perhaps he was just a curious bystander. Being from far away (cf. *Did You Know* 1), he might never have heard of Jesus. Or, perhaps he was a disciple of Christ who (like Peter) wanted to remain anonymous, but somehow caught the attention of the Roman soldiers.
- 1b. From the beginning, Jesus set His own wishes aside. Everything He did was for the good of others. He obeyed God's will for Him to suffer and die on the cross, even though His human instincts told Him not to drink the bitter cup. Sometimes, work is placed upon our shoulders, even though we are unwilling. We want to hide because we feel like we did not ask for the responsibility. In those times especially, we must learn

from Jesus, who prayed to the Father for the wisdom and strength to finish His work. When we put our faith in the almighty God, He will make our burdens light (Mt 11:28-29).

2. In both cases, there was a commotion. Many people followed Jesus. However, whereas they shouted "Hosanna!" when He entered Jerusalem, they now cursed him on the way to Golgotha. Before, they wanted to crown Him king. Now, they mocked Him as "The King of the Jews." They were easily influenced by the chief priests and the scribes. They forgot about Jesus' words and miracles. All they wanted was to watch Him die a painful and shameful death on the cross.
- 3a. Either Jesus would not rely on human means to reduce His pain, or His pain was too great for medicine to have any effect. Also, Jesus did not want to dull his senses because He still had work to do. Even as He was hanging on the cross, He continued to show His love (to His tormentors and His mother) and to save souls (the robber who repented).
4. It was a declaration of Jesus' "guilt" as well as a mockery to His claim. However, our Lord Jesus has proved that he is not only the King of the Jews, but the King of kings who triumphs over evil (cf. 1Tim 6:15-16; Rev 17:14; 19:15-16). The written notice "The King of the Jews" and the cross were meant to demean Jesus, but they have become a symbol of hope and power for Christians. When we are saved, we boast in nothing except for the cross of Jesus Christ (Gal 6:14).
5. If we turn away from the Lord Jesus after we've tasted His grace, it is as if we are crucifying and disgracing Him all over again. We'd be no better than the Jews who, after having received healing and mercy from Jesus, repaid Him by nailing Him on the cross.
- 6a. distorted and laughed at Jesus' words about rebuilding the temple in three days (29); dared Him to come down from the cross (30,32); mocked Him that He could not save Himself (31); mocked His title of Christ and king (32); jokingly waited for Elijah to come save Jesus (36)
- 6b. In this passage, twice the people misunderstood or misheard Jesus, and laughed at Him. First, they blindly repeated the false claims on what Jesus had said regarding the temple (cf. Lesson 23, Question 7). Second, when Jesus cried out to God ("Eloi"), they thought He was calling for Elijah. They thought Jesus was just a failed prophet less than Elijah (Mk 8:28). They repeatedly challenged Him to come down from the cross, not knowing that they were speaking against the will of God. Their hearts were so hardened that even the three-hour darkness before Jesus' death did not faze them (33, 35-36). They simply refused to repent.
7. No, the chief priests and the scribes would not have believed. They said they would believe only because Jesus seemed doomed on the cross. A further proof of their unbelief is their cover-up after Jesus' resurrection

(Mt 28:11-15). Like Jesus said in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, because they rejected the word of God, they would not be persuaded even if one rose from the dead (Lk 16:30-31).

8. Jesus didn't come down from the cross for the same reason He did not ask the Father to send twelve legions of angels to protect Him (cf. Mt 26:53-54). After Jesus prayed in Gethsemane, He resolved to fulfill the Scriptures (Mk 14:49). His earthly ministry was finished; nothing would be accomplished by staying longer. If Jesus didn't suffer and die, how could He have resurrected to prove that He has triumphed over sin and death? If he had chosen to save Himself, today we would have no hope of salvation.
9. The people rejected the idea that they would be saved through the cross, a symbol of shame. They refused to believe, even though Jesus had clearly revealed the truth to them. They trusted in their own wisdom and rejected Jesus as foolish. "But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise" (1Cor 1:27). Because our wisdom is nothing when compared to God's infinite wisdom, we must humbly believe in His words.
10. When one of the robbers repented, Jesus forgave Him (Lk 23:40-43). He also forgave the people who had rejected Him (Lk 23:34). "While we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom 5:6-8). Through His example, Christ teaches us to forgive regardless of whether or not it was asked. This was Paul's plea to Philemon to forgive Onesimus (Phm 15-18, 21).
11. The robber who later repented probably had first based his opinion of Jesus on what other people said. But when he saw for himself who Jesus is, he knew that the others were wrong. Jesus' words of forgiveness and love (Lk 23:34, 40-43; Jn 19:25-27) convinced Him to believe. Today, a person might have misconceptions about our faith. Our words and actions must show the love of Christ, so that they too will repent and believe in Jesus.
- 12a. During Jesus' last three hours, darkness came over the whole land (33). When He died, the temple curtain was torn from top to bottom (38). There were others recorded in Mt 27:51-52.
- 12b. These signs showed the spiritual power and significance of Jesus' death on the cross. The darkness was a sign of mourning for Jesus' agony (Am 8:9). The torn curtain symbolized how Jesus broke His body so that we can enter the Most Holy Place, to be able to directly receive God's forgiveness.
13. In Gethsemane, Jesus prayed to His "Abba, Father." However, in the moment of His greatest agony, Jesus was severed from His Father. He suffered the wages of sin—eternal death, forsaken by God (Rom 6:23). On the cross, Jesus no longer felt His Father's presence. When He

carried the sins of all mankind, He was abandoned. When He cried out, He felt as though God did not answer (Ps 22:2). The darkness over the land symbolized how His spirit suffered.

- 14a. Unlike the people who were set to crucify Jesus, the centurion was sensitive to what he saw and heard. With only a few hours of firsthand experience of Jesus, he became convinced that Jesus was the Son of God. He saw how Jesus forgave those who persecuted Him. He must have realized that the darkness across the land meant something. He heard Jesus' bitter cry to God. Jesus' power and love compelled him to exclaim the truth he now believed.
- 14b. The centurion's understanding of Jesus was incomplete. He thought that it was the end, and did not realize that Jesus would soon rise again. Jesus is alive today. He is the Son of God!

In terms of faith, the centurion was ahead of the Jews (including the chief priests and scribes); he saw what Jesus did and believed. However, if that was the extent of his understanding, he might have lamented not knowing Jesus sooner and passed up a chance to know Christ better. When we experience the power of the Lord Jesus, we must continue to grow in spiritual wisdom. The more we know, the more we are sure of what we believe. The more we believe, the more God will teach us.
15. Jesus' death is the most powerful example of love (1Jn 3:16). He died to wash away our sins, so that we can come to God with a clear conscience (Heb 10:22). If we are truly convinced that Christ died for us, we would no longer live for ourselves (2Cor 5:14-15). We must follow Christ's example and love our brothers (1Jn 3:17-19). If we deliberately continue to sin after having received the knowledge of the truth, then we will be judged (Heb 10:26-27, 29).
17. Jesus served with all His might. He put all His energy into His ministry—teaching, healing, forgiving sins, etc. On the cross, He was finally drained of His last strength. The physical torture was too much. The spiritual severance from God stripped Him of all hope. No one could have survived long under those circumstances.

Jesus' short time on the cross might also indicate God's mercy when we suffer. The heavenly Father does not allow anyone to suffer more than necessary (1Cor 10:13). When we've "fought the good fight" (2Tim 4:7) for the Lord, we need not fear death. It is a blessing to die in the Lord because we no longer have to suffer in a world of sin (cf. Lk 16:20-22; 1Kgs 14:12-13). There will be a "crown of righteousness" (2Tim 4:8) waiting for us in heaven, where "there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying" (Rev 21:4).
18. He "boldly" (43 NIV) asked Pilate for Jesus' body. He offered a new tomb, some linen cloth (46), and a large quantity of spices (Jn 19:39). He

and Nicodemus personally embalmed Jesus' body (Jn 19:39-40). Both of them had been disciples of Christ in secret (Nicodemus came to Jesus at night [Jn 3:1-2]), but now both were not afraid to proclaim their faith. Sometimes it is a "risk" to put our faith into action. People will know that we are Christians. Sometimes it's for the better. Sometimes it's for the worse. We might risk embarrassment before the unbelievers. We might have to sacrifice our time, effort, money, etc. But James reminds us, "faith without works is dead" (Jas 2:26).

Lesson 25

Observation

Outline

The Empty Tomb (16:1-8)

Women go to anoint Jesus' body (1-3)

Young man in the tomb tells the woman that Jesus had risen (4-6)

Woman commanded to tell the disciples (7-8)

Epilogue (16:9-20)

Disciples do not believe that Jesus is alive (9-13)

Jesus appears to the eleven disciples (14)

Jesus commands the disciples to preach the good news (15-18)

Jesus ascends to heaven (19)

Disciples preach everywhere (20)

Key Words/Phrases

Anoint, Jesus of Nazareth, crucified, risen, alive, believe, preach, baptized, saved, condemned, signs, heaven, right hand of God

General Analysis

- Mary Magdalene (9; Jn 20:16), two of the disciples (12; Lk 24:15,18), the apostles as a group (Jn 20:19-20), Thomas (Jn 20:26-27), Peter, Nathanael, James, John (Jn 21:1-7), about 500 believers, Paul (1Cor 15:5-8)

The large number of witnesses is more proof of the certainty of Jesus' resurrection. It also explains why the believers were willing to give up everything, even their own lives, to preach the gospel.

- If Jesus' resurrection never happened, then the Christian faith would collapse. If Jesus were dead, then He would be no better than other religious leaders. Worse, if Jesus had not risen from the dead, then He had lied about Himself (Mk 9:31; 10:34); there would be no reason to believe any of His words. If Jesus did not overcome death, then

Christians are putting their hopes in a lie (1Cor 15:14, 19). There would be no proof that Jesus is the Son of God, that our sins are forgiven (1Cor 15:17-18), or that Jesus will come again to take us to heaven.

The fact of Jesus' resurrection assures us a living hope of inheriting the heavenly kingdom (1Pet 1:3-5; Jn 11:25-26). His resurrection gives power to wash away our sins through water baptism (1Pet 3:21). Because He is alive, we can live a new life without sins (Rom 6:6-11; Eph 2:5-6). Because Jesus has risen, we are no longer condemned (Rom 8:34). In the last days, those who belong to Christ will also be resurrected into heaven (1Cor 15:20, 23, 51-54).

- The Holy Spirit (Jn 16:7) lives in us. When we pray in His name, He answers our prayers. When we preach in His name, the words have life-transforming power. We can cast out demons and heal in His name. He shows Himself in visions and dreams. He reveals His wisdom when we study the Bible.
- It is inappropriate to celebrate Easter because:

While Jesus commands us to remember His suffering and death through the Holy Communion (Mt 26:26-28; cf. Lesson 22, Question 9b), He did not make similar commands regarding His resurrection. Because Jesus did not say so, it is not necessary to create a special occasion to celebrate His resurrection. Otherwise, we'd be honoring human traditions above God's commands (cf. Lesson 12, Question 5).

Like Christmas, Easter has its origins in pagan rituals. Often, the pagan symbols (eggs, bunny) overshadow the meaning of Christ's resurrection. Therefore, it is inappropriate to connect this day to our Lord Jesus Christ. Instead, we should honor the resurrection of Christ by submitting to His Holy Spirit (Rom 6:5-13).

Segment Analysis

- In spite of Jesus' prophecy of His resurrection (cf. Mk 9:31; 10:34), they thought Jesus was dead for good. They had lost their hope in Jesus to save them (cf. Lk 24:21). The women went to the tomb to perform the last rites for Jesus (anointing His body). The disciples were mourning and weeping (10). Some even went back to their previous lives (cf. Jn 21:3).
- They went as soon as they could (just after sunrise after the Sabbath [2]). They were not put off by the stench of the body. They went to Jesus' tomb and were not afraid to reveal their relation to Jesus (unlike the disciples, who were in hiding [Jn 20:19]).
- "Jesus of Nazareth"; "crucified"; "risen"; "not here"

These words show us how Jesus' resurrection has given new life and new meaning. Nazareth was an insignificant town, and "Jesus the

Nazarene” normally would be considered a slur (cf. Jn 1:46; 19:19). However, because He has risen, today “Jesus of Nazareth” is a name of power and glory (cf. Acts 2:22; 3:6; 4:10; 10:38). Similarly, crucifixion was a symbol of disgrace. But because Jesus is no longer in the tomb, we can rejoice over our victory over crucifixion and death (cf. Heb 12:2; 1Cor 15:55-57).

4. In spite of Peter’s past failures (cf. Mk 8:32-33; 9:5-6; 14:31; Jn 13:6-9; 18:10), the news of Jesus’ resurrection was directed specifically at him because he was given the task of strengthening the other disciples and sacrificing for the church (cf. Lk 22:31-32; Jn 21:18-19).
5. They were bewildered and afraid (8). Perhaps they didn’t take the young man’s words literally. In spite of what the young man had said about Jesus having risen from the dead, Mary Magdalene told Peter and John, “They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him” (Jn 20:2). It wasn’t until after Jesus had appeared to her that she told the disciples what really happened (cf. Mk 16:9; Jn 20:11-18).
6. They heard many testimonies, but still did not believe that Jesus had risen (cf. Mk 16:11, 13, 14; Lk 24:37-38). Jesus wants us to “walk by faith, not by sight” (2Cor 5:7).
- 7a. preach the good news to the world (cf. Mk 16:15; Rom 10:14-15). Jesus’ command is similar to the young man’s command to the women (7). In both, they were told to preach what they have seen and heard (cf. Acts 2:33; 4:20; 22:15; 1Jn 1:1-3).
- 7b. drive out demons, speak in new tongues, not be harmed if they pick up snakes and drink poison, heal the sick
- 7c. Our job is to tell others what we have seen and heard. We testify the power of Jesus’ forgiveness, and what He has done for us. At the same time, we must pray to God to work with us and to confirm our words (20).
8. Believe in the Lord Jesus, repent, and be baptized (cf. Mk 16:16; Acts 2:38). We must also live by the Holy Spirit and not fall back to our sinful nature (Gal 5:16).
- 9a. “At the right hand of God” is an expression that means having the power and authority of God (see *Did You Know* 4). The words “sat down” also symbolizes the honor that Jesus received (Whereas angels stand in God’s presence [Lk 1:19; Rev 8:2; Dan 7:10], the Jesus the Son of God sits down at God’s right hand).

“Sat down at the right hand of God” further signifies the finished work of Jesus Christ (where the earthly priests stood to minister before God and

offered sacrifices repeatedly, Christ offered Himself as sacrifice for sins once for all and sat down at the right hand of God [Heb 10:11-12]).

- 9b. His Holy Spirit intercedes for us (Rom 8:26-27, 32; Heb 9:15); He is also preparing a place in heaven for us (Jn 14:2-3).

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