

Goals

Many of our students at this time will be involved in holy work in one form or another. In this unit, our students will learn through the example of the Lord Jesus the importance of holy work and spiritual cultivation. Our students will discover that the qualities that a company looks for in its employees are often not the qualities or motives that God seeks in those who serve Him. Our students will also identify their gifts and some of the various ways they can serve God and the people around them.

unit
2**Teacher Devotional**

Our Lord Jesus once told this to His disciples, "I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing" (John 15:5). Therefore, it is extremely important to accomplish things for God with His strength and wisdom. As apostle Paul said, "I can do everything through Christ who gives me strength" (Phil 4:13). Take a few minutes to ask yourself, "What would my life be like apart from my Lord Jesus Christ?" Pray to God to show you how you can be even more rooted in the word of God and in your walk with God.

Stick With Our Lord Jesus

*"Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me."
(John 15:4)*

Lesson 4

The Gospel of Mark
**Jesus Christ,
the Perfect Servant****Listed Scriptures**

Isaiah 42:1-7, 49:1-6, 50:4-9, 52:13-53:13; Mk 8:1-10; Lk 22:39-42; Phil 2:1-11

Lesson Aim

- 1) To enable students to understand the need to develop spiritual qualities when doing holy work
- 2) To enable students to learn how to serve from the example of our Lord Jesus

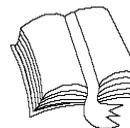
Memory Verse

"And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many." (Mk 10:44, 45)

Bible Reading For This Week (for students and teachers)

Mark 1-5

B I B L E B A C K G R O U N D

**About the author:**

Mark's gospel, like the others, is technically anonymous in that the author does not identify himself. However, the clear testimony of the early church fathers shows that it was written by John Mark. It is believed that Mark created this gospel by writing down Peter's recollections of Jesus' life. Mark is a Roman name that means "hammer," while "John" is a Jewish name that means "grace of God." Mark was a native of Jerusalem, and the church often met for prayer at his mother's house (Ac 12:12). Mark was a companion of Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey. Halfway, however, Mark deserted them. On the second journey, Paul refused to take Mark. But thanks to his cousin Barnabas, Mark was mentored in the faith, and he later reconciled with Paul and became a valuable worker.

Time of Writing:

It was likely written in Rome between AD 55 and 70. Dating the Gospel of Mark with accuracy is virtually impossible because the text contains few clues. It can only be surmised that Mark was written before AD 70 because there is no mention of the destruction of Jerusalem that had been predicted by the Lord Jesus (13:1-23).

Purpose of Writing:

The Gospel of Mark is the shortest of the four gospels. The gospel was written to Roman Christians living in Rome to prove that Jesus was the Messiah. Mark did not need to recite the genealogy of the Lord Jesus or refer to fulfillments of Old Testament prophecies as the Gospel of Matthew does. Gentiles don't need a Jewish history lesson; they need a clear picture of Christ. And the Romans believe in power and action. So Mark presents the Lord through a rapid succession of vivid pictures of Him in action – His true identity revealed by what He does, not by what He says. However, Mark shows the Lord using His mighty power to help others and shows Him taking the form of a servant, not a king. Mark weaves the servant theme throughout the book to show us how Jesus Christ came to give up His life and serve others. As disciples of the Lord, we should too.

W A R M U P



Imagine you are an employment agent seeking potential candidates for a job as an editor for a local newspaper and another job as the editor of our church publication. What things would you be looking for in both jobs? What similarities or differences would there be in the job requirements?

B I B L E S T U D Y



Part 1

Isaiah's portrayal of Jesus Christ- the Perfect Servant

In the first half of the book of Isaiah, the prophet Isaiah warns the people to turn away from their sins. He prophesied that if they continued in their sins, they would be taken into exile by the Babylonians. Nevertheless, Isaiah comforts the people and speaks of the deliverance of the Lord. He portrays how the Holy One of Israel

will come in greatness and might to enforce obedience, blot out injustice and redeem His people. But suddenly, Isaiah's tone changes. The King who will come will be a servant! In the book of Isaiah, there are four "Servant Songs" (Is 42:1-7; 49:1-6; 50:4-9; 52:13-53:13), which speak of the character and mission of the servant of God. At the climax, Isaiah prophesies how the Messiah will die for the people.

Historically, the servant that Isaiah was referring to was Cyrus, King of Persia (559-530 BC), who defeated Babylon and freed the Israelites (Is 45:1-8; 48:14-15). Cyrus allowed the people to return to rebuild the city of Jerusalem, which had been destroyed. However, in the four Servant Songs, God was pulling aside the curtain of time to let the people of Isaiah's day look ahead to the suffering of the Messiah and the resulting forgiveness made available to all of mankind. The songs are therefore, prophecies concerning the Lord Jesus, who would come as a servant. In fact, this contrast between Isaiah's image of the sovereign Lord, acting in power, suffering

and eventually dying for others, was puzzling to the Jews. It was only with the coming of the Lord Jesus in the New Testament that this prophecy was understood.

When Jesus Christ came to the world, He turned the world upside down. He challenged existing views. Although He was fully God, He didn't act like a king or a mighty warrior, but as a servant who was ready to serve and die for the sins of the people. The Lord taught an upside-down perspective on being important. He said whoever wanted to be first must be last. The world views someone as great when that person is first and best in everything. The Lord views someone as great when He serves and gives up His life for others.

Teaching Tips

Read the four "Servant Songs" recorded in the book of Isaiah. Identify the verses that speak of:

- a) the servant's relationship with God
- b) the servant's mission
- c) the characteristics of the servant.



Part 2

The Characteristics of the Perfect Servant of God

a. God's servant obeys and fulfills the will of God

As earthly servants are required to carry out the orders and wishes of the master, Jesus Christ came as a servant of God to complete the mission set before Him. The Lord's mission was to do the will of the Father. In John 3:34, Lord Jesus says, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent me, and to accomplish His work." And John 6:38 reads, "For I have come down from heaven, not to do my will, but the will of Him who sent me" (Jn 5:19-20, 30; 8:28; 12:47-50; Lk 22:41-44). The Lord's entire life was a preparation and fulfillment of His mission. Everything He said and did was for this purpose. Even as a young boy, the Lord Jesus recognized why He had come (Lk 2:49). At times when it seemed too much to bear, Lord Jesus walked bravely on, knowing that it was for this purpose that He had come (Jn 12:27). Servants need to know what the will of their master is. Similarly, the Lord knew what the will of the Father was (Lk 4:48). In the book of Isaiah, the mission of the servant of God was to bring justice to the nations. He would be a light to the nations. He would open the eyes that are blind, bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, and bring salvation to the ends of the earth (Is 42:1; 49:6). The Lord came as a light to the world. He came to preach salvation to those who were in deep spiritual darkness and proclaimed liberty to the captives of sin (Mt 4:16). As a servant, the Lord had fully and completely obeyed the will of the Heavenly Father. And with the words, "It is finished," He accomplished the work of redemption.

b. God's servant is humble

Although Jesus Christ was God, He was willing to leave His heavenly throne and glory to dwell among men. He came not only in human form, but he took on the lowliest status of a servant. The Lord did not make a public entry into the world like the great princes, rather He entered quietly. His kingdom was a spiritual kingdom, and it did not come mightily or powerfully. Rather it came without observation. In Isaiah, it says that, "He will not cry out, nor raise His voice, nor cause His voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed he will not break nor cause a smoldering wick to be quenched" (Is 42:2-3). The Lord came with compassion and tenderness. His friends and companions were the lowly, the uneducated, the sinners and tax collectors—those who were rejected or without hope in society. When others tried to make Him king by force, He withdrew from them, for He did not come to be a king, but a servant (Jn 6:15). He came to demonstrate the principle of servitude.

"If anyone would be first, he must be last of all and servant of all" (Mk 9:35). After performing miracles, the Lord would instruct certain people not to speak about it. He came not to seek His own glory or the glory of men (Jn 5:41; 8:50), but the glory of the Father. Through the washing of His disciples' feet and receiving the cruelest and most humiliating form of death, the Lord Jesus taught His disciples what it really meant to be great in the heavenly kingdom.

c. God's servant will undergo suffering

The duty of a servant is to obey the commands of the master, whether he is willing or not. When a servant has to answer every call of the master, his personal will and freedom is denied. Everyday, the servant lives a life of service and toil, having little or no time to rest.

While Jesus Christ was on earth, He went from village to village preaching the kingdom of God, healing the sick and casting out demons each day. As news of Him began to spread, the Lord became busier and busier. Huge crowds would come to seek Him no matter the time of day. He had compassion on them and served them readily (Mk 1:32-34). He placed aside His own needs and wants to help them. Mark 8:1-10 records an occasion when the Lord Jesus had been preaching for three days and had not eaten. By Mark 3:20, the crowds had come together again, so that He and the disciples were not even able to eat. Often Jesus Christ would toil and labor to the extent that He would not have enough food or sleep. He customarily spent the evenings praying in the mountains or woke up to pray before day (Mk 1:35). Would we be willing to go without food or sleep? Would we be able to keep on giving despite fatigue and hunger? Lord Jesus did not think of Himself. Every moment was spent helping those around Him and saving the souls of the people.

Although Jesus Christ suffered physically, the greatest suffering that the Lord underwent was the punishment of bearing the sins of the world. For our sins, the Lord willingly gave Himself up as the sacrificial lamb to be slaughtered. Isaiah says of the Lord Jesus, "I turned not backward, I gave my back to the smiters and my cheeks to those who pulled out the beard; I hid not my face from shame and spitting" (Is 50:5-6). To save us from sin, Jesus Christ took the punishment, upon Himself so that through His chastisement, we are made whole, and with His stripes we are healed (Is 53:4-6).

Teaching Tips

You may wish to ask students to come up with a list of examples from the gospels for each section. You might ask, "In what ways did the Lord Jesus show Himself to be: a) obedient to the will of God b) humble and meek and c) a suffering servant? Students can then come together to share and discuss their findings.

C H E C K F O R U N D E R S T A N D I N G



- 1** Why would God choose to save mankind through a humble servant rather than a glorious king?
- 2** What does that tell us about the God whom we worship?
- 3** God often works in ways we don't expect. Has God worked in unexpected ways in our lives?
- 4** The prophet Isaiah prophesied centuries before the advent of the Lord Jesus. What does that teach us concerning the promises and love of God?
- 5** In what ways does the Lord Jesus fulfill the picture of God's servant as spoken of in the Book of Isaiah?
- 6** What was the mission of the Lord Jesus? What is our mission today?
- 7** How faithful have we been in fulfilling assigned duties in church?
- 8** What can we learn about humility from the example of our Lord Jesus?

L I F E A P P L I C A T I O N



To Be Like Lord Jesus

In today's lesson we studied three characteristics required of a good servant of the Lord. Many of us at this time have begun to take part in doing holy works in one form or another. We may have realized that serving is not as easy as it seems. We may face trials, frustrations or risks. In our discussion, we will look at the importance of these qualities in serving the Lord.

Obedience:

"You are my friends if you do what I command you." (John 15:14)

An obedient heart and doing the will of God are the primary qualifications for being God's servant. However, we find that we like to have the freedom to do what

we like. We often don't like being told what to do. When God asks us to do certain things, we don't listen. There are times when we may have to force ourselves to submit to what God wants rather than what we want.

Questions to think about:

- 1.** Give an example of when you were unwilling to listen or do something that you were told to do.
- 2.** Why is obedience such an important quality for a servant of God?
- 3.** Why can it be difficult to submit to God or others at times?
- 4.** Suggest ways that can help improve our submission and obedience to God's will.
(By laying aside our own will and desires, through faith in God's words and promises, by praying for strength to do His will, through our own determination and will)

Humility:

"Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls." (Mt 11:29)

Often it can be difficult to maintain a humble spirit when school and society encourage us to have self-esteem, confidence and pride.

Questions to think about:

- 1.** Reflect on a time when you felt proud of yourself, your work or accomplishments.
- 2.** What are the characteristics of being humble?
- 3.** How can we be more humble?
(Through understanding ourselves and our own limitations, through realizing that everything we possess is given to us by God (1 Cor 4:7), through observing and appreciating the merits of others (Phil 2:3), through meditating and following the example of our Lord Jesus and other Bible characters (Phil 2:6-8).)

Suffering:

"Therefore, since Christ suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind, for he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin." (1 Pet 4:1)

Since the Lord suffered for us, we should prepare to suffer physically, emotionally

and socially for Christ (1 Pet 4:1).

Questions to think about:

1. Make a list of all the ways you feel you have suffered while serving the Lord.
2. How did you feel at the time? Did you give up?
3. How did you overcome your difficulties and problems?

R E F L E C T I O N & P R A Y E R



Being a servant requires a high level of spiritual qualities. As we continue to serve the Lord, let us constantly examine our hearts so that our faith and service will be approved by the Lord.

Lesson 5

The Gospel of Mark Servant Qualities

Listed Scriptures

Hag 2:11-14; Lk 12:41-48; Ac 6:1-6; 1 Cor 3:5-15; 4:1-2; 1 Cor 12:1-11; 2 Cor 11:23-28; 2 Tim 2:20-22; 1 Pet 4:1-11

Lesson Aim

To enable students to understand the necessary qualities we should possess as faithful servants of God

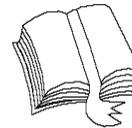
Memory Verse

And He sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, "If anyone desires to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all." (Mk 9:35)

Bible Reading For This Week (for students and teachers)

Mark 6-10

B I B L E B A C K G R O U N D



Please refer to the Bible Background section in Lesson 4 for additional information on the Gospel of Mark (Lessons 4, 5, and 6 are Bible studies based on the Gospel of Mark).