

THE SERVANT WHO RULES THE RULER WHO SERVES



A HOPE OF GLORY STUDY
FALL 2025

THURSDAY MORNING SCHEDULE

OTHER GROUPS MEET THE WEEK FOLLOWING THE NOTED DATES

September 18: Introduction to Mark

September 25: Mark 1 & 2 | Lesson 1 | The Authority of the Son of Man

October 2: Mark 3 & 4 | Lesson 2 | The Soil of Our Heart

October 9 (*off campus*): Mark 5 & 6 | Lesson 3 | The Power of the Servant

October 16: Mark 7 | Lesson 4 | Breaking Down the Barriers

October 23: Mark 8 | Lesson 5 | Take Up Your Cross and Follow

October 30: Mark 9 & 10 | Lesson 6 | The Glory of the Servant

November 6: Mark 11 & 12 | Lesson 7 | Faith and Forgiveness Moves Mountains

November 13: Mark 13 & 14:52 | Lesson 8 | The Battle in the Garden

November 20: Mark 14:53 - Mark 16 | Lesson 9 | The Servant Glorified



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INTRODUCTION

In Ezekiel 1 and Revelation 4, we read about the living creatures that surround the throne of God. They are a lion, a man, an ox and a flying eagle. As you read about them, they seem unworldly, and they are. Over the centuries, theologians have looked upon them as representative of the various characteristics of Jesus in the four gospels. There are discrepancies about which creature aligns with which gospel. My take on those creatures, is not biblical but let's go with it...

If I were to compare the individual gospels to modern day movies, I would look to the Ten Commandments starring Charlton Heston for the gospel of Matthew. Matthew was written for the Jews. It refers back to the promises of the Old Testament and is epic in its delivery, just like the movie. Matthew focuses on the sovereignty of Jesus just like our movie focuses on the sovereignty of God. It shows that Jesus is the long-awaited inheritor of the throne of King David, so the personification of him in Matthew is a Lion, the king of the animal world.

The gospel of Luke reminds me of the Godfather series. (Don't get upset, hang with me here). The Godfather movie and its sequels go back to the beginning. That is what Luke does. He interviewed key players in the life of Jesus, like Mary and tells us about Jesus' conception, birth, and the reaction of others. Luke then ultimately focuses on the man and his work, like The Godfather focuses on Michael Corleone. Luke wrote for a Greek audience that valued the attributes of man and he focuses on the humanity of Jesus, emphasizing that Jesus is all God but also all man.

The gospel of John was the last gospel written and focuses on the deity of Jesus and that he is the personification of God himself. If I had to compare this to a movie, it would be 2001, A Space Odyssey. It begins with an astronaut encountering a powerful alien entity (the devil) but overcoming that entity by "new life" (an embryo in a translucent orb that floats above earth). In the final scene you see the glory of space and new life that it represents. Only a deity can conceive and accomplish this

goal. John's gospel is written for all people, and its symbol is the eagle, that soaring majestic bird that can look directly into the sun.

That leaves us with the gospel of Mark. It is the shortest of the gospels and is not concerned with proving that Jesus was the long-awaited Messiah who satisfied all the prophecies. His focus was not about the humanity of Jesus but what made him tick. He wrote predominantly for the Romans who valued power over anything. Mark's focus is the humility of Jesus since he claimed to be the lowly servant. The symbol for Mark's gospel is the ox, that beast of burden. Mark starts his gospel with a bang...it is action packed. It reminds me of Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade. Something is always happening; it is a war between good and evil. The goal is to capture the Holy Grail; the cup Jesus drank from at the Last Supper. You realize at the end of the movie, it is not the cup of a king or a god, it is the humble cup of a servant.

Each gospel is vital to understanding Jesus. Each one focuses on distinctive characteristics of Jesus. It takes all of them together to embrace the fullness of who Jesus was and is. We need all of these characteristics at different times of our lives. When our lives get tough and seem out of control, we need Jesus the King to be sovereign over our circumstances. When we are questioning if anyone hears or knows how we feel, we need Jesus the man who lived on earth and gets what we are up against because he experienced it too. In this world of turmoil and darkness we need Jesus, who is God, the light of the world to shine his light so that we can see that his glory reigns. AND, when we think we have it all together, and are in danger of being self-focused, we need to heed the words of Mark 10:43-45, "Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be a slave to all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." Jesus showed us how to be a servant of the Living God.

—Meg Rice

MARK 1 & 2

LESSON 1: THE AUTHORITY OF THE SON OF MAN

All the other gospels, slowly and methodically introduce Jesus as to who he is, what he did and how he did it. Not Mark, he jumps right in. Notice, as you read Mark 1, the number of times the word “immediately” is used or you see immediate action.

1. Read Mark 1:1-11. Who does Mark say Jesus is in verse 1? To what other source does Mark quote to affirm the authenticity of Jesus in verse 2-8? In verses 9-11, we see the final affirmation of who Jesus is. What do we see in verses 9-11?

This begs the question, who is Jesus to you?

2. Read Mark 1:12-34. It speaks of the authority Jesus had. Who was he able to resist in verses 12-13? (For more detailed account see Matthew 4:1-11 and Luke 4:1-13.) Mark 1:14-20 records the calling of 4 important disciples. Define disciple. The gospel of John tells us that these future disciples had already heard Jesus speak. What does Jesus declare in Mark 1:15? What is the response of these fishermen?

How have you responded to the call of Jesus to follow him?

3. In Mark 1:21-34, how do you see Jesus’ authority exercised?

4. Mark 1:35- Mark 2:12 relates stories about the power of Jesus. In verse 35, what do you see is a priority in the life of Jesus? How do you see his power and strength shown in the rest of these verses?

5. At times we may think, we need to be “perfect” or at least “near perfect” to be used by Jesus. How does Mark 2:13-17 encourage you?

6. Mark 2:21-22 can be difficult to understand. In this parable, Jesus is saying the old ways of doing things is over. The ministry of Jesus brings in a new reality of the kingdom of God being on earth as it is in heaven. How have you seen the old life left behind and new life embraced in your life?

7. Jesus will be condemned by the Jewish religious authority for ignoring the Sabbath rest commanded in the 10 Commandments. What do verses 23-27 say about this?

APPLICATION: How have you seen the reality of Jesus being the Son of God in your life? How have you sensed his authority? His power?

PRAYER: Holy Father, you sent your Son, Jesus, to save the world. Before he had ever healed, preached or taught, you were pleased with him and loved him. That same unconditional love extends to each of us. It is not about what we do for you but our relationship with you as our heavenly Father. Open our hearts to feel your love and pleasure with who we are right now. Father, remind us during times of heartache and trials that you sit on the throne and are intimately concerned about every aspect of our lives. Holy Father, we commit our lives to you. Amen.

MARK 3 & 4

LESSON 2: THE SOIL OF OUR HEART

Mark makes it clear that Jesus is becoming enormously popular. His miraculous healings and teachings draw people from far and near. As with any new idea, there are different reactions to Jesus. For generations, the Jewish people have been waiting for a Messiah, one promised through the prophets who would save Israel. However, four hundred years had passed since any prophet had spoken. God had been silent. Over the years, the Jewish religious leaders had developed their own system of religion. Now that system was being challenged.

1. Read Mark 3:1-6. How does Jesus challenge the established religious system? What do you see is the heart of Jesus? How does it compare to the heart of the Jewish leaders? What do the 'teachers of the law' accuse Jesus of in Mark 3:22-30?

2. Mark 3:7-12, what is the reaction of the demonic (or unclean) evil spirits? What does this tell you about Jesus' control over evil? (We will study the demonic more in-depth next week).

3. Read Mark 3:13-19. Jesus had a large following now, but he knows for his message about the kingdom of God to succeed, he needs to train followers. What did he say the purpose of the 12 apostles would be? Define the word 'apostle'? How can the purpose of the 12 apostles apply to your life?

4. In verse 21, what is the reaction of Jesus' family? What is Jesus' reaction to them? See Mark 3:31-35.

5. Jesus begins to speak in parables. Define parables. Why do you think he chose to communicate this way? See Mark 4:9-12. How do you see parables as compassionate for those who cannot hear? Read Mark 4:1-20 which is the parable of the seed. This speaks of how our hearts react to the message of Jesus. What kind of soil have you experienced in your faith walk?

6. Mark 4:26-34 speaks of seeds and the kingdom of God. What does the gradual growth of the seed in verses 26-29 proclaim (see also 1 Peter 1:23-25)? What does the mustard seed parable in verses 30-32 state about the kingdom of God?

7. Read Mark 4:35-40. What is the emotion of the disciples? What is the emotion of Jesus? What does this tell you about times of storms and uncertainty in your life?

APPLICATION: Write out a prayer asking the Lord Jesus to create a heart with good soil so that you may be a powerful woman of God.

PRAYER: Almighty Father, we praise you for sending your Son, Jesus, to live on earth and show us your heart of love. Renew our hearts to be good soil so that we may serve you as willing servants of your kingdom. Open our physical eyes to see the reality of this life and open our spiritual eyes to see your hand in our everyday life. Open our ears to hear the troubles of others and open our spiritual ears to hear your voice and minister in the name of Jesus. We ask this in His glorious name. Amen.

MARK 5 & 6

LESSON 3: THE POWER OF THE SERVANT

We have seen in the past lessons that demons or unclean spirits bow to the authority of Jesus. In this lesson, we will delve into what this means to us.

1. Read Mark 5:1-20. At the end of Mark 4, we read that the disciples were terrified when they saw Jesus rebuke the wind and waves. Now we see a man possessed by a legion of evil spirits fall at his feet before the authority and power of Jesus. What does Jesus say about the evil powers of this world in John 16:33? What does Jesus ask of the Father in John 17:15? Evil exists in this world, but it is not to be feared. How does this comfort you in our world today? See also Ephesians 6:10-18.

2. The rest of Mark 5 is about two healings. What do they have in common and how are they different?

3. Read Mark 6:1-6. His hometown friends and family could not grasp the magnitude of who Jesus, the local boy, had become. Have you experienced rejection by friends or family as you go deeper in your faith walk and are changed by the power of the Holy Spirit? Write out a prayer of love and compassion for those who do not see you as Christ Jesus sees you.

4. Jesus' rejection by others will be a part of his ministry all the way to the cross. In Mark 6:7-13, Jesus sends his disciples to minister, but tells them to carry nothing with them, to depend on the charity of those they serve. What are they to do about those who reject them? What does Jesus say in Luke 6:27-31? How do you reconcile these two statements?

5. The name of King Herod the Great in the Bible is synonymous with an enemy of God. We see this at the birth of Jesus recorded in Matthew 2:13-16. Mark 6:14-29 is the story his grandson, King Herod, who was a puppet king established by Rome to oversee parts of Israel. What do you read in Acts 12:1-3 about Herod the Great's grandson, King Herod? Generational attitudes and strongholds are real. What does 2 Corinthians 10:3-6 say about breaking strongholds?

6. Mark 6:30-44 is the story of the Feeding of the Five Thousand. The disciples had returned from being sent out to minister, heal and drive out demons. Now they are tired and need rest, but the throngs of people follow them for more miracles. What does Jesus say in verse 37? This is a lesson to the disciples that they can do the impossible by faith in Jesus. Has there been a time in your life when you questioned your ability? How does this story encourage you?

7. Mark 6:45-52 is the story of Jesus walking on water. Why do you think Jesus stayed behind on land? Why do you think he decided to stroll on top of the water? If he was going to pass them by, what made him stop and get in the boat with them? For another version of this story see Matthew 14:22-33.

APPLICATION: Mark 5 and 6 reveal Jesus has power over the demonic, physical illness, death, elements of food, and gravity. How have you experienced Jesus' power in your life?

PRAYER: All powerful Father, you hold each of us in the palm of your hand. Take hold of our hand and lead us into a deeper knowledge of your Son. Help us to open our hearts to the love of Jesus. Help us to open our minds to the truth of Jesus. Give us hearts to heal the broken hearted, to love those in bondage and to be willing to follow wherever you lead us. It is in the power of the name of Jesus that we pray. Amen.

MARK 7

LESSON 4: BREAKING DOWN THE BARRIERS

If I had to entitle Mark 7, it would be “Breaking Down the Barriers”. God had established Laws, the 10 Commandments, and had embellished on what they meant in the book of Leviticus. Remember, God was taking a people who had been enslaved for 400 years and training them in how to live as a community of righteousness. Over the centuries, the Jewish religious leaders had added a minutia of “traditions” that tended to usurp the intent of the Laws of God. Jesus had to break down those barriers.

1. Read Mark 7:1-8. What are the Pharisees accusing Jesus and his disciples of? The “tradition” of washing hands before eating was a ceremonial practice accompanied by prayers rather than focused on cleanliness. This was not a part of the Law given by God. In verse 7, Jesus quotes Isaiah 29:13 while calling them hypocrites. What were the religious leaders guilty of according to verse 8? How do you see this happening in our church today or in your faith life?

2. Read Mark 7:9-13, focusing on verse 13. What is Jesus accusing the Jewish religious leaders of in these verses? Have you seen this in our churches where we compromised or disregarded the Word of God for societal “traditions”?

3. According to verses 20-23, what does Jesus say is the most important? What does Psalm 51:10 say?

4. The next barrier Jesus is breaking down is the one between Jew and Gentile. Read verses 24-30 with these facts in mind. 1. Jesus is in the Gentile territory of Tyre and Sidon, so the woman is a Gentile. 2. The Jews called Gentiles “dogs” as a derogatory term. Also see Matthew 15:24. What does this tell you about our mindset about those who do not know Jesus yet?

5. If Jesus is showing his disciples about breaking down barriers, how do you think verses 31-37 fit into this scenario? Hint: How are we able to open our ears to the reality of breaking down barriers?

APPLICATION: Ask the Lord to reveal any barrier you have in your heart that needs breaking.

PRAYER: God of all grace and mercy, You reveal yourself through Jesus, as the God who welcomes all who will come. You desire our hearts to be sold out to you. Reveal in each of us any barrier that needs breaking down so that we worship you in spirit and in truth. Open our ears to hearing your truth in our lives. We pray this in the name above all names, Jesus our Savior. Amen.

MARK 8

LESSON 5: TAKE UP YOUR CROSS AND FOLLOW

We are in the part of Mark where Jesus is traveling and ministering. But his main thrust is teaching the twelve disciples. His time is short, and he needs to imbed in these men the truths of the kingdom of God. In chapter 6 of Mark, we read about the feeding of the 5,000 in the Galilee area. These people were predominantly Jews. The 12 baskets of leftovers that were collected point to the 12 tribes of the Jews as being fed abundantly by God the Father.

1. Read Mark 8:1-10, 17-21. In the first feeding of the 5000, the fish and bread was supplied by a young boy. In this feeding of the 4000, it is the disciple's bread. The first feeding was in the Jewish area, the second feeding is in a predominantly Gentile area. Twelve baskets of left overs were collected at the first feeding and seven were collected at the second. The word for baskets in the first feeding was a small container, the word for basket in the second feeding is a very large basket. If the food is a gift from God through the hands of Jesus, what do you think this is symbolizing?

2. What does John 6:26-29, 32-35 say about bread? In the Lord's Prayer we ask the Father to "Give us this day our daily bread". What does that mean to you?

3. In Mark 8:11-15, what does Jesus warn the disciples of? In the natural, what does yeast or leaven do? Can you compare it to what Jesus is saying?

4. Mark 8:22-25 is a weird healing of a blind man. This comes right after the feeding of the 4,000. This healing takes place in two stages. The disciples at this point are seeing evidence of Jesus' deity but they don't really get it. How do you see this healing teaching the disciples a truth about the kingdom of God?

5. Read Mark 8:27-30 with Matthew 16:13-20 and Luke 9:18-21. Jesus asks his disciples, “Who do you say I am?” What would be our response to this most important question we will ever be asked? What supplementary insights are provided by the other two gospels?

6. Read Mark 8:31-33. It is here that Jesus reveals to his disciples what he must endure. What is Peter’s response? How does Jesus correct him? What truth does this tell you about the kingdom of God?

7. The final teaching in this chapter is in verses 34-38. In what ways are we expected to deny ourselves? If the cross represented cruel death at the time of Jesus, what does it mean to you to “take up his cross”? Where in your life have you had to make a choice to follow Jesus?

APPLICATION: Write out a prayer asking God to give you the courage and perseverance to take up your cross and follow wherever he leads you.

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, you love each of us more than we can imagine. We long to live a life of peace and joy. In the midst of the trials and temptations of life, give us the determination to follow your Son no matter what is happening in the world around us. May we experience the peace which passes understanding through your grace and mercy. We pray this in the powerful name of Jesus, our Lord and Savior. Amen.

MARK 9 & 10

LESSON 6: THE GLORY OF THE SERVANT

It is becoming increasingly apparent that there is no middle ground when it comes to faith in Jesus. Jesus is seeing the shadow of the cross, and he is intent on preparing his beloved disciples. However, the twelve disciples don't seem to be getting the full impact of Jesus' purpose on earth. He is performing miracles, but miracle healings are not the ultimate goal of Jesus. He wants our hearts to be sold out to Him.

1. Read Mark 9:2-13 which is the Transfiguration of Jesus. Compare this to Matthew 17:1-8 and Luke 9:28-36a. What do you think is the significance of the presence of Moses and Elijah? Why do you think Jesus chose his closest three disciples to witness his glory?

2. The glory of the Transfiguration is followed by the story in Mark 9:14-29. Why do you think Jesus was exasperated in verse 19? The disciples seem unable to do this miracle. What hint does verses 29 give us about the inability of the disciples? How does the father's reaction in verse 23,24 encourage you?

3. When you read through Mark 9:30-50, what seems to be the focus of the disciples? What is the focus of Jesus?

4. Compare Mark 9:49-50 to Matthew 5:13-16. What does salt do in the natural world? How does this relate to being a disciple of Jesus? What does light do in the natural world? How does this relate to being a follower of Jesus?

Being a follower or disciple of Jesus is not for the feint of heart. It requires commitment and at times a change of heart.

5. Chapter 10:1-12 addresses divorce. It was a practice among the faithful Jews to divorce a wife for no reason. What does Jesus say about this? Verses 13-16 addresses the value of children. What does Jesus say about their faith? What do verses 17-27 address? Since we all fall into the wealthy category of the world's people, how does verse 27 help you? Compare this to 1 Timothy 6:10.

6. Mark 10:32-34 is the third prediction of his death recorded in Mark. What is the focus of the disciples in verses 35-45? How do we avoid falling into the trap of self-glory even while we are doing the Lord's work?

7. Mark 10 ends with the story of a blind man named Bartimaeus. He is desperate to be healed of his blindness and knows Jesus can do this. How do you compare the physical blindness of Bartimaeus to the spiritual blindness of the disciples?

APPLICATION: : The father in Mark 9:23,24 is struggling. He wants to fully believe in Jesus but is having trouble. Are you in that same mindset? Write out a prayer asking Jesus to "help you overcome your unbelief".

PRAYER: Merciful Father, you know we are but human and succumb to the trappings of original sin. Convict us if we seek our own glory. May all that we do and say bring honor and glory to you alone. We thank you that Jesus came to earth to show us the way. We want to become disciples sold out to Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

MARK 11 & 12

LESSON 7: FAITH AND FORGIVENESS MOVES MOUNTAINS

For Jesus, the time is approaching to prepare for his ultimate sacrifice. He is in control. He knows the ancient prophecies written about the coming Messiah in the Old Testament, and he will fulfill all of them. The enemies of Jesus are lining up to silence him, not even realizing they are playing into the hands of a sovereign God.

1. Read Mark 11:1-11. Compare this to Zechariah 9:9, Psalm 118:25-26 and Psalm 89:2-4, 19-29. If the faithful Jewish people knew these prophecies, then what does it tell you about this scene? This first Palm Sunday is celebrated at the beginning of our Holy Week. What does that service mean to you?

The rest of Mark 11 is a comparison of the cursing of the fig tree to the cleansing of the Temple. This is the second time Jesus cleansed the Temple of the graft and cheating by the Jewish religious authorities. The fig tree is cursed because it produced no fruit even though it had foliage and looked the part of a fig tree. The Temple, which was the heart of Jewish faith, looked the part but was cursed because it was not producing the fruit that God had ordained. This sealed the fate of Jesus but also sealed the fate of the nation of Israel.

2. Read Mark 11:22-26. This is not so much a formula for miracles as it is a warning of what can bring about the destruction of a person or nation. What does Jesus say is the answer in verse 22? Having faith in God through the trials of life can be difficult. They can be mountains. What does Jesus say to do with these mountains? What can keep us from those answered prayers according to verse 25?

3. The various Jewish authorities have now united to trick Jesus into breaking a Law of Moses or a law of Rome. They want to do away with him. The chief priests, teacher of the Law and elders are religious zealots who follow the Law of Moses. What do they ask Jesus in Mark 11: 27-33? How does Jesus answer?

4. Read the parable in Mark 12:1-12. The Jewish leaders know this is about them. Who do you think the Man who planted the vineyard represents? Who are the tenants? Who do you think are the servants sent? Who is the son? Why are these religious leaders condemned by Jesus in this parable?

5. The Pharisees were also religious zealots, but the Herodians were Jewish political pawns of Rome. How do they try to trap Jesus in Mark 12:13-17? How did they try to trick Jesus in Mark 12:18-27? Did it work for any of them?

6. In this sad commentary of the Jewish religious leaders there is one bright spot in Mark 12:28-34. What do these verses say? How did this man know to agree with Jesus? See Deuteronomy 6:4-5 and Leviticus 19:18.

7. In Mark 12:38-40, of what does Jesus accuse the teachers of the law? How does this compare to his teachings in verses 41-44?

APPLICATION: Ask the Lord to reveal to you if your faith has turned to one of “show” and not one of fruitfulness. Ask the Lord if there is someone you need to forgive so that your faith will not be impeded by unforgiveness.

PRAYER: Most loving Father, you desire the best for your children. That “best” is faith in you and your son, Jesus Christ. Remove any unforgiveness in our hearts so that we may be all you have called us to be. Take away any pride that is rearing its ugly head. May we have the heart of the poor widow that gave all she had to you. We ask this in the name of the King of Kings, Jesus. Amen.

MARK 13 – 14:52

LESSON 8: THE BATTLE IN THE GARDEN

It is a couple of days before the passion and death of Jesus. He has been focused on teaching and training his disciples. He knows time is short, but he needs to instruct his followers on how to survive what is coming. In 70 AD, Jerusalem and the Temple were utterly destroyed by the Roman army under General Titus. Jesus had to make sure his followers survived the coming catastrophe so that the Kingdom of God would grow and flourish.

1. Read Mark 13:1-13. What did the four disciples ask Jesus in verse 4? What was the warning Jesus gave to his disciples in verse 5? What did Jesus say must happen before his followers were to react? See verses 6-9a. What else does he say will happen in verses 9b-13? This seems to be a time when the disciples will be challenged. How does Jesus encourage them to withstand what is coming in verse 9, 11 and 13b?

2. What changes in Mark 13:14-23? What does Jesus tell his followers to do in verses 23,33,35 and 37?

This is called the Olivet Discourse because Jesus spoke these words on the Mount of Olives overlooking Jerusalem. See parallel passages in Matthew 24 and Luke 21:5-36. There is a difference of opinion among theologians as to whether this is about the fall of Jerusalem and the Jewish nation in 70 AD, or a combination of that and the end of this age spoken about in the book of Revelation.

3. Read Mark 14:1-11. Compare and contrast the woman identified as Mary of Bethany in John 12:3 and Judas Iscariot.

4. Read Mark 14:12-25. What Jewish feast was taking place? See Exodus 12 for the origin of this feast. Can you see the symbolism between this ancient feast and the last Supper? Hint: John 1:29,1 Corinthians 5:7b, 1 Peter 1:19. What does the blood of the sacrificed lamb in Exodus 12:3,5,6-8,13 guarantee for those under the blood of the lamb?

5. What does Jesus predict in Mark 14:26-31? Do we fall away when the going gets tough? Was Peter forgiven? See Luke 22:31-34 and John 21:15-19.

As we will see next week, Jesus went through terrible agony. However, the worst of his battle happened in the Garden of Gethsemane.

6. Read Mark 14:32-52. What strikes you as you read these verses? Jesus was completely God but also, completely man. He knew what was ahead of him. From this point forward, Jesus seems to be completely at peace, and he sets his face like flint towards the cross. What does this mean to you?

APPLICATION: Read through the cross sections of the gospels about the Garden of Gethsemane in Matthew 26:36-46 and Luke 22:39-46. What other information do you see?

PRAYER: Glorious Father, You sent your beloved son so that those who believed in him would not only have eternal life, but an abundant life here on earth. Jesus' obedience to you and love for us is overwhelming. We see his fear and troubled heart at the Garden of Gethsemane. This touches our hearts. Give us a deeper understanding of his sacrifice for each of us so that we may fall deeper in love with our Savior and our Redeemer. Amen.

MARK 14:53 – MARK 16

LESSON 9: THE SERVANT GLORIFIED

We have reached the climax of Mark's gospel. Remember, his gospel focuses on the servanthood of Jesus. Mark 10:45, "For the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." We see these words most clearly come to life in these last chapters of Mark. Each of the gospels record the trials, torture, crucifixion, death and resurrection of Jesus from a different viewpoint. (See Matthew 26:31- Matthew 28, Luke 22:54- Luke 24 and John 18-21). Mark tends to focus on how different people responded in different ways to the gift Jesus was offering.

1. Read Mark 14:53-65. This is the illegal trial of Jesus before the entire leadership of the Jewish people, the Sanhedrin. What do you notice as you read this account? What does Jesus claim in verse 62? What do you see prophesied in Daniel 7:13-14?

2. Read Mark 14:66-72 with Mark 14:29. What do you think is Peter's predominate shortcoming?

3. Rome ruled Israel with a mighty hand. The Jews wanted Jesus crucified but needed Pontius Pilate's approval. What do you notice about Pontius Pilate in Mark 15:1-15. If Pilate could free Jesus, what aspect of his character made him yield to the crowd?

4. Read Mark 15:16-20. This was most likely the Roman soldiers who would later crucify Jesus. Many theologians don't think this behavior was a common practice. Why do you think these soldiers were compelled to treat Jesus like this? See Luke 22:53 and John 13:25-30. There are times today when darkness seems to reign. Have you felt this way in recent times? How does the story of Jesus' triumph encourage you?

5. Read Mark 15:21-32. Compare the reactions of Simon of Cyrene and the others around the cross. What do you notice in Romans 16:13? This could be Simon's son, Rufus who came to faith. Has there been a time in your life when you were compelled to walk an unwanted path but in hindsight saw the blessing?

6. Mark 15:33-47 has several different groups reacting to Jesus. Which do you identify with the most?

7. Jesus seems to have suffered separation from God on the cross as he quotes the beginning of Psalm 22. How does 2 Corinthians 5:21 fit into Jesus' feelings of loss? Read Psalm 22. Can you see similarities in that prophecy that were fulfilled at the cross? What does it mean to you that Psalm 22 is a Psalm of victory?

8. In Mark 16, who does Jesus appear to first in resurrected form? What is the reaction of the disciples to the women's story of resurrection? How does Jesus respond to them in verse 14? The resurrection of Jesus is critical to our faith. What does Paul say about it in 1 Corinthians 15:12-19?

APPLICATION: Read Matthew 25:35-36. Take an inventory of how you are doing in this area of your faith walk.

PRAYER: Loving Father, you come to us again and again to woo us into a deeper relationship with you. You desire to protect us and guide us. Help us to be your hands and feet to a world in need of your love. Thank you that as we come humbly to you with contrite hearts, you are there for us and shine your light on our lives. We praise your Holy name and the name of Jesus. Amen.

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