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Resources/Commentaries used for this study:

- *The Gospel of Mark: A Commentary on the Greek Text* by R. T. France
- *The Gospel according to Mark* by James R. Edwards
- *Mark: An Introduction and Commentary* by R. Alan Cole
- *Mark: NIV Application Commentary* by David Garland
- *Mark for Everyone* by N.T. Wright and Tom Wright

Welcome

Hello!

We are excited to study the Gospel of Mark together! This will be a two part series with Part One covering Mark 1-10 over the course of 11 lessons.

Mark is the shortest account of Jesus' life and ministry and easy to read through quickly. What we often don't realize when we do this, however, is the masterful way that Mark constructs this narrative and draws on Old Testament words and images to prove that Jesus is God! This year we are going to encounter Jesus by slowing down and observing Jesus' power and His authority. He calls all of us to follow Him as disciples, and obey and worship Him as our king.

Through this study, we pray that you will see how Jesus comes as the Son of God to establish His kingdom and what that means for you as you seek to know and follow Him.

During each week of our study we will work through these steps:

Personal Study

- Each week you will study the passage on your own, through the inductive method described below. You will work through observation questions, gospel connections throughout the Bible, and personal application, reflection, and prayer. The more you are able to dig in on your own, the more fruit you will bear in your own life and be able to contribute to the group.

Small Group Discussion

- You will discuss what you learned when you get together with your small group each week. Completing the personal study is not required, but it leads to fruitful and dynamic discussion and application. Bring your questions!

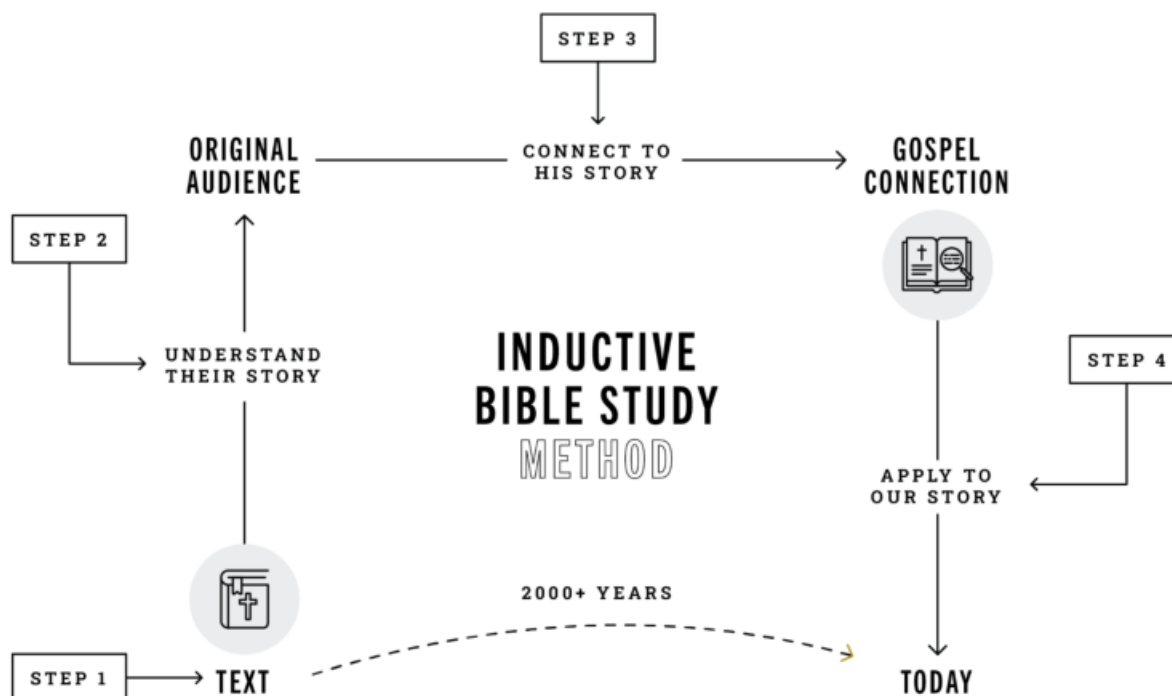
Large Group Teaching

- One of our large group teachers will teach on the text, drawing out biblical themes and application points to wrap up each lesson.

We look forward to learning from God and from each other as we study the Gospel of Mark together!

- The Discipleship Team of Northview Community Church

How we are going to study the text each week:



How this workbook is set up for personal study:

- ☐ **Step 1:** Observe the text by reading it several times and marking characters and key words/phrases *SO THAT you grasp what the passage is about.* (Each passage is provided in the workbook in the ESV translation for you to highlight, mark, and make notes on.)
- ☐ **Step 2:** Understand their story by completing the observation questions in the first half of the lesson *SO THAT you understand what the original author is communicating to his audience.* There are two options for the observation portion of study - just choose one to complete each week!
 - ☐ **Option 1: Self-Directed Observation Questions:** We have provided two pages with general observation questions for you to fill out on your own as you observe the text. It would be helpful to still complete the “*think it through*” questions found in option 2.
 - ☐ **Option 2: Directed Observation Questions:** We provide three pages of specific questions to help guide your observations as well and get you thinking deeper with the “*think it through*” questions.
- ☐ **Step 3:** Connect to God’s story by completing the gospel connection questions in the second half of the lesson *SO THAT you can understand where this passage fits in God’s larger story of salvation.*
- ☐ **Step 4:** Reflect and Apply to your story by completing the last page of each lesson *SO THAT the teaching of the passage helps you to practically grow as a more deeply rooted follower of Jesus.*

Maps





MARK

Introduction to Mark: Melodic Line

1. What is the Gospel of Mark about? What are some key themes?

If you want to get a sense for what any book is about, it is helpful to read the first chapter and the last chapter! These chapters introduce and conclude key themes and ideas, and give the reader an idea of how that content or information will be developed between the start and the end of the book.

The Bible is written using human forms, like stories and letters and poetry, so the biblical authors used common literary techniques. This means that we can follow a similar process in order to discover the key themes and ideas of a biblical book!

As we begin our study of Mark, we will dig into these 'bookends' together. (Scripture included on pages 9-11)

a. **What stays the same?** What words and ideas are emphasized at the beginning (Mark 1:1-28) and the end (Mark 15:1-16:8) of the Gospel of Mark?

i. Title of Jesus:

1. What title is He given as the gospel begins? Who gives Him this title?
2. Who acknowledges this title at the end?

ii. Main location associated with Jesus:

1. Where did Jesus come from in the beginning?
2. When is this location mentioned at the end?

iii. Key disciple in this gospel:

1. Which disciple is named first?
2. How is this disciple singled out at the end?

b. **What changes?** What is different about the world as a result of the events in Mark's gospel?

Mark 1:1-28

- A. Who is the messenger?
- B. What information is given about the kingdom?
- C. What is torn open?
- C. Who descends?
- D. Who is astonished and why?
- E. What is the "vibe" of the beginning?

Mark 15:1-16:8

- A. Who is / are the messengers?
- B. What information is given about the kingdom?
- C. What is torn open?
- D. Who rises?
- E. Who is astonished and why?
- F. What is the "vibe" of the ending?

Note about our scripture text formatting in this workbook:

One way to help see how the biblical author is organizing his material and to encourage ourselves to slow down and notice details, is to copy the text from the Bible into a separate document and reformat it.

The four Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John) are structured around a variety of different stories, and stories have similar features: a particular setting (location), characters, events, conversations etc. We have reflected this reality as we have reformatted the text for you for each lesson. We indented each sentence depending on its function as follows:

At the left margin: Setting

Indented one Tab: Identification / Description of characters or events

Indented two Tabs: Words spoken by characters

SCRIPTURE FOR MELODIC LINE

GOSPEL BOOKENDS: What is the Gospel of Mark about?

Mark 1:1-28

1 The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

² As it is written in Isaiah the prophet,

“Behold, I send my messenger before your face,
who will prepare your way,

³ the voice of one crying in the wilderness:

‘Prepare the way of the Lord,
make his paths straight,’”

⁴ John appeared, baptizing in the wilderness and proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins....

⁹ In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan.

¹⁰ And when he came up out of the water, immediately he saw the heavens being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove.

¹¹ And a voice came from heaven,

“You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased.”

¹² The Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness.

¹³ And he was in the wilderness forty days, being tempted by Satan.

And he was with the wild animals, and the angels were ministering to him.

¹⁴ Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, ¹⁵ and saying,

“The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.”

¹⁶ Passing alongside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew the brother of Simon casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen.

¹⁷ And Jesus said to them,

“Follow me, and I will make you become fishers of men.”

¹⁸ And immediately they left their nets and followed him.

¹⁹ And going on a little farther, he saw James the son of Zebedee and John his brother, who were in their boat mending the nets.

²⁰ And immediately he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants and followed him.

²¹ And they went into Capernaum, and immediately on the Sabbath he entered the synagogue and was teaching.

²² And they were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as one who had authority, and not as the scribes.

²³ And immediately there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit.

And he cried out,

²⁴ “What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth?

Have you come to destroy us?

I know who you are—the Holy One of God.”

²⁵ But Jesus rebuked him, saying,

“Be silent, and come out of him!”

²⁶ And the unclean spirit, convulsing him and crying out with a loud voice, came out of him.

²⁷ And they were all amazed, so that they questioned among themselves, saying,

“What is this?

A new teaching with authority!

He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him.”

²⁸ And at once his fame spread everywhere throughout all the surrounding region of Galilee.

Mark 15:1-16:8

15 And as soon as it was morning, the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council.

And they bound Jesus and led him away and delivered him over to Pilate.

² And Pilate asked him,

“Are you the King of the Jews?”

And he answered him,

“You have said so.” ...

⁶ Now at the feast he used to release for them one prisoner for whom they asked.

⁷ And among the rebels in prison, who had committed murder in the insurrection, there was a man called Barabbas.

⁸ And the crowd came up and began to ask Pilate to do as he usually did for them.

⁹ And he answered them, saying,

“Do you want me to release for you the King of the Jews?”

¹⁰ For he perceived that it was out of envy that the chief priests had delivered him up.

¹¹ But the chief priests stirred up the crowd to have him release for them Barabbas instead.

¹² And Pilate again said to them,

“Then what shall I do with the man you call the King of the Jews?”

¹³ And they cried out again,

“Crucify him.” ...

¹⁶ And the soldiers led him away inside the palace (that is, the governor's headquarters), and they called together the whole battalion.

¹⁷ And they clothed him in a purple cloak, and twisting together a crown of thorns, they put it on him. ¹⁸ And they began to salute him,

“Hail, King of the Jews!” ...

²⁴ And they crucified him and divided his garments among them, casting lots for them, to decide what each should take.

²⁵ And it was the third hour when they crucified him.

²⁶ And the inscription of the charge against him read,

“The King of the Jews.” ...

³¹ So also the chief priests with the scribes mocked him to one another, saying,

“He saved others; he cannot save himself.

³² Let the Christ, the King of Israel, come down now from the cross that we may see and believe.”

Those who were crucified with him also reviled him....

³⁷ And Jesus uttered a loud cry and breathed his last.

³⁸ And the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom.

³⁹ And when the centurion, who stood facing him, saw that in this way he breathed his last, he said,

“Truly this man was the Son of God!”...

16 When the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him...

⁵ And entering the tomb, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, dressed in a white robe, and they were alarmed.

⁶ And he said to them,

“Do not be alarmed.

You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified.

He has risen; he is not here.

See the place where they laid him.

⁷ But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going before you to Galilee.

There you will see him, just as he told you.”

⁸ And they went out and fled from the tomb, for trembling and astonishment had seized them, and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.

Introduction to Mark: Authorship

Since we are going to spend the next few months studying the book that Mark wrote, we thought it would be a good idea to introduce you to the author himself. (Scripture included on pages 15-16)

1. Who is Mark: What do we learn from the Bible?

- a. The first mention of Mark comes in Acts 12.
 - i. Read Acts 12:1-12, and then record what you learn in Acts 12:12 about John Mark.
- b. The next time we hear about Mark is in Acts 12:25 - Acts 13:5.
 - i. What do we learn about John Mark in these verses?
 - ii. Now read Colossians 4:10 to see some important additional information about John Mark. Who is he related to?
- c. What happens to John Mark in Acts 13:13?
- d. The next time John Mark is mentioned is in Acts 15:36-41.
 - i. What happens in this text?
- e. Many years later, John Mark is mentioned again.
 - i. What title does Paul give him in Philemon 1:23-24?
 - ii. What does Paul say about him in 2 Timothy 4:11?
- f. The final mention of John Mark is in 1 Peter 5:12-13.
 - i. Who is he working alongside here? (i.e. Who is writing these comments?)

1. *Think it through: What can you learn from this brief sketch of John Mark in scripture? How does his story challenge or encourage you?*

2. Who is Mark: What do we learn from Church History?

One of the most persistent features of early Christian tradition about the **Gospel of Mark is the belief that its origin was connected with the apostle Peter**. ...Papias, writing at the beginning of the second century, is himself quoting an earlier authority, 'the Elder'...

This is what the Elder used to say: **Mark became Peter's interpreter** and wrote accurately, though not in order, all that he remembered of the things said or done by the Lord. For he had not himself heard the Lord or been his follower, but later, as I said, he followed Peter. Peter delivered teachings as occasion required, rather than compiling a sort of orderly presentation of the traditions about the Lord. So Mark was not wrong in recording in this way the individual items as he remembered them. His one concern was to leave out nothing of what he had heard and to make no false statements in reporting them.¹

[T]he late-second-century church father, Clement of Alexandria [records]:

When **Peter** had publicly preached the word at Rome, and by the Spirit had proclaimed the Gospel, that those present, who were many, **exhorted Mark, as one who had followed [Peter] for a long time and remembered what had been spoken, to make a record of what was said**; and that he did this, and distributed the Gospel among those that asked him. (*Hist. Eccl.* 6.14.6–7)

To this account we may add the corroborating testimony of Irenaeus in the middle of the second century that after Peter and Paul had preached and laid the foundations of the church in Rome, "**Mark, the disciple and interpreter of Peter**, also himself handed on in writing the things that had been preached by Peter" (*Adv. Haer.* 3.1.1). The tradition that **Peter was a key source for Mark's Gospel**—indeed, that the Second Gospel was in many respects "**Peter's memoirs**"—found, as far as we know, unanimous agreement in the early church. Thus, from a variety of traditions from the end of the first century onward we see a complementary testimony that the author of the Second Gospel is Mark, the interpreter of Peter, who composed the Gospel in Rome.²

¹ France, R. T. (2002). [*The Gospel of Mark: a commentary on the Greek text*](#) (pp. 7–8). Grand Rapids, MI; Carlisle: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press.

² Edwards, J. R. (2002). [*The Gospel according to Mark*](#) (pp. 4–5). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

SCRIPTURE FOR AUTHORSHIP

Who is Mark?

Acts 12:1-12

About that time Herod the king laid violent hands on some who belonged to the church.

² He killed James the brother of John with the sword, ³ and when he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded to arrest Peter also....

⁵ So Peter was kept in prison, but earnest prayer for him was made to God by the church.

⁶ Now when Herod was about to bring him out, on that very night, Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains, and sentries before the door were guarding the prison.

⁷ And behold, an angel of the Lord stood next to him, and a light shone in the cell.

He struck Peter on the side and woke him, saying,

“Get up quickly.”

And the chains fell off his hands....

¹⁰ When they had passed the first and the second guard, they came to the iron gate leading into the city. It opened for them of its own accord, and they went out and went along one street, and immediately the angel left him.

¹¹ When Peter came to himself, he said,

“Now I am sure that the Lord has sent his angel and rescued me from the hand of Herod and from all that the Jewish people were expecting.”

¹² When he realized this, he went to the house of Mary, the mother of John whose other name was Mark, where many were gathered together and were praying.

Acts 12:25 - 13:5

²⁵ And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem when they had completed their service, bringing with them John, whose other name was Mark.

13:1 Now there were in the church at Antioch prophets and teachers, Barnabas... and Saul.

² While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said,

“Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.”

³ Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off.

⁴ So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia, and from there they sailed to Cyprus.

⁵ When they arrived at Salamis, they proclaimed the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews. And they had John to assist them.

Colossians 4:10

¹⁰ Aristarchus my fellow prisoner greets you, and Mark the cousin of Barnabas (concerning whom you have received instructions—if he comes to you, welcome him)...

Acts 13:13

¹³ Now Paul and his companions set sail from Paphos and came to Perga in Pamphylia. And John left them and returned to Jerusalem

Acts 15:36-41

³⁶ And after some days Paul said to Barnabas,

“Let us return and visit the brothers in every city where we proclaimed the word of the Lord, and see how they are.”

³⁷ Now Barnabas wanted to take with them John called Mark.

³⁸ But Paul thought best not to take with them one who had withdrawn from them in Pamphylia and had not gone with them to the work.

³⁹ And there arose a sharp disagreement, so that they separated from each other.

Barnabas took Mark with him and sailed away to Cyprus, ⁴⁰ but Paul chose Silas and departed, having been commended by the brothers to the grace of the Lord.

⁴¹ And he went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.

Philemon 1:23-24

²³ Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, sends greetings to you, ²⁴ and so do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, and Luke, my fellow workers.

2 Timothy 4:11

¹¹ Luke alone is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is very useful to me for ministry.

1 Peter 5:12-13

¹² By Silvanus, a faithful brother as I regard him, I have written briefly to you, exhorting and declaring that this is the true grace of God.

Stand firm in it.

¹³ She who is at Babylon, who is likewise chosen, sends you greetings, and so does Mark, my son.

MARK

Lesson 1 | **Who is Jesus? The Son of God** **Mark 1:1-13**

1 The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

² As it is written in Isaiah the prophet,

“Behold, I send my messenger before your face,
who will prepare your way,

³ the voice of one crying in the wilderness:

‘Prepare the way of the Lord,
make his paths straight,’”

⁴ John appeared, baptizing in the wilderness and proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.

⁵ And all the country of Judea and all Jerusalem were going out to him and were being baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins.

⁶ Now John was clothed with camel's hair and wore a leather belt around his waist and ate locusts and wild honey.

⁷ And he preached, saying,

“After me comes he who is mightier than I, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie.

⁸ I have baptized you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”

⁹ In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan.

¹⁰ And when he came up out of the water, immediately he saw the heavens being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove.

¹¹ And a voice came from heaven,

“You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased.”

¹² The Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness.

¹³ And he was in the wilderness forty days, being tempted by Satan.

And he was with the wild animals, and the angels were ministering to him.

MARK

Lesson 1 | **Who is Jesus? The Son of God**

Mark seems to launch quite quickly into his story but, “Most recent commentators agree...that the first part of that story stands apart to some extent, as more of a preface than merely the first scene of the drama.”³ This preface or “prologue” in chapter 1:1-13, sets up Mark’s account of the gospel, the “good news” of Jesus Christ. As we will observe in the coming weeks, Mark’s style is fast-paced, yet descriptive, and lively. He is a master storyteller and as we observe his account, we should be careful to take note of what he includes and doesn’t include because he has a purpose for all of it!

Begin your study in prayer.

READ THE TEXT

Read the text several times and mark characters and key words/phrases *SO THAT you grasp what the passage is about.*

UNDERSTAND THEIR STORY

Ask questions to understand their story *SO THAT you understand what the author is communicating to his original audience.*

Option 1: Self-Directed Observation Questions

1. **HOW:** Break down the passage into sections to discern *how* Mark has organized it. What are the main sections about?

2. **WHERE:** What locations are mentioned?

³ R. T. France, *The Gospel of Mark: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Carlisle: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press, 2002), 54.

3. **WHEN:** What time markers do you see in this text? Do you think they are significant?
4. **WHO:** List the main characters and what you learn about them.
5. **WHAT** is Mark emphasizing? List the KEY WORDS (often repeated words or phrases or ideas) and what you learn about them.
6. **WHAT** questions do you have about the passage? What is unclear?
7. **WHAT** is Mark's main idea in this passage? How would you summarize what he is communicating?

UNDERSTAND THEIR STORY

Option 2: Directed Observation Questions

1. Summarize each section to understand the flow of the narrative.
 - a. Mark 1:1
 - b. Mark 1:2-8
 - c. Mark 1:9-11
 - d. Mark 1:12-13
2. **WHO** are the people in this chapter and **WHAT** do you learn about them?
 - a. John
 - i. By introducing John right after quoting the prophet Isaiah, Mark suggests that John is fulfilling Isaiah's words. What kind of person did Isaiah say would come, and what would this person do?
 - ii. How does Mark describe John's appearance?
 - iii. How does Mark describe John's ministry?
 - iv. What does John say about Jesus?
 1. *Apply it: Is this how you think and talk about Jesus? Why do you think John has this perspective and how could that help shape your own understanding of Jesus?*
 - b. The Spirit/Holy Spirit
 - i. What two things does the Holy Spirit do in this text? (See vs 9-13)
 1. *Think it through: Why do you think the Spirit did these two things? (If you don't know, don't worry, we'll come back to this!)*

c. Who is speaking in vs 11, and what does He say?

- i. *Think it through: What difference does it make that God affirms Jesus as both His own Son and pleasing to Him? How would this moment be different if God didn't speak here and Jesus was simply baptized?*

d. Jesus

- i. We have made several observations about Jesus as we've answered the questions above. What else do you notice about how Jesus is described, or what He experiences?

3. **WHERE** does the narrative take place? Locate the locations listed on the maps on pages 2 or 3.

a. **WHERE** does John appear and baptize the people?

b. **WHERE** do the people come from?

c. **WHERE** does Jesus come from?

d. **WHERE** does the Spirit drive Jesus?

e. The "wilderness" seems to be a **key word** in this passage. (Go back and mark it in the text if you haven't already.) List the three things that happen 'in the wilderness'.

- i. *Think it through: Why do you think Mark is emphasizing this location? What comes to mind when you think of this word?*

4. **WHEN** did Jesus appear?

a. **HOW** did John prepare the way for Him (i.e. What was John doing to prepare the way)?

5. **WHEN** was Jesus driven into the wilderness, and how long was He there?

a. **WHAT** did He experience in the wilderness?

1. *Think it through: Why do you think Jesus had this experience in the wilderness?*

6. **WHAT** does Mark emphasize in this passage? **What** do the **key words** reveal?

a. Son of God/Beloved Son - go back and mark each occurrence of this word in the text if you haven't already

i. **WHAT** does God declare about Jesus? **WHAT** would this reveal to Mark's readers?

1. *Think it through: Why do you think Mark introduces Jesus as the Son of God to his readers?*

b. Baptism/Baptize - go back and mark each occurrence of this word in the text if you haven't already

i. **WHAT** was John's baptism about?

ii. Look up "repentance" in a dictionary. Record what it means.

iii. **WHAT** is the difference between the two baptisms in vs 8?

1. *Think it through: What do you think each baptism accomplishes?*

2. *Think it through: Why do you think Jesus was baptized?*

7. How would you summarize Mark's main idea in this passage?

CONNECT TO HIS STORY

1. **“As it is written in Isaiah the prophet...”** Mark actually quotes from two Old Testament prophets to set up the introduction of John. Look up the following passages to understand what they teach us about John and about Jesus.
 - a. Read Malachi 3:1-4. Malachi was a prophet who lived near the end of the Old Testament time period, after the southern kingdom of Israel (which was called Judah) was defeated by the Babylonians, and most of the people of Israel were forced to live in Babylon. He prophesied to those who returned to Jerusalem after this "Babylonian exile".
 - i. Who is speaking in Malachi 3:1?
 1. With this answer in mind, who does the messenger prepare the way for?
 - ii. What will He do when He comes? (vs 2-3)
 - iii. What will be the result of His coming? (vs 4)
 - b. Read Isaiah 40:1-11. Isaiah was a prophet who lived approximately 300 years before Malachi. He prophesied and warned the southern kingdom (Judah) about the coming Babylonian exile, but also revealed hope about their rescue from that exile.
 - i. How does Isaiah start his prophecy in vs 1-2?
 - ii. Who is coming, and what will be revealed when He comes?
 - iii. According to Isaiah 40:9-11 where is He coming to and what will He do?
 - c. *Think it through: By using these Old Testament prophecies to introduce John and his preparation ministry, what is Mark revealing about WHO Jesus really is and what will happen when He comes?*
 - i. *Apply it: Is this how you think of Jesus? How does your view of Jesus need to be shaped (or re-shaped) by these passages?*

2. **“John appeared, baptizing in the wilderness...John was clothed with camel’s hair and wore a leather belt around his waist...”** Mark introduces John as the messenger and forerunner of Jesus, but also uses the unique description of his clothing to help identify him with someone else from the Old Testament. Read the following passages to connect the dots!
- a. Read 2 Kings 1:1-8. Who, in this text, has similar clothing as John?
 - b. Skim through 1 Kings 18, and then focus on 1 Kings 18:36-37. Who was Elijah & what was his mission?
 - c. Read Malachi 4:5-6. At the very end of the Old Testament, the prophet Malachi mentions Elijah again. When does he say Elijah will appear, and what will Elijah do?
 - d. *Think it through: Based on what the authors of 1 & 2 Kings and Malachi are telling us about Elijah’s appearance and his role, why do you think it is significant that Mark highlights the way in which John is like Elijah? (i.e. What does he suggest John will do, based on the fact that he is fulfilling the role of Elijah?)*
3. **“John appeared, baptizing in the wilderness...all the country of Judea and all Jerusalem were going out to Him...” “The Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness and he was in the wilderness forty days being tempted by Satan...”** The key word “wilderness” is repeated often in our passage and should cause us to question why this location might be emphasized. In the Old Testament, the wilderness is deeply connected to God’s redemptive work as He rescued Israel from their slavery in Egypt.
- a. Read Exodus 19:1-6. Israel had been brutally oppressed and enslaved by the Egyptians for 400 years, but God rescued them through His great power and mighty works.
 - i. Israel heads into the wilderness as they leave Egypt. What does God call them to do in 19:5?
 - ii. What will be the result of their obedience? What will God do? (19:5b-6)

- b. Read Deuteronomy 8:1-6. Deuteronomy was written to Israel just as their wilderness time was ending and they were about to enter the promised land. Read how Moses summarizes what happened in the wilderness.

i. What did God do *to* and *for* Israel in the wilderness? (Look for the verbs!)

ii. Why did God do these things? What were His purposes?

1. *Think it through: Reflect on how Israel's identity and relationship with God was shaped by her time in the wilderness. How might this be connected to what you observed about Mark's use of "the wilderness" in our passage?*

- c. Read Hosea 2:14-23. Later in Israel's history, after years of idolatry and rebellion against God, prophets like Hosea prophesied of a time when God would again draw His people to the wilderness and restore them.

i. What will God remove/abolish?

ii. What will be the relationship God establishes with His people?

- d. *Apply it: What is a time of "wilderness" that you have walked through? How did God use it to shape your relationship with Him?*

REFLECT AND APPLY TO OUR STORY

How did you encounter Jesus this week?

The writers of the gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke & John) “reflect” on how Jesus fulfilled God’s plan for the world by highlighting who Jesus is and how people respond to Him. As you reflect on what you’ve learned, consider what a privilege it is to get to know the Son of God.

1. What did you learn about who Jesus is?

a. Reflect: If you truly believe this, how should this knowledge change your thoughts, emotions, and actions?

2. In this text John was calling people to repent, be baptized, and confess their sins in order to prepare the way for Jesus. Have you done all three of these things as you have come to know Jesus? If not, why?

a. Reflect: How was the way prepared for you to meet Jesus?



Apply to Our Story

ADORATION

In light of this passage/lesson, what can I PRAISE God for?

CONFESSION

In light of this passage/lesson, what do I need to CONFESS or repent of?

SUPPLICATION

In light of this passage/lesson, what can I ASK God for?

MARK

Lesson 2 | **The Kingdom is at Hand: The Authority of the Son of God** **Mark 1:14-2:17**

1 ¹⁴ Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, ¹⁵ and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.”

¹⁶ Passing alongside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew the brother of Simon casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen.

¹⁷ And Jesus said to them,

“Follow me, and I will make you become fishers of men.”

¹⁸ And immediately they left their nets and followed him.

¹⁹ And going on a little farther, he saw James the son of Zebedee and John his brother, who were in their boat mending the nets.

²⁰ And immediately he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants and followed him.

²¹ And they went into Capernaum, and immediately on the Sabbath he entered the synagogue and was teaching.

²² And they were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as one who had authority, and not as the scribes.

²³ And immediately there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit.

And he cried out,

²⁴ “What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth?

Have you come to destroy us?

I know who you are—the Holy One of God.”

²⁵ But Jesus rebuked him, saying,

“Be silent, and come out of him!”

²⁶ And the unclean spirit, convulsing him and crying out with a loud voice, came out of him.

²⁷ And they were all amazed, so that they questioned among themselves, saying,

“What is this?

A new teaching with authority!

He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him.”

²⁸ And at once his fame spread everywhere throughout all the surrounding region of Galilee.

²⁹ And immediately he left the synagogue and entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John.

³⁰ Now Simon's mother-in-law lay ill with a fever, and immediately they told him about her.

³¹ And he came and took her by the hand and lifted her up, and the fever left her, and she began to serve them.

³² That evening at sundown they brought to him all who were sick or oppressed by demons.

³³ And the whole city was gathered together at the door.

³⁴ And he healed many who were sick with various diseases, and cast out many demons.

And he would not permit the demons to speak, because they knew him.

³⁵ And rising very early in the morning, while it was still dark, he departed and went out to a desolate place, and there he prayed.

³⁶ And Simon and those who were with him searched for him, ³⁷ and they found him and said to him,
"Everyone is looking for you."

³⁸ And he said to them,

"Let us go on to the next towns, that I may preach there also, for that is why I came out."

³⁹ And he went throughout all Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and casting out demons.

⁴⁰ And a leper came to him, imploring him, and kneeling said to him,

"If you will, you can make me clean."

⁴¹ Moved with pity, he stretched out his hand and touched him and said to him,

"I will; be clean."

⁴² And immediately the leprosy left him, and he was made clean.

⁴³ And Jesus sternly charged him and sent him away at once, ⁴⁴ and said to him,

"See that you say nothing to anyone, but go, show yourself to the priest and offer for your cleansing what Moses commanded, for a proof to them."

⁴⁵ But he went out and began to talk freely about it, and to spread the news, so that Jesus could no longer openly enter a town, but was out in desolate places, and people were coming to him from every quarter.

2 And when he returned to Capernaum after some days, it was reported that he was at home.

² And many were gathered together, so that there was no more room, not even at the door.

And he was preaching the word to them.

³ And they came, bringing to him a paralytic carried by four men.

⁴ And when they could not get near him because of the crowd, they removed the roof above him, and when they had made an opening, they let down the bed on which the paralytic lay.

⁵ And when Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic,

"Son, your sins are forgiven."

⁶ Now some of the scribes were sitting there, questioning in their hearts,

⁷ “Why does this man speak like that?

He is blaspheming!

Who can forgive sins but God alone?”

⁸ And immediately Jesus, perceiving in his spirit that they thus questioned within themselves, said to them,

“Why do you question these things in your hearts?

⁹ Which is easier, to say to the paralytic,

‘Your sins are forgiven,’

or to say,

‘Rise, take up your bed and walk’?

¹⁰ But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins”

—he said to the paralytic—

¹¹ “I say to you, rise, pick up your bed, and go home.”

¹² And he rose and immediately picked up his bed and went out before them all, so that they were all amazed and glorified God, saying,

“We never saw anything like this!”

¹³ He went out again beside the sea, and all the crowd was coming to him, and he was teaching them.

¹⁴ And as he passed by, he saw Levi the son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax booth, and he said to him,

“Follow me.”

And he rose and followed him.

¹⁵ And as he reclined at table in his house, many tax collectors and sinners were reclining with Jesus and his disciples, for there were many who followed him.

¹⁶ And the scribes of the Pharisees, when they saw that he was eating with sinners and tax collectors, said to his disciples,

“Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?”

¹⁷ And when Jesus heard it, he said to them,

“Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick.

I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.”

MARK

Lesson 2 | The Kingdom is at Hand: The Authority of the Son of God

Last week we were introduced to the ministry of John the Baptist and dug deep into the Old Testament connections that revealed he was the prophesied forerunner to the Messiah, who came to fulfill the promises God had made throughout Scripture. We were also introduced to Jesus and learned that the gospel starts with acknowledging that He is the Son of God. In this week's passage Jesus begins His ministry, preaching the gospel, and revealing His authority. How do you think people will react when He comes on the scene with new teaching, miraculous healings, and a costly call to follow Him?

Begin your study in prayer.

READ THE TEXT

Read the text several times and mark characters and key words/phrases *SO THAT* you grasp what the passage is about.

UNDERSTAND THEIR STORY

Ask questions to understand their story *SO THAT* you understand what the author is communicating to his original audience.

Option 1: Self-Directed Observation Questions

1. **HOW:** Break down the passage into sections to discern *how* Mark has organized it. What are the main sections about?
2. **WHERE:** What locations are mentioned?

3. **WHEN:** What time markers do you see in this text? Do you think they are significant?
4. **WHO:** List the main characters and what you learn about them.
5. **WHAT** is Mark emphasizing? List the KEY WORDS (often repeated words or phrases or ideas) and what you learn about them.
6. **WHAT** questions do you have about the passage? What is unclear?
7. **WHAT** is Mark's main idea in this passage? How would you summarize what he is communicating?

UNDERSTAND THEIR STORY

Option 2: Directed Observation Questions

8. Summarize each section to understand the flow of the narrative.
 - a. Mark 1:14-20
 - b. Mark 1:21-34
 - c. Mark 1:35-39
 - d. Mark 1:40-45
 - e. Mark 2:1-12
 - f. Mark 2:13-17
9. **WHO** are the people in these chapters and **WHAT** do you learn about them?
 - a. Jesus
 - i. Summarize the main things Jesus *says* in this passage:
 - ii. Summarize the main things Jesus *does* in this passage:
 - b. Simon and Andrew, James and John
 - i. What were they doing before encountering Jesus?
 - ii. What did Jesus call them to do? What did He promise to make them?
 - iii. What did they leave behind?
 1. *Think it through: What were the implications of following Jesus for these men? How might their lives be affected?*
 - c. The “unclean spirits” and “demons”
 - i. What do they know about Jesus?
 - ii. What does Jesus do to them?

- d. For the following characters, note your observations about their encounter with Jesus (How did they initially encounter Jesus? What did Jesus do for them? How did they respond to Jesus?).

i. The “man with an unclean spirit”

ii. Simon’s mother-in-law

iii. The leper

iv. The paralytic (and friends)

- e. “Some of the scribes” (2:6) / “The scribes of the Pharisees” (2:16)

i. What is their response to Jesus’ words and actions?

1. *Think it through: What does this reveal about their hearts? What do they need to learn?*

- f. Levi

i. What was he doing when Jesus called him and how did he respond to Jesus?

10. **WHERE** does the narrative take place? Find the locations listed on the maps on pages 2 or 3.

- a. **WHERE** does Mark record that Jesus began His ministry? Note where else this region is mentioned in the passage and what you learn.

- b. What three places does Jesus visit in Capernaum? (Note briefly what happens at each.)

i. 1:21-28

ii. 1:29-34

iii. 1:35-38

- c. **WHERE** is Jesus forced to do ministry after the healing of the leper? **WHY?**

d. **WHERE** does the healing of the paralytic take place? What details does Mark include about this place?

e. **WHERE** does Jesus go after calling Levi? **WHY** did this cause controversy?

11. **WHEN** does the narrative take place?

a. What had happened before Jesus began His ministry in Galilee?

1. *Think it through: Why might Mark have included this detail as his time marker? How does it affect the tone (or feeling) of our passage and Jesus' ministry?*

b. What "timing" word is repeated over and over throughout our passage?

1. *Think it through: How does this word affect how you read the narrative?*

12. **WHAT** does Mark emphasize in this passage? **WHAT** do the **key words** reveal? Go back and mark each occurrence of this word in the text if you haven't already.

a. Follow: Who is called to follow and how do they respond?

b. Astonished / Astounded: Who is astonished & amazed in this passage?

c. Authority: Who has authority and how is it revealed?

13. According to this passage, **WHY** did Jesus come? (1:38, 2:17)

14. **WHAT** questions do people have in response to Jesus' words and actions? (Note: there are 3 times people ask questions)

15. **HOW** would you summarize Mark's main idea in this passage?

CONNECT TO HIS STORY

1. **“Follow me and I will make you become fishers of men”** As Jesus begins His ministry, He immediately calls people to follow Him and promises to transform them with a new purpose. This is the beginning of His call to discipleship that will be fleshed out throughout the New Testament, but it is not new for the people of God.
 - a. Read Genesis 12:1-4. What did God call Abraham to do?
 - i. What promises did God make to Abraham?
 - ii. What sacrifices did Abraham have to make to obey God’s call?
1. *Think it through: What similarities and differences do you note between God’s call on Abraham and Jesus’ call to those in Mark 1 and 2?*
 - b. Read Ephesians 2:1-10. We are always following someone or something. Paul teaches the Ephesian church that before they encountered Christ, they were still followers.
 - i. Who/what were they following?
 - ii. What did God do for the Ephesians (and for us!)? Why did He do these things?
 - c. Read Matthew 28:17-20. Jesus said He would make Simon and Andrew “fishers of men”. How does this passage in Matthew help explain what this means? What actions/works was He calling them to participate in?
1. *Apply it: Simon, Andrew, James, John and Levi were called to follow Jesus and leave their old life behind. But this was just the beginning. Is there something you are struggling to leave behind in order to follow Jesus fully?*
2. *Apply it: What works have been prepared for you to do, as you follow Jesus?*

2. **“Who can forgive sins, but God alone?...The Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins”**
The scribes were scandalized by Jesus’ proclamation of forgiveness for the paralytic. Look at the following passages to understand some of the Old Testament’s teaching about sin and forgiveness.
- a. Read Exodus 34:1-9. In this scene Moses has gone up on Mt. Sinai to meet with God and God reveals His goodness and name to Moses.
 - i. How does God describe Himself/His name to Moses?
 - ii. In response, what does Moses request of God?
 - b. Skim 1 Kings 8:22-54. This is King Solomon’s prayer when he dedicated the temple he had built for God in Jerusalem.
 - i. What elements do you notice are repeated over and over (note especially vs. 30, 33-36, 46-47, 50)?
 - c. Read Psalm 103:1-14. Note every occurrence of the word sin/iniquity/transgression (or other synonym)
 - i. How does David describe God’s character?
 - ii. What does he say God does with our sin?
 - d. Micah 7:18-19. How does the prophet describe God’s character?
 - i. What does God do with our sin?
 - e. *Think it through: When Jesus claims to have authority to forgive sins in Mark 2, who is He claiming to be? How does He prove it?*
 - f. *Apply it: Consider all you have read about God’s character and His willingness and ability to forgive sin. Have you had your sins forgiven? Read Colossians 1:13-14. Because of Jesus’ atoning work on the cross, we can have forgiveness. Take a moment and reflect in prayer. What can you praise Him for, what might you need to confess or ask? (Tip - use the reflection/prayer page at the end of this lesson to record more thoughts.)*

3. **“I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.”** The scribes were critical of Jesus eating with “tax collectors and sinners” because of their own religious expectations, rules, and boundaries. They tried to achieve their own righteousness according to the law and they didn’t understand how much they also needed to be forgiven.
- a. Read Psalm 14:1-3. What were the scribes forgetting?
 - b. Read Romans 5:18-21. Because of Adam’s sin in Genesis 3, all have been made sinners. Jesus’ point in Mark 2:17 is that only those who recognize their sin will see their need for Him and respond to His call. But does Jesus leave sinners the way they are?
 - i. What does Jesus do for sinners?
 - ii. What used to increase and reign?
 - iii. What NOW abounds and reigns?
 - c. Read Romans 5:6-11. Jesus’ treatment of the tax collectors and sinners at Levi’s house showed radical grace. After His death and resurrection, Paul writes about this same grace for us today.
 - i. List all the descriptions Paul gives of people before they are justified and reconciled?
 - ii. How did God show His love for us? Why was it so radical?
 - d. Read 1 John 1:8-10. Thinking and acting like a scribe is still a danger and temptation today. What is required for cleansing and forgiveness of sin?
 - e. *Apply it: Do you have a heart of grace like Jesus or a heart of judgement like the scribes? How should understanding Jesus’ mission and grace change how you treat and reach out to others? (Is there someone specific that the Spirit is bringing to your mind?)*

REFLECT AND APPLY TO OUR STORY

How did you encounter Jesus this week?

1. What does Jesus say He has come to do?

a. Reflect: How does His grace for sinners encourage or challenge you today?

2. What response is Jesus calling from those He meets?

a. Reflect: What implications does this call have on your own life as He calls you to follow Him?



Apply to Our Story

ADORATION

In light of this passage/lesson, what can I PRAISE God for?

CONFESSION

In light of this passage/lesson, what do I need to CONFESS or repent of?

SUPPLICATION

In light of this passage/lesson, what can I ASK God for?

MARK

Lesson 3 | **Who is the Son of God? Lord of the Sabbath** **Mark 2:18-3:6**

2 ¹⁸Now John's disciples and the Pharisees were fasting.

And people came and said to him,

“Why do John's disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?”

¹⁹And Jesus said to them,

“Can the wedding guests fast while the bridegroom is with them?

As long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast.

²⁰ The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast in that day.

²¹ No one sews a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old garment.

If he does, the patch tears away from it, the new from the old, and a worse tear is made.

²² And no one puts new wine into old wineskins.

If he does, the wine will burst the skins—and the wine is destroyed, and so are the skins.

But new wine is for fresh wineskins.”

²³ One Sabbath he was going through the grainfields, and as they made their way, his disciples began to pluck heads of grain.

²⁴ And the Pharisees were saying to him,

“Look, why are they doing what is not lawful on the Sabbath?”

²⁵ And he said to them,

“Have you never read what David did, when he was in need and was hungry, he and those who were with him: ²⁶ how he entered the house of God, in the time of Abiathar the high priest, and ate the bread of the Presence, which it is not lawful for any but the priests to eat, and also gave it to those who were with him?”

²⁷ And he said to them,

“The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.

²⁸ So the Son of Man is lord even of the Sabbath.”

3 Again he entered the synagogue, and a man was there with a withered hand.

² And they watched Jesus, to see whether he would heal him on the Sabbath, so that they might accuse him.

³ And he said to the man with the withered hand,

“Come here.”

⁴ And he said to them,

“Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do harm, to save life or to kill?”

But they were silent.

⁵ And he looked around at them with anger, grieved at their hardness of heart, and said to the man,

“Stretch out your hand.”

He stretched it out, and his hand was restored.

⁶ The Pharisees went out and immediately held counsel with the Herodians against him, how to destroy him.

MARK

Lesson 3 | **Who is the Son of God? Lord of the Sabbath**

In the previous lesson, Jesus began His mission to establish the kingdom and began to call followers. He displayed His authority through teaching, healing, and casting out demons and people began to gather in astonishment and to question who He is. This week we're going to see Jesus interact with the religious leaders as they begin to confront Him. Take note of how people respond to Jesus differently as He continues to reveal more about who He truly is!

Begin your study in prayer.

READ THE TEXT

Read the text several times and mark characters and key words/phrases *SO THAT* you grasp what the passage is about.

UNDERSTAND THEIR STORY

Ask questions to understand their story *SO THAT* you understand what the author is communicating to his original audience.

Option 1: Self-Directed Observation Questions

1. **HOW:** Break down the passage into sections to discern *how* Mark has organized it. What are the main sections about?
2. **WHERE:** What locations are mentioned?

3. **WHEN:** What time markers do you see in this text? Do you think they are significant?
4. **WHO:** List the main characters and what you learn about them.
5. **WHAT** is Mark emphasizing? List the KEY WORDS (often repeated words or phrases or ideas) and what you learn about them.
6. **WHAT** questions do you have about the passage? What is unclear?
7. **WHAT** is Mark's main idea in this passage? How would you summarize what he is communicating?

UNDERSTAND THEIR STORY

Option 2: Directed Observation Questions

1. Summarize each section to understand the flow of the narrative.
 - a. Mark 2:18-22
 - b. Mark 2:23-28
 - c. Mark 3:1-6
2. **WHO** are the people in these chapters and **WHAT** do you learn about them?
 - a. Jesus
 - i. What three things does Jesus compare Himself/His mission to in the three short parables?
 - ii. How does He view the Sabbath?
 - b. Disciples
 - i. How are they different from John's and the Pharisees' disciples?
 - ii. What did the Pharisees accuse them of?
 - c. Pharisees
 - i. What is their attitude toward Jesus and His disciples?

1. *Think it through: From what you know about the Pharisees (religious leaders) why did they feel this way?*

- ii. How does Jesus describe their hearts? How does He feel towards them?
- iii. What do they set out to do at the end of our passage?

- d. Man with the withered hand
 - i. What instructions did Jesus give him?

1. *Think it through: Put yourself in this man's shoes. What was he risking by standing up with Jesus?*

- 3. **WHERE** does the narrative take place? (Look back to last week's lesson to find the likely region.) Find the locations listed on the maps on pages 2 or 3.

- a. **WHERE** did the two confrontations with the Pharisees take place?

- 4. **WHEN** did the two confrontations with the Pharisees take place? (What time marker is noted in the text?)

- 5. **WHAT** does Mark emphasize in this passage? Go back and mark each occurrence of this word in the text if you haven't already.

- a. Fasting: Who is fasting? Who does not fast?

- i. Why are they NOT fasting, according to Jesus?

- ii. When WILL they fast?

1. *Think it through: From what you know about fasting and weddings in the Bible, what do you think Jesus' explanation means? (We'll look at this more in the Connect to His Story section.)*

- b. Sabbath: What is not lawful to do on the Sabbath according to the Pharisees?

- i. What is lawful to do on the Sabbath according to Jesus?

ii. What did the Pharisees misunderstand about the purpose of the Sabbath?

iii. Who is lord of the Sabbath?

6. **WHAT** is the main point of the two short parables in Mark 2:21-22?

a. *Think it through: What have Jesus' listeners been tempted to do with Jesus and His teachings when it came to Judaism and their laws? Why would this not work?*

b. *Apply it: "Jesus is the new patch and the new wine. He is not an attachment, addition, or appendage to the status quo. He cannot be integrated into or contained by preexisting structures, even Judaism, Torah, and the synagogue."⁴ In what ways have you used Jesus to try to "patch" something up? Or how have you tried to just add Him to your own way of living and traditions? What might you need to confess or repent of?*

7. **WHAT** story does Jesus point to when the Pharisees' accuse the disciples of breaking the Sabbath?

8. **WHAT** is ironic about the Pharisees actions on the Sabbath given Jesus' question about what is lawful on the Sabbath?

9. **HOW** would you summarize Mark's main idea in this passage?

⁴ James R. Edwards, The Gospel according to Mark, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos, 2002), 92.

CONNECT TO HIS STORY

1. **“Can the wedding guests fast while the bridegroom is with them? ...the days will come when the bridegroom is taken away...”** When confronted with the question of fasting, Jesus puts forward a huge contrast: the practice of fasting could not be more opposite to the celebration of a wedding. The only time Israel was commanded by God to fast regularly was the Day of Atonement (Lev. 23:26-32), yet fasting happened at other times as well.

- a. Read the following passages and note briefly WHO fasts and WHY they were fasting:
 - i. 1 Samuel 7:3-6
 - ii. 2 Samuel 1:11-12
 - iii. 2 Chronicles 20:1-12
 - iv. Nehemiah 1:1-11
 - v. Daniel 9:1-19

1. Think it through: Noting the reasons people were fasting in the Old Testament, why would it not make sense for Jesus' disciples to be fasting?

Now let's read a little bit about weddings and bridegrooms:

- b. Read Isaiah 62:1-5. If this passage is written to the people of Israel, the bride, who is compared to a bridegroom?
- c. Read John 3:22-30. John the Baptist also used the imagery of a bridegroom. Who does he compare to a bridegroom?
 - i. How does he describe himself?
- d. Read Revelation 19:6-9. This passage symbolically describes when Jesus (the Lamb) is united with His people (the Bride). See also Rev. 21:1-4, 9. How is the “wedding” described?

1. *Think it through: How does the imagery of a wedding contrast with fasting? Why is Jesus using this contrast in Mark 2?*

e. *Apply it: Do you think of the mission of Jesus and your relationship with Him more like a celebration or a fast? Why?*

f. *Apply it: Jesus doesn't denounce fasting, just the appropriateness of the occasion. When might fasting be an appropriate part of the Christian life today?*

2. **“Look, why are they doing what is not lawful on the Sabbath?”** The Sabbath was one of the key observances that set Judaism apart from all other religions and an essential element to the Jewish faith and practice. It also became a key instigator in controversy between Jesus and the religious leaders.

a. Read Exodus 20:1-17. Notice the extra detail surrounding the law of the Sabbath. What was Israel to do in order to keep it “holy”?

1. *Think it through: Why might it be important that the observance of the Sabbath was grounded in the creation narrative? (Read Gen. 2:1-3 for more context.)*

b. Read Exodus 31:12-17. What was the Sabbath a sign of?

i. What were the consequences of profaning/breaking the Sabbath law?

c. Read Deut 5:12-15. What were they to remember on the Sabbath day?

1. *Think it through: How do these passages help you understand Jesus' comment that the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath?*

- d. Read Isaiah 58:13-14. The religious leaders of Jesus' day had dozens of laws regarding what people could and couldn't do on the Sabbath. According to Isaiah, what did God want His people to desist from doing on the Sabbath?

1. *Think it through: How does this help us understand the underlying principle of the Sabbath?*

- e. *Apply it: Jesus claims to be lord of the Sabbath - who is He claiming to be? How does this change how the Sabbath laws and principles should be understood and followed today?*⁵

- 3. **“And He looked round at them with anger, grieved at their hardness of heart.”** The heart has always been humanity's problem. Read the following passages to see how God has always been working to deal with the sin problem in the human heart.

- a. Read Genesis 6:1-8 and then 8:13-22 (note vs 21). These passages come before and after the flood. What do you notice is the problem with humanity? (How does God describe their hearts?)

- b. Read Ezekiel 36:22-32. Ezekiel wrote this during the days of Israel's exile, when God had judged them for their wickedness against Him and sent them out of their land.

- i. List what God promises to do for His people.

- ii. How will they be changed because of what God does?

- c. *Think it through it: Judgement (ex. the flood, exile) does not deal with a hard heart. Witnessing miracles also didn't seem to change the hard hearts of the religious leaders. If someone is going to have a soft heart to God today, what needs to happen?*

⁵ For further reading, the MB Confession of Faith addresses the Lord's Day in Article 16. Head to mennonitebrethren.ca to find the whole confession or read the specific notes for Article 16 here:
<https://mennonitebrethren.b-cdn.net/wp-content/uploads/2026/04/0-2.2-ARTICLE-16-Notes-and-FAQs-Apr-13-2026.pdf>

REFLECT AND APPLY TO OUR STORY

How did you encounter Jesus this week?

1. What did you learn about who Jesus is?

a. Reflect: How can you celebrate Jesus as your “bridegroom” today?

2. What appears to affect how people respond to Jesus?

a. Reflect: Is there a hardness in your heart that you need to submit to Jesus, allowing Him to soften?



Apply to Our Story

ADORATION

In light of this passage/lesson, what can I PRAISE God for?

CONFESSION

In light of this passage/lesson, what do I need to CONFESS or repent of?

SUPPLICATION

In light of this passage/lesson, what can I ASK God for?

MARK

Lesson 4 | Responding to the Son of God: Insiders and Outsiders Mark 3:7-35

3 ⁷ Jesus withdrew with his disciples to the sea, and a great crowd followed, from Galilee and Judea ⁸ and Jerusalem and Idumea and from beyond the Jordan and from around Tyre and Sidon.

When the great crowd heard all that he was doing, they came to him.

⁹ And he told his disciples to have a boat ready for him because of the crowd, lest they crush him, ¹⁰ for he had healed many, so that all who had diseases pressed around him to touch him.

¹¹ And whenever the unclean spirits saw him, they fell down before him and cried out, “You are the Son of God.”

¹² And he strictly ordered them not to make him known.

¹³ And he went up on the mountain and called to him those whom he desired, and they came to him.

¹⁴ And he appointed twelve (whom he also named apostles) so that they might be with him and he might send them out to preach ¹⁵ and have authority to cast out demons.

¹⁶ He appointed the twelve: Simon (to whom he gave the name Peter); ¹⁷ James the son of Zebedee and John the brother of James (to whom he gave the name Boanerges, that is, Sons of Thunder);

¹⁸ Andrew, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus, and Simon the Zealot, ¹⁹ and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.

²⁰ Then he went home, and the crowd gathered again, so that they could not even eat.

²¹ And when his family heard it, they went out to seize him, for they were saying, “He is out of his mind.”

²² And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem were saying,

“He is possessed by Beelzebul,”

and

“by the prince of demons he casts out the demons.”

²³ And he called them to him and said to them in parables,

“How can Satan cast out Satan?

²⁴ If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand.

²⁵ And if a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand.

²⁶ And if Satan has risen up against himself and is divided, he cannot stand, but is coming to an end.

²⁷ But no one can enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man.

Then indeed he may plunder his house.

²⁸ "Truly, I say to you, all sins will be forgiven the children of man, and whatever blasphemies they utter, ²⁹ but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin"

— ³⁰ for they were saying,

"He has an unclean spirit."

³¹ And his mother and his brothers came, and standing outside they sent to him and called him.

³² And a crowd was sitting around him, and they said to him,

"Your mother and your brothers are outside, seeking you."

³³ And he answered them,

"Who are my mother and my brothers?"

³⁴ And looking about at those who sat around him, he said,

"Here are my mother and my brothers!

³⁵ For whoever does the will of God, he is my brother and sister and mother."

MARK

Lesson 4 | Responding to the Son of God: Insiders and Outsiders

Last week we saw the religious leaders beginning to question Jesus and ended on the foreboding note that they desired to “destroy Him”! As confrontation ramps up, we start to see even more drastic contrasts in how people respond to the Son of God and His new kingdom ways. It’s becoming more and more clear who is truly a follower on the “inside”, close to Jesus, and who is on the “outside”, misunderstanding and fighting against Jesus.

Begin your study in prayer.

READ THE TEXT

Read the text several times and mark characters and key words/phrases *SO THAT* you grasp what the passage is about.

UNDERSTAND THEIR STORY

Ask questions to understand their story *SO THAT* you understand what the author is communicating to his original audience.

Option 1: Self-Directed Observation Questions

1. **HOW:** Break down the passage into sections to discern *how* Mark has organized it. What are the main sections about?
2. **WHERE:** What locations are mentioned?
3. **WHEN:** What time markers do you see in this text? Do you think they are significant?

4. **WHO:** List the main characters and what you learn about them.
5. **WHAT** is Mark emphasizing? List the KEY WORDS (often repeated words or phrases or ideas) and what you learn about them.
6. **WHAT** questions do you have about the passage? What is unclear?
7. **WHAT** is Mark's main idea in this passage? How would you summarize what he is communicating?

UNDERSTAND THEIR STORY

Option 2: Directed Observation Questions

1. Summarize each section to understand the flow of the narrative.
 - a. Mark 3:7-12
 - b. Mark 3:13-19
 - c. Mark 3:20-30
 - d. Mark 3:31-35
2. **WHO** are the people in these chapters and **WHAT** do you learn about them?
 - a. Jesus
 - i. Who does He call to Himself and for what purpose? (There are TWO groups.)
 - ii. Who tries to call Him to themselves? For what purpose?
 - b. The crowd
 - i. Why is the crowd gathering around Jesus?
 - ii. Note the three locations the crowd is mentioned. What details does Mark share about the crowd?
 - c. The twelve apostles
 - i. Why did Jesus call them? (What two reasons does Mark mention?)
 - ii. What would they be sent out to do? (Mark notes two things.)
 - iii. List their names and the extra details Mark records about them if applicable:

- d. The scribes
 - i. Where did they come from?
 - ii. How do they respond to Jesus? What do they accuse Him of?
- e. Satan/Beelzebul
 - i. How do the scribes view him?
 - ii. How does Jesus view him?
- f. His mother and brothers
 - i. How do they respond to Jesus and His ministry?

1. *Think it through: Why might the people closest (biologically) have this reaction to Jesus?*

- g. By the end of this passage, **WHO** seems close to Jesus (on the “inside”) and **WHO** seems far from Jesus (on the “outside”)?

- 3. **WHERE** does the narrative take place?
 - a. **WHERE/WHO** is Jesus withdrawing *from*? (Look back at lesson 3 and Mark 2:1-3:6 for help.)
 - b. **WHERE** does the great crowd come from? Note the locations on the maps on pages 2 or 3 and if they are primarily Gentile and Jewish.
 - c. **WHERE** does Jesus go to appoint the twelve apostles?

- d. **WHERE** do the confrontations take place in 3:20-35?
-
- 4. **WHAT** does Mark emphasize in this passage? Go back and mark each occurrence of this word in the text if you haven't already.
 - a. Unclean spirits / demons: What hierarchy do you notice is indicated about the demonic kingdom?
 - i. *Think it through: What power does Jesus have over the demons? Why?*
 - b. Family / Mother and brothers: How does Jesus redefine His family?
 - i. *Think it through: How would this be both comforting and difficult to hear and understand?*
-
- 5. **HOW** do the parables in verses 23-27 reveal the problem in the scribes' accusation?
-
- 6. **WHAT** sins does Jesus say will be forgiven?
 - a. **WHAT** is the "eternal sin" that Jesus warns about? (We'll study this more in the Connect to His Story section.)
-
- 7. **HOW** would you summarize Mark's main idea in this passage?

CONNECT TO HIS STORY

1. **“And he went up on the mountain and called to him those whom he desired, and they came to him. And he appointed twelve (whom he also named apostles) so that they might be with him and he might send them out to preach and have authority to cast out demons.”** Not only is there Old Testament symbolism in this moment, but this group of twelve men will play a large role as Jesus’ closest followers and be the recipients of intentional teaching and responsibility throughout the book of Mark, and other gospel accounts as well.
 - a. Read Genesis 49. How many tribes constituted the nation of Israel?
 - i. What differences and similarities do you notice between the formation of Israel and Jesus’ appointing of the twelve disciples/apostles?
 - ii. Read Exodus 24:1-8. This passage describes a covenant ceremony. What did the twelve tribes of Israel promise to do?
 - iii. Read Exodus 28:15-30. This passage describes a special piece of clothing the high priest would wear before the LORD. Why are the twelve tribes represented on the breast piece?
 - b. Read Revelation 21:9-22. In this passage John sees a vision of the new heavens and new earth and specifically the “bride,” the “new Jerusalem,” a symbol of God’s people.
 - i. Whose names are on the gates? What are they made of?
 - ii. Whose names are on the foundations? What are they adorned with?
1. *Think it through: What do you think the descriptions of this city are symbolizing for the people of God? How does it help you see what Jesus is doing in Mark 3:17-19?*

2. **“And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem were saying, ‘He is possessed by Beelzebul,’ and ‘by the prince of demons he casts out the demons’... ‘Truly, I say to you, all sins will be forgiven the children of man...but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin.’”** A key feature of Jesus’ ministry has been casting out demons and in this confrontation the religious leaders are accusing Jesus of being possessed or using the power of Satan to do this work. He refutes them with parables and practical logic and then goes on to warn them about a sin for which there is no forgiveness. This verse has caused confusion and fear for many people so let’s dig into it a bit!
- a. Read Mark 1:9-13 and Luke 4:1,14-19. How is Jesus’ relationship with the Holy Spirit described?
 - b. Read Acts 10:37-38 where Paul describes Jesus’ ministry. What empowered His ministry? Who was with Him?
 - c. Read the following passages and note what they teach about Jesus’ power over Satan. (Proving that Jesus has bound the strong man.)
 - i. Hebrews 2:14-15
 - ii. 1 John 3:7-10
 - iii. Revelation 20:1-3, 7-10
 - d. Now read Isaiah 5:20. What was Isaiah warning people about?
 - e. *Think it through: Putting all of this together, how would you describe “blaspheming against the Holy Spirit” and why would it be an eternal sin?*
 - i. *Apply it: Do you think this is a sin that believers need to be worried about committing? Why or why not?*

3. **“Who are my mother and my brothers?’ And looking about at those who sat around him, he said, “Here are my mother and my brothers! For whoever does the will of God, he is my brother and sister and mother.”** Jesus is redefining family and what it means to be the people of God. This would have been shocking for His disciples, the people of Israel, and Mark’s original audience⁶!
- a. Read Mark 10:28-31. What might someone lose for the sake of following Jesus?
 - i. What will followers of Jesus gain?
 - b. Read Ephesians 2:11-22. Notice what Jesus’ blood accomplished in a world divided between Jew and Gentile. What used to separate people?
 - i. What do we now have in common through Christ?
 - c. Read 1 John 3:1-3, 23-24. According to John, what is the believer’s relationship to God?
 - i. What commandment are we given as His children in order to abide in Him?
 - d. *Apply it: Consider what you have been given as a member of Jesus’ family. Do you value and love your fellow brothers and sisters in Christ? What might you need to change?*

⁶ “For Westerners...Jesus’ words, though perhaps mildly shocking, don’t mean that much. As we grow up we develop a circle of friends who know us much better, who spend much more time with us, than our parents and siblings. We regard that as normal. But in Jesus’ world it was scandalous—as it would still be in some places. The family bond was tight and long-lasting. As with many non-Western cultures today, it was normal for children to live close to their parents, maybe even in the same house. The family unit would often be a business unit as well, sharing everything in common. What’s more, for Jews the close family bond was part of the God-given fabric of thinking and living. Loyalty to the family was the local and specific out-working of loyalty to Israel as the people of God. Break the link, and you’ve undermined a major pillar in the way Jews in the first century (and in the twentieth, come to that) think and feel about the world and themselves... God is doing the unthinkable: he is starting a new family, a new holy people, and is doing so without regard for ordinary human family bonds. Unless you read verses 34 and 35 as deeply shocking, you haven’t got the message.” Tom Wright, *Mark for Everyone* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 2004), 39-40.

REFLECT AND APPLY TO OUR STORY

How did you encounter Jesus this week?

1. In what ways do people misunderstand or misrepresent Jesus (and the gospel) today?
 - a. *Reflect: How are you growing to understand Him and His ministry more through this study?*
2. What different ways did you see people respond to Jesus in the passage this week?
 - a. *Reflect: What does it look like for you to respond to Jesus today as He calls you to be His disciple and invites you to be His brother or His sister?*



Apply to Our Story

ADORATION

In light of this passage/lesson, what can I PRAISE God for?

CONFESSION

In light of this passage/lesson, what do I need to CONFESS or repent of?

SUPPLICATION

In light of this passage/lesson, what can I ASK God for?

MARK

Lesson 5 | **Parables of the Kingdom: He Who Has Ears, Let Him Hear** **Mark 4:1-34**

4 Again he began to teach beside the sea.

And a very large crowd gathered about him, so that he got into a boat and sat in it on the sea, and the whole crowd was beside the sea on the land.

² And he was teaching them many things in parables, and in his teaching he said to them:

³ “Listen!

Behold, a sower went out to sow.

⁴ And as he sowed, some seed fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured it.

⁵ Other seed fell on rocky ground, where it did not have much soil, and immediately it sprang up, since it had no depth of soil.

⁶ And when the sun rose, it was scorched, and since it had no root, it withered away.

⁷ Other seed fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no grain.

⁸ And other seeds fell into good soil and produced grain, growing up and increasing and yielding thirtyfold and sixtyfold and a hundredfold.”

⁹ And he said,

“He who has ears to hear, let him hear.”

¹⁰ And when he was alone, those around him with the twelve asked him about the parables.

¹¹ And he said to them,

“To you has been given the secret of the kingdom of God, but for those outside everything is in parables, ¹² so that

“they may indeed see but not perceive,
and may indeed hear but not understand,
lest they should turn and be forgiven.”

¹³ And he said to them,

“Do you not understand this parable?

How then will you understand all the parables?

¹⁴ The sower sows the word.

¹⁵ And these are the ones along the path, where the word is sown: when they hear, Satan immediately comes and takes away the word that is sown in them.

¹⁶ And these are the ones sown on rocky ground: the ones who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with joy.

¹⁷ And they have no root in themselves, but endure for a while; then, when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately they fall away.

¹⁸ And others are the ones sown among thorns.

They are those who hear the word, ¹⁹ but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches and the desires for other things enter in and choke the word, and it proves unfruitful.

²⁰ But those that were sown on the good soil are the ones who hear the word and accept it and bear fruit, thirtyfold and sixtyfold and a hundredfold.”

²¹ And he said to them,

“Is a lamp brought in to be put under a basket, or under a bed, and not on a stand?

²² For nothing is hidden except to be made manifest; nor is anything secret except to come to light.

²³ If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear.”

²⁴ And he said to them,

“Pay attention to what you hear: with the measure you use, it will be measured to you, and still more will be added to you.

²⁵ For to the one who has, more will be given, and from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away.”

²⁶ And he said,

“The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground.

²⁷ He sleeps and rises night and day, and the seed sprouts and grows; he knows not how.

²⁸ The earth produces by itself, first the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear.

²⁹ But when the grain is ripe, at once he puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come.”

³⁰ And he said,

“With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable shall we use for it?

³¹ It is like a grain of mustard seed, which, when sown on the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth, ³² yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes larger than all the garden plants and puts out large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade.”

³³ With many such parables he spoke the word to them, as they were able to hear it.

³⁴ He did not speak to them without a parable, but privately to his own disciples he explained everything.

MARK

Lesson 5 | **Parables of the Kingdom: He Who Has Ears, Let Him Hear**

After a fast-paced couple of chapters of healing ministry, teaching, confrontation, and miracles, Jesus slows down, recording Jesus' teaching by the sea. But how does He decide to teach the crowds? In parables! Word pictures and stories stick in people's minds and cause them to think more deeply about an idea. Pastors use stories to illustrate concepts, but Jesus' parables are a bit different: they test the listener, to see how they respond to what is being taught. As we dig into these stories, pay attention to what Jesus calls people to do with what they hear!

Begin your study in prayer.

READ THE TEXT

Read the text several times and mark characters and key words/phrases *SO THAT* you grasp what the passage is about.

UNDERSTAND THEIR STORY

Ask questions to understand their story *SO THAT* you understand what the author is communicating to his original audience.

Option 1: Self-Directed Observation Questions

1. **HOW:** Break down the passage into sections to discern *how* Mark has organized it. What are the main sections about?
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4. **WHO:** List the main characters and what you learn about them.
5. **WHAT** is Mark emphasizing? List the KEY WORDS (often repeated words or phrases or ideas) and what you learn about them.
6. **WHAT** questions do you have about the passage? What is unclear?
7. **WHAT** is Mark's main idea in this passage? How would you summarize what he is communicating?

UNDERSTAND THEIR STORY

Option 2: Directed Observation Questions

1. Summarize each section to understand the flow of the narrative. Since the text forms a chiasm, we've indented the sections of the text. Try to notice the connections between the parallel sections!

a Mark 4:1-2

b Mark 4:3-9

c Mark 4:10-12

d Mark 4:13-20

c' Mark 4:21-25

b' Mark 4:26-32

a' Mark 4:33-34

2. **WHO** does Jesus teach? (Note: there are two groups!) (vs 1-2,10-11,33-34)

a. **WHERE** does He teach each group?

b. **WHAT** different methods does He use to teach each group? (vs 33-34)

i. **WHY** does He start to teach his disciples? (vs 10)

ii. **WHY** do those outside get only parables? (vs 11)

1. Think it through: This seems like a harsh reason! How do you feel about Jesus' explanation at this point?

Since parables are short illustrations with a main point, we are going to go through each one to discern what Jesus is trying to say to the people listening.

3. Mark 4:3-9, 13-20

- a. **WHAT** is the sower sowing? **WHAT** does this item represent?
- b. **WHAT** happens to each group after they hear the word? And **WHAT** is their final result?
 - i. The path
 - ii. Rocky ground
 - iii. Among Thorns
 - iv. Good soil

1. *Think it through: What is the main difference between the good soil and the other soils?*

4. Mark 4:21-23

- a. **HOW** would you answer Jesus' question in verse 21?
- b. **WHAT** is being made manifest and brought to light in verse 22?

i. *Think it through: Does this affect your understanding of verse 11? How?*

5. Mark 4:24-25

- a. **WHAT** is Jesus saying to pay attention to? **WHAT** picture does He use for how we are to pay attention to it?
- b. **WHAT** is the result of how you measure what you hear?

6. Mark 4:26-32

- a. **WHAT** is the kingdom of God compared to in the last two parables? (v26-32)
- b. **HOW** does the seed grow?
- c. **WHAT** happens when the seed has fully grown in each parable?
- d. **WHAT** is the job of the sower?

1. *Think it through: How do these parables help you understand the kingdom of God?*

7. **WHAT** does Mark emphasize in this passage? Go back and mark each occurrence of this word in the text if you haven't already

- a. *Listen! ... He who has ears to hear, let him hear* – go back and mark each time Jesus invites others to listen, pay attention, or hear.
 - i. **WHO** is invited to hear throughout the passage?
 - ii. **WHO** is able to understand? Why?

1. *Think it through: What is the difference between hearing and understanding?*

8. **HOW** would you summarize Mark's main idea in this passage?

CONNECT TO HIS STORY

1. **“They may indeed see but not perceive, and may indeed hear but not understand, lest they should turn and be forgiven.”** Jesus quotes Isaiah as He explains why He teaches everything in parables. Let’s take a look at what’s happening there to get a better understanding. Then we will jump to Acts where Paul quotes the same text.
 - a. Read Isaiah 6:1-12 for context, and then focus on verses 5-10. Isaiah is called to prophecy to a rebellious Israel who refuses to listen to God’s warnings and turn back to following after Him.
 - i. What does Isaiah say about himself and the people he is living with?
 - ii. What is the Lord asking for? How does Isaiah respond?
 - iii. What does the Lord tell Isaiah to say?
 1. *Think it through: Do you think God doesn’t want people to understand?*
 - b. Read Acts 28:23-31. Paul is in Rome preaching to a gathered group of Jews. See how they respond to his message!
 - i. What does Paul testify to? How do people respond to his message?
 - ii. Who is Paul referring to when he quotes Isaiah in vs 26-27?
 - iii. What does Paul continue to do?
 - c. *Apply it: Like the crowds, Israel, and the Jews in Rome, we are invited to hear the gospel and respond to it. How have you responded to what you have heard about the kingdom of God? Have you accepted it, or have you disbelieved?*
 - d. *Apply it: Like Jesus, Isaiah, and Paul, we should not be affected by how people respond to our presentation of the gospel. Do you find it easy to confidently proclaim the kingdom of God regardless of others’ response? How can you ask God to help you in this?*

2. **“... and the seed sprouts and grows; he knows not how.”** How the kingdom of God grows is a mystery to the one who sows the seed, but he still does the work of sowing. Let’s take a look at another couple of texts that talk about the mystery of this growth.
 - a. Read Ecclesiastes 11:5-6.
 - i. Who doesn’t know how life comes to a child or how a seed grows? Who does?
 - ii. What is the responsibility of the sower?
 - b. Read 1 Corinthians 3:5-9.
 - i. Who is Paul writing to in this letter? How does he describe the process of their growth?
 - ii. Who deserves the credit for the growth?
 - iii. What is the responsibility of Apollos and Paul?
 - c. *Apply it: We often want to control the things that are in God’s hands (i.e. the faith of our loved ones; our own futures; when it will rain and be sunny.) What might you be trying to control that is actually God’s responsibility? How can you lay that at His feet today?*
3. **“For nothing is hidden except to be made manifest; nor is anything secret except to come to light.”** Parables can seem like hidden knowledge meant for the select few, yet Jesus follows them with this thought that all that is hidden will be revealed.
 - a. Read Luke 24:13-35.
 - i. Whose eyes are kept from recognizing Jesus?
 - ii. What had they hoped Jesus would do?
 - iii. What does Jesus use to teach them?
 - iv. What is revealed at the end? How do the disciples respond?

1. *Think it through: In this text, what was previously hidden that is now revealed in Jesus Christ?*

b. Read Colossians 2:1-6.

i. What is God's mystery?

ii. What is hidden? Where is it hidden?

iii. What has the church received? How are they called to respond?

1. *Think it through: Based on these texts, who has the secrets of God's kingdom?*

c. Read 2 Corinthians 3:12-18.

i. What does the veil stop people from seeing?

ii. How is it taken away?

iii. When is the veil removed?

iv. What do those with the veil removed behold? What does that change about them?

d. *Apply it: Although the truths of the kingdom of God were still hidden when Jesus told these parables, they have now been revealed to those who turn to the LORD! If that is not you, take some time to talk to God, ask Him to show you the beauty of the gospel. If you have put your trust in Jesus, spend some time praising Him for what He has done!*

REFLECT AND APPLY TO OUR STORY

How did you encounter Jesus this week?

1. What appears to keep people from responding to Jesus?

a. Reflect: How have you responded to the good news about the kingdom of God? Have you sought Jesus for understanding?

2. What is revealed about God in this text?

a. Reflect: How does recognizing God's work in growing the kingdom comfort and compel you?



Apply to Our Story

ADORATION

In light of this passage/lesson, what can I PRAISE God for?

CONFESSION

In light of this passage/lesson, what do I need to CONFESS or repent of?

SUPPLICATION

In light of this passage/lesson, what can I ASK God for?

MARK

Lesson 6 | **Responding to the Son of God: Do Not Fear, Only Believe** **Mark 4:35-5:43**

4 ³⁵ On that day, when evening had come, he said to them,

“Let us go across to the other side.”

³⁶ And leaving the crowd, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was.

And other boats were with him.

³⁷ And a great windstorm arose, and the waves were breaking into the boat, so that the boat was already filling.

³⁸ But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion.

And they woke him and said to him,

“Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?”

³⁹ And he awoke and rebuked the wind and said to the sea,

“Peace!

Be still!”

And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm.

⁴⁰ He said to them,

“Why are you so afraid?

Have you still no faith?”

⁴¹ And they were filled with great fear and said to one another,

“Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?”

5 They came to the other side of the sea, to the country of the Gerasenes.

² And when Jesus had stepped out of the boat, immediately there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit.

³ He lived among the tombs.

And no one could bind him anymore, not even with a chain, ⁴ for he had often been bound with shackles and chains, but he wrenched the chains apart, and he broke the shackles in pieces.

No one had the strength to subdue him.

⁵ Night and day among the tombs and on the mountains he was always crying out and cutting himself with stones.

⁶ And when he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and fell down before him.

⁷ And crying out with a loud voice, he said,

“What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God?
I adjure you by God, do not torment me.”

⁸ For he was saying to him,

“Come out of the man, you unclean spirit!”

⁹ And Jesus asked him,

“What is your name?”

He replied,

“My name is Legion, for we are many.”

¹⁰ And he begged him earnestly not to send them out of the country.

¹¹ Now a great herd of pigs was feeding there on the hillside, ¹² and they begged him, saying,

“Send us to the pigs; let us enter them.”

¹³ So he gave them permission.

And the unclean spirits came out and entered the pigs; and the herd, numbering about two thousand, rushed down the steep bank into the sea and drowned in the sea.

¹⁴ The herdsmen fled and told it in the city and in the country.

And people came to see what it was that had happened.

¹⁵ And they came to Jesus and saw the demon-possessed man, the one who had had the legion, sitting there, clothed and in his right mind, and they were afraid.

¹⁶ And those who had seen it described to them what had happened to the demon-possessed man and to the pigs.

¹⁷ And they began to beg Jesus to depart from their region.

¹⁸ As he was getting into the boat, the man who had been possessed with demons begged him that he might be with him.

¹⁹ And he did not permit him but said to him,

“Go home to your friends and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you.”

²⁰ And he went away and began to proclaim in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him, and everyone marveled.

²¹ And when Jesus had crossed again in the boat to the other side, a great crowd gathered about him, and he was beside the sea.

²² Then came one of the rulers of the synagogue, Jairus by name, and seeing him, he fell at his feet

²³ and implored him earnestly, saying,

“My little daughter is at the point of death.

Come and lay your hands on her, so that she may be made well and live.”

²⁴ And he went with him.

And a great crowd followed him and thronged about him.

²⁵ And there was a woman who had had a discharge of blood for twelve years, ²⁶ and who had suffered much under many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was no better but rather grew worse.

²⁷ She had heard the reports about Jesus and came up behind him in the crowd and touched his garment.

²⁸ For she said,

“If I touch even his garments, I will be made well.”

²⁹ And immediately the flow of blood dried up, and she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease.

³⁰ And Jesus, perceiving in himself that power had gone out from him, immediately turned about in the crowd and said,

“Who touched my garments?”

³¹ And his disciples said to him,

“You see the crowd pressing around you, and yet you say,

‘Who touched me?’”

³² And he looked around to see who had done it.

³³ But the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came in fear and trembling and fell down before him and told him the whole truth.

³⁴ And he said to her,

“Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease.”

³⁵ While he was still speaking, there came from the ruler's house some who said,

“Your daughter is dead.

Why trouble the Teacher any further?”

³⁶ But overhearing what they said, Jesus said to the ruler of the synagogue,

“Do not fear, only believe.”

³⁷ And he allowed no one to follow him except Peter and James and John the brother of James.

³⁸ They came to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and Jesus^[a] saw a commotion, people weeping and wailing loudly.

³⁹ And when he had entered, he said to them,

“Why are you making a commotion and weeping?

The child is not dead but sleeping.”

⁴⁰ And they laughed at him.

But he put them all outside and took the child's father and mother and those who were with him and went in where the child was.

⁴¹ Taking her by the hand he said to her,

“Talitha cumi,”

which means,

“Little girl, I say to you, arise.”

⁴² And immediately the girl got up and began walking (for she was twelve years of age), and they were immediately overcome with amazement.

⁴³ And he strictly charged them that no one should know this, and told them to give her something to eat.

MARK

Lesson 6 | Responding to the Son of God: Do Not Fear, Only Believe

Last week Jesus taught in parables about how people should respond to what they hear. This week we see how people actually respond to Jesus! In four acts of power, Jesus reveals more of who He is to the disciples and the others that are around. As you read these stories, try to put yourself into the shoes of those near Jesus. How would you react to these acts of power? What would you think about Jesus if you had seen Him do these things?

Begin your study in prayer.

READ THE TEXT

Read the text several times and mark characters and key words/phrases *SO THAT* you grasp what the passage is about.

UNDERSTAND THEIR STORY

Ask questions to understand their story *SO THAT* you understand what the author is communicating to his original audience.

Option 1: Self-Directed Observation Questions

1. **HOW:** Break down the passage into sections to discern *how* Mark has organized it. What are the main sections about?

2. **WHERE:** What locations are mentioned?

3. **WHEN:** What time markers do you see in this text? Do you think they are significant?
4. **WHO:** List the main characters and what you learn about them.
5. **WHAT** is Mark emphasizing? List the KEY WORDS (often repeated words or phrases or ideas) and what you learn about them.
6. **WHAT** questions do you have about the passage? What is unclear?
7. **WHAT** is Mark's main idea in this passage? How would you summarize what he is communicating?

UNDERSTAND THEIR STORY

Option 2: Directed Observation Questions

9. Summarize each section to understand the flow of the narrative.
 - a. Mark 4:35-41
 - b. Mark 5:1-20
 - c. Mark 5:21-43
10. Our passage today tells three stories, each with a problem, a solution, and a response from the people around. Let's read through each story and pick out these elements.
 - a. Read Mark 4:35-41.
 - i. **WHERE** and **WHEN** does this story take place?
 - ii. **WHAT** is the problem presented to Jesus?
 - iii. **HOW** does Jesus fix the problem?
 - iv. **WHAT** does Jesus say to the disciples after He has calmed the sea?
 - v. **HOW** do people respond to Jesus?
 1. *Think it through: Put yourself in the shoes of the disciples. How do you think you would have responded to Jesus calming the wind and the waves with just His words?*
 - b. Read Mark 5:1-20.
 - i. **WHERE** does this story take place? Is Jewish or Gentile territory? (Find them on the maps on pages 2 or 3.)
 - ii. **WHAT** is the problem presented to Jesus?

iii. **HOW** does Jesus fix the problem?

iv. **HOW** do the characters respond to Jesus?

The demons

The demon possessed man

The herdsman and the people

v. **WHAT** does Jesus say to the man who had been possessed with demons?

1. *Think it through: How is Jesus' command to this man different from what He has told others? (1:44, 5:43) Why do you think that is?*

c. Read Mark 5:21-43.

i. **WHERE** does this story take place?

ii. **WHAT** are the two problems presented to Jesus?

1. Jairus

2. The woman

iii. **HOW** does Jesus fix the problem?

1. The woman

2. The little girl

iv. **HOW** do people respond to Jesus?

1. The woman

2. The people weeping

3. The disciples and the little girl's family

v. **WHAT** does Jesus say to the people?

1. The woman

2. The ruler of the synagogue

d. *Think it through: What are you learning about Jesus through each of these stories (questions a-c)?*

e. *Think it through: What is similar about how each of these stories end?*

11. **WHAT** does Mark emphasize in this passage?

a. Go back through the text and mark who or what obeys Jesus' commands.

b. Go back through the text and mark who or what has faith in Jesus.

c. Go back through the text and mark who or what is afraid of Jesus' power.

12. **HOW** would you summarize Mark's main idea in this passage?

CONNECT TO HIS STORY

1. **“Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?”** The disciples are left in shock by Jesus’ ability to calm the sea and the waves. Let’s take a look at other texts that show who controls the sea in order to understand their response a bit better.
 - a. Read Genesis 1:9-10. How are the land and seas created?
 - b. Read Exodus 14:10-31. As Moses leads Israel out of slavery in Egypt they are pursued by the Egyptian army. Let’s see how the LORD rescues His people.
 - i. What does Moses tell the panicked Israelites?
 - ii. What does the LORD tell Moses to do to save Israel?
 - iii. Who causes the sea to part? And how?
 - iv. At the end of the text how does the author summarize what Israel saw that day? How did they respond?
 - c. Read Psalm 65:5-8.
 - i. How is God described?
 - ii. What does He have power over?
 - iii. How do people respond to God’s work?
 1. *Think it through: Imagine you are one of the disciples, you’ve grown up listening to the psalms at the temple. Remembering passages like this, what are you thinking about Jesus as He rebukes the winds and waves?*
 - d. Read Revelation 21:1-4. What is no more in this text?

- e. *Apply it: Jesus' power over the wind and waves proved He was more powerful than the disciples had realized. In fact, He had power that only God has! Realizing that Jesus was more powerful than they expected left them scared. How do you feel about Jesus' power over the natural world? Does it lead you to fear or to peace?*
- f. *Apply it: In the storm Jesus was able to sleep because He understood who controlled the wind and the waves. He didn't panic, He simply told the storm to be still. Do you believe that God is in control in the same way that Jesus did? How do you think believing like this would change how you approach your own life when storms come?*

2. **“Go home to your friends and tell them how much the LORD has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you.”** In a unique moment in the book of Mark, Jesus tells the former demoniac to go and tell others about what has been done for him.

- a. Read Psalm 66:16.
 - i. Who is being invited to hear? Who do you think this is?
 - ii. What is being told?
- b. Read Matthew 28:18-20.
 - i. Where does Jesus tell the disciples to go?
 - ii. By whose authority are they going?
 - iii. Who is with them as they go?
- c. Read Revelation 12:7-12.
 - i. What has come? Who has been thrown down?
 - ii. How have they conquered him?

1. *Think it through: What does this tell you about the power of Jesus' blood and your testimony?*

2. *Apply it: Part of the call on our Christian lives is to share our faith with those around us. Not every believer will have a dramatic story like that of the Garasene demoniac, but each one will have ways that God has worked in their lives. Take a few minutes and consider how God has worked in your story, what He has done for your soul. Then take some time to pray, asking God who you can share your story with, and that He would provide opportunities for you to share.*
3. **“Do not be afraid, only believe.”** Throughout this story Jesus has encouraged others to not be afraid, but have faith. Telling people not to fear is a common theme throughout scripture, but let’s look at why those people don’t need to be afraid.
 - a. Read Isaiah 41:10. Why does Israel not need to be afraid?
 - b. Read Psalm 118:6. Why does the psalmist say he will not fear?
 - i. *Think it through: “What can man do to me?” may feel like a scary question. We can imagine a lot of things that other people can do to us! So why is it that we don’t need to fear if the LORD is on our side?*
 - c. Read Hebrews 13:5-6. Paul applies the above psalm to a particular context.
 - i. What does Paul say to keep your life free from?
 1. *Think it through: Why might love of money lead to fear?*
 - ii. What are you supposed to do instead? Why can we be confident?
 - d. *Apply it: Often our fears reveal our loves. (ie. fear of missing out reveals a love for being with people). What it is that you fear losing? How does Jesus speak to that fear, and invite you to trust Him and find peace?*

REFLECT AND APPLY TO OUR STORY

How did you encounter Jesus this week?

1. What did you learn about who Jesus is?

a. *Reflect: How are you comforted and compelled by Jesus' power over our world and His compassion towards people?*

2. What response is Jesus calling from those He meets?

a. *Reflect: In what area of your life is Jesus inviting you to not fear, but put your faith in Him?*



Apply to Our Story

ADORATION

In light of this passage/lesson, what can I PRAISE God for?

CONFESSION

In light of this passage/lesson, what do I need to CONFESS or repent of?

SUPPLICATION

In light of this passage/lesson, what can I ASK God for?

MARK

Lesson 7 | **Responding to the Son of God: Why do People Respond Differently?** **Mark 6:1-56**

6 He went away from there and came to his hometown, and his disciples followed him.

² And on the Sabbath he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were astonished, saying,

“Where did this man get these things?

What is the wisdom given to him?

How are such mighty works done by his hands?

³ Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon?

And are not his sisters here with us?”

And they took offense at him.

⁴ And Jesus said to them,

“A prophet is not without honor, except in his hometown and among his relatives and in his own household.”

⁵ And he could do no mighty work there, except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and healed them.

⁶ And he marveled because of their unbelief.

And he went about among the villages teaching.

⁷ And he called the twelve and began to send them out two by two, and gave them authority over the unclean spirits.

⁸ He charged them to take nothing for their journey except a staff—no bread, no bag, no money in their belts— ⁹ but to wear sandals and not put on two tunics.

¹⁰ And he said to them,

“Whenever you enter a house, stay there until you depart from there.

¹¹ And if any place will not receive you and they will not listen to you, when you leave, shake off the dust that is on your feet as a testimony against them.”

¹² So they went out and proclaimed that people should repent.

¹³ And they cast out many demons and anointed with oil many who were sick and healed them.

¹⁴ King Herod heard of it, for Jesus' name had become known.

Some said,

“John the Baptist has been raised from the dead.

That is why these miraculous powers are at work in him.”

¹⁵ But others said,

“He is Elijah.”

And others said,

“He is a prophet, like one of the prophets of old.”

¹⁶ But when Herod heard of it, he said,

“John, whom I beheaded, has been raised.”

¹⁷ For it was Herod who had sent and seized John and bound him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, because he had married her.

¹⁸ For John had been saying to Herod,

“It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife.”

¹⁹ And Herodias had a grudge against him and wanted to put him to death.

But she could not, ²⁰ for Herod feared John, knowing that he was a righteous and holy man, and he kept him safe.

When he heard him, he was greatly perplexed, and yet he heard him gladly.

²¹ But an opportunity came when Herod on his birthday gave a banquet for his nobles and military commanders and the leading men of Galilee.

²² For when Herodias's daughter came in and danced, she pleased Herod and his guests.

And the king said to the girl,

“Ask me for whatever you wish, and I will give it to you.”

²³ And he vowed to her,

“Whatever you ask me, I will give you, up to half of my kingdom.”

²⁴ And she went out and said to her mother,

“For what should I ask?”

And she said,

“The head of John the Baptist.”

²⁵ And she came in immediately with haste to the king and asked, saying,

“I want you to give me at once the head of John the Baptist on a platter.”

²⁶ And the king was exceedingly sorry, but because of his oaths and his guests he did not want to break his word to her.

²⁷ And immediately the king sent an executioner with orders to bring John's head.

He went and beheaded him in the prison ²⁸ and brought his head on a platter and gave it to the girl, and the girl gave it to her mother.

²⁹ When his disciples heard of it, they came and took his body and laid it in a tomb.

³⁰ The apostles returned to Jesus and told him all that they had done and taught.

³¹ And he said to them,

“Come away by yourselves to a desolate place and rest a while.”

For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat.

³² And they went away in the boat to a desolate place by themselves.

³³ Now many saw them going and recognized them, and they ran there on foot from all the towns and got there ahead of them.

³⁴ When he went ashore he saw a great crowd, and he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd.

And he began to teach them many things.

³⁵ And when it grew late, his disciples came to him and said,

“This is a desolate place, and the hour is now late.

³⁶ Send them away to go into the surrounding countryside and villages and buy themselves something to eat.”

³⁷ But he answered them,

“You give them something to eat.”

And they said to him,

“Shall we go and buy two hundred denarii worth of bread and give it to them to eat?”

³⁸ And he said to them,

“How many loaves do you have?

Go and see.”

And when they had found out, they said,

“Five, and two fish.”

³⁹ Then he commanded them all to sit down in groups on the green grass.

⁴⁰ So they sat down in groups, by hundreds and by fifties.

⁴¹ And taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven and said a blessing and broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples to set before the people.

And he divided the two fish among them all.

⁴² And they all ate and were satisfied.

⁴³ And they took up twelve baskets full of broken pieces and of the fish.

⁴⁴ And those who ate the loaves were five thousand men.

⁴⁵ Immediately he made his disciples get into the boat and go before him to the other side, to Bethsaida, while he dismissed the crowd.

⁴⁶ And after he had taken leave of them, he went up on the mountain to pray.

⁴⁷ And when evening came, the boat was out on the sea, and he was alone on the land.

⁴⁸ And he saw that they were making headway painfully, for the wind was against them.

And about the fourth watch of the night he came to them, walking on the sea.

He meant to pass by them, ⁴⁹ but when they saw him walking on the sea they thought it was a ghost, and cried out, ⁵⁰ for they all saw him and were terrified.

But immediately he spoke to them and said,

“Take heart; it is I.

Do not be afraid.”

⁵¹ And he got into the boat with them, and the wind ceased.

And they were utterly astounded, ⁵² for they did not understand about the loaves, but their hearts were hardened.

⁵³ When they had crossed over, they came to land at Gennesaret and moored to the shore.

⁵⁴ And when they got out of the boat, the people immediately recognized him ⁵⁵ and ran about the whole region and began to bring the sick people on their beds to wherever they heard he was.

⁵⁶ And wherever he came, in villages, cities, or countryside, they laid the sick in the marketplaces and implored him that they might touch even the fringe of his garment.

And as many as touched it were made well.

MARK

Lesson 7 | Responding to the Son of God: Why do People Respond Differently?

In the previous lesson, Jesus displayed His power over the wind and the waves, the demonic world, illness and death. As He did so, many people responded in fear, but Jesus exhorted the disciples and Jairus to have faith instead! As Jesus continues His ministry, the responses of people become increasingly polarized. In this week's passage, some people who recognize Jesus reject Him, while others run to meet Him. Why do people respond so differently to Jesus? Read the text and answer the questions below to find out!

Begin your study in prayer.

READ THE TEXT

Read the text several times and mark characters and key words/phrases *SO THAT* you grasp what the passage is about.

UNDERSTAND THEIR STORY

Ask questions to understand their story *SO THAT* you understand what the author is communicating to his original audience.

Option 1: Self-Directed Observation Questions

1. **HOW:** Break down the passage into sections to discern *how* Mark has organized it. What are the main sections about?

3. **WHEN:** What time markers do you see in this text? Do you think they are significant?
4. **WHO:** List the main characters and what you learn about them.
5. **WHAT** is Mark emphasizing? List the KEY WORDS (often repeated words or phrases or ideas) and what you learn about them.
6. **WHAT** questions do you have about the passage? What is unclear?
7. **WHAT** is Mark's main idea in this passage? How would you summarize what he is communicating?

UNDERSTAND THEIR STORY

Option 2: Directed Observation Questions

1. Summarize each section to understand the flow of the narrative.

- a. Mark 6:1-6
- b. Mark 6:7-13
- c. Mark 6:14-29
- d. Mark 6:30-44
- e. Mark 6:45-52
- f. Mark 6:53-56

2. **WHO** are the people in this chapter and **WHAT** do you learn about them?

- a. The people in Jesus' hometown
 - i. What words are used to describe their responses to Jesus?

1. Think it through: Why do you think they respond this way? List as many possible reasons as you can for their response - from the text, and your own reasoning!

- ii. What are the consequences of their response?

b. "The twelve"

- i. What do you learn about them in 6:7-13? (What were they able to do?)
 - ii. What do you learn about them in 6:30-44? (What do they not yet understand?)
 - iii. What do you learn about them in 6:45-51? (What words are used to describe their responses to Jesus?)

1. *Think it through: In what ways are the disciples similar to, and different from, the people in Jesus' hometown?*

c. Herod

- i. What is his response to Jesus?
- ii. What was his initial response to John the Baptist?
- iii. What are all the factors and people that influenced the way Herod ultimately treated John the Baptist?

1. *Think it through: What does this story reveal about what ultimately motivated Herod?*

2. *Apply it: In what situations have you been motivated to do things which go against your personal convictions?*

d. The people of Gennesaret

- i. What is their response to Jesus?
- ii. What do they experience as a result of the way they respond to Jesus?

1. *Think it through: Compare verses 5-6 (the beginning of this passage) to verse 56 (the end of this passage). Why do you think these different groups of people (who both recognize Jesus) experience different things?*

2. *Apply it: What application can you draw from this comparison for your own life?*

3. **WHERE** does the narrative take place? Locate the locations listed on the maps on pages 2 or 3 and note if this is Jewish or Gentile territory.
 - a. **WHERE** is Jesus' hometown (If you don't remember, review Mark 1:9 and 1:24)? Where does He teach in His hometown?

- b. **WHERE** does He go with the apostles after they return from their mission? Note: an exact location is not mentioned, but this place is still given a description.

i. *Think it through: What do you think this description means, and why do you think it is significant? Where else is this description used in Mark?*

- c. **WHERE** did He send the disciples after as He dismissed the crowd?

- d. **WHERE** did they finally end up in this passage?

4. **WHEN** does the narrative take place?

- a. Based on what we read in 6:14-29, what big event has already taken place historically?

- b. What time markers do we see in 6:30-44?

- c. What time markers do we see in 6:45-51?

5. **WHAT** does Mark emphasize in this passage? Go back and mark each occurrence of the following words in the text if you haven't already.

- a. Astonished / Astounded: Who is astonished & astounded in this passage?

- b. Mighty Works / Miraculous powers: What are these words describing?

- c. Teach / Proclaim: How often do these words appear in the passage? What does this communicate about Jesus' ministry and the ministry He gives to the twelve?

- d. Recognize: Find where this word appears in the text, and review your answers to why this word is important (see 2d above).

6. **HOW** would you summarize Mark's main idea in this passage?

CONNECT TO HIS STORY

1. **“And he called the twelve and began to send them out two by two.”** It may be that Jesus sent the disciples out in pairs for companionship and support, but there are likely other ideas at play here. Look up the text below for a possible rationale.
 - a. Read Deuteronomy 17:6 and 19:15. In this text, Moses is giving commandments to the people of Israel.
 - i. How many witnesses were required to testify for a charge to be established?
 1. *Think it through: With this background in mind, why would Jesus have people travel in twos, and instruct them to shake off the dust on their feet (Luke 6:11), if they are not received? Conversely, how could Jesus’ decision to have people travel in twos affect the way their message of repentance is received?*
 - b. *Apply It: As you think about people you would like to talk to about Jesus, are there ways in which you could incorporate other people into these plans? How could you do outreach in community with others?*
2. **“When he went ashore he saw a great crowd, and he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd.”** This phrase is loaded with Old Testament imagery. Look up the following texts to understand what Mark is reminding people of as he uses this phrase.
 - a. Read Numbers 27:12-23 for context and then focus on verses 16-17.
 - i. What is Moses’ concern in these verses?
 - ii. How does God address Moses’ concern?
 - iii. What does Moses’ successor eventually accomplish? (If you need a hint, read Joshua 11:23)
 1. *Think it through: How does the work of Moses’ successor foreshadow what Jesus will eventually accomplish?*
 - b. Read Psalm 78:70-72.
 - i. Who is identified as a shepherd in this text?

- ii. How does this shepherd act? What does he do?

1. *Think it through: How does the work of this shepherd foreshadow what Jesus will eventually accomplish?*

- c. Read Ezekiel 34:1-6.

- i. What does God have against Israel's shepherds in this text?
- ii. What has happened to the sheep as a result of their leadership?
- iii. According to Ezekiel 34:11-16, what will God do in response?

1. *Think it through: What is Mark affirming about Jesus' identity as he uses this phrase in Mark 10:34?*

- 3. **"And taking the five loaves and the two fish he looked up to heaven and said a blessing and broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples to set before the people"** In this story, Jesus is meeting people's physical needs, but also declaring something about His identity. Look up the texts below to see where else in scripture people received food in desolate places!

- a. Read Exodus 16:1-4.

- i. Where are the Israelites in this story? How is their location similar to that of the people in Mark's gospel?
- ii. Who provided food for the people of Israel? Who is providing food for the people in Mark's gospel?

- b. Read Exodus 16:17-18.

- i. What was the result of God providing food for the people? Where is this idea echoed in Mark's gospel?

- c. Read Genesis 49:28, Exodus 24:4, Exodus 28:21, Exodus 39:14.
 - i. Many numbers in scripture have symbolic meaning. What do you think twelve symbolizes based on these verses?

- ii. Where do you see the number twelve come up in Mark's gospel?

- d. *Think it through: Based on the answers you have provided in a - c above, what is Jesus declaring about Himself as He feeds the 5000 men a desolate place?*

- 4. **“And about the fourth watch of the night he came to them walking on the sea. He meant to pass by them... But immediately he spoke to them... And he got into the boat.”** As you read this story, were you puzzled by why Mark wrote that Jesus meant to *pass by* them? Look up the texts below for some possible explanations.

- a. Read Exodus 33:18-23, and Exodus 34:5-6.
 - i. Who *passes by* Moses in these texts?

- b. Read 1 Kings 19:9-11.
 - i. Who *passed by* Elijah in this text?

- c. Read Job 9:1-11.
 - i. What is Job affirming about God in verse 8, and what does Job say that God does in verse 11a?

- 1. *Think it through: Based on a-c above, when Mark says that Jesus meant to pass by them, what is he trying to help people understand?*

- 2. *Apply it: How is Job's experience of God (vs 11b) different from the disciple's experience of Jesus in Mark 10:51? How is this an encouragement to you?*

- 3. *Apply it: What warning does Job issue for people in verse 4, and where do you see this phrase appear in Mark 10:45-52? How is this a warning to you?*

REFLECT AND APPLY TO OUR STORY

How did you encounter Jesus this week?

1. What appears to be keeping or have kept people from responding to Jesus in this text?
 - a. *Reflect: Do you find yourself running to Jesus to learn from His teaching and to be 'made well'?
What can you do, or what could you pray for, to make this a more natural reflex for you?*



Apply to Our Story

ADORATION

In light of this passage/lesson, what can I PRAISE God for?

CONFESSION

In light of this passage/lesson, what do I need to CONFESS or repent of?

SUPPLICATION

In light of this passage/lesson, what can I ASK God for?

MARK

Lesson 8 | **Responding to the Son of God: Who Will Hear and Understand?** **Mark 7:1-8:21**

7 Now when the Pharisees gathered to him, with some of the scribes who had come from Jerusalem, ² they saw that some of his disciples ate with hands that were defiled, that is, unwashed.

³ (For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they wash their hands properly, holding to the tradition of the elders, ⁴ and when they come from the marketplace, they do not eat unless they wash. And there are many other traditions that they observe, such as the washing of cups and pots and copper vessels and dining couches.)

⁵ And the Pharisees and the scribes asked him,

“Why do your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat with defiled hands?”

⁶ And he said to them,

“Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written,

“‘This people honors me with their lips,
but their heart is far from me;

⁷ in vain do they worship me,
teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.’

⁸ You leave the commandment of God and hold to the tradition of men.”

⁹ And he said to them,

“You have a fine way of rejecting the commandment of God in order to establish your tradition!

¹⁰ For Moses said,

‘Honor your father and your mother’;

and,

‘Whoever reviles father or mother must surely die.’

¹¹ But you say,

‘If a man tells his father or his mother,

“Whatever you would have gained from me is Corban”

(that is, given to God)—

¹² then you no longer permit him to do anything for his father or mother, ¹³ thus making void the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down.

And many such things you do.”

¹⁴ And he called the people to him again and said to them,

“Hear me, all of you, and understand: ¹⁵ There is nothing outside a person that by going into him can defile him, but the things that come out of a person are what defile him.”

¹⁷ And when he had entered the house and left the people, his disciples asked him about the parable.

¹⁸ And he said to them,

“Then are you also without understanding?

Do you not see that whatever goes into a person from outside cannot defile him, ¹⁹ since it enters not his heart but his stomach, and is expelled?”

(Thus he declared all foods clean.)

²⁰ And he said, “

What comes out of a person is what defiles him.

²¹ For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, ²² coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness.

²³ All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person.”

²⁴ And from there he arose and went away to the region of Tyre and Sidon.

And he entered a house and did not want anyone to know, yet he could not be hidden.

²⁵ But immediately a woman whose little daughter had an unclean spirit heard of him and came and fell down at his feet.

²⁶ Now the woman was a Gentile, a Syrophenician by birth.

And she begged him to cast the demon out of her daughter.

²⁷ And he said to her,

“Let the children be fed first, for it is not right to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs.”

²⁸ But she answered him,

“Yes, Lord; yet even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs.”

²⁹ And he said to her,

“For this statement you may go your way; the demon has left your daughter.”

³⁰ And she went home and found the child lying in bed and the demon gone.

³¹ Then he returned from the region of Tyre and went through Sidon to the Sea of Galilee, in the region of the Decapolis.

³² And they brought to him a man who was deaf and had a speech impediment, and they begged him to lay his hand on him.

³³ And taking him aside from the crowd privately, he put his fingers into his ears, and after spitting touched his tongue.

³⁴ And looking up to heaven, he sighed and said to him,

“Ephphatha,”
that is,

“Be opened.”

³⁵ And his ears were opened, his tongue was released, and he spoke plainly.

³⁶ And Jesus charged them to tell no one.

But the more he charged them, the more zealously they proclaimed it.

³⁷ And they were astonished beyond measure, saying,

“He has done all things well. He even makes the deaf hear and the mute speak.”

8 In those days, when again a great crowd had gathered, and they had nothing to eat, he called his disciples to him and said to them,

² “I have compassion on the crowd, because they have been with me now three days and have nothing to eat.

³ And if I send them away hungry to their homes, they will faint on the way.

And some of them have come from far away.”

⁴ And his disciples answered him,

“How can one feed these people with bread here in this desolate place?”

⁵ And he asked them,

“How many loaves do you have?”

They said, “Seven.”

⁶ And he directed the crowd to sit down on the ground.

And he took the seven loaves, and having given thanks, he broke them and gave them to his disciples to set before the people; and they set them before the crowd.

⁷ And they had a few small fish.

And having blessed them, he said that these also should be set before them.

⁸ And they ate and were satisfied.

And they took up the broken pieces left over, seven baskets full.

⁹ And there were about four thousand people.

And he sent them away.

¹⁰ And immediately he got into the boat with his disciples and went to the district of Dalmanutha.

¹¹ The Pharisees came and began to argue with him, seeking from him a sign from heaven to test him.

¹² And he sighed deeply in his spirit and said,

“Why does this generation seek a sign?

Truly, I say to you, no sign will be given to this generation.”

¹³ And he left them, got into the boat again, and went to the other side.

¹⁴ Now they had forgotten to bring bread, and they had only one loaf with them in the boat.

¹⁵ And he cautioned them, saying,

“Watch out; beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod.”

¹⁶ And they began discussing with one another the fact that they had no bread.

¹⁷ And Jesus, aware of this, said to them,

“Why are you discussing the fact that you have no bread?

Do you not yet perceive or understand?

Are your hearts hardened?

¹⁸ Having eyes do you not see, and having ears do you not hear?

And do you not remember?

¹⁹ When I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many baskets full of broken pieces did you take up?”

They said to him,

“Twelve.”

²⁰ “And the seven for the four thousand, how many baskets full of broken pieces did you take up?”

And they said to him,

“Seven.”

²¹ And he said to them,

“Do you not yet understand?”

MARK

Lesson 8 | **Responding to the Son of God: Who Will Hear and Understand?**

In last week's lesson, people from His hometown took offense at Jesus, and the disciples' hardened hearts kept them from understanding Him fully. Despite this mixed reception there were people who welcomed Him and, as the narrative continues, this group grows. Some surprising people hear and understand, while others appear to be blind and deaf. Who fits into each category? Read the text and answer the questions below to find out.

Begin your study in prayer.

READ THE TEXT

Read the text several times and mark characters and key words/phrases *SO THAT* you grasp what the passage is about.

UNDERSTAND THEIR STORY

Ask questions to understand their story *SO THAT* you understand what the author is communicating to his original audience.

Option 1: Self-Directed Observation Questions

1. **HOW:** Break down the passage into sections to discern *how* Mark has organized it. What are the main sections about?

2. **WHERE:** What locations are mentioned?

3. **WHEN:** What time markers do you see in this text? Do you think they are significant?
4. **WHO:** List the main characters and what you learn about them.
5. **WHAT** is Mark emphasizing? List the KEY WORDS (often repeated words or phrases or ideas) and what you learn about them.
6. **WHAT** questions do you have about the passage? What is unclear?
7. **WHAT** is Mark's main idea in this passage? How would you summarize what he is communicating?

UNDERSTAND THEIR STORY

Option 2: Directed Observation Questions

1. Summarize each section to understand the flow of the narrative.

e. Mark 7:1-23

f. Mark 7:24-30

g. Mark 7:31-37

h. Mark 8:1-10

i. Mark 8:11-13

j. Mark 8:14-21

2. **WHO** are the people in these chapters and **WHAT** do you learn about them?

a. The Pharisees (7:1-13)

i. What do they ask Jesus?

ii. What name does Jesus call them and why does He use this name?

iii. What are the Pharisees holding onto, and what are they letting go of?

iv. What is happening to the Word of God as a result of their actions?

1. Apply it: Are there ways that we may be in danger of “making void the word of God” by our traditions? Where do you see this potential danger?

b. The Pharisees (8:11-13)

i. What else do you learn about the Pharisees in these verses?

ii. What are the consequences of their response to Jesus? (What does Jesus do?)

c. His disciples

i. What do you learn about them in 7:17-18?

ii. What do you learn about them in 8:1-10 and 14-21?

d. The Syrophoenician (Gentile) woman

i. How does she approach Jesus?

ii. What is her request (vs 26), and what is Jesus' final response to her request (vs 29-30)?

iii. What do you learn from the dialogue between the woman and Jesus in verses 27-28?

1. Think it through: What do you think she understands about Jesus' mission, based on her response to Jesus' statement? If you don't know, we'll come back to this!

e. The man who was deaf and had a speech impediment

i. What happened to this man when people brought him to Jesus?

3. **WHERE** does the narrative take place? Locate the locations listed on the maps on pages 2 or 3 & note if this is Jewish or Gentile territory.

a. **WHERE** have the Pharisees and scribes come from?

b. **WHERE** does Jesus meet the Syrophoenician woman?

c. **WHERE** does Jesus meet the man who was deaf and had a speech impediment?

d. Based on the fact that there doesn't seem to be a scene change from the end of chapter 7 to the end of beginning of chapter 8, **WHERE** do the events of 8:1-9 take place?

e. **WHERE** does He meet the Pharisees a second time?⁷

⁷ Note: The exact location of Dalmanutha is unknown, but historians believe it may be near Magdala.

4. **WHAT** does Mark emphasize in this passage? Go back and mark each occurrence of this word in the text if you haven't already
- a. Defile: What do the Pharisees think defiles a person? What does Jesus say defiles a person?
 - b. Hear and Understand:
 - i. Who are all the people in earshot when Jesus issues this command?
 - ii. Who does Jesus accuse of NOT hearing and understanding in this passage?
 - iii. Who begins to "hear" in this passage?
 - iv. Who seems to "understand" in this passage?
 - c. Astonished:
 - i. Who is astonished in this passage, and what does their astonishment cause them to say?
 - ii. How does this response differ from those who were astonished in lesson #7? (See Mark 6:2.)
5. **HOW** does this story of feeding people differ from the story in Lesson #7? List all the differences you can find.
6. **HOW** would you summarize Mark's main idea in this passage?

CONNECT TO HIS STORY

1. **“Now when the Pharisees gathered to him, with some of the scribes who had come from Jerusalem, they saw that some of his disciples ate with hands that were defiled, that is, unwashed... And he said to them, “You have a fine way of rejecting the commandment of God in order to establish your tradition.”** Why are the Pharisees so concerned about handwashing, and why does Jesus get so angry at this confrontation? Read the texts below to find out.

- a. Read Exodus 30:17-21. In this text, God is giving Moses commands for worship.
 - i. Who was commanded to wash in this text?

- ii. Who were these individuals (i.e., what was their role in the nation of Israel)?

- iii. What was the washing supposed to prepare them for, or protect them from?

1. Think it through: How do God’s commands in Exodus differ from the traditions the “Pharisees and all the Jews” observed? List as many things as you can think of!

- b. Read Exodus 20:12 and 21:17, and then review Mark 7:11-13.

- i. How do God’s commands in Exodus differ from the traditions of the Jews?

- c. *Think it through: In the answers to a and b above, which tradition adds to God’s Word, and which tradition takes away from God’s Word?*

- d. Read Deuteronomy 4:1-2.

- i. What are God’s people instructed not to do in this text?

- ii. What are God’s people instructed to do in this text?

1. Apply it: Are you ever tempted to add to God’s Word or subtract from God’s Word? How does this text challenge you today?

2. **“And he said to them, ‘Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites...’.”** In this text, Jesus is quoting Isaiah 29:13 which declares God’s judgment on the people of Israel. Read the passages below to understand what was happening in the prophet Isaiah’s time (over 700 years before Jesus), and how that is paralleled in Jesus’ time.
 - a. Read Isaiah 1:11-16.
 - i. Why is the LORD angry with the people of Israel, and why will He not listen to them?
 - ii. What is the LORD instructing them to do? What are they supposed to be “washed” from in verse 16?
 1. *Think it through: How do Jesus’ words in Mark 7:18-23 parallel the LORD’s words in Isaiah 1:11-16? (i.e. What is of primary importance to God? What are the Pharisees not understanding?)*
3. **“Now the woman was a Gentile, a Syrophenician by birth... And he said to her, ‘Let the children be fed first, for it is not right to take the children’s bread and throw it to the dogs.’”** When reading this story, it’s natural to focus on Jesus’ surprising use of the term ‘dogs’⁸, and miss his main point. To discern what Jesus is saying about His mission, look up the texts below.
 - a. Read Isaiah 49:5-6. The Servant here represented a specific individual within Israel (Jesus) who will accomplish what the nation failed to do.
 - i. What will the servant of the LORD do first (i.e. for Israel)?
 - ii. What will the servant of the LORD do next?
 - b. Read Acts 3:17-26 for context, and then focus on verse 26. In this text, Peter is preaching a sermon in the temple, to the men of Israel.
 - i. What does Peter say about Jesus’ mission as he ends this sermon?
 - c. Read Romans 1:16-17, 2:9-11.
 - i. What two groups of people are mentioned in these verses? What do you learn about their relationship to the gospel, and the priority in which they experience either tribulation and distress or glory, honour, and peace?

⁸ For more information on the use of this term, visit <https://www.gotquestions.org/Canaanite-woman-dog.html>

- d. *Think it through: How do these texts in Isaiah, Acts and Romans help you to understand what Jesus is saying to the Gentile woman? Do you think the woman understands what Jesus is saying? Why or why not?*

4. **“In those days, when again a great crowd had gathered, and they had nothing to eat... he asked them, ‘How many loaves do you have?’ They said, ‘Seven.’... and they ate and were satisfied. And they took up the broken pieces left over, seven baskets full.”** As Jesus ministers in the Decapolis (in Gentile territory), He again feeds a crowd. Last time the twelve baskets were symbolic of the twelve tribes of Israel, what could the number seven signify here?

- a. Read Deuteronomy 7:1-2. In this text Moses is giving the people of Israel instructions for entering the promised land.

i. How many nations were in the land when they entered?

ii. What was Israel supposed to do to these nations? What is Jesus doing for them now?

1. *Think it through: How does this story of Jesus providing bread for the Gentiles relate to His earlier encounter with the Gentile woman? What does the progression of this narrative indicate about the expansion of Jesus’ mission?*⁹

5. **“He cautioned them, saying, ‘...beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod.’ ... And Jesus...said to them. ‘Why are you discussing the fact that you have no bread? Do you not yet perceive or understand? Are your hearts hardened? Having eyes do you not see, and having ears do you not hear?’”** As this narrative section comes to an end, Jesus refers to last week’s text (with Herod), and this week’s text (the Pharisees), and laments that the disciples do not yet understand. What is Jesus concerned about here?

- a. Read Jeremiah 5:20-29.

i. What does God say about the state of the nation of Israel in these verses?

ii. What will God do in response to their rebellious hearts?

1. *Think it through: As Jesus quotes Jeremiah to His disciples, what is He concerned about?*

⁹ For another parallel, Read Acts 10:9-35! Here Peter has a revelation from God about clean and unclean food which expands His mission! How does He apply this lesson about food to the people whom He encounters after the vision?

REFLECT AND APPLY TO OUR STORY

How did you encounter Jesus this week?

1. What response is Jesus calling from those He meets?
 - a. *Reflect: In order for us to accurately hear and understand Jesus, and live in line with His teaching, we need to know and honor the Scriptures (the Word of God) as our ultimate authority and source of reality. What can you do, or what heart posture can you pray for, to grow your practice of reading and meditating on the Scriptures?*



Apply to Our Story

ADORATION

In light of this passage/lesson, what can I PRAISE God for?

CONFESSION

In light of this passage/lesson, what do I need to CONFESS or repent of?

SUPPLICATION

In light of this passage/lesson, what can I ASK God for?

MARK

Lesson 9 | **Entering the Kingdom: Blind People Need their Sight Restored** **Mark 8:22-9:50**

8 ²² And they came to Bethsaida.

And some people brought to him a blind man and begged him to touch him.

²³ And he took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the village, and when he had spit on his eyes and laid his hands on him, he asked him,

“Do you see anything?”

²⁴ And he looked up and said,

“I see people, but they look like trees, walking.”

²⁵ Then Jesus laid his hands on his eyes again; and he opened his eyes, his sight was restored, and he saw everything clearly.

²⁶ And he sent him to his home, saying,

“Do not even enter the village.”

²⁷ And Jesus went on with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi.

And on the way he asked his disciples,

“Who do people say that I am?”

²⁸ And they told him,

“John the Baptist; and others say, Elijah; and others, one of the prophets.”

²⁹ And he asked them,

“But who do you say that I am?”

Peter answered him,

“You are the Christ.”

³⁰ And he strictly charged them to tell no one about him.

³¹ And he began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes and be killed, and after three days rise again.

³² And he said this plainly.

And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him.

³³ But turning and seeing his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said,

“Get behind me, Satan!

For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man.”

³⁴ And calling the crowd to him with his disciples, he said to them,

“If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.

³⁵ For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it.

³⁶ For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul?

³⁷ For what can a man give in return for his soul?

³⁸ For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of Man also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.”

9 And he said to them,

“Truly, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God after it has come with power.”

² And after six days Jesus took with him Peter and James and John, and led them up a high mountain by themselves.

And he was transfigured before them, ³ and his clothes became radiant, intensely white, as no one^[a] on earth could bleach them.

⁴ And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses, and they were talking with Jesus.

⁵ And Peter said to Jesus,

“Rabbi, it is good that we are here.

Let us make three tents, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah.”

⁶ For he did not know what to say, for they were terrified.

⁷ And a cloud overshadowed them, and a voice came out of the cloud,

“This is my beloved Son; listen to him.”

⁸ And suddenly, looking around, they no longer saw anyone with them but Jesus only.

⁹ And as they were coming down the mountain, he charged them to tell no one what they had seen, until the Son of Man had risen from the dead.

¹⁰ So they kept the matter to themselves, questioning what this rising from the dead might mean.

¹¹ And they asked him,

“Why do the scribes say that first Elijah must come?”

¹² And he said to them,

“Elijah does come first to restore all things.

And how is it written of the Son of Man that he should suffer many things and be treated with contempt?

¹³ But I tell you that Elijah has come, and they did to him whatever they pleased, as it is written of him.”

¹⁴ And when they came to the disciples, they saw a great crowd around them, and scribes arguing with them.

¹⁵ And immediately all the crowd, when they saw him, were greatly amazed and ran up to him and greeted him.

¹⁶ And he asked them,

“What are you arguing about with them?”

¹⁷ And someone from the crowd answered him,

“Teacher, I brought my son to you, for he has a spirit that makes him mute.

¹⁸ And whenever it seizes him, it throws him down, and he foams and grinds his teeth and becomes rigid.

So I asked your disciples to cast it out, and they were not able.”

¹⁹ And he answered them,

“O faithless generation, how long am I to be with you?

How long am I to bear with you?

Bring him to me.”

²⁰ And they brought the boy to him.

And when the spirit saw him, immediately it convulsed the boy, and he fell on the ground and rolled about, foaming at the mouth.

²¹ And Jesus asked his father,

“How long has this been happening to him?”

And he said,

“From childhood.

²² And it has often cast him into fire and into water, to destroy him.

But if you can do anything, have compassion on us and help us.”

²³ And Jesus said to him,

“If you can’!

All things are possible for one who believes.”

²⁴ Immediately the father of the child cried out and said,

“I believe; help my unbelief!”

²⁵ And when Jesus saw that a crowd came running together, he rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it,

“You mute and deaf spirit, I command you, come out of him and never enter him again.”

²⁶ And after crying out and convulsing him terribly, it came out, and the boy was like a corpse, so that most of them said,

“He is dead.”

²⁷ But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he arose.

²⁸ And when he had entered the house, his disciples asked him privately,

“Why could we not cast it out?”

²⁹ And he said to them,
“This kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer.”

³⁰ They went on from there and passed through Galilee.

And he did not want anyone to know, ³¹ for he was teaching his disciples, saying to them,
“The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill him.
And when he is killed, after three days he will rise.”

³² But they did not understand the saying, and were afraid to ask him.

³³ And they came to Capernaum.

And when he was in the house he asked them,
“What were you discussing on the way?”

³⁴ But they kept silent, for on the way they had argued with one another about who was the greatest.

³⁵ And he sat down and called the twelve.

And he said to them,
“If anyone would be first, he must be last of all and servant of all.”

³⁶ And he took a child and put him in the midst of them, and taking him in his arms, he said to them,
³⁷ “Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me, and whoever receives me,
receives not me but him who sent me.”

³⁸ John said to him,
“Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in your name, and we tried to stop him,
because he was not following us.”

³⁹ But Jesus said,
“Do not stop him, for no one who does a mighty work in my name will be able soon afterward to
speak evil of me.

⁴⁰ For the one who is not against us is for us.

⁴¹ For truly, I say to you, whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because you belong to Christ
will by no means lose his reward.

⁴² “Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him if
a great millstone were hung around his neck and he were thrown into the sea.

⁴³ And if your hand causes you to sin, cut it off.

It is better for you to enter life crippled than with two hands to go to hell, to the unquenchable
fire.

⁴⁵ And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off.

It is better for you to enter life lame than with two feet to be thrown into hell.

⁴⁷ And if your eye causes you to sin, tear it out.

It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into hell,

⁴⁸ 'where their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched.'

⁴⁹ For everyone will be salted with fire.

⁵⁰ Salt is good, but if the salt has lost its saltiness, how will you make it salty again?

Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another."

MARK

Lesson 9 | **Entering the Kingdom: Blind People Need their Sight Restored**

When the Pharisees rejected Jesus and the disciples struggled to understand Him, Jesus expanded His ministry to the Gentiles who hear and understand. In the passages we'll study this week and next, Jesus turns His focus from people's ears to their eyes! Lesson 9 begins with Jesus healing a blind man, and Lesson 10 ends with Jesus helping a blind man recover his sight. In between, Jesus engages with people's spiritual blindness. How can blind people enter His kingdom? They need their sight restored.

Begin your study in prayer.

READ THE TEXT

Read the text several times and mark characters and key words/phrases *SO THAT* you grasp what the passage is about.

UNDERSTAND THEIR STORY

Ask questions to understand their story *SO THAT* you understand what the author is communicating to his original audience.

Option 1: Self-Directed Observation Questions

1. **HOW:** Break down the passage into sections to discern *how* Mark has organized it. What are the main sections about?
2. **WHERE:** What locations are mentioned?

3. **WHEN:** What time markers do you see in this text? Do you think they are significant?
4. **WHO:** List the main characters and what you learn about them.
5. **WHAT** is Mark emphasizing? List the KEY WORDS (often repeated words or phrases or ideas) and what you learn about them.
6. **WHAT** questions do you have about the passage? What is unclear?
7. **WHAT** is Mark's main idea in this passage? How would you summarize what he is communicating?

UNDERSTAND THEIR STORY

Option 2: Directed Observation Questions

1. Summarize each section to understand the flow of the narrative.
 - a. Mark 8:22-26
 - b. Mark 8:27-9:1
 - c. Mark 9:2-13
 - d. Mark 9:14-29
 - e. Mark 9:30-50
2. **WHO** are the people in these chapters and **WHAT** do you learn about them?
 - a. The blind man
 - i. How does he come to Jesus? (i.e. How is his community involved in what happens?)
 - ii. How is his sight restored? (i.e. What does Jesus do, and how is this healing different from other healings?)
 1. *Think it through: Many commentators see this healing as symbolic of something that is happening in the story as a whole. What do you think it could symbolize? If you don't have any ideas yet, don't worry! We'll come back to this question!*
 - b. Jesus' disciples as a whole¹⁰
 - i. What do you learn about them in Mark 8:27-28?
 - ii. What do you learn about them in Mark 9:14-28?
 - iii. What do you learn about them in Mark 9:30-36?
 1. *Think it through: If you had to use one word to describe the disciples at this point in Mark's gospel, what would that word be?*

¹⁰ For this question, look at his disciples as a whole. We'll focus on specific disciples in the next question.

- c. Jesus' "inner circle"
 - i. What does Peter understand in Mark 8:27-33, and what does he still not understand?
 - ii. What do Peter, James, and John learn in Mark 9:2-12, and what do they still not understand?
 - iii. What do you learn about John in Mark 9:38?
- d. Jesus
 - i. What do we learn about who He is, and what He will do?¹¹
- e. The father of the boy
 - i. What attitude is he hoping that Jesus has towards him and his son?
 - 1. *Think it through. Is this something the father should hope for? Which two groups of people have already told us that He has this quality in previous lessons?*¹²
 - 2. *Apply it. Do you believe that Jesus has this posture towards you? Why or why not?*
 - ii. How does the father describe his own faith?
 - 1. *Apply it: How does his description of his faith challenge or encourage you?*
 - 2. *Think it through: How does his description of his faith mirror the blind man's healing, and the description of the disciples within this passage?*

¹¹ For this question, record his words about himself in 8:31-33, 9:9-13, and 9:30-31. We'll look at his words for his followers later.

¹² Need a hint? Look back to Lesson #7 (Mark 6:34), and Lesson #8 (Mark 8:2).

3. **WHERE** does the narrative take place? Locate the locations listed on the maps on pages 2 or 3 & note if this is Jewish or Gentile territory.
 - a. **WHERE** does the first healing occur?
 - b. **WHERE** does Jesus travel after healing the blind man?
 - c. **WHERE** is Jesus transfigured?
 - i. *Think it through: Do you think the physical location of the transfiguration is significant? Why or why not?*
 - d. **WHERE** is His final location in this passage?
4. **WHAT** does Mark emphasize in this passage as he records Jesus' teaching about what it means to follow him? Go back and mark each occurrence of this word in the text if you haven't already.
 - a. Life / Soul: What should followers of Jesus realize about their life and their soul?
 - b. Ashamed: Who could potentially be ashamed in this passage, and what (or who) could they be ashamed of?
 - c. Sin / Hell (Unquenchable fire): How would you summarize Jesus' warnings on these topics?
 - i. *Apply it: Which of these warnings is the most convicting or challenging for you today and why?*
5. **HOW** would you summarize Mark's main idea in this passage?
 - a. *Think it through: How does Mark 8:33b fit into this summary?*

CONNECT TO HIS STORY

1. **“And he began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes and be killed, and after three days rise again.”**
As we see in this narrative, Peter immediately rebukes Jesus for this statement, but Jesus insists that this is God’s plan, and that Peter and the other disciples should know this. What texts might Jesus be referring to as he clarifies the disciples’ understanding? Look up the passages below to find out.
 - a. Read Psalm 22:1-2, 6-8, 14-18. As Jesus is dying on the cross, he quotes this Psalm.
 - i. What kind of suffering does David describe when he wrote this psalm?
 - ii. What is the end result of this suffering, according to verses 27-31?
 - b. Read Isaiah 52:13 - 53:12. In this text, Isaiah prophesies about a future “suffering servant”.
 - i. In what ways will this servant suffer?
 - ii. What is the end result of this suffering, according to Isaiah 52:15, 53:5-6, 11-12?
 - d. *Apply it: Choose one phrase or idea that challenges or encourages you today as you think about Jesus’ suffering, and the end result of His suffering for all who believe in Him for salvation! If you are a follower of Jesus, spend some time praising Him for what He has done for you; if you are not yet a follower of Jesus, consider if you are ready to place your trust in the One who has suffered for you!*
2. **“And after six days Jesus took with him Peter and James and John, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. And he was transfigured before them... and there appeared to them Elijah, with Moses.”** After Peter proclaims that Jesus is the Christ, and Jesus foretells that the Son of Man will come in the glory of the Father, a select group of disciples are given the privilege of seeing a glimpse of the glorified Jesus. Why does this happen on a mountain, and why do Moses & Elijah appear with Him? Read the following texts and answer the questions below to find out!
 - a. Read Exodus 19:1-6.
 - i. Where are the Israelites in this text, and what has just happened to them?
 - ii. Who is the leader of the Israelites in this text?

- b. Read Exodus 24:12-18.
 - i. For what purpose does God invite Moses to come up the mountain?
 - ii. For how many days does the cloud cover the mountain before Moses enters it? Do you see this time period in our text in Mark?
 - iii. How does God communicate with Moses in Exodus 24:16? Where do you see similar language in our text in Mark?
- c. Read 1 Kings 19:1-6.
 - i. Who is the main character in this text, and where does he go to meet with God after he flees from Jezebel?¹³
- d. Read Deuteronomy 18:15-19.
 - i. What did Moses say would happen in the future and how were people supposed to respond to this person? Where do you see similar language in our text in Mark?
- e. Read Luke 24:13-27 (which takes place after Jesus has died and been resurrected), and then focus on verse 27.
 - i. How does Jesus describe the Scriptures in this verse, and what did the Scriptures talk about according to Jesus?
- e. *Think it through: How do all these texts help you to understand the significance of Moses and Elijah being with Jesus as He is transfigured? List all the ways their experiences and their words foreshadow the experiences and words of Jesus.*

- 3. **“It is better for you to enter life crippled than with two hands go to hell, to the unquenchable fire... ‘where their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched.’”** As this section ends, Jesus warns people that it is better to experience “corporal” punishment (a limb cut off as per Exodus 21:24-25), than “capital” punishment (death).¹⁴ Here, Jesus is exaggerating to make a point. People will end up in one of two destinations: the kingdom of God or hell (vs 47), and therefore we should be willing to go to extreme efforts to kill sin, before it kills us.¹⁵ Read ahead for some places we see this idea in Scripture.

¹³ Note: Mount Horeb is another name for Mount Sinai: <https://www.gotquestions.org/mount-Horeb.html>

¹⁴ Keener, C.S., (1993). IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament (Mark 9:43-47)

¹⁵ A phrase used by John Owen in his book, *The Mortification of Sin*.

- a. Read Isaiah 66:15-24.
 - i. What event are these verses describing?
 - ii. What is the “end” of all those who have rebelled against the LORD?
 - iii. What is the “end” of all those who follow the LORD?
 - b. Read Matthew 18:7-9.
 - i. What additional word does Jesus use here to describe the fire?
 - c. Matthew 25:41-46.
 - i. How does Jesus describe the eventual ‘end’ of those who don’t enter His kingdom?
 - d. *Apply it: Are you cherishing sin rather than running to Jesus for His forgiveness, grace, and empowerment over sin? Do you need to repent and believe the Gospel? If the LORD is convicting you, please talk to someone! We would be honored to journey with you and pray with and for you.*
4. **“For everyone will be salted with fire. Salt is good, but if the salt has lost its saltiness, how will you make it salty again? Have salt in yourselves and be at peace with one another.”** What is the deal with salt, and why does Jesus say these words? Look up the following verses to find out.
- a. Leviticus 2:13.
 - i. What were people supposed to do with every offering?
 - b. Romans 12:1-2.
 - i. How are we supposed to present ourselves to God?
 - c. 1 Peter 4:12-19.
 - i. What kinds of trials await followers of Jesus?
 - d. *Think it through: How do the ideas of Leviticus 2, Romans 12 and 1 Peter 4 above fit with Jesus’ overall message in this section of text (especially 8:31-38)? What should we expect to experience as His followers?*

REFLECT AND APPLY TO OUR STORY

How did you encounter Jesus this week?

1. What do we learn about who Jesus is, and what He has come to do in this text?
 - a. *Reflect: Jesus calls His followers to follow in His footsteps: to deny themselves, take up their cross, follow Him, lose their lives for His sake, and not be ashamed of Him and His words. How is the Spirit applying these commands to you, as you spend time in God's Word this week?*



Apply to Our Story

ADORATION

In light of this passage/lesson, what can I PRAISE God for?

CONFESSION

In light of this passage/lesson, what do I need to CONFESS or repent of?

SUPPLICATION

In light of this passage/lesson, what can I ASK God for?

MARK

Lesson 10 | **Entering the Kingdom: How can Blind People Recover their Sight?** **Mark 10:1-52**

10 And he left there and went to the region of Judea and beyond the Jordan, and crowds gathered to him again.

And again, as was his custom, he taught them.

² And Pharisees came up and in order to test him asked,

“Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?”

³ He answered them,

“What did Moses command you?”

⁴ They said,

“Moses allowed a man to write a certificate of divorce and to send her away.”

⁵ And Jesus said to them,

“Because of your hardness of heart he wrote you this commandment.

⁶ But from the beginning of creation,

‘God made them male and female.’

⁷ ‘Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife,

⁸ and the two shall become one flesh.’

So they are no longer two but one flesh.

⁹ What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.”

¹⁰ And in the house the disciples asked him again about this matter.

¹¹ And he said to them,

“Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her, ¹² and if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery.”

¹³ And they were bringing children to him that he might touch them, and the disciples rebuked them.

¹⁴ But when Jesus saw it, he was indignant and said to them,

“Let the children come to me; do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God.

¹⁵ Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it.”

¹⁶ And he took them in his arms and blessed them, laying his hands on them.

¹⁷ And as he was setting out on his journey, a man ran up and knelt before him and asked him,

“Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?”

¹⁸ And Jesus said to him,

“Why do you call me good?

No one is good except God alone.

¹⁹ You know the commandments: ‘Do not murder, Do not commit adultery, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Do not defraud, Honor your father and mother.’”

²⁰ And he said to him, “Teacher, all these I have kept from my youth.”

²¹ And Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him,

“You lack one thing: go, sell all that you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.”

²² Disheartened by the saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.

²³ And Jesus looked around and said to his disciples,

“How difficult it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!”

²⁴ And the disciples were amazed at his words.

But Jesus said to them again,

“Children, how difficult it is to enter the kingdom of God!

²⁵ It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God.”

²⁶ And they were exceedingly astonished, and said to him,

“Then who can be saved?”

²⁷ Jesus looked at them and said,

“With man it is impossible, but not with God. For all things are possible with God.”

²⁸ Peter began to say to him,

“See, we have left everything and followed you.”

²⁹ Jesus said,

“Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands, for my sake and for the gospel, ³⁰ who will not receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions, and in the age to come eternal life.

³¹ But many who are first will be last, and the last first.”

³² And they were on the road, going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was walking ahead of them.

And they were amazed, and those who followed were afraid.

And taking the twelve again, he began to tell them what was to happen to him, ³³ saying,

“See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and the scribes, and they will condemn him to death and deliver him over to the Gentiles.

³⁴ And they will mock him and spit on him, and flog him and kill him.

And after three days he will rise.”

³⁵ And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came up to him and said to him,
“Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you.”

³⁶ And he said to them,
“What do you want me to do for you?”

³⁷ And they said to him,
“Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory.”

³⁸ Jesus said to them,
“You do not know what you are asking.
Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or to be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?”

³⁹ And they said to him,
“We are able.”

And Jesus said to them,
“The cup that I drink you will drink, and with the baptism with which I am baptized, you will be baptized, ⁴⁰ but to sit at my right hand or at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared.”

⁴¹ And when the ten heard it, they began to be indignant at James and John.

⁴² And Jesus called them to him and said to them,
“You know that those who are considered rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them.

⁴³ But it shall not be so among you.

But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, ⁴⁴ and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all.

⁴⁵ For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

⁴⁶ And they came to Jericho.

And as he was leaving Jericho with his disciples and a great crowd, Bartimaeus, a blind beggar, the son of Timaeus, was sitting by the roadside.

⁴⁷ And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out and say,
“Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!”

⁴⁸ And many rebuked him, telling him to be silent.

But he cried out all the more,

“Son of David, have mercy on me!”

⁴⁹ And Jesus stopped and said,
“Call him.”

And they called the blind man, saying to him,

“Take heart.

Get up; he is calling you.”

⁵⁰ And throwing off his cloak, he sprang up and came to Jesus.

⁵¹ And Jesus said to him,

“What do you want me to do for you?”

And the blind man said to him,

“Rabbi, let me recover my sight.”

⁵² And Jesus said to him,

“Go your way; your faith has made you well.”

And immediately he recovered his sight and followed him on the way.

MARK

Lesson 10 | **Entering the Kingdom: How can Blind People Recover their Sight?**

This week we encounter Jesus' final teaching before He enters Jerusalem. As we noted in Lesson 9, Jesus' disciples and people whom Jesus encountered did not yet see things clearly or believe Him fully. They were partially blind: setting their minds on the things of man rather than on the things of God (Mark 8:33b). In our text this week, Jesus sounds the warning alarm: "Children, how difficult it is to enter the kingdom of God!" How can blind people recover their sight so that they can enter the kingdom? Read the passage and answer the questions below to find out!

Begin your study in prayer.

READ THE TEXT

Read the text several times and mark characters and key words/phrases *SO THAT* you grasp what the passage is about.

UNDERSTAND THEIR STORY

Ask questions to understand their story *SO THAT* you understand what the author is communicating to his original audience.

Option 1: Self-Directed Observation Questions

1. **HOW:** Break down the passage into sections to discern *how* Mark has organized it. What are the main sections about?
2. **WHERE:** What locations are mentioned?

3. **WHEN:** What time markers do you see in this text? Do you think they are significant?
4. **WHO:** List the main characters and what you learn about them.
5. **WHAT** is Mark emphasizing? List the KEY WORDS (often repeated words or phrases or ideas) and what you learn about them.
6. **WHAT** questions do you have about the passage? What is unclear?
7. **WHAT** is Mark's main idea in this passage? How would you summarize what he is communicating?

UNDERSTAND THEIR STORY

Option 2: Directed Observation Questions

1. Summarize each section to understand the flow of the narrative.
 - a. Mark 10:1-12
 - b. Mark 10:13-16
 - c. Mark 10:17-31
 - d. Mark 10:32-45
 - e. Mark 10:46-52
2. **WHO** are the people in these chapters and **WHAT** do you learn about them?
 - a. The Pharisees
 - i. What is their purpose for approaching Jesus with a question about divorce?
 - ii. What does Jesus reveal about the Pharisees (in particular) and Israel (in general) in His answer?
 - b. The children
 - i. How are the children a model for all people, according to Jesus?
 1. *Think it through: Do you think there is a connection between these two narratives? Why might Mark have placed the verses on Jesus' teaching about the children right after His encounter with the Pharisees in 10:1-12?*
 - c. The rich man
 - i. What question does he ask Jesus?
 - ii. What has he done in the past?
 - iii. What does Jesus ask him to do?
 1. *Think it through: Why do you think Jesus asks him to do this? What issue is Jesus identifying in his life?*

d. Jesus' disciples in general (10:23-32)

- i. What two things astonish and amaze them? What question do they ask in response?

1. *Think it through: Why do you think they are astonished and amazed by Jesus' statement?*¹⁶

- ii. How are they described as they are "on the road"?

e. James and John

- i. What do they ask for? What does this request show that they do not yet understand?

f. Bartimaeus

- i. What name does Bartimaeus use to address Jesus?

1. *Think it through: What does this name reveal about Bartimaeus' knowledge of Jesus? Who does he understand Jesus to be?*

- ii. What does Bartimaeus initially ask for from Jesus?

- iii. What does Bartimaeus eventually ask for and receive from Jesus?

- iv. How is Bartimaeus made well, according to Jesus? What does he do at the end of this passage?

1. *Think it through: Based on the answers to these questions above, list the ways in which Bartimaeus is a "model disciple" in contrast to the other characters in this passage (the Pharisees, the rich man, James, John, and the other disciples).*

¹⁶ If you need a hint, and have studied the Old Testament before with us or in another setting, think: In light of the Mosaic covenant, how did Old Testament believers generally view wealth?

3. **WHERE** does the narrative take place? Locate the locations listed on the maps on pages 2 or 3.
 - a. **WHERE** do the Pharisees approach Jesus?
 - b. **WHERE** is Jesus when approached by the rich man?
 - c. **WHERE** is Jesus walking to?
 - d. **WHERE** does Jesus encounter Bartimaeus?
4. **WHAT** does Mark emphasize in this passage as he records Jesus' teaching about what it means to follow Him? Go back and mark each occurrence of this word in the text if you haven't already.
 - a. Commandments: What do you learn about the commandments in this passage?
 - b. Kingdom of God: Who (what kind of people) will enter it? Who will have difficulty entering?
 - c. Possible and impossible: Who makes entrance to the kingdom possible?
 - d. Great and slave/servant: How is the way of Jesus different from the way of the world (Gentiles)?
 - e. Follow: Who does Jesus invite to follow Him? Who ends up following Him?
 - f. What do you want me to do for you?: Identify both times Jesus asks this question. How do different people answer the question, and how does this tie into the overall message of this text?
5. **HOW** would you summarize Mark's main idea in this passage?

1. *Think it through: How does Mark 10:27 fit into this summary?*

CONNECT TO HIS STORY

1. **“A man ran up and knelt before him and asked him, ‘Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?’ ... And Jesus looked at him, loved him and said to him, ‘You lack one thing; go, sell all that you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.’ Disheartened by the saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.”** In this exchange between the rich man and Jesus, we see Jesus reframe people’s perspective of eternal salvation: one doesn’t inherit eternal life solely by following the commandments (or ‘being a good person’). Look up the text below to see how this idea is developed in another New Testament passage.
 - a. Read Philippians 3:3-11. In this text the Apostle Paul briefly recounts his own spiritual journey.
 - i. What reasons did Paul have for ‘confidence in the flesh’? (i.e. At one time, what external evidence did he point to, to prove that he was righteous, and worthy of eternal life)?
 - ii. What changed when Paul encountered Jesus?
 - iii. How does Paul now view righteousness? How does a person become righteous?
 - iv. According to Paul, how does one ‘attain to the resurrection from the dead’? (Or to use the words of the rich man in Mark 10, ‘inherit eternal life’?)
 - b. *Apply it: Are you able to say, along with Paul, “I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord”? If not, what do you feel is more valuable than knowing Christ Jesus? Pray about your response.*
2. **“And they were exceedingly astonished, and said to him, ‘Then who can be saved?’ Jesus looked at them and said, ‘With man it is impossible, but not with God. For all things are possible with God.’ ”** The idea that all things are possible with God comes up throughout the Old Testament,¹⁷ but here, Jesus applies it to God’s involvement in salvation. Read the following texts to see how this concept is developed in the New Testament.
 - a. 2 Corinthians 4:1-6. In this text, the Apostle Paul describes what makes salvation ‘impossible with man.’
 - i. What is the state of unbelievers according to Paul?

¹⁷ If you’re interested in chasing down this idea, check out Genesis 18:9-15, Job 42:1-6, Daniel 4:28-37, Luke 1:26-38.

ii. How does someone receive 'the light of the knowledge of the glory of God'?

b. Read John 16:4b-8 and 1 Thessalonians 1:5.

i. What is the role of the Holy Spirit in salvation, according to Jesus and Paul?

c. Read Acts 16:11-15.

i. How is Lydia's salvation described here? What happened to her?

d. Read Romans 5:1-5.

i. How is God's love poured into our hearts?

e. *Apply it: If you are a follower of Jesus, praise Him that He has "done the impossible": He has convicted you of sin, and has poured His love into you by the Holy Spirit. Thank Him for opening up your heart, and removing the blinders that kept you from seeing the glory of Jesus. If you are not yet a follower of Jesus, or are praying for those who are not yet followers of Jesus, why not boldly ask that God would do the impossible and save them (or save you!).*

3. " **'Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or to be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?' And they said, 'We are able.'** " What is Jesus talking about when He mentions the "cup" and His "baptism"? Read the texts below and answer the questions to find out.

a. Read Isaiah 51:17-23. In this text, the prophet Isaiah is relaying a message to Israel.

i. A "cup" is mentioned three times in these verses. How is it described and what does it contain?

b. Read Jeremiah 25:15-29.

i. What does 'the cup' symbolize in these verses? What are people experiencing when they drink the cup?

c. Read Psalm 60:1-3.

- i. What does David say that God has done to the people of Israel?

d. Read Psalm 75:1-8.

- i. What does the cup represent in this text?

1. *Think it through: From what you know of Jesus' story, how and when does Jesus 'drink the cup'?*

e. Read Psalm 69:1-15, and focus on verses 2 and 14-15.

- i. What did 'deep waters' signify in these verses?

f. Read Romans 6:1-11.

- i. What does baptism symbolize in these verses? (i.e. What happens when people are baptized?)

- ii. What does coming out of the waters of baptism symbolize?

1. *Apply it: If you have been baptized, think back to your own baptism and your journey with God since that time. If you haven't been baptized, why not?*

2. *Apply it: Are you living as if you are 'dead to sin' or is there a recurring sin or struggle you need to confess to the Lord, to set you free?*

3. *Apply it: Are you living as if you are 'alive to God in Christ Jesus' or do you need to ask the Lord to help you 'walk in newness of life'?*

REFLECT AND APPLY TO OUR STORY

How did you encounter Jesus this week?

1. How does Jesus help people to see their need for Him?

a. *Reflect: If Jesus asked you today, "What do you want me to do for you?" What would you say?*



Apply to Our Story

ADORATION

In light of this passage/lesson, what can I PRAISE God for?

CONFESSION

In light of this passage/lesson, what do I need to CONFESS or repent of?

SUPPLICATION

In light of this passage/lesson, what can I ASK God for?

Prayer Request Log

INTRODUCTION

Name

Prayer Request(s)

[illegible]

LESSON ONE

Name

Prayer Request(s)

[illegible]

LESSON TWO

Name

Prayer Request(s)

[illegible]

[illegible]

Name

Prayer Request(s)

[illegible]

LESSON FIVE

Name

Prayer Request(s)

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LESSON SEVEN

Name

Prayer Request(s)

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LESSON EIGHT

Name

Prayer Request(s)

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LESSON NINE

Name

Prayer Request(s)

[illegible]

LESSON TEN

Name

Prayer Request(s)

[illegible]