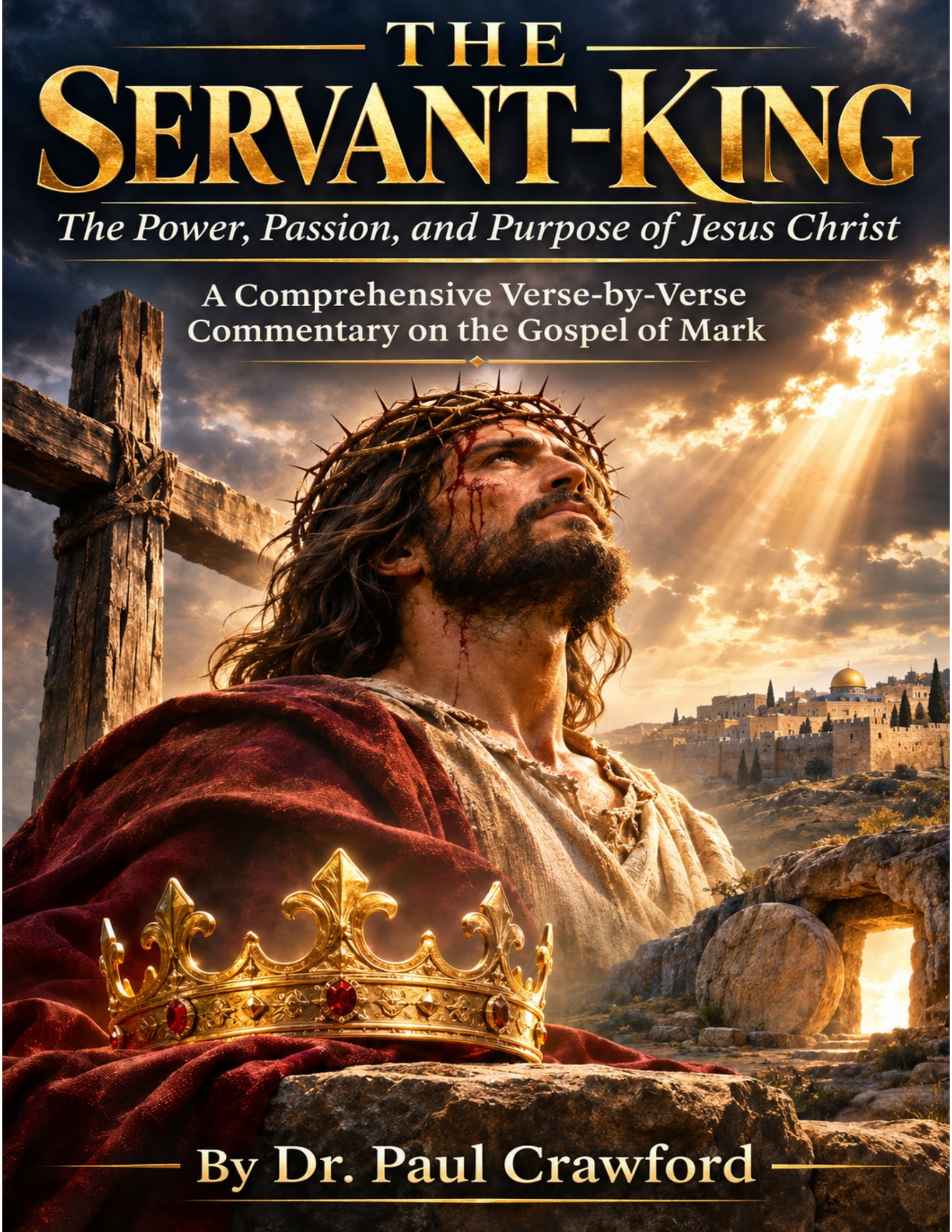
THE SERVANT-KING

The Power, Passion, and Purpose of Jesus Christ

A Comprehensive Verse-by-Verse Commentary on the Gospel of Mark



By Dr. Paul Crawford

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PREFACE

Discovering the Servant-King

The Power, Passion, and Purpose of Jesus Christ

A Comprehensive Verse-by-Verse Commentary on the Gospel of Mark

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The King Who Came to Serve

There is something profoundly extraordinary about a King who possesses all authority yet willingly kneels to serve. There is something almost incomprehensible about the Creator of the universe entering His own creation, not clothed in the splendor of earthly royalty, but wrapped in the humility of human flesh. There is something breathtaking about the eternal Son of God walking dusty roads, touching diseased bodies, embracing forgotten children, feeding hungry multitudes, and ultimately surrendering Himself to the cruelty of a Roman cross.

This is the Jesus Christ revealed in the Gospel of Mark.

He is the Servant-King.

He is the One whose voice silenced raging storms, whose touch restored broken bodies, whose command drove demons into submission, and whose compassion reached those whom society had abandoned. Yet He is also the One who willingly endured betrayal, rejection, humiliation, suffering, and death to accomplish the eternal purpose of redemption.

The Gospel of Mark presents Jesus Christ in a manner that is both powerful and deeply personal. It does not merely introduce us to a religious teacher, a moral philosopher, or an extraordinary miracle worker. It confronts us with the living Son of God, whose authority is absolute, whose compassion is immeasurable, and whose mission was established in the eternal counsel of God.

From its opening declaration to its climactic announcement of the resurrection, Mark's Gospel reveals a Savior who came with a purpose that no human opposition, demonic resistance, religious conspiracy, or Roman execution could ultimately defeat.

The cross was not an interruption of His mission.

The cross was the fulfillment of His mission.

And the empty tomb stands as the eternal declaration that the Servant who suffered is also the King who reigns.

The Gospel That Moves with Purpose

Among the four Gospel accounts, Mark possesses a distinctive urgency. Its narrative moves rapidly from one event to another, presenting the words and works of Jesus with remarkable intensity. The reader is repeatedly carried from the synagogue to the wilderness, from crowded streets to lonely mountains, from desperate human suffering to astonishing demonstrations of divine power.

Mark does not allow us to remain comfortable spectators.

We are brought face-to-face with a Savior who acts.

He teaches with authority.

He confronts religious hypocrisy.

He challenges the self-righteous.

He rebukes unbelief.

He forgives sinners.

He heals the suffering.

He delivers the oppressed.

He calls ordinary men to extraordinary service.

And He continually directs His disciples toward the inevitable reality of His suffering, death, and resurrection.

The Gospel of Mark is not simply a record of what Jesus did. It is a revelation of who Jesus is.

Every miracle demonstrates His authority. Every confrontation exposes the condition of the human heart. Every act of compassion reveals the character of God. Every prediction of His suffering points toward the redemptive purpose for which He entered the world.

The urgency of Mark's writing reminds us that the gospel is not a message designed merely to satisfy intellectual curiosity. It is the announcement of divine truth that demands repentance, faith, obedience, and personal surrender to Jesus Christ.

One cannot properly encounter the Jesus of Mark and remain indifferent to His claims.

The question that confronted the first disciples continues to confront every generation:

Who is Jesus Christ, and what does His identity demand of my life?

The Heart of the Servant-King

If one verse could capture the central message of Mark's Gospel, it would unquestionably be Mark 10:45:

Mark 10:45 — “The Son of Man did not come so others could serve Him. He came to serve and to give His life as the ransom that would rescue many.”

These remarkable words reveal both the character and the mission of Jesus Christ.

He came not to be served, but to serve.

He came not to seek earthly recognition, but to accomplish heavenly redemption.

He came not to establish His kingdom through human ambition, political manipulation, or military conquest, but to demonstrate the power of God through obedience, humility, sacrifice, and ultimately His victory over death.

The One who deserved every crown accepted a crown of thorns.

The One before whom angels worshiped endured the insults of sinful men.

The One who commanded the winds and waves submitted Himself to the Father's redemptive will.

The One who possessed the power to escape the cross willingly remained there to accomplish what fallen humanity could never accomplish for itself.

This is the magnificent paradox of the Servant-King.

His humility did not diminish His deity.

His suffering did not weaken His sovereignty.

His death did not represent defeat.

And His resurrection was not merely an encouraging conclusion to a tragic story.

Rather, His resurrection was the triumphant vindication of His identity and the victorious declaration that sin, death, and the grave could not overcome the eternal Son of God.

The Servant-King came to give His life as a ransom for many, accomplishing a redemption that rests not upon human merit, religious achievement, or personal righteousness, but upon the finished work of Jesus Christ.

Why Another Commentary on Mark?

Throughout the centuries, countless scholars, pastors, theologians, and faithful students of Scripture have devoted themselves to examining the Gospel of Mark. Their contributions have enriched the church's understanding of biblical history, theological truth, and the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ.

It is therefore reasonable to ask why another commentary should be written.

My answer is simple.

The Word of God is inexhaustible, and the church's need to understand it has never diminished.

Every generation must return to Scripture, not to reinvent its message, but to rediscover, proclaim, and faithfully apply the truth that God has already revealed.

We live in a world increasingly characterized by spiritual confusion, religious compromise, moral instability, and competing claims about the identity of Jesus Christ.

Some portray Him merely as an inspiring teacher.

Others reduce Him to a symbol of social reform.

Still others admire His compassion while rejecting His commandments, celebrate His love while ignoring His holiness, or speak of His kingdom while refusing to acknowledge His authority.

But the Jesus of Scripture cannot be selectively reconstructed to accommodate human preferences.

He must be received as He has revealed Himself.

Mark presents a Christ who is loving but never indifferent toward sin, merciful but never separated from truth, humble but never lacking authority, and compassionate but never willing to compromise the righteousness of God.

He is not a Savior who simply endorses humanity's desires.

He is the sovereign Lord who calls sinners to repentance and disciples to complete surrender.

My desire in writing this commentary is to direct readers beyond superficial familiarity with the Gospel accounts and into a deeper, more reverent understanding of the person, work, and authority of Jesus Christ.

I want readers to see the beauty of His compassion without overlooking the seriousness of His commands.

I want them to appreciate the magnitude of His miracles while recognizing that those miracles point beyond themselves to His divine identity.

I want them to understand the suffering of Calvary without losing sight of the eternal purpose accomplished through His sacrifice.

Above all, I want them to encounter the Servant-King as He is presented in the inspired Word of God.

A Commitment to the Authority of Scripture

The foundation of this commentary is the conviction that the Bible is the inspired, authoritative, and trustworthy Word of God.

Scripture is not merely a historical collection of religious experiences or the record of humanity's evolving understanding of the divine. It is God's written revelation, given through human authors under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

As Paul declared:

2 Timothy 3:16 — “All Scripture comes from God and is useful for teaching truth, correcting error, confronting wrong behavior, and training people to live in a way that is right before Him.”

This conviction shapes the entire approach of the present work.

The Gospel of Mark must be examined within its historical setting, grammatical structure, literary context, and theological purpose. Its individual verses must be understood in relation to their immediate passages and the broader revelation of Scripture.

No responsible exposition should force a predetermined interpretation upon the biblical text.

Neither should a commentary replace the meaning of Scripture with personal speculation, theological novelty, or the shifting opinions of contemporary culture.

The responsibility of the biblical expositor is not to make Scripture say something impressive.

It is to faithfully explain what Scripture actually says.

For this reason, this commentary seeks to examine the Gospel of Mark carefully, thoughtfully, and systematically.

Attention will be given to the historical circumstances surrounding the ministry of Jesus, the religious and political environment of first-century Palestine, the meaning of important Greek words, the connections between Mark and the other Gospel accounts, and the doctrinal significance of the events recorded.

Where interpretive difficulties arise, they deserve careful consideration rather than careless dismissal.

Where Christians have historically disagreed over particular passages, those differences should be represented accurately and examined in light of the biblical evidence.

Where textual questions exist, such as the well-known manuscript considerations surrounding Mark 16:9–20, they should be acknowledged with scholarly integrity and treated with appropriate seriousness.

My commitment is not to defend an interpretation merely because it is familiar or popular.

My commitment is to pursue the meaning of God's Word with reverence, consistency, and faithfulness.

The Importance of Verse-by-Verse Exposition

There is a profound difference between reading through Scripture and carefully studying what Scripture communicates.

A casual reading may reveal the general movement of a passage, but patient exposition allows the reader to examine its language, context, doctrinal implications, and practical demands.

A verse-by-verse commentary requires deliberate attention to the details of the biblical text.

It recognizes that even seemingly minor expressions may contribute to the larger theological message.

In Mark, a simple statement concerning the compassion of Jesus can reveal the gracious character of God.

A brief confrontation with the Pharisees can expose the dangers of religious hypocrisy.

A question asked by the disciples can uncover the struggle between faith and unbelief.

A miracle performed in a remote village can demonstrate the unlimited reach of divine authority.

And a single declaration from the cross can direct our attention toward the immeasurable cost of redemption.

These truths must not be rushed past or treated as incidental details.

They deserve our attention because they are part of the inspired record.

Throughout this commentary, each chapter of Mark will be considered in its literary and historical context, with individual verses and closely connected passages examined to illuminate their meaning.

Particular attention will be given to several recurring themes: the deity and humanity of Christ, His authority over creation and the spiritual realm, the nature of the kingdom of God, the necessity of repentance and faith, the demands of discipleship, the reality of spiritual opposition, and the central importance of the cross and resurrection.

The purpose is not simply to accumulate information.

It is to cultivate understanding that leads to faithful Christian living.

The Servant-King and the Sovereignty of God

One of the most remarkable truths revealed in Mark is that the ministry of Jesus unfolded according to the divine purpose of God.

The events surrounding His suffering were not unforeseen circumstances that caught Heaven by surprise.

The rejection of the religious leaders, the betrayal by Judas, the weakness of the disciples, the injustice of His trial, and the cruelty of His crucifixion did not overthrow the sovereignty of God.

Jesus repeatedly foretold His approaching suffering, death, and resurrection.

He understood the mission before Him.

He knew the cost of obedience.

And He willingly continued toward Jerusalem.

The Servant-King was not a helpless victim of human history.

He was the obedient Son fulfilling the redemptive purpose of the Father.

This understanding is essential to a proper interpretation of Mark.

The sovereignty of God is not presented as an abstract doctrine disconnected from the real struggles of human existence. It is demonstrated in the unfolding mission of Christ, whose obedience accomplishes salvation in the midst of opposition, suffering, and death.

The cross reveals both the terrible reality of human sin and the glorious certainty of God's redemptive purpose.

And the resurrection declares that God's purposes cannot ultimately be frustrated by the schemes of men or the powers of darkness.

For believers facing uncertainty, persecution, disappointment, or suffering, this truth provides lasting encouragement.

The same sovereign God who accomplished redemption through the suffering of His Son remains faithful to every promise He has made.

The Call to Genuine Discipleship

A central emphasis of Mark's Gospel is that following Jesus Christ involves far more than religious identification.

It requires personal allegiance to the Savior.

When Jesus called His first disciples, He did not invite them merely to admire His teaching from a distance. He commanded them to follow Him.

When He confronted the rich young ruler, He exposed the man's attachment to earthly possessions.

When the disciples argued over greatness, He taught them that true leadership is expressed through humble service.

When Peter resisted the announcement of the cross, Jesus corrected his misunderstanding of the divine mission.

And when Jesus spoke to the crowds about discipleship, His words were unmistakably direct:

Mark 8:34 — “Jesus said that anyone who wants to follow Him must deny self, take up the cross, and faithfully walk after Him.”

These words remain profoundly relevant.

Christianity cannot be reduced to religious entertainment, cultural tradition, occasional church attendance, or a comfortable profession of faith that produces no evidence of obedience.

To follow Christ is to acknowledge His rightful authority over every dimension of life.

It involves repentance from sin, faith in His saving work, submission to His Word, and a willingness to endure hardship for His name.

This does not mean that human obedience earns salvation. Salvation rests entirely upon the grace of God through Jesus Christ.

Rather, genuine discipleship is the fitting response of those who have been brought into a saving relationship with Him.

The Gospel of Mark continually challenges the assumption that one can embrace the benefits of Christ while rejecting the demands of His lordship.

The Servant-King calls His people not merely to receive His compassion, but also to follow His example.

He calls us to humility in an age of pride.

He calls us to faithfulness in an age of compromise.

He calls us to holiness in an age of moral confusion.

He calls us to service in an age of self-promotion.

And He calls us to proclaim His gospel in a world that desperately needs the truth.

A Word to Pastors, Teachers, and Students of Scripture

This commentary has been written with several groups of readers in mind.

To the pastor who faithfully stands before a congregation and seeks to proclaim the whole counsel of God, I hope these pages will provide useful exposition, theological insight, and practical material for sermon preparation.

To the Bible teacher who desires to guide others into a clearer understanding of Scripture, I hope this work will serve as a dependable companion in the study of Mark.

To the student of theology, I hope it will encourage disciplined interpretation, doctrinal precision, and a deeper appreciation for the unity of biblical revelation.

To the believer who simply desires to know Jesus Christ more intimately, I hope it will make the Gospel of Mark more understandable, meaningful, and personally challenging.

And to anyone who has not yet come to saving faith in Christ, I pray that the biblical truths examined in these pages will direct your attention to the Savior who came to seek and to save the lost.

Nevertheless, I must emphasize an important distinction.

No commentary, regardless of its length or depth, possesses the authority of Scripture itself.

Human explanations are valuable only to the degree that they faithfully communicate the meaning of God's Word.

Readers should therefore approach this work with an open Bible, a prayerful heart, and a willingness to examine every conclusion according to the Scriptures.

My purpose is not to draw attention to the commentator.

It is to direct attention to Christ.

From the Manger to the Cross, and from the Cross to Glory

The earthly ministry of Jesus Christ was characterized by extraordinary contrasts.

He possessed divine authority, yet accepted human limitations.

He was perfectly holy, yet willingly associated with sinners.

He commanded the obedience of demons, yet endured the accusations of religious leaders.

He could multiply bread for thousands, yet experienced physical hunger.

He could still the storm, yet permitted Himself to be arrested.

He could raise the dead, yet willingly entered death Himself.

And though He was mocked as a king, He was in truth the King of kings.

These contrasts are not contradictions.

They are windows into the mystery and majesty of the incarnation.

The eternal Son of God entered human history to accomplish what no prophet, priest, king, philosopher, or religious institution could accomplish.

He came to redeem sinners.

Mark's Gospel moves relentlessly toward this redemptive climax.

The miracles are magnificent, but they are not the final destination.

The teachings are profound, but they do not stand apart from His saving mission.

The confrontations are revealing, but they are not the ultimate purpose of His coming.

Everything points toward the cross.

And beyond the cross stands the empty tomb.

The suffering Servant is the victorious Lord.

The rejected Messiah is the exalted Son.

The crucified King is the risen Savior.

This is the glorious message that gives the Gospel of Mark its enduring significance.

My Prayer for Every Reader

As you begin this journey through the Gospel of Mark, my prayer is that you will approach these pages with more than intellectual curiosity.

I pray that you will approach them with spiritual hunger.

May you see Jesus Christ more clearly than ever before.

May His authority strengthen your confidence in the sovereignty of God.

May His compassion deepen your love for those who are suffering.

May His holiness expose every area of compromise in your own life.

May His humility challenge your pride.

May His obedience inspire your faithfulness.

May His suffering remind you of the immeasurable cost of redemption.

May His resurrection fill your heart with unshakable hope.

And may His call to discipleship move you beyond passive admiration into active obedience.

It is possible to know the stories of Jesus without truly understanding the significance of His person and mission.

It is possible to admire His miracles while resisting His authority.

It is possible to speak of His love while neglecting His commandments.

And it is possible to study the gospel academically without allowing its truths to transform the heart.

My deepest desire is that this commentary will encourage something far greater than familiarity with biblical events.

I pray that it will lead readers toward a more profound knowledge of the living Christ and a deeper commitment to His truth.

For the Gospel of Mark is not ultimately about the accomplishments of ordinary men.

It is about the extraordinary mission of the eternal Son of God.

It is the account of a King who laid aside the outward privileges of earthly royalty to walk among the poor, the suffering, the rejected, and the sinful.

It is the story of a Servant whose every act was governed by perfect obedience to His Father.

It is the revelation of a Savior who willingly gave His life as the ransom for many.

And it is the triumphant proclamation of a Lord who conquered the grave and reigns forevermore.

The world measures greatness by wealth, influence, recognition, and power.

Jesus Christ revealed a greatness that transcends every earthly standard.

He demonstrated that genuine greatness is found in humble service, that perfect obedience is more glorious than human applause, and that the greatest victory in history was accomplished through the willing sacrifice of the Son of God.

He wore a crown of thorns so that the redeemed might receive the crown of life.

He entered the darkness of the cross so that sinners might be brought into the light of salvation.

He humbled Himself in obedience unto death, yet He reigns forever as the exalted Lord.

This is the King revealed in Mark.

This is the Savior proclaimed in Scripture.

This is the Lord who calls us to follow Him.

This is the Servant-King.

May every chapter, every passage, and every verse considered in this commentary serve one supreme purpose: to magnify the glory of Jesus Christ and to encourage faithful obedience to His eternal Word.

To Him alone belong the honor, glory, dominion, and praise, now and forever.

Amen.

Dr. Paul Crawford
Author and Biblical Commentator
Crawford Bible Commentary

Mark 10:45 — “The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve others and to give His life as the price that would set many people free.”

Prologue

There is something striking about the Gospel of Mark.

It does not ease the reader slowly into the story of Jesus Christ. It moves with urgency. It speaks with force. It carries the reader from one scene to the next with a sense that something decisive is happening. Jesus is teaching, healing, confronting, calling, commanding, suffering, serving, and moving steadily toward the cross.

Mark presents Jesus not merely as a teacher to be admired, but as the Son of God who came with authority and purpose.

He commands unclean spirits, and they obey.

He speaks to storms, and the wind becomes still.

He touches the diseased, and they are made whole.

He confronts religious hypocrisy.

He forgives sins.

He calls ordinary people to leave everything and follow Him.

And ultimately, He gives His own life.

That is the great paradox at the heart of Mark’s Gospel: the One who possesses all authority chooses the path of servanthood. The King becomes the servant. The Lord of glory walks among the broken. The One before whom demons tremble kneels in humility before the needs of others. The One with power over death willingly walks toward His own death.

Mark 10:45 captures the heartbeat of the entire Gospel: the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many.

That statement reveals both the identity and the mission of Jesus Christ.

He is the Servant-King.

The Gospel of Mark forces us to confront a question that cannot remain merely academic: **Who is Jesus?**

The disciples wrestled with that question.

The crowds wondered about it.

The religious leaders resisted the answer.

The demons knew exactly who He was.

And eventually Peter declared that Jesus was the Christ.

But Mark does not allow us to stop with the correct title. Knowing who Jesus is demands a response.

If He is truly the Christ, then He must be followed.

If He is truly Lord, then He must be obeyed.

If He is truly the Son of God, then He cannot simply occupy a small corner of our lives.

Jesus calls His followers to deny themselves, take up their cross, and follow Him. That is not the language of comfortable religion. It is the language of surrender.

The Gospel of Mark therefore confronts two kinds of blindness.

There is physical blindness, which Jesus repeatedly demonstrates His power to heal.

But there is also spiritual blindness.

People can witness miracles and still fail to understand.

They can hear truth and still resist it.

They can stand near Jesus and yet misunderstand His mission.

Even the disciples, who walked beside Him, struggled to grasp the meaning of His suffering, death, and resurrection.

That makes Mark especially relevant to the church today.

We live in a time when it is possible to know much about Jesus without truly following Him. It is possible to speak His name while resisting His authority. It is possible to admire His compassion while rejecting His commands. It is possible to celebrate His miracles while ignoring His cross.

Mark will not permit that kind of shallow discipleship.

Again and again, this Gospel brings us face-to-face with the cost of following Christ.

Jesus calls people away from self-preservation and toward surrender.

Away from pride and toward humility.

Away from empty religion and toward genuine faith.

Away from fear and toward trust.

Away from self-rule and toward the kingdom of God.

The cross stands at the center of that call.

From the earliest chapters, Jesus is moving toward Jerusalem. His ministry is not aimless. His death is not an accident. His suffering is not evidence of failure.

It is the mission.

At the cross, the Servant-King gives Himself for sinners.

The innocent One suffers for the guilty.

The righteous One bears what the unrighteous deserve.

The King is mocked.

The Lord is beaten.

The Son of God is crucified.

And yet the story does not end with a sealed tomb.

The resurrection changes everything.

The One who gave His life takes it up again.

Death does not defeat Him.

The grave cannot hold Him.

The Servant who suffered is revealed as the victorious King.

That victory stands behind every page of this commentary.

As we move verse by verse through Mark, our goal is not merely to accumulate information. Biblical knowledge is essential, but knowledge alone is not transformation.

We must hear what the text says.

We must understand what it means.

We must see how it points to Christ.

And then we must ask what obedience requires from us.

Every miracle reveals something about Jesus.

Every confrontation exposes something about the human heart.

Every parable opens a window into the kingdom of God.

Every warning deserves to be taken seriously.

Every promise deserves to be trusted.

Every command demands a response.

This commentary has been written with the conviction that Scripture must be handled carefully, faithfully, and practically. The Word of God was not given merely to satisfy curiosity. It was given to

reveal truth, expose sin, strengthen faith, correct error, equip believers, and lead people into deeper obedience to Christ.

Mark's Gospel is fast-moving, but it should not be read carelessly.

Its brevity does not mean shallowness.

Its simplicity does not mean weakness.

Its urgency does not eliminate depth.

Within these sixteen chapters is a powerful portrait of Jesus Christ that can challenge both the unbeliever and the longtime Christian.

To the unbeliever, Mark asks: **What will you do with Jesus?**

To the believer, Mark asks: **Are you truly following Him?**

To the fearful, Jesus says, trust Me.

To the broken, He offers mercy.

To the proud, He gives warning.

To the weary, He gives hope.

To the sinner, He offers forgiveness.

To the disciple, He gives a cross to carry.

And to all who will hear, He gives the call:

Follow Me.

As you begin this journey through the Gospel of Mark, do not merely study the Servant-King from a distance.

Watch Him.

Listen to Him.

Consider His words.

Observe His compassion.

See His authority.

Stand beneath His cross.

Look into the empty tomb.

And then decide what His life, death, and resurrection demand from yours.

Jesus Christ did not come merely to impress the world.

He came to redeem it.

He did not come merely to gather admirers.

He came to make disciples.

He did not come to be served.

He came to serve.

And He did not come simply to give us an example.

He came to give His life.

This is the Gospel of Mark.

This is the story of the Servant-King.

And this is the call to follow Him.

CRAWFORD BIBLE COMMENTARY

BIBLE STUDY

Mark Chapter 1 — The Beginning of the Gospel

A Verse-by-Verse Bible Study from the Crawford Standard Bible

Introduction

The Gospel of Mark is the shortest of the four Gospels.
It is also the fastest moving.
Mark does not begin with a family tree like Matthew.
He does not begin with the birth of Jesus like Luke.
He jumps right into action.
One of Mark's favorite words is **“immediately.”**
It appears again and again in this chapter.
Jesus is always on the move.
Teaching.

Healing.
Casting out demons.
Calling disciples.
Many early Christian writers say Mark wrote down the preaching of the apostle Peter.
This may be why the Gospel feels so much like an eyewitness report.
Mark shows Jesus as the powerful Son of God who came to serve.
Chapter 1 introduces Jesus with a burst of activity.
John the Baptist prepares the way.
Jesus is baptized, and the Father speaks from heaven.
Jesus is tested in the wilderness.
He begins preaching the kingdom of God.
He calls fishermen to follow Him.
He shows authority over demons and disease.
He rises early to pray.
And He touches a man with leprosy that no one else would touch.
The chapter moves through eight movements:

- The Ministry of John the Baptist (verses 1–8).
- The Baptism and Temptation of Jesus (verses 9–13).
- The Beginning of Jesus' Ministry (verses 14–15).
- The Calling of the First Disciples (verses 16–20).
- Jesus' Authority and Power (verses 21–28).
- Healings at Simon's House (verses 29–34).
- Jesus Prays and Continues Preaching (verses 35–39).
- Jesus Heals a Leper (verses 40–45).

The central truth of Mark 1 is:
Jesus Christ, the beloved Son of God, came announcing the kingdom of God, calling people to repent and believe, and proving His authority over sin, Satan, and sickness with compassion that reaches even the untouchable.

I. THE BEGINNING OF THE GOOD NEWS

Mark 1:1 — Jesus Christ, the Son of God

“This is the beginning of the good news about Jesus Christ, the Son of God.”
Mark's first sentence is like a title for the whole book.
“This is the beginning.”
These words remind us of Genesis 1:1.
God is beginning something new.
“Of the good news.”
The word **gospel** means good news.
It was used for announcements of victory or the birth of a king.
“About Jesus Christ.”
Jesus means “The Lord saves.”
Christ means “the Anointed One,” the promised Messiah.
“The Son of God.”
From the very first verse, Mark tells us who Jesus is.
He is not just a teacher or prophet.
He is the Son of God.

Cross References

Genesis 1:1
At the very start, God made the heavens and the earth.
John 1:1
Before anything else existed, the Word was already there. The Word was with God, and the Word was God.
Matthew 1:1
This is the family record of Jesus the Messiah, who came from the family line of David and Abraham.

Spiritual Principle

The good news is not first about what we do, but about who Jesus is.

Key Truth

The gospel begins and ends with Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

II. MY MESSENGER AHEAD OF YOU

Mark 1:2 — The Prophets Foretold It

“As it is written by the prophets: “Behold, I send My messenger ahead of You, who will prepare Your way.””
Mark shows that Jesus' coming was not an accident.
God had planned it long before.
“As it is written by the prophets.”
Mark quotes Malachi, the last prophet of the Old Testament.
“I send My messenger ahead of You.”
God promised to send a messenger before the Lord came.
That messenger was John the Baptist.
“Who will prepare Your way.”
In ancient times, a messenger went ahead of a king to prepare the road.
John would prepare people's hearts for Jesus.

Cross References

Malachi 3:1
The Lord who rules over all says, “Look, I am sending My messenger to clear the road ahead of Me. Then the Lord you are looking for will suddenly come to His temple.”
Matthew 11:10
Jesus said, “John is the one the Scriptures speak about: ‘I am sending My messenger ahead of You to prepare the road for You.’”
Luke 7:27
John is the man the Scriptures had in mind when they said God would send His messenger ahead to get the way ready.

Spiritual Principle

God always keeps His promises, even when they take centuries.

Key Truth

The coming of Jesus was planned by God and announced long before.

III. A VOICE IN THE WILDERNESS

Mark 1:3 — Prepare the Way of the Lord

“A voice of one calling out in the wilderness: “Prepare the way of the Lord, make His paths straight.””
Mark now quotes Isaiah.
“A voice of one calling out in the wilderness.”
John was only a voice.
He did not point to himself.
He pointed to the One coming after him.
“Prepare the way of the Lord.”
The word **Lord** in Isaiah refers to God Himself.
Mark applies it to Jesus.
This is a strong statement that Jesus is the Lord.
“Make His paths straight.”
Crooked roads were straightened for a king's arrival.
People needed to straighten out their lives through repentance.

Cross References

Isaiah 40:3
> A voice is shouting, “Get a road ready in the desert for the Lord. Make a straight highway through the dry land for our God.”

Matthew 3:3
> Isaiah the prophet was speaking about John when he wrote of someone shouting in the desert, “Clear a way for the Lord. Make the road straight for Him.”

Luke 3:4
> It happened just as Isaiah the prophet had written: “Someone is calling out in the wilderness, ‘Get the road ready for the Lord. Straighten out His paths.’”

Spiritual Principle

God calls His people to prepare their hearts for Jesus.

Application

Is there anything crooked in your life that needs to be made straight?

IV. JOHN APPEARED

Mark 1:4 — A Baptism of Repentance

“John appeared in the wilderness, baptizing and preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.”
“John appeared in the wilderness.”

After four hundred years of prophetic silence, God's messenger appeared.
Not in the temple.
Not in a palace.
In the wilderness.
“Baptizing and preaching a baptism of repentance.”
Repentance means turning around.
Turning from sin and turning toward God.
John's baptism was an outward sign of that inner change.
“For the forgiveness of sins.”
People needed forgiveness.
John prepared them to receive it from the One who was coming.

Cross References

Matthew 3:1
> In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the desert of Judea.

Luke 3:3
> John went all through the area around the Jordan River, preaching that people should be baptized to show they had turned from their sins, so they could be forgiven.

Acts 19:4
> Paul said, “John's baptism showed that people had changed their hearts. He told them to believe in the One who would come after him, that is, Jesus.”

Spiritual Principle

The way to Jesus begins with turning from sin.

Key Truth

Repentance is not just feeling sorry; it is turning around.

V. CONFESSING THEIR SINS

Mark 1:5 — Crowds from Judea and Jerusalem

“People from all over Judea and Jerusalem went out to him. They confessed their sins and were baptized by him in the Jordan River.”
“People from all over Judea and Jerusalem went out to him.”
Huge crowds came.
They walked miles into the wilderness to hear him.
God was stirring hearts.
“They confessed their sins.”
They openly admitted their wrongdoing.
Confession is the honest first step of repentance.
“And were baptized by him in the Jordan River.”
The Jordan was the river Israel crossed to enter the promised land.
Now God's people stood at the Jordan again, preparing for something new.

Cross References

Matthew 3:5
People came to him from Jerusalem, all of Judea, and the whole area around the Jordan River.
Luke 3:7
Crowds kept coming out to be baptized by John.
Acts 19:18
Many of those who believed came forward and openly admitted the evil things they had done.

Spiritual Principle

Honest confession opens the door to forgiveness.

Application

Is there a sin you need to confess honestly to God?

VI. CAMEL'S HAIR AND LOCUSTS

Mark 1:6 — John's Simple Life

“John wore clothes made of camel's hair with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey.”
John looked and lived like a prophet.
“Clothes made of camel's hair with a leather belt.”
This was the same kind of clothing Elijah wore.
John came in the spirit and power of Elijah.
“He ate locusts and wild honey.”
Locusts were a food allowed by the law.
This was the simple food of the desert.
John did not live for comfort.
His simple life matched his serious message.

Cross References

2 Kings 1:8
They answered, “He was a man wearing a hairy coat with a leather belt around his waist.” The king said, “That was Elijah from Tishbe.”
Matthew 3:4
John's clothes were made of camel hair, and he wore a leather belt. He ate locusts and honey from the wild.
Zechariah 13:4
On that day false prophets will be ashamed of their visions. They will not wear a prophet's hairy coat to fool people.

Spiritual Principle

A life of simplicity can make a message more powerful.

Key Truth

John's life said the same thing his words said: get ready for the King.

VII. ONE MORE POWERFUL

Mark 1:7 — Not Worthy to Untie His Sandals

“He preached, “After me comes one more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie.”
“After me comes one more powerful than I.”
John was famous.
Crowds followed him.
But he pointed away from himself.
“Whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie.”
Untying sandals was the job of the lowest servant.
John said he was not worthy even to do that for Jesus.
This is true humility.

Cross References

Matthew 3:11
The One coming after me is greater than I am. I am not good enough even to carry His sandals.
Luke 3:16
John told them all, “Someone is coming who is much stronger than I am. I am not good enough to untie the straps of His sandals.”
John 1:27
He is the One who comes after me, and I do not even deserve to untie His sandals.

Spiritual Principle

True servants of God point people to Jesus, not to themselves.

Application

Does your life point people to Jesus or to yourself?

VIII. BAPTIZED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT

Mark 1:8 — Water and Spirit

“I baptize you with water, but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.””
“I baptize you with water.”
John's baptism was an outward sign.
It could wash the body, but not change the heart.
“But He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”
Jesus would do something John could never do.
He would give the Holy Spirit.
The Spirit would live within His people.
The Spirit would cleanse, change, and empower them from the inside.
This promise was fulfilled at Pentecost and continues for all who believe.

Cross References

Matthew 3:11
I baptize you with water to show you have changed your hearts. But He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.
Luke 3:16
I use water to baptize you, but the One coming will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.
Acts 1:5
John baptized people with water, but in just a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.

Spiritual Principle

Only Jesus can change the heart by giving the Holy Spirit.

Key Truth

Outward religion can wash the outside, but only Christ can make us new inside.

IX. JESUS COMES TO BE BAPTIZED

Mark 1:9 — From Nazareth to the Jordan

“At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan.”
Now Jesus Himself steps onto the scene.
“Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee.”
Nazareth was a small, unimportant village.
Jesus grew up there in a humble home.
“And was baptized by John in the Jordan.”
Why would the sinless Son of God be baptized?
He had no sins to confess.
Jesus was identifying with sinners.
He stood in line with the people He came to save.
He was also showing His obedience to the Father and beginning His public ministry.

Cross References

Matthew 3:13
Then Jesus traveled from Galilee to the Jordan River so John could baptize Him.
Luke 3:21
When all the people were being baptized, Jesus was baptized too. While He was praying, the sky opened.
John 1:32
John told about it: “I saw the Spirit come down from heaven like a dove and stay on Him.”

Spiritual Principle

Jesus humbly took His place beside the sinners He came to save.

Key Truth

The sinless One stood in the river with sinners so that sinners could one day stand with God.

X. HEAVEN OPENED

Mark 1:10 — The Spirit Like a Dove

“As Jesus came up out of the water, He saw heaven opened, and the Spirit descending on Him like a dove.”
“As Jesus came up out of the water.”
Mark again moves quickly.
“He saw heaven opened.”
The word Mark uses means **torn open**.
It is the same word used when the temple curtain was torn at Jesus' death.
God was breaking into human history.
“And the Spirit descending on Him like a dove.”
The Holy Spirit came upon Jesus.
He was anointed for His ministry.
The dove is a picture of gentleness and peace.

Cross References

Matthew 3:16
As soon as Jesus was baptized, He came up out of the water. At that moment heaven opened, and He saw God's Spirit coming down like a dove and landing on Him.
Luke 3:22
The Holy Spirit came down on Him in a form that looked like a dove.
John 1:32
John said, “I watched the Spirit come down out of heaven like a dove and rest on Him.”

Spiritual Principle

Jesus was anointed by the Holy Spirit for His mission.

Key Truth

In Jesus, heaven has been opened to us.

XI. MY BELOVED SON

Mark 1:11 — The Father's Voice

“A voice came from heaven: “You are My beloved Son; with You I am well pleased.””
Here we see the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit together.
The Son is baptized.
The Spirit descends.
The Father speaks.
“You are My beloved Son.”
The Father declares who Jesus is.
He is the Son, deeply loved.
“With You I am well pleased.”
Jesus had not yet preached a sermon or done a miracle.

Yet the Father was already pleased with Him.
His relationship with the Father came before His work.

Cross References

Matthew 3:17
Then a voice from heaven said, “This is My Son, and I love Him. I am very pleased with Him.”
Luke 3:22
A voice came from heaven: “You are My Son, whom I love. I am very happy with You.”
Psalm 2:7
I will tell what the Lord has decided. He said to me, “You are My Son. Today I have become Your Father.”

Spiritual Principle

Jesus is the beloved Son of God, fully approved by the Father.

Key Truth

In Christ, believers share in the Father's love and approval.

XII. DRIVEN INTO THE WILDERNESS

Mark 1:12 — Immediately

“Immediately the Spirit drove Him into the wilderness.”
“Immediately.”
Right after the high point of His baptism, Jesus was led into testing.
“The Spirit drove Him.”
The word is strong.
The Spirit sent Him out with purpose.
This was not an accident.
It was part of God's plan.
“Into the wilderness.”
The wilderness was a place of danger and loneliness.
Israel had been tested in the wilderness for forty years and often failed.
Jesus would be tested there too.

Cross References

Matthew 4:1
After that, the Spirit led Jesus into the desert to be tempted by the devil.
Luke 4:1
Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, came back from the Jordan River. The Spirit led Him into the desert.
Hebrews 2:18
Because Jesus Himself suffered when He was tempted, He is able to help those who are being tempted now.

Spiritual Principle

Times of great blessing are often followed by times of testing.

Application

Are you ready for testing after a spiritual high point?

XIII. FORTY DAYS OF TESTING

Mark 1:13 — Tempted, Yet Cared For

“He was there forty days, being tempted by Satan. He was with the wild animals, and angels attended Him.”
“He was there forty days.”
This recalls Israel's forty years in the wilderness.
It also recalls Moses and Elijah, who each spent forty days with God.
“Being tempted by Satan.”
Satan tried to turn Jesus away from the Father's plan.
Where Adam fell and Israel failed, Jesus stood firm.
“He was with the wild animals.”
Only Mark mentions this detail.
It shows how alone and exposed Jesus was.
“And angels attended Him.”
Yet God cared for Him.
Angels served Him.
God never abandoned His Son in the wilderness.

Cross References

Matthew 4:11
Then the devil went away, and angels came and took care of Jesus.
Luke 4:13
After the devil had finished every kind of temptation, he left Jesus until another time.
Hebrews 4:15
Jesus, our High Priest, knows how weak we are. He faced every kind of temptation we face, but He never once gave in to sin.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus faced temptation and won, so He can help us when we are tempted.

Key Truth

Even in the wilderness, God sends help to His own.

XIV. JESUS GOES TO GALILEE

Mark 1:14 — Preaching the Good News of God

“After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, preaching the good news of God.”
“After John was put in prison.”
John had boldly spoken against King Herod's sin.
For that, he was arrested.

The messenger's work was ending.
“Jesus went into Galilee.”
Jesus began His main ministry in the region where He grew up.
“Preaching the good news of God.”
This was the center of Jesus' work.
He came to announce good news.
The good news comes from God and is about what God is doing.

Cross References

Matthew 4:12
When Jesus heard that John had been arrested, He went back to Galilee.
Luke 4:14
Jesus went back to Galilee with the power of the Holy Spirit, and news about Him spread through the whole area.
John 4:43
Two days later, Jesus left there and went to Galilee.

Spiritual Principle

God's work continues even when His servants suffer.

Key Truth

John's voice was silenced, but the good news only grew louder.

XV. REPENT AND BELIEVE

Mark 1:15 — The Kingdom Is Near

“He said, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!””
This verse sums up the message of Jesus.
“The time is fulfilled.”
The moment God had been planning had arrived.
All of history had been leading to this.
“The kingdom of God is near.”
God's reign was breaking into the world through Jesus.
The King Himself had come.
“Repent.”
Turn from sin.
“And believe the good news!”
Trust in what God is doing through Jesus.
Repentance and faith always go together.
We turn from sin and turn to Christ.

Cross References

Matthew 4:17
From that time Jesus began to preach, “Turn away from your sins, because the kingdom of heaven is almost here.”

Luke 4:43
Jesus said, “I must tell the good news about God's kingdom in other towns too. That is the reason God sent Me.”
Galatians 4:4
When the right time came, God sent His Son. He was born to a woman and lived under the law.

Spiritual Principle

The right response to Jesus is to repent and believe.

Application

Have you turned from sin and put your trust in Jesus?

XVI. BY THE SEA OF GALILEE

Mark 1:16 — Simon and Andrew

“As Jesus walked beside the Sea of Galilee, He saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net, for they were fishermen.”
“As Jesus walked beside the Sea of Galilee.”
Jesus went to an ordinary place.
The lakeshore was where people worked.
“He saw Simon and his brother Andrew.”
Jesus noticed them.
He knew exactly who He was calling.
Simon would later be called Peter.
“Casting a net, for they were fishermen.”
They were ordinary working men.
Not scholars.
Not religious leaders.
Jesus calls ordinary people.

Cross References

Matthew 4:18
While Jesus was walking along the Sea of Galilee, He saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew, throwing a net into the lake. They were fishermen.
Luke 5:2
He saw two boats at the edge of the lake. The fishermen had left them and were washing their nets.
John 1:40
Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was one of the two who heard what John said and followed Jesus.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus finds and calls people in the middle of ordinary life.

Key Truth

You do not have to be important to be called by Jesus.

XVII. FISHERS OF MEN

Mark 1:17 — Come, Follow Me

“Jesus said, “Come, follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.””
“Come, follow Me.”
Jesus did not invite them to follow a set of rules.
He invited them to follow Him.
Christianity is first a relationship with a Person.
“And I will make you.”
Jesus would do the shaping.
They would not change themselves.
He would make them into something new.
“Fishers of men.”
Jesus used their old skills in a new way.
They had caught fish.
Now they would bring people to God.

Cross References

Matthew 4:19
Jesus told them, “Come with Me, and I will teach you to bring in people instead of fish.”
Luke 5:10
Jesus said to Simon, “Do not be afraid. From now on you will be catching people.”
Jeremiah 16:16
The Lord says, “I will send for many fishermen, and they will catch them.”

Spiritual Principle

Jesus calls us to follow Him and then makes us into people who bring others to Him.

Application

Who could you help bring to Jesus?

XVIII. THEY LEFT THEIR NETS

Mark 1:18 — Immediate Obedience

“Immediately they left their nets and followed Him.”
“Immediately.”
They did not delay.
They did not make excuses.
“They left their nets.”
Their nets were their business.
Their income.
Their security.
They left them behind.
“And followed Him.”

Following Jesus meant leaving something.
It still does.

Cross References

Matthew 4:20
Right away they left their nets and went with Him.
Luke 5:11
They pulled their boats up on the shore, left everything, and followed Jesus.
Matthew 19:27
Peter answered, “Look, we have left everything to follow You. What will we get?”

Spiritual Principle

Following Jesus calls for immediate and wholehearted obedience.

Application

What “nets” might Jesus be asking you to leave behind?

XIX. JAMES AND JOHN

Mark 1:19 — Mending Their Nets

“Going a little farther, He saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John in a boat, mending their nets.”
“Going a little farther.”
Jesus kept looking for those He would call.
“He saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John.”
Another pair of brothers.
They would become close followers of Jesus.
Along with Peter, they would form His inner circle.
“In a boat, mending their nets.”
They were working hard, repairing what was torn.
Jesus would one day use them to help repair broken lives.

Cross References

Matthew 4:21
Going on from there, Jesus saw two other brothers, James and John, sons of Zebedee. They were in a boat with their father, fixing their nets.
Luke 5:10
James and John, Zebedee's sons, who worked together with Simon, were amazed too.
Matthew 20:20
Then the mother of Zebedee's sons came to Jesus with her sons. She bowed down and asked Him for something.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus calls people who are faithful in their ordinary work.

Key Truth

Faithfulness in small things often comes before a bigger calling.

XX. THEY LEFT THEIR FATHER

Mark 1:20 — Without Delay

“Without delay He called them, and they left their father Zebedee with the hired men and followed Him.”
“Without delay He called them.”
Jesus called them right away.
“They left their father Zebedee with the hired men.”
Mark mentions the hired men.
This shows the family business was doing well.
James and John were not leaving poverty behind.
They were leaving a good, stable life.
Their father was not left alone; he had workers to help him.
“And followed Him.”
Jesus was worth more than family business and comfort.

Cross References

Matthew 4:22
Right away they left the boat and their father and went with Jesus.
Luke 5:11
After they brought their boats to land, they left everything behind and went with Jesus.
Luke 18:29
Jesus said, “I promise you, anyone who has left home, wife, brothers, parents, or children for God's kingdom will receive much more.”

Spiritual Principle

Jesus is worthy of first place, above even the closest relationships.

Key Truth

No one who follows Jesus ever loses more than they gain.

XXI. IN THE SYNAGOGUE AT CAPERNAUM

Mark 1:21 — Teaching on the Sabbath

“They went to Capernaum, and on the Sabbath Jesus entered the synagogue and taught.”
“They went to Capernaum.”
Capernaum was a fishing town on the Sea of Galilee.
It became Jesus' home base during His ministry.
“On the Sabbath Jesus entered the synagogue.”

Jesus faithfully attended worship.
The synagogue was where Jews gathered to hear God's word.
“And taught.”
Visiting teachers were often invited to speak.
Jesus used the opportunity to teach God's truth.

Cross References

Matthew 4:13
He left Nazareth and went to live in Capernaum, a town by the lake in the area of Zebulun and Naphtali.
Luke 4:31
Then He went down to Capernaum, a town in Galilee, and taught the people on the Sabbath.
Luke 4:16
Jesus went to Nazareth, where He had grown up. On the Sabbath day He went to the synagogue as He always did.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus valued regular worship and the teaching of God's word.

Application

Do you make worship and hearing God's word a regular habit?

XXII. HE TAUGHT WITH AUTHORITY

Mark 1:22 — Not Like the Scribes

“The people were amazed, because He taught with authority, not like the scribes.”
“The people were amazed.”
They had never heard anyone teach like this.
“Because He taught with authority.”
Jesus did not need to quote other teachers.
He spoke as One who had the right to speak for God.
“Not like the scribes.”
The scribes were experts in the law.
They usually supported their teaching by quoting famous rabbis.
Jesus spoke with His own authority.
He did not just explain God's word.
He spoke as the Word Himself.

Cross References

Matthew 7:28
When Jesus finished speaking, the crowds were amazed at His teaching.
Matthew 7:29
He taught as One who had real authority, not like their teachers of the law.
Luke 4:32
They were amazed at His teaching, because His words carried authority.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus speaks with the full authority of God.

Key Truth

When Jesus speaks, it is not one opinion among many; it is the final word.

XXIII. AN UNCLEAN SPIRIT

Mark 1:23 — In the Synagogue

“Suddenly a man with an unclean spirit was in the synagogue. He cried out,”
“Suddenly.”
In the middle of worship, something shocking happened.
“A man with an unclean spirit was in the synagogue.”
An **unclean spirit** is a demon, an evil spirit opposed to God.
It is surprising that this man was in the place of worship.
Evil can hide even in religious places.
“He cried out.”
The presence of Jesus exposed the darkness.
The demon could not stay quiet.

Cross References

Luke 4:33
In the synagogue there was a man who had an evil spirit in him, and he shouted with a loud voice.
Mark 5:2
When Jesus got out of the boat, a man with an evil spirit came out of the graveyard to meet Him.
Acts 19:15
The evil spirit answered them, “I know Jesus, and I know about Paul, but who are you?”

Spiritual Principle

The presence of Jesus exposes the powers of darkness.

Key Truth

Darkness cannot stay hidden when the Light walks in.

XXIV. THE HOLY ONE OF GOD

Mark 1:24 — The Demon Knows

““Leave us alone! What do You want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have You come to destroy us? I know who You are—the Holy One of God!””
“Leave us alone!”
The demon wanted nothing to do with Jesus.
“What do You want with us, Jesus of Nazareth?”
Notice the word **“us.”**
The demon spoke for the forces of evil.

“Have You come to destroy us?”
The demons knew Jesus had come to defeat them.
“I know who You are—the Holy One of God!”
The demon recognized Jesus.
It knew Jesus was pure, holy, and sent from God.
But knowing who Jesus is is not the same as trusting Him.

Cross References

Luke 4:34
> “What do You want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Did You come to wipe us out? I know who You are. You are God's Holy One!”

John 6:69
> We believe, and we know, that You are the Holy One sent from God.

Psalm 16:10
> You will not leave me in the grave, and You will not let Your holy one rot away.

Spiritual Principle

Even demons recognize Jesus, but true faith goes beyond knowing to trusting.

Spiritual Warning

It is possible to know facts about Jesus without knowing Him as Lord.

XXV. BE QUIET AND COME OUT

Mark 1:25 — Jesus Rebukes the Spirit

“Jesus rebuked him: “Be quiet and come out of him!””
“Jesus rebuked him.”
Jesus did not argue with the demon.
He did not use rituals or long prayers.
“Be quiet.”
Jesus did not want testimony from demons.
He would reveal who He was in His own way and time.
“And come out of him!”
With a simple command, Jesus took charge.
His word alone was enough.

Cross References

Luke 4:35
> Jesus ordered the evil spirit, “Stop talking and get out of him!”

Mark 9:25
> Jesus spoke firmly to the evil spirit: “You spirit that makes him unable to hear or speak, I command you to come out of him and never go back in.”

Zechariah 3:2
> The Lord said to Satan, “May the Lord scold you, Satan!”

Spiritual Principle

The word of Jesus has full authority over the powers of evil.

Key Truth

Jesus does not negotiate with darkness; He commands it.

XXVI. THE DEMON CAME OUT

Mark 1:26 — With a Loud Cry

“The demon shook the man violently and came out of him with a loud cry.”
“The demon shook the man violently.”
The evil spirit did harm on its way out.
Evil always seeks to hurt.
“And came out of him with a loud cry.”
But it had to obey.
It could not resist Jesus.
The man was set free.

Cross References

Luke 4:35
The demon threw the man down in front of everyone and came out of him without hurting him.
Mark 9:26
The spirit screamed, shook the boy violently, and came out.
Acts 8:7
Evil spirits came out of many people with loud shouts.

Spiritual Principle

Evil may struggle, but it must give way to Jesus.

Key Truth

Jesus came to set captives free.

XXVII. A NEW TEACHING WITH AUTHORITY

Mark 1:27 — Everyone Was Astonished

“Everyone was astonished and asked, “What is this? A new teaching—with authority! He even commands unclean spirits, and they obey Him!””
“Everyone was astonished.”
The people were stunned.
“What is this? A new teaching—with authority!”
His words and His actions matched.
He taught with authority, and He acted with authority.

“He even commands unclean spirits, and they obey Him!”
Others tried to drive out demons with long rituals.
Jesus only spoke, and they obeyed.
This was something completely new.

Cross References

Luke 4:36
Everyone was amazed. They said to each other, “What kind of word is this? With authority and power He orders evil spirits out, and they leave!”
Matthew 7:29
He taught them like someone with authority, not like their teachers of the law.
Acts 19:12
Even handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched Paul were taken to the sick, and their sicknesses were healed and evil spirits left them.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus' teaching is proven by His power.

Key Truth

Jesus does not only tell us the truth; He has the power to set us free.

XXVIII. NEWS SPREAD QUICKLY

Mark 1:28 — Throughout Galilee

“News about Him spread quickly through all of Galilee.”
What happened in one synagogue was soon known everywhere.
People talked about Jesus in every town.
When Jesus works, people cannot stay silent.

Cross References

Luke 4:37
And the news about Jesus spread to every place in the whole area.
Matthew 4:24
News about Jesus spread all through Syria, and people brought Him everyone who was sick.
Luke 7:17
This news about Jesus spread through all of Judea and the surrounding areas.

Spiritual Principle

What Jesus does is worth telling.

Application

Who have you told about what Jesus has done for you?

XXIX. TO SIMON AND ANDREW'S HOUSE

Mark 1:29 — From the Synagogue to the Home

“After leaving the synagogue, they went with James and John to Simon and Andrew's house.”
Jesus moved from public worship to a private home.
The same Lord who worked in the synagogue also cared about what happened at home.
Simon and Andrew opened their house to Jesus.
Their home became a place of ministry.

Cross References

Matthew 8:14
When Jesus went into Peter's house, He saw Peter's mother-in-law lying in bed with a fever.
Luke 4:38
Jesus left the synagogue and went to Simon's house.
Matthew 4:18
While Jesus was walking by the Sea of Galilee, He saw Simon, called Peter, and his brother Andrew.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus cares about our homes as much as our places of worship.

Application

Is your home open to Jesus and His work?

XXX. A FEVER

Mark 1:30 — They Told Jesus

“Simon's mother-in-law was in bed with a fever, and they told Jesus about her.”
“Simon's mother-in-law.”
This tells us Peter was married.
“Was in bed with a fever.”
In those days, a fever could be serious and even deadly.
“And they told Jesus about her.”
This is a simple picture of prayer.
They brought the need to Jesus.

Cross References

Matthew 8:14
Jesus came into Peter's home and found Peter's mother-in-law in bed, sick with a fever.
Luke 4:38
Simon's mother-in-law was very sick with a high fever, and they asked Jesus to help her.
1 Corinthians 9:5
Do we not have the right to bring a believing wife with us, as the other apostles and the Lord's brothers and Peter do?

Spiritual Principle

We should bring the needs of others to Jesus.

Application

Who can you bring to Jesus in prayer today?

XXXI. SHE BEGAN TO SERVE

Mark 1:31 — Lifted Up

“He took her by the hand, helped her up, and immediately the fever left her. She began to serve them.”
“He took her by the hand.”
Jesus touched her.
His healing was personal and tender.
“Helped her up.”
He lifted her.
“And immediately the fever left her.”
The healing was instant and complete.
Normally a person needs days to recover from a fever.
She was fully well at once.
“She began to serve them.”
Her first response was to serve.
Those whom Jesus lifts up are lifted up to serve.

Cross References

Matthew 8:15
Jesus touched her hand, and the fever went away. She got up and started to serve Him.
Luke 4:39
He stood over her and ordered the fever to leave, and it did. She got up right away and began serving them.
John 12:2
They gave a dinner for Jesus there. Martha served the food.

Spiritual Principle

Those who are touched by Jesus respond by serving.

Key Truth

Grace received becomes grace that serves.

XXXII. AFTER SUNSET

Mark 1:32 — Bringing the Sick

“That evening, after sunset, the people brought to Jesus all the sick and demon-possessed.”
“That evening, after sunset.”

Why wait until sunset?
The Sabbath ended at sunset.
Then people were free to carry the sick.
“The people brought to Jesus all the sick and demon-possessed.”
News had spread.
People brought everyone who needed help.

Cross References

Matthew 8:16
That evening people brought to Jesus many who had demons. With just a word He drove out the spirits and healed all who were sick.
Luke 4:40
When the sun was going down, people brought their sick friends and family to Jesus. He put His hands on each one and healed them.
Matthew 4:24
People brought Him all who were sick with all kinds of diseases and pain, those with demons, those with seizures, and those who could not move, and He healed them.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus welcomes all who come to Him in need.

Key Truth

No one was too sick or too troubled to be brought to Jesus.

XXXIII. THE WHOLE TOWN

Mark 1:33 — At the Door

“The whole town gathered at the door.”
This is a vivid detail, likely from Peter's own memory.
The whole town crowded around his front door.
Everyone wanted to see Jesus.
Need had drawn them.
Hope had brought them.

Cross References

Luke 4:40
As the sun set, everyone who had sick people brought them to Jesus.
Matthew 8:16
When evening came, many people with demons were brought to Him.
Mark 2:2
So many people gathered that there was no room left, not even outside the door. Jesus was teaching them God's message.

Spiritual Principle

Where Jesus is, people in need will gather.

Key Truth

A home where Jesus is present becomes a door of hope for the whole town.

XXXIV. HE WOULD NOT LET THE DEMONS SPEAK

Mark 1:34 — Healing Many

“Jesus healed many with various diseases and drove out many demons. He would not let the demons speak, because they knew who He was.”
“Jesus healed many with various diseases.”
No disease was too hard for Him.
“And drove out many demons.”
His power over evil was complete.
“He would not let the demons speak, because they knew who He was.”
Again Jesus silenced the demons.
He did not want their testimony.
Their words could cause confusion about what kind of Messiah He was.
Jesus would reveal Himself in His own time and way, especially through the cross.

Cross References

Matthew 8:16
He drove out the evil spirits with a word and healed all the sick.
Luke 4:41
Demons came out of many people, shouting, “You are the Son of God!” But Jesus ordered them to be quiet, because they knew He was the Messiah.
Matthew 12:16
He warned them not to tell others about Him.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus reveals Himself in His own way and time.

Key Truth

The truth about Jesus should come from those who love Him, not from His enemies.

XXXV. EARLY IN THE MORNING

Mark 1:35 — Jesus Prays

“Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, went to a solitary place, and prayed.”
After a long and busy day, Jesus could have slept in.
“Very early in the morning, while it was still dark.”
Instead, He rose before dawn.
“Jesus got up, went to a solitary place.”

He looked for a quiet place.
Away from the crowds.
“And prayed.”
If the Son of God needed to pray, how much more do we?
Prayer was the source of His strength and direction.

Cross References

Luke 4:42
At sunrise Jesus left and went to a lonely place.
Luke 5:16
But Jesus often slipped away to quiet places to pray.
Luke 6:12
One day Jesus went up on a mountain to pray, and He spent the whole night praying to God.

Spiritual Principle

Prayer was central to the life and ministry of Jesus.

Application

Do you make time to be alone with God in prayer?

XXXVI. LOOKING FOR JESUS

Mark 1:36 — Simon and His Companions

“Simon and his companions went to look for Him,”
Peter and the others woke up and found Jesus gone.
They went out searching.
The word used suggests they hunted for Him eagerly.
They did not understand yet why He had left.

Cross References

Luke 4:42
The people kept looking for Him. When they found Him, they tried to keep Him from leaving.
Mark 1:35
Long before sunrise, Jesus got up, left the house, and went to a quiet place to pray.
John 6:24
When the crowd saw that Jesus and His followers were not there, they got into boats and went to Capernaum to look for Him.

Spiritual Principle

People naturally look for Jesus when they have seen His power.

Key Truth

Seeking Jesus is good, but we must seek Him for who He is, not only for what He does.

XXXVII. EVERYONE IS LOOKING FOR YOU

Mark 1:37 — The Crowds Are Waiting

“and when they found Him, they said, “Everyone is looking for You!””
The disciples were excited.
Jesus was popular.
The whole town wanted Him back.
They probably thought Jesus should take advantage of the moment.
But Jesus had a different plan.

Cross References

John 6:24
When the people saw that Jesus was gone, they went to look for Him.
Luke 4:42
The crowds searched for Him, found Him, and tried to keep Him from going away.
Matthew 14:35
When the people recognized Jesus, they sent word all through the area and brought Him all their sick.

Spiritual Principle

Popularity is not the same as God's purpose.

Key Truth

Jesus was not led by crowds but by His Father.

XXXVIII. THAT IS WHY I CAME

Mark 1:38 — On to the Next Towns

“Jesus replied, “Let us go on to the nearby villages so I can preach there too. That is why I came.””
“Let us go on to the nearby villages.”
Jesus did not stay where He was popular.
He moved on.
“So I can preach there too.”
His main mission was to preach the good news.
Healing was important.
But the message of the kingdom came first.
“That is why I came.”
Jesus knew His purpose.
Prayer had made it clear.

Cross References

Luke 4:43
Jesus told them, “I have to bring the good news of God's kingdom to other towns as well. This is what I was sent to do.”
Isaiah 61:1
The Spirit of the Lord God is on me, because the Lord chose me to bring good news to the poor and to heal those whose hearts are broken.
Luke 4:18
The Spirit of the Lord is on Me. He has chosen Me to tell the good news to the poor, to announce freedom for prisoners, sight for the blind, and release for those who are crushed.

Spiritual Principle

Knowing God's purpose keeps us from being pulled off course by popularity.

Application

Do you know what God has called you to do?

XXXIX. THROUGHOUT GALILEE

Mark 1:39 — Preaching and Driving Out Demons

“So He traveled throughout Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and driving out demons.”
Jesus took His ministry everywhere.
“Preaching in their synagogues.”
He went where people gathered to hear God's word.
“And driving out demons.”
His words and His power went together.
The kingdom of God was pushing back the kingdom of darkness.

Cross References

Matthew 4:23
Jesus went all over Galilee teaching in the synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing every kind of sickness.
Luke 4:44
And He kept on preaching in the synagogues of Judea.
Matthew 9:35
Jesus traveled through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, announcing the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease.

Spiritual Principle

The message of the kingdom must go everywhere.

Key Truth

Jesus' kingdom advances through His word and His power.

XL. IF YOU ARE WILLING

Mark 1:40 — A Man with Leprosy

“A man with leprosy came to Him and begged on his knees, “If You are willing, You can make me clean.””
“A man with leprosy.”
Leprosy was a terrible skin disease.
People with leprosy were considered unclean.
They had to live apart from others.
They could not worship with God's people.
No one would touch them.
“Came to Him and begged on his knees.”
This man broke the rules to come close to Jesus.
He came humbly, on his knees.
“If You are willing, You can make me clean.”
He had no doubt about Jesus' power.
His only question was whether Jesus was willing.

Cross References

Matthew 8:2
> A man with a skin disease came and bowed down in front of Jesus. He said, “Lord, You can heal me if You want to.”

Luke 5:12
> A man covered with leprosy saw Jesus, bowed with his face to the ground, and begged, “Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean.”

2 Kings 5:1
> Naaman was the commander of the army of the king of Aram. He was a great and respected man, a brave soldier, but he had a skin disease.

Spiritual Principle

Come to Jesus humbly, trusting His power and His heart.

Key Truth

The question is never whether Jesus can, but whether we will come to Him.

XLI. MOVED WITH COMPASSION

Mark 1:41 — I Am Willing

“Jesus was moved with compassion. He reached out His hand and touched the man. “I am willing. Be clean!” He said.”
This is one of the most tender verses in the Gospels.
“Jesus was moved with compassion.”
Jesus felt deeply for this man.
His heart was moved.

“He reached out His hand and touched the man.”
Jesus could have healed him with a word.
But He touched him.
This man may not have felt a human touch in years.
By law, touching a leper made a person unclean.
But when Jesus touched the leper, the leper became clean.
“I am willing. Be clean!”
Jesus answered the man's question.
Yes, He was willing.

Cross References

Matthew 8:3
Jesus reached out and touched him. “I want to,” He said. “Be healed!”
Luke 5:13
Jesus stretched out His hand and touched him. He said, “I am willing. Be made clean!” At once the disease left him.
Leviticus 13:45
A person with a skin disease must wear torn clothes, let his hair hang loose, cover the lower part of his face, and shout, “Unclean! Unclean!”

Spiritual Principle

Jesus is not only able to save; He is willing.

Key Truth

Jesus touches those whom no one else will touch.

XLII. IMMEDIATELY CLEANSED

Mark 1:42 — The Leprosy Left

“Immediately the leprosy left him, and he was cleansed.”
“Immediately.”
Again, Mark's favorite word.
“The leprosy left him.”
The disease was gone.
“And he was cleansed.”
He was not only healed.
He was clean.
He could return to his family, his community, and the worship of God.
This is a picture of what Jesus does for sinners.
Sin makes us unclean.
Jesus makes us clean.

Cross References

Matthew 8:3
At that moment the man's skin disease was healed.

Luke 5:13
Right away the leprosy disappeared.
2 Kings 5:14
So Naaman went down and dipped himself in the Jordan seven times, as the man of God had said. His skin became healthy like a young boy's, and he was clean.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus makes the unclean clean and restores what sin has taken.

Key Truth

No one is too unclean for Jesus to cleanse.

XLIII. A STRONG WARNING

Mark 1:43 — Sent Away at Once

“Jesus sent him away at once with a strong warning:”
Jesus spoke firmly to the man.
He had a reason.
He did not want people coming to Him only for miracles.
He did not want crowds to stop Him from preaching.
He also did not want people to think of Him only as a wonder-worker.

Cross References

Matthew 8:4
Then Jesus told him, “Be sure not to tell anyone.”
Luke 5:14
Jesus ordered him not to tell anyone.
Matthew 9:30
Their eyes were opened. Jesus warned them strongly, “Make sure no one finds out about this.”

Spiritual Principle

Jesus' mission was bigger than miracles.

Key Truth

Jesus wanted people to come for the Healer, not only for the healing.

XLIV. SHOW YOURSELF TO THE PRIEST

Mark 1:44 — A Testimony to Them

““See that you don't tell this to anyone. But go, show yourself to the priest and offer the sacrifices Moses commanded for your cleansing, as a testimony to them.””
“See that you don't tell this to anyone.”
Jesus asked for silence.
“But go, show yourself to the priest.”

The law of Moses said a healed leper had to be examined by a priest.
Only then could he be declared clean.
“And offer the sacrifices Moses commanded for your cleansing.”
Jesus respected God's law.
“As a testimony to them.”
The priests would see the evidence.
A healed leper was a powerful witness that God was at work.

Cross References

Leviticus 14:2
> These are the instructions for a person with a skin disease on the day he is made clean: he must be brought to the priest.

Matthew 8:4
> Go and let the priest look at you, and offer the gift Moses commanded. This will show them what has happened.

Luke 5:14
> Go and show yourself to the priest, and offer the sacrifice Moses required for your cleansing, so they will have proof.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus honored God's law and used it to bear witness to the truth.

Key Truth

A changed life is a testimony that God is at work.

XLV. HE SPREAD THE NEWS

Mark 1:45 — People Came from Everywhere

“But the man went out and began to spread the news widely. As a result, Jesus could no longer enter towns openly but stayed outside in lonely places. Yet people still came to Him from everywhere.”
“But the man went out and began to spread the news widely.”
The man was overjoyed.
But he disobeyed Jesus.
“As a result, Jesus could no longer enter towns openly.”
Crowds now made it hard for Jesus to move freely.
“But stayed outside in lonely places.”
Notice the irony.
At the start, the leper had to live outside the towns.
Now he could go into the towns.
And Jesus had to stay outside.
Jesus took the outsider's place.
That is a picture of what He would do on the cross.
“Yet people still came to Him from everywhere.”
Nothing could stop people from coming to Jesus.

Cross References

Luke 5:15
But the news about Jesus spread even more. Large crowds came to hear Him and to be healed of their sicknesses.
Matthew 9:31
But they went out and spread the news about Him all over that area.
Luke 5:16
But Jesus would often slip away to lonely places and pray.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus took the place of the outcast so that the outcast could be welcomed home.

Key Truth

Obedience matters, even when our intentions are good.

XLVI. SEVEN GREAT LESSONS FROM MARK 1

1. John Prepared the Way

“Prepare the way of the Lord.”

Principle:

John prepared the way for Jesus through repentance and baptism.

2. Jesus Is the Beloved Son of God

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

Principle:

Jesus is the beloved Son of God, confirmed at His baptism.

3. The Kingdom of God Is Near

“Repent and believe the good news!”

Principle:

We are called to repent and believe the good news.

4. Jesus Calls Ordinary People

“Come, follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.”

Principle:

Jesus calls ordinary people to follow Him and bring others to Him.

5. Jesus Has Authority Over All

“He even commands unclean spirits, and they obey Him!”

Principle:

He has authority over sickness, sin, and demons; His power is greater than all.

6. Prayer Was Central to Jesus' Ministry

“Very early in the morning... Jesus got up... and prayed.”

Principle:

Jesus' life of prayer is a model for us to follow.

7. Compassion Moved Him to Heal

“Jesus was moved with compassion.”

Principle:

Jesus' compassion moved Him to heal, and it still does today.

XLVII. A DAY IN THE LIFE OF JESUS

Verses 21–39 show one full day in Jesus' ministry, from Sabbath morning to the next dawn.

Morning: Teaching in the Synagogue

He taught God's word with authority.

In the Synagogue: Freeing a Man from a Demon

He set a captive free.

Afternoon: Healing in a Home

He healed Peter's mother-in-law.

Evening: Serving the Whole Town

He healed the sick and freed the troubled.

Before Dawn: Praying Alone

He drew strength from His Father.

Next Morning: Moving On to Preach

He stayed true to His mission.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Jesus' busy life of service flowed from quiet time alone with the Father.

XLVIII. THE AUTHORITY OF JESUS

Mark 1 shows Jesus' authority in many areas.

Authority in His Words

“He taught with authority.”

Authority Over People

“Come, follow Me.” And they followed.

Authority Over Demons

“Be quiet and come out of him!”

Authority Over Disease

“Immediately the fever left her.”

Authority Over Uncleanness

“Be clean!”

Authority Over His Own Schedule

“Let us go on to the nearby villages.”

Key Truth

There is no area of life where Jesus does not have authority.

XLIX. THE WORD “IMMEDIATELY”

Mark uses the word **“immediately”** many times in this chapter.

- The Spirit immediately drove Him into the wilderness.
- The fishermen immediately left their nets.
- Without delay He called James and John.
- Immediately the fever left her.
- Immediately the leprosy left him.

This word shows:

- The urgency of Jesus' mission.
- The power of Jesus' word.
- The proper response to His call.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

When Jesus speaks, the right time to respond is now.

L. WHAT MARK 1 TEACHES ABOUT JESUS

He Is the Christ

“Jesus Christ.”

He Is the Son of God

“The Son of God.”

He Is the Lord

“Prepare the way of the Lord.”

He Baptizes with the Holy Spirit

“He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”

He Is the Beloved of the Father

“You are My beloved Son.”

He Conquered Temptation

“Being tempted by Satan.”

He Is the Holy One of God

“I know who You are—the Holy One of God!”

He Is Full of Compassion

“Jesus was moved with compassion.”

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Jesus is the powerful Son of God who uses His power with compassion.

LI. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR PERSONAL STUDY

Question 1

How does Mark begin his Gospel?
With a bold statement: Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and His story is good news.

Question 2

What was John the Baptist's role?

To prepare the way for Jesus by calling people to repent and be baptized.

Question 3

What is repentance?
Turning from sin and turning to God.

Question 4

Why was Jesus baptized if He had no sin?
To identify with sinners, to obey the Father, and to begin His public ministry.

Question 5

What happened at Jesus' baptism?
Heaven was torn open, the Spirit came down like a dove, and the Father spoke His approval.

Question 6

Why was Jesus tempted in the wilderness?
To face Satan and win where others had failed, and to be able to help us when we are tempted.

Question 7

What was the message Jesus preached?
“The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!”

Question 8

What did Jesus mean by “fishers of men”?
He would turn His followers into people who bring others to God.

Question 9

Why did Jesus silence the demons?
He did not want testimony from evil spirits, and He would reveal Himself in His own way and time.

Question 10

What does Jesus' early-morning prayer teach us?
That prayer is essential, especially in busy seasons of life.

Question 11

Why is it important that Jesus touched the leper?
It showed His deep compassion, and instead of Jesus becoming unclean, the leper became clean.

Question 12

What should Mark 1 change about the way Christians live today?
Mark 1 should cause believers to live:

- Pointing others to Jesus, as John did.

- Repenting and trusting the good news.
- Following Jesus without delay.
- Bringing others to Him.
- Trusting His authority over every power.
- Bringing the needs of others to Jesus in prayer.
- Making time to pray alone with God.
- Showing compassion to the outcast.

LII. PERSONAL APPLICATION

Mark 1 asks several important questions.

Do I Believe Jesus Is the Son of God?

Have I trusted Him as Lord and Savior?

Have I Repented and Believed?

Have I truly turned to Christ?

Am I Following Jesus?

Or am I still holding on to my nets?

Am I a Fisher of Men?

Who am I helping to come to Jesus?

Do I Trust Jesus' Authority?

Is there any power I fear more than I trust Him?

Do I Bring Needs to Jesus?

Whom can I tell Jesus about today?

Do I Make Time to Pray?

When do I meet with God alone?

Do I Touch the Untouchable?

Whom does God want me to show compassion to?

LIII. A CRAWFORD BIBLE STUDY PRINCIPLE

“The Touch No One Else Would Give”

The man with leprosy lived on the outside.
Outside the town.
Outside the synagogue.
Outside his family.
He had to warn people to stay away.
No one would come near him.
No one would touch him.
Then he met Jesus.
He fell on his knees.
He did not doubt Jesus' power.
He only wondered if Jesus cared.
“If You are willing.”
Jesus could have healed him with a word from a safe distance.
But Jesus reached out and touched him.
The touch no one else would give.
And Jesus said, **“I am willing.”**
This creates a powerful principle.
There is no one too unclean, too broken, or too far outside for Jesus to reach.
He is not only able.
He is willing.

Principle:

Jesus is both able and willing to touch and cleanse those whom the world pushes away.

LIV. FINAL APPLICATION

Mark Chapter 1 introduces Jesus with power and speed.
John prepares the way.
The Father declares His love for His Son.
The Spirit leads Jesus into the wilderness, where He defeats temptation.
Jesus preaches the kingdom of God.
He calls fishermen to follow Him.
He shows authority over demons and disease.
He rises early to pray.
And He touches the untouchable.
Mark 1 therefore reminds us:
Never forget who Jesus is.
Never delay in following Him.
Never think anyone is beyond His reach.
Never neglect prayer.
Never stop telling the good news.

The church does not need people who are only amazed by Jesus.
It needs:
Believers who repent and believe.
Disciples who follow without delay.
Fishers of men who bring others to Him.
And servants who show His compassion.
The same Jesus still calls:
Tell people that Jesus is the Son of God.
Tell people that the kingdom of God has come near.
Tell people to repent and believe the good news.
Tell people that Jesus is willing to make them clean.
And as you live:
Repent and believe.
Follow Him.
Pray.
Reach out with compassion.

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father,
Thank You for the good news about Jesus Christ, Your Son.
Thank You for sending messengers to prepare the way.
Thank You that You declared Jesus as Your beloved Son.
Thank You that Jesus faced temptation and won.
Thank You that the kingdom of God has come near.
Thank You that Jesus calls ordinary people to follow Him.
Thank You that He has authority over every power of darkness and disease.
Thank You that He is moved with compassion and willing to make us clean.
Forgive us when we have delayed in following You.
Forgive us when we have held on to our nets.
Forgive us when we have neglected prayer.
Forgive us when we have kept our distance from people in need.
Help us repent and believe the good news every day.
Make us fishers of men.
Teach us to rise and pray as Jesus did.
Fill us with His compassion.
And help us bring others to the One who is willing to make them clean.
“The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!”
In Jesus' name, Amen.

Key Verse

“The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!” — Mark 1:15

Central Truth

Jesus Christ, the beloved Son of God, came announcing the kingdom of God, calling people to repent and believe, and proving His authority over sin, Satan, and sickness with compassion that reaches even the untouchable.

Mark 1 in One Sentence

Mark begins the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, by showing John preparing the way, the Father declaring His love at Jesus' baptism, Jesus defeating temptation, calling fishermen to follow Him, preaching the kingdom, driving out demons, healing the sick, rising early to pray, and touching and cleansing a man with leprosy.

CRAWFORD BIBLE COMMENTARY

BIBLE STUDY

Mark Chapter 2 — Authority to Forgive Sins

A Verse-by-Verse Bible Study from the Crawford Standard Bible

Introduction

Mark Chapter 2 continues the fast-moving story of Jesus.
In Chapter 1, Jesus showed His authority over demons and disease.
Now He shows His authority over something even greater.
Sin.
Four friends carry a paralyzed man to Jesus.
They cannot get through the crowd, so they dig through the roof.
Jesus does not first heal the man's legs.
He forgives his sins.
The religious leaders are shocked.
Only God can forgive sins.

And that is exactly the point.
Then Jesus heals the man to prove He has the authority to forgive.
This chapter also begins a series of conflicts with the religious leaders.
They object when Jesus forgives sins.
They object when He eats with tax collectors and sinners.
They object when His disciples do not fast.
They object when His disciples pick grain on the Sabbath.
Each time, Jesus answers with a statement about who He is.

- The Son of Man who forgives sins.
- The Doctor who came for the sick.
- The Bridegroom whose presence brings joy.
- The Lord of the Sabbath.

The chapter moves through four movements:

- Jesus Heals a Paralyzed Man (verses 1–12).
- The Calling of Levi (verses 13–17).
- A Question About Fasting (verses 18–22).
- Lord of the Sabbath (verses 23–28).

The central truth of Mark 2 is:
Jesus has divine authority to forgive sins, calls sinners to follow Him, brings the new life of His kingdom, and is Lord even of the Sabbath.

I. JESUS IS HOME

Mark 2:1 — Back in Capernaum

“A few days later, when Jesus returned to Capernaum, the news spread that He was back home.”
“When Jesus returned to Capernaum.”
Capernaum had become Jesus' home base.
This was probably Peter's house again.
“The news spread that He was back home.”
After the leper spread the news in Chapter 1, Jesus was famous.
As soon as people heard He was back, they came.

Cross References

Matthew 9:1
Jesus got into a boat, went across the lake, and came back to His own town.
Luke 5:17
One day while Jesus was teaching, Pharisees and teachers of the law were sitting there. They had come from every village in Galilee and Judea and from Jerusalem. The Lord's power was with Jesus to heal.
Matthew 4:13
Jesus moved from Nazareth and made His home in Capernaum, a town beside the lake.

Spiritual Principle

Where Jesus is, people will come.

Key Truth

The news of Jesus' presence is still the best news a town can hear.

II. NO ROOM LEFT

Mark 2:2 — Jesus Preached the Word

“Soon the house was so crowded that there was no room left, not even outside the door. Jesus preached the word to them.”
“The house was so crowded that there was no room left.”
People packed every corner.
They spilled out into the street.
“Jesus preached the word to them.”
Many had come hoping for miracles.
But Jesus gave them what they needed most.
He preached God's word.

Cross References

Luke 5:17
As Jesus taught, religious leaders from many towns sat listening, and God's power to heal was with Him.
Mark 1:45
Jesus could no longer go into a town openly. He stayed in lonely places, but people still came to Him from everywhere.
Acts 5:42
Every day, in the temple and from house to house, they kept on teaching and telling the good news that Jesus is the Messiah.

Spiritual Principle

People's deepest need is to hear God's word.

Key Truth

Jesus put preaching first, even when crowds came for miracles.

III. FOUR FRIENDS

Mark 2:3 — Carrying a Paralyzed Man

“Then four men came, carrying a paralyzed man on a mat.”
“Four men came.”
These four friends cared about this man.
“Carrying a paralyzed man on a mat.”
He could not walk to Jesus himself.
So they carried him.
This is a picture of what friends do.
They bring people to Jesus who cannot get there on their own.

Cross References

Matthew 9:2
Some people brought to Jesus a man who could not move, lying on a mat.
Luke 5:18
Some men came carrying a paralyzed man on a mat. They tried to bring him in and set him down in front of Jesus.
John 5:5
One man there had been sick for thirty-eight years.

Spiritual Principle

Some people will only reach Jesus if someone carries them.

Application

Who could you help carry to Jesus?

IV. THROUGH THE ROOF

Mark 2:4 — An Opening Above Jesus

“Since they couldn't get to Jesus because of the crowd, they made an opening in the roof above Him. After digging through, they lowered the mat with the man lying on it.”
“They couldn't get to Jesus because of the crowd.”
The way was blocked.
Many people would have given up.
“They made an opening in the roof above Him.”
Houses then often had flat roofs made of beams, branches, and packed clay.
Outside stairs led up to the roof.
The friends climbed up and dug through.
“They lowered the mat with the man lying on it.”
Imagine the dust falling.
Imagine the crowd looking up.
These friends would not let anything stop them.

Cross References

Luke 5:19
Because of the crowd, they could not find a way in. So they climbed up on the roof, removed some tiles, and lowered him on his mat into the middle of the crowd, right in front of Jesus.
Matthew 9:2
They brought to Jesus a man who was paralyzed, lying on his bed.
Ecclesiastes 11:6
Plant your seed in the morning, and keep working in the evening, because you do not know which effort will succeed.

Spiritual Principle

Faith finds a way to Jesus, even when the way seems blocked.

Application

What obstacles keep you or others from coming to Jesus?

V. YOUR SINS ARE FORGIVEN

Mark 2:5 — When Jesus Saw Their Faith

“When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralyzed man, “Son, your sins are forgiven.””
“When Jesus saw their faith.”
Their faith was visible.
It was seen in what they did.
Jesus honored the faith of the friends and the man.
“Son.”
A warm and tender word.
“Your sins are forgiven.”
This was surprising.
Everyone expected Jesus to heal the man's body.
But Jesus went to the deepest need first.
The man's greatest problem was not his legs.
It was his sin.
Jesus is not saying the man's sin caused his paralysis.
He is showing that forgiveness is the greatest gift He brings.

Cross References

Matthew 9:2
> When Jesus saw how much they believed, He told the paralyzed man, “Cheer up, son! Your sins are forgiven.”

Luke 5:20
> Seeing their faith, Jesus said, “Friend, your sins are forgiven.”

Luke 7:48
> Then Jesus said to the woman, “Your sins are forgiven.”

Spiritual Principle

Our greatest need is forgiveness, and Jesus meets it first.

Key Truth

Faith that acts is faith that Jesus sees.

VI. THE SCRIBES SITTING THERE

Mark 2:6 — Silent Objections

“But some of the scribes sitting there thought to themselves,”
“Some of the scribes sitting there.”
The religious experts had front-row seats.
They were watching Jesus closely.

“Thought to themselves.”
They did not say anything out loud.
But their hearts were full of objections.

Cross References

Matthew 9:3
Some of the teachers of the law said to themselves, “This man is speaking against God!”
Luke 5:21
The teachers of the law and the Pharisees began to think, “Who is this man who insults God?”
Luke 5:22
Jesus knew what they were thinking and asked, “Why are you thinking these things in your hearts?”

Spiritual Principle

It is possible to sit close to Jesus and still have a closed heart.

Spiritual Warning

Religious knowledge does not guarantee a heart open to Jesus.

VII. WHO CAN FORGIVE SINS BUT GOD?

Mark 2:7 — The Charge of Blasphemy

““Why does this man talk like that? He is blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?””
“He is blaspheming!”
Blasphemy means speaking against God or claiming what belongs only to God.
It was a very serious charge.
“Who can forgive sins but God alone?”
The scribes were right about this.
Only God can forgive sins.
All sin is ultimately against God.
But they missed the obvious conclusion.
If Jesus forgives sins, then Jesus is acting as God.

Cross References

Matthew 9:3
Some of the law teachers thought, “This man is insulting God!”
Luke 5:21
They asked themselves, “Who does He think He is, insulting God like this? No one but God can forgive sins.”
Isaiah 43:25
The Lord says, “I am the One who wipes away your sins for My own sake, and I will not remember them anymore.”

Spiritual Principle

Only God can forgive sins, and Jesus forgives sins.

Key Truth

The scribes asked the right question but refused the right answer.

VIII. JESUS KNEW THEIR THOUGHTS

Mark 2:8 — Why Are You Reasoning?

“Immediately Jesus knew in His spirit what they were thinking and said to them, “Why are you reasoning these things in your hearts?”
“Immediately Jesus knew in His spirit what they were thinking.”
The scribes had not spoken.
But Jesus knew their thoughts.
This was another sign of His divine nature.
“Why are you reasoning these things in your hearts?”
Jesus brought their hidden thoughts into the open.
Nothing is hidden from Him.

Cross References

Matthew 9:4
Jesus knew what they were thinking. He asked, “Why are you thinking evil things in your hearts?”
Luke 5:22
Jesus knew their thoughts and asked them, “Why are you thinking like this?”
John 2:25
No one had to explain people to Jesus. He already knew what was going on inside every one of them.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus knows every thought of our hearts.

Application

What thoughts in your heart would you want Jesus to see?

IX. WHICH IS EASIER?

Mark 2:9 — A Question for the Critics

“Which is easier: to say to this paralyzed man, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Get up, take your mat, and walk’?”
Jesus asks a clever question.
It is easy to say, “Your sins are forgiven.”
No one can see whether it really happened.
It is harder to say, “Get up and walk.”
Everyone would see immediately whether it worked.
Jesus was about to do the visible thing to prove the invisible thing.

Cross References

Matthew 9:5
Which is easier to say: “Your sins are forgiven,” or “Get up and walk”?
Luke 5:23
Is it easier to say, “Your sins are forgiven,” or to say, “Stand up and walk”?
John 5:8
Jesus said to him, “Stand up, pick up your mat, and walk.”

Spiritual Principle

What Jesus does in the open proves what He does in the heart.

Key Truth

The healing was the proof; the forgiveness was the prize.

X. THE SON OF MAN HAS AUTHORITY

Mark 2:10 — Authority on Earth to Forgive

“But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins”—He said to the paralyzed man—”
“So that you may know.”
Jesus wanted them to know the truth.
“The Son of Man.”
This was Jesus' favorite title for Himself.
It comes from Daniel 7.
There, the Son of Man comes with the clouds of heaven and receives everlasting authority from God.
“Has authority on earth to forgive sins.”
God forgives from heaven.
Jesus forgives on earth.
He has the same authority as God.

Cross References

Matthew 9:6
“I want you to know that the Son of Man has the right on earth to forgive sins.” Then He spoke to the paralyzed man.
Luke 5:24
“I will prove to you that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins.”
Daniel 7:13
In my vision at night I saw someone who looked like a son of man coming with the clouds of the sky. He came to the Ancient One and was led into His presence.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus, the Son of Man, has full authority to forgive sins.

Key Truth

Forgiveness is not a hope we wait for; it is a gift Jesus gives now.

XI. GET UP AND GO HOME

Mark 2:11 — The Command

““I say to you, get up, take your mat, and go home.””
“I say to you.”
Jesus spoke with His own authority.
“Get up.”
A man who could not move was told to stand.
“Take your mat.”
The mat had carried him.
Now he would carry it.
“And go home.”
Jesus sent him back to his family and his normal life.
He was completely restored.

Cross References

Matthew 9:6
“Stand up, pick up your mat, and go home.”
Luke 5:24
He said to the man who could not walk, “I tell you, stand up, take your mat, and go home.”
John 5:8
Jesus told him, “Get up, pick up your mat, and walk.”

Spiritual Principle

The word of Jesus gives power to do what He commands.

Key Truth

When Jesus says “get up,” He also gives the strength to rise.

XII. WE HAVE NEVER SEEN ANYTHING LIKE THIS

Mark 2:12 — Everyone Was Amazed

“Immediately the man got up, took his mat, and walked out in full view of them all. Everyone was amazed and praised God, saying, “We have never seen anything like this!””
“Immediately the man got up.”
The healing was instant.
“Took his mat, and walked out in full view of them all.”
The crowd that blocked his way in now made way for him to walk out.
Everyone saw it.
The proof was clear.
“Everyone was amazed and praised God.”
The miracle led people to worship.

“We have never seen anything like this!”
Jesus was doing something brand new.

Cross References

Matthew 9:7
The man stood up and went home.
Luke 5:25
Right away he stood up in front of them, picked up his mat, and went home praising God.
Luke 5:26
Everyone was amazed and gave glory to God. Filled with awe, they said, “We have seen amazing things today!”

Spiritual Principle

The works of Jesus lead people to praise God.

Application

Has what Jesus has done in your life led you to praise God?

XIII. BESIDE THE LAKE

Mark 2:13 — A Large Crowd

“Once again Jesus went out beside the lake. A large crowd came to Him, and He taught them.”
“Once again Jesus went out beside the lake.”
The Sea of Galilee was a favorite place for Jesus to teach.
“A large crowd came to Him.”
Wherever He went, people followed.
“And He taught them.”
Again Mark stresses Jesus' teaching.
His words were central to His ministry.

Cross References

Matthew 13:2
Such large crowds gathered that He got into a boat and sat in it, while the people stood on the shore.
Luke 5:1
One day Jesus was standing beside Lake Gennesaret, and the crowd was pressing in around Him to hear God's message.
Luke 6:17
Jesus came down and stood on level ground with a large crowd of His followers and many people from all over Judea, Jerusalem, Tyre, and Sidon.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus faithfully taught God's truth to all who would listen.

Key Truth

Jesus never tired of teaching people the truth.

XIV. FOLLOW ME

Mark 2:14 — Levi at the Tax Booth

“As He walked along, He saw Levi son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax booth. “Follow Me,” Jesus said. Levi got up and followed Him.”
“He saw Levi son of Alphaeus.”
Levi is also known as Matthew.
He later wrote the Gospel of Matthew.
“Sitting at the tax booth.”
Tax collectors worked for the Roman government.
They often charged more than they should and kept the extra.
Many Jews saw them as traitors and thieves.
They were among the most hated people in society.
“Follow Me,” Jesus said.
Jesus did not wait for Levi to clean up his life first.
He simply called him.
“Levi got up and followed Him.”
Levi left a profitable career.
A fisherman could go back to fishing.
A tax collector who walked away could not easily return.

Cross References

Matthew 9:9
> As Jesus was leaving, He saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax office. Jesus said, “Follow Me,” and Matthew got up and followed Him.

Luke 5:27
> After this Jesus went out and saw a tax collector named Levi sitting at his tax booth. He told him, “Come with Me.”

Luke 19:5
> When Jesus came to that place, He looked up and said, “Zacchaeus, hurry and come down! I must stay at your house today.”

Spiritual Principle

No one is too far gone to be called by Jesus.

Key Truth

Jesus calls people as they are, but He does not leave them as they are.

XV. DINNER AT LEVI'S HOUSE

Mark 2:15 — Eating with Tax Collectors and Sinners

“Later, Jesus was eating at Levi's house. Many tax collectors and sinners were dining with Him and His disciples, for there were many who followed Him.”
“Jesus was eating at Levi's house.”

Levi threw a party.
He wanted his friends to meet Jesus.
“Many tax collectors and sinners were dining with Him.”
Levi's friends were people like him.
Outcasts.
People respectable folks avoided.
In that culture, sharing a meal meant acceptance and friendship.
Jesus sat at the table with them.
“For there were many who followed Him.”
These outsiders were drawn to Jesus.

Cross References

Matthew 9:10
> While Jesus was eating at Matthew's house, many tax collectors and sinners came and ate with Him and His followers.

Luke 5:29
> Levi gave a big dinner for Jesus at his house. A large crowd of tax collectors and other people were eating with them.

Luke 15:1
> Tax collectors and sinners were all coming close to listen to Jesus.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus welcomes sinners to His table.

Application

Who could you invite to meet Jesus?

XVI. WHY DOES HE EAT WITH SINNERS?

Mark 2:16 — The Pharisees Object

“When the teachers of the law who were Pharisees saw Him eating with sinners and tax collectors, they asked His disciples, “Why does He eat with tax collectors and sinners?””
“The teachers of the law who were Pharisees.”
The **Pharisees** were a group who were very careful about keeping the law and their traditions.
They kept themselves separate from people they considered unclean.
“Why does He eat with tax collectors and sinners?”
They were shocked.
They thought a holy man would keep away from sinners.
Notice they asked the disciples, not Jesus.
They were criticizing from a distance.

Cross References

Matthew 9:11
> When the Pharisees saw this, they asked His followers, “Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?”

Luke 5:30
The Pharisees and their teachers of the law complained to His followers, “Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?”
Luke 15:2
The Pharisees and law teachers complained, “This man makes sinners feel at home and sits down to eat with them.”

Spiritual Principle

Self-righteousness keeps people away from those Jesus came to reach.

Spiritual Warning

Be careful of looking down on those Jesus came to save.

XVII. THE DOCTOR CAME FOR THE SICK

Mark 2:17 — Not the Righteous, but Sinners

“When Jesus heard this, He said to them, “It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.””
“It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick.”
A doctor does not avoid sick people.
He goes to them.
That is his job.
Jesus is the Great Physician.
“I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.”
Jesus came for sinners.
The Pharisees thought they were righteous.
They did not see their need.
The tax collectors knew they were sinners.
And that is exactly who Jesus came to call.
In truth, everyone is a sinner.
The only difference is who admits it.

Cross References

Matthew 9:12
When Jesus heard this, He said, “Healthy people do not need a doctor. Only sick people do.”
Luke 5:31
Jesus answered, “It is the sick, not the well, who need a doctor.”
1 Timothy 1:15
This is true, and everyone should believe it: Christ Jesus came into the world to rescue sinners, and I am the biggest sinner of all.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus came for sinners who know they need Him.

Key Truth

The first step to being healed is admitting you are sick.

XVIII. WHY DON'T YOUR DISCIPLES FAST?

Mark 2:18 — A Question About Fasting

“Now John's disciples and the Pharisees were fasting. Some people came and asked Jesus, “Why don't Your disciples fast like John's disciples and the Pharisees do?””
“John's disciples and the Pharisees were fasting.”
Fasting means going without food for a time to focus on God.
The law required fasting on only one day each year, the Day of Atonement.
But many religious people fasted often.
Some Pharisees fasted twice a week.
“Why don't Your disciples fast?”
People noticed that Jesus' disciples did not follow these extra fasts.
They wondered why.

Cross References

Matthew 9:14
> Then John's followers came to Jesus and asked, “Why do we and the Pharisees often fast, but Your followers do not?”

Luke 5:33
> They said to Jesus, “John's followers often fast and pray, and so do the Pharisees' followers. But Yours keep eating and drinking.”

Luke 18:12
> The Pharisee prayed, “I fast twice a week, and I give a tenth of everything I get.”

Spiritual Principle

Spiritual practices are good, but they must not become a way to measure others.

Key Truth

Religion often asks, “What are you doing?” Jesus asks, “Who are you with?”

XIX. THE BRIDEGROOM IS HERE

Mark 2:19 — Wedding Guests Do Not Fast

“Jesus answered, “Can the wedding guests fast while the bridegroom is with them? As long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast.”
“Can the wedding guests fast while the bridegroom is with them?”
Jesus uses the picture of a wedding.
A wedding was a time of joy and feasting.
Wedding celebrations in those days often lasted a week.
No one fasted at a wedding.
“As long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast.”
Jesus is the Bridegroom.

His presence brought joy.
Fasting was a sign of mourning.
But this was a time for celebration.

Cross References

Matthew 9:15
Jesus answered, “Wedding guests are not sad while the groom is still with them, are they?”
Luke 5:34
Jesus said, “You cannot make the friends of the groom go without food while he is with them.”
John 3:29
The bride belongs to the groom. The groom's friend stands by and listens, and he is full of joy when he hears the groom's voice. That is how my joy is now complete.

Spiritual Principle

The presence of Jesus brings joy.

Key Truth

Following Jesus is more like a wedding feast than a funeral.

XX. THE BRIDEGROOM WILL BE TAKEN

Mark 2:20 — Then They Will Fast

“But the time will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them, and on that day they will fast.”
“The time will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them.”
This is the first hint in Mark of Jesus' death.
The words **“taken from them”** suggest a violent removal.
“And on that day they will fast.”
When Jesus was crucified, the disciples would mourn.
Many Christians also see this verse as making room for fasting in the church today, while we wait for Christ's return.
Churches have different traditions about how and when to fast.
But the heart of fasting should be longing for Jesus.

Cross References

Matthew 9:15
The day will come when the groom is taken away from them, and then they will fast.
Luke 5:35
But the time is coming when the groom will be taken from them. In those days they will fast.
John 16:20
I tell you the truth, you will cry and be sad while the world is glad. You will grieve, but your grief will turn into joy.

Spiritual Principle

True fasting flows from longing for Jesus.

Application

Do you long for Jesus' presence and return?

XXI. A NEW PATCH ON AN OLD GARMENT

Mark 2:21 — The Tear Gets Worse

“No one sews a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment. If he does, the new piece pulls away from the old, and the tear becomes worse.”
Jesus gives a simple picture from everyday life.
New cloth that has not been washed will shrink.
If you sew it onto an old garment, it will pull and rip the old cloth.
The tear will get worse.
Jesus did not come just to patch up the old religious system.
He came to bring something entirely new.

Cross References

Matthew 9:16
> No one sews a patch of new cloth on an old coat. The patch would shrink and tear the coat, making the hole worse.

Luke 5:36
> Jesus gave them this example: “No one tears a piece from a new coat to patch an old one. If he does, he ruins the new coat, and the patch will not match the old one.”

2 Corinthians 5:17
> Anyone who belongs to Christ is a brand-new person. The old life is gone, and a new life has begun.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus did not come to patch up old religion but to make all things new.

Key Truth

Christ is not an add-on to our old life; He makes a new one.

XXII. NEW WINE, NEW WINESKINS

Mark 2:22 — Something New

“And no one pours new wine into old wineskins. If he does, the wine will burst the skins, and both the wine and the skins will be ruined. No, new wine must be poured into new wineskins.”
Wine was stored in containers made from animal skins.
New wine was still fermenting and expanding.
Old skins were dry and stiff.
If you put new wine in old skins, the skins would burst.
New wine needs new skins that can stretch.
Jesus brings the new wine of His kingdom.
It cannot be squeezed into old forms of religion and rule-keeping.

It needs new hearts.

Cross References

Matthew 9:17
People do not put new wine into old wineskins. If they do, the skins will split, the wine will spill, and the skins will be ruined.
Luke 5:38
New wine has to be put into new wineskins.
Job 32:19
Inside, I am like a bottle of wine that has no air. I am like new wineskins ready to burst.

Spiritual Principle

The new life of Christ requires new hearts, not just old habits.

Application

Is your heart open to the new life Jesus brings?

XXIII. THROUGH THE GRAINFIELDS

Mark 2:23 — Picking Grain on the Sabbath

“One Sabbath, Jesus was walking through the grainfields. His disciples began to pick some heads of grain as they walked along.”
“One Sabbath.”
The **Sabbath** was the seventh day, a day of rest commanded by God.
“His disciples began to pick some heads of grain.”
They were hungry.
The law allowed people to pick grain by hand from a neighbor's field as they walked by.
This was not stealing.
The question was not about picking grain.
It was about doing it on the Sabbath.

Cross References

Matthew 12:1
At that time Jesus walked through the grainfields on a Sabbath. His followers were hungry, so they began picking heads of grain and eating them.
Luke 6:1
One Sabbath, as Jesus walked through some grainfields, His followers picked some grain, rubbed it in their hands, and ate it.
Deuteronomy 23:25
When you walk through your neighbor's grainfield, you may pick some grain with your hands, but you must not use a sickle to cut it.

Spiritual Principle

God's law made room for the needs of hungry people.

Key Truth

God's commands were always meant for people's good.

XXIV. WHY ARE THEY DOING WHAT IS UNLAWFUL?

Mark 2:24 — The Pharisees Object Again

“The Pharisees said to Him, “Look, why are they doing what is unlawful on the Sabbath?””
The Pharisees were watching.
They considered picking grain to be harvesting.
And harvesting was work.
Over time, religious teachers had added many detailed rules about what counted as work.
These rules went far beyond what God's law actually said.
The Pharisees judged the disciples by their traditions.

Cross References

Matthew 12:2
> When the Pharisees saw this, they said to Jesus, “Look! Your followers are doing something that is not allowed on the Sabbath.”

Luke 6:2
> Some Pharisees asked, “Why are you doing what the law says you cannot do on the Sabbath?”

Exodus 20:10
> The seventh day is a day of rest set apart for the Lord your God. On that day no one in your household may do any work.

Spiritual Principle

Human traditions must never be treated as equal to God's word.

Spiritual Warning

Adding our rules to God's commands can turn His gift into a burden.

XXV. WHAT DAVID DID

Mark 2:25 — Have You Never Read?

“He answered, “Have you never read what David did when he and his companions were hungry and in need?”
“Have you never read?”
The Pharisees knew the Scriptures well.
But Jesus asked if they had truly understood them.
“What David did when he and his companions were hungry and in need.”
Jesus points them to a story about King David.
The Pharisees honored David.
They could not easily criticize him.

Cross References

Matthew 12:3
Jesus answered, “Have you not read what David did when he and the men with him were hungry?”
Luke 6:3
Jesus replied, “Have you never read what David did when he and his men were hungry?”
1 Samuel 21:6
So the priest gave David the holy bread, because there was no other bread there except the bread set out before the Lord.

Spiritual Principle

Scripture rightly understood shows God's mercy toward human need.

Key Truth

It is possible to read the Bible often and still miss its heart.

XXVI. THE CONSECRATED BREAD

Mark 2:26 — In the Days of Abiathar

“In the days of Abiathar the high priest, he entered the house of God and ate the consecrated bread, which was lawful only for the priests to eat. He also gave some to his companions.”
When David was running from King Saul, he and his men were hungry.
He came to the tabernacle.
The only bread there was the special holy bread placed before the Lord.
Normally, only priests could eat it.
But the priest gave it to David and his men.
God did not condemn them.
Human need was more important than the strict rule.
“In the days of Abiathar the high priest.”
In 1 Samuel 21, the priest who gave the bread was Ahimelech, Abiathar's father.
Bible students explain this in different ways.
Many note that the phrase can mean “in the passage about Abiathar” or “in the time of Abiathar,” who was there and soon became the well-known high priest of David's day.

Cross References

1 Samuel 21:1
David went to Nob to see Ahimelech the priest. Ahimelech was afraid when he met him and asked, “Why are you alone?”
Matthew 12:4
He went into God's house and ate the holy bread with his men, even though only priests were allowed to eat it.
Luke 6:4
He went into God's house, took the holy bread, ate it, and gave some to his men, even though the law said only priests could eat it.

Spiritual Principle

God cares more about mercy than about rigid rule-keeping.

Key Truth

God's law was never meant to let people starve.

XXVII. THE SABBATH WAS MADE FOR MAN

Mark 2:27 — A Gift, Not a Burden

“Then He said to them, “The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.”
“The Sabbath was made for man.”
God gave the Sabbath as a gift.
A day of rest.
A day to enjoy God.
A day to be refreshed.
“Not man for the Sabbath.”
People were not created to serve the Sabbath rules.
The Pharisees had turned the gift into a heavy burden.
Jesus restored its true purpose.
Christians today hold different views on how the Sabbath principle applies, but all can agree that God's day of rest is meant for our good.

Cross References

Exodus 23:12
> Work six days, but rest on the seventh day. Then your ox and donkey can rest, and the slave born in your house and the foreigner can be refreshed.

Deuteronomy 5:14
> The seventh day is a day of rest for the Lord your God. Do not do any work, so that your servants may rest just as you do.

Matthew 12:11
> Jesus said, “If one of you has a sheep and it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will you not grab it and lift it out?”

Spiritual Principle

God's commands are gifts given for our good.

Application

Do you treat God's day of rest as a gift or as a burden?

XXVIII. LORD OF THE SABBATH

Mark 2:28 — The Son of Man Is Lord

“So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath.”
This is a stunning claim.
God made the Sabbath.

So only God is Lord over the Sabbath.
Jesus says He is Lord of the Sabbath.
Again, Jesus is claiming divine authority.
He decides what the Sabbath means.
He is the One who gives true rest.

Cross References

Matthew 12:8
The Son of Man is the One who rules over the Sabbath.
Luke 6:5
Then Jesus said, “The Son of Man is Lord over the Sabbath day.”
Isaiah 58:13
Stop doing whatever you want on My holy day. Call the Sabbath a joy, and honor the Lord's holy day.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus is Lord over every day and every command.

Key Truth

True rest is found not in a day, but in the Lord of the day.

XXIX. FIVE GREAT LESSONS FROM MARK 2

1. Faith Finds a Way

“They made an opening in the roof above Him.”

Principle:

The friends of the paralyzed man broke through barriers to bring him to Jesus.

2. Jesus Has Authority to Forgive Sins

“The Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.”

Principle:

His miracles prove His divine authority.

3. He Calls the Unlikely

“Follow Me.” Levi got up and followed Him.

Principle:

Levi the tax collector reminds us that no one is too far gone to follow Jesus.

4. Jesus Brings New Life

“New wine must be poured into new wineskins.”

Principle:

His kingdom is not about old traditions but about transformation.

5. The Sabbath Is a Gift

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

Principle:

The Sabbath was made for humanity's good, and Jesus is Lord over it.

XXX. FOUR PICTURES OF JESUS

In each conflict in Mark 2, Jesus reveals something about Himself.

1. The Son of Man Who Forgives

“The Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.”
He does what only God can do.

2. The Doctor Who Heals Sinners

“It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick.”
He came for those who know they need Him.

3. The Bridegroom Who Brings Joy

“Can the wedding guests fast while the bridegroom is with them?”
His presence turns sorrow into celebration.

4. The Lord of the Sabbath

“The Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath.”
He is Lord over God's law and gives true rest.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Every objection to Jesus became an opportunity for Him to show who He really is.

XXXI. FOUR KINDS OF FRIENDS

The four men in verses 3–5 show what true friendship looks like.

They Cared

They saw their friend's need.

They Carried

They did what he could not do for himself.

They Persisted

When the way was blocked, they did not give up.

They Believed

“When Jesus saw their faith.”

Key Truth

The best thing you can do for a friend is bring him to Jesus.

XXXII. RELIGION VERSUS RELATIONSHIP

Mark 2 shows a clear contrast between the religious leaders and Jesus.

The Religious Leaders

- Questioned Jesus' right to forgive.
- Kept away from sinners.
- Measured others by fasting.
- Added rules to God's law.
- Focused on outward rules.

Jesus

- Forgave sins with authority.
- Ate with sinners to call them.
- Brought the joy of His presence.
- Restored the true meaning of God's law.
- Focused on the heart and real needs.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Jesus did not come to give us a heavier religion but a new life with Him.

XXXIII. WHAT MARK 2 TEACHES ABOUT JESUS

He Preaches the Word

“Jesus preached the word to them.”

He Forgives Sins

“Son, your sins are forgiven.”

He Knows Our Thoughts

“Jesus knew in His spirit what they were thinking.”

He Is the Son of Man

“The Son of Man has authority on earth.”

He Calls Sinners

“I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.”

He Is the Bridegroom

“While the bridegroom is with them.”

He Is Lord of the Sabbath

“The Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath.”

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Jesus does what only God can do: He forgives sin, knows the heart, and rules over God's law.

XXXIV. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR PERSONAL STUDY

Question 1

Why did the four friends dig through the roof?
Because the crowd blocked the way, and they were determined to bring their friend to Jesus.

Question 2

Why did Jesus forgive the man's sins before healing him?
Because forgiveness was his greatest need.

Question 3

Why did the scribes accuse Jesus of blasphemy?
Because only God can forgive sins, and they would not accept that Jesus is God.

Question 4

How did Jesus prove He could forgive sins?
By healing the paralyzed man in front of everyone.

Question 5

What does the title “Son of Man” mean?

It comes from Daniel 7 and points to the One who receives everlasting authority from God.

Question 6

Why was Levi's call so surprising?
Tax collectors were hated as traitors and cheaters, yet Jesus called him.

Question 7

Why did Jesus eat with tax collectors and sinners?
Because He came to call sinners, just as a doctor comes for the sick.

Question 8

Why didn't Jesus' disciples fast?
Because the Bridegroom was with them, and it was a time of joy.

Question 9

What do the patch and wineskins teach?
Jesus brings something new that cannot be squeezed into old religious forms.

Question 10

Why did the Pharisees object to the disciples picking grain?
They saw it as work on the Sabbath according to their traditions.

Question 11

What does “the Sabbath was made for man” mean?
God gave the Sabbath as a gift for people's good, not as a burden.

Question 12

What should Mark 2 change about the way Christians live today?
Mark 2 should cause believers to live:

- Bringing friends to Jesus, whatever it takes.
- Rejoicing in the forgiveness of sins.
- Welcoming sinners as Jesus did.
- Admitting their own need for the Great Physician.
- Finding joy in Jesus' presence.
- Embracing the new life He gives.
- Refusing to put human rules above God's word.
- Honoring Jesus as Lord over every day.

XXXV. PERSONAL APPLICATION

Mark 2 asks several important questions.

Who Am I Carrying to Jesus?

Is there a friend who cannot get there on their own?

Have I Received Jesus' Forgiveness?

Do I know my sins are forgiven?

Am I Open to Jesus or Critical of Him?

Do I sit close to Him but keep my heart closed?

Am I Willing to Leave My Tax Booth?

What must I walk away from to follow Him?

Do I Welcome Sinners?

Or do I keep my distance?

Do I Know I Need the Doctor?

Or do I think I am healthy on my own?

Is My Faith Joyful?

Do I live like a guest at a wedding?

Have I Turned God's Gifts into Burdens?

Am I living by rules or by relationship with Jesus?

XXXVI. A CRAWFORD BIBLE STUDY PRINCIPLE

“Through the Roof”

The four friends had a problem.
Their friend could not walk.
The house was full.
The door was blocked.
The crowd would not move.
Most people would have given up.
They could have said, “We tried.”
But they went up.
They climbed the stairs.
They dug through the roof.
They lowered their friend right in front of Jesus.
And Jesus saw their faith.

This creates a powerful principle.
When the door is blocked, love looks for another way.
There is always a way to bring someone to Jesus for those who will not quit.

Principle:

Real faith does not stop at closed doors; it finds a way to bring people to Jesus.

XXXVII. FINAL APPLICATION

Mark Chapter 2 shows the authority and grace of Jesus.
He forgives sins.
He heals the paralyzed.
He calls a tax collector.
He eats with sinners.
He brings the joy of the Bridegroom.
He brings new wine that needs new hearts.
And He is Lord of the Sabbath.
Mark 2 therefore reminds us:
Never give up on bringing someone to Jesus.
Never doubt that Jesus can forgive.
Never think anyone is too far gone.
Never look down on sinners.
Never let rules replace relationship with Christ.
The church does not need people who stand at a distance and criticize.
It needs:
Friends who carry.
Sinners who come.
Followers who leave their old lives behind.
And hearts open to the new life Jesus gives.
The same Jesus still calls:
Tell people that Jesus forgives sins.
Tell people that Jesus came for sinners.
Tell people that following Jesus brings joy.
Tell people that Jesus is Lord of all.
And as you live:
Bring people to Jesus.
Receive His forgiveness.
Follow Him.
Rest in Him.

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father,
Thank You that Jesus has authority on earth to forgive sins.
Thank You for friends who carry us to Jesus when we cannot come on our own.
Thank You that Jesus calls tax collectors and sinners.
Thank You that He is the Great Physician who came for the sick.
Thank You for the joy of the Bridegroom's presence.

Thank You for the new life of Your kingdom.
Thank You that Your commands are gifts for our good.
Thank You that Jesus is Lord even of the Sabbath.
Forgive us when we have given up too easily on bringing others to Jesus.
Forgive us when we have been critical instead of open-hearted.
Forgive us when we have looked down on sinners.
Forgive us when we have turned Your gifts into burdens.
Give us faith that finds a way.
Help us rest in Your forgiveness.
Make us quick to follow You.
Fill our hearts with the new wine of Your Spirit.
And help us honor Jesus as Lord of every day.
“The Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.”
In Jesus' name, Amen.

Key Verse

“When Jesus heard this, He said to them, “It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.”” — Mark 2:17

Central Truth

Jesus has divine authority to forgive sins, calls sinners to follow Him, brings the new life of His kingdom, and is Lord even of the Sabbath.

Mark 2 in One Sentence

Jesus forgives and heals a paralyzed man to prove His authority to forgive sins, calls the tax collector Levi and eats with sinners as the Doctor who came for the sick, explains that His disciples do not fast while the Bridegroom is with them, and declares that the Sabbath was made for man and that He is Lord of the Sabbath.

CRAWFORD BIBLE COMMENTARY

BIBLE STUDY

Mark Chapter 3 —
The Son of Man, Lord of All

A Verse-by-Verse Bible Study from the Crawford Standard Bible

Introduction

Mark Chapter 3 shows the growing tension around Jesus.
In Chapter 2, the religious leaders questioned Him.
Now they begin plotting to kill Him.
The chapter opens in a synagogue on the Sabbath.
A man with a shriveled hand is there.
The Pharisees are watching to see if Jesus will heal him.
Jesus does, and He is grieved by their hard hearts.
Then huge crowds come from everywhere to see Him.
Jesus goes up a mountain and chooses twelve apostles.
They will be with Him and be sent out to preach.
But opposition grows.
His own family thinks He is out of His mind.
The scribes from Jerusalem say He is working by the power of Satan.
Jesus answers that Satan cannot drive out Satan.
He has come to tie up the strong man.
He gives a solemn warning about blaspheming the Holy Spirit.
Finally, Jesus describes His true family.
“Whoever does the will of God is My brother and sister and mother.”
The chapter moves through five movements:

- Jesus Heals on the Sabbath (verses 1–6).
- Crowds Follow Jesus (verses 7–12).
- The Twelve Apostles Chosen (verses 13–19).
- A Divided Kingdom Cannot Stand (verses 20–30).
- The True Family of Jesus (verses 31–35).

The central truth of Mark 3 is:
Jesus is Lord over the Sabbath, Satan, and every power, and while hard hearts reject Him, those who follow Him and do God's will become His true family.

I. A MAN WITH A SHRIVELED HAND

Mark 3:1 — In the Synagogue Again

“Jesus went into the synagogue again, and a man with a shriveled hand was there.”
“Jesus went into the synagogue again.”
Even with growing opposition, Jesus kept going to worship.
“A man with a shriveled hand was there.”
His hand was withered and useless.

It may have made it hard for him to work.
Some of the Pharisees may have expected Jesus to notice him.

Cross References

Matthew 12:9
Jesus left that place and went into their synagogue.
Luke 6:6
On another Sabbath Jesus went into the synagogue and taught. A man was there whose right hand was withered.
Luke 14:3
Jesus asked the experts in the law and the Pharisees, “Is it right to heal on the Sabbath or not?”

Spiritual Principle

Jesus notices people in need, even in the middle of controversy.

Key Truth

No one in the room escapes Jesus' attention.

II. WATCHING CLOSELY

Mark 3:2 — Looking for an Accusation

“The Pharisees watched closely to see if He would heal on the Sabbath so they could accuse Him.”
“The Pharisees watched closely.”
They were not watching to learn.
They were watching to catch Him.
“To see if He would heal on the Sabbath.”
Their tradition allowed healing on the Sabbath only if a life was in danger.
A withered hand was not an emergency.
“So they could accuse Him.”
Their hearts were set against Jesus.
They cared more about trapping Him than about the man's suffering.

Cross References

Matthew 12:10
They asked Jesus, “Is it right to heal on the Sabbath?” They wanted a reason to accuse Him.
Luke 6:7
The teachers of the law and the Pharisees kept their eyes on Jesus, hoping to find something to charge Him with.
Luke 11:54
They were waiting to catch Him saying something wrong.

Spiritual Principle

A critical spirit looks for faults instead of seeing needs.

Spiritual Warning

Be careful not to watch others only to find something wrong.

III. STAND UP

Mark 3:3 — In Front of Everyone

“Jesus said to the man with the withered hand, “Stand up in front of everyone.””
Jesus did not hide what He was about to do.
He did not heal the man quietly in a corner.
He called him to the center of the room.
Jesus knew what the Pharisees were thinking.
He chose to act openly.
He also gave the man dignity.
The man who was often overlooked was now at the center.

Cross References

Matthew 12:13
Then Jesus said to the man, “Hold out your hand.”
Luke 6:8
Jesus knew what they were thinking, so He said to the man, “Get up and stand here in front of everyone.” The man got up and stood there.
John 5:6
When Jesus saw him lying there and knew he had been sick a long time, He asked him, “Do you want to get well?”

Spiritual Principle

Jesus does what is right openly, without fear of critics.

Key Truth

Jesus brings the overlooked into the center of His care.

IV. TO DO GOOD OR TO DO EVIL?

Mark 3:4 — They Said Nothing

“Then He asked them, “Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill?” But they said nothing.”
“Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do evil?”
Jesus went to the heart of the issue.
Refusing to do good when you can is a kind of evil.
“To save life or to kill?”
The irony is sharp.
Jesus wanted to heal on the Sabbath.
The Pharisees were planning to kill on the Sabbath.
“But they said nothing.”

They had no answer.
Their silence showed their hard hearts.

Cross References

Matthew 12:12
A person is worth so much more than a sheep. So the law allows doing good on the Sabbath.
Luke 6:9
Jesus said, “Let Me ask you something. On the Sabbath, is it right to do good or to do harm? To save a life or to destroy it?”
Luke 13:15
The Lord answered him, “You hypocrites! Doesn't each of you untie his ox or donkey on the Sabbath and lead it out for a drink of water?”

Spiritual Principle

Doing good always honors God, on any day.

Key Truth

Failing to do good when we can is not neutral.

V. ANGER AND GRIEF

Mark 3:5 — His Hand Was Restored

“Jesus looked around at them with anger and deep grief at their hard hearts. He said to the man, “Stretch out your hand.” The man stretched it out, and his hand was completely restored.”
“Jesus looked around at them with anger.”
Only Mark records Jesus' anger here.
This was righteous anger.
Anger at sin and cruelty.
“And deep grief at their hard hearts.”
His anger was mixed with sorrow.
He was grieved that they were so hard.
Jesus was not angry for Himself.
He was angry for the man and grieved for them.
“Stretch out your hand.”
The man could not stretch it out by himself.
But he obeyed, and as he did, he was healed.
“His hand was completely restored.”
Jesus did not touch him.
He only spoke.
So no one could even say He did “work” on the Sabbath.

Cross References

Matthew 12:13
Jesus told the man, “Stretch out your hand.” He stretched it out, and it was healed and became as healthy as the other one.

Luke 6:10

Jesus looked around at all of them and said to the man, “Hold out your hand.” He did, and his hand was made well.

Ephesians 4:18

Their minds are in the dark, and they are cut off from the life God gives, because they do not understand and their hearts have become hard.

Spiritual Principle

Hard hearts grieve Jesus.

Application

Is there any hardness in your heart that grieves the Lord?

VI. PLOTTING TO KILL HIM

Mark 3:6 — The Pharisees and the Herodians

“Immediately the Pharisees went out and began plotting with the Herodians how they might kill Jesus.”

“Immediately the Pharisees went out.”

They had just seen a miracle.

But instead of praising God, they plotted murder.

“Began plotting with the Herodians.”

The **Herodians** were supporters of King Herod's family.

Normally the Pharisees and the Herodians did not get along.

But they united against Jesus.

“How they might kill Jesus.”

This is the first mention in Mark of a plan to kill Jesus.

The shadow of the cross begins to fall.

Cross References

Matthew 12:14

But the Pharisees went out and made plans to kill Jesus.

Luke 6:11

But they were furious and started talking with each other about what they could do to Jesus.

John 11:53

From that day on, they made plans to kill Jesus.

Spiritual Principle

Hearts that reject Jesus can harden quickly from opposition to hatred.

Spiritual Warning

Seeing God's power does not change a heart that refuses to believe.

VII. WITHDRAWING TO THE SEA

Mark 3:7 — A Large Crowd Followed

“Jesus withdrew with His disciples to the sea, and a large crowd from Galilee followed. People came also from Judea,”
“Jesus withdrew with His disciples to the sea.”
Jesus stepped away from the conflict.
His time to die had not yet come.
“A large crowd from Galilee followed.”
The leaders rejected Him.
But crowds of ordinary people came.
“People came also from Judea.”
His fame was spreading far beyond Galilee.

Cross References

Matthew 12:15
> Jesus knew what they were doing, so He left that place. Many people followed Him, and He healed all of them.

Luke 6:17
> A large crowd of His followers was there, along with many people from Judea, Jerusalem, and the coast near Tyre and Sidon.

Matthew 4:25
> Large crowds followed Him from Galilee, the Ten Towns, Jerusalem, Judea, and the land across the Jordan.

Spiritual Principle

There is wisdom in stepping back from conflict when it is not the right time.

Key Truth

While leaders rejected Jesus, ordinary people came running to Him.

VIII. FROM EVERY DIRECTION

Mark 3:8 — They Heard What He Was Doing

“Jerusalem, Idumea, beyond the Jordan, and from the region around Tyre and Sidon. The great crowd came because they had heard about all He was doing.”
Mark lists places from every direction.

- **Jerusalem** to the south.
- **Idumea**, far to the south.
- **Beyond the Jordan** to the east.
- **Tyre and Sidon** to the north, which were Gentile regions.

Jews and Gentiles were coming.
“Because they had heard about all He was doing.”
News of Jesus traveled everywhere.

Cross References

Matthew 4:25
Many people from Galilee, the Ten Towns, Jerusalem, Judea, and across the Jordan followed Him.
Luke 6:17
People came from all over Judea, from Jerusalem, and from the coastal towns of Tyre and Sidon.
Matthew 15:21
Jesus left there and went to the area of Tyre and Sidon.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus draws people from every nation and background.

Key Truth

The good news of Jesus was never meant for one group only.

IX. A SMALL BOAT READY

Mark 3:9 — So the Crowd Would Not Crush Him

“Jesus told His disciples to have a small boat ready for Him so the crowd would not crush Him.”
The crowd was so large it was dangerous.
People pushed and pressed.
Jesus planned wisely.
A boat would let Him step a little way out from shore.
From there He could teach the people safely.
Jesus was not careless.
He used practical wisdom.

Cross References

Luke 5:3
Jesus got into one of the boats, the one that belonged to Simon, and asked him to push out a little from shore. Then He sat down and taught the people from the boat.
Matthew 13:2
Such a large crowd gathered that Jesus got into a boat and sat down, while the people stood on the shore.
Luke 5:1
One day Jesus was standing by Lake Gennesaret, and the people were crowding around Him to listen to God's word.

Spiritual Principle

Faith and practical wisdom go together.

Key Truth

Trusting God does not mean ignoring common sense.

X. PUSHING TO TOUCH HIM

Mark 3:10 — Many Healed

“For He had healed many, and those suffering from diseases were pushing forward to touch Him.”
“For He had healed many.”
Jesus' healing power was well known.
“Those suffering from diseases were pushing forward to touch Him.”
Sick people pushed through the crowd.
They believed that even touching Him would heal them.
Their need made them desperate.

Cross References

Matthew 14:36
The sick begged Him to let them touch even the edge of His cloak, and everyone who touched it was healed.
Luke 6:19
Everyone tried to touch Him, because power was coming from Him and healing them all.
Matthew 9:20
Just then a woman who had been bleeding for twelve years came up behind Jesus and touched the edge of His cloak.

Spiritual Principle

Desperate need drives people to reach for Jesus.

Application

Are you reaching for Jesus with the same eagerness?

XI. YOU ARE THE SON OF GOD

Mark 3:11 — Evil Spirits Fall Down

“Whenever evil spirits saw Him, they fell down before Him and cried out, “You are the Son of God!””
“Whenever evil spirits saw Him, they fell down before Him.”
The demons bowed before Jesus.
Not in worship, but in fear.
They knew He was their master.
“And cried out, ‘You are the Son of God!’”
The demons knew who Jesus was.
Ironically, they recognized what the religious leaders refused to see.

Cross References

Luke 4:41
Demons also came out of many people, shouting, “You are the Son of God!”

Matthew 8:29
They shouted, “What do You want with us, Son of God? Did You come here to punish us before the right time?”
Acts 16:17
The girl followed Paul and us, shouting, “These men are servants of the Most High God. They are telling you how to be saved.”

Spiritual Principle

Every power in the universe must bow before Jesus.

Key Truth

Demons know who Jesus is; the question is whether we will trust Him.

XII. DO NOT MAKE ME KNOWN

Mark 3:12 — A Strict Order

“But He strictly ordered them not to make Him known.”
Again Jesus silenced the demons.
He did not want their testimony.
He did not want people to think He was working with evil spirits.
And He wanted to reveal Himself in His own way and time.
The full truth about who He was would be shown at the cross and the empty tomb.

Cross References

Matthew 12:16
He warned them not to tell people who He was.
Luke 4:41
He scolded them and would not let them speak, because they knew He was the Christ.
Matthew 9:30
Jesus sternly warned them, “Make sure no one hears about this.”

Spiritual Principle

Jesus chooses how and when He reveals Himself.

Key Truth

Jesus does not need the testimony of darkness to prove He is the Light.

XIII. UP ON THE MOUNTAIN

Mark 3:13 — Those He Wanted

“Jesus went up on a mountain and called to Himself those He wanted, and they came to Him.”
“Jesus went up on a mountain.”
Luke tells us Jesus spent the whole night in prayer before this.
Mountains in the Bible were often places of meeting God.

“And called to Himself those He wanted.”
Jesus chose.
The choice was His.
He called those He wanted.
“And they came to Him.”
They answered the call.

Cross References

Matthew 10:1
> Jesus called His twelve followers together and gave them authority over evil spirits and the power to heal every disease and sickness.

Luke 6:12
> At that time Jesus went up a mountain to pray, and He spent the whole night praying to God.

Luke 9:1
> Jesus called the twelve apostles together and gave them power and authority over all demons and to heal diseases.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus personally chooses and calls those who serve Him.

Key Truth

It is an honor to be called by Jesus, not something we earn.

XIV. TO BE WITH HIM

Mark 3:14 — Appointed Twelve

“He appointed twelve that they might be with Him, and that He might send them out to preach,”
“He appointed twelve.”
Twelve is a meaningful number.
Israel had twelve tribes.
Jesus was forming a new people of God.
“That they might be with Him.”
This was the first purpose.
Before they did anything, they were to be with Jesus.
They would learn by living with Him.
“And that He might send them out to preach.”
The second purpose was mission.
They would be sent out with His message.
First with Him, then sent by Him.

Cross References

Matthew 10:1
> He called the twelve disciples and gave them power to drive out evil spirits and heal every kind of illness.

Luke 6:13
When morning came, He called His followers to Him and chose twelve of them, whom He named apostles.
Luke 9:2
He sent them out to tell about God's kingdom and to heal the sick.

Spiritual Principle

Being with Jesus comes before being sent by Jesus.

Application

Are you spending time with Jesus before trying to serve Him?

XV. AUTHORITY OVER DEMONS

Mark 3:15 — Sent with Power

“with authority to drive out demons.”
Jesus gave His apostles a share in His own authority.
They would not go in their own strength.
They would go with His power.
The kingdom of God was pushing back the kingdom of darkness.
Now Jesus' followers would take part in that work.

Cross References

Matthew 10:1
He gave them authority to drive out evil spirits and to heal every disease.
Luke 9:1
Jesus gave the Twelve power and authority to drive out all demons and to cure diseases.
Luke 10:19
Listen! I have given you power to walk on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy. Nothing will hurt you.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus equips those He sends with His own authority.

Key Truth

The power for ministry comes from Jesus, not from us.

XVI. SIMON, CALLED PETER

Mark 3:16 — The First Name

“These are the twelve He appointed: Simon (to whom He gave the name Peter);”
“Simon.”
Simon is always listed first among the apostles.
He became their leader and spokesman.

“To whom He gave the name Peter.”
Peter means “rock.”
Simon was impulsive and often unstable.
But Jesus saw what he would become.
Jesus gave him a name that described his future, not just his present.

Cross References

Matthew 16:18
Jesus said, “Your name is Peter, which means rock. Upon this rock I will build My church, and even the power of death will never overcome it.”
John 1:42
Andrew brought Simon to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, “You are Simon, son of John. You will be called Cephas,” which means Peter, or rock.
Luke 6:14
He chose Simon, whom He named Peter, and Simon's brother Andrew.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus sees what we can become by His grace.

Key Truth

Jesus names us by what He will make of us.

XVII. SONS OF THUNDER

Mark 3:17 — James and John

“James son of Zebedee and John his brother (to whom He gave the name Boanerges, meaning “Sons of Thunder”);”
“James son of Zebedee and John his brother.”
These two brothers were fishermen with Peter and Andrew.
“To whom He gave the name Boanerges, meaning ‘Sons of Thunder.’”
This nickname probably described their fiery personalities.
Once they wanted to call down fire on a village that rejected Jesus.
But Jesus changed them.
John later became known as the apostle of love.

Cross References

Luke 6:14
He also chose James and John.
Luke 9:54
When His followers James and John saw this, they said, “Lord, do You want us to call down fire from heaven to destroy them?”
Matthew 4:21
Going on from there, Jesus saw James and John, the sons of Zebedee, getting their nets ready in a boat with their father.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus takes strong personalities and shapes them for His glory.

Key Truth

Jesus can turn thunder into love.

XVIII. THE REST OF THE TWELVE

Mark 3:18 — Ordinary Men

“Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Zealot,”
Look at this mix of men.

- **Andrew**, Peter's brother, who brought others to Jesus.
- **Philip**, from Bethsaida.
- **Bartholomew**, often thought to be Nathanael.
- **Matthew**, the former tax collector.
- **Thomas**, later known for his doubts and his great confession.
- **James son of Alphaeus**, about whom little is known.
- **Thaddaeus**, also called Judas son of James.
- **Simon the Zealot**, who may have belonged to a group that wanted to overthrow Rome.

Imagine a tax collector who worked for Rome and a Zealot who hated Rome in the same group.
Only Jesus could bring them together.

Cross References

Matthew 10:2
> These are the names of the twelve apostles: first Simon, called Peter, and his brother Andrew; James son of Zebedee and his brother John.

Luke 6:14
> Simon, whom He named Peter, his brother Andrew, James, John, Philip, and Bartholomew.

Acts 1:13
> Those present were Peter, John, James, Andrew, Philip, Thomas, Bartholomew, Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus unites very different people into one family.

Key Truth

In Christ, former enemies can become brothers.

XIX. JUDAS ISCARIOT

Mark 3:19 — Who Later Betrayed Him

“and Judas Iscariot, who later betrayed Him.”
Judas is always listed last.

And he is always described as the betrayer.
Judas was with Jesus for three years.
He saw the miracles.
He heard the teaching.
He was even trusted with the money.
Yet he betrayed Jesus.
This is a sobering reminder.
Being near Jesus is not the same as belonging to Him.

Cross References

Matthew 10:4
Simon the Zealot and Judas Iscariot, who later handed Jesus over to His enemies.
Luke 6:16
Judas son of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor.
John 6:71
He was talking about Judas, son of Simon Iscariot. Even though Judas was one of the Twelve, he would later turn Jesus over to His enemies.

Spiritual Principle

Being close to Jesus is not the same as truly belonging to Him.

Spiritual Warning

Outward closeness to Jesus can hide a heart that is far from Him.

XX. NOT EVEN TIME TO EAT

Mark 3:20 — The Crowds Return

“Then Jesus entered a house, and again a crowd gathered so that He and His disciples could not even eat.”
“Then Jesus entered a house.”
Jesus returned to Capernaum.
“Again a crowd gathered.”
The crowds would not leave Him alone.
“So that He and His disciples could not even eat.”
Jesus gave Himself fully to the people.
He did not even have time for a meal.

Cross References

Matthew 12:15
Many people followed Jesus, and He healed all who were sick.
Luke 8:19
Jesus' mother and brothers came to see Him, but there were so many people that they could not get near Him.
Mark 2:2
So many people came that there was no room, not even outside the door, and Jesus was teaching them God's message.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus gave Himself fully to serving others.

Key Truth

Love is willing to be inconvenienced.

XXI. OUT OF HIS MIND

Mark 3:21 — His Family's Concern

“When His family heard about this, they went to take charge of Him, saying, “He is out of His mind.””
“When His family heard about this.”
News reached His family in Nazareth.
“They went to take charge of Him.”
They wanted to take Him home.
“Saying, ‘He is out of His mind.’”
They thought Jesus had gone too far.
He was not eating.
He was causing trouble with the leaders.
They were worried, perhaps embarrassed.
At this point His brothers did not yet believe in Him.
Later, after the resurrection, they would.

Cross References

John 7:5
Even His own brothers did not believe in Him.
John 10:20
Many of them said, “He has a demon and is crazy. Why listen to Him?”
Mark 3:31
Then Jesus' mother and brothers arrived. They stood outside and sent someone in to call Him.

Spiritual Principle

Following God's call may be misunderstood, even by those closest to us.

Key Truth

Jesus understands what it feels like when your family does not understand you.

XXII. BY BEELZEBUL

Mark 3:22 — The Scribes' Accusation

“And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem said, “He is possessed by Beelzebul! By the prince of demons He drives out demons.””
“The scribes who came down from Jerusalem.”
These were official religious investigators.

They came from the center of religious power.
“He is possessed by Beelzebul!”
Beelzebul was a name for Satan, the ruler of demons.
“By the prince of demons He drives out demons.”
They could not deny Jesus' power.
So they explained it away.
They said His power came from Satan.
This was a terrible accusation.
They called the work of God the work of the devil.

Cross References

Matthew 12:24
> When the Pharisees heard this, they said, “This man drives out demons only by the power of Beelzebul, the ruler of demons.”

Luke 11:15
> Some of them said, “He uses the power of Beelzebul, the ruler of demons, to drive out demons.”

John 8:48
> The Jewish leaders answered, “Aren't we right to say You are a Samaritan and have a demon?”

Spiritual Principle

Hard hearts will find a way to explain away even clear evidence.

Spiritual Warning

It is dangerous to call the work of God evil.

XXIII. HOW CAN SATAN DRIVE OUT SATAN?

Mark 3:23 — Jesus Answers in Parables

“So Jesus called them over and spoke to them in parables: “How can Satan drive out Satan?”
“So Jesus called them over.”
Jesus did not ignore their accusation.
He answered it directly.
“Spoke to them in parables.”
A **parable** is a short story or picture that teaches a truth.
“How can Satan drive out Satan?”
Jesus shows how foolish their claim is.
Why would Satan fight against his own demons?
It makes no sense.

Cross References

Matthew 12:25
> Jesus knew what they were thinking and said, “Any kingdom that fights against itself will be destroyed.”

Luke 11:17
Jesus knew their thoughts and said, “Every kingdom divided against itself falls apart.”
2 Corinthians 11:14
This is no surprise, because even Satan disguises himself to look like an angel of light.

Spiritual Principle

Truth exposes the foolishness of false accusations.

Key Truth

Satan does not work against himself; only Jesus defeats him.

XXIV. A DIVIDED KINGDOM

Mark 3:24 — Cannot Stand

“If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand.”
This is a simple truth.
A nation at war with itself will fall.
Civil war destroys a country.
If Satan were fighting himself, his kingdom would collapse.

Cross References

Matthew 12:25
Every kingdom that is divided against itself will be ruined.
Luke 11:17
A kingdom that fights against itself will be destroyed.
1 Corinthians 14:33
God does not cause disorder. He brings peace.

Spiritual Principle

Division destroys from within.

Key Truth

What is true of kingdoms is also true of churches.

XXV. A DIVIDED HOUSE

Mark 3:25 — Cannot Stand

“If a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand.”
Jesus applies the same truth to a household.
A family that is always fighting will fall apart.
Unity is necessary for strength.
This truth applies to families, churches, and nations.

Cross References

Matthew 12:25
Any city or family that is divided against itself will not last.
Luke 11:17
A family that fights itself will fall apart.
Amos 3:3
Can two people walk together unless they have agreed to meet?

Spiritual Principle

Unity is essential for any household to stand.

Application

Are you helping to build unity in your family and church?

XXVI. HIS END HAS COME

Mark 3:26 — Satan Cannot Stand

“And if Satan rises up against himself and is divided, he cannot stand; his end has come.”
Jesus finishes the argument.
If Satan were fighting himself, his kingdom would already be finished.
But that is not what was happening.
Something else was going on.
Satan's kingdom was being defeated by someone stronger.

Cross References

Matthew 12:26
If Satan drives out Satan, he is fighting against himself. How then can his kingdom last?
Luke 11:18
If Satan is divided against himself, how can his kingdom stand?
Revelation 12:12
The devil has come down to you full of anger, because he knows his time is short.

Spiritual Principle

Satan's kingdom is coming to an end.

Key Truth

Satan's days are numbered, and he knows it.

XXVII. BINDING THE STRONG MAN

Mark 3:27 — Plundering His House

“No one can enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods unless he first ties up the strong man. Then he can plunder his house.”
This is the key to Jesus' answer.

“A strong man's house.”
The strong man is Satan.
His house is the world under his power.
His goods are the people he holds captive.
“Unless he first ties up the strong man.”
Someone stronger must come and tie him up.
That someone is Jesus.
“Then he can plunder his house.”
Every time Jesus drove out a demon, He was taking back what Satan had stolen.
He was setting captives free.
Jesus is not working with Satan.
He is defeating him.

Cross References

Matthew 12:29
How can anyone break into a strong man's house and carry off his things unless he first ties him up? Then he can take everything.
Luke 11:21
When a strong man with weapons guards his own house, his things are safe.
Isaiah 49:24
Can the spoils be taken away from a warrior? Can captives be rescued from a mighty man?

Spiritual Principle

Jesus is stronger than Satan and sets his captives free.

Key Truth

The strong man has met the Stronger One.

XXVIII. ALL SINS CAN BE FORGIVEN

Mark 3:28 — Every Slander

“Truly I tell you, people can be forgiven all their sins and every slander they utter.”
“Truly I tell you.”
Jesus speaks with solemn authority.
“People can be forgiven all their sins.”
This is amazing grace.
All sins can be forgiven.
No matter how great.
“And every slander they utter.”
Even words spoken against God can be forgiven.
God's mercy is wide.

Cross References

Matthew 12:31
I tell you, every sin and every evil word people speak can be forgiven.

Luke 12:10
Anyone who says something against the Son of Man can be forgiven.
1 John 1:9
When we own up to our sins before God, we can count on Him to do what is right. He will forgive us and make us clean from every wrong thing.

Spiritual Principle

God's forgiveness is wide enough to cover every sin we bring to Him.

Key Truth

No sin is too great for God's grace when we turn to Him.

XXIX. BLASPHEMY AGAINST THE HOLY SPIRIT

Mark 3:29 — An Eternal Sin

“But anyone who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven; they are guilty of an eternal sin.”
This is one of the most serious warnings in the Bible.
“Anyone who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit.”
What does this mean?
Look at the context.
The scribes saw the clear work of the Holy Spirit through Jesus.
And they called it the work of Satan.
Bible students generally understand this sin as a hardened, deliberate rejection of the Spirit's clear witness to Jesus.
It is not a careless word or a single moment of doubt.
It is a settled heart that calls God's light darkness and refuses to repent.
“Will never be forgiven.”
Why can it not be forgiven?
Not because God's grace is too small.
But because the person refuses the only One who can forgive.
A word of comfort:
Those who are worried that they have committed this sin show by their concern that their hearts are not hardened.
Anyone who comes to Jesus in repentance will be received.

Cross References

Matthew 12:32
Anyone who speaks against the Son of Man can be forgiven, but anyone who speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, now or in the age to come.
Luke 12:10
But anyone who insults the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven.

Hebrews 6:4
It is impossible to bring back to repentance those who were once given light, tasted the heavenly gift, and shared in the Holy Spirit.

Spiritual Principle

Hardened rejection of the Spirit's witness to Christ shuts the door to forgiveness.

Spiritual Warning

Do not harden your heart against the Holy Spirit's call to come to Jesus.

XXX. HE HAS AN UNCLEAN SPIRIT

Mark 3:30 — Why Jesus Said This

“He said this because they were saying, “He has an unclean spirit.””
Mark explains why Jesus gave this warning.
The scribes were saying Jesus had an evil spirit.
They looked at the Holy Spirit's work and called it demonic.
That was the danger they were in.

Cross References

Matthew 12:24
The Pharisees said, “He drives out demons only by the power of Beelzebul.”
John 8:48
They said, “Aren't we right to say You are a Samaritan and demon-possessed?”
John 10:20
Many said, “He has a demon and is out of His mind. Why listen to Him?”

Spiritual Principle

Calling God's work evil is a dangerous path.

Key Truth

The warning was given to save people, not just to condemn them.

XXXI. HIS MOTHER AND BROTHERS

Mark 3:31 — Standing Outside

“Then Jesus' mother and brothers came. Standing outside, they sent someone in to call Him.”
“Then Jesus' mother and brothers came.”
His family arrived, as verse 21 said they would.
Christians understand Jesus' “brothers” in different ways.
Many Protestants understand them as younger children born to Mary and Joseph.
Catholic and Orthodox Christians understand them as close relatives, such as cousins or children of Joseph from an earlier marriage.
“Standing outside.”

Notice the picture.
His family was outside.
The crowd of listeners was inside.
“They sent someone in to call Him.”
They wanted Him to come out to them.

Cross References

Matthew 12:46
While Jesus was still talking to the crowd, His mother and brothers stood outside, wanting to speak with Him.
Luke 8:19
Jesus' mother and brothers came to see Him, but they could not get to Him because of the crowd.
John 7:5
For not even His brothers believed in Him.

Spiritual Principle

Being related to Jesus by family does not guarantee being close to Him.

Key Truth

It is possible to stand outside while others sit at Jesus' feet.

XXXII. LOOKING FOR YOU

Mark 3:32 — The Crowd Tells Him

“A crowd was sitting around Him, and they said, “Your mother and brothers are outside looking for You.””
“A crowd was sitting around Him.”
This is the posture of disciples.
Sitting at the feet of the teacher.
“Your mother and brothers are outside looking for You.”
Someone passed on the message.
They probably expected Jesus to stop and go to His family.

Cross References

Matthew 12:47
Someone told Him, “Your mother and brothers are standing outside and want to talk to You.”
Luke 8:20
Someone told Him, “Your mother and brothers are standing outside, wanting to see You.”
John 2:12
After this, Jesus went down to Capernaum with His mother, brothers, and followers.

Spiritual Principle

Those who sit at Jesus' feet are in the place of true discipleship.

Application

Are you sitting at Jesus' feet or standing outside?

XXXIII. WHO ARE MY FAMILY?

Mark 3:33 — A Surprising Question

“Jesus asked, “Who are My mother and My brothers?””
This question would have shocked the crowd.
Family was extremely important in that culture.
Jesus was not rejecting His family.
He loved His mother.
Even on the cross, He made sure she was cared for.
But He was teaching that there is a family even deeper than blood.

Cross References

Matthew 12:48
Jesus answered, “Who is My mother? Who are My brothers?”
Luke 8:21
But He answered them, “My mother and brothers are those who hear God's word and do it.”
2 Corinthians 5:16
So from now on we do not look at anyone the way the world does.

Spiritual Principle

God's family is formed by faith, not by blood.

Key Truth

Jesus loves His earthly family, but His spiritual family is open to all.

XXXIV. HERE ARE MY MOTHER AND BROTHERS

Mark 3:34 — Looking at Those Around Him

“Then He looked at those seated around Him and said, “Here are My mother and My brothers!”
“Then He looked at those seated around Him.”
Picture Jesus looking around the room.
Looking into the faces of those listening to Him.
“Here are My mother and My brothers!”
These ordinary people were His family.
What an honor.
Those who sat at His feet were as close to Him as family.

Cross References

Matthew 12:49
Pointing to His followers, He said, “Look! These are My mother and My brothers.”
Luke 8:21
Jesus answered, “My mother and brothers are the ones who hear God's message and obey it.”

John 15:14
If you obey what I tell you, you are My friends.

Spiritual Principle

Those who follow Jesus are welcomed into His family.

Key Truth

Jesus looks at His followers and says, “This is My family.”

XXXV. WHOEVER DOES THE WILL OF GOD

Mark 3:35 — My Brother, Sister, and Mother

“Whoever does the will of God is My brother and sister and mother.”
“Whoever.”
The door is open to anyone.
Man or woman.
Rich or poor.
Jew or Gentile.
“Does the will of God.”
This is the mark of God's family.
Not just hearing, but doing.
Not just knowing, but obeying.
“Is My brother and sister and mother.”
Jesus calls His followers His closest family.
Notice He includes **sister**.
Women were fully welcomed into His family.

Cross References

Matthew 12:50
Whoever obeys My Father in heaven is family to Me, a brother, a sister, and a mother.
Matthew 7:21
Saying “Lord, Lord” to Me will not get anyone into the kingdom of heaven. Only those who actually obey My Father in heaven will go in.
Hebrews 2:11
Jesus makes people holy, and He and the people He makes holy share the same Father. That is why He is glad to call them His brothers and sisters.

Spiritual Principle

Those who do God's will belong to Jesus' true family.

Application

Is your life marked by doing God's will?

XXXVI. FIVE GREAT LESSONS FROM MARK 3

1. The Sabbath Is for Mercy and Healing

“Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do evil?”

Principle:

Jesus shows that doing good honors God, even on the Sabbath.

2. Hardened Hearts Grieve Jesus

“With anger and deep grief at their hard hearts.”

Principle:

Religion without compassion misses the heart of God.

3. Jesus Has Power Over Satan

“Unless he first ties up the strong man.”

Principle:

His kingdom cannot be overthrown; He binds the strong man.

4. Blasphemy Against the Spirit Is Serious

“Anyone who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven.”

Principle:

Hardened rejection of the Spirit's witness to Christ cannot be forgiven.

5. True Family Is Spiritual

“Whoever does the will of God is My brother and sister and mother.”

Principle:

Those who do God's will are closer to Jesus than blood relatives.

XXXVII. FIVE RESPONSES TO JESUS

Mark 3 shows different ways people responded to Jesus.

1. The Pharisees: Hostility

They watched to accuse Him and plotted to kill Him.

2. The Crowds: Curiosity and Need

They came from everywhere because of what He was doing.

3. His Family: Misunderstanding

They thought He was out of His mind.

4. The Scribes: Rejection

They said His power came from Satan.

5. The Disciples: Following

They came when He called and sat at His feet.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Everyone responds to Jesus in some way; the only right response is to follow Him.

XXXVIII. THE PURPOSE OF THE TWELVE

Verses 13–15 show why Jesus chose the apostles.

1. Called by Jesus

“Called to Himself those He wanted.”

2. To Be With Him

“That they might be with Him.”

3. To Preach

“That He might send them out to preach.”

4. With His Authority

“With authority to drive out demons.”

Key Truth

Every disciple is called first to be with Jesus and then to be sent by Him.

XXXIX. THE STRONG MAN AND THE STRONGER ONE

Verse 27 gives a picture of Jesus' victory over Satan.

The Strong Man

Satan, who held people captive.

His House

The world under his power.

His Goods

People trapped by sin and evil.

The Stronger One

Jesus, who came to tie up the strong man.

The Victory

Jesus sets the captives free.

When It Happened

- Jesus resisted Satan in the wilderness.
- He drove out demons throughout His ministry.
- He defeated Satan fully at the cross and the empty tomb.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

No one is too firmly held by Satan for Jesus to set free.

XL. WHAT MARK 3 TEACHES ABOUT JESUS

He Notices the Suffering

“A man with a shriveled hand was there.”

He Feels Anger and Grief

“With anger and deep grief at their hard hearts.”

He Heals with a Word

“Stretch out your hand.”

He Is the Son of God

“You are the Son of God!”

He Chooses His Followers

“Called to Himself those He wanted.”

He Is Stronger Than Satan

“He first ties up the strong man.”

He Welcomes Us into His Family

“Here are My mother and My brothers!”

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Jesus is the mighty Son of God who defeats Satan and the tender Savior who welcomes us into His family.

XLI. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR PERSONAL STUDY

Question 1

Why were the Pharisees watching Jesus in the synagogue?
To see if He would heal on the Sabbath so they could accuse Him.

Question 2

What question did Jesus ask them?
Whether it was right on the Sabbath to do good or evil, to save life or to kill.

Question 3

Why was Jesus angry and grieved?
Because of their hard hearts that cared more about rules than a suffering man.

Question 4

How did the Pharisees respond to the healing?
They began plotting with the Herodians to kill Jesus.

Question 5

Why did Jesus silence the evil spirits?
He did not want their testimony and would reveal Himself in His own way and time.

Question 6

What were the two main purposes of the Twelve?
To be with Jesus and to be sent out to preach.

Question 7

What does it show that Jesus chose both Matthew and Simon the Zealot?
That Jesus unites very different people into one family.

Question 8

Why did Jesus' family think He was out of His mind?
He was so busy serving the crowds that He did not even eat, and His brothers did not yet believe.

Question 9

How did Jesus answer the charge that He worked by Satan's power?
Satan would not fight against himself; instead, Jesus was tying up the strong man.

Question 10

What is blasphemy against the Holy Spirit?
A hardened, deliberate rejection of the Spirit's clear witness to Jesus, calling God's work evil.

Question 11

Who is Jesus' true family?
Whoever does the will of God.

Question 12

What should Mark 3 change about the way Christians live today?
Mark 3 should cause believers to live:

- Doing good whenever they can.
- Keeping a soft and compassionate heart.
- Spending time with Jesus before serving Him.
- Trusting His power over Satan.
- Living in unity with other believers.
- Taking the Holy Spirit's call seriously.
- Doing the will of God.
- Treating fellow believers as family.

XLII. PERSONAL APPLICATION

Mark 3 asks several important questions.

Do I Do Good When I Can?

Or do I hold back for the wrong reasons?

Is My Heart Hard or Soft?

Would my attitudes grieve Jesus?

Do I Watch Others to Criticize Them?

Or to help them?

Do I Spend Time with Jesus?

Am I with Him before I try to serve Him?

Do I Trust Jesus' Power Over Evil?

Or do I live in fear?

Am I Helping Unity or Division?

In my family and my church?

Am I Open to the Spirit's Call?

Or am I hardening my heart?

Am I Part of Jesus' True Family?

Am I doing the will of God?

XLIII. A CRAWFORD BIBLE STUDY PRINCIPLE

“Inside or Outside?”

At the end of Mark 3, there are two groups of people.
One group was outside.
His own family.
People who had known Him all His life.
They wanted to take Him home.
They thought He had lost His mind.
The other group was inside.
Ordinary people.
Tax collectors, fishermen, and sinners.
They were sitting at His feet, listening.
Jesus looked at the people inside and said, **“Here are My mother and My brothers!”**
This creates a powerful principle.
What brings us close to Jesus is not our background.
It is not our family name.
It is not how long we have been around Him.
It is whether we sit at His feet and do the will of God.

Principle:

Closeness to Jesus is not about where you came from but whether you listen to Him and do God's will.

XLIV. FINAL APPLICATION

Mark Chapter 3 shows Jesus as Lord of all.
Lord of the Sabbath.
Lord over sickness.
Lord over demons.
Lord over Satan himself.
It shows hearts that harden against Him.
It shows crowds that come to Him.
It shows twelve men called to be with Him.
And it shows a new family formed around Him.
Mark 3 therefore reminds us:
Never let rules replace compassion.
Never harden your heart against Jesus.
Never call God's work evil.
Never think Satan is stronger than Jesus.
Never forget that God's family is open to all who do His will.
The church does not need people who stand outside and criticize.
It needs:
Hearts that are soft.
Disciples who are with Jesus.
Messengers who are sent by Him.
And a family that does the will of God.
The same Jesus still calls:
Tell people that Jesus is stronger than Satan.
Tell people that all sins can be forgiven when they come to Him.
Tell people that Jesus welcomes them into His family.
Tell people that doing good always honors God.
And as you live:
Keep a soft heart.
Be with Jesus.
Trust His power.
Do the will of God.

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father,
Thank You that Jesus notices those who suffer.
Thank You that He used the Sabbath to do good and to heal.
Thank You that He is the Son of God, before whom every evil power must bow.
Thank You that He calls people to be with Him and sends them out with His message.
Thank You that He is the Stronger One who ties up the strong man and sets captives free.
Thank You that all sins can be forgiven for those who come to Him.
Thank You that He welcomes all who do Your will into His family.
Forgive us when our hearts have been hard.
Forgive us when we have watched others to criticize instead of to help.
Forgive us when we have caused division.
Forgive us when we have stood outside instead of sitting at Jesus' feet.

Keep our hearts soft and open to Your Spirit.
Help us spend time with Jesus each day.
Give us courage to share His message.
Make us people who do Your will.
And help us love our brothers and sisters in Christ as true family.
“Whoever does the will of God is My brother and sister and mother.”
In Jesus' name, Amen.

Key Verse

“Whoever does the will of God is My brother and sister and mother.” — Mark 3:35

Central Truth

Jesus is Lord over the Sabbath, Satan, and every power, and while hard hearts reject Him, those who follow Him and do God's will become His true family.

Mark 3 in One Sentence

Jesus heals a man's shriveled hand on the Sabbath despite the Pharisees' hard hearts, draws crowds from every direction, chooses twelve apostles to be with Him and preach, answers the charge that He works by Satan by showing that He has come to bind the strong man, warns against blaspheming the Holy Spirit, and declares that whoever does God's will is His true family.

CRAWFORD BIBLE COMMENTARY

BIBLE STUDY

Mark Chapter 4 — Parables of the Kingdom and the Power of Faith

A Verse-by-Verse Bible Study from the Crawford Standard Bible

Introduction

Mark Chapter 4 is a chapter of parables and power.
In Chapter 3, opposition to Jesus grew.
Some rejected Him.
Others followed Him.
Now Jesus explains why people respond so differently to God's word.
He tells the Parable of the Sower.
The same seed falls on four kinds of soil.
The difference is not the seed.
The difference is the soil.
Jesus then teaches about a lamp that must shine.
He teaches about a measure that comes back to us.
He teaches about a seed that grows while the farmer sleeps.
He teaches about a tiny mustard seed that becomes a large plant.
Each parable shows something about how God's kingdom works.
Then the scene changes.
That evening, Jesus and His disciples cross the lake.
A furious storm comes up.
Jesus is asleep.
The disciples are terrified.
Jesus speaks to the wind and the waves, and they obey.
"Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey Him!"
The chapter moves through seven movements:

- The Parable of the Sower (verses 1–9).
- The Purpose of Parables (verses 10–12).
- The Meaning of the Sower (verses 13–20).
- The Lamp and the Measure (verses 21–25).
- The Growing Seed (verses 26–29).
- The Mustard Seed (verses 30–32).
- Jesus Calms the Storm (verses 33–41).

The central truth of Mark 4 is:
God's word bears fruit in hearts that truly receive it, His kingdom grows by His power from small beginnings to a great harvest, and Jesus is Lord even over the storms of nature and of life.

I. TEACHING FROM A BOAT

Mark 4:1 — A Huge Crowd by the Lake

"Jesus began to teach again by the lakeshore. A huge crowd gathered, so He got into a boat and sat in it on the water, while the people stood along the shore."
"Jesus began to teach again by the lakeshore."
Jesus returned to His favorite teaching place.
"A huge crowd gathered."
The crowds were larger than ever.
"So He got into a boat and sat in it on the water."
Teachers in those days usually sat while teaching.
The boat gave Jesus a little space from the crowd.

The water may also have helped carry His voice to the people on the shore.

Cross References

Matthew 13:1
That same day Jesus left the house and sat down beside the lake.
Matthew 13:2
So many people gathered around Him that He got into a boat and sat down, while the crowd stood on the shore.
Luke 8:4
A large crowd was gathering as people came to Jesus from town after town, and He told them a story.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus uses whatever means are needed to bring God's word to people.

Key Truth

Jesus was always looking for ways to help people hear.

II. MANY THINGS IN PARABLES

Mark 4:2 — Teaching with Stories

“He taught them many things using parables. He said:”
A **parable** is a story from everyday life that teaches a spiritual truth.
Jesus used farming, fishing, lamps, seeds, and other familiar things.
Parables make truth memorable.
They invite listeners to think.
They also reveal truth to open hearts and hide it from those who refuse to listen.

Cross References

Matthew 13:3
Then Jesus used stories to teach them many things.
Luke 8:4
When a large crowd gathered, Jesus told them this story.
Psalm 78:2
I will open my mouth and speak in stories. I will tell things that have been hidden since long ago.

Spiritual Principle

God's truth can be found in the ordinary things of life.

Key Truth

Jesus made deep truths simple enough for anyone to remember.

III. LISTEN!

Mark 4:3 — A Farmer Went Out

“Listen! A farmer went out to plant seed.”
“Listen!”
Jesus begins by calling for attention.
The whole chapter is about how we listen.
“A farmer went out to plant seed.”
Everyone knew this scene.
A farmer walked through his field throwing seed by hand.
Seed landed everywhere.
The farmer did not choose where each seed fell.
He scattered it widely.

Cross References

Matthew 13:3
He said, “A farmer went out to plant his seed.”
Luke 8:5
A farmer went out to scatter his seed.
Isaiah 55:10
Rain and snow come down from the sky and water the ground. They make plants grow and give seed to the farmer and bread to eat.

Spiritual Principle

How we listen to God's word matters.

Application

Are you really listening when God's word is taught?

IV. SEED ON THE PATH

Mark 4:4 — The Birds Ate It

“As he scattered it, some fell along the path, and birds came and ate it.”
“Some fell along the path.”
Paths ran through the fields.
People walked on them until the ground was packed hard.
“And birds came and ate it.”
The seed could not sink in.
It just lay on the surface.
Birds swooped down and took it away.

Cross References

Matthew 13:4
As he scattered the seed, some fell beside the road, and birds came and ate it up.

Luke 8:5
Some seed fell along the path. People stepped on it, and the birds ate it.
Matthew 13:19
When someone hears the message about the kingdom but does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was planted in his heart.

Spiritual Principle

A hard heart keeps God's word from sinking in.

Key Truth

The word cannot grow where it cannot get in.

V. SEED ON ROCKY GROUND

Mark 4:5 — Shallow Soil

“Some fell on rocky ground where there wasn't much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow,”
“Some fell on rocky ground.”
In Galilee, much of the land had a layer of rock just under the surface.
“Where there wasn't much soil.”
There was only a thin layer of dirt.
“It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow.”
The seed sprouted fast.
It looked promising.
But the roots had nowhere to go.

Cross References

Matthew 13:5
Some seed fell on rocky places without much dirt. It grew fast because the soil was not deep.
Luke 8:6
Other seed fell on rock.
Matthew 13:20
The seed on rocky ground is the person who hears the message and gladly accepts it right away.

Spiritual Principle

A quick start does not guarantee lasting growth.

Key Truth

Fast is not the same as deep.

VI. SCORCHED BY THE SUN

Mark 4:6 — No Root

“but when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and since they had no root, they withered away.”
“When the sun came up, the plants were scorched.”
The heat came.
“Since they had no root, they withered away.”
Without deep roots, the plants could not reach water.
They dried up and died.
The sun did not cause the problem.
It only revealed the problem.
The real problem was no roots.

Cross References

Matthew 13:6
> But when the sun came up, the plants were burned, and because they did not have deep roots, they dried up.

Luke 8:6
> When it came up, the plants dried up because they had no moisture.

James 1:11
> The sun rises with burning heat and dries up the plant. Its flower falls off, and its beauty is gone.

Spiritual Principle

Trials reveal whether our faith has deep roots.

Application

Are your roots in Christ deep enough to survive the heat?

VII. SEED AMONG THORNS

Mark 4:7 — Choked

“Some fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants, so they produced no grain.”
“Some fell among thorns.”
The soil here was good.
But thorns and weeds were already growing.
“Which grew up and choked the plants.”
The thorns grew faster.
They crowded out the good plants.
They took the sunlight, water, and space.
“So they produced no grain.”
The plants survived, but they produced nothing.
This is perhaps the most dangerous soil.
It looks alive, but it is fruitless.

Cross References

Matthew 13:7
Other seed fell among thorny weeds, which grew up and choked the plants.
Luke 8:7
Some seed fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up with it and choked it.
Jeremiah 4:3
The Lord says, “Break up your hard ground, and do not plant your seed among thorns.”

Spiritual Principle

Competing loves can choke out the fruit of God's word.

Spiritual Warning

A life can look healthy and still bear no fruit.

VIII. SEED ON GOOD SOIL

Mark 4:8 — A Great Harvest

“But some fell on good soil. It grew, increased, and produced a harvest—some thirty, some sixty, and some a hundred times what was planted.”
“But some fell on good soil.”
Finally, the seed found soft, deep, clean ground.
“It grew, increased, and produced a harvest.”
The seed did what it was meant to do.
“Some thirty, some sixty, and some a hundred times.”
An ordinary harvest might be seven or ten times what was planted.
Thirty, sixty, or a hundred times was amazing.
This is the power of God's word in a receptive heart.
Notice also that not everyone produces the same amount.
But all good soil bears fruit.

Cross References

Matthew 13:8
But some seed fell on good ground and produced a crop, some a hundred times more, some sixty, and some thirty.
Luke 8:8
Other seed fell on good soil. It grew and produced a hundred times more.
Genesis 26:12
Isaac planted crops in that land, and that year he harvested a hundred times what he planted, because the Lord blessed him.

Spiritual Principle

God's word produces an abundant harvest in a receptive heart.

Key Truth

All good soil bears fruit, though not all bears the same amount.

IX. EARS TO HEAR

Mark 4:9 — Let Them Hear

“Then Jesus said, “Anyone who has ears to hear, let them hear!””
Everyone has ears.
But not everyone truly hears.
Jesus is calling people to listen with their hearts.
To think about what He said.
To respond.
This saying appears again and again in Jesus' teaching.

Cross References

Matthew 13:9
Whoever has ears should listen.
Luke 8:8
As He said this, He called out, “If you have ears, then listen!”
Revelation 2:7
Anyone who has ears should listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches.

Spiritual Principle

God calls us not only to hear His word but to truly listen.

Application

Are you listening with your heart, not just your ears?

X. ALONE WITH JESUS

Mark 4:10 — They Asked About the Parables

“When Jesus was alone, the twelve disciples and others around Him asked about the parables.”
“When Jesus was alone.”
The crowd went home.
But some stayed.
“The twelve disciples and others around Him.”
Not only the Twelve, but other followers as well.
“Asked about the parables.”
They wanted to understand.
This is the mark of a true disciple.
They came to Jesus with their questions.

Cross References

Matthew 13:10
The followers came to Jesus and asked, “Why do You speak to the people in stories?”
Luke 8:9
His followers asked Him what this story meant.

Matthew 13:36

Then Jesus left the crowd and went into the house. His followers came to Him and said, “Explain to us the story about the weeds in the field.”

Spiritual Principle

Those who want to understand God's word must come to Jesus.

Application

Do you bring your questions about God's word to Jesus in prayer?

XI. THE SECRET OF THE KINGDOM

Mark 4:11 — Given to You

“He said, “To you has been given the secret of the kingdom of God, but to those on the outside, everything is spoken in parables,”
“To you has been given the secret of the kingdom of God.”
A **secret** in the Bible often means something once hidden but now revealed by God.
The secret was that the kingdom of God had come in Jesus.
This truth was given to the disciples as a gift.
“But to those on the outside.”
Those who did not follow Jesus.
“Everything is spoken in parables.”
For them, the parables remained puzzles.
They heard the stories but missed the meaning.

Cross References

Matthew 13:11

Jesus answered, “You have been given the ability to understand the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, but they have not.”

Luke 8:10

He said, “God has let you know the secrets of His kingdom. But to others I speak in stories.”

1 Corinthians 2:7

We speak of God's wisdom, which was hidden in the past. God planned this wisdom for our glory before the world began.

Spiritual Principle

Understanding God's kingdom is a gift given to those who follow Jesus.

Key Truth

The deepest truths are revealed to those who come close to Jesus.

XII. SEEING BUT NOT PERCEIVING

Mark 4:12 — The Words of Isaiah

“so that, ‘they may see but not perceive, and hear but not understand; otherwise they might turn and be forgiven.’””
Jesus quotes Isaiah 6.
God sent Isaiah to preach to people who would not listen.
Their hearts were hardened by their own refusal.
This is a hard verse.
Bible students understand it in this way:
Jesus' parables were a form of judgment on hearts that had already rejected Him.
Those who refused to listen would find the truth hidden.
But those who came to Jesus with open hearts would understand.
The door was never closed to anyone willing to come.

Cross References

Isaiah 6:9
> God said, “Go and tell these people: ‘Keep listening, but you will not understand. Keep looking, but you will not really see.’”

Matthew 13:14
> What Isaiah said is coming true in them: “You will hear and hear but never understand. You will look and look but never see.”

John 12:40
> God has blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts, so that they cannot see with their eyes, understand with their hearts, and turn to Me for healing.

Spiritual Principle

Those who refuse to listen will find the truth hidden, but open hearts will find it revealed.

Spiritual Warning

Continually rejecting God's word can leave a heart unable to understand it.

XIII. DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND?

Mark 4:13 — The Key Parable

“Jesus said to them, “Don't you understand this parable? Then how will you understand any parable?”
Jesus gently corrects His disciples.
They were slow to understand.
“Then how will you understand any parable?”
The Parable of the Sower is the key to all the parables.
It explains how people respond to God's word.
If they understood this, they could understand the rest.

Cross References

Matthew 13:18
Now listen to what the story about the farmer means.
Luke 8:11
This is what the story means: the seed is God's word.
Mark 7:18
Jesus asked them, “Are you also still unable to understand?”

Spiritual Principle

Understanding how we receive God's word is the key to understanding the kingdom.

Key Truth

Jesus is patient with slow learners.

XIV. THE FARMER SOWS THE WORD

Mark 4:14 — The Seed Is God's Word

“The farmer sows the word.”
This is simple and clear.
The seed is God's word.
The farmer is anyone who shares it.
Jesus Himself.
The apostles.
And every believer who tells others about God.
The seed is always good.
The difference is in the soil.

Cross References

Matthew 13:19
The seed is the message about the kingdom.
Luke 8:11
The seed is God's message.
1 Peter 1:23
You have been born again, not from a seed that dies, but from one that lasts forever, through God's living word that never ends.

Spiritual Principle

God's word is the living seed that brings new life.

Key Truth

The seed is good; the question is the soil.

XV. THE PATH: TAKEN AWAY

Mark 4:15 — Satan Takes the Word

“Some people are like seed along the path, where the word is sown. As soon as they hear it, Satan comes and takes away the word that was planted in them.”
“Some people are like seed along the path.”
These are hard-hearted listeners.
The word never sinks in.
“As soon as they hear it, Satan comes.”
Satan is like the birds.
He moves quickly.
“And takes away the word that was planted in them.”
He distracts.
He causes doubt.
He makes people forget.
The word never gets a chance to grow.

Cross References

Matthew 13:19
When people hear the message about the kingdom and do not understand it, the evil one comes and takes away what was planted in their hearts.
Luke 8:12
The seed along the path stands for those who hear, but the devil comes and takes the message from their hearts so they cannot believe and be saved.
2 Corinthians 4:4
The god of this world has blinded the minds of those who do not believe, so they cannot see the light of the good news about Christ's glory.

Spiritual Principle

Satan works to snatch God's word away before it can take root.

Application

What helps you hold on to God's word after you hear it?

XVI. THE ROCKY GROUND: QUICK JOY

Mark 4:16 — Receiving It with Joy

“Others are like seed sown on rocky ground. They hear the word and immediately receive it with joy.”
“They hear the word and immediately receive it with joy.”
These people respond with excitement.
They seem to be the best listeners.
They are happy.
They are eager.

But their response is emotional and shallow.

Cross References

Matthew 13:20
The seed on rocky ground stands for those who hear the message and right away receive it gladly.
Luke 8:13
The seed on rock stands for those who hear the message and receive it with joy.
John 5:35
John was like a burning, shining lamp, and you were happy for a while to enjoy his light.

Spiritual Principle

Joy in hearing God's word is good, but it must lead to deep roots.

Key Truth

Excitement is not the same as commitment.

XVII. NO ROOT

Mark 4:17 — Falling Away in Trouble

“But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away.”
“Since they have no root.”
Their faith never went deep.
“They last only a short time.”
Their joy faded.
“When trouble or persecution comes because of the word.”
Following Jesus brings opposition.
“They quickly fall away.”
When faith costs something, they quit.
Their faith was real enough to start, but not deep enough to last.

Cross References

Matthew 13:21
But they do not let it grow deep roots, so they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the message, they quickly give up.
Luke 8:13
They believe for a while, but when testing comes, they fall away.
Matthew 24:10
At that time many will turn away from their faith, betray one another, and hate one another.

Spiritual Principle

Faith without deep roots cannot survive hardship.

Application

What are you doing to grow deep roots in Christ?

XVIII. AMONG THORNS

Mark 4:18 — They Hear the Word

“Still others are like seed among thorns. They hear the word,”
“They hear the word.”
These people really do hear.
The word gets in.
It even begins to grow.
But something else is growing too.

Cross References

Matthew 13:22
The seed among the thorns stands for those who hear the message.
Luke 8:14
The seed that fell among thorns stands for those who hear, but as they go on their way, they are choked.
1 Timothy 6:9
Those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap. They are caught by many foolish and harmful desires that pull people down into ruin.

Spiritual Principle

Hearing God's word is not enough if other things are allowed to grow alongside it.

Key Truth

The word can be heard and still be crowded out.

XIX. THREE KINDS OF THORNS

Mark 4:19 — Choking the Word

“but the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of riches, and desires for other things choke the word, making it unfruitful.”
Jesus names three thorns.
“The worries of this life.”
Anxiety about everyday things.
Bills, health, family, the future.
“The deceitfulness of riches.”
Money promises security and happiness.
But it lies.
It never satisfies.
“And desires for other things.”
Wanting more and more.
Pleasure, success, possessions.
“Choke the word, making it unfruitful.”
None of these is necessarily evil.

But when they take first place, they choke out God's word.

Cross References

Matthew 13:22
The worries of this life and the lie that money brings happiness choke the message, so it produces nothing.
Luke 8:14
They are choked by worries, riches, and the pleasures of life, and their fruit never matures.
1 Timothy 6:10
Loving money leads to every kind of evil. Some people have wandered away from the faith because they wanted money, and they have caused themselves much pain.

Spiritual Principle

Worries, riches, and desires can choke the fruit of God's word.

Spiritual Warning

The thorns grow slowly and quietly, until the fruit is gone.

XX. GOOD SOIL

Mark 4:20 — Hear, Accept, Produce

“But those who are like seed sown on good soil hear the word, accept it, and produce a crop—thirty, sixty, or a hundredfold.”
Good soil does three things.
“Hear the word.”
They listen.
“Accept it.”
They welcome it.
They believe it.
They let it shape their lives.
“And produce a crop.”
The word bears fruit.
Changed character.
Good works.
Others brought to Christ.
“Thirty, sixty, or a hundredfold.”
Fruit is the mark of a true believer.

Cross References

Matthew 13:23
The seed on good ground stands for those who hear the message and understand it. They produce a crop of thirty, sixty, or even a hundred times more.
Luke 8:15
The seed on good soil stands for those with a good and honest heart, who hear the message, hold on to it, and patiently produce a crop.

James 1:22
Do not only listen to God's word and fool yourselves. Put it into practice.

Spiritual Principle

Hearts that hear, accept, and obey God's word bear lasting fruit.

Application

What kind of soil is your heart right now?

XXI. A LAMP ON A STAND

Mark 4:21 — Not Under a Basket

“Jesus continued, “Do you bring a lamp to put it under a basket or under a bed? No! You put it on a stand.”
Jesus gives another picture.
A small clay oil lamp lit a home.
“Do you bring a lamp to put it under a basket or under a bed?”
That would be foolish.
It would hide the light.
“No! You put it on a stand.”
A lamp is meant to shine.
The truth Jesus brings is not meant to stay hidden.
His followers who receive the light must let it shine.

Cross References

Matthew 5:15
Nobody lights a lamp just to cover it up. They set it up high, where it can light up the whole house.
Luke 8:16
No one lights a lamp and covers it with a bowl or puts it under a bed. Instead, he puts it on a stand so those who come in can see.
Luke 11:33
No one lights a lamp and hides it. Instead, it is put on a stand so people can see when they come in.

Spiritual Principle

The light of God's truth is meant to shine, not to be hidden.

Application

Are you letting the light of Christ shine through your life?

XXII. NOTHING HIDDEN

Mark 4:22 — Brought into the Open

“For nothing is hidden except to be revealed, and nothing concealed except to be brought into the open.”

For now, the truth about Jesus was partly hidden in parables.
But it would not stay hidden.
One day it would be fully revealed.
Through the cross, the resurrection, and the preaching of the gospel.
Also, everything hidden in people's hearts will one day be brought to light.

Cross References

Matthew 10:26
Do not be afraid of them. Everything that is covered up will be shown, and every secret will be made known.
Luke 8:17
Whatever is hidden will be made plain, and every secret will come out into the light.
Luke 12:2
Nothing is covered up that will not be uncovered, and nothing is hidden that will not be made known.

Spiritual Principle

God's truth will be fully revealed in His time.

Key Truth

What is hidden now will one day be seen by all.

XXIII. EARS TO HEAR

Mark 4:23 — Listen Again

“If anyone has ears to hear, let them hear.””
Jesus repeats His call.
This is important.
Listen carefully.
Do not let these truths pass by.

Cross References

Matthew 11:15
Whoever has ears should listen.
Luke 8:8
If you have ears, listen!
Revelation 3:22
If you have ears, listen to what the Spirit is telling the churches.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus calls us again and again to listen with our hearts.

Key Truth

When Jesus repeats something, it is because it matters.

XXIV. PAY ATTENTION TO WHAT YOU HEAR

Mark 4:24 — The Measure You Use

“He also said, “Pay attention to what you hear. With the measure you use, it will be measured to you—and even more.”
“Pay attention to what you hear.”
Listen carefully.
Think about what you are taking in.
“With the measure you use, it will be measured to you.”
The more attention you give God's word, the more understanding you will receive.
“And even more.”
God is generous.
He gives back more than we give.
Those who listen eagerly receive abundantly.

Cross References

Matthew 7:2
> You will be judged in the same way you judge others, and the amount you give to others is the amount you will receive.

Luke 6:38
> When you give to others, gifts will come back to you, packed down, shaken to fit more, and spilling over the top. The size of the scoop you use for others is the size God will use for you.

2 Corinthians 9:6
> Whoever plants a little will harvest a little, and whoever plants a lot will harvest a lot.

Spiritual Principle

The attention we give God's word determines how much we receive from it.

Application

How much attention are you giving to God's word?

XXV. WHOEVER HAS WILL BE GIVEN MORE

Mark 4:25 — Growing or Losing

“Whoever has will be given more; whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken away.””
“Whoever has will be given more.”
Those who receive God's word and act on it will understand more and more.
“Whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken away.”
Those who ignore God's word will lose even the little understanding they had.

Spiritual truth is like a muscle.
Use it, and it grows.
Ignore it, and it weakens.

Cross References

Matthew 13:12
Those who have understanding will be given more, and they will have plenty. But those who do not have, even what they have will be taken from them.
Matthew 25:29
Everyone who has will be given more, and they will have more than enough. But whoever has nothing will lose even what little they have.
Luke 8:18
So be careful how you listen. Whoever has will get more, but whoever does not have will lose even what they think they have.

Spiritual Principle

Those who respond to God's word grow; those who ignore it lose ground.

Key Truth

In the spiritual life, we never stand still.

XXVI. SCATTERING SEED

Mark 4:26 — The Kingdom Is Like This

“Jesus said, “The kingdom of God is like a man who scatters seed on the ground.”
Only Mark records this parable.
It is a simple picture.
A man plants seed in his field.
He does his part.
Then God does His part.

Cross References

1 Corinthians 3:6
My work was to plant, and Apollos poured on the water. But it was God who caused the growth.
1 Corinthians 3:7
So the one who plants and the one who waters are not important. Only God, who makes things grow, is important.
Isaiah 55:10
Just as rain and snow water the earth and make plants grow, giving seed for planting and bread for eating.

Spiritual Principle

Our part is to sow; God's part is to make it grow.

Application

Are you faithfully sowing the seed of God's word?

XXVII. HE DOESN'T KNOW HOW

Mark 4:27 — Night and Day

“Night and day, whether he sleeps or gets up, the seed sprouts and grows, though he doesn't know how.”
“Night and day, whether he sleeps or gets up.”
The farmer goes about his life.
He sleeps.
He wakes.
“The seed sprouts and grows.”
The growth continues even when he is not watching.
“Though he doesn't know how.”
He cannot explain it.
He cannot control it.
God's kingdom grows in a mysterious way.
We cannot force spiritual growth.
We cannot fully explain how a heart changes.
But God is at work.

Cross References

Ecclesiastes 11:5
> You do not know how the wind blows or how a baby grows inside its mother. In the same way, you cannot understand the work of God, who makes everything.

John 3:8
> You can hear the wind, but you cannot tell where it started or where it is headed. That is how it is when the Spirit gives someone new life.

1 Corinthians 3:7
> Neither the planter nor the waterer is anything; only God, who makes it grow.

Spiritual Principle

God's kingdom grows in ways we cannot see or explain.

Key Truth

You can rest at night, because God is still working.

XXVIII. FIRST THE STALK

Mark 4:28 — By Itself

“The soil produces grain by itself—first the stalk, then the head, then the full grain in the head.”
“The soil produces grain by itself.”
The Greek word here is the source of our word **“automatic.”**
The growth happens without human effort.
It is God's power at work.
“First the stalk, then the head, then the full grain.”

Growth happens in stages.
It takes time.
Spiritual growth is the same.
We should be patient with ourselves and with others.

Cross References

Genesis 1:12
> The land produced plants. Plants grew seeds, and trees grew fruit with seeds inside, each after its own kind. And God saw that it was good.

James 5:7
> Brothers and sisters, be patient until the Lord comes. See how the farmer waits patiently for the valuable crop to grow, waiting for the autumn and spring rains.

Isaiah 55:10
> The rain and snow fall and water the earth so that it grows plants and gives seed and bread.

Spiritual Principle

Spiritual growth happens in stages, and it takes time.

Application

Are you patient with growth in yourself and others?

XXIX. THE HARVEST HAS COME

Mark 4:29 — Putting in the Sickle

“As soon as the grain is ripe, he puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come.””
“As soon as the grain is ripe.”
When the time is right.
“He puts in the sickle.”
The farmer harvests.
“Because the harvest has come.”
The harvest is a picture of the end of the age.
God's kingdom will reach its full harvest.
God's work, though slow and hidden now, will be completed.

Cross References

Joel 3:13
> Swing the sickle, because the harvest is ready.

Revelation 14:15
> Another angel came out of the temple and called loudly to the One sitting on the cloud, “Swing Your sickle and gather the harvest, because the time has come and the earth's harvest is ripe.”

Matthew 13:39
> The harvest is the end of the age, and the workers who gather it are angels.

Spiritual Principle

God's kingdom will reach its full harvest at the right time.

Key Truth

What God begins, He will finish.

XXX. WHAT IS THE KINGDOM LIKE?

Mark 4:30 — Another Parable

“Again He said, “What is the kingdom of God like? What parable shall we use to describe it?”
Jesus invites His listeners to think with Him.
The kingdom of God is so great that no single picture can describe it.
So He gives another parable.

Cross References

Matthew 13:31
Jesus told them another story: “The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed.”
Luke 13:18
Then Jesus said, “What is God's kingdom like? What can I compare it to?”
Matthew 13:24
Jesus told them another story: “The kingdom of heaven is like a man who planted good seed in his field.”

Spiritual Principle

God's kingdom is so great that it takes many pictures to describe it.

Key Truth

The kingdom of God is bigger than any one story can tell.

XXXI. A MUSTARD SEED

Mark 4:31 — The Smallest Seed

“It is like a mustard seed, which is the smallest of all seeds when planted in the ground.”
“It is like a mustard seed.”
A mustard seed is tiny, about the size of a pinhead.
“The smallest of all seeds when planted in the ground.”
Among the seeds farmers commonly planted in that land, it was known as the smallest.
It was a common way of describing something very small.
The kingdom of God began small.
A carpenter from Nazareth.
Twelve ordinary men.
It did not look impressive.

Cross References

Matthew 13:31
The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone planted in a field.

Luke 13:19
It is like a mustard seed that a man planted in his garden.
Matthew 17:20
Even if your faith is no bigger than a tiny mustard seed, you can tell this mountain to go somewhere else, and it will go.

Spiritual Principle

God's kingdom often begins in small and unimpressive ways.

Key Truth

Never despise small beginnings.

XXXII. THE LARGEST OF GARDEN PLANTS

Mark 4:32 — Birds Nest in Its Shade

“Yet when it grows, it becomes the largest of garden plants, with such large branches that the birds of the air can nest in its shade.””
“Yet when it grows, it becomes the largest of garden plants.”
A mustard plant could grow eight to twelve feet tall.
“With such large branches.”
From a tiny seed, a large plant grew.
“That the birds of the air can nest in its shade.”
In the Old Testament, a tree with birds in its branches pictured a great kingdom that sheltered many nations.
God's kingdom would grow to welcome people from every nation.
From twelve disciples, the church has spread around the world.

Cross References

Matthew 13:32
It is the smallest of seeds, but when it grows, it becomes larger than the other garden plants and turns into a tree, so that birds come and rest in its branches.
Ezekiel 17:23
I will plant it on Israel's high mountain. It will grow branches and bear fruit and become a great cedar. Every kind of bird will nest under it.
Daniel 4:12
Its leaves were beautiful, and it had plenty of fruit. Wild animals rested in its shade, and birds lived in its branches.

Spiritual Principle

God's kingdom grows from small beginnings to bless all nations.

Key Truth

What begins small in God's hands can grow beyond anything we imagine.

XXXIII. AS MUCH AS THEY COULD UNDERSTAND

Mark 4:33 — Many Parables

“Jesus taught the word with many parables like these, as much as the people could understand.”
“Jesus taught the word with many parables like these.”
Mark gave only a few examples.
Jesus told many more.
“As much as the people could understand.”
Jesus was a wise teacher.
He taught people at their level.
He gave them what they could handle.

Cross References

Matthew 13:34
Jesus used stories to tell all these things to the people.
John 16:12
I have much more to tell you, but it is too much for you to take in right now.
Psalm 78:2
I will teach you with stories. I will talk about mysteries from the past.

Spiritual Principle

God teaches us patiently, as much as we are able to receive.

Key Truth

Jesus meets people where they are.

XXXIV. HE EXPLAINED EVERYTHING

Mark 4:34 — Alone with His Disciples

“He did not speak to them without using a parable, but when alone with His disciples, He explained everything.”
“He did not speak to them without using a parable.”
In public, Jesus taught mainly in parables.
“But when alone with His disciples, He explained everything.”
Those who stayed close received the full explanation.
There is a blessing in spending time alone with Jesus.

Cross References

Matthew 13:34
He always used stories to teach the crowds.

Matthew 13:35
This happened to fulfill what the prophet said: “I will speak in stories. I will tell things that have been secret since the world was made.”
John 16:25
I have told you these things using word pictures. But a time is coming when I will speak to you plainly about the Father.

Spiritual Principle

Those who draw close to Jesus receive deeper understanding.

Application

Are you spending time alone with Jesus to learn from Him?

XXXV. LET'S GO TO THE OTHER SIDE

Mark 4:35 — That Evening

“That evening He said to His disciples, “Let's go over to the other side of the lake.””
“That evening.”
After a long day of teaching.
“Let's go over to the other side of the lake.”
Jesus gave a clear plan.
They were going to the other side.
Remember these words.
Jesus did not say, “Let's go to the middle of the lake and sink.”
He said they were going across.

Cross References

Matthew 8:18
When Jesus saw the crowd around Him, He told His followers to go to the other side of the lake.
Matthew 8:23
Jesus got into a boat, and His followers went with Him.
Luke 8:22
One day Jesus and His followers got into a boat. He said, “Let's cross the lake.” So they started across.

Spiritual Principle

When Jesus gives a promise, He will see it through.

Key Truth

If Jesus says you are going to the other side, you will get there.

XXXVI. JUST AS HE WAS

Mark 4:36 — Leaving the Crowd

“Leaving the crowd behind, they took Him along in the boat, just as He was. Other boats were with Him too.”
“Leaving the crowd behind.”
They left the crowd at the shore.
“They took Him along in the boat, just as He was.”
Jesus was probably exhausted after teaching all day.
They left without preparing.
“Other boats were with Him too.”
Other people were also on the water.
The storm would affect them all.

Cross References

Matthew 8:23
When Jesus got into the boat, His followers went with Him.
Luke 8:22
They got into a boat and set out across the lake.
John 6:22
The next day, the crowd on the other side of the lake saw that only one boat had been there.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus shares in the journeys of His followers.

Key Truth

When Jesus is in your boat, you are never alone.

XXXVII. A FURIOUS STORM

Mark 4:37 — Nearly Swamped

“A furious storm came up, and the waves broke over the boat so that it was nearly swamped.”
“A furious storm came up.”
The Sea of Galilee is surrounded by hills.
Cool winds can rush down suddenly and stir up violent storms.
“The waves broke over the boat.”
Water poured in.
“So that it was nearly swamped.”
The boat was filling up.
Several of these men were experienced fishermen.
If they were afraid, this was a serious storm.
Being with Jesus does not mean we will never face storms.

Cross References

Matthew 8:24
Suddenly a terrible storm came up on the lake, so that waves covered the boat.
Luke 8:23
A strong wind blew down on the lake, and the boat began to fill with water. They were in danger.
Jonah 1:4
But the Lord sent a great wind on the sea, and there was such a violent storm that the ship was about to break apart.

Spiritual Principle

Following Jesus does not keep us from storms, but it keeps us with Him in them.

Key Truth

The disciples were in the storm because they obeyed Jesus.

XXXVIII. SLEEPING ON A CUSHION

Mark 4:38 — Don't You Care?

“Jesus was in the back, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke Him and said, “Teacher, don't you care if we drown?””
“Jesus was in the back, sleeping on a cushion.”
What a picture.
Jesus was truly human.
He was tired.
He slept.
And He was at peace in the storm.
“The disciples woke Him.”
They were desperate.
“Teacher, don't you care if we drown?”
This is the cry of fear.
They thought His sleep meant He did not care.
But Jesus' peace was not a lack of care.
It was perfect trust in the Father.

Cross References

Matthew 8:24
But Jesus was sleeping.
Luke 8:23
As they sailed, Jesus fell asleep.
Jonah 1:5
Jonah had gone down into the bottom of the ship, where he lay down and fell into a deep sleep.

Spiritual Principle

God's silence in our storms is not a sign that He does not care.

Application

Have you ever wondered if God cares about your storm?

XXXIX. PEACE! BE STILL!

Mark 4:39 — Completely Calm

“He got up, rebuked the wind, and said to the waves, “Peace! Be still!” The wind died down, and it was completely calm.”
“He got up.”
Jesus rose.
“Rebuked the wind.”
He spoke to the wind the way He spoke to demons.
“And said to the waves, ‘Peace! Be still!’”
Three simple words in Mark's language.
The literal sense is “Be silent! Be muzzled!”
“The wind died down, and it was completely calm.”
Normally, even after the wind stops, the waves keep rolling for a while.
But this calm was immediate and complete.
Only the Creator has this kind of power.

Cross References

Matthew 8:26
Then He got up and gave orders to the winds and the waves, and everything became completely calm.
Luke 8:24
He got up and commanded the wind and the rough water. They stopped, and everything was calm.
Psalm 107:29
He made the storm be still and calmed the waves.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus has authority over the forces of nature.

Key Truth

The storm that terrified the disciples obeyed Jesus with one word.

XL. WHY ARE YOU SO AFRAID?

Mark 4:40 — Still No Faith?

“He said to His disciples, “Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?””
“Why are you so afraid?”
Jesus asked a searching question.
They had reason to be afraid of the storm.
But they had Jesus in the boat.
“Do you still have no faith?”

They had seen Him heal the sick and drive out demons.
Yet they still did not trust Him in the storm.
Fear and faith struggle against each other.
Faith remembers who is in the boat.

Cross References

Matthew 8:26
Jesus asked them, “Why are you afraid? Your faith is so small!”
Luke 8:25
He asked them, “Where is your faith?”
Matthew 14:31
Right away Jesus reached out His hand and caught Peter. He said, “Your faith is so small. Why did you doubt?”

Spiritual Principle

Faith trusts Jesus even when the storm is raging.

Application

What storm in your life is Jesus asking you to trust Him with?

XLI. WHO IS THIS?

Mark 4:41 — Even the Wind and Waves Obey

“They were terrified and asked each other, “Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey Him!””
“They were terrified.”
Before, they were afraid of the storm.
Now they were in awe of Jesus.
This was a holy fear.
“Who is this?”
This is the great question of the Gospel of Mark.
Who is Jesus?
“Even the wind and the waves obey Him!”
In the Old Testament, only God controls the sea.
The answer to their question is clear.
Jesus is God.

Cross References

Matthew 8:27
The men were amazed and said, “What kind of man is this? Even the wind and the waves obey Him!”
Luke 8:25
They were afraid and amazed. They said to each other, “Who is this? He gives orders to the wind and the water, and they obey Him!”
Psalm 89:9
You rule over the raging sea. When its waves rise up, You calm them.

Spiritual Principle

The One who calms the storm is the Lord of all creation.

Key Truth

The question “Who is this?” has only one answer: Jesus is Lord.

XLII. FIVE GREAT LESSONS FROM MARK 4

1. The Word of God Must Be Received Deeply

“Those who are like seed sown on good soil hear the word, accept it, and produce a crop.”

Principle:

Fruit comes when the heart is soft and ready.

2. Faithfulness Brings More

“With the measure you use, it will be measured to you—and even more.”

Principle:

The attention you give God's word will determine what you receive.

3. God's Kingdom Grows Mysteriously

“The seed sprouts and grows, though he doesn't know how.”

Principle:

Like a seed, the kingdom grows beyond human control or understanding.

4. Small Beginnings Can Yield Great Results

“It is like a mustard seed.”

Principle:

God's work can grow far beyond what anyone expects.

5. Jesus Has Authority Over Nature

“Even the wind and the waves obey Him!”

Principle:

Even storms obey Him, reminding us to trust His power over our fears.

XLIII. THE FOUR SOILS

The Parable of the Sower describes four kinds of hearts.

1. The Hard Path

- The word does not sink in.
- Satan snatches it away.
- Result: no growth.

2. The Rocky Ground

- The word is received with joy.
- But it has no root.
- Result: quick growth, quick falling away.

3. The Thorny Ground

- The word grows.
- But worries, riches, and desires choke it.
- Result: life, but no fruit.

4. The Good Soil

- The word is heard and accepted.
- It takes deep root.
- Result: an abundant harvest.

How to Become Good Soil

- Soften your heart through humility and prayer.
- Grow deep roots through daily time in God's word.
- Pull out the thorns of worry and greed.
- Obey what you hear.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The seed is always good; the question is always the soil.

XLIV. THREE PARABLES OF GROWTH

Mark 4 gives three pictures of how God's kingdom grows.

The Sower

The kingdom grows where God's word is received.

The Growing Seed

The kingdom grows by God's power, even when we cannot see it.

The Mustard Seed

The kingdom grows from small beginnings to great size.

Key Truth

God's kingdom grows through His word, by His power, beyond our expectations.

XLV. JESUS IN THE STORM

Verses 35–41 teach important lessons about storms in life.

Storms Come Even When We Obey

The disciples were in the storm because they followed Jesus' command.

Jesus Is in the Boat

He did not send them alone.

Jesus Is at Peace

His rest showed perfect trust in the Father.

Jesus Cares

His sleep did not mean He did not care.

Jesus Has Authority

One word from Him calmed the storm.

Jesus Calls Us to Faith

“Why are you so afraid?”

Jesus Is Lord

“Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey Him!”

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The storm is never stronger than the One who is in the boat with you.

XLVI. WHAT MARK 4 TEACHES ABOUT JESUS

He Is the Great Teacher

“He taught them many things using parables.”

He Is the Sower of the Word

“The farmer sows the word.”

He Reveals the Secret of the Kingdom

“To you has been given the secret of the kingdom of God.”

He Explains His Word to His Followers

“When alone with His disciples, He explained everything.”

He Was Truly Human

“Sleeping on a cushion.”

He Is Lord Over Creation

“Peace! Be still!”

He Is God

“Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey Him!”

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Jesus is fully human, tired enough to sleep in a storm, and fully God, powerful enough to stop it.

XLVII. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR PERSONAL STUDY

Question 1

What is a parable?
A story from everyday life that teaches a spiritual truth.

Question 2

What does the seed represent in the Parable of the Sower?
God's word.

Question 3

What do the four soils represent?
Four different kinds of hearts that hear God's word.

Question 4

What happens to seed on the path?
Satan takes it away before it can grow.

Question 5

Why did the seed on rocky ground wither?

It had no root, so it could not survive trouble and persecution.

Question 6

What three thorns choke the word?
The worries of this life, the deceitfulness of riches, and desires for other things.

Question 7

What marks the good soil?
It hears the word, accepts it, and produces fruit.

Question 8

What does the lamp on the stand teach?
The truth of God is meant to shine, not to be hidden.

Question 9

What does the Parable of the Growing Seed teach?
God's kingdom grows by His power in ways we cannot see or explain.

Question 10

What does the mustard seed teach?
God's kingdom begins small but grows into something great that shelters many.

Question 11

Why did the disciples think Jesus did not care?
Because He was asleep while the storm raged.

Question 12

What should Mark 4 change about the way Christians live today?
Mark 4 should cause believers to live:

- Listening carefully to God's word.
- Growing deep roots in Christ.
- Pulling out the thorns of worry and greed.
- Bearing fruit for God.
- Letting their light shine.
- Sowing the word and trusting God for the growth.
- Not despising small beginnings.
- Trusting Jesus in every storm.

XLVIII. PERSONAL APPLICATION

Mark 4 asks several important questions.

What Kind of Soil Am I?

Hard, rocky, thorny, or good?

Do I Truly Listen?

Or does God's word go in one ear and out the other?

How Deep Are My Roots?

Would my faith survive a hard trial?

What Thorns Are Growing in My Heart?

Worry? Money? Other desires?

Is My Light Shining?

Or am I hiding it?

Am I Sowing the Seed?

Am I sharing God's word with others?

Am I Patient with Growth?

In myself and others?

Do I Trust Jesus in My Storms?

Or do I wonder if He cares?

XLIX. A CRAWFORD BIBLE STUDY PRINCIPLE

“The Same Seed, Different Soil”

The farmer in Jesus' parable did not use different seed.
He used the same seed in every part of the field.
The path got the same seed as the good soil.
The rocky ground got the same seed as the good soil.
The thorny ground got the same seed as the good soil.
But the results were completely different.
Why?
Because of the soil.
Many people hear the same sermon.
Read the same Bible.
Sit in the same church.
But some grow and bear fruit, and others do not.

The difference is not the seed.
The difference is the heart.
This creates a powerful principle.
We cannot change the seed.
But by God's grace, we can prepare the soil.
We can ask God to soften our hearts, deepen our roots, and remove the thorns.

Principle:

The power is in the seed, but the harvest depends on the heart.

L. FINAL APPLICATION

Mark Chapter 4 teaches us how to receive God's word and how to trust God's Son.
It shows four kinds of hearts.
It calls us to let our light shine.
It reminds us to listen carefully.
It shows that God's kingdom grows by His power.
It shows that small beginnings can become something great.
And it shows that Jesus is Lord even over the storm.
Mark 4 therefore reminds us:
Never let your heart grow hard.
Never be content with shallow faith.
Never let the thorns choke the word.
Never hide your light.
Never despise small beginnings.
Never forget who is in your boat.
The church does not need people who only hear the word.
It needs:
Hearts that are good soil.
Lights that shine.
Sowers who scatter the seed.
And disciples who trust Jesus in the storm.
The same Jesus still calls:
Tell people that God's word can change their lives.
Tell people that God's kingdom is growing.
Tell people that no beginning is too small for God.
Tell people that Jesus can calm any storm.
And as you live:
Listen carefully.
Grow deep roots.
Let your light shine.
Trust Jesus in the storm.

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father,
Thank You for the good seed of Your word.
Thank You that Your word has the power to bring new life and great fruit.

Thank You that You reveal the secret of Your kingdom to those who follow Jesus.
Thank You that Your kingdom grows by Your power, even when we cannot see it.
Thank You that You can take small beginnings and make them great.
Thank You that Jesus is in the boat with us in every storm.
Thank You that even the wind and the waves obey Him.
Forgive us when our hearts have been hard.
Forgive us when our faith has been shallow.
Forgive us when we have let worries, riches, and desires choke Your word.
Forgive us when we have hidden our light.
Forgive us when we have been afraid instead of trusting You.
Make our hearts good soil.
Help our roots grow deep in Christ.
Pull out every thorn that chokes Your word.
Let our lives produce a harvest for Your glory.
And in every storm, help us remember who is in our boat.
“Peace! Be still!”
In Jesus' name, Amen.

Key Verse

“But those who are like seed sown on good soil hear the word, accept it, and produce a crop—thirty, sixty, or a hundredfold.” — Mark 4:20

Central Truth

God's word bears fruit in hearts that truly receive it, His kingdom grows by His power from small beginnings to a great harvest, and Jesus is Lord even over the storms of nature and of life.

Mark 4 in One Sentence

Jesus teaches in parables that God's word bears fruit only in hearts that truly receive it, that His light must shine, that His kingdom grows by God's power from tiny beginnings into something great, and then calms a furious storm with a word, leaving His disciples asking, “Who is this?”

Mark Chapter 5 —
Deliverance, Healing, and Resurrection

A Verse-by-Verse Bible Study from the Crawford Standard Bible

Introduction

Mark Chapter 5 continues right where Chapter 4 ended.
Jesus had just calmed a furious storm.
The disciples asked, **“Who is this?”**
Chapter 5 gives a powerful answer.
Jesus shows His authority over three great enemies.

- Demons.
- Disease.
- Death.

First, Jesus meets a man controlled by many demons.
He lived among the tombs.
No chains could hold him.
Jesus sets him free with a word.
Then Jesus crosses back over the lake.
A synagogue leader named Jairus begs Him to come heal his dying daughter.
On the way, a woman who had been bleeding for twelve years touches His cloak and is healed.
But the delay seems costly.
Word comes that Jairus' daughter has died.
Jesus says, **“Don't be afraid; just believe.”**
Then He takes the girl by the hand and raises her from the dead.
In every scene, Jesus meets people at their lowest point.
A man no one could help.
A woman no doctor could heal.
A father whose child was gone.
And Jesus restores each one.
The chapter moves through two movements:

- Jesus Heals a Demon-Possessed Man (verses 1–20).
- Jesus Heals a Woman and Raises a Girl (verses 21–43).

The central truth of Mark 5 is:
Jesus has complete authority over demons, disease, and death, and He uses that power with compassion to restore those whom no one else can help.

I. THE OTHER SIDE OF THE LAKE

Mark 5:1 — The Region of the Gadarenes

“They arrived on the other side of the lake, in the region of the Gadarenes.”
“They arrived on the other side of the lake.”

Jesus said they would cross to the other side.
Despite the storm, they arrived.
“In the region of the Gadarenes.”
This was on the eastern side of the Sea of Galilee.
Different ancient copies and Gospels name the area slightly differently, using the names of nearby towns.
It was a mostly Gentile region.
The presence of a large herd of pigs shows this.
Jesus was reaching beyond Israel.

Cross References

Matthew 8:28
> When Jesus came to the other side of the lake, into the area of the Gadarenes, two men with demons came out of the burial caves to meet Him.

Luke 8:26
> Jesus and His followers sailed to the area of the Gerasenes, across the lake from Galilee.

Matthew 9:1
> Jesus got into a boat and went back across the lake to His own town.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus crosses every boundary to reach those in need.

Key Truth

Jesus came through a storm to reach one man.

II. FROM THE TOMBS

Mark 5:2 — A Man with an Unclean Spirit

“As soon as Jesus stepped out of the boat, a man with an unclean spirit came from the tombs to meet Him.”
“As soon as Jesus stepped out of the boat.”
Jesus barely had time to set foot on shore.
“A man with an unclean spirit.”
This man was controlled by evil spirits.
“Came from the tombs.”
Tombs were often caves cut into the hills.
To Jews, tombs were places of uncleanness and death.
This man lived in the place of the dead.
Matthew mentions two men.
Mark and Luke focus on the one who stood out and later told his story.

Cross References

Matthew 8:28
> Two men who had demons in them came out of the tombs. They were so violent that no one could travel on that road.

Luke 8:27
As Jesus stepped onto the shore, a man from the town met Him. He had demons and had not worn clothes for a long time. He lived in the tombs, not in a house.
Isaiah 65:4
They sit among the graves and spend the night in secret places. They eat pig meat.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus goes to the darkest places to bring light.

Key Truth

No place is too dark for Jesus to enter.

III. NO ONE COULD BIND HIM

Mark 5:3 — Living Among the Tombs

“This man lived among the tombs, and no one could bind him anymore, not even with chains.”
“This man lived among the tombs.”
He had been driven away from normal life.
He had no home.
No family around him.
“No one could bind him anymore, not even with chains.”
People had tried to control him.
But nothing worked.
Human strength could not help him.

Cross References

Luke 8:27
He had lived in the burial caves, not in a house, for a long time.
Psalm 107:10
Some people sat in darkness and deep gloom, held as prisoners in iron chains and misery.
Judges 16:9
But Samson snapped the ropes as easily as a string breaks when it touches fire.

Spiritual Principle

Some bondage is too strong for any human power to break.

Key Truth

What chains cannot control, Christ can set free.

IV. NO ONE STRONG ENOUGH

Mark 5:4 — Chains and Shackles Broken

“Many times he had been bound hand and foot, but he tore the chains apart and broke the shackles; no one was strong enough to subdue him.”

“Many times he had been bound hand and foot.”
People had tried again and again.
“But he tore the chains apart and broke the shackles.”
The evil spirits gave him terrible strength.
“No one was strong enough to subdue him.”
He was beyond human help.
Remember the strong man in Mark 3.
Here was the strong man's captive.
And the Stronger One had arrived.

Cross References

Luke 8:29
Many times the demon had taken hold of him. Even when he was chained hand and foot and guarded, he broke the chains and was driven by the demon into lonely places.
Judges 16:9
He broke the ropes as if they were thread burned by a flame.
Psalm 107:14
He brought them out of the darkness and deep gloom and broke their chains apart.

Spiritual Principle

Where human strength fails, Jesus' power prevails.

Key Truth

No one was strong enough to tame him, but Jesus was strong enough to free him.

V. CRYING OUT NIGHT AND DAY

Mark 5:5 — Cutting Himself

“Night and day he cried out among the tombs and in the hills, cutting himself with stones.”
“Night and day he cried out.”
His torment never stopped.
He had no rest.
“Among the tombs and in the hills.”
He wandered in lonely places.
“Cutting himself with stones.”
He was hurting himself.
This shows the destructive work of evil.
Satan does not only attack God.
He seeks to destroy people made in God's image.
A word of care for today:
Not everyone who struggles with self-harm or deep distress is under demonic control.
Many people today suffer from real pain and illness of the mind and heart.
Anyone who is hurting this way should reach out for help from people they trust, their church, and trained professionals.
Jesus cares deeply for those who are hurting, and help is available.

Cross References

Luke 8:29
The demon often seized him and drove him out into the wild places.
1 Kings 18:28
So they shouted louder and cut themselves with swords and spears, as was their custom, until blood flowed.
Leviticus 19:28
Do not cut your bodies for the dead or put tattoo marks on yourselves. I am the Lord.

Spiritual Principle

Evil seeks to destroy, but Jesus comes to restore.

Key Truth

Jesus sees the pain that others turn away from.

VI. HE RAN AND BOWED

Mark 5:6 — Before Jesus

“When he saw Jesus from a distance, he ran and bowed before Him,”
“When he saw Jesus from a distance.”
The man noticed Jesus even from far away.
“He ran and bowed before Him.”
This is surprising.
The demons in him knew who Jesus was.
They could not resist bowing.
Perhaps also the man himself was reaching for help.
Every power must one day bow before Jesus.

Cross References

Luke 8:28
When he saw Jesus, he cried out, fell down in front of Him, and shouted.
Matthew 8:29
They shouted, “What do You want with us, Son of God?”
Philippians 2:10
One day, when the name of Jesus is spoken, everyone in heaven, on earth, and below the earth will fall to their knees before Him.

Spiritual Principle

Every power in the universe must bow before Jesus.

Key Truth

The man ran toward the only One who could help him.

VII. SON OF THE MOST HIGH GOD

Mark 5:7 — Don't Torment Me

“and cried out in a loud voice, “What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? Swear to God you won't torment me!””
“What do you want with me, Jesus?”
The demon was afraid of Jesus.
“Son of the Most High God.”
The demon knew exactly who Jesus was.
Most High God was a title often used by Gentiles for the true God.
“Swear to God you won't torment me!”
What irony.
A demon asking Jesus to swear by God.
The tormentor was afraid of being tormented.

Cross References

Luke 8:28
> He shouted, “What do You want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? Please, do not hurt me!”

Matthew 8:29
> “Did You come here to punish us before the right time?”

James 2:19
> So you believe God is one? That is fine. But the demons believe the same thing, and it makes them tremble.

Spiritual Principle

Demons know who Jesus is and fear Him.

Spiritual Warning

Knowing who Jesus is without trusting Him is not saving faith.

VIII. COME OUT OF THIS MAN

Mark 5:8 — Jesus' Command

“For Jesus had already said, “Come out of this man, you unclean spirit!””
Mark explains why the demon cried out.
Jesus had already commanded it to leave.
The demon was not in control.
Jesus was.

Cross References

Luke 8:29
> For Jesus had commanded the evil spirit to come out of the man.

Mark 1:25
Jesus said firmly, “Be quiet! Come out of him!”
Acts 16:18
Paul turned and said to the spirit, “In the name of Jesus Christ I order you to come out of her!” At that moment the spirit left her.

Spiritual Principle

The word of Jesus has power over every evil spirit.

Key Truth

When Jesus speaks, evil must obey.

IX. MY NAME IS LEGION

Mark 5:9 — For We Are Many

“Then Jesus asked him, “What is your name?” The man replied, “My name is Legion, for we are many.””
“What is your name?”
Jesus asked a personal question.
“My name is Legion.”
A **legion** was a Roman army unit of several thousand soldiers.
“For we are many.”
This man was not troubled by one demon but by many.
His condition was extreme.
But not too extreme for Jesus.

Cross References

Luke 8:30
Jesus asked him, “What is your name?” He answered, “Legion,” because many demons had gone into him.
Mark 1:24
“What do You want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have You come to destroy us?”
Ephesians 6:12
We are not fighting against people. We are fighting against the rulers, authorities, and powers of darkness in this world.

Spiritual Principle

No amount of evil is too great for Jesus to overcome.

Key Truth

A legion of demons is no match for one word from Jesus.

X. NOT OUT OF THE REGION

Mark 5:10 — They Begged Him

“And he begged Jesus repeatedly not to send them out of the region.”
The demons knew they had to leave the man.
They knew they were defeated.
Now they begged for mercy.
They did not want to be sent away.
Luke says they begged not to be sent into the abyss.
The demons knew their final judgment would come.

Cross References

Luke 8:31
The demons kept begging Jesus not to order them to go into the bottomless pit.
Matthew 8:31
The demons begged Jesus, “If You make us leave, send us into that herd of pigs.”
Revelation 20:3
He threw Satan into the bottomless pit, closed it, and locked it so he could not fool the nations anymore.

Spiritual Principle

Evil spirits are under Jesus' authority and await His judgment.

Key Truth

Demons beg; Jesus decides.

XI. A HERD OF PIGS

Mark 5:11 — On the Hillside

“Nearby a large herd of pigs was feeding on the hillside.”
Pigs were unclean animals under the law of Moses.
Jews did not raise pigs.
This shows that Jesus was in Gentile territory.
The scene was full of uncleanness.
An unclean spirit.
An unclean place of tombs.
Unclean animals.
Into all this uncleanness, the holy Son of God had come.

Cross References

Luke 8:32
A large herd of pigs was feeding on the hill.
Matthew 8:30
Some distance away a large herd of pigs was feeding.

Leviticus 11:7
The pig has a split hoof but does not chew the cud. It is unclean for you.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus brings holiness into places full of uncleanness.

Key Truth

The Holy One was not afraid to enter unclean places.

XII. SEND US AMONG THE PIGS

Mark 5:12 — The Demons' Request

“The demons begged Him, “Send us among the pigs; allow us to go into them.””
“The demons begged Him.”
Again the demons recognized Jesus' authority.
They could not act without His permission.
“Send us among the pigs.”
They asked to go into the animals.
Their nature is to destroy.
If they could not destroy the man, they would destroy something else.

Cross References

Luke 8:32
The demons begged Jesus to let them go into the pigs.
Matthew 8:31
The demons pleaded, “If You drive us out, send us into the herd of pigs.”
Isaiah 65:4
They spend their nights in tombs and eat the meat of pigs.

Spiritual Principle

Evil cannot act beyond what God allows.

Key Truth

Even demons must ask Jesus' permission.

XIII. INTO THE LAKE

Mark 5:13 — Two Thousand Pigs

“Jesus gave them permission, and the unclean spirits came out of the man and entered the pigs. The herd—about two thousand in number—rushed down the steep bank into the lake and drowned.”
“Jesus gave them permission.”
Jesus allowed it.
“The unclean spirits came out of the man.”

The man was free.
“And entered the pigs.”
The demons went into the animals.
“About two thousand in number.”
This shows how many demons had been tormenting this one man.
“Rushed down the steep bank into the lake and drowned.”
The destruction of the pigs showed the destructive power of evil.
It also gave visible proof that the demons had truly left the man.
Some ask why Jesus allowed this loss.
The Bible does not explain everything.
But it shows that one human life is worth far more than a herd of animals.

Cross References

Luke 8:33

> The demons came out of the man and went into the pigs. Then the herd rushed down the hill into the lake and drowned.

Matthew 8:32

> He told them, “Go!” So they came out and went into the pigs. The whole herd rushed down the hill into the lake and died in the water.

Exodus 14:28

> The water came back and covered the chariots and horsemen, the whole army of Pharaoh. Not one of them survived.

Spiritual Principle

One human soul is worth more than any earthly possession.

Key Truth

The goal of evil is destruction; the goal of Jesus is restoration.

XIV. THE PEOPLE CAME TO SEE

Mark 5:14 — The Herdsmen Reported

“Those tending the pigs ran off and reported this in the town and countryside, and the people came to see what had happened.”
“Those tending the pigs ran off.”
The herdsmen were shocked and afraid.
“And reported this in the town and countryside.”
News spread quickly.
“The people came to see what had happened.”
Everyone wanted to see for themselves.

Cross References

Luke 8:34

> When the men taking care of the pigs saw what happened, they ran off and told it in the town and the countryside.

Matthew 8:33
Those tending the pigs ran into town and told everything, including what had happened to the men with demons.
Luke 8:36
Those who had seen it told the others how the man with demons had been made well.

Spiritual Principle

The works of Jesus cannot stay hidden.

Key Truth

When Jesus changes a life, people come to see.

XV. IN HIS RIGHT MIND

Mark 5:15 — Sitting, Dressed, and Calm

“They came to Jesus and saw the man who had been possessed by the legion of demons, sitting there, dressed and in his right mind; and they were afraid.”
Look at the change in this man.
“Sitting there.”
Before, he was running wild.
Now he was calm and still.
“Dressed.”
Before, he was naked.
Now he was clothed.
“And in his right mind.”
Before, he was tormented and out of control.
Now he could think clearly.
“And they were afraid.”
This is surprising.
They were not afraid when the man was wild.
They were afraid when he was well.
The power of Jesus frightened them.

Cross References

Luke 8:35
The people came out to see. When they came to Jesus, they found the man sitting at His feet, dressed and thinking clearly, and they were afraid.
Matthew 8:34
The whole town came out to meet Jesus.
2 Corinthians 5:17
When someone belongs to Christ, that person is made new. The old things are gone, and everything has become new.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus brings peace, dignity, and a sound mind to those He sets free.

Application

What has Jesus changed in your life?

XVI. THEY TOLD WHAT HAPPENED

Mark 5:16 — The Report

“Those who had seen it told the people what had happened to the demon-possessed man—and about the pigs as well.”
The eyewitnesses told the whole story.
The man.
And the pigs.
Notice the two parts of the report.
Some people were thinking about the man.
Others were thinking about the pigs.
What they cared about would shape how they responded.

Cross References

Luke 8:36
The people who had seen it told the others how Jesus had healed the man.
Matthew 8:33
They went into the town and told about everything.
John 4:39
Many Samaritans from that town believed in Jesus because of what the woman said: “He told me everything I ever did.”

Spiritual Principle

What we value shapes how we respond to Jesus.

Key Truth

Some saw a man restored; others saw only pigs lost.

XVII. PLEASE LEAVE

Mark 5:17 — Begging Jesus to Go

“Then the people began to plead with Jesus to leave their region.”
This is one of the saddest verses in Mark.
A man had been set free.
The Son of God was standing among them.
And they begged Him to leave.
Why?
They were afraid of His power.
They had lost money with the pigs.
They preferred their old life to the change Jesus brought.
And Jesus left.

He does not force Himself on anyone.

Cross References

Luke 8:37
Then all the people in the area asked Jesus to leave, because they were very afraid. So He got into the boat and went back.
Matthew 8:34
When they saw Him, they begged Him to leave their area.
Acts 16:39
The officials came and apologized to them. They led them out of the jail and asked them to leave the city.

Spiritual Principle

Some people would rather keep their comfort than have Jesus change their lives.

Spiritual Warning

Jesus will not stay where He is not wanted.

XVIII. LET ME GO WITH YOU

Mark 5:18 — The Healed Man's Request

“As Jesus was getting into the boat, the man who had been demon-possessed begged to go with Him.”
Notice the contrast.
The demons begged.
The townspeople begged Jesus to leave.
The healed man begged to go with Jesus.
He loved the One who had saved him.
He wanted to stay close to Him.

Cross References

Luke 8:38
The man who had been freed from the demons begged to go with Jesus.
Matthew 8:34
The people of the town begged Jesus to leave.
Mark 3:14
He chose twelve so that they could be with Him and so He could send them out to preach.

Spiritual Principle

Those who are set free by Jesus want to be near Him.

Application

Do you long to be close to Jesus?

XIX. GO HOME AND TELL

Mark 5:19 — How Much the Lord Has Done

“But Jesus did not permit him. He said, “Go home to your own people and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how He has had mercy on you.””
“But Jesus did not permit him.”
Jesus said no.
Not because He did not love him.
Because He had a mission for him.
“Go home to your own people.”
The people of this region had asked Jesus to leave.
But Jesus left a witness behind.
“Tell them how much the Lord has done for you.”
He did not need special training.
He only needed to tell his story.
“And how He has had mercy on you.”
The heart of his testimony was mercy.
Notice the difference from other miracles.
Elsewhere Jesus told people to keep quiet.
Here, in Gentile territory, He told the man to tell everyone.

Cross References

Luke 8:39
Go back home and tell people how much God has done for you.
Psalm 66:16
Come and listen, all you who fear God, and I will tell you what He has done for me.
1 Chronicles 16:8
Give thanks to the Lord and call on His name. Let all the nations know what He has done.

Spiritual Principle

Every believer has a story of God's mercy to tell.

Application

Who needs to hear what the Lord has done for you?

XX. PROCLAIMING IN THE DECAPOLIS

Mark 5:20 — All the People Were Amazed

“So the man went away and began to proclaim in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him. And all the people were amazed.”
“So the man went away.”
He obeyed.
“And began to proclaim in the Decapolis.”
The **Decapolis** was a group of ten Greek cities.

It was a Gentile region.
“How much Jesus had done for him.”
Jesus told him to tell what **the Lord** had done.
He told what **Jesus** had done.
He understood that Jesus is the Lord.
“And all the people were amazed.”
When Jesus later returned to this region, crowds came to Him.
One man's testimony prepared the way.

Cross References

Luke 8:39
The man went all over town telling how much Jesus had done for him.
Matthew 4:25
Large crowds followed Him from Galilee, the Ten Cities, Jerusalem, Judea, and the land east of the Jordan.
Mark 7:31
Then Jesus left the area of Tyre and went through Sidon to the Sea of Galilee, through the area of the Ten Cities.

Spiritual Principle

One changed life can prepare a whole region for Jesus.

Key Truth

The man once chained among the tombs became the first missionary to the Decapolis.

XXI. BACK ACROSS THE LAKE

Mark 5:21 — A Large Crowd Gathered

“When Jesus crossed again by boat to the other side of the lake, a large crowd gathered around Him while He was by the shore.”
Jesus returned to the Jewish side of the lake.
On one side, people begged Him to leave.
On this side, people crowded around Him.

Cross References

Matthew 9:1
Jesus got into a boat, crossed the lake, and came to His own town.
Luke 8:40
When Jesus returned, the crowd welcomed Him, because they had all been waiting for Him.
Matthew 14:34
When they had crossed the lake, they landed at Gennesaret.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus goes where He is welcomed.

Key Truth

Some push Jesus away, while others wait eagerly for Him.

XXII. JAIRUS FELL AT HIS FEET

Mark 5:22 — A Synagogue Ruler

“Then one of the synagogue rulers, named Jairus, came and fell at His feet.”
“One of the synagogue rulers.”
Jairus was an important man.
He led the synagogue in his town.
Many religious leaders opposed Jesus.
But Jairus came to Him.
“Named Jairus.”
Mark gives his name.
This suggests Jairus may have been known to the early church.
“Came and fell at His feet.”
An important man humbled himself.
Desperate need breaks down pride.

Cross References

Matthew 9:18
While Jesus was saying this, a synagogue leader came and bowed down in front of Him.
Luke 8:41
A man named Jairus, a leader of the synagogue, came and fell at Jesus' feet.
John 11:32
When Mary came to where Jesus was and saw Him, she fell at His feet.

Spiritual Principle

Desperate need humbles even the proud.

Key Truth

Position and status mean nothing when your child is dying.

XXIII. MY LITTLE DAUGHTER IS DYING

Mark 5:23 — An Earnest Plea

“He pleaded earnestly, “My little daughter is dying. Please come and lay Your hands on her so she may be healed and live.””
“He pleaded earnestly.”
Jairus begged again and again.
“My little daughter is dying.”
This is every parent's worst fear.
“Please come and lay Your hands on her.”
He believed Jesus' touch could heal her.

“So she may be healed and live.”
Jairus had faith.
He believed Jesus could save his daughter's life.

Cross References

Matthew 9:18
He said, “My daughter has just died. But come and put Your hand on her, and she will live.”
Luke 8:42
His only daughter, about twelve years old, was dying.
2 Kings 4:32
When Elisha came into the house, there was the boy lying dead on his bed.

Spiritual Principle

Bring your deepest needs to Jesus with earnest prayer.

Application

What deep need do you need to bring to Jesus today?

XXIV. JESUS WENT WITH HIM

Mark 5:24 — The Crowd Pressed Around

“So Jesus went with him. A large crowd followed and pressed around Him.”
“So Jesus went with him.”
Jesus did not hesitate.
He went.
“A large crowd followed and pressed around Him.”
People pushed and crowded.
Progress was slow.
Every moment mattered.
Jairus must have been anxious to hurry.

Cross References

Matthew 9:19
Jesus got up and went with him, and His followers went too.
Luke 8:42
As Jesus went, the people crowded all around Him.
Mark 3:9
He told His followers to have a small boat ready so the crowd would not crush Him.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus is willing to go with us into our crisis.

Key Truth

When you ask Jesus to come, He comes.

XXV. TWELVE YEARS OF BLEEDING

Mark 5:25 — A Suffering Woman

“A woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years.”
Now Mark interrupts the story.
A woman was in the crowd.
“Who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years.”
Her condition made her ceremonially unclean under the law.
She could not worship at the temple.
Anyone she touched would also become unclean.
For twelve years, she had been isolated.
Notice: Jairus' daughter was twelve years old.
For as long as that little girl had been alive, this woman had been suffering.

Cross References

Matthew 9:20
Then a woman who had been bleeding for twelve years came up behind Jesus.
Luke 8:43
A woman was there who had been bleeding for twelve years, and no one could heal her.
Leviticus 15:25
If a woman has bleeding for many days, or at a time other than her monthly period, she will be unclean for as long as it lasts.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus sees those who have suffered long in silence.

Key Truth

Twelve years of suffering were about to end in a moment.

XXVI. SHE GREW WORSE

Mark 5:26 — Many Doctors

“She had suffered much under the care of many doctors and had spent all she had, but instead of getting better she grew worse.”
“She had suffered much under the care of many doctors.”
She had tried everything.
Some treatments in those days were painful and strange.
“And had spent all she had.”
She was now poor.
“But instead of getting better she grew worse.”
She had lost her health, her money, and her hope.
Human help had failed her completely.

Cross References

Luke 8:43
She had spent all her money on doctors, but none of them could heal her.
Matthew 9:20
A woman who had suffered from bleeding for twelve years came near Him.
Jeremiah 46:11
You have tried many medicines, but nothing can heal you.

Spiritual Principle

When every human answer fails, Jesus is still able.

Key Truth

Jesus is the hope of those who have run out of hope.

XXVII. SHE TOUCHED HIS CLOAK

Mark 5:27 — From Behind in the Crowd

“When she heard about Jesus, she came up behind Him in the crowd and touched His cloak.”
“When she heard about Jesus.”
News about Jesus gave her hope.
“She came up behind Him in the crowd.”
She came secretly.
She was unclean.
She was ashamed.
She did not want to be seen.
“And touched His cloak.”
By the law, her touch would make Jesus unclean.
But instead, His holiness would make her clean.

Cross References

Matthew 9:20
She came up behind Him and touched the edge of His cloak.
Luke 8:44
She came up behind Jesus and touched the bottom of His coat.
Matthew 14:36
The sick begged to touch even the edge of His coat, and all who touched it were healed.

Spiritual Principle

Hearing about Jesus can stir faith that reaches out to Him.

Key Truth

Faith reaches for Jesus, even with trembling hands.

XXVIII. IF I JUST TOUCH HIS CLOTHES

Mark 5:28 — Her Faith

“For she thought, “If I just touch His clothes, I will be healed.””
This was her faith.
It may have been mixed with some superstition.
She thought she could be healed secretly.
But her faith was real.
She believed Jesus had power to heal her.
Even imperfect faith that reaches for Jesus is honored by Him.

Cross References

Matthew 9:21
She said to herself, “If I only touch His coat, I will be healed.”
Luke 8:44
She touched His coat, and right away her bleeding stopped.
Matthew 14:36
Everyone who touched His cloak was made well.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus honors even small or imperfect faith that reaches for Him.

Key Truth

The power is not in the strength of our faith but in the One we trust.

XXIX. IMMEDIATELY HEALED

Mark 5:29 — Freed from Her Suffering

“Immediately her bleeding stopped, and she felt in her body that she was freed from her suffering.”
“Immediately her bleeding stopped.”
Twelve years of suffering ended in an instant.
“And she felt in her body that she was freed from her suffering.”
She knew it.
She could feel the difference.
What doctors could not do in twelve years, Jesus did in a moment.

Cross References

Matthew 9:22
At that moment the woman was healed.
Luke 8:44
Right away her bleeding stopped.
Psalm 103:3
He is the One who pardons every wrong I have done and cures every disease I have.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus' power heals completely and immediately when He chooses.

Key Truth

One touch of Jesus can undo years of suffering.

XXX. WHO TOUCHED MY CLOTHES?

Mark 5:30 — Power Had Gone Out

“At once Jesus realized that power had gone out from Him. He turned in the crowd and asked, “Who touched My clothes?””
“At once Jesus realized that power had gone out from Him.”
Jesus knew healing power had gone out.
This was not magic.
It was Jesus' own power, given in response to faith.
“He turned in the crowd and asked, ‘Who touched My clothes?’”
Jesus knew who it was.
But He wanted her to come forward.
He wanted to give her more than physical healing.

Cross References

Luke 8:45
Jesus asked, “Who touched Me?” When everyone denied it, Peter said, “Master, the people are crowding and pushing against You.”
Luke 8:46
But Jesus said, “Someone touched Me. I know that power has gone out from Me.”
Luke 6:19
All the people tried to touch Him, because power was coming from Him and healing them all.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus knows when faith reaches out to Him.

Key Truth

In a crowd of hundreds, Jesus noticed one person's touch of faith.

XXXI. YOU SEE THE CROWD

Mark 5:31 — The Disciples' Surprise

“His disciples said, “You see the crowd pressing against You, and yet You ask, ‘Who touched Me?’””
The disciples thought the question was strange.
Everyone was touching Jesus.
People were bumping and pushing.
But there is a difference between being near Jesus and reaching out to Him in faith.

Many touched Him.
Only one touched Him with faith.

Cross References

Luke 8:45
Peter said, “Master, the crowds are all around You and pushing against You.”
Mark 6:37
But Jesus answered, “You give them something to eat.” They said, “Are we supposed to go spend a lot of money on bread?”
Mark 8:4
His followers answered, “How can anyone get enough bread out here in the desert to feed all these people?”

Spiritual Principle

Being near Jesus is not the same as reaching out to Him in faith.

Key Truth

Many crowd around Jesus, but few truly reach for Him.

XXXII. HE KEPT LOOKING

Mark 5:32 — Searching the Crowd

“But Jesus kept looking around to see who had done it.”
Jesus would not move on.
Even with Jairus waiting.
Even with a dying girl.
He kept looking.
He wanted to meet this woman face to face.
She was not just a healing.
She was a person He loved.

Cross References

Luke 8:47
The woman saw that she could not hide, so she came forward trembling.
John 1:48
Nathanael asked, “How do You know me?” Jesus answered, “I saw you under the fig tree before Philip called you.”
1 Samuel 16:7
People look at the outside, but the Lord looks at the heart.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus wants a personal relationship, not just to meet a need.

Key Truth

Jesus does not want to heal us from a distance; He wants to know us.

XXXIII. THE WHOLE TRUTH

Mark 5:33 — She Fell at His Feet

“Then the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came trembling and fell at His feet and told Him the whole truth.”
“Knowing what had happened to her.”
She knew she had been healed.
“Came trembling.”
She was afraid.
Would He be angry that an unclean woman had touched Him?
“And fell at His feet.”
Like Jairus, she bowed before Jesus.
“And told Him the whole truth.”
She held nothing back.
Her shame.
Her suffering.
Her secret touch.
And her healing.

Cross References

Luke 8:47
Seeing that she could not stay hidden, the woman came shaking and fell at His feet. In front of everyone she told why she had touched Him and how she had been healed right away.
Matthew 9:22
Jesus turned and saw her.
1 John 1:9
When we confess our sins to God, He keeps His promise and does what is right. He forgives us and cleans away all our wrongdoing.

Spiritual Principle

Coming to Jesus honestly brings complete healing.

Application

Is there something you need to tell Jesus honestly?

XXXIV. DAUGHTER, GO IN PEACE

Mark 5:34 — Your Faith Has Made You Well

“He said to her, “Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace and be healed of your affliction.””
“Daughter.”
This is the only time in the Gospels Jesus calls someone “daughter.”
The woman who had been cut off from everyone now belonged to a family.
“Your faith has made you well.”

The word here can also mean **saved**.
She was healed in body and restored in soul.
“Go in peace.”
Not just the absence of trouble.
Wholeness with God.
“And be healed of your affliction.”
Jesus publicly declared her clean.
She could return to her community.
She came in secret and shame.
She left in public and peace.

Cross References

Matthew 9:22
> Jesus turned around, looked at her, and said, “Cheer up, My daughter. Because you trusted Me, you are well.” From then on she was healthy.

Luke 8:48
> He said to her, “Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace.”

Luke 7:50
> Jesus said to the woman, “Your faith has saved you. Go in peace.”

Spiritual Principle

Jesus heals the body, restores the soul, and welcomes us into His family.

Key Truth

The woman who was cut off for twelve years was called “Daughter.”

XXXV. YOUR DAUGHTER IS DEAD

Mark 5:35 — Why Bother the Teacher?

“While Jesus was still speaking, some people came from the house of Jairus. “Your daughter is dead,” they said. “Why bother the Teacher anymore?””
“While Jesus was still speaking.”
The timing was terrible.
“Your daughter is dead.”
The words Jairus feared most.
The delay seemed to have cost his daughter's life.
“Why bother the Teacher anymore?”
They thought it was over.
Jesus could heal the sick.
But surely He could not raise the dead.

Cross References

Luke 8:49
> While Jesus was still talking, someone came from the house of Jairus and said, “Your daughter is dead. Do not bother the Teacher anymore.”

Matthew 9:18
“My daughter has just died. But come and lay Your hand on her, and she will live.”
John 11:21
Martha said to Jesus, “Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died.”

Spiritual Principle

What looks like the end to us is not the end to Jesus.

Key Truth

Jesus is never too late.

XXXVI. DON'T BE AFRAID; JUST BELIEVE

Mark 5:36 — Jesus Speaks to Jairus

“Ignoring what they said, Jesus told Jairus, “Don't be afraid; just believe.””
“Ignoring what they said.”
Jesus overheard the message.
But He would not let it have the last word.
“Don't be afraid.”
Fear was the natural response.
Jesus told him to stop being afraid.
“Just believe.”
Keep trusting.
Keep believing.
Jairus had believed Jesus could heal.
Now he must believe Jesus could do even more.

Cross References

Luke 8:50
When Jesus heard this, He said to Jairus, “Do not be afraid. Only believe, and she will be made well.”
John 11:40
Jesus said, “Didn't I tell you that if you believed, you would see God's glory?”
Isaiah 41:10
Do not be scared, because I am right beside you. Do not lose heart, because I am your God. I will give you strength and come to your aid.

Spiritual Principle

Faith overcomes fear by trusting Jesus even when the news is bad.

Application

What bad news do you need to answer with faith?

XXXVII. PETER, JAMES, AND JOHN

Mark 5:37 — Only Three

“He did not let anyone follow Him except Peter, James, and John the brother of James.”
Jesus left the crowd behind.
He took only three disciples.
Peter, James, and John.
These three formed Jesus' inner circle.
They would also see His glory on the mountain.
And they would be near Him in Gethsemane.
Some moments are not for crowds.

Cross References

Matthew 17:1
Six days later, Jesus took Peter, James, and John the brother of James up on a high mountain by themselves.
Mark 9:2
Six days later Jesus took Peter, James, and John and led them up a high mountain alone.
Mark 14:33
He took Peter, James, and John with Him, and He began to be very troubled and distressed.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus reveals Himself in special ways to those who are close to Him.

Key Truth

Some of the deepest lessons are learned away from the crowds.

XXXVIII. CRYING AND WAILING

Mark 5:38 — The Commotion at the House

“When they came to the home of the synagogue ruler, Jesus saw the commotion, with people crying and wailing loudly.”
The house was full of noise.
In that culture, mourning was loud and public.
Families even hired professional mourners and flute players.
The weeping showed that the girl was truly dead.
Everyone knew it.

Cross References

Luke 8:51
When Jesus came to the house, He let only Peter, John, James, and the girl's parents go in with Him.
Matthew 9:23
When Jesus went into the leader's house, He saw the flute players and the noisy crowd.

Jeremiah 9:17
The Lord says, “Think about this! Call for the women who mourn for the dead. Send for the ones who are best at it.”

Spiritual Principle

Jesus enters into the grief of families who mourn.

Key Truth

Jesus walks right into the house of sorrow.

XXXIX. NOT DEAD BUT ASLEEP

Mark 5:39 — Why All This Uproar?

“He went inside and said to them, “Why all this uproar and weeping? The child is not dead but asleep.””
“Why all this uproar and weeping?”
Jesus asked them to stop.
“The child is not dead but asleep.”
Jesus was not saying she was only in a coma.
She was truly dead.
But to Jesus, death is like sleep.
Sleep is temporary.
You wake up from sleep.
And Jesus was about to wake her.
For believers, death is not the end.
It is a sleep from which Jesus will awaken us.

Cross References

Luke 8:52
Everyone was crying and sad for the girl. But Jesus said, “Stop crying. She is not dead, only asleep.”
Matthew 9:24
He said, “Go away. The girl is not dead, only sleeping.” But they laughed at Him.
John 11:11
Jesus said, “Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I am going there to wake him up.”

Spiritual Principle

To Jesus, death is like sleep, because He has power to awaken the dead.

Key Truth

For those who belong to Jesus, death is not the end of the story.

XL. THEY LAUGHED AT HIM

Mark 5:40 — Putting Them Outside

“But they laughed at Him. After putting them all outside, He took the child's father and mother and the disciples who were with Him, and went in where the child was.”
“But they laughed at Him.”
Their tears quickly turned to mocking.
They knew she was dead.
They thought Jesus was foolish.
“After putting them all outside.”
Jesus sent away the unbelievers.
“He took the child's father and mother and the disciples who were with Him.”
Only a few witnesses stayed.
People of faith and love.
“And went in where the child was.”
Jesus went straight to the place of death.

Cross References

Luke 8:53
They laughed at Him, because they knew she was dead.
Matthew 9:24
They made fun of Him.
2 Kings 4:33
Elisha went in, shut the door behind him, and prayed to the Lord.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus is not stopped by the laughter of unbelief.

Key Truth

The world may laugh at faith, but it will not have the last word.

XLI. TALITHA CUMI

Mark 5:41 — Little Girl, Get Up

“He took her by the hand and said, “Talitha cumi!”—which means, “Little girl, I say to you, get up!””
“He took her by the hand.”
Touching a dead body made a person unclean.
But Jesus took her hand.
Again, His life overcame uncleanness and death.
“Talitha cumi!”
Mark records the very words Jesus spoke in Aramaic, the language He usually spoke.
Peter must have remembered them all his life.
“Little girl, I say to you, get up!”

These are gentle, tender words.
The kind of words a parent might say to wake a child in the morning.
Jesus raised the dead with the voice of love.

Cross References

Luke 8:54
Jesus took her by the hand and called out, “My child, get up!”
Matthew 9:25
After the crowd was put outside, He went in and took the girl by the hand, and she got up.
1 Kings 17:21
Elijah stretched himself over the boy three times and cried to the Lord, “Lord my God, please let this boy's life come back into him!”

Spiritual Principle

Jesus speaks life into death with tenderness and power.

Key Truth

The voice that wakes a child from sleep is the same voice that will wake the dead.

XLII. SHE STOOD UP

Mark 5:42 — Completely Astonished

“Immediately the girl stood up and began to walk around (she was twelve years old). At this they were completely astonished.”
“Immediately the girl stood up.”
Life returned instantly.
“And began to walk around.”
She was not weak.
She was fully restored.
“She was twelve years old.”
Twelve years, like the woman's suffering.
Twelve years of life given back.
“At this they were completely astonished.”
They were overwhelmed.
They had seen the impossible.

Cross References

Luke 8:55
Her spirit came back into her, and she stood up right away. Then Jesus told them to give her something to eat.
Matthew 9:25
He took the girl's hand, and she got up.
Acts 9:40
Peter sent everyone out of the room, knelt, and prayed. He turned to the body and said, “Tabitha, get up.” She opened her eyes, saw Peter, and sat up.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus has complete authority over death.

Key Truth

Death itself must obey the voice of Jesus.

XLIII. GIVE HER SOMETHING TO EAT

Mark 5:43 — Strict Orders and Tender Care

“Jesus gave them strict orders not to let anyone know about this, and He told them to give her something to eat.”
“Jesus gave them strict orders not to let anyone know about this.”
Jesus again asked for silence.
He did not want to be seen only as a miracle worker.
His full purpose would be revealed through the cross.
“And He told them to give her something to eat.”
What a beautiful detail.
The One who had just raised the dead thought about a hungry little girl.
Jesus cares about big miracles and small needs.
The food also showed she was truly alive.

Cross References

Luke 8:56
Her parents were amazed, but Jesus told them not to tell anyone what had happened.
Mark 1:44
Jesus said, “Be sure you do not tell anyone about this.”
Mark 7:36
Jesus ordered the people not to tell anyone, but the more He told them, the more they spread the news.

Spiritual Principle

The Lord of life cares about our everyday needs.

Key Truth

The same Jesus who conquers death remembers that a little girl needs breakfast.

XLIV. FIVE GREAT LESSONS FROM MARK 5

1. Jesus Has Power Over Demons

“My name is Legion, for we are many.”

Principle:

Even a legion of unclean spirits must bow to Him.

2. Testimony Matters

“Tell them how much the Lord has done for you.”

Principle:

The healed man was sent to tell what the Lord had done, showing the power of personal witness.

3. Faith Brings Healing

“Daughter, your faith has made you well.”

Principle:

The woman who had been bleeding was healed because she believed.

4. Fear Is Overcome by Faith

“Don't be afraid; just believe.”

Principle:

Jairus was called to keep trusting Jesus even after hearing the worst news.

5. Jesus Has Authority Over Life and Death

“Little girl, I say to you, get up!”

Principle:

The raising of Jairus' daughter points to Jesus' final victory over death.

XLV. THREE PEOPLE AT THEIR LOWEST

Mark 5 shows Jesus meeting three people when all hope seemed gone.

1. The Man Among the Tombs

- Tormented by many demons.
- Cut off from society.
- Hurting himself.
- No one could help him.
- Jesus set him free.

2. The Woman in the Crowd

- Sick for twelve years.
- Unclean and isolated.
- Poor from paying doctors.
- No one could heal her.

- Jesus made her well and called her “Daughter.”

3. The Father and His Daughter

- A child who was dying, then dead.
- A father whose hope was crushed.
- A house full of mourning.
- No one could bring her back.
- Jesus raised her to life.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

When no one else can help, Jesus can.

XLVI. THE TWO DAUGHTERS

Mark 5 links two daughters together.

The Woman

- Suffered for twelve years.
- Was unclean and alone.
- Touched Jesus secretly.
- Was called “Daughter” by Jesus.

The Girl

- Was twelve years old.
- Was dying and then died.
- Was touched by Jesus.
- Was called “Little girl” by Jesus.

What They Teach Us

- Jesus has time for everyone.
- The delay for one was not a loss for the other.
- Jesus is never too late.

Key Truth

Jesus' timing is perfect, even when it seems like He is delaying.

XLVII. HOW TO SHARE YOUR TESTIMONY

Verses 19–20 show how a changed life becomes a witness.

Go Home

Start with the people who know you best.

Tell What the Lord Has Done

Share your own story.

Tell How He Had Mercy

Point to God's mercy, not your goodness.

Tell About Jesus

Make sure people know who did it.

Let God Work

“All the people were amazed.”

Crawford Bible Study Principle

You do not need special training to tell what Jesus has done for you.

XLVIII. WHAT MARK 5 TEACHES ABOUT JESUS

He Is the Son of the Most High God

“Jesus, Son of the Most High God.”

He Is Stronger Than Any Demon

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

He Restores Minds and Lives

“Sitting there, dressed and in his right mind.”

He Is the Lord

“Tell them how much the Lord has done for you.”

He Notices the Hidden

“Who touched My clothes?”

He Welcomes the Outcast

“Daughter, your faith has made you well.”

He Conquers Death

“Little girl, I say to you, get up!”

He Cares About Small Needs

“Give her something to eat.”

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Jesus is mighty enough to conquer death and tender enough to remember a child's hunger.

XLIX. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR PERSONAL STUDY

Question 1

Where did Jesus meet the man with the unclean spirit?
Among the tombs in a Gentile region on the eastern side of the lake.

Question 2

Why could no one control the man?
He was controlled by many demons and broke every chain.

Question 3

What does the name “Legion” mean?
A Roman army unit of thousands of soldiers, showing that many demons were in him.

Question 4

Why did Jesus let the demons go into the pigs?
The Bible does not explain fully, but it showed the demons truly left and that one person is worth more than a herd of animals.

Question 5

Why did the people ask Jesus to leave?
They were afraid of His power and upset about the loss of the pigs.

Question 6

Why didn't Jesus let the healed man come with Him?
He sent him home to tell his people what the Lord had done.

Question 7

Who was Jairus?
A synagogue ruler whose twelve-year-old daughter was dying.

Question 8

Why was the woman's condition so hard?

She was sick, poor, and considered unclean, which cut her off from worship and from others.

Question 9

Why did Jesus ask who touched Him?
He wanted to meet her personally, restore her publicly, and call her “Daughter.”

Question 10

What did Jesus tell Jairus when he heard his daughter had died?
“Don't be afraid; just believe.”

Question 11

Why did Jesus say the girl was asleep?
Because to Jesus, death is like sleep; He had the power to wake her.

Question 12

What should Mark 5 change about the way Christians live today?
Mark 5 should cause believers to live:

- Trusting Jesus' power over every evil.
- Telling others what the Lord has done for them.
- Reaching out to Jesus in faith.
- Coming to Him honestly with their whole story.
- Refusing to let fear replace faith.
- Trusting Jesus' timing.
- Facing death with hope.
- Caring for both great and small needs.

L. PERSONAL APPLICATION

Mark 5 asks several important questions.

Is There Something Holding Me Captive?

Have I brought it to Jesus?

Am I Telling My Story?

Who needs to hear what the Lord has done for me?

Do I Want Jesus to Stay or Go?

Am I afraid of the changes He might bring?

Am I Reaching for Jesus?

Or just standing in the crowd?

Have I Told Jesus the Whole Truth?

Is there anything I am hiding?

How Do I Respond to Bad News?

With fear or with faith?

Do I Trust Jesus' Timing?

Even when He seems to delay?

Do I Believe Jesus Conquers Death?

Does this give me hope?

LI. A CRAWFORD BIBLE STUDY PRINCIPLE

“Never Too Late”

Jairus was in a hurry.
His little girl was dying.
Every moment mattered.
Then Jesus stopped.
He stopped for a woman who had been sick for twelve years.
He stopped to ask a question.
He stopped to listen to her whole story.
Jairus must have been in agony.
Then the news came.
“Your daughter is dead.”
It seemed too late.
The delay seemed to have cost everything.
But Jesus turned to Jairus and said, **“Don't be afraid; just believe.”**
And then He raised the girl from the dead.
This creates a powerful principle.
Jesus' delays are not denials.
When it seems too late to us, it is not too late for Him.
The One who conquers death is never late.

Principle:

Jesus is never too late, because He holds power even over death.

LII. FINAL APPLICATION

Mark Chapter 5 shows Jesus' power over everything that destroys life.
He set free a man held by a legion of demons.

He healed a woman no doctor could help.
He raised a little girl from the dead.
In each case, Jesus met people at their lowest point.
And in each case, He restored them completely.
Mark 5 therefore reminds us:
Never think anyone is beyond Jesus' help.
Never be silent about what He has done for you.
Never send Jesus away because you fear change.
Never stop reaching for Him in faith.
Never let bad news silence your faith.
The church does not need people who only crowd around Jesus.
It needs:
People set free who tell their story.
People who reach out in faith.
People who trust Him when the news is bad.
And people who believe He conquers death.
The same Jesus still calls:
Tell people that Jesus can set them free.
Tell people that Jesus heals and restores.
Tell people that Jesus welcomes the outcast as family.
Tell people that Jesus has conquered death.
And as you live:
Reach out to Him.
Tell what He has done.
Don't be afraid.
Just believe.

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father,
Thank You that Jesus is the Son of the Most High God.
Thank You that no power of evil can stand against Him.
Thank You that He sets captives free and restores minds and lives.
Thank You that He notices those who reach out to Him in faith.
Thank You that He welcomes outcasts and calls them sons and daughters.
Thank You that He is never too late.
Thank You that He has power even over death.
Forgive us when we have kept quiet about what You have done for us.
Forgive us when we have been afraid of the changes Jesus brings.
Forgive us when we have stood in the crowd without reaching out in faith.
Forgive us when we have let fear replace faith.
Set us free from anything that holds us captive.
Give us courage to tell others about Your mercy.
Help us reach out to Jesus with our whole hearts.
When the news is bad, help us hear Him say, “Don't be afraid; just believe.”
And fill us with hope in the One who conquers death.
“Don't be afraid; just believe.”
In Jesus' name, Amen.

Key Verse

“Ignoring what they said, Jesus told Jairus, “Don't be afraid; just believe.”” — Mark 5:36

Central Truth

Jesus has complete authority over demons, disease, and death, and He uses that power with compassion to restore those whom no one else can help.

Mark 5 in One Sentence

Jesus frees a man tormented by a legion of demons and sends him home to tell what the Lord has done, heals a woman who had been bleeding for twelve years when she touches His cloak in faith, and raises Jairus' twelve-year-old daughter from the dead, showing His power over demons, disease, and death.

CRAWFORD BIBLE COMMENTARY

BIBLE STUDY

Mark Chapter 6 — Rejection, Martyrdom, Miracles, and Faith

A Verse-by-Verse Bible Study from the Crawford Standard Bible

Introduction

Mark Chapter 6 is full of contrasts.
It begins with rejection.
Jesus returns to Nazareth, and the people who knew Him best refuse to believe.
Then Jesus sends out the Twelve.
They go with almost nothing except His authority.
Then Mark tells a dark story.
King Herod had John the Baptist beheaded at a birthday party.

The faithful messenger paid for the truth with his life.
Then the light shines again.
Jesus feeds five thousand men, plus women and children, with five loaves and two fish.
That night He walks on the water to His frightened disciples.
And the chapter ends with crowds bringing the sick to Him, and all who touch Him are healed.
Through it all, Mark shows two responses to Jesus.
Unbelief that shuts Him out.
And faith that reaches out to Him.
The chapter moves through six movements:

- Jesus Rejected at Nazareth (verses 1–6).
- The Twelve Sent Out (verses 7–13).
- The Death of John the Baptist (verses 14–29).
- Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand (verses 30–44).
- Jesus Walks on Water (verses 45–52).
- Healings at Gennesaret (verses 53–56).

The central truth of Mark 6 is:
Jesus is the compassionate Shepherd and Lord over creation who provides for His people and sends them out in His power, and while unbelief shuts Him out and faithfulness may cost everything, those who come to Him in faith find Him more than enough.

I. BACK TO HIS HOMETOWN

Mark 6:1 — Returning to Nazareth

“Jesus left that place and returned to His hometown, accompanied by His disciples.”
“Jesus left that place.”
He had just raised Jairus' daughter.
“And returned to His hometown.”
Jesus went back to Nazareth, where He grew up.
“Accompanied by His disciples.”
He came not as a private visitor but as a teacher with followers.
The people of Nazareth would have to decide what they thought of Him.

Cross References

Matthew 13:54
He went to His hometown and taught the people in their synagogue.
Luke 4:16
Jesus went to Nazareth, the town where He grew up. On the Sabbath He went into the synagogue, as He usually did.
John 4:44
Jesus Himself had said that a prophet is not respected in his own country.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus offers Himself even to those who think they already know Him.

Key Truth

Familiarity can be the hardest barrier to faith.

II. WHERE DID HE GET THIS?

Mark 6:2 — Astonished in the Synagogue

“On the Sabbath He began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard Him were astonished. They asked, “Where did this man get these things? What wisdom has been given Him, and how are these mighty works done by His hands?”
“Many who heard Him were astonished.”
They could not deny His wisdom.
“Where did this man get these things?”
This was the right question.
But they gave the wrong answer.
“How are these mighty works done by His hands?”
They knew about His miracles.
Yet they would not accept where His power came from.

Cross References

Matthew 13:54
> The people were amazed and asked, “Where did this man get such wisdom and power to do miracles?”

Luke 4:22
> Everyone spoke well of Him and was surprised at the gracious words He said. They asked, “Isn't this Joseph's son?”

John 7:15
> The Jewish leaders were amazed and said, “How does this man know so much when He never studied?”

Spiritual Principle

Being amazed by Jesus is not the same as believing in Him.

Key Truth

The right question can still lead to the wrong conclusion.

III. ISN'T THIS THE CARPENTER?

Mark 6:3 — They Took Offense

“Is this not the carpenter, the son of Mary, and the brother of James, Joses, Judas, and Simon? Are His sisters not here with us?” And they were offended at Him.”
“Is this not the carpenter?”
The word means a builder who worked with wood or stone.
Jesus had worked with His hands among them.
“The son of Mary.”
In that culture, a man was usually called by his father's name.
Calling Him “son of Mary” may have been an insult, hinting at rumors about His birth.
“The brother of James, Joses, Judas, and Simon.”

As noted in Chapter 3, Christians understand these “brothers” in different ways.
James later became a leader in the Jerusalem church, and Judas is often thought to be the writer of the letter of Jude.
“And they were offended at Him.”
The word means they stumbled over Him.
They could not accept that someone so ordinary could be so great.

Cross References

Matthew 13:55
> Isn't He the carpenter's son? Isn't His mother named Mary, and aren't His brothers James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas?

Luke 4:22
> They said, “Isn't this the son of Joseph?”

John 6:42
> They said, “This is Jesus, Joseph's son. We know His father and mother. How can He say, ‘I came down from heaven’?”

Spiritual Principle

God often works through what seems ordinary.

Spiritual Warning

Do not let what you think you know about Jesus keep you from knowing Him.

IV. A PROPHET WITHOUT HONOR

Mark 6:4 — In His Own Town

“But Jesus said to them, “A prophet is not without honor except in his own town, among his relatives, and in his own household.””
Jesus used a common saying.
People often respect a stranger more than someone they grew up with.
Jesus felt this rejection from three circles.

- His own town.
- His relatives.
- His own household.

The people closest to Him were the slowest to believe.

Cross References

Matthew 13:57
> Jesus said to them, “A prophet is honored everywhere except in his own town and in his own home.”

Luke 4:24
> He said, “The truth is, no prophet is welcomed in his hometown.”

John 4:44
> Jesus had pointed out that a prophet gets no honor in his own country.

Spiritual Principle

Those closest to us may be the hardest to reach.

Key Truth

Jesus understands the pain of rejection by those who know you best.

V. HE COULD DO NO GREAT MIRACLE THERE

Mark 6:5 — Only a Few Healed

“He could do no great miracle there, except lay His hands on a few sick people and heal them.”
“He could do no great miracle there.”
This does not mean Jesus lost His power.
He had just raised the dead.
It means He would not force His works on people who refused to believe.
His miracles were meant to be received by faith.
“Except lay His hands on a few sick people and heal them.”
Even in a town of unbelief, a few came to Him.
And Jesus healed them.
Grace still reached those who would receive it.

Cross References

Matthew 13:58
He did not do many miracles there because they did not believe.
Luke 4:23
Jesus said, “You will surely say to Me, ‘Do the same miracles here in Your hometown that we heard You did in Capernaum.’”
2 Kings 5:11
But Naaman got angry and went away. He said, “I thought he would come out and call on the Lord his God and wave his hand over the spot and heal me.”

Spiritual Principle

Unbelief shuts the door to many blessings God wants to give.

Key Truth

Jesus' power was not limited, but their hearts were closed.

VI. HE MARVELED AT THEIR UNBELIEF

Mark 6:6 — Teaching in Other Villages

“And He marveled at their unbelief. Then He went around to the surrounding villages, teaching.”
“He marveled at their unbelief.”
Jesus was amazed.

Only twice in the Gospels is Jesus said to be amazed.
Once at a Gentile soldier's great faith.
Here, at His hometown's great unbelief.
“Then He went around to the surrounding villages, teaching.”
Rejection did not stop Jesus.
He kept going.
He took the message elsewhere.

Cross References

Matthew 9:35
Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the good news of the kingdom.
Luke 13:22
Jesus went through towns and villages, teaching as He traveled toward Jerusalem.
John 12:37
Even though Jesus had done so many miracles in front of them, they still did not believe in Him.

Spiritual Principle

Rejection should not stop us from sharing the message.

Application

Do you keep going when people reject your witness?

VII. TWO BY TWO

Mark 6:7 — Sent with Authority

“Jesus called the Twelve and began sending them out two by two. He gave them authority over unclean spirits.”
“Jesus called the Twelve.”
The men chosen in Chapter 3 were now ready to be sent.
“And began sending them out two by two.”
Jesus did not send them alone.
Partners encourage each other.
The law also required two witnesses to confirm a matter.
“He gave them authority over unclean spirits.”
They went with Jesus' own power.

Cross References

Matthew 10:1
Jesus called His twelve followers together and gave them power over evil spirits and the power to heal every sickness.
Luke 9:1
Jesus called the Twelve together and gave them power and authority over all demons and to cure diseases.

Luke 10:1
After this the Lord chose seventy-two others and sent them out two by two ahead of Him to every town and place He was about to visit.

Spiritual Principle

God sends His servants together, with His power.

Key Truth

No one is meant to serve Christ alone.

VIII. TAKE NOTHING

Mark 6:8 — Only a Staff

“He instructed them to take nothing for the journey except a staff—no bag, no bread, no money in their belts—”
“Take nothing for the journey except a staff.”
A walking stick for the road.
“No bag.”
No beggar's bag for collecting money.
“No bread.”
No food supply.
“No money in their belts.”
Men often carried coins in their belts.
Jesus was teaching them to trust God completely.
They would depend on God's care and the hospitality of others.
This was a special instruction for this mission.

Cross References

Matthew 10:9
Do not carry any gold, silver, or copper money in your belts.
Luke 9:3
He told them, “Take nothing for the trip: no walking stick, no bag, no bread, no money, and no extra shirt.”
Luke 10:4
Do not carry a money bag, a traveling bag, or sandals.

Spiritual Principle

God's servants must depend on God, not on their own resources.

Application

Are you trusting God or your own resources?

IX. SANDALS AND ONE TUNIC

Mark 6:9 — Traveling Light

“but to wear sandals and not take an extra tunic.”
“But to wear sandals.”
They could wear simple shoes for walking.
“And not take an extra tunic.”
A tunic was the main garment.
An extra one was useful for cold nights.
But they were to travel light.
The details in Matthew and Luke differ slightly, such as about the staff and sandals.
Many Bible students explain this as different ways of saying the same thing: take only the bare necessities, nothing extra.

Cross References

Matthew 10:10
Do not take a bag for the trip, extra clothes, sandals, or a walking stick. A worker should be given what he needs.
Luke 9:3
Do not take an extra shirt.
Luke 10:4
Do not take money, a bag, or shoes.

Spiritual Principle

Simplicity helps us focus on our mission.

Key Truth

The less we carry, the more we must trust God.

X. STAY IN ONE HOUSE

Mark 6:10 — Until You Leave

“He said, “Whenever you enter a house, stay there until you leave that town.”
When someone welcomed them, they were to stay there.
They were not to move from house to house looking for better food or comfort.
This would show contentment.
It would also honor those who first welcomed them.

Cross References

Matthew 10:11
When you enter a city or village, find someone worthy and stay there until you leave.
Luke 9:4
Whatever house you enter, stay there until you leave that town.

Luke 10:7
Stay in that house, eating and drinking what they give you, because a worker deserves to be paid. Do not move from house to house.

Spiritual Principle

God's servants should be content with the provision God gives.

Key Truth

Contentment honors both God and those who serve us.

XI. SHAKE OFF THE DUST

Mark 6:11 — A Testimony Against Them

“If any place will not receive you or listen to you, shake the dust off your feet as a testimony against them. Truly I tell you, it will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah on the day of judgment than for that town.””
“If any place will not receive you.”
Some would reject them.
“Shake the dust off your feet.”
When Jews left Gentile lands, they sometimes shook off the dust.
It showed they were separating themselves.
“As a testimony against them.”
It was a solemn warning.
The town had rejected God's message.
“More tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah.”
Sodom was famous for wickedness.
But rejecting Jesus' own messengers was even more serious.
Greater light brings greater responsibility.

Cross References

Matthew 10:15
I tell you the truth, on judgment day it will be better for Sodom and Gomorrah than for that town.
Luke 9:5
If people do not welcome you, shake the dust off your feet as you leave their town, as a warning to them.
Acts 13:51
So Paul and Barnabas shook the dust off their feet against them and went to Iconium.

Spiritual Principle

Rejecting God's message is a serious matter.

Key Truth

The more light we receive, the more we are responsible for.

XII. THEY PREACHED REPENTANCE

Mark 6:12 — The Message

“So they went out and preached that people should repent.”
They obeyed.
Their message was the same as John's and Jesus' message.
Turn from sin.
Turn to God.
Repentance is always the starting point of the good news.

Cross References

Matthew 10:7
As you go, preach this message: “The kingdom of heaven is near.”
Luke 9:6
So they left and went through the villages, preaching the good news and healing people everywhere.
Luke 24:47
Starting in Jerusalem, people of every nation will be told in His name that they must turn from sin and can be forgiven.

Spiritual Principle

The call to repent is at the heart of the gospel message.

Key Truth

The good news always calls people to turn around.

XIII. DEMONS DRIVEN OUT, SICK HEALED

Mark 6:13 — Anointing with Oil

“They drove out many demons and anointed many sick people with oil, healing them.”
“They drove out many demons.”
Jesus' authority worked through them.
“And anointed many sick people with oil.”
Oil was used as medicine in those days.
It was also a sign of God's blessing and the Holy Spirit's presence.
“Healing them.”
God's power was at work through ordinary men who obeyed Jesus.

Cross References

Luke 9:6
They traveled from village to village, preaching the good news and healing people everywhere.
James 5:14
If one of you is sick, send for the leaders of the church. They should pray for that person and rub oil on him in the Lord's name.

Matthew 10:8
Make the sick well, bring the dead back to life, cleanse people with skin diseases, and send demons away. You did not pay for what you got, so do not charge others.

Spiritual Principle

God works powerfully through ordinary people who obey Him.

Key Truth

The power was Jesus'; the obedience was theirs.

XIV. HEROD HEARD

Mark 6:14 — Rumors About Jesus

“King Herod heard about Jesus, for His name had become well known. Some said, “John the Baptist has been raised from the dead, and that is why these powers are at work in Him.””
“King Herod heard about Jesus.”
This was Herod Antipas, son of Herod the Great.
He ruled Galilee for Rome.
People called him king, though his title was really tetrarch, a lesser ruler.
“For His name had become well known.”
The ministry of the Twelve had spread Jesus' fame even more.
“John the Baptist has been raised from the dead.”
Some believed Jesus was John come back to life.

Cross References

Matthew 14:1
At that time Herod, the ruler of Galilee, heard the reports about Jesus.
Luke 9:7
Herod the ruler heard about everything that was happening and was confused, because some people said John had risen from the dead.
Matthew 16:14
They answered, “Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.”

Spiritual Principle

Everyone must decide who Jesus is.

Key Truth

Even kings must deal with the question of Jesus.

XV. ELIJAH OR A PROPHET

Mark 6:15 — Other Opinions

“Others said, “He is Elijah,” and still others, “He is a prophet, like one of the prophets of old.””

People had many opinions.
“He is Elijah.”
The Old Testament promised Elijah would come before the day of the Lord.
“He is a prophet, like one of the prophets of old.”
Others saw Him as a great prophet.
All these answers honored Jesus.
But none were big enough.
Jesus is more than a prophet.
He is the Son of God.

Cross References

Matthew 16:14
Some say You are John the Baptist, some say Elijah, and others say Jeremiah or another prophet.
Luke 9:8
Others said Elijah had appeared, and still others said one of the prophets of long ago had come back to life.
Deuteronomy 18:15
From among your own people, the Lord your God will send you a prophet like me. Pay attention to what He says.

Spiritual Principle

Good opinions about Jesus are not enough; we must know who He truly is.

Key Truth

Calling Jesus a great prophet is not big enough.

XVI. JOHN, WHOM I BEHEADED

Mark 6:16 — A Guilty Conscience

“But when Herod heard this, he said, “John, whom I beheaded, has been raised from the dead!””
Herod's conscience was troubling him.
He had killed John.
Now he feared John had come back.
Guilt was haunting him.
Sin may be hidden from others, but it cannot be hidden from our own conscience.

Cross References

Matthew 14:2
He said to his servants, “This is John the Baptist. He has risen from the dead. That is why he can do these miracles.”
Luke 9:9
Herod said, “I cut off John's head. So who is this man I hear such things about?” And he kept trying to see Jesus.
Matthew 14:10
He had John's head cut off in the prison.

Spiritual Principle

A guilty conscience cannot be silenced by power.

Key Truth

Herod could kill the prophet, but he could not kill his own guilt.

XVII. ON ACCOUNT OF HERODIAS

Mark 6:17 — John Arrested

“For Herod himself had given orders to arrest John and bound him in prison on account of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, whom he had married.”
Mark now goes back to tell what had happened earlier.
“Herod himself had given orders to arrest John.”
Herod was responsible.
“On account of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife.”
Herodias had been married to Herod's half-brother.
Herod divorced his own wife and married Herodias.
Herodias was also his niece.
This marriage broke God's law.

Cross References

Matthew 14:3
Herod had arrested John, tied him up, and put him in prison because of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife.
Luke 3:19
John had criticized Herod for marrying Herodias, his brother's wife, and for all the other evil things he had done.
Leviticus 18:16
You must not have sexual relations with your brother's wife. That would dishonor your brother.

Spiritual Principle

Sin often leads to more sin.

Key Truth

One wrong choice led Herod down a road to murder.

XVIII. IT IS NOT LAWFUL

Mark 6:18 — John's Bold Words

“For John had been saying to Herod, “It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife.””
“John had been saying to Herod.”
The wording suggests John said it more than once.
He kept warning Herod.
“It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife.”

John spoke the truth to a powerful ruler.
He did not soften God's word to protect himself.
He knew it could cost him.
But faithfulness to God mattered more.

Cross References

Matthew 14:4
John had been telling Herod, “It is against the law for you to have her.”
Leviticus 18:16
Do not have relations with your brother's wife, because that would shame your brother.
Leviticus 20:21
If a man marries his brother's wife, it is a disgraceful thing. He has dishonored his brother.

Spiritual Principle

God's truth must be spoken even to the powerful.

Application

Are you willing to speak God's truth when it costs you?

XIX. A GRUDGE

Mark 6:19 — Herodias Wanted Him Dead

“So Herodias nursed a grudge against John and wanted to kill him, but she could not,”
“Herodias nursed a grudge against John.”
She held on to her anger.
She fed it.
It grew into hatred.
“And wanted to kill him.”
Unrepented sin led her to want murder.
“But she could not.”
For a time, she was blocked.
God's timing was still in control.

Cross References

Matthew 14:5
Herod wanted to kill John but was afraid of the people, because they believed John was a prophet.
1 Kings 19:2
Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, “May the gods punish me if by this time tomorrow I do not kill you as you killed those prophets.”
Esther 3:6
Haman thought it was beneath him to kill only Mordecai. So he looked for a way to destroy all of Mordecai's people.

Spiritual Principle

A grudge that is fed will grow into something deadly.

Spiritual Warning

Do not nurse a grudge; it will poison your heart.

XX. HEROD FEARED JOHN

Mark 6:20 — Puzzled, Yet Listening

“because Herod feared John and protected him, knowing him to be a righteous and holy man. When Herod heard him, he was greatly puzzled, yet he enjoyed listening to him.”
“Herod feared John and protected him.”
Herod respected John.
“Knowing him to be a righteous and holy man.”
He knew John was a man of God.
“When Herod heard him, he was greatly puzzled.”
John's words troubled him.
“Yet he enjoyed listening to him.”
Herod was drawn to the truth.
But he would not obey it.
He wanted to listen without changing.
This is a dangerous place to be.

Cross References

Matthew 14:5
> He was afraid of the people, who thought John was a prophet.

Acts 24:25
> As Paul talked about right living, self-control, and the coming judgment, Felix became afraid and said, “Go away for now. When I have time, I will call for you.”

Acts 24:26
> At the same time, he hoped Paul would offer him money, so he sent for him often and talked with him.

Spiritual Principle

Enjoying God's word without obeying it leaves the heart unchanged.

Spiritual Warning

It is possible to admire the preacher and still reject the message.

XXI. HEROD'S BIRTHDAY

Mark 6:21 — The Opportune Time

“Finally the opportune time came. On his birthday, Herod gave a banquet for his high officials and military commanders and the leading men of Galilee.”
“Finally the opportune time came.”
Herodias had been waiting.
Now her chance came.

“On his birthday, Herod gave a banquet.”
A great feast for the important men of his region.
“For his high officials and military commanders and the leading men of Galilee.”
Herod wanted to impress them.
Pride and the desire to look good would soon trap him.

Cross References

Matthew 14:6
On Herod's birthday, the daughter of Herodias danced for Herod and his guests.
Esther 1:3
In the third year of his rule, he gave a banquet for all his officials and servants.
Genesis 40:20
Three days later was Pharaoh's birthday, and he gave a feast for all his officials.

Spiritual Principle

Those who wait to do evil will find their opportunity unless they repent.

Key Truth

A party can become a trap when pride is in charge.

XXII. THE DAUGHTER DANCED

Mark 6:22 — Ask Whatever You Want

“The daughter of Herodias came in and danced, pleasing Herod and his dinner guests. The king said to the girl, “Ask me for whatever you want, and I will give it to you.””
“The daughter of Herodias came in and danced.”
The Jewish historian Josephus names Herodias' daughter as Salome.
She was young, perhaps a teenager.
“Pleasing Herod and his dinner guests.”
The dance delighted the drunken guests.
“Ask me for whatever you want, and I will give it to you.”
Herod made a foolish promise.
He spoke without thinking.
He wanted to look generous before his guests.

Cross References

Matthew 14:6
The daughter of Herodias danced, and Herod was very pleased.
Esther 5:3
The king asked her, “What is it, Queen Esther? What do you want? I will give you anything, even half of my kingdom.”
Matthew 14:7
So he promised with an oath to give her anything she asked.

Spiritual Principle

Careless words spoken in pride can lead to great harm.

Key Truth

Think before you promise.

XXIII. UP TO HALF MY KINGDOM

Mark 6:23 — Herod's Oath

“He swore to her, “Whatever you ask I will give you, up to half my kingdom.””
Herod made his promise even stronger.
He swore an oath.
“Up to half my kingdom.”
This was a way of showing great generosity.
But Herod did not really have a kingdom to give.
He ruled only under Rome.
His words were proud and empty.

Cross References

Matthew 14:7
He promised to give her whatever she asked for.
Esther 5:3
The king said, “What is your request? I will give it to you, up to half the kingdom.”
Esther 7:2
The king asked again, “What do you want, Queen Esther? I will give you anything, up to half of my kingdom.”

Spiritual Principle

Proud promises can trap us.

Key Truth

Big words often lead to big regrets.

XXIV. WHAT SHALL I ASK?

Mark 6:24 — The Head of John the Baptist

“She went out and asked her mother, “What shall I request?” Her mother replied, “The head of John the Baptist.””
“She went out and asked her mother.”
The girl did not know what to ask for.
“What shall I request?”
She could have asked for riches.
“Her mother replied, ‘The head of John the Baptist.’”
Herodias had been waiting for this.
She did not hesitate.
Her grudge had become murderous.
And she used her own daughter to do it.

Cross References

Matthew 14:8
Her mother told her what to ask for, so she said, “Give me the head of John the Baptist here on a plate.”
Esther 5:6
While they were drinking wine, the king asked Esther, “What is your request? It will be given to you.”
1 Kings 19:2
Jezebel sent a message to Elijah threatening to kill him by the next day.

Spiritual Principle

Hatred left unchecked will use anyone to get its way.

Spiritual Warning

Parents shape their children's choices, for good or for evil.

XXV. RIGHT NOW

Mark 6:25 — On a Platter

“At once she hurried to the king with the request: “I want you to give me the head of John the Baptist on a platter—right now.””
“At once she hurried to the king.”
She wasted no time.
“I want you to give me the head of John the Baptist on a platter.”
A horrible request.
Spoken in the middle of a feast.
“Right now.”
She did not want Herod to have time to change his mind.

Cross References

Matthew 14:8
She said, “Give me John the Baptist's head on a plate.”
Esther 5:6
The king asked, “What is your wish? I will give it to you.”
Matthew 14:11
John's head was brought on a plate and given to the girl, and she took it to her mother.

Spiritual Principle

Evil often hurries before conscience can speak.

Key Truth

Sin rushes; righteousness waits on God.

XXVI. GREATLY DISTRESSED

Mark 6:26 — Because of His Oaths

“The king was greatly distressed, but because of his oaths and his dinner guests, he did not want to refuse her.”
“The king was greatly distressed.”
Herod did not want to do this.
“But because of his oaths.”
He felt trapped by his promise.
“And his dinner guests.”
He cared more about his reputation than about doing right.
“He did not want to refuse her.”
Herod could have said no.
Keeping a sinful oath is not faithfulness.
It is sin.
But fear of what others would think won.

Cross References

Matthew 14:9
> The king was very sad, but because of his promise and his guests, he ordered that her request be granted.

Judges 11:35
> When Jephthah saw her, he tore his clothes and said, “My daughter, you have crushed me! I made a promise to the Lord, and I cannot take it back.”

Ecclesiastes 5:5
> You are better off never promising at all than promising and then failing to follow through.

Spiritual Principle

Fear of others' opinions can push us into great sin.

Application

Do you care more about what people think or about what God thinks?

XXVII. JOHN BEHEADED

Mark 6:27 — The Executioner Sent

“So he immediately sent an executioner with orders to bring John's head. The man went, beheaded John in the prison,”
Herod gave the order.
The executioner went to the prison.
And John was killed.
The greatest prophet died because of a dance, a foolish oath, and a woman's grudge.
From a human view, it seemed senseless.
But John had finished the work God gave him.

He had prepared the way for Jesus.

Cross References

Matthew 14:10
So he sent orders to have John beheaded in the prison.
Luke 9:9
Herod said, “I beheaded John.”
Revelation 20:4
I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because they told the truth about Jesus and God's word.

Spiritual Principle

Faithfulness to God may cost everything, but it is never wasted.

Key Truth

John lost his head but kept his faithfulness.

XXVIII. ON A PLATTER

Mark 6:28 — Given to Her Mother

“brought his head on a platter, and gave it to the girl, who gave it to her mother.”
The scene is horrifying.
The head of God's prophet carried in on a dish.
Handed to a girl.
Then to her mother.
Herodias got what she wanted.
But she gained nothing.
Herod's guilt would haunt him.
And history remembers them as the ones who killed a righteous man.

Cross References

Matthew 14:11
The head was brought on a plate and given to the girl, and she brought it to her mother.
Esther 5:6
The king asked, “What do you want? It will be done.”
Proverbs 16:14
An angry king can bring death, but a wise person will try to calm him.

Spiritual Principle

Evil may win for a moment, but it never truly wins.

Key Truth

The wicked got what they wanted, and lost everything that mattered.

XXIX. LAID IN A TOMB

Mark 6:29 — John's Disciples

“When John's disciples heard about it, they came and took his body and laid it in a tomb.”
John's followers loved him.
They came for his body.
They gave him an honorable burial.
Matthew tells us they then went and told Jesus.
John's death foreshadowed Jesus' death.
Both were faithful messengers.
Both were killed by those in power.
Both were laid in a tomb.
But only one would rise again on the third day.

Cross References

Matthew 14:12
John's followers came, took his body, and buried it. Then they went and told Jesus.
John 19:38
Joseph of Arimathea asked Pilate for the body of Jesus. With Pilate's permission, he came and took the body away.
Acts 8:2
Some godly men buried Stephen and cried loudly for him.

Spiritual Principle

Faithful servants are honored by those who love God.

Key Truth

John's tomb pointed ahead to another tomb that would one day be empty.

XXX. THE APOSTLES RETURN

Mark 6:30 — Reporting to Jesus

“The apostles gathered around Jesus and reported to Him all they had done and taught.”
“The apostles.”
This is the only time Mark uses this word.
It means **sent ones**.
They had been sent, and now they returned.
“Reported to Him all they had done and taught.”
They told Jesus everything.
Ministry should always return to Jesus.
We report to Him.
We give Him the glory.

Cross References

Luke 9:10
When the apostles came back, they told Jesus everything they had done.
Luke 10:17
The seventy-two came back full of joy and said, “Lord, even the demons obey us when we use Your name!”
Acts 14:27
When they arrived, they gathered the church together and told everything God had done through them.

Spiritual Principle

All ministry should return to Jesus for His approval and glory.

Application

Do you bring your service back to Jesus in prayer?

XXXI. COME AND REST

Mark 6:31 — A Quiet Place

“Then, because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have time to eat, He said to them, “Come with Me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest.””
“So many people were coming and going.”
The work was nonstop.
“They did not even have time to eat.”
They were exhausted.
“Come with Me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest.”
Jesus cared for His tired disciples.
He knew they needed rest.
Rest is not laziness.
It is part of God's design.
Notice: **“Come with Me.”**
True rest is found with Jesus.

Cross References

Matthew 14:13
When Jesus heard about John, He left in a boat and went to a quiet place by Himself.
Luke 9:10
He took them with Him to a town called Bethsaida, where they could be alone.
Psalm 23:2
He gives me a place to lie down in soft grass, and He guides me to quiet streams.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus calls His tired servants to rest with Him.

Application

Are you taking time to rest with Jesus?

XXXII. A SOLITARY PLACE

Mark 6:32 — By Boat

“So they went away by themselves in a boat to a solitary place.”
Jesus and the Twelve set out across the lake.
They needed quiet.
They also needed time to grieve John's death.
Jesus Himself had just lost the one who prepared His way.

Cross References

Matthew 14:13
He went away by boat to a quiet place to be alone.
Luke 9:10
He took them and went away privately to Bethsaida.
John 6:1
After this, Jesus went across the Sea of Galilee, also called the Sea of Tiberias.

Spiritual Principle

Times of quiet are needed after times of sorrow and service.

Key Truth

Even Jesus needed time away.

XXXIII. THEY RAN AHEAD

Mark 6:33 — The Crowd Arrived First

“But many saw them leaving and recognized them, and they ran on foot from all the towns and got there ahead of them.”
The quiet getaway did not stay quiet.
People saw the boat leaving.
They ran along the shore.
From all the towns, they came.
And they got there first.
The people were eager for Jesus.

Cross References

Matthew 14:13
When the crowds heard about it, they followed Him on foot from the towns.
John 6:2
A large crowd followed Him because they saw the miracles He did for the sick.
Luke 9:11
But the crowds learned where He went and followed Him.

Spiritual Principle

People who are hungry for Jesus will go to great lengths to find Him.

Key Truth

The crowd ran to Jesus faster than the boat could row.

XXXIV. SHEEP WITHOUT A SHEPHERD

Mark 6:34 — He Had Compassion

“When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, He had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So He began teaching them many things.”
“When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd.”
His rest was interrupted.
“He had compassion on them.”
Not frustration.
Not annoyance.
Compassion.
“Because they were like sheep without a shepherd.”
Sheep without a shepherd are lost, hungry, and in danger.
Israel's leaders had failed them.
Jesus is the true Shepherd.
“So He began teaching them many things.”
Their first need was the truth.

Cross References

Matthew 9:36
> Looking at the crowds, Jesus' heart went out to them. They were worn out and lost, like sheep that have no one to care for them.

Matthew 14:14
> When Jesus came ashore, He saw a large crowd. He felt deep compassion for them and healed their sick.

Numbers 27:17
> Choose someone to lead them, so the Lord's people will not be like sheep without a shepherd.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus is the compassionate Shepherd who meets His people's needs.

Key Truth

Interruptions became opportunities for compassion.

XXXV. IT'S ALREADY VERY LATE

Mark 6:35 — A Remote Place

“By this time it was late in the day, so His disciples came to Him and said, “This is a remote place, and it's already very late.”
The disciples noticed a problem.
It was getting dark.
They were far from town.
Thousands of people had no food.
They saw the problem clearly.
But they did not yet see the solution standing right in front of them.

Cross References

Matthew 14:15
When evening came, the followers came to Him and said, “This is a lonely place, and it is already late.”
Luke 9:12
Late in the afternoon the Twelve came to Him and said, “We are in a lonely place here.”
John 6:5
Jesus looked up and saw a large crowd coming. He said to Philip, “Where can we buy bread for these people to eat?”

Spiritual Principle

It is easy to see problems and miss the power of Jesus.

Key Truth

The disciples saw the need but forgot who was with them.

XXXVI. SEND THEM AWAY

Mark 6:36 — Let Them Buy Food

“Send the people away so they can go to the surrounding countryside and villages and buy themselves something to eat.””
The disciples had a practical idea.
Send the people away.
Let them take care of themselves.
It seemed reasonable.
But it was not what Jesus had in mind.

Cross References

Matthew 14:15
Send the people away so they can go to the villages and buy food.
Luke 9:12
Send the crowd away so they can go to nearby villages and find food and a place to stay.

John 6:5
Jesus asked, “Where can we buy bread to feed these people?”

Spiritual Principle

Our first thought may be to send needs away, but Jesus calls us to meet them.

Key Truth

“Send them away” is never Jesus' first answer.

XXXVII. YOU GIVE THEM SOMETHING TO EAT

Mark 6:37 — Two Hundred Denarii

“But Jesus answered, “You give them something to eat.” They said, “Should we go and spend two hundred denarii on bread to give them something to eat?””
“You give them something to eat.”
Jesus put the responsibility on the disciples.
He was testing them.
He was teaching them.
“Two hundred denarii.”
A denarius was a day's pay for a worker.
This was about eight months of wages.
They did not have that kind of money.
And even if they did, it would not be enough.
Jesus wanted them to see that they could not do it on their own.

Cross References

Matthew 14:16
Jesus said, “They do not need to leave. You give them something to eat.”
Luke 9:13
He said, “You give them food to eat.” They answered, “We have only five loaves and two fish, unless we go and buy food for all these people.”
John 6:7
Philip answered, “Even eight months' pay would not buy enough bread for each of them to have a bite.”

Spiritual Principle

Jesus calls us to do what we cannot do without Him.

Key Truth

Jesus gives tasks that are too big for us so we will depend on Him.

XXXVIII. HOW MANY LOAVES?

Mark 6:38 — Five and Two Fish

““How many loaves do you have?” He asked. “Go and see.” When they found out, they said, “Five—and two fish.””
“How many loaves do you have?”
Jesus started with what they had.
“Go and see.”
They had to look.
“Five—and two fish.”
John tells us these came from a boy's lunch.
Small barley loaves and small dried fish.
It was not much.
But it was what they had.
Jesus does not ask for what we do not have.
He asks for what we do have.

Cross References

Matthew 14:17
They said, “We have only five loaves of bread and two fish.”
Luke 9:13
They said, “We have only five loaves and two fish.”
John 6:9
Here is a boy with five small barley loaves and two little fish. But that is not enough for so many people.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus starts with what we have, however small.

Application

What do you have that you can give to Jesus?

XXXIX. ON THE GREEN GRASS

Mark 6:39 — Sitting Down in Groups

“Then Jesus directed them to have all the people sit down in groups on the green grass.”
“Have all the people sit down in groups.”
Jesus brought order.
He organized the crowd.
“On the green grass.”
Only Mark mentions the green grass.
It was springtime.
It recalls Psalm 23.
“He makes me lie down in green pastures.”

The Good Shepherd was caring for His sheep.

Cross References

Matthew 14:19
He told the people to sit down on the grass.
Luke 9:14
He said to His followers, “Have them sit down in groups of about fifty.”
John 6:10
Jesus said, “Have the people sit down.” There was plenty of grass there.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus provides for His people with care and order.

Key Truth

The Good Shepherd makes His sheep lie down in green pastures.

XL. HUNDREDS AND FIFTIES

Mark 6:40 — In Orderly Groups

“So they sat down in groups of hundreds and fifties.”
The word Mark uses pictures garden beds.
The groups may have looked like rows of flowers on the green hillside.
This orderly arrangement also recalls how Moses organized Israel in the wilderness.
Jesus was gathering God's people and feeding them as God fed Israel with manna.

Cross References

Luke 9:14
There were about five thousand men there. Jesus said, “Have them sit in groups of about fifty.”
Exodus 18:21
Choose capable men who fear God, who can be trusted, and who hate bribes. Put them over the people as leaders of thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens.
John 6:10
The men sat down, about five thousand of them.

Spiritual Principle

God is a God of order who cares for His people.

Key Truth

Jesus did for the crowd what God did for Israel in the wilderness.

XLI. HE GAVE THANKS AND BROKE THE LOAVES

Mark 6:41 — Distributed by the Disciples

“Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, He gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then He gave them to His disciples to distribute to the people. He also divided the two fish among them all.”
“Taking the five loaves and the two fish.”
Jesus took the small offering.
“Looking up to heaven.”
He looked to the Father.
“He gave thanks.”
He thanked God for what seemed too little.
“And broke the loaves.”
As He broke them, they multiplied.
“Then He gave them to His disciples to distribute.”
Jesus provided.
The disciples delivered.
Notice the actions: took, gave thanks, broke, gave.
These same actions appear at the Last Supper.

Cross References

Matthew 14:19
> He took the five loaves and two fish, looked up to heaven, and thanked God. He broke the bread and gave it to His followers, and they gave it to the people.

Luke 9:16
> Jesus took the five loaves and two fish, looked up to heaven, and blessed them. Then He broke them and gave them to His followers to hand out.

John 6:11
> Jesus took the loaves, gave thanks, and passed them out to the people. He did the same with the fish, giving as much as they wanted.

Spiritual Principle

When we give thanks for little, God can make it much.

Key Truth

Jesus provides; His disciples distribute.

XLII. THEY ALL ATE

Mark 6:42 — Satisfied

“They all ate and were satisfied,”
“They all ate.”

Not some.
All.
“And were satisfied.”
Not just a small taste.
They ate until they were full.
Jesus does not give barely enough.
He satisfies completely.

Cross References

Matthew 14:20
They all ate as much as they wanted.
Luke 9:17
Everyone ate and was full.
John 6:12
When they had all had enough, He told His followers, “Gather the leftover pieces so nothing is wasted.”

Spiritual Principle

Jesus fully satisfies those who come to Him.

Key Truth

With Jesus, there is always enough.

XLIII. TWELVE BASKETS

Mark 6:43 — Leftovers

“and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces of bread and fish.”
After everyone ate, there were leftovers.
Twelve baskets full.
One for each disciple.
Perhaps a reminder that Jesus had provided for them too.
The twelve baskets may also picture the twelve tribes of Israel.
Jesus provides more than enough.

Cross References

Matthew 14:20
The followers gathered twelve baskets full of leftover pieces.
Luke 9:17
They picked up twelve baskets of leftover pieces.
John 6:13
So they gathered the leftovers and filled twelve baskets with the pieces of the five barley loaves.

Spiritual Principle

God's provision overflows beyond our need.

Key Truth

Jesus started with five loaves and ended with twelve baskets.

XLIV. FIVE THOUSAND MEN

Mark 6:44 — The Number

“The number of the men who had eaten was about five thousand.”
Five thousand men.
Matthew adds that women and children were also there.
The total may have been far more.
This is the only miracle besides the resurrection recorded in all four Gospels.
It shows how important it was to the early church.

Cross References

Matthew 14:21
About five thousand men ate, not counting women and children.
Luke 9:14
There were about five thousand men.
John 6:10
About five thousand men sat down.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus is able to provide for any number of people.

Key Truth

No crowd is too large for Jesus to feed.

XLV. HE MADE THEM GET INTO THE BOAT

Mark 6:45 — Sent Ahead

“Immediately Jesus made His disciples get into the boat and go ahead of Him to Bethsaida, while He dismissed the crowd.”
“Immediately Jesus made His disciples get into the boat.”
Jesus urged them strongly.
John tells us the crowd wanted to make Jesus king by force.
Jesus did not want His disciples caught up in that excitement.
“And go ahead of Him to Bethsaida.”
He sent them across the lake.
“While He dismissed the crowd.”
He sent the people home.

Cross References

Matthew 14:22
Right away Jesus made His followers get into the boat and go ahead of Him to the other side while He sent the people home.
John 6:17
They got into a boat and started across the lake to Capernaum. It was dark, and Jesus had not yet come to them.
John 1:44
Philip was from Bethsaida, the same town as Andrew and Peter.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus protects His followers from the wrong kind of excitement.

Key Truth

Jesus would not accept a crown without a cross.

XLVI. TO PRAY

Mark 6:46 — On the Mountainside

“After leaving them, He went up on a mountainside to pray.”
After a huge miracle, Jesus went to pray.
In Mark, Jesus prays at three key moments.

- After a busy day in Capernaum.
- After feeding the five thousand.
- In Gethsemane before the cross.

Each time, He faced the temptation to take an easier path.
And each time, He went to the Father.

Cross References

Matthew 14:23
After sending the crowds away, He went up on a mountain by Himself to pray.
Luke 6:12
Jesus went out to a mountain to pray, and He spent the night praying to God.
John 6:15
Jesus knew they planned to make Him king by force, so He went off to the mountain by Himself.

Spiritual Principle

Prayer keeps us on God's path after success as well as after trouble.

Application

Do you pray after victories as well as in trials?

XLVII. ALONE ON LAND

Mark 6:47 — In the Middle of the Lake

“Later that night, the boat was in the middle of the lake, and He was alone on land.”
The disciples were out on the water.
Jesus was on the shore.
They were separated.
It may have felt like Jesus was far away.
But He was not unaware.

Cross References

Matthew 14:23
When evening came, He was there alone.
Matthew 14:24
By this time the boat was far from land, being battered by the waves because the wind was against it.
John 6:16
When evening came, His followers went down to the lake.

Spiritual Principle

Even when Jesus seems far away, He knows where we are.

Key Truth

Distance from Jesus is never distance from His sight.

XLVIII. STRAINING AT THE OARS

Mark 6:48 — Walking on the Lake

“He saw the disciples straining at the oars because the wind was against them. About the fourth watch of the night, He went out to them, walking on the lake. He was about to pass by them,”
“He saw the disciples straining at the oars.”
From the mountain, Jesus saw them.
He saw their struggle.
“Because the wind was against them.”
They were rowing hard but getting nowhere.
“About the fourth watch of the night.”
Between three and six in the morning.
They had been rowing for hours.
“He went out to them, walking on the lake.”
Jesus walked on the water.
In the Old Testament, only God walks on the waves of the sea.
“He was about to pass by them.”
This recalls when God “passed by” Moses and Elijah to show His glory.
Jesus was revealing who He is.

Cross References

Matthew 14:25
Between three and six in the morning, Jesus came to them, walking on the water.
John 6:19
After rowing three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on the water and coming near the boat. They were afraid.
Job 9:8
God alone spreads out the skies and walks on the waves of the sea.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus sees our struggles and comes to us in them.

Key Truth

Jesus walks on the very waves that are against us.

XLIX. A GHOST!

Mark 6:49 — They Cried Out

“but when they saw Him walking on the lake, they thought He was a ghost. They cried out,”
In the dark, the disciples saw a figure on the water.
They did not recognize Jesus.
They thought it was a ghost.
Fear can keep us from recognizing Jesus when He comes to help.

Cross References

Matthew 14:26
When the followers saw Him walking on the water, they were terrified. “It's a ghost!” they said, and they screamed in fear.
John 6:19
They saw Jesus walking on the water toward the boat, and they were frightened.
Luke 24:37
They were startled and frightened, thinking they were seeing a ghost.

Spiritual Principle

Fear can blind us to the presence of Jesus.

Key Truth

Sometimes the One we fear is the One coming to save us.

L. IT IS I

Mark 6:50 — Take Courage

“for they all saw Him and were terrified. Immediately He spoke to them and said, “Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid.””

“Immediately He spoke to them.”
Jesus did not leave them in fear.
“Take courage!”
Be brave.
“It is I.”
In the language Mark uses, this can be read as **“I AM.”**
This is the name God used for Himself when He spoke to Moses.
Jesus was saying more than “It's me.”
He was revealing that He is God.
“Don't be afraid.”
His presence is the answer to fear.

Cross References

Matthew 14:27
But Jesus spoke to them right away: “Be brave! It is I. Do not be afraid.”
John 6:20
But He said to them, “It is I. Do not be afraid.”
Isaiah 41:10
Do not be frightened, for I am with you. Do not be troubled, for I am your God.

Spiritual Principle

The presence of Jesus is the answer to our fear.

Key Truth

When Jesus says “It is I,” fear has to go.

LI. THE WIND DIED DOWN

Mark 6:51 — Utterly Amazed

“Then He climbed into the boat with them, and the wind died down. They were utterly amazed,”
“Then He climbed into the boat with them.”
Jesus joined them in their struggle.
“And the wind died down.”
Again, creation obeyed Him.
“They were utterly amazed.”
They were overwhelmed.
This was the second time they had seen Jesus calm the wind.
Yet they were still amazed.

Cross References

Matthew 14:32
When they climbed into the boat, the wind stopped.
John 6:21
They gladly took Him into the boat, and right away the boat reached the shore where they were heading.

Psalm 107:29
He turned the storm into a calm, and the waves became quiet.

Spiritual Principle

When Jesus enters our boat, the storm must obey Him.

Key Truth

Peace comes when Jesus climbs in.

LII. THEIR HEARTS WERE HARDENED

Mark 6:52 — They Had Not Understood About the Loaves

“for they had not understood about the loaves; their hearts were hardened.”
Mark gives a surprising explanation.
“They had not understood about the loaves.”
They had just seen Jesus feed thousands.
If they had understood who He was, they would not have been so shocked.
“Their hearts were hardened.”
This is strong language.
The same words used for Jesus' enemies.
The disciples were not enemies.
But they were slow to understand.
Even followers of Jesus can have dull hearts.

Cross References

Matthew 14:33
Then those in the boat worshiped Him and said, “You really are the Son of God!”
Mark 8:17
Jesus knew what they were talking about and asked, “Why are you talking about having no bread? Do you still not see or understand? Are your hearts hard?”
John 12:40
He has blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts.

Spiritual Principle

Even followers of Jesus can be slow to understand what He has shown them.

Spiritual Warning

Seeing miracles does not guarantee understanding; hearts must be open.

LIII. LANDING AT GENNESARET

Mark 6:53 — Anchored There

“When they had crossed over, they landed at Gennesaret and anchored there.”
The boat landed at Gennesaret.

This was a fertile plain on the northwest shore of the lake.
The wind had pushed them off course from Bethsaida.
But Jesus had work for them here.

Cross References

Matthew 14:34
When they had crossed the lake, they came to land at Gennesaret.
John 6:24
When the crowd saw that Jesus and His followers were not there, they got into boats and went to Capernaum looking for Jesus.
John 6:25
When they found Him on the other side of the lake, they asked, “Teacher, when did You get here?”

Spiritual Principle

God can use even a change of plans for His purposes.

Key Truth

Where the wind takes us, Jesus has work for us.

LIV. THEY RECOGNIZED HIM

Mark 6:54 — As Soon As They Got Out

“As soon as they got out of the boat, people recognized Jesus.”
Jesus was now famous everywhere.
People knew Him immediately.
His reputation had spread throughout the region.

Cross References

Matthew 14:35
When the people there recognized Jesus, they sent word through the whole area.
Mark 1:37
When they found Him, they said, “Everyone is looking for You!”
Luke 4:42
The people looked for Him, and when they found Him, they tried to keep Him from leaving.

Spiritual Principle

Where Jesus has worked, people will recognize Him.

Key Truth

Jesus' fame went ahead of Him.

LV. CARRYING THE SICK

Mark 6:55 — Running Through the Region

“They ran throughout that whole region and carried the sick on mats to wherever they heard He was.”
People ran everywhere.
They brought their sick friends and family.
They carried them on mats.
Wherever they heard Jesus was, they brought them.
Like the four friends in Chapter 2, they carried people to Jesus.

Cross References

Matthew 14:35
They brought all their sick people to Him.
Mark 2:3
Four men came, carrying a paralyzed man.
Acts 5:15
People even carried the sick into the streets and laid them on beds and mats, hoping Peter's shadow might fall on some of them as he passed by.

Spiritual Principle

Love carries the hurting to Jesus.

Application

Who can you help bring to Jesus?

LVI. ALL WHO TOUCHED HIM WERE HEALED

Mark 6:56 — Even the Edge of His Cloak

“And wherever He went—into villages, towns, or the countryside—they laid the sick in the marketplaces. They begged Him to let them touch even the edge of His cloak, and all who touched Him were healed.”
“Wherever He went.”
Villages.
Towns.
The countryside.
“They laid the sick in the marketplaces.”
The places of business became places of healing.
“They begged Him to let them touch even the edge of His cloak.”
Like the woman in Chapter 5, they reached out in faith.
“And all who touched Him were healed.”
Not some.

All.
What a contrast to Nazareth.
There, unbelief limited the miracles.
Here, faith brought healing to all.

Cross References

Matthew 14:36
They begged Him to let the sick just touch the edge of His coat, and everyone who touched it was healed.
Mark 5:28
She thought, “If I can just touch His clothes, I will be healed.”
Acts 19:12
Handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched Paul were taken to the sick, and they were healed.

Spiritual Principle

Faith that reaches out to Jesus finds His power to heal.

Key Truth

The chapter began with unbelief that shut Jesus out and ended with faith that reached out to Him.

LVII. SIX GREAT LESSONS FROM MARK 6

1. Unbelief Blocks Blessings

“He could do no great miracle there.”

Principle:

Jesus could do little in His hometown because of their unbelief.

2. Disciples Are Sent with Faith, Not Resources

“Take nothing for the journey except a staff.”

Principle:

Dependence on God's power matters more than human preparation.

3. John's Death Foreshadows Christ's Sacrifice

“John, whom I beheaded.”

Principle:

Standing for truth can cost your life.

4. Jesus Feeds the Hungry

“They all ate and were satisfied.”

Principle:

He is the true Shepherd who provides for His people.

5. Jesus Walks on Water

“Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid.”

Principle:

His authority over nature reveals His divine power.

6. Faith Activates Healing

“All who touched Him were healed.”

Principle:

All who reached out to Him in Gennesaret were made whole.

LVIII. TWO KINGS, TWO BANQUETS

Mark places two meals side by side.

Herod's Banquet

- Held in a palace.
- For the rich and powerful.
- Full of pride, drinking, and foolish oaths.
- Ended in death.

Jesus' Banquet

- Held on a green hillside.
- For ordinary, hungry people.
- Full of compassion, order, and thanksgiving.
- Ended in life and plenty.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The kingdoms of this world end in death, but the kingdom of Jesus brings life and abundance.

LIX. WHAT JOHN THE BAPTIST TEACHES US

John's death shows the cost of faithfulness.

He Spoke the Truth

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

He Spoke to the Powerful

He did not soften God's word for a king.

He Paid the Price

He was imprisoned and killed.

He Finished His Work

He had prepared the way for Jesus.

He Pointed to Jesus Even in Death

His death foreshadowed the death of the One he served.

Key Truth

Faithfulness to God may cost us everything, but it gains what cannot be lost.

LX. FROM LITTLE TO MUCH

The feeding of the five thousand teaches how Jesus works.

1. Jesus Sees the Need

“He had compassion on them.”

2. Jesus Gives the Task

“You give them something to eat.”

3. Jesus Asks What We Have

“How many loaves do you have?”

4. Jesus Gives Thanks

“He gave thanks.”

5. Jesus Multiplies

“He broke the loaves.”

6. The Disciples Distribute

“He gave them to His disciples to distribute.”

7. Everyone Is Satisfied

“They all ate and were satisfied.”

8. There Is More Than Enough

“Twelve basketfuls.”

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Give Jesus what you have, and He will make it more than enough.

LXI. WHAT MARK 6 TEACHES ABOUT JESUS

He Was a Humble Carpenter

“Is this not the carpenter?”

He Sends His Servants with Authority

“He gave them authority over unclean spirits.”

He Is the Compassionate Shepherd

“They were like sheep without a shepherd.”

He Provides Abundantly

“They all ate and were satisfied.”

He Prays to the Father

“He went up on a mountainside to pray.”

He Walks on the Sea

“Walking on the lake.”

He Is the Great “I AM”

“Take courage! It is I.”

He Heals All Who Come

“All who touched Him were healed.”

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The carpenter from Nazareth is the Shepherd of Israel, the Lord of the sea, and the great I AM.

LXII. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR PERSONAL STUDY

Question 1

Why did the people of Nazareth reject Jesus?
They knew Him as an ordinary carpenter and could not accept that He was more.

Question 2

Why could Jesus do no great miracle in Nazareth?
Not because His power was limited, but because their unbelief shut out His works.

Question 3

Why did Jesus send the Twelve out with so little?
To teach them to depend completely on God.

Question 4

What did shaking the dust off their feet mean?
It was a solemn warning to those who rejected God's message.

Question 5

Why did Herod think Jesus was John raised from the dead?
His guilty conscience was troubling him after he killed John.

Question 6

Why was John arrested?
For telling Herod it was wrong to marry his brother's wife.

Question 7

Why did Herod go ahead with John's execution?
Because of his foolish oath and his fear of what his guests would think.

Question 8

Why did Jesus have compassion on the crowd?
They were like sheep without a shepherd.

Question 9

What did Jesus do with the five loaves and two fish?
He gave thanks, broke them, and gave them to His disciples to distribute, and everyone was fed.

Question 10

Why did Jesus walk on the water?
To come to His struggling disciples and to reveal that He is Lord over creation.

Question 11

Why were the disciples so amazed?
They had not understood the meaning of the loaves; their hearts were hardened.

Question 12

What should Mark 6 change about the way Christians live today?
Mark 6 should cause believers to live:

- Refusing to let familiarity breed unbelief.
- Depending on God more than on resources.
- Speaking God's truth with courage.
- Keeping promises wisely and refusing sinful ones.
- Resting with Jesus after hard work.
- Showing compassion when interrupted.
- Giving Jesus what they have, however small.
- Trusting Jesus in the storms of life.

LXIII. PERSONAL APPLICATION

Mark 6 asks several important questions.

Has Familiarity Dulled My Faith?

Do I take Jesus for granted?

Am I Depending on God or My Resources?

What would I do if I had nothing but Jesus?

Am I Willing to Speak the Truth?

Even when it is costly?

Am I Listening Without Obeying?

Like Herod, do I enjoy God's word but refuse to change?

Do I Rest with Jesus?

When did I last come away with Him?

How Do I Respond to Interruptions?

With annoyance or compassion?

What Do I Have to Give Jesus?

What are my five loaves and two fish?

Do I Recognize Jesus in My Storms?

Or does fear blind me to His presence?

LXIV. A CRAWFORD BIBLE STUDY PRINCIPLE

“Five Loaves in His Hands”

Five small loaves.
Two little fish.
A boy's lunch.
The disciples looked at it and said, “What is this among so many?”
It was not enough.
It was not even close.
But they gave it to Jesus.
Jesus took it.
He looked up to heaven.
He gave thanks.
He broke it.
And thousands were fed.
This creates a powerful principle.
What we have is never enough in our hands.
But it is always enough in His.
The question is not how much we have.
The question is whether we will give it to Jesus.

Principle:

Little in our hands becomes much in the hands of Jesus.

LXV. FINAL APPLICATION

Mark Chapter 6 shows both rejection and provision.
Jesus was rejected by His hometown.
The Twelve were sent out with nothing but His power.
John the Baptist paid for faithfulness with his life.
Jesus fed thousands with a boy's lunch.
He walked on the water to His frightened disciples.
And all who reached out to Him were healed.
Mark 6 therefore reminds us:
Never let familiarity turn into unbelief.
Never trust resources more than God.
Never be afraid to speak the truth.

Never think your little is too small for Jesus.
Never forget that Jesus sees you straining at the oars.
The church does not need people who only admire Jesus.
It needs:
Messengers who go in His power.
Servants who speak the truth.
Givers who offer what they have.
And disciples who trust Him in the storm.
The same Jesus still calls:
Tell people that Jesus is the Good Shepherd.
Tell people that Jesus provides more than enough.
Tell people that Jesus comes to us in our storms.
Tell people that all who reach out to Him in faith can find healing and hope.
And as you live:
Believe.
Give what you have.
Take courage.
Reach out to Jesus.

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father,
Thank You for Jesus, the carpenter who is also the Lord of all.
Thank You that He sends His servants out with His power.
Thank You for faithful witnesses like John the Baptist who spoke the truth at great cost.
Thank You that Jesus is the compassionate Shepherd who feeds His sheep.
Thank You that He takes our little and makes it more than enough.
Thank You that He sees us straining at the oars and comes to us.
Thank You that He says, “Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid.”
Forgive us when familiarity has dulled our faith.
Forgive us when we have trusted our resources more than You.
Forgive us when we have been afraid to speak the truth.
Forgive us when we have listened to Your word without obeying it.
Forgive us when fear has kept us from seeing Jesus.
Give us faith that reaches out to Him.
Help us give Him whatever we have.
Teach us to rest with Him.
Fill us with His compassion for the crowds.
And in every storm, help us hear His voice.
“Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid.”
In Jesus' name, Amen.

Key Verse

“When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, He had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So He began teaching them many things.” — Mark 6:34

Central Truth

Jesus is the compassionate Shepherd and Lord over creation who provides for His people and sends them out in His power, and while unbelief shuts Him out and faithfulness may cost everything, those who come to Him in faith find Him more than enough.

Mark 6 in One Sentence

Jesus is rejected in Nazareth, sends out the Twelve with His authority, and, after John the Baptist is beheaded by Herod, has compassion on the crowds and feeds five thousand with five loaves and two fish, then walks on the lake to His struggling disciples and heals all who touch Him in Gennesaret.

CRAWFORD BIBLE COMMENTARY

BIBLE STUDY

Mark Chapter 7 — Tradition, Faith, and Healing

A Verse-by-Verse Bible Study from the Crawford Standard Bible

Introduction

Mark Chapter 7 deals with a question that matters in every generation.
What makes a person clean or unclean before God?
Religious leaders from Jerusalem came to inspect Jesus and His disciples.
They noticed the disciples ate without doing the special hand-washing their tradition required.
This was not about hygiene.
It was about religious tradition.
Jesus answered strongly.
He showed how human traditions had come to replace God's commands.
Then He taught that true uncleanness does not come from food or outward things.
“What comes out of a person is what defiles him.”

Sin begins in the heart.
Then Jesus went into Gentile territory.
A Greek woman begged Him to free her daughter from a demon.
Her humble, persistent faith moved Jesus to heal her child.
Finally, Jesus healed a deaf man who could hardly speak.
The crowd said, **“He has done everything well.”**
The chapter shows that God's grace is not limited by human rules or human boundaries.
This chapter is not a criticism of any one group.
Jesus' warning about empty tradition applies to religious people of every time and place, including Christians today.
The chapter moves through four movements:

- Confrontation with the Pharisees (verses 1–13).
- What Truly Defiles a Person (verses 14–23).
- The Faith of a Gentile Woman (verses 24–30).
- Jesus Heals a Deaf and Mute Man (verses 31–37).

The central truth of Mark 7 is:
God looks at the heart, not at outward religious rituals, and His grace in Jesus reaches past human traditions and boundaries to cleanse, heal, and welcome all who come to Him in faith.

I. FROM JERUSALEM

Mark 7:1 — Gathered Around Jesus

“The Pharisees and some of the scribes who had come from Jerusalem gathered around Jesus.”
“The Pharisees and some of the scribes.”
Religious leaders who were experts in the law and its traditions.
“Who had come from Jerusalem.”
This was another official delegation.
Jerusalem was the center of religious authority.
They had come to examine Jesus.
“Gathered around Jesus.”
They were watching closely.

Cross References

Matthew 15:1
Then some Pharisees and teachers of the law came to Jesus from Jerusalem.
Luke 11:53
When Jesus left, the teachers of the law and the Pharisees began to oppose Him strongly and question Him about many things.
John 1:19
The Jewish leaders in Jerusalem sent priests and Levites to ask John, “Who are you?”

Spiritual Principle

Religious authority does not guarantee a heart open to God.

Key Truth

Some come to Jesus to learn; others come to find fault.

II. UNWASHED HANDS

Mark 7:2 — They Found Fault

“They saw some of His disciples eating bread with “unclean” (that is, unwashed) hands, and they found fault.”
“They saw some of His disciples eating bread with ‘unclean’ hands.”
The issue was not dirt.
It was a ritual washing.
Religious teachers required a special way of washing before eating.
“And they found fault.”
They were quick to criticize.
They focused on outward ceremony.

Cross References

Matthew 15:2
> “Why do Your followers break the traditions of the elders? They do not wash their hands before they eat.”

Luke 11:38
> The Pharisee was surprised to see that Jesus did not wash before the meal.

Romans 14:14
> Because I belong to the Lord Jesus, I am sure no food is dirty by itself. But if a person believes something is unclean, then for him it is.

Spiritual Principle

A critical spirit often focuses on outward details and misses the heart.

Spiritual Warning

Be careful not to judge others by man-made rules.

III. THE TRADITION OF THE ELDERS

Mark 7:3 — A Special Washing

“(The Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they wash their hands in a special way, holding to the tradition of the elders.”
Mark explains this custom for his readers.
Many of them were Gentiles who did not know Jewish customs.
“Holding to the tradition of the elders.”
These were rules passed down by religious teachers over many generations.
They were meant to help people obey God's law carefully.
But over time, many came to treat these traditions as if they were God's own commands.

Cross References

Matthew 15:2
> Why do Your followers disobey the rules handed down by the elders?

Colossians 2:8
Watch out that no one carries you off with hollow, tricky ideas that come from human customs and the ways of this world instead of from Christ.
Galatians 1:14
I was ahead of many people my age in the Jewish religion and was very eager to keep the traditions of my ancestors.

Spiritual Principle

Traditions can be helpful, but they must never be treated as equal to God's word.

Key Truth

Good intentions can slowly turn into heavy rules.

IV. CUPS, PITCHERS, AND KETTLES

Mark 7:4 — Many Other Traditions

“When they come from the marketplace, they do not eat unless they wash. They also hold many other traditions, such as the washing of cups, pitchers, kettles, and dining couches.)”
“When they come from the marketplace.”
The market was full of people, including Gentiles.
Some feared they might have touched something unclean.
“They also hold many other traditions.”
Washing cups.
Washing pitchers.
Washing kettles.
Even washing dining couches.
The list of rules kept growing.
Religion had become a matter of outward washing.

Cross References

Matthew 23:25
How terrible for you, teachers of the law and Pharisees! You clean the outside of your cups and dishes, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence.
Leviticus 11:32
If one of these dead creatures falls on anything, that thing becomes unclean, whether it is made of wood, cloth, leather, or sackcloth.
Hebrews 9:10
These were only about food, drink, and different washings, outward rules that lasted until the time God would make things new.

Spiritual Principle

Outward washing cannot make the heart clean.

Key Truth

A clean cup does not mean a clean heart.

V. WHY DON'T YOUR DISCIPLES?

Mark 7:5 — The Question

“The Pharisees and scribes asked Him, “Why don't Your disciples walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashed hands?””
The leaders asked Jesus directly.
They criticized His disciples.
But the real target was Jesus.
“Walk according to the tradition of the elders.”
To **walk** means to live.
They believed faithful people lived by these traditions.
Jesus would show that faithfulness is about following God, not human rules.

Cross References

Matthew 15:2
Why do Your followers break our traditions? They do not wash their hands before they eat.
Mark 2:16
When the teachers of the law who were Pharisees saw Him eating with sinners and tax collectors, they asked His followers, “Why does He eat with them?”
Luke 11:38
The Pharisee noticed that Jesus had not washed first before the meal, and he was surprised.

Spiritual Principle

Faithfulness is measured by God's word, not by human customs.

Key Truth

The question is not whether we follow tradition but whether we follow God.

VI. HONORING WITH THEIR LIPS

Mark 7:6 — Hearts Far Away

“Jesus replied, “Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you hypocrites, as it is written: ‘This people honors Me with their lips, but their hearts are far from Me.”
“Isaiah was right.”
Jesus quoted Isaiah 29.
“When he prophesied about you hypocrites.”
A **hypocrite** was originally an actor wearing a mask.
Someone who plays a part on the outside.
“This people honors Me with their lips.”
They said the right words.
“But their hearts are far from Me.”
Their hearts did not match their words.
God wants the heart, not just the lips.

Cross References

Isaiah 29:13
The Lord says, “These people come near Me with their mouths and honor Me with their words, but their hearts are far away from Me.”
Matthew 15:8
These people show honor to Me with words, but their hearts are far from Me.
Titus 1:16
They say they know God, but what they do shows they do not.

Spiritual Principle

God desires the worship of the heart, not just the words of the lips.

Application

Does your heart match your worship?

VII. WORSHIP IN VAIN

Mark 7:7 — Commandments of Men

“In vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.’”
“In vain they worship Me.”
Their worship was empty.
It had no value.
“Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.”
They taught human rules as if they were God's commands.
This is a serious danger.
When human rules are put on the same level as God's word, worship becomes empty.

Cross References

Isaiah 29:13
Their worship of Me is made up only of rules taught by people.
Colossians 2:22
These rules are about things that wear out when they are used. They are only human commands and teachings.
Matthew 15:9
Their worship of Me is worthless, because they teach rules that people made up.

Spiritual Principle

Worship based on human rules instead of God's truth is empty.

Spiritual Warning

Every church must be careful not to treat its customs as if they were God's commands.

VIII. SETTING ASIDE GOD'S COMMAND

Mark 7:8 — Holding to Human Tradition

“You set aside the command of God to hold on to human tradition—such as washing cups and pitchers—and you do many other similar things.””
“You set aside the command of God.”
This was the heart of the problem.
They let go of what God said.
“To hold on to human tradition.”
And they gripped tightly to what people said.
They had it backward.
God's word should come first.
Traditions should serve God's word, never replace it.

Cross References

Matthew 15:3
Jesus answered, “Why do you break God's command to keep your own traditions?”
Colossians 2:8
Do not let anyone lead you away with empty ideas based on human traditions instead of on Christ.
Isaiah 29:13
Their worship is only rules made by people.

Spiritual Principle

God's word must always stand above human tradition.

Key Truth

When we hold tightly to tradition, we may let go of God's command.

IX. SKILLFULLY REJECTING

Mark 7:9 — Keeping Your Own Tradition

“And He continued, “You skillfully reject the commandment of God to keep your own tradition.”
“You skillfully reject.”
Jesus used sharp words.
They were clever at it.
They found smart ways to get around God's law.
“To keep your own tradition.”
Notice the words **“your own.”**
The tradition was theirs, not God's.

Cross References

Matthew 15:3
Why do you break God's command for the sake of your traditions?

Matthew 15:6
You have made God's word worthless by following your own traditions.
Mark 7:13
You cancel God's word by the traditions you pass down.

Spiritual Principle

Cleverness that gets around God's word is not wisdom.

Spiritual Warning

It is possible to be very religious and still find clever ways to disobey God.

X. HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER

Mark 7:10 — What Moses Said

“For Moses said, ‘Honor your father and mother,’ and, ‘Whoever curses father or mother must be put to death.’”
Jesus gives a clear example.
“Honor your father and mother.”
This is one of the Ten Commandments.
Honoring parents included caring for them in their old age.
“Whoever curses father or mother must be put to death.”
God took this very seriously.
Dishonoring parents was a grave sin.

Cross References

Exodus 20:12
Respect your father and mother, so that you will live a long time in the land the Lord your God is giving you.
Deuteronomy 5:16
Honor your father and mother as the Lord your God commanded you, so that you may live long and things may go well for you.
Exodus 21:17
Anyone who curses his father or mother must be put to death.

Spiritual Principle

God commands us to honor and care for our parents.

Application

How are you honoring your parents?

XI. CORBAN

Mark 7:11 — Dedicated to God

“But you say, ‘If a man declares something Corban (that is, dedicated to God), he no longer has to help his father or mother.’”
“Corban.”
This word meant a gift set apart for God.
A person could declare money or property **Corban**.
Then, according to some teachers, it could not be used to help anyone else.
But the person might still keep using it for himself.
“He no longer has to help his father or mother.”
This became a religious excuse.
A son could avoid supporting his aging parents by saying his money belonged to God.
It looked holy.
But it broke God's command.

Cross References

Matthew 15:5
> But you say that if anyone tells his father or mother, “What I might have used to help you is a gift to God,”

Matthew 23:18
> You say, “If anyone swears by the altar, it means nothing. But if anyone swears by the gift on the altar, he must keep his promise.”

Numbers 30:2
> If a man makes a promise to the Lord, he must not break his word. He must do everything he said.

Spiritual Principle

Religious excuses can never cancel God's clear commands.

Spiritual Warning

Be careful of using religion as an excuse to avoid love.

XII. NOTHING FOR HIS PARENTS

Mark 7:12 — Blocked from Helping

“In this way you no longer let him do anything for his parents.”
The result was cruel.
Aging parents were left without help.
And the religious leaders allowed it.
They thought they were honoring God.
But they were breaking His command and hurting people.

Cross References

Matthew 15:5
You teach that a person who gives his money to God does not have to help his parents.
1 Timothy 5:4
If a widow has children or grandchildren, they should first learn to serve God by caring for their own family and repaying their parents. This pleases God.
Matthew 15:6
You let them avoid honoring their father and mother.

Spiritual Principle

True devotion to God shows itself in love for family.

Key Truth

You cannot honor God while neglecting the people He told you to care for.

XIII. NULLIFYING GOD'S WORD

Mark 7:13 — Many Things Like That

“Thus you nullify the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down. And you do many things like that.””
“Thus you nullify the word of God.”
To **nullify** means to cancel or make empty.
Their traditions canceled out God's word.
“By your tradition that you have handed down.”
What was passed down from people overruled what came from God.
“And you do many things like that.”
Corban was only one example.
There were many others.

Cross References

Matthew 15:6
You have canceled God's word because of your traditions.
Isaiah 29:13
They worship Me with rules made by people.
Colossians 2:8
Be careful that no one leads you away with human traditions instead of Christ.

Spiritual Principle

Human traditions can empty God's word of its power if they are placed above it.

Application

Is there any tradition in your life that is pushing aside God's word?

XIV. LISTEN AND UNDERSTAND

Mark 7:14 — Calling the Crowd

“Jesus called the crowd to Him again and said, “Listen to Me, everyone, and understand this:”
Jesus turned from the leaders to the crowd.
He wanted everyone to hear this.
“Listen to Me, everyone, and understand this.”
This was important.
He was about to teach a truth that would change how people understood purity.

Cross References

Matthew 15:10
Jesus called the crowd to Him and said, “Listen and understand.”
Mark 4:9
Then Jesus said, “Let anyone who has ears listen.”
Matthew 13:9
Whoever has ears should listen.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus wants everyone to understand the truth about the heart.

Key Truth

Some truths are too important for only a few to hear.

XV. WHAT DEFILES A PERSON

Mark 7:15 — From the Inside Out

“There is nothing outside a person that by going into him can defile him. It is what comes out of a person that defiles him.”
“There is nothing outside a person that by going into him can defile him.”
Food cannot make a person spiritually unclean.
Unwashed hands cannot make the soul unclean.
“It is what comes out of a person that defiles him.”
The real problem is inside.
Sin comes from the heart.
This was a revolutionary teaching.

Cross References

Matthew 15:11
What goes into a person's mouth does not make him unclean. What comes out of his mouth is what makes him unclean.
Acts 10:15
The voice spoke to him again: “Do not call anything unclean that God has made clean.”

Romans 14:14
I am sure, as one who belongs to the Lord Jesus, that no food is unclean in itself.

Spiritual Principle

Uncleanness before God comes from the heart, not from outside things.

Key Truth

The problem is not what goes in but what comes out.

XVI. EARS TO HEAR

Mark 7:16 — Let Him Hear

“If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear.””
Jesus repeats His familiar call.
Listen carefully.
Think about this.
Some of the oldest copies of Mark do not include this verse.
But the same words appear elsewhere in Mark, and the call to listen fits Jesus' teaching.

Cross References

Mark 4:9
Whoever has ears to hear should listen.
Matthew 11:15
If you have ears, then listen.
Revelation 2:7
Everyone who has ears should listen to what the Spirit says to the churches.

Spiritual Principle

God's truth calls for careful listening.

Key Truth

Hearing is not the same as listening.

XVII. ASKING ABOUT THE PARABLE

Mark 7:17 — In the House

“After He had left the crowd and entered the house, His disciples asked Him about this parable.”
Again the disciples came privately to Jesus.
They did not fully understand.
They called His saying a **parable**, a word picture that needed explaining.
Jesus was patient with their questions.

Cross References

Matthew 15:15
Peter said, “Explain this saying to us.”
Mark 4:10
When He was alone, the Twelve and the others around Him asked Him about the stories.
Mark 4:34
When He was alone with His followers, He explained everything to them.

Spiritual Principle

Disciples bring their questions to Jesus.

Application

Do you take your questions about Scripture to Jesus?

XVIII. STILL WITHOUT UNDERSTANDING?

Mark 7:18 — Nothing from the Outside

“He said to them, “Are you still without understanding? Don't you realize that nothing entering a person from the outside can defile him?”
“Are you still without understanding?”
Jesus was disappointed they were slow to understand.
“Don't you realize that nothing entering a person from the outside can defile him?”
He repeated the point.
What goes in from outside does not make a person unclean before God.

Cross References

Matthew 15:16
Jesus said, “Do you still not understand?”
Mark 4:13
Jesus asked them, “Do you not understand this story? How then will you understand any story?”
Matthew 16:9
Do you still not understand? Don't you remember the five loaves for the five thousand?

Spiritual Principle

Jesus patiently teaches those who are slow to understand.

Key Truth

Jesus does not give up on slow learners.

XIX. ALL FOODS CLEAN

Mark 7:19 — Into the Stomach

“It doesn't go into the heart but into the stomach, and then out of the body.” (In saying this, Jesus declared all foods clean.)”

“It doesn't go into the heart but into the stomach.”
Food affects the body, not the soul.
It passes through and leaves.
“And then out of the body.”
Jesus used very plain language.
“In saying this, Jesus declared all foods clean.”
Mark adds this important note.
The food laws of the Old Testament had a purpose for Israel.
But Jesus brought something new.
Later, God showed Peter the same truth in a vision.
Most Christians understand this to mean believers are free from the Old Testament food laws.
What matters to God is the heart.

Cross References

Acts 10:15
The voice spoke a second time: “Stop calling things unclean when God has made them clean.”
Romans 14:14
As one who belongs to the Lord Jesus, I am fully sure that no food is unclean in itself.
1 Timothy 4:4
All that God created is good. If we thank Him for it, we do not need to turn any of it away.

Spiritual Principle

In Christ, what matters is not what we eat but the condition of our hearts.

Key Truth

Jesus moved the focus from the plate to the heart.

XX. WHAT COMES OUT

Mark 7:20 — The Real Source of Defilement

“He continued, “What comes out of a person is what defiles him.”
Jesus repeats the main point.
The source of uncleanness is inside us.
Our words.
Our actions.
Our attitudes.
They all flow from the heart.

Cross References

Matthew 15:18
But what comes out of the mouth comes from the heart, and that is what makes a person unclean.
James 3:6
The tongue is like a fire. It is a world of evil among the parts of our body. It spreads its evil through the whole body.
Matthew 12:34
The mouth speaks what the heart is full of.

Spiritual Principle

What comes out of us reveals what is inside us.

Key Truth

The heart is the fountain; words and actions are the stream.

XXI. FROM WITHIN

Mark 7:21 — Out of the Heart

“For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts: sexual immorality, theft, murder,”
“For from within, out of the heart of man.”
This is a sobering truth.
The problem is not outside us.
It is inside us.
“Come evil thoughts.”
Sin begins with thoughts.
Then it grows into actions.
“Sexual immorality, theft, murder.”
Jesus begins a list of sins.
Each one starts in the heart.

Cross References

Genesis 6:5
> The Lord saw how wicked people had become on the earth. Every thought and plan in their hearts was always evil.

Jeremiah 17:9
> Nothing fools us like our own hearts. They are sick beyond cure. Who can really know them?

Matthew 15:19
> Out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual sin, stealing, lying, and insulting others.

Spiritual Principle

Sin begins in the heart before it shows in our actions.

Application

What thoughts do you need to bring to God for cleansing?

XXII. A LIST OF EVILS

Mark 7:22 — More from the Heart

“adultery, greed, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance, and foolishness.”
The list continues.

- **Adultery** — breaking faithfulness in marriage.
- **Greed** — always wanting more.

- **Wickedness** — doing harm to others.
- **Deceit** — lying and tricking.
- **Lewdness** — shameless sinful behavior.
- **Envy** — resenting what others have.
- **Slander** — speaking evil of others.
- **Arrogance** — pride that looks down on others.
- **Foolishness** — living as if God does not matter.

These are not only outward sins.
Many are attitudes no one else can see.
But God sees them.

Cross References

Galatians 5:19
The things the sinful nature does are clear: sexual sin, impurity, and shameful behavior.
Romans 1:29
They were filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed, and hatred. They were full of jealousy, murder, fighting, lying, and thinking the worst about others.
Matthew 15:19
Evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual sins, stealing, lying, and slander all come from the heart.

Spiritual Principle

God sees the hidden sins of the heart as clearly as the outward ones.

Spiritual Warning

Pride and envy are just as serious to God as theft and adultery.

XXIII. ALL THESE EVILS

Mark 7:23 — From Within

“All these evils come from within, and they defile a person.””
“All these evils come from within.”
Every one of them starts inside.
“And they defile a person.”
These make a person truly unclean.
Washing hands cannot fix this.
Avoiding certain foods cannot fix this.
Only God can make a heart clean.
That is why we need Jesus.

Cross References

Matthew 15:20
These things make a person unclean. But eating with unwashed hands does not.
James 1:14
But each person is tempted when his own evil desires drag him away and trap him.
Proverbs 4:23
More than anything, watch over your heart, because your whole life comes out of it.

Spiritual Principle

Only God can cleanse the heart that sin has made unclean.

Key Truth

We do not need cleaner hands; we need new hearts.

XXIV. TO THE REGION OF TYRE

Mark 7:24 — He Could Not Stay Hidden

“Jesus left that place and went to the region of Tyre. He entered a house and did not want anyone to know it, but He could not keep His presence hidden.”
“Jesus left that place and went to the region of Tyre.”
Tyre was a Gentile city on the coast, north of Galilee.
Jesus had just taught that food does not make a person unclean.
Now He went into Gentile territory, where Jews thought people were unclean.
“He entered a house and did not want anyone to know it.”
Jesus may have wanted rest.
“But He could not keep His presence hidden.”
Jesus' fame had spread even here.

Cross References

Matthew 15:21
Jesus left that place and went to the area of Tyre and Sidon.
Matthew 11:21
If the miracles done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have turned from their sins long ago.
Mark 3:8
People came from the area around Tyre and Sidon because they heard about what He was doing.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus cannot be hidden from those who are looking for Him.

Key Truth

Jesus went where others would not go.

XXV. A MOTHER'S PLEA

Mark 7:25 — She Fell at His Feet

“A woman whose little daughter had an unclean spirit heard about Him, and she came and fell at His feet.”
“A woman whose little daughter had an unclean spirit.”
A mother with a suffering child.
“Heard about Him.”
News of Jesus had reached her.

“And she came and fell at His feet.”
She humbled herself.
She was desperate.
Like Jairus, she came for her daughter.

Cross References

Matthew 15:22
A Canaanite woman from that area came and cried out, “Lord, Son of David, have mercy on me! My daughter is badly troubled by a demon.”
Mark 5:23
He begged, “My little daughter is dying. Please come and put Your hands on her.”
Mark 1:23
Suddenly a man with an evil spirit cried out in the synagogue.

Spiritual Principle

Love for our children drives us to the feet of Jesus.

Application

Who are you bringing to Jesus in prayer?

XXVI. A GREEK WOMAN

Mark 7:26 — Syrian Phoenicia

“The woman was a Greek, born in Syrian Phoenicia. She begged Jesus to drive the demon out of her daughter.”
“The woman was a Greek.”
She was a Gentile.
She spoke Greek and followed Greek culture.
“Born in Syrian Phoenicia.”
This was the region of Tyre and Sidon.
Long ago this land had been home to Israel's enemies.
“She begged Jesus to drive the demon out of her daughter.”
She kept asking.
She would not give up.

Cross References

Matthew 15:22
A woman from Canaan who lived there came to Jesus, crying out for help.
Acts 10:1
There was a man in Caesarea named Cornelius, an officer in the Italian army.
Matthew 15:24
Jesus answered, “I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel.”

Spiritual Principle

God's mercy is available to people of every nation.

Key Truth

An outsider came with nothing but need and faith.

XXVII. THE CHILDREN'S BREAD

Mark 7:27 — First the Children

“He told her, “First let the children be fed, for it isn't right to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs.””
This is a hard saying.
“First let the children be fed.”
The **children** were Israel.
Jesus' mission was first to the Jewish people.
The word **first** is important.
It means others would come later.
“It isn't right to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs.”
Some Jews called Gentiles “dogs.”
The word Jesus used here meant small household dogs, family pets.
Jesus may have been testing her faith.
He knew how she would respond.
This was not cruelty but an invitation for her faith to speak.

Cross References

Matthew 15:24
He said, “God sent Me first to the lost sheep of Israel.”
Matthew 15:26
Jesus said, “It is not right to take the children's bread and give it to the dogs.”
Romans 1:16
I am proud of the good news. Through it God's power rescues everyone who trusts Him, the Jews first and the Gentiles too.

Spiritual Principle

God's plan of salvation came first to Israel and then to all nations.

Key Truth

The word “first” held a door open for the Gentiles.

XXVIII. EVEN THE DOGS

Mark 7:28 — Crumbs from the Table

“She replied, “Yes, Lord, but even the dogs under the table eat the crumbs the children drop.””
Her answer is beautiful.
“Yes, Lord.”
She did not argue.
She did not get offended.

She accepted what Jesus said.
She called Him **Lord**.
“But even the dogs under the table eat the crumbs the children drop.”
She turned His picture into a plea.
She did not ask to take the children's place.
She only asked for crumbs.
She believed even a crumb of Jesus' power would be enough.

Cross References

Matthew 15:27
She said, “Yes, Lord, but even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table.”
Matthew 8:8
The officer answered, “Lord, I am not good enough for You to come into my house. Just give the order, and my servant will be healed.”
Romans 3:29
Is God only the God of the Jews? Is He not also the God of the Gentiles? Yes, He is the God of the Gentiles too.

Spiritual Principle

Humble, persistent faith takes hold of God's mercy.

Key Truth

A crumb of Jesus' grace is more than enough.

XXIX. BECAUSE OF THIS REPLY

Mark 7:29 — The Demon Has Left

“Then He said to her, “Because of this reply, you may go; the demon has left your daughter.””
“Because of this reply.”
Jesus was pleased with her answer.
Matthew tells us Jesus said, **“Woman, you have great faith!”**
“You may go.”
Her request was granted.
“The demon has left your daughter.”
Jesus healed the girl from a distance.
He did not even go to her house.
His word was enough.

Cross References

Matthew 15:28
Jesus answered, “Woman, you have great faith! What you asked for will be done.” And her daughter was healed at that moment.
Matthew 8:13
Jesus said to the officer, “Go home. It will be done just as you believed.” And his servant was healed at that very time.

Mark 5:34
He told her, “Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace.”

Spiritual Principle

Jesus honors humble, persistent faith.

Key Truth

Distance is no barrier to the power of Jesus' word.

XXX. THE DEMON GONE

Mark 7:30 — Lying on the Bed

“She went home and found her child lying on the bed, and the demon gone.”
The mother believed and went home.
She found her daughter resting peacefully.
The demon was gone.
The torment was over.
What Jesus said had come true.

Cross References

Matthew 15:28
Her daughter was healed at that very moment.
Mark 1:31
He took her hand and helped her up. The fever left her.
John 4:52
He asked them when his son got better. They said, “The fever left him yesterday at one in the afternoon.”

Spiritual Principle

Jesus' word can be trusted completely.

Key Truth

She went home on faith and found the promise fulfilled.

XXXI. THROUGH SIDON TO THE DECAPOLIS

Mark 7:31 — A Long Journey

“Jesus left the region of Tyre and went through Sidon down to the Sea of Galilee and into the region of the Decapolis.”
Jesus took a long route.
North to Sidon.
Then down to the area east of the Sea of Galilee.

The **Decapolis** was the region of ten Greek cities.
This was where the man freed from Legion had told his story.
Now Jesus returned.
The seed planted by one man's testimony was ready for harvest.

Cross References

Matthew 15:29
Jesus left there and went along the Sea of Galilee. He went up on a hill and sat down.
Mark 5:20
The man went away and told people in the Ten Towns how much Jesus had done for him.
Matthew 4:25
Large crowds followed Him from Galilee, the Ten Towns, Jerusalem, Judea, and across the Jordan.

Spiritual Principle

One person's testimony can prepare the way for Jesus.

Key Truth

Jesus came back to the place where a changed life had told His story.

XXXII. A DEAF MAN

Mark 7:32 — Brought to Jesus

“There some people brought to Him a man who was deaf and could hardly talk, and they begged Him to lay His hand on him.”
“There some people brought to Him a man.”
Again, friends brought someone to Jesus.
“Who was deaf and could hardly talk.”
He could not hear.
He could barely speak.
He was cut off from others.
“And they begged Him to lay His hand on him.”
They believed Jesus could heal him.

Cross References

Matthew 9:32
As they were leaving, some people brought Jesus a man who could not talk because he had a demon.
Isaiah 35:5
Then the blind will see again, and the deaf will hear.
Mark 8:22
Some people brought a blind man to Jesus and begged Him to touch him.

Spiritual Principle

Bringing others to Jesus is an act of love and faith.

Application

Who can you bring to Jesus?

XXXIII. TAKEN ASIDE

Mark 7:33 — Fingers and Touch

“Jesus took him aside, away from the crowd, put His fingers into the man's ears, and then spit and touched the man's tongue.”
“Jesus took him aside, away from the crowd.”
Jesus gave him private attention.
The man could not hear words.
So Jesus used touch and actions he could understand.
“Put His fingers into the man's ears.”
Showing He would open his ears.
“Then spit and touched the man's tongue.”
Showing He would loosen his tongue.
In those days, saliva was thought to have healing power.
But the power was not in the method.
It was in Jesus.
He met this man in a personal, tender way.

Cross References

Mark 8:23
> He took the blind man by the hand and led him outside the village. He spit on his eyes and put His hands on him.

John 9:6
> After He said this, He spit on the ground, made some mud, and put it on the man's eyes.

Mark 5:41
> He took the child by the hand and said, “Little girl, get up!”

Spiritual Principle

Jesus meets each person in a way they can understand.

Key Truth

Jesus spoke to the deaf man in the language of touch.

XXXIV. EPHPHATHA!

Mark 7:34 — Be Opened!

“Looking up to heaven, He sighed deeply and said, “Ephphatha!” (which means, “Be opened!”).”
“Looking up to heaven.”
Jesus looked to the Father.
The man could see this.
He would know the healing came from God.

“He sighed deeply.”
Jesus felt the pain of this man's suffering.
He grieved over what sin and sickness had done to God's world.
“Ephphatha!”
Mark records the very word Jesus spoke in Aramaic.
“Be opened!”
Two simple words with great power.

Cross References

John 11:41
Jesus looked up and said, “Father, I thank You that You have heard Me.”
Mark 6:41
He looked up to heaven, gave thanks, and broke the loaves.
John 11:33
When Jesus saw her crying, He was deeply moved and troubled in spirit.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus feels deeply for those who suffer.

Key Truth

Before Jesus spoke the healing word, He shared the man's sorrow.

XXXV. HE SPOKE PLAINLY

Mark 7:35 — Ears Opened, Tongue Loosened

“At once the man's ears were opened, his tongue was loosened, and he began to speak plainly.”
“At once the man's ears were opened.”
He could hear.
“His tongue was loosened.”
What had held his tongue was released.
“And he began to speak plainly.”
He spoke clearly right away.
He did not need to learn slowly.
This fulfilled Isaiah's promise about the time of God's salvation.

Cross References

Isaiah 35:5
In that day, people who could not see will see, and people who could not hear will hear.
Luke 1:64
Right away Zechariah could speak again, and he began praising God.
Isaiah 32:3
Then those who can see will not close their eyes, and those who can hear will listen.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus brings the promised healing of God's kingdom.

Key Truth

The first thing the man heard was Jesus' voice.

XXXVI. THE MORE THEY SPREAD IT

Mark 7:36 — Not to Tell Anyone

“Jesus commanded them not to tell anyone. But the more He told them, the more they spread the news.”
Again, Jesus asked for silence.
He did not want to be seen only as a miracle worker.
But the people could not keep quiet.
The more He told them, the more they talked.
Joy is hard to hide.

Cross References

Mark 1:44
See that you do not tell anyone about this.
Mark 5:43
He gave them strict orders not to let anyone know.
Matthew 9:30
Jesus warned them sternly, “See that no one knows about this.”

Spiritual Principle

The works of Jesus are too wonderful to keep silent.

Key Truth

When Jesus changes a life, people cannot help but talk.

XXXVII. HE HAS DONE EVERYTHING WELL

Mark 7:37 — Overwhelmed with Amazement

“People were overwhelmed with amazement. “He has done everything well,” they said. “He makes the deaf hear and the mute speak.””
“People were overwhelmed with amazement.”
They were beyond amazed.
“He has done everything well.”
These words recall Genesis 1.
When God created the world, He saw that everything was very good.
Jesus was doing the work of the Creator.
Restoring what was broken.
“He makes the deaf hear and the mute speak.”
This was what Isaiah said God would do when He came to save His people.

These Gentiles were seeing God's promises fulfilled.

Cross References

Isaiah 35:5
The blind will see again, and the deaf will hear.
Genesis 1:31
God looked over all He had made and saw that it was all very good.
Matthew 15:31
The crowd was amazed when they saw the mute speaking, the crippled made well, the lame walking, and the blind seeing. And they praised the God of Israel.

Spiritual Principle

Everything Jesus does is done well.

Key Truth

Jesus is restoring God's good creation.

XXXVIII. FIVE GREAT LESSONS FROM MARK 7

1. Tradition Versus Truth

“You set aside the command of God to hold on to human tradition.”

Principle:

Human traditions can never override God's commands.

2. Defilement Comes from Within

“What comes out of a person is what defiles him.”

Principle:

Sin begins in the heart, not in food or outward rituals.

3. Faith Crosses Boundaries

“Yes, Lord, but even the dogs under the table eat the crumbs.”

Principle:

The Syrophoenician woman's faith showed that God's mercy reaches beyond Israel.

4. Jesus Heals in Unique Ways

“Ephphatha!” (which means, “Be opened!”)

Principle:

His power was not in rituals but in the authority of His word and His compassion.

5. All Things Done Well

“He has done everything well.”

Principle:

Christ's works were complete, perfect, and undeniable proof of His divine mission.

XXXIX. TRADITION AND GOD'S WORD

Mark 7 helps us think about traditions in our own lives and churches.

Traditions Can Be Good

- They can help us remember God's truth.
- They can give order to worship.
- They can connect generations.

Traditions Become Dangerous When

- They are treated as equal to God's word.
- They are used to judge others.
- They become a substitute for a changed heart.
- They are used as excuses to avoid obeying God.

Questions to Ask About Our Traditions

- Does this come from God's word or from people?
- Does it help or hinder love for God and others?
- Am I using it to look good or to honor God?
- Would I set it aside if it conflicted with Scripture?

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Hold God's word tightly and human traditions loosely.

XL. THE HEART OF THE PROBLEM

Verses 14–23 teach where sin really comes from.

What Does Not Defile

- Food.
- Unwashed hands.
- Outward things.

What Does Defile

- Evil thoughts.
- Sinful actions.
- Wrong attitudes.

Where It Comes From

“From within, out of the heart.”

What We Need

- Not cleaner hands, but a new heart.
- Not better rules, but God's cleansing.
- Not outward religion, but inward change through Christ.

Key Truth

Only God can give us the clean heart we need.

XLI. LESSONS FROM THE SYROPHOENICIAN WOMAN

Her faith teaches us how to come to Jesus.

She Came Humbly

“She came and fell at His feet.”

She Came for Someone Else

She begged for her daughter.

She Came Persistently

She would not give up.

She Accepted Jesus' Words

“Yes, Lord.”

She Asked Only for Grace

“Even the dogs under the table eat the crumbs.”

She Trusted His Word

She went home believing.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Humble, persistent faith that asks only for grace will never be turned away.

XLII. WHAT MARK 7 TEACHES ABOUT JESUS

He Knows the Heart

“Their hearts are far from Me.”

He Upholds God's Word

“You set aside the command of God.”

He Declares All Foods Clean

“In saying this, Jesus declared all foods clean.”

He Welcomes Outsiders

“The demon has left your daughter.”

He Heals from a Distance

“She went home and found her child lying on the bed, and the demon gone.”

He Feels Our Pain

“He sighed deeply.”

He Does Everything Well

“He has done everything well.”

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Jesus sees past outward religion to the heart, and He opens His mercy to everyone who comes in faith.

XLIII. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR PERSONAL STUDY

Question 1

Why did the Pharisees criticize Jesus' disciples?
They did not perform the special ritual hand-washing required by tradition.

Question 2

What was the “tradition of the elders”?
Rules passed down by religious teachers that went beyond God's written law.

Question 3

Why did Jesus call them hypocrites?
Because they honored God with their lips while their hearts were far from Him.

Question 4

What was Corban?
A way of declaring something dedicated to God, which some used to avoid helping their parents.

Question 5

How did Corban break God's command?
It allowed people to avoid honoring and caring for their parents.

Question 6

What did Jesus teach about what defiles a person?
Nothing from outside defiles a person; what comes from the heart does.

Question 7

What did Mark mean when he said Jesus declared all foods clean?
Food does not make a person unclean before God; what matters is the heart.

Question 8

What sins did Jesus say come from the heart?
Evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance, and foolishness.

Question 9

Why did Jesus speak to the woman about the children's bread?
His mission was first to Israel, and He may have been testing and drawing out her faith.

Question 10

What made the woman's answer so remarkable?
She humbly agreed with Jesus and asked only for the crumbs of His grace.

Question 11

Why did Jesus touch the deaf man's ears and tongue?
To communicate with him in a way he could understand and show what He was about to do.

Question 12

What should Mark 7 change about the way Christians live today?
Mark 7 should cause believers to live:

- Worshiping God from the heart, not just the lips.
- Placing God's word above human traditions.

- Caring faithfully for their parents.
- Guarding their hearts from sin.
- Asking God for clean hearts.
- Welcoming outsiders to Jesus.
- Coming to Jesus with humble, persistent faith.
- Praising Jesus who does everything well.

XLIV. PERSONAL APPLICATION

Mark 7 asks several important questions.

Does My Heart Match My Worship?

Or am I honoring God only with my lips?

Have I Put Any Tradition Above God's Word?

What customs have become more important to me than God's commands?

Am I Using Religion as an Excuse?

To avoid loving the people God gave me?

How Am I Caring for My Parents?

Am I honoring them as God commands?

What Is Coming Out of My Heart?

What do my words and actions reveal?

Do I Look Down on Outsiders?

Or do I welcome them to Jesus?

Is My Faith Humble and Persistent?

Do I keep coming to Jesus even when the answer seems slow?

Do I Believe Jesus Does Everything Well?

Even in the hard parts of my life?

XLV. A CRAWFORD BIBLE STUDY PRINCIPLE

“Clean Hands, Dirty Hearts”

The religious leaders had very clean hands.

They washed them carefully.
They washed their cups.
They washed their pitchers.
They even washed their couches.
They were proud of how clean they were on the outside.
But Jesus looked deeper.
He saw hearts far from God.
He saw greed.
He saw pride.
He saw people who would rather keep a rule than help their own parents.
Their hands were clean, but their hearts were not.
This creates a powerful principle.
It is possible to look clean and still be unclean.
What God wants most is not clean hands, but a clean heart.
And only Jesus can give us that.

Principle:

God cares less about how clean we look and more about how clean our hearts are.

XLVI. FINAL APPLICATION

Mark Chapter 7 moves from outward religion to the inner heart.
It warns against honoring God with the lips while the heart is far away.
It shows how human traditions can push aside God's word.
It teaches that sin comes from within.
It shows Jesus welcoming a Gentile woman with great faith.
And it shows Jesus opening deaf ears and loosening a silent tongue.
Mark 7 therefore reminds us:
Never let tradition replace God's word.
Never use religion as an excuse to avoid love.
Never think outward washing can clean the heart.
Never think anyone is too far outside God's mercy.
Never forget that Jesus does everything well.
The church does not need people with clean hands and cold hearts.
It needs:
Hearts that truly worship.
Lives shaped by God's word.
Faith that reaches across every boundary.
And praise for the One who does everything well.
The same Jesus still calls:
Tell people that God looks at the heart.
Tell people that Jesus can make the heart clean.
Tell people that His mercy is for every nation.
Tell people that He still opens deaf ears and loosens silent tongues.
And as you live:
Worship from the heart.
Honor God's word.
Guard your heart.

Come to Jesus with humble faith.

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father,
Thank You that You look at the heart and not only at outward actions.
Thank You for Your word, which stands above every human tradition.
Thank You that Jesus can make unclean hearts clean.
Thank You that Your mercy reaches people of every nation.
Thank You that Jesus honored the humble faith of an outsider.
Thank You that He opens deaf ears and loosens silent tongues.
Thank You that He does everything well.
Forgive us when we have honored You with our lips while our hearts were far away.
Forgive us when we have placed our traditions above Your word.
Forgive us when we have used religion as an excuse to avoid love.
Forgive us for the evil thoughts and attitudes that come from our hearts.
Forgive us when we have looked down on those outside.
Create in us clean hearts.
Help us honor and care for our parents.
Give us humble, persistent faith.
Open our ears to hear Your voice and our mouths to praise You.
And help us trust that You do everything well.
“He has done everything well.”
In Jesus' name, Amen.

Key Verse

“He continued, “What comes out of a person is what defiles him.”” — Mark 7:20

Central Truth

God looks at the heart, not at outward religious rituals, and His grace in Jesus reaches past human traditions and boundaries to cleanse, heal, and welcome all who come to Him in faith.

Mark 7 in One Sentence

Jesus rebukes religious leaders for setting aside God's commands to keep human traditions, teaches that true defilement comes from the heart rather than from food, honors the humble faith of a Gentile woman by freeing her daughter from a demon, and heals a deaf man so that the people declare, “He has done everything well.”

CRAWFORD BIBLE COMMENTARY

BIBLE STUDY

Mark Chapter 8 — Provision, Revelation, and the Cost of Discipleship

A Verse-by-Verse Bible Study from the Crawford Standard Bible

Introduction

Mark Chapter 8 is the turning point of Mark's Gospel.
For seven chapters, people have been asking, **“Who is this?”**
In this chapter, Peter gives the answer.
“You are the Christ.”
But first, Mark shows how slow people were to see.
Jesus feeds four thousand people with seven loaves.
The Pharisees demand a sign from heaven.
The disciples worry about bread, even after two feeding miracles.
Jesus asks them, **“Do you still not understand?”**
Then Jesus heals a blind man in two stages.
At first he sees people like trees walking.
Then he sees everything clearly.
This healing is a picture of the disciples.
They were beginning to see, but not yet clearly.
Right after Peter confesses that Jesus is the Christ, Jesus begins to teach something new.
The Christ must suffer, die, and rise again.
Peter cannot accept it.
Jesus rebukes him strongly.
Then Jesus calls everyone to follow Him on the road of the cross.
“If anyone would come after Me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow Me.”
From this point on, Mark's Gospel turns toward Jerusalem and the cross.
The chapter moves through seven movements:

- Jesus Feeds Four Thousand (verses 1–10).
- A Sign Demanded (verses 11–13).
- The Leaven of the Pharisees (verses 14–21).
- Jesus Heals a Blind Man at Bethsaida (verses 22–26).
- Peter's Confession of Christ (verses 27–30).
- Jesus Predicts His Death (verses 31–33).
- The Cost of Discipleship (verses 34–38).

The central truth of Mark 8 is:

Jesus is the Christ who provides abundantly for His people and opens blind eyes, but He came to suffer, die, and rise again, and He calls all who follow Him to deny themselves, take up their cross, and value Him above the whole world.

I. ONCE AGAIN NOTHING TO EAT

Mark 8:1 — A Large Crowd

“During those days, a large crowd gathered, and once again they had nothing to eat. Jesus called His disciples to Him and said,”
“During those days.”
Jesus was still in the region of the Decapolis.
This was mostly Gentile territory.
“A large crowd gathered.”
The healing of the deaf man had drawn many people.
“And once again they had nothing to eat.”
The situation was like the feeding of the five thousand.
But this time, many in the crowd were likely Gentiles.
Jesus' care was reaching beyond Israel.

Cross References

Matthew 15:32
Jesus called His followers to Him and said, “I feel sorry for these people.”
Mark 6:34
When Jesus landed and saw the large crowd, He felt sorry for them.
Mark 6:39
Then Jesus told the followers to have the people sit in groups on the green grass.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus' care reaches people of every background.

Key Truth

The same compassion that fed Israel now fed the nations.

II. THREE DAYS WITH JESUS

Mark 8:2 — Compassion for the Crowd

“I have compassion on these people. They have already been with Me three days and have nothing to eat.”
“I have compassion on these people.”
Jesus Himself speaks of His compassion.
He felt deeply for them.
“They have already been with Me three days.”
The people stayed with Jesus for three days.
They were so hungry for His teaching that they stayed even after their food ran out.

“And have nothing to eat.”
Jesus noticed their physical need.

Cross References

Matthew 15:32
They have been with Me three days and have nothing to eat.
Mark 6:34
He had compassion for them because they were like sheep without a shepherd.
Matthew 9:36
When Jesus saw the crowds, His heart went out to them because they were hurting and helpless.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus cares about our physical needs as well as our spiritual needs.

Key Truth

Those who stay with Jesus will find Him caring for them.

III. THEY WILL FAINT

Mark 8:3 — From a Long Distance

“If I send them home hungry, they will faint along the way, for some of them have come from a long distance.””
“If I send them home hungry, they will faint along the way.”
Jesus thought about their journey home.
He would not send them away weak.
“For some of them have come from a long distance.”
Some had traveled far.
Jesus knew each person's situation.

Cross References

Matthew 15:32
I do not want to send them away hungry, or they might faint on the way.
Exodus 16:3
The Israelites said, “In Egypt we sat by pots of meat and ate all the food we wanted. But you brought us into this desert to starve us all to death.”
Deuteronomy 8:3
He humbled you by letting you go hungry, and then He fed you with manna. He wanted to teach you that people need more than bread to live. They need every word that comes from the Lord.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus knows the details of our lives and cares about our journey.

Key Truth

Jesus thinks about the road ahead of us.

IV. WHERE CAN WE GET BREAD?

Mark 8:4 — The Disciples' Question

“His disciples answered, “Where in this remote place can anyone get enough bread to feed them?””
This is surprising.
The disciples had already seen Jesus feed five thousand.
Yet they asked the same doubtful question.
They still did not trust Jesus to provide.
How often we forget what God has already done.

Cross References

Matthew 15:33
His followers asked, “Where could we get enough bread in this lonely place to feed so many people?”
Numbers 11:22
Moses asked, “Even if we killed all the sheep and cattle, would it be enough? Even if we caught all the fish in the sea, would it be enough?”
2 Kings 4:43
His servant asked, “How can I set this in front of a hundred men?” Elisha said, “Give it to them to eat, because the Lord says, ‘They will eat and have food left over.’”

Spiritual Principle

We often forget God's past faithfulness when facing new needs.

Application

What has God done for you in the past that you need to remember now?

V. SEVEN LOAVES

Mark 8:5 — How Many Do You Have?

“Jesus asked, “How many loaves do you have?” They replied, “Seven.””
Jesus asked the same question as before.
He started with what they had.
Seven loaves.
More than last time.
But still far too little.
Jesus once again would use what was offered.

Cross References

Matthew 15:34
Jesus asked, “How many loaves do you have?” They answered, “Seven, and a few small fish.”
Mark 6:38
He asked them, “How many loaves do you have? Go and look.”

John 6:9
There is a boy here with five barley loaves and two small fish.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus always starts with what we have.

Key Truth

God does not ask what we lack; He asks what we have.

VI. GIVING THANKS AND BREAKING

Mark 8:6 — Distributed to the People

“He told the crowd to sit down on the ground. Taking the seven loaves and giving thanks, He broke them and gave them to His disciples to distribute, and they set them before the people.”
“He told the crowd to sit down on the ground.”
Jesus brought order again.
“Taking the seven loaves and giving thanks.”
He thanked the Father.
“He broke them and gave them to His disciples to distribute.”
The same pattern as before.
Jesus provided.
The disciples served.

Cross References

Matthew 15:36
He took the seven loaves and the fish, gave thanks, broke them, and gave them to His followers, who gave them to the people.
Mark 6:41
He took the five loaves and two fish, looked up to heaven, gave thanks, and broke the loaves.
John 6:11
Jesus took the bread, thanked God for it, and gave it to the people who were sitting there.

Spiritual Principle

Thanksgiving opens the way for God's provision.

Key Truth

Jesus gives the bread; His disciples pass it on.

VII. A FEW SMALL FISH

Mark 8:7 — Blessed and Shared

“They also had a few small fish. He gave thanks for them as well and told the disciples to distribute them.”
There were also a few fish.

Jesus thanked God for those too.
Jesus gives thanks for every gift, even small ones.
Then the fish were shared with everyone.

Cross References

Matthew 15:36
He gave thanks for the fish and gave them out.
Mark 6:41
He also divided the two fish among them all.
1 Samuel 9:13
The people will not eat until the prophet arrives, because he must bless the sacrifice first.

Spiritual Principle

Every gift, however small, is worth thanking God for.

Application

Do you thank God for small blessings?

VIII. SEVEN BASKETS LEFT OVER

Mark 8:8 — Satisfied

“The people ate and were satisfied. Afterward, the disciples picked up seven basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over.”
“The people ate and were satisfied.”
Again, everyone had enough.
“Seven basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over.”
The word for **basket** here is different from Chapter 6.
These were large baskets, big enough to hold a person.
Paul was later lowered over a wall in this kind of basket.
Once again, there was more than enough.

Cross References

Matthew 15:37
Everyone ate and was full. Then the followers picked up seven baskets full of leftover pieces.
Mark 6:43
They filled twelve baskets with the leftover pieces of bread and fish.
John 6:12
When they had all eaten enough, He said, “Gather the leftover pieces so nothing is wasted.”

Spiritual Principle

Jesus provides more than enough, every time.

Key Truth

Seven loaves became seven large baskets left over.

IX. ABOUT FOUR THOUSAND

Mark 8:9 — Sent Away

“About four thousand were present. After He had sent them away,”
“About four thousand were present.”
This was a different crowd from the five thousand.
It was a different place, a different number, and different baskets.
Jesus did this miracle twice.
“After He had sent them away.”
Jesus sent them home fed and strengthened.

Cross References

Matthew 15:38
About four thousand men ate, plus women and children.
Mark 6:44
About five thousand men had eaten.
John 6:10
The men sat down, about five thousand in all.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus provides for His people again and again.

Key Truth

What Jesus did once, He can do again.

X. TO DALMANUTHA

Mark 8:10 — Back in the Boat

“He got into the boat with His disciples and went to the region of Dalmanutha.”
Jesus crossed the lake again.
Dalmanutha is mentioned only here in the Bible.
Its exact location is not known today.
It was probably on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee.
Matthew calls the area Magadan.

Cross References

Matthew 15:39
After sending the crowd away, Jesus got into the boat and went to the area of Magadan.
Mark 6:45
Right away Jesus made His followers get into the boat and go ahead of Him.
Matthew 16:1
The Pharisees and Sadducees came to test Jesus. They asked Him to show them a sign from heaven.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus keeps moving to bring His message to new places.

Key Truth

Jesus never stayed long in one place; there was always more work to do.

XI. A SIGN FROM HEAVEN

Mark 8:11 — Testing Him

“The Pharisees came and began to argue with Him, testing Him by asking for a sign from heaven.”
“The Pharisees came and began to argue with Him.”
They came to debate.
“Testing Him.”
They wanted to trap Him.
“By asking for a sign from heaven.”
They wanted something spectacular.
Something from the sky to prove He was from God.
They had heard of His miracles.
They had seen enough.
But they would not believe.

Cross References

Matthew 16:1
The Pharisees and Sadducees came and tested Jesus by asking Him to show them a sign from heaven.
Matthew 12:38
Some of the Pharisees and teachers of the law said, “Teacher, we want to see a miraculous sign from You.”
Luke 11:16
Others tested Him by asking for a sign from heaven.

Spiritual Principle

Hearts that refuse to believe always ask for one more sign.

Spiritual Warning

No sign is ever enough for a heart that will not believe.

XII. HE SIGHED DEEPLY

Mark 8:12 — No Sign Will Be Given

“He sighed deeply in His spirit and said, “Why does this generation ask for a sign? Truly I tell you, no sign will be given to it.””
“He sighed deeply in His spirit.”

Jesus was grieved.
Their unbelief hurt Him.
“Why does this generation ask for a sign?”
They had already seen so much.
“No sign will be given to it.”
Jesus refused to perform on demand.
Matthew adds that the only sign would be the sign of Jonah.
Just as Jonah came back after three days, Jesus would rise from the dead.

Cross References

Matthew 16:4
A wicked and unfaithful generation asks for a sign, but none will be given to it except the sign of Jonah.
Matthew 12:39
Evil and unfaithful people ask for a sign, but no sign will be given except the sign of the prophet Jonah.
Jonah 3:5
The people of Nineveh believed God. They announced a fast and put on sackcloth, from the greatest to the least.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus will not perform for unbelief.

Key Truth

The greatest sign would be the empty tomb.

XIII. HE LEFT THEM

Mark 8:13 — Back to the Other Side

“Then He left them, got back into the boat, and crossed to the other side.”
Jesus walked away.
He did not keep arguing.
He left those who refused to believe.
There is a sad lesson here.
Unbelief can cause us to miss Jesus.

Cross References

Matthew 16:4
Then Jesus left them and went away.
Mark 4:35
That evening Jesus said, “Let's go across to the other side of the lake.”
John 6:1
After this, Jesus went across the Sea of Galilee.

Spiritual Principle

Stubborn unbelief may cause us to miss what Jesus offers.

Spiritual Warning

Jesus will not stay forever where He is not wanted.

XIV. ONLY ONE LOAF

Mark 8:14 — Forgotten Bread

“The disciples had forgotten to bring bread, except for one loaf they had with them in the boat.”
The disciples forgot to pack food.
They had only one loaf.
Ironically, they had just seen seven baskets of leftovers.
And the One who fed thousands was right there in the boat.
Some see a deeper meaning.
They had the one true Bread of Life with them.

Cross References

Matthew 16:5
When the followers went across the lake, they forgot to bring bread.
Mark 6:52
They did not understand about the loaves, because their hearts were hardened.
Mark 8:17
Jesus asked, “Why are you talking about having no bread?”

Spiritual Principle

When Jesus is with us, we have everything we need.

Key Truth

They worried about one loaf while the Bread of Life sat beside them.

XV. BEWARE OF THE YEAST

Mark 8:15 — The Pharisees and Herod

“Jesus warned them, “Watch out! Beware of the yeast of the Pharisees and that of Herod.””
“Watch out!”
A strong warning.
“Beware of the yeast of the Pharisees.”
Yeast or leaven spreads through dough.
A little yeast affects the whole batch.
The yeast of the Pharisees was their unbelief and religious pride.
“And that of Herod.”
Herod's yeast was worldly power and a hard heart.
Both refused to see who Jesus was.
Both could spread into the disciples' hearts if they were not careful.

Cross References

Matthew 16:6
Jesus said to them, “Be careful! Watch out for the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees.”
Luke 12:1
Jesus said to His followers, “Be careful of the yeast of the Pharisees, which is pretending to be good.”
1 Corinthians 5:6
Your boasting is wrong. You know how just a pinch of yeast works its way through all the dough.

Spiritual Principle

Unbelief and pride spread quietly, like yeast in dough.

Spiritual Warning

A little wrong thinking can affect a whole life.

XVI. BECAUSE WE HAVE NO BREAD

Mark 8:16 — Missing the Point

“They discussed this with one another and said, “It is because we have no bread.””
The disciples misunderstood completely.
Jesus was speaking about spiritual danger.
They thought He was talking about bread.
They were focused on their stomachs.
Jesus was focused on their hearts.

Cross References

Matthew 16:7
They talked about this among themselves and said, “He said this because we did not bring bread.”
Mark 8:14
They had forgotten to bring bread, except for one loaf.
Luke 12:1
Beware of the yeast of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.

Spiritual Principle

Worry about earthly things can make us miss spiritual truth.

Key Truth

The disciples were thinking about lunch; Jesus was thinking about their souls.

XVII. DO YOU STILL NOT UNDERSTAND?

Mark 8:17 — Hardened Hearts

“Aware of their conversation, Jesus asked, “Why are you talking about having no bread? Do you still not see or understand? Are your hearts hardened?”

Jesus asked a series of hard questions.
“Why are you talking about having no bread?”
They should not have been worried.
“Do you still not see or understand?”
After everything they had seen.
“Are your hearts hardened?”
These were strong words.
Earlier Jesus said the Pharisees had hard hearts.
Now He asked the same of His own disciples.
Even followers can become dull and slow to believe.

Cross References

Mark 6:52
> They had not understood about the loaves, because their hearts were hard.

Matthew 16:8
> Jesus knew what they were saying and asked, “Why are you talking about not having bread? Your faith is small.”

Isaiah 6:9
> Keep listening, but do not understand. Keep looking, but do not see.

Spiritual Principle

Even followers of Jesus can grow dull to what He has shown them.

Application

Has your heart grown dull to what God has done?

XVIII. EYES BUT FAIL TO SEE

Mark 8:18 — Don't You Remember?

“Do you have eyes but fail to see, and ears but fail to hear? Don't you remember?”
“Do you have eyes but fail to see?”
They saw the miracles, but they did not understand them.
“And ears but fail to hear?”
They heard His words, but did not grasp them.
“Don't you remember?”
Memory matters.
Remembering what God has done builds faith for today.

Cross References

Jeremiah 5:21
> Listen, you foolish people who have no sense. You have eyes but do not see, and ears but do not hear.

Ezekiel 12:2
> Son of man, you live among stubborn people. They have eyes to see but do not see, and ears to hear but do not hear.

Isaiah 6:9
Go and tell the people: “You will listen, but you will not understand. You will look, but you will not really see.”

Spiritual Principle

Remembering God's past works strengthens faith for present needs.

Application

What do you need to remember about God's faithfulness?

XIX. TWELVE BASKETS

Mark 8:19 — Remembering the Five Thousand

“When I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many baskets of pieces did you pick up?” “Twelve,” they replied.”
Jesus helped them remember.
Five loaves.
Five thousand people.
Twelve baskets left over.
They knew the answer.
But they had not drawn the right conclusion.

Cross References

Mark 6:43
They filled twelve baskets with the leftover bread and fish.
Matthew 16:9
Don't you remember the five loaves for the five thousand, and how many baskets you gathered?
John 6:13
They gathered the leftovers and filled twelve baskets.

Spiritual Principle

Knowing the facts of God's works is not the same as trusting Him.

Key Truth

They remembered the number but forgot the lesson.

XX. SEVEN BASKETS

Mark 8:20 — Remembering the Four Thousand

“And when I broke the seven loaves for the four thousand, how many baskets of pieces did you pick up?” They answered, “Seven.””
Jesus asked again.
Seven loaves.
Four thousand people.

Seven baskets left over.
Twice Jesus had provided more than enough.
Surely He could handle one missing loaf.

Cross References

Mark 8:8
The followers picked up seven baskets of leftover pieces.
Matthew 16:10
Don't you remember the seven loaves for the four thousand, and how many baskets you gathered?
John 6:13
The baskets were filled with the leftover pieces.

Spiritual Principle

God's faithfulness in the past is proof of His faithfulness in the future.

Key Truth

The One who provided twice will provide again.

XXI. DO YOU STILL NOT UNDERSTAND?

Mark 8:21 — The Question Remains

“He said to them, “Do you still not understand?””
Jesus ended with a question.
He did not give the answer.
He wanted them to think.
Do you still not understand who I am?
This question prepares for what comes next.
Soon Peter will begin to understand.

Cross References

Mark 8:17
Do you still not see or understand?
Matthew 16:11
How can you not understand that I was not talking to you about bread?
Mark 4:40
He said to them, “Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?”

Spiritual Principle

Jesus patiently leads us to understand who He is.

Key Truth

The greatest question is not about bread but about Jesus.

XXII. A BLIND MAN AT BETHSAIDA

Mark 8:22 — Begging Jesus to Touch Him

“They came to Bethsaida, and some people brought a blind man and begged Jesus to touch him.”
“They came to Bethsaida.”
A fishing town on the north shore of the lake.
The hometown of Peter, Andrew, and Philip.
“Some people brought a blind man.”
Again, friends brought someone to Jesus.
“And begged Jesus to touch him.”
They believed His touch could heal.
This healing comes right after Jesus asked if the disciples could see.
It is a living picture of their need.

Cross References

Mark 7:32
Some people brought to Him a man who was deaf and could hardly speak.
John 9:1
As Jesus walked along, He saw a man who had been blind since birth.
Matthew 9:27
As Jesus went on from there, two blind men followed Him, calling out, “Have mercy on us, Son of David!”

Spiritual Principle

Bringing others to Jesus is an act of faith and love.

Key Truth

The disciples needed their eyes opened as much as the blind man did.

XXIII. OUTSIDE THE VILLAGE

Mark 8:23 — Do You See Anything?

“He took the blind man by the hand and led him outside the village. When He had spit on the man's eyes and put His hands on him, Jesus asked, “Do you see anything?””
“He took the blind man by the hand.”
Jesus personally led him.
A blind man must trust the one leading him.
“And led him outside the village.”
Away from the crowd.
“When He had spit on the man's eyes and put His hands on him.”
Jesus used touch, as with the deaf man.
“Jesus asked, ‘Do you see anything?’”
This is the only time Jesus asks someone about their healing during the healing.

Cross References

Mark 7:33
Jesus took him away from the crowd. He put His fingers in the man's ears, spit, and touched the man's tongue.
John 9:6
He spit on the ground, made mud, and spread it on the man's eyes.
Mark 5:40
He put everyone outside and took the girl's parents and His followers into the room.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus leads us by the hand when we cannot see the way.

Key Truth

Trust the One who takes your hand.

XXIV. LIKE TREES WALKING

Mark 8:24 — Partial Sight

“The man looked up and said, “I see people, but they look like trees walking around.””
“The man looked up.”
He began to see.
“I see people, but they look like trees walking around.”
His sight was blurry.
He could see shapes, but not clearly.
This is the only miracle in the Gospels that happens in two stages.
Why?
Not because Jesus lacked power.
It was an acted parable.
The disciples were like this man.
They saw something of who Jesus was.
But not yet clearly.

Cross References

John 9:11
He answered, “The man called Jesus made mud and put it on my eyes. He told me to go and wash. So I went and washed, and then I could see.”
Mark 10:51
Jesus asked him, “What do you want Me to do for you?” The blind man said, “Teacher, I want to see.”
Matthew 20:33
They said, “Lord, we want to be able to see.”

Spiritual Principle

Spiritual sight often comes gradually.

Key Truth

Seeing a little is the beginning, not the end.

XXV. HE SAW EVERYTHING CLEARLY

Mark 8:25 — Fully Restored

“Once more Jesus put His hands on the man's eyes. Then his eyes were opened, his sight was restored, and he saw everything clearly.”
“Once more Jesus put His hands on the man's eyes.”
Jesus did not stop halfway.
He finished the work.
“Then his eyes were opened.”
“His sight was restored.”
“And he saw everything clearly.”
Three phrases to show complete healing.
Jesus does not leave His work unfinished.
He will finish opening the eyes of His followers too.

Cross References

John 9:7
So the man went and washed, and he came back able to see.
Mark 7:35
At once the man could hear, and he spoke clearly.
Isaiah 35:5
Blind eyes will be opened, and deaf ears will hear.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus finishes what He begins.

Key Truth

The second touch brought clear sight.

XXVI. DON'T GO INTO THE VILLAGE

Mark 8:26 — Sent Home

“Jesus sent him home, saying, “Don't even go into the village.””
Jesus sent the man home quietly.
He did not want crowds stirred up.
He was about to turn toward Jerusalem.
His focus was on teaching His disciples and on the cross ahead.

Cross References

Mark 5:43
He gave strict orders that no one should know about this.

Mark 7:36
Jesus told them not to tell anyone.
Matthew 8:4
See that you do not tell anyone.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus' mission was guided by the Father's timing, not by popularity.

Key Truth

Jesus was preparing for something greater than crowds.

XXVII. WHO DO PEOPLE SAY I AM?

Mark 8:27 — Near Caesarea Philippi

“Jesus and His disciples went on to the villages around Caesarea Philippi. On the way He asked them, “Who do people say I am?””
“The villages around Caesarea Philippi.”
This was far to the north, near the source of the Jordan River.
It was a Gentile area full of pagan temples.
There was even a temple honoring the Roman emperor.
In a place surrounded by false gods, Jesus asked the most important question.
“Who do people say I am?”
Jesus began with what others thought.

Cross References

Matthew 16:13
When Jesus came to the area of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His followers, “Who do people say the Son of Man is?”
Luke 9:18
Once when Jesus was praying alone, His followers were with Him. He asked them, “Who do the crowds say I am?”
John 6:67
Jesus asked the Twelve, “Do you want to leave too?”

Spiritual Principle

The most important question in life is who Jesus is.

Key Truth

Among the temples of false gods, the true God asked, “Who do you say I am?”

XXVIII. JOHN, ELIJAH, A PROPHET

Mark 8:28 — Popular Opinions

“They replied, “Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets.””
The disciples reported the popular opinions.
These were the same ideas Herod had heard.
All were respectful.
All saw Jesus as a great man of God.
But none was big enough.

Cross References

Matthew 16:14
> They answered, “Some say John the Baptist. Others say Elijah. And others say Jeremiah or one of the prophets.”

Luke 9:19
> They answered, “Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others say one of the old prophets has come back to life.”

Mark 6:14
> Some people were saying, “John the Baptist has been raised from the dead.”

Spiritual Principle

Popular opinions about Jesus are often respectful but incomplete.

Key Truth

Calling Jesus great is not the same as calling Him Lord.

XXIX. YOU ARE THE CHRIST

Mark 8:29 — Peter's Confession

“But what about you?” He asked. “Who do you say I am?” Peter answered, “You are the Christ.””
“But what about you?”
Now the question became personal.
It was not enough to know what others thought.
“Who do you say I am?”
Every person must answer this question.
“Peter answered, ‘You are the Christ.’”
Christ means the Anointed One, the Messiah.
The King God had promised.
This is the center of Mark's Gospel.
Peter saw what the crowds had missed.

Cross References

Matthew 16:16
Simon Peter answered, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”
Luke 9:20
He asked, “But who do you say I am?” Peter answered, “God's Messiah.”
John 6:69
We believe, and we know, that You are the Holy One from God.

Spiritual Principle

Every person must personally answer who Jesus is.

Application

Who do you say Jesus is?

XXX. TELL NO ONE

Mark 8:30 — A Warning

“Jesus warned them not to tell anyone about Him.”
Why keep it secret?
Many people expected the Messiah to be a military king.
They thought He would overthrow Rome.
If word spread, crowds might try to force Jesus into that role.
The disciples also did not yet understand what kind of Messiah Jesus was.
He would first be a suffering Messiah.

Cross References

Matthew 16:20
Then He warned His followers not to tell anyone that He was the Messiah.
Luke 9:21
Jesus warned them strictly not to tell anyone.
Mark 1:34
He would not let the demons speak, because they knew who He was.

Spiritual Principle

Knowing who Jesus is must be joined with understanding what He came to do.

Key Truth

The right title can be misunderstood without the cross.

XXXI. THE SON OF MAN MUST SUFFER

Mark 8:31 — The First Prediction

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

“He then began to teach them.”
This was something new.
Mark's Gospel now turns toward the cross.
“The Son of Man must suffer many things.”
The word **must** shows this was God's plan.
“Be rejected by the elders, chief priests, and scribes.”
The religious leaders of Israel would reject Him.
“Be killed.”
The Messiah would die.
“And after three days rise again.”
Death would not be the end.
This is the first of three times Jesus clearly predicts His death in Mark.

Cross References

Matthew 16:21
> From then on Jesus began to tell His followers that He must go to Jerusalem, suffer many things, be killed, and on the third day be raised to life.

Luke 9:22
> The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the leaders. He will be killed and raised on the third day.

Mark 9:31
> He was teaching them, “The Son of Man will be handed over to people. They will kill Him, and three days later He will rise.”

Spiritual Principle

The way to victory for Jesus was through suffering and the cross.

Key Truth

The Messiah came to die before He would reign.

XXXII. PETER REBUKES JESUS

Mark 8:32 — Taking Him Aside

“He spoke plainly about this, and Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him.”
“He spoke plainly about this.”
No parables this time.
Jesus told them clearly.
“Peter took Him aside.”
Peter pulled Jesus away from the others.
“And began to rebuke Him.”
Peter scolded Jesus.
Imagine this.
Moments before, Peter called Him the Christ.
Now he tells the Christ He is wrong.
Peter could not accept a suffering Messiah.

Cross References

Matthew 16:22
Peter took Him aside and began to correct Him. “Never, Lord! This must never happen to You!”
Luke 24:25
Jesus told them, “You do not understand, and your hearts are so slow to trust what the prophets taught!”
John 12:16
At first His followers did not understand these things. Only after Jesus was raised to glory did they remember.

Spiritual Principle

It is dangerous to tell Jesus how His plan should go.

Spiritual Warning

We can confess Jesus as Lord and still resist His ways.

XXXIII. GET BEHIND ME, SATAN!

Mark 8:33 — Human Concerns

“But when Jesus turned and looked at His disciples, He rebuked Peter: “Get behind Me, Satan! You do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns.””
“When Jesus turned and looked at His disciples.”
Jesus looked at all of them.
They may have been thinking the same as Peter.
“He rebuked Peter.”
Jesus answered Peter's rebuke with a stronger one.
“Get behind Me, Satan!”
Jesus was not saying Peter was Satan.
But Peter was repeating Satan's temptation.
In the wilderness, Satan tempted Jesus to reach glory without the cross.
Now Peter was doing the same.
“You do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns.”
Peter was thinking like the world.
The world wants glory without suffering.
God's way was the cross.

Cross References

Matthew 16:23
Jesus turned and said to Peter, “Get away from Me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to Me. You care about human things, not God's things.”
Matthew 4:10
Jesus said, “Go away, Satan! The Scriptures say, ‘Worship the Lord your God and serve only Him.’”
Luke 4:8
Jesus answered, “The Scriptures say, ‘You must worship the Lord your God and serve only Him.’”

Spiritual Principle

Any voice that leads us away from God's way, even a friend's, must be resisted.

Spiritual Warning

Good intentions can still oppose God's plan.

XXXIV. TAKE UP YOUR CROSS

Mark 8:34 — Deny Yourself and Follow

“Then He called the crowd to Him along with His disciples and said, “If anyone would come after Me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow Me.”
“Then He called the crowd to Him along with His disciples.”
This message was for everyone.
“If anyone would come after Me.”
The invitation is open.
“Let him deny himself.”
To say no to self.
To stop living for our own will and comfort.
“Take up his cross.”
In those days, a person carrying a cross was on the way to die.
Everyone knew what this meant.
It meant being willing to give up everything for Jesus.
“And follow Me.”
Follow Jesus wherever He leads.
Even to the cross.

Cross References

Matthew 16:24
> Then Jesus said to His followers, “If anyone wants to follow Me, he must say no to himself, pick up his cross, and come with Me.”

Luke 9:23
> He said to everyone, “Whoever wants to follow Me must give up his own way, take up his cross every day, and follow Me.”

Luke 14:27
> Anyone who will not pick up his cross and walk behind Me cannot be one of My disciples.

Spiritual Principle

Following Jesus means denying self, taking up the cross, and following Him daily.

Application

What does it mean for you to take up your cross today?

XXXV. LOSE YOUR LIFE TO SAVE IT

Mark 8:35 — For My Sake and the Gospel

“For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and for the gospel will save it.”
“Whoever wants to save his life will lose it.”
Living only for yourself leads to loss.
Holding on to this life too tightly means losing what matters most.
“But whoever loses his life for My sake and for the gospel will save it.”
Giving your life to Jesus leads to true life.
This is the great paradox of the Christian life.
We find life by giving it away.
Notice: **“for My sake and for the gospel.”**
Only Mark adds **“for the gospel.”**

Cross References

Matthew 16:25
Whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever gives up his life for Me will find it.
Luke 9:24
If you try to hold on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for Me, you will save it.
John 12:25
People who cling to their life here will lose it. People who let go of their life in this world will hold on to it and live forever.

Spiritual Principle

We find true life by giving our lives to Jesus.

Key Truth

What we hold too tightly, we lose; what we give to Jesus, we keep forever.

XXXVI. THE WHOLE WORLD

Mark 8:36 — Forfeiting the Soul

“What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his soul?”
Jesus asks a searching question.
Imagine owning everything.
All the money.
All the power.
All the pleasure.
But losing your soul.
It would be the worst trade ever made.
Nothing in this world is worth your soul.

Cross References

Matthew 16:26
What good is it if someone gains the whole world but loses his soul?
Luke 9:25
What good is it to win the whole world but lose or destroy yourself?
Psalm 49:7
No one can buy back the life of another person. No one can pay God enough to save someone.

Spiritual Principle

Your soul is worth more than the whole world.

Application

Are you trading your soul for anything this world offers?

XXXVII. IN EXCHANGE FOR THE SOUL

Mark 8:37 — What Can You Give?

“Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul?”
Once a soul is lost, what could buy it back?
Nothing.
No amount of money.
No good works.
No earthly treasure.
The only price high enough was the life of Jesus Himself.
That is what He was about to pay.

Cross References

Matthew 16:26
What can a person give in exchange for his soul?
Psalm 49:7
No one can pay the price to rescue another person from death.
Psalm 49:15
But God will rescue me from the power of the grave. He will surely take me to Himself.

Spiritual Principle

Nothing we have can buy back a soul; only Christ's sacrifice can.

Key Truth

The soul is so valuable that only the blood of Jesus could pay for it.

XXXVIII. ASHAMED OF ME

Mark 8:38 — When He Comes in Glory

“If anyone is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of them when He comes in His Father's glory with the holy angels.””
“If anyone is ashamed of Me and My words.”
Some would be embarrassed to follow Jesus.
Afraid of what others would think.
“In this adulterous and sinful generation.”
Adulterous here means unfaithful to God.
The world often mocks Jesus.
“The Son of Man will be ashamed of them.”
Jesus will not claim those who refused to claim Him.
“When He comes in His Father's glory with the holy angels.”
The suffering Messiah will one day return in glory.
The cross comes first.
But the crown will follow.

Cross References

Matthew 16:27
The Son of Man will come in His Father's glory with His angels, and then He will reward each person for what they have done.
Luke 9:26
Whoever is embarrassed by Me and by what I teach, the Son of Man will be embarrassed by that person when He returns in the shining glory of Himself, His Father, and the holy angels.
2 Timothy 2:12
If we keep going through hard times, we will share His rule. If we turn our backs on Him, He will turn His back on us.

Spiritual Principle

Those who boldly follow Jesus now will share in His glory when He returns.

Application

Are you ever ashamed to be known as a follower of Jesus?

XXXIX. SIX GREAT LESSONS FROM MARK 8

1. Jesus Provides Abundantly

“The people ate and were satisfied.”

Principle:

His compassion reaches even to our physical needs.

2. Faith Is Greater Than Signs

“Why does this generation ask for a sign?”

Principle:

An unbelieving generation demands signs, but faith believes God's word.

3. Beware of False Teaching

“Beware of the yeast of the Pharisees and that of Herod.”

Principle:

Like yeast, hypocrisy and unbelief spread quickly.

4. Spiritual Sight Grows Over Time

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

Principle:

Like the blind man, we often see dimly before we see clearly.

5. The Great Confession

“You are the Christ.”

Principle:

Peter's declaration that Jesus is the Christ is central to the gospel.

6. True Discipleship Costs Everything

“Let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow Me.”

Principle:

To follow Christ, we must surrender self, take up the cross, and value eternal life above the whole world.

XL. THE TURNING POINT OF MARK

Mark 8 divides the Gospel into two halves.

Chapters 1–8: Who Is Jesus?

- Jesus teaches with authority.
- He heals the sick and drives out demons.
- He calms storms and feeds crowds.
- People keep asking, “Who is this?”
- Peter finally answers: “You are the Christ.”

Chapters 8–16: What Did Jesus Come to Do?

- Jesus predicts His death three times.
- He turns toward Jerusalem.
- He teaches about the cost of following Him.
- He suffers, dies, and rises again.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Knowing who Jesus is leads to understanding what He came to do: give His life on the cross.

XLI. THE TWO-STAGE HEALING

The blind man at Bethsaida is a picture of the disciples.

Before Jesus' Touch

Blind. They did not see who Jesus was.

After the First Touch

Partial sight. Peter saw that Jesus was the Christ.

Still Blurry

“Like trees walking.” Peter did not understand that the Christ must suffer.

After the Second Touch

Clear sight. After the resurrection and Pentecost, the disciples would see clearly.

Key Truth

Jesus is patient with our partial sight and faithful to bring us to clear vision.

XLII. WHAT IT MEANS TO FOLLOW JESUS

Verses 34–38 describe true discipleship.

1. Deny Yourself

Say no to self-centered living.

2. Take Up Your Cross

Be willing to suffer and give up everything for Jesus.

3. Follow Him

Go where He leads, every day.

4. Lose Your Life to Save It

Give your life to Jesus and find true life.

5. Value Your Soul Above the World

Nothing on earth is worth losing your soul.

6. Do Not Be Ashamed of Him

Stand with Jesus now, and He will stand with you when He returns.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The cross is not an accessory to the Christian life; it is the shape of it.

XLIII. WHAT MARK 8 TEACHES ABOUT JESUS

He Has Compassion

“I have compassion on these people.”

He Provides

“They ate and were satisfied.”

He Grieves Over Unbelief

“He sighed deeply in His spirit.”

He Opens Blind Eyes

“He saw everything clearly.”

He Is the Christ

“You are the Christ.”

He Must Suffer, Die, and Rise

“The Son of Man must suffer many things... and after three days rise again.”

He Will Come in Glory

“When He comes in His Father's glory with the holy angels.”

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Jesus is the Christ who came to suffer and die, and who will one day return in glory.

XLIV. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR PERSONAL STUDY

Question 1

How was the feeding of the four thousand different from the five thousand?
It happened in a mostly Gentile region, with seven loaves and seven large baskets left over.

Question 2

Why did the disciples doubt Jesus could feed the crowd?
They forgot what He had already done.

Question 3

Why did Jesus refuse to give the Pharisees a sign?
They had already seen enough and refused to believe; no sign would satisfy them.

Question 4

What was the yeast of the Pharisees and Herod?
Their unbelief, hypocrisy, and hard hearts, which could spread like yeast.

Question 5

Why did Jesus ask the disciples about the baskets?
To help them remember His provision and realize He could meet any need.

Question 6

Why was the blind man healed in two stages?
It was a picture of the disciples, who saw Jesus partly but not yet clearly.

Question 7

What is the significance of Caesarea Philippi?
It was a place full of pagan temples, where Jesus asked who people said He was.

Question 8

What did Peter confess?
“You are the Christ,” the promised Messiah.

Question 9

Why did Jesus tell the disciples to keep it secret?
People expected a military king, and the disciples did not yet understand He must suffer.

Question 10

Why did Jesus call Peter “Satan”?
Peter was tempting Jesus to avoid the cross, just as Satan had in the wilderness.

Question 11

What does it mean to take up your cross?
To be willing to give up everything, even your life, to follow Jesus.

Question 12

What should Mark 8 change about the way Christians live today?
Mark 8 should cause believers to live:

- Trusting Jesus to provide.
- Remembering what God has done.
- Believing God's word without demanding signs.
- Guarding against the yeast of hypocrisy and unbelief.
- Being patient with spiritual growth.
- Confessing Jesus as the Christ.
- Denying themselves and taking up their cross.
- Never being ashamed of Jesus.

XLV. PERSONAL APPLICATION

Mark 8 asks several important questions.

Do I Remember What God Has Done?

Or do I forget His past faithfulness?

Am I Demanding Signs?

Or am I trusting God's word?

Is There Yeast in My Heart?

Pride, hypocrisy, or unbelief?

How Clearly Do I See Jesus?

Is my spiritual sight still blurry?

Who Do I Say Jesus Is?

Have I personally confessed Him as the Christ?

Am I Telling Jesus How to Run My Life?

Like Peter, do I resist His plan?

What Is My Cross?

What is Jesus asking me to give up?

Am I Ashamed of Jesus?

Do I stand with Him in front of others?

XLVI. A CRAWFORD BIBLE STUDY PRINCIPLE

“The Crown Through the Cross”

Peter had just made the greatest confession.
“You are the Christ.”
He was right.
But he had the wrong picture.
He imagined a Messiah who would win, conquer, and rule.
A Messiah of glory without suffering.
Jesus said no.
The Christ must suffer.
The Christ must die.
The Christ must rise.
The crown comes through the cross.
And then Jesus turned to all of us.
The same is true for His followers.
We cannot have the crown without the cross.
We cannot follow Jesus and avoid the road He walked.
This creates a powerful principle.
The world says, “Save yourself.”
Jesus says, “Lose yourself for Me, and you will find true life.”

Principle:

The way to glory for Jesus, and for His followers, always passes through the cross.

XLVII. FINAL APPLICATION

Mark Chapter 8 is the turning point of Mark's Gospel.
Jesus feeds four thousand.
He refuses to give signs to unbelief.
He warns against the yeast of the Pharisees and Herod.
He opens blind eyes in two stages.
Peter confesses that Jesus is the Christ.
And Jesus reveals that the Christ must suffer, die, and rise again.
Then He calls everyone to take up the cross.
Mark 8 therefore reminds us:
Never forget what God has already done.

Never demand signs when God has given His word.
Never let pride or unbelief spread in your heart.
Never confess Jesus as Christ while refusing His cross.
Never trade your soul for the world.
The church does not need people who want Jesus without the cross.
It needs:
Disciples who confess Him as the Christ.
Followers who deny themselves.
Servants who carry their cross.
And believers who are never ashamed of Him.
The same Jesus still calls:
Tell people that Jesus is the Christ.
Tell people that He suffered, died, and rose again.
Tell people that their soul is worth more than the whole world.
Tell people that He is coming again in glory.
And as you live:
Remember His faithfulness.
Confess Him as Christ.
Take up your cross.
Follow Him.

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father,
Thank You that Jesus has compassion on the crowds and provides more than enough.
Thank You that Your word is enough, even without signs.
Thank You that Jesus opens blind eyes and does not leave His work unfinished.
Thank You that He is the Christ, the Messiah You promised.
Thank You that He was willing to suffer, die, and rise again for us.
Thank You that He will return in His Father's glory with the holy angels.
Forgive us when we have forgotten Your faithfulness.
Forgive us when we have demanded signs instead of trusting Your word.
Forgive us when pride and unbelief have spread in our hearts.
Forgive us when we have wanted a Savior without a cross.
Forgive us when we have been ashamed of Jesus.
Open our eyes to see Jesus clearly.
Help us deny ourselves and take up our cross daily.
Give us courage to follow Jesus wherever He leads.
Help us value our souls and the souls of others above everything in this world.
And make us bold to stand for Jesus in this generation.
“If anyone would come after Me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow Me.”
In Jesus' name, Amen.

Key Verse

“Then He called the crowd to Him along with His disciples and said, “If anyone would come after Me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow Me.”” — Mark 8:34

Central Truth

Jesus is the Christ who provides abundantly for His people and opens blind eyes, but He came to suffer, die, and rise again, and He calls all who follow Him to deny themselves, take up their cross, and value Him above the whole world.

Mark 8 in One Sentence

Jesus feeds four thousand, refuses to give the Pharisees a sign, warns His slow-to-understand disciples about the yeast of the Pharisees and Herod, heals a blind man in two stages, receives Peter's confession that He is the Christ, predicts His death and resurrection, and calls all who follow Him to deny themselves and take up their cross.

CRAWFORD BIBLE COMMENTARY

BIBLE STUDY

Mark Chapter 9 — The Glory of Christ, the Power of Faith, and the Call to Humble Discipleship

A Verse-by-Verse Bible Study from the Crawford Standard Bible

Introduction

Mark Chapter 9 moves from the mountaintop to the valley.
In Chapter 8, Jesus told His disciples He must suffer and die.
He called them to take up their cross.
Now, to strengthen them, He gives three of them a glimpse of His glory.
On a high mountain, Jesus is transfigured.
His clothes shine brighter than any earthly white.
Moses and Elijah appear with Him.
The Father speaks from a cloud.

“This is My beloved Son. Listen to Him!”
But they cannot stay on the mountain.
At the bottom, a desperate father waits with his son.
The other disciples could not help him.
Jesus frees the boy and teaches about faith and prayer.
“I believe! Help my unbelief!”
Then Jesus predicts His death a second time.
And the disciples argue about who is the greatest.
Jesus takes a little child in His arms and teaches that true greatness is found in serving.
The chapter ends with serious warnings about sin and hell.
Jesus calls His followers to deal with sin decisively and to live at peace.
The chapter moves through seven movements:

- The Transfiguration (verses 1–10).
- Elijah and the Suffering Son of Man (verses 11–13).
- Jesus Heals a Demon-Possessed Boy (verses 14–29).
- Jesus Predicts His Death a Second Time (verses 30–32).
- Who Is the Greatest? (verses 33–37).
- Whoever Is Not Against Us Is For Us (verses 38–41).
- Warnings About Sin and Hell (verses 42–50).

A note on verse numbers: in this chapter, verses 44 and 46 are not included.
Those verses repeat the words of verse 48 and are missing from many of the oldest copies of Mark, so many modern Bibles leave them out or place them in a footnote.
The central truth of Mark 9 is:
Jesus is the glorious, beloved Son of God whom we must listen to, and those who follow Him are called to trusting faith, dependent prayer, humble service, and serious holiness as they walk the road to the cross.

I. THE KINGDOM COME WITH POWER

Mark 9:1 — Some Standing Here

“Jesus said to them, “Truly I tell you, some standing here will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God come with power.””
“Truly I tell you.”
A solemn statement.
“Some standing here will not taste death.”
Some of those listening would still be alive.
“Before they see the kingdom of God come with power.”
What did Jesus mean?
Bible students understand this in several ways.
Many connect it to the Transfiguration that follows immediately.
Others see it fulfilled in the resurrection, at Pentecost, or in the spread of the gospel.
Each of these showed God's kingdom coming with power.
Mark places this saying right before the Transfiguration, where three disciples saw Jesus' glory.

Cross References

Matthew 16:28
I tell you the truth, some people standing here will see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom before they die.
Luke 9:27
Some of you standing here will not die before you see God's kingdom.
Matthew 24:30
Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky. All the nations will see Him coming on the clouds with power and great glory.

Spiritual Principle

God's kingdom comes with power, and Jesus gives His followers glimpses of it.

Key Truth

The road of the cross leads to the glory of the kingdom.

II. UP A HIGH MOUNTAIN

Mark 9:2 — Transfigured Before Them

“Six days later, Jesus took Peter, James, and John with Him up a high mountain by themselves. There He was transfigured before them.”
“Six days later.”
Six days after Peter's confession and Jesus' teaching about the cross.
“Jesus took Peter, James, and John.”
His inner circle again.
“Up a high mountain by themselves.”
The mountain is not named.
Many think it was Mount Hermon near Caesarea Philippi, while an old tradition names Mount Tabor.
“There He was transfigured before them.”
Transfigured means changed in form.
The glory that was always His shone through.
For a moment, they saw Jesus as He truly is.

Cross References

Matthew 17:1
Six days later Jesus took Peter, James, and John up on a high mountain by themselves.
Luke 9:28
About eight days after Jesus said this, He took Peter, John, and James and went up on a mountain to pray.
2 Peter 1:16
When we told you about the power of our Lord Jesus Christ and His coming, we were not passing on clever myths. We had seen His majesty for ourselves.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus revealed His glory to strengthen His disciples for the hard road ahead.

Key Truth

The glory of Jesus was not added from outside; it shone from within.

III. DAZZLING WHITE

Mark 9:3 — Whiter Than Any Bleach

“His clothes became dazzling white, whiter than anyone on earth could bleach them.”
“His clothes became dazzling white.”
They shone brilliantly.
“Whiter than anyone on earth could bleach them.”
No human effort could make anything this white.
This was heavenly glory.
In the Bible, shining white is the color of God's holiness and glory.

Cross References

Matthew 17:2
> There He was changed in front of them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as light.

Daniel 7:9
> As I watched, thrones were set up, and the Ancient One sat down. His clothes were white as snow.

Revelation 1:14
> His head and His hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes were like flames of fire.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus shares the holy glory of God.

Key Truth

No earthly whiteness can compare with the purity of Christ.

IV. ELIJAH AND MOSES

Mark 9:4 — Speaking with Jesus

“Elijah and Moses appeared and spoke with Jesus.”
Two great figures of the Old Testament appeared.
Moses represents the Law.
Elijah represents the Prophets.
Both had met God on a mountain.
Both had unusual departures from this world.
Luke tells us they talked with Jesus about His coming departure in Jerusalem.
The whole Old Testament was pointing to Jesus and His cross.

Cross References

Matthew 17:3
> Then Moses and Elijah appeared and were talking with Him.

Luke 9:30
Two men, Moses and Elijah, were talking with Him.
Malachi 4:5
Look, I will send you the prophet Elijah before the great and terrible day of the Lord comes.

Spiritual Principle

The Law and the Prophets point to Jesus.

Key Truth

All of Scripture meets in Jesus.

V. THREE SHELTERS

Mark 9:5 — It Is Good to Be Here

“Peter said, “Rabbi, it is good for us to be here. Let us put up three shelters—one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.””
“Rabbi, it is good for us to be here.”
Peter was right about that.
“Let us put up three shelters.”
Shelters were small tents or booths.
Perhaps Peter was thinking of the Feast of Tabernacles.
Perhaps he wanted to make the moment last.
“One for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.”
Peter's mistake was putting Jesus on the same level as Moses and Elijah.
Jesus is far greater.

Cross References

Matthew 17:4
Peter said to Jesus, “Lord, it is good that we are here. If You want, I will put up three shelters.”
Luke 9:33
Peter said, “Master, it is good for us to be here. Let us make three shelters.” He did not know what he was saying.
Leviticus 23:34
On the fifteenth day of the seventh month, the Feast of Shelters to the Lord begins, and it lasts seven days.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus is not one great teacher among many; He stands above all.

Key Truth

We cannot stay on the mountaintop; Jesus leads us back down to serve.

VI. TERRIFIED

Mark 9:6 — Not Knowing What to Say

“He did not know what to say, for they were terrified.”
Mark is honest about Peter.
He spoke because he did not know what else to do.
All three disciples were terrified.
When humans see God's glory, they are overwhelmed.

Cross References

Matthew 17:6
When the followers heard the voice, they fell to the ground, very frightened.
Luke 9:34
While he was saying this, a cloud came and covered them, and they were afraid as they went into the cloud.
Exodus 20:18
The people saw the thunder and lightning and heard the trumpet and saw the mountain smoking. They shook with fear and stayed far away.

Spiritual Principle

God's glory reveals our smallness and fills us with holy fear.

Key Truth

Sometimes the right response to God's glory is silence.

VII. LISTEN TO HIM!

Mark 9:7 — The Father's Voice from the Cloud

“A cloud overshadowed them, and a voice came from the cloud: “This is My beloved Son. Listen to Him!””
“A cloud overshadowed them.”
In the Old Testament, a cloud often showed God's presence.
It led Israel through the wilderness.
It filled the tabernacle.
“A voice came from the cloud.”
The Father spoke.
“This is My beloved Son.”
The same words spoken at Jesus' baptism.
“Listen to Him!”
This was the Father's command.
Not to Moses.
Not to Elijah.
To Jesus.
Especially now, when Jesus was teaching about the cross.

Cross References

Matthew 17:5
While Peter was talking, a bright cloud covered them. A voice from the cloud said, “This is My Son, whom I love. I am very pleased with Him. Listen to Him!”
Deuteronomy 18:15
From your own people, the Lord your God will raise up a prophet like me. Pay attention to Him.
2 Peter 1:17
Jesus received honor and glory from God the Father when the voice came from the majestic glory, saying, “This is My Son, whom I love. I am very pleased with Him.”

Spiritual Principle

The Father commands us to listen to His Son.

Application

Are you listening to Jesus, especially when He speaks about the cross?

VIII. ONLY JESUS

Mark 9:8 — They Looked Around

“Suddenly, when they looked around, they saw only Jesus with them.”
“Suddenly.”
The vision ended.
“When they looked around, they saw only Jesus with them.”
Moses was gone.
Elijah was gone.
The cloud was gone.
Only Jesus remained.
This is a beautiful picture.
In the end, Jesus is all we need.

Cross References

Matthew 17:8
When they looked up, they saw no one except Jesus.
Luke 9:36
When the voice finished speaking, only Jesus was there.
2 Corinthians 4:6
The same God who once ordered light to shine in the darkness has now shone into our hearts, so we can see His glory shining from the face of Christ.

Spiritual Principle

When everything else fades, Jesus remains.

Key Truth

Only Jesus. That is enough.

IX. UNTIL THE SON OF MAN HAS RISEN

Mark 9:9 — Tell No One Yet

“As they came down the mountain, Jesus ordered them not to tell anyone what they had seen until the Son of Man had risen from the dead.”
“As they came down the mountain.”
They returned to the ordinary world.
“Jesus ordered them not to tell anyone what they had seen.”
They had to keep it secret for now.
“Until the Son of Man had risen from the dead.”
After the resurrection, they would understand.
The glory would make sense only after the cross.
Peter later wrote about this moment in his letter.

Cross References

Matthew 17:9
> As they came down the mountain, Jesus commanded them, “Do not tell anyone what you saw until the Son of Man has risen from the dead.”

Luke 9:36
> The followers kept quiet and told no one at that time what they had seen.

Mark 8:30
> Jesus warned them not to tell anyone about Him.

Spiritual Principle

The glory of Jesus is understood fully only through the cross and resurrection.

Key Truth

Some things make sense only after Easter.

X. WHAT DOES RISING FROM THE DEAD MEAN?

Mark 9:10 — Keeping the Matter

“They kept the matter to themselves, wondering what “rising from the dead” meant.”
“They kept the matter to themselves.”
They obeyed.
“Wondering what ‘rising from the dead’ meant.”
They believed in a resurrection at the end of time.
But they could not understand how the Messiah would die and rise again now.
They were still seeing like the blind man after the first touch.

Cross References

John 20:9
They still did not understand from the Scriptures that Jesus had to rise from the dead.
Luke 18:34
The followers understood none of this. Its meaning was hidden from them.
Mark 9:32
But they did not understand what He meant, and they were afraid to ask.

Spiritual Principle

God's truth is sometimes understood only over time.

Key Truth

The disciples obeyed even before they understood.

XI. ELIJAH MUST COME FIRST

Mark 9:11 — The Disciples' Question

“The disciples asked Him, “Why do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?””
They had just seen Elijah.
This raised a question.
Malachi had promised Elijah would come before the day of the Lord.
If Jesus was the Messiah, where was Elijah?

Cross References

Malachi 4:5
I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and fearful day of the Lord.
Matthew 17:10
The followers asked Jesus, “Why do the teachers of the law say Elijah must come first?”
Matthew 11:14
If you are willing to accept it, John is the Elijah who was to come.

Spiritual Principle

God's plan unfolds just as He promised.

Key Truth

Every promise God makes is kept.

XII. THE SON OF MAN MUST SUFFER

Mark 9:12 — Elijah Restores All Things

“Jesus replied, “Indeed, Elijah comes first and restores all things. But why then is it written that the Son of Man must suffer greatly and be rejected?”
“Indeed, Elijah comes first and restores all things.”
Jesus agreed with the prophecy.

“But why then is it written that the Son of Man must suffer greatly and be rejected?”
Jesus pointed to another truth.
The Scriptures also said the Messiah would suffer.
Isaiah 53 describes a suffering servant.
The disciples needed to hold both truths together.

Cross References

Malachi 4:6
He will turn the hearts of parents to their children, and the hearts of children to their parents.
Isaiah 53:3
He was hated and rejected by people. He had much pain and suffering. People would not even look at Him.
Matthew 17:12
In the same way, the Son of Man will suffer at their hands.

Spiritual Principle

The Scriptures teach both the glory and the suffering of the Messiah.

Key Truth

The suffering of Jesus was not a surprise; it was written.

XIII. ELIJAH HAS ALREADY COME

Mark 9:13 — They Did to Him Whatever They Pleased

“I tell you, Elijah has already come, and they did to him whatever they pleased, just as it is written about him.””
“Elijah has already come.”
Jesus was speaking of John the Baptist.
John came in the spirit and power of Elijah.
“And they did to him whatever they pleased.”
Herod imprisoned and killed him.
“Just as it is written about him.”
Elijah was hunted by Queen Jezebel.
John was killed because of Queen Herodias.
What happened to the forerunner would also happen to the Messiah.

Cross References

Matthew 17:12
Elijah has already come, but people did not recognize him. They did whatever they wanted to him.
Matthew 11:14
John is the Elijah who was to come.
1 Kings 19:2
Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah to say, “By this time tomorrow I will kill you.”

Spiritual Principle

God's servants often suffer, just as the Messiah would.

Key Truth

John's suffering was a preview of Jesus' suffering.

XIV. ARGUING WITH THE DISCIPLES

Mark 9:14 — A Large Crowd

“When they came to the other disciples, they saw a large crowd around them, and the scribes were arguing with them.”
From the glory of the mountain to the chaos of the valley.
A crowd had gathered.
The scribes were arguing with the nine disciples left behind.
Something had gone wrong.

Cross References

Matthew 17:14
When they came back to the crowd, a man came to Jesus and knelt in front of Him.
Luke 9:37
The next day, when they came down from the mountain, a large crowd met Jesus.
Mark 2:6
Some teachers of the law were sitting there, thinking to themselves.

Spiritual Principle

After the mountaintop comes the valley of real need.

Key Truth

Faith is tested not on the mountain but in the valley.

XV. RUNNING TO GREET HIM

Mark 9:15 — The Crowd Was Amazed

“As soon as the crowd saw Jesus, they were amazed and ran to greet Him.”
The crowd was amazed.
Perhaps Jesus still carried some sign of the glory He had shown.
Like Moses' face shining after meeting God.
The people ran to Him.

Cross References

Mark 6:54
As soon as they got out of the boat, people recognized Jesus.
Luke 8:40
When Jesus returned, the crowd welcomed Him.
Matthew 17:14
When they reached the crowd, a man came up to Jesus.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus' arrival brings hope into confusion.

Key Truth

When Jesus comes, the crowd turns from the argument to Him.

XVI. WHAT ARE YOU ARGUING ABOUT?

Mark 9:16 — Jesus Asks

“He asked, “What are you arguing with them about?””
Jesus asked what was going on.
He stepped in to protect His disciples.
He took charge of the situation.

Cross References

Luke 9:38
A man in the crowd shouted, “Teacher, please come and look at my son. He is my only child.”
Matthew 17:14
A man came to Jesus and knelt before Him.
Mark 9:33
He asked them, “What were you arguing about on the road?”

Spiritual Principle

Jesus steps into our conflicts and takes charge.

Key Truth

Jesus always asks the question that brings things into the light.

XVII. A SPIRIT THAT MAKES HIM MUTE

Mark 9:17 — A Father's Plea

“A man from the crowd answered, “Teacher, I brought You my son, who has a spirit that makes him mute.”
“Teacher, I brought You my son.”
A father had come for help.
“Who has a spirit that makes him mute.”
His son was troubled by an evil spirit.
It kept him from speaking.
Luke tells us he was an only son.

Cross References

Matthew 17:15
Lord, have mercy on my son. He has seizures and suffers terribly.

Luke 9:38
Teacher, please look at my son. He is my only child.
Mark 1:23
Just then a man with an evil spirit cried out in the synagogue.

Spiritual Principle

Parents bring their children's needs to Jesus.

Application

Who in your family do you need to bring to Jesus?

XVIII. THEY COULD NOT

Mark 9:18 — The Disciples Failed

“Whenever it seizes him, it throws him to the ground. He foams at the mouth, grinds his teeth, and becomes rigid. I asked Your disciples to drive it out, but they could not.””
“Whenever it seizes him, it throws him to the ground.”
The boy suffered terrible attacks.
The symptoms are similar to severe seizures.
In this case, the Gospel tells us an evil spirit was the cause.
But not every seizure or illness today is caused by a demon.
Many have medical causes and should receive good medical care.
“I asked Your disciples to drive it out, but they could not.”
The disciples had driven out demons before.
But this time they failed.

Cross References

Matthew 17:15
He often falls into the fire or into the water.
Luke 9:39
A spirit seizes him, and he suddenly screams. It throws him into fits so that he foams at the mouth.
Mark 1:26
The evil spirit shook the man violently and came out with a loud scream.

Spiritual Principle

Past success does not guarantee present power; we must depend on God each time.

Key Truth

The disciples had authority, but they had stopped depending on God.

XIX. HOW LONG?

Mark 9:19 — You Unbelieving Generation

“Jesus said, “You unbelieving generation, how long must I be with you? Bring the boy to Me.””

“You unbelieving generation.”
Jesus was grieved by the lack of faith all around Him.
The crowd, the scribes, and even His disciples.
“How long must I be with you?”
Jesus was weary of unbelief.
“Bring the boy to Me.”
But He did not turn away.
He still invited the boy to come.
When others fail, Jesus does not.

Cross References

Matthew 17:17
Jesus answered, “You faithless and twisted people! How long must I stay with you? Bring the boy here to Me.”
Luke 9:41
Jesus said, “You people who do not believe and have turned from God! How long must I be with you? Bring your son here.”
Deuteronomy 32:5
They have acted sinfully against Him. They are not His children; they are a twisted and crooked generation.

Spiritual Principle

When human help fails, bring the need to Jesus.

Key Truth

“Bring the boy to Me” is still Jesus' invitation.

XX. CONVULSIONS

Mark 9:20 — The Spirit Saw Jesus

“They brought him, and when the spirit saw Jesus, it immediately threw the boy into convulsions. He fell to the ground, rolling and foaming at the mouth.”
As soon as the evil spirit saw Jesus, it reacted violently.
It knew who Jesus was.
It made its final attack.
Evil often fights hardest just before it is defeated.

Cross References

Matthew 17:15
He has seizures and suffers greatly.
Luke 9:42
While the boy was coming, the demon threw him to the ground and into a fit.
Mark 1:26
The spirit shook the man and came out with a loud cry.

Spiritual Principle

Evil may rage, but it cannot stand before Jesus.

Key Truth

The darkness often grows loudest just before the light wins.

XXI. SINCE CHILDHOOD

Mark 9:21 — How Long?

“Jesus asked the boy's father, “How long has he been like this?” He replied, “Since childhood.”
“How long has he been like this?”
Jesus took time to ask.
He cared about the father's story.
“Since childhood.”
This family had suffered for years.
The father had carried this burden for a long time.

Cross References

Luke 13:11
> A woman was there who had been crippled by a spirit for eighteen years. She was bent over and could not stand up straight.

John 5:5
> One man there had been sick for thirty-eight years.

John 9:1
> As Jesus walked along, He saw a man who had been blind from birth.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus cares about our whole story, not just our present crisis.

Key Truth

Jesus listens to the long years of our suffering.

XXII. IF YOU CAN

Mark 9:22 — Take Pity on Us

“It has often thrown him into fire or water to kill him. But if You can do anything, take pity on us and help us.””
“It has often thrown him into fire or water to kill him.”
The evil spirit wanted to destroy the boy.
“But if You can do anything.”
The father's faith was weak.
The disciples had failed.
He was not sure anymore.
“Take pity on us and help us.”

Notice the word **“us.”**
The father felt his son's suffering as his own.

Cross References

Matthew 17:15
He often falls into the fire or into the water.
Psalm 34:19
Good people may have many troubles, but the Lord will rescue them from all of them.
James 5:14
Is anyone sick? Let him call the elders of the church to pray for him.

Spiritual Principle

Even weak and hesitant faith can bring a need to Jesus.

Key Truth

The father said “if You can”; the real question was “if you believe.”

XXIII. EVERYTHING IS POSSIBLE

Mark 9:23 — For the One Who Believes

“Jesus said, “‘If You can’? Everything is possible for the one who believes.””
“If You can?”
Jesus repeated the father's words.
There was no question about Jesus' power.
The question was about the father's faith.
“Everything is possible for the one who believes.”
Faith connects us to God's unlimited power.
This does not mean we can get anything we want.
It means nothing is too hard for God when we trust Him and His will.

Cross References

Matthew 17:20
If your faith is as small as a mustard seed, you can tell this mountain to move, and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you.
Mark 11:23
If anyone tells this mountain to be lifted up and thrown into the sea, and does not doubt but believes, it will happen.
Matthew 21:21
If you have faith and do not doubt, you can do even more.

Spiritual Principle

Nothing is impossible for God when we trust Him.

Key Truth

The question is never “Can Jesus?” but “Will I believe?”

XXIV. I BELIEVE! HELP MY UNBELIEF!

Mark 9:24 — An Honest Prayer

“Immediately the boy's father cried out, “I believe! Help my unbelief!””
This is one of the most honest prayers in the Bible.
“I believe!”
The father had some faith.
“Help my unbelief!”
But he also had doubts.
He did not pretend.
He brought both his faith and his doubt to Jesus.
And Jesus accepted that prayer.
We do not need perfect faith to come to Jesus.
We need honest faith that asks Him for help.

Cross References

Luke 17:5
The apostles said to the Lord, “Make our faith stronger!”
Matthew 17:20
Even faith as small as a mustard seed can move mountains.
Hebrews 11:6
No one can please God without trusting Him. Whoever comes to Him has to believe that He exists and that He gives good things to those who sincerely seek Him.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus welcomes honest faith that struggles with doubt.

Application

Can you pray, “I believe; help my unbelief”?

XXV. COME OUT AND NEVER ENTER AGAIN

Mark 9:25 — Jesus Rebukes the Spirit

“Seeing the crowd running to the scene, Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit: “You deaf and mute spirit, I command you, come out and never enter him again.””
“Seeing the crowd running to the scene.”
The crowd was growing.
“Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit.”
Jesus spoke directly to the spirit.
“I command you.”
Jesus spoke with full authority.
“Come out and never enter him again.”

Not just freedom for now.
Freedom forever.

Cross References

Mark 1:25
Jesus spoke firmly to the spirit: “Be quiet! Come out of him!”
Luke 9:42
Jesus gave a firm command to the evil spirit, healed the boy, and gave him back to his father.
Mark 5:8
Jesus had said to it, “Come out of the man, you evil spirit!”

Spiritual Principle

Jesus' freedom is complete and lasting.

Key Truth

When Jesus sets someone free, they are free indeed.

XXVI. LIKE A CORPSE

Mark 9:26 — He Is Dead

“The spirit shrieked, convulsed him violently, and came out. The boy looked so much like a corpse that many said, “He is dead.””
“The spirit shrieked, convulsed him violently, and came out.”
The spirit made one last violent attack.
Then it left.
“The boy looked so much like a corpse.”
He lay completely still.
“Many said, ‘He is dead.’”
To the crowd, it looked like the worst had happened.
But Jesus was not finished.

Cross References

Mark 1:26
The spirit threw him into a fit and came out with a shout.
Luke 9:42
The demon threw him down into a fit.
Luke 8:52
Jesus said, “Stop crying. She is not dead, only asleep.”

Spiritual Principle

What looks like death may be the beginning of new life in Jesus' hands.

Key Truth

When others say “It's over,” Jesus may be just beginning.

XXVII. LIFTED UP

Mark 9:27 — He Stood

“But Jesus took him by the hand, lifted him up, and he stood.”
“But Jesus took him by the hand.”
The same tender touch He gave Peter's mother-in-law and Jairus' daughter.
“Lifted him up.”
The word used here is also used of resurrection.
“And he stood.”
The boy was alive and free.
What a picture of what Jesus does for us.
He takes us by the hand and raises us up.

Cross References

Mark 1:31
He went to her, took her hand, and helped her up.
Mark 5:41
He took her by the hand and said, “Little girl, get up!”
Acts 3:7
Peter took him by the right hand and helped him up. At once the man's feet and ankles became strong.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus lifts up those who are cast down.

Key Truth

The hand of Jesus raises the fallen.

XXVIII. WHY COULDN'T WE?

Mark 9:28 — The Disciples Ask Privately

“After Jesus had gone indoors, His disciples asked privately, “Why couldn't we drive it out?””
The disciples were confused.
They had driven out demons before.
Why not this time?
They came to Jesus privately with their question.
Failure can be a great teacher if we bring it to Jesus.

Cross References

Matthew 17:19
Then the followers came to Jesus privately and asked, “Why couldn't we drive out that demon?”
Mark 9:18
I asked Your followers to drive out the spirit, but they could not.

Luke 9:40
I begged Your followers to make it leave, but they could not.

Spiritual Principle

Bring your failures to Jesus and learn from Him.

Application

What failure do you need to bring to Jesus?

XXIX. ONLY BY PRAYER

Mark 9:29 — Prayer and Fasting

“He replied, “This kind can come out only by prayer and fasting.””
“This kind can come out only by prayer.”
The disciples had relied on their past success.
Perhaps they thought they had the power themselves.
Jesus pointed them back to prayer.
Dependence on God is the key.
“And fasting.”
Many ancient copies of Mark include **“and fasting.”**
Some of the oldest copies end with **“prayer.”**
Either way, the lesson is clear.
Some battles require deeper dependence on God.

Cross References

Matthew 17:21
But this kind does not go out except through prayer and fasting.
Daniel 9:3
So I turned to the Lord God and prayed and pleaded with Him, fasting and wearing rough cloth and sitting in ashes.
James 5:16
When a godly person prays, great things happen.

Spiritual Principle

Spiritual power comes from constant dependence on God in prayer.

Key Truth

The disciples had authority, but they had forgotten to pray.

XXX. THROUGH GALILEE

Mark 9:30 — Not Wanting Anyone to Know

“They left that place and passed through Galilee. Jesus did not want anyone to know where they were,”

Jesus traveled quietly.
He was focused on His disciples now.
The crowds would have to wait.
He needed time to prepare them for what was coming.

Cross References

Matthew 17:22
When they came together in Galilee, Jesus said to them.
Luke 9:43
While everyone was amazed at all He did, Jesus said to His followers.
Mark 9:9
He told them not to tell anyone what they had seen.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus makes time to teach His disciples deeply.

Key Truth

Some lessons are taught away from the crowds.

XXXI. THE SECOND PREDICTION

Mark 9:31 — Delivered into the Hands of Men

“because He was teaching His disciples: “The Son of Man will be delivered into the hands of men. They will kill Him, and after three days He will rise.””
“He was teaching His disciples.”
The wording means He kept teaching it again and again.
“The Son of Man will be delivered into the hands of men.”
Delivered can also mean betrayed.
It hints at Judas' betrayal.
But it also points to God handing over His Son for us.
“They will kill Him.”
“And after three days He will rise.”
This is the second clear prediction of His death and resurrection.

Cross References

Matthew 17:22
The Son of Man will be handed over to people.
Luke 9:44
Listen carefully: The Son of Man will be handed over to people.
Mark 8:31
The Son of Man must suffer many things, be killed, and after three days rise again.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus knew exactly what was coming and walked toward it willingly.

Key Truth

The cross was not an accident; it was the plan.

XXXII. AFRAID TO ASK

Mark 9:32 — They Did Not Understand

“But they did not understand and were afraid to ask Him about it.”
“But they did not understand.”
They still could not grasp it.
“And were afraid to ask Him about it.”
Why were they afraid?
Perhaps they remembered how Jesus rebuked Peter.
Perhaps they did not want to hear more.
Sometimes we avoid asking because we fear the answer.

Cross References

Luke 9:45
But they did not understand. The meaning was hidden from them, and they were afraid to ask.
Luke 18:34
The followers understood none of this.
Mark 8:32
Peter took Him aside and began to correct Him.

Spiritual Principle

Do not be afraid to ask Jesus about hard truths.

Application

Is there a hard truth you have been afraid to ask God about?

XXXIII. WHAT WERE YOU ARGUING ABOUT?

Mark 9:33 — In the House at Capernaum

“They came to Capernaum. When He was in the house, He asked them, “What were you arguing about on the road?””
“They came to Capernaum.”
Back to Jesus' home base.
“What were you arguing about on the road?”
Jesus knew.
But He wanted them to admit it.

Cross References

Matthew 18:1
At that time the followers came to Jesus and asked, “Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?”
Luke 9:46
An argument started among the followers about which of them was the greatest.
Mark 9:35
Whoever wants to be first must be last and the servant of all.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus knows what we talk about when we think He is not listening.

Key Truth

The road to the cross was where the disciples argued about greatness.

XXXIV. THEY KEPT SILENT

Mark 9:34 — Who Is the Greatest?

“They kept silent, because they had argued about who was the greatest.”
They were embarrassed.
Jesus had just told them He would die.
And they were arguing about who was the most important.
They knew it was wrong.
So they said nothing.

Cross References

Luke 9:46
The followers argued about which one of them was the greatest.
Luke 22:24
Then the followers argued about which of them should be thought of as the greatest.
Matthew 18:1
The followers asked, “Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?”

Spiritual Principle

Pride and the desire for importance are opposite to the way of the cross.

Spiritual Warning

Silence before Jesus often shows we already know we were wrong.

XXXV. LAST OF ALL, SERVANT OF ALL

Mark 9:35 — True Greatness

“Sitting down, Jesus called the Twelve and said, “Anyone who wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all.””

“Sitting down.”
Teachers sat to teach important lessons.
“Jesus called the Twelve.”
This was for all of them.
“Anyone who wants to be first must be last of all.”
In God's kingdom, everything is turned upside down.
“And servant of all.”
True greatness is not about being served.
It is about serving.
Jesus Himself would show this on the cross.

Cross References

Matthew 20:26
You must not be like that. If one of you wants to be important, he has to serve the rest.
Luke 9:48
Whoever is least among you all is the greatest.
Matthew 23:11
The greatest among you will be your servant.

Spiritual Principle

True greatness in God's kingdom is found in humble service.

Application

Whom can you serve this week?

XXXVI. A LITTLE CHILD

Mark 9:36 — Taken in His Arms

“He took a little child and placed him among them. Taking the child in His arms, He said,”
“He took a little child.”
Probably in Peter's house.
“And placed him among them.”
Right in the middle of the disciples.
“Taking the child in His arms.”
A tender picture.
In that culture, children had little status.
They could not do anything for anyone.
Jesus held one up as an example.

Cross References

Matthew 18:2
Jesus called a little child to Him and stood the child in front of them.
Luke 9:47
Jesus knew what they were thinking, so He took a little child and stood the child beside Him.
Mark 10:16
He took the children in His arms, put His hands on them, and blessed them.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus values those whom the world overlooks.

Key Truth

The arms of Jesus are open to the least important.

XXXVII. WELCOMING A CHILD

Mark 9:37 — Welcoming Jesus and the Father

““Whoever welcomes one of these little children in My name welcomes Me; and whoever welcomes Me does not welcome Me but the One who sent Me.””
“Whoever welcomes one of these little children in My name welcomes Me.”
Serving the least important is serving Jesus.
No one gains status by serving a child.
That is exactly why it pleases God.
“And whoever welcomes Me does not welcome Me but the One who sent Me.”
Welcoming Jesus means welcoming the Father.
The humblest act of service reaches all the way to God.

Cross References

Matthew 18:5
Whoever welcomes a little child like this in My name welcomes Me.
Luke 9:48
Whoever welcomes this little child in My name welcomes Me. And whoever welcomes Me welcomes the One who sent Me.
Matthew 10:40
When people take you in, they are taking Me in, and when they take Me in, they are taking in the Father who sent Me.

Spiritual Principle

Serving the least is serving Christ Himself.

Key Truth

No act of kindness to the overlooked is ever small in God's eyes.

XXXVIII. WE TRIED TO STOP HIM

Mark 9:38 — Not Following Us

“John said to Him, “Teacher, we saw someone driving out demons in Your name and we tried to stop him, because he was not following us.””
“John said to Him.”
One of the Sons of Thunder spoke up.
“We saw someone driving out demons in Your name.”
Someone outside their group was doing God's work.

And it was working.
Remember, the disciples had just failed to drive out a demon.
“We tried to stop him, because he was not following us.”
Notice: **“not following us.”**
Not “not following You.”
They were protecting their group.

Cross References

Luke 9:49
John said, “Master, we saw someone using Your name to drive out demons. We told him to stop, because he does not belong to our group.”
Numbers 11:27
A young man ran and told Moses, “Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp.”
1 Corinthians 12:3
No one speaking by the Spirit of God says, “Jesus be cursed,” and no one can say, “Jesus is Lord,” except by the Holy Spirit.

Spiritual Principle

God's work is bigger than any one group.

Spiritual Warning

Be careful not to confuse loyalty to your group with loyalty to Jesus.

XXXIX. DO NOT STOP HIM

Mark 9:39 — Doing Miracles in My Name

““Do not stop him,” Jesus said. “For no one who does a miracle in My name can soon afterward speak evil of Me.”
“Do not stop him.”
Jesus corrected John.
“For no one who does a miracle in My name can soon afterward speak evil of Me.”
Someone working in Jesus' name was on Jesus' side.
He was honoring Jesus, not opposing Him.
The disciples did not have a monopoly on God's work.

Cross References

Luke 9:50
Jesus said to him, “Do not stop him, because whoever is not against you is for you.”
Numbers 11:29
Moses answered, “Are you jealous for my sake? I wish all the Lord's people were prophets and that the Lord would put His Spirit on them!”
1 Corinthians 12:3
Only by the Holy Spirit can anyone say, “Jesus is Lord.”

Spiritual Principle

Rejoice when Jesus' name is honored, even by those outside your circle.

Key Truth

Moses wished all God's people would prophesy; Jesus' heart is just as wide.

XL. NOT AGAINST US IS FOR US

Mark 9:40 — On the Same Side

“Whoever is not against us is for us.”
This is a generous principle.
Those who honor Jesus and are not opposed to Him are on the same side.
Elsewhere Jesus said, **“Whoever is not with Me is against Me.”**
The two sayings fit together.
About ourselves, we must be fully with Jesus.
About others who honor Jesus, we should be generous.
This does not mean ignoring false teaching.
But it means not rejecting true believers just because they are not in our group.

Cross References

Luke 9:50
Whoever is not against you is on your side.
Matthew 12:30
If you are not on My side, you are working against Me. If you are not helping Me gather, you are scattering.
Numbers 11:29
I wish all the Lord's people were prophets.

Spiritual Principle

Followers of Jesus should be generous toward others who honor His name.

Application

Do you rejoice when God works through believers outside your own church?

XLI. A CUP OF WATER

Mark 9:41 — A Sure Reward

“Truly I tell you, anyone who gives you a cup of water in My name because you belong to Christ will certainly not lose their reward.””
“Anyone who gives you a cup of water.”
A simple act.
Water was common and cheap.
“In My name because you belong to Christ.”
The motive matters.
Kindness shown because someone belongs to Jesus.
“Will certainly not lose their reward.”
God notices even the smallest act of kindness.

Nothing done for Jesus is forgotten.

Cross References

Matthew 10:42
If anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones because he is My follower, he will surely be rewarded.
Matthew 25:40
The King will reply, “When you helped even the smallest of My brothers and sisters, you were helping Me.”
Hebrews 6:10
God is always just. He will remember how hard you worked and how you showed your love for Him by caring for His people.

Spiritual Principle

God rewards even the smallest kindness done for Christ's sake.

Key Truth

A cup of water given in Jesus' name is never wasted.

XLII. A MILLSTONE

Mark 9:42 — Causing Little Ones to Stumble

““If anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble, it would be better for them to have a large millstone hung around their neck and be thrown into the sea.”
“If anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble.”
Little ones includes children and humble believers.
To **cause to stumble** means leading them into sin or away from faith.
“It would be better for them to have a large millstone hung around their neck.”
A large millstone was turned by a donkey.
It was very heavy.
“And be thrown into the sea.”
This is a strong image.
Jesus is not commanding this punishment.
He is saying that God's judgment for harming the faith of the little ones is even worse than this.
God takes the protection of children and weak believers very seriously.

Cross References

Matthew 18:6
If anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him to be drowned in the deep sea with a large stone tied around his neck.
Luke 17:2
It would be better for him to be thrown into the sea with a stone around his neck than to cause one of these little ones to sin.
Matthew 18:10
Be careful that you do not look down on any of these little ones. I tell you, their angels in heaven are always with My Father.

Spiritual Principle

God fiercely protects children and humble believers.

Spiritual Warning

Leading the weak into sin is one of the most serious offenses before God.

XLIII. IF YOUR HAND CAUSES YOU TO SIN

Mark 9:43 — Better to Enter Life Maimed

“If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better to enter life maimed than with two hands to go into hell, where the fire never goes out.”
Jesus now turns from sins against others to our own sins.
“If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off.”
This is a strong picture, not a command to harm our bodies.
Jesus often used dramatic language to make a point.
Sin does not come from the hand itself, but from the heart, as Jesus taught in Chapter 7.
The meaning is clear.
Deal with sin decisively.
Remove whatever leads you into sin, whatever the cost.
“It is better to enter life maimed.”
Giving up something precious is better than losing eternal life.
“Than with two hands to go into hell.”
The word for **hell** is **Gehenna**.
It was a valley outside Jerusalem once used for terrible idol worship and later for burning trash.
It became a picture of God's final judgment.
“Where the fire never goes out.”
Jesus speaks plainly about the reality of judgment.

Cross References

Matthew 5:30
> If your right hand leads you into sin, get rid of it. Losing one part of you is far better than having all of you end up in hell.

Matthew 18:8
> If your hand or foot causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better to enter life crippled than to have two hands and be thrown into the fire that never ends.

Colossians 3:5
> Kill off the earthly things that still live in you: sexual sin, dirty living, wrong desires, and greed, which is really a kind of idol worship.

Spiritual Principle

Sin must be dealt with decisively because eternity is at stake.

Application

What do you need to remove from your life because it leads you into sin?

XLIV. IF YOUR FOOT CAUSES YOU TO SIN

Mark 9:45 — Better to Enter Life Crippled

“And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better to enter life crippled than to have two feet and be thrown into hell.”
Jesus repeats the lesson.
The **hand** pictures what we do.
The **foot** pictures where we go.
If a place or path leads you into sin, stop going there.
Do not walk where temptation waits for you.

Cross References

Matthew 18:8
It is better to enter life lame than to have two feet and be thrown into eternal fire.
Isaiah 59:7
Their feet run to do evil, and they hurry to kill innocent people.
Romans 3:15
They are always ready to hurt and kill people.

Spiritual Principle

Avoid the places and paths that lead you into sin.

Application

Are there places you need to stop going?

XLV. IF YOUR EYE CAUSES YOU TO SIN

Mark 9:47 — Better to Enter with One Eye

“And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out. It is better to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into hell,”
The third picture.
The **eye** pictures what we look at and desire.
Many sins begin with what we see.
Jesus calls us to guard our eyes.
Again, this is not a call to harm ourselves.
It is a call to take radical steps against temptation.
Notice **“the kingdom of God”** here means the same as **“life”** in verses 43 and 45.

Cross References

Matthew 5:29
If your right eye pulls you into sin, get rid of it. You are better off losing one part of yourself than having your whole self thrown into hell.

Matthew 18:9
If your eye makes you sin, take it out and throw it away. It is better to enter life with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into the fire of hell.
Proverbs 4:25
Keep your eyes looking straight ahead. Fix your attention on what is in front of you.

Spiritual Principle

Guard what you look at, because sin often begins with the eyes.

Application

What are you allowing your eyes to see that leads you away from God?

XLVI. THE WORM AND THE FIRE

Mark 9:48 — Isaiah's Warning

“where ‘the worms that eat them do not die, and the fire is not quenched.’”
Jesus quotes the last verse of Isaiah.
It describes the fate of those who rebel against God.
The worm that never dies.
The fire that is never put out.
These images describe the terrible reality of final judgment.
Jesus spoke of hell more than anyone else in the Bible.
He did so out of love, to warn people.
He came to save us from this very judgment.

Cross References

Isaiah 66:24
They will go out and see the dead bodies of those who rebelled against Me. The worms that eat them will not die, and the fire that burns them will not go out.
Matthew 3:12
He will gather His wheat into the barn, but He will burn the chaff with a fire that cannot be put out.
Revelation 14:11
The smoke from their torment rises forever and ever. There is no rest day or night for those who worship the beast.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus warns about judgment because He loves us and came to save us from it.

Key Truth

The One who warned most about hell is the One who died to save us from it.

XLVII. SALTED WITH FIRE

Mark 9:49 — Everyone Will Be Salted

“Everyone will be salted with fire.”
This is one of the hardest verses in Mark to understand.
Bible students have suggested several meanings.
In the Old Testament, every offering was seasoned with salt.
Fire is also a picture of testing and purifying.
Many understand it to mean that every believer will be refined through trials, like an offering set apart to God.
Others connect it to the fire of judgment just mentioned.
Either way, it reminds us that life with God involves testing and purifying.

Cross References

Leviticus 2:13
> Put salt on every grain offering you bring. Do not leave the salt of God's covenant out of your offerings. Put salt on all your offerings.

1 Corinthians 3:13
> The work of each person will be clearly seen, because the Day will bring it to light. Fire will test what each person has done.

Matthew 5:13
> You are like salt for the whole world. But once salt loses its taste, nothing can bring the flavor back.

Spiritual Principle

God uses fiery trials to purify and preserve His people.

Key Truth

The fire that refines is part of a life offered to God.

XLVIII. HAVE SALT AMONG YOURSELVES

Mark 9:50 — Be at Peace

“Salt is good, but if it loses its saltiness, how can you make it salty again? Have salt among yourselves, and be at peace with one another.””
“Salt is good.”
Salt preserved food and added flavor.
It was very valuable.
“But if it loses its saltiness, how can you make it salty again?”
Salt in those days was often mixed with other minerals.
If the salt dissolved away, what was left was useless.
A disciple who loses their distinctiveness is like salt that has lost its taste.
“Have salt among yourselves.”
Keep the qualities of true disciples.
Faithfulness, purity, and devotion to Jesus.

“And be at peace with one another.”
Jesus ends where the argument began.
The disciples had been arguing about greatness.
Jesus calls them to peace.

Cross References

Matthew 5:13
You are the world's seasoning. But salt that goes flat is useless, and people just throw it away.
Colossians 4:6
When you talk, always be kind and pleasant, and season your words with salt. Then you will know how to answer everyone.
Romans 12:18
As much as it depends on you, get along peacefully with all people.

Spiritual Principle

Disciples must keep their distinctive faithfulness and live at peace with one another.

Key Truth

The salt of the disciple is shown in holiness toward God and peace toward others.

XLIX. SEVEN GREAT LESSONS FROM MARK 9

1. The Transfiguration Reveals Christ's Glory

“This is My beloved Son. Listen to Him!”

Principle:

Jesus is the fulfillment of the Law (Moses) and the Prophets (Elijah).

2. Faith Overcomes Unbelief

“I believe! Help my unbelief!”

Principle:

Even weak faith can be strengthened when we bring it honestly to Jesus.

3. Prayer and Fasting Are Vital

“This kind can come out only by prayer and fasting.”

Principle:

Some spiritual battles require deeper dependence on God.

4. True Greatness Is Found in Humility

“Anyone who wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all.”

Principle:

To be first, one must become last and a servant.

5. Unity in Christ's Mission

“Do not stop him.”

Principle:

Those working in His name should not be hindered.

6. The Seriousness of Sin

“If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off.”

Principle:

Sin must be dealt with decisively because eternal consequences are at stake.

7. Be Salt

“Have salt among yourselves, and be at peace with one another.”

Principle:

Followers of Jesus must keep their faithfulness and pursue peace.

L. FROM THE MOUNTAIN TO THE VALLEY

Mark 9 shows two very different scenes.

On the Mountain

- Jesus shines with glory.
- Moses and Elijah appear.
- The Father speaks.
- Three disciples are overwhelmed.

In the Valley

- A boy suffers.
- A father is desperate.
- Disciples have failed.
- Scribes are arguing.

What This Teaches

- We cannot stay on the mountain.
- The glory of Jesus prepares us for the needs below.
- The same Jesus who shines in glory meets us in our struggles.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Mountaintop moments are given to strengthen us for valley ministry.

LI. HONEST FAITH

The father in verses 21–24 teaches us how to pray when faith is weak.

He Came to Jesus

Even after the disciples failed.

He Told His Story

“Since childhood.”

He Asked for Mercy

“Take pity on us and help us.”

He Admitted His Faith

“I believe!”

He Admitted His Doubt

“Help my unbelief!”

Jesus Answered

The boy was set free.

Key Truth

Jesus does not require perfect faith; He welcomes honest faith that asks for help.

LII. TRUE GREATNESS

Verses 33–41 turn the world's idea of greatness upside down.

The World Says

- Be first.
- Be served.
- Be important.
- Protect your group.

Jesus Says

- Be last.
- Serve all.
- Welcome the least important.

- Rejoice when others serve in My name.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

In God's kingdom, the way up is down.

LIII. DEALING WITH SIN SERIOUSLY

Verses 42–50 teach how seriously Jesus takes sin.

Sin Against Others

Leading little ones into sin is very serious.

Sin in What We Do

“If your hand causes you to sin.”

Sin in Where We Go

“If your foot causes you to sin.”

Sin in What We See

“If your eye causes you to sin.”

Important Note

Jesus used strong, dramatic pictures.
He was not telling anyone to harm their body.
He was calling us to cut off sin decisively and remove whatever leads us into it.
Anyone struggling with thoughts of harming themselves should reach out right away for help from a trusted person, their church, or a trained professional.

Practical Steps

- Identify what leads you into sin.
- Remove it, even if it is costly.
- Avoid places and situations of temptation.
- Guard what you watch and read.
- Ask others to hold you accountable.

Key Truth

Sin is never worth keeping, because eternity is at stake.

LIV. WHAT MARK 9 TEACHES ABOUT JESUS

He Is Glorious

“His clothes became dazzling white.”

He Is Greater Than Moses and Elijah

“They saw only Jesus with them.”

He Is the Beloved Son

“This is My beloved Son.”

He Must Be Heard

“Listen to Him!”

He Must Suffer

“The Son of Man must suffer greatly and be rejected.”

He Has Power Over Evil

“Come out and never enter him again.”

He Lifts Up the Fallen

“Jesus took him by the hand, lifted him up.”

He Welcomes Children

“Taking the child in His arms.”

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The glorious Son of God came to suffer, to serve, and to lift up the weak.

LV. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR PERSONAL STUDY

Question 1

What happened at the Transfiguration?
Jesus' appearance was changed, His clothes shone white, Moses and Elijah appeared, and the Father spoke from a cloud.

Question 2

Why did Moses and Elijah appear?
They represent the Law and the Prophets, which point to Jesus.

Question 3

What was wrong with Peter's idea of three shelters?
It placed Jesus on the same level as Moses and Elijah.

Question 4

What did the Father command?
“This is My beloved Son. Listen to Him!”

Question 5

Who was the Elijah who had already come?
John the Baptist.

Question 6

Why couldn't the disciples drive out the spirit?
They had stopped depending on God in prayer.

Question 7

What does “I believe! Help my unbelief!” teach us?
That Jesus welcomes honest faith, even when it is mixed with doubt.

Question 8

What were the disciples arguing about?
Who was the greatest.

Question 9

How did Jesus define true greatness?
Being last of all and servant of all.

Question 10

Why did Jesus say not to stop the man using His name?
Because whoever is not against us is for us, and God's work is bigger than one group.

Question 11

Did Jesus mean we should literally cut off our hands?
No. He used strong pictures to teach that we must deal with sin decisively.

Question 12

What should Mark 9 change about the way Christians live today?
Mark 9 should cause believers to live:

- Listening to Jesus above all others.
- Bringing honest faith to Jesus.
- Depending on God in prayer.
- Seeking to serve rather than to be served.
- Welcoming the least important.
- Rejoicing when others serve in Jesus' name.
- Dealing seriously with sin.
- Living at peace with one another.

LVI. PERSONAL APPLICATION

Mark 9 asks several important questions.

Am I Listening to Jesus?

Or to other voices?

Do I See Jesus as Greater Than All?

Or as one good teacher among many?

Am I Depending on Prayer?

Or on past success?

Can I Pray Honestly?

“I believe; help my unbelief”?

Am I Seeking Greatness?

Or seeking to serve?

Do I Welcome the Overlooked?

Children, the poor, the forgotten?

Am I Generous Toward Other Believers?

Or do I only value those in my group?

What Sin Do I Need to Cut Off?

What step will I take today?

LVII. A CRAWFORD BIBLE STUDY PRINCIPLE

“I Believe; Help My Unbelief”

A father stood before Jesus.
His son had suffered since childhood.
He had tried everything.
He had come to Jesus' disciples.
They had failed.
His hope was almost gone.
He said, **“If You can do anything.”**
Jesus turned it back to him.
“If You can? Everything is possible for the one who believes.”
The father did not pretend.
He did not claim to have perfect faith.
He cried out the most honest prayer in the Bible.
“I believe! Help my unbelief!”
And Jesus answered.
This creates a powerful principle.
You do not need perfect faith to come to Jesus.
You only need to bring the faith you have, and ask Him to help with the rest.

Principle:

Bring Jesus your faith and your doubts together; He will strengthen what is weak.

LVIII. FINAL APPLICATION

Mark Chapter 9 takes us from glory to service.
Jesus is transfigured on the mountain.
The Father commands us to listen to Him.
In the valley, Jesus frees a suffering boy.
He teaches that faith and prayer are essential.
He predicts His death again.
He teaches that true greatness is found in serving.
He welcomes a child in His arms.
And He warns us to deal seriously with sin.
Mark 9 therefore reminds us:
Never put anyone on the same level as Jesus.
Never stop listening to Him.
Never rely on past success instead of prayer.
Never seek greatness instead of service.
Never treat sin lightly.
The church does not need people competing to be the greatest.
It needs:
Disciples who listen to Jesus.

Believers who pray with honest faith.
Servants who welcome the least.
And people who take sin seriously and live at peace.
The same Jesus still calls:
Tell people that Jesus is the beloved Son of God.
Tell people that everything is possible for those who believe.
Tell people that Jesus lifts up the fallen.
Tell people that true greatness is found in serving.
And as you live:
Listen to Him.
Pray with honest faith.
Serve all.
Be at peace.

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father,
Thank You for revealing the glory of Your beloved Son.
Thank You for the command to listen to Him.
Thank You that Jesus is greater than Moses, greater than Elijah, greater than all.
Thank You that He comes down from the mountain to meet us in our valleys.
Thank You that He welcomes honest faith mixed with doubt.
Thank You that He lifts up the fallen and frees those who suffer.
Thank You that He took a child in His arms and showed us true greatness.
Forgive us when we have not listened to Jesus.
Forgive us when we have relied on past success instead of prayer.
Forgive us when we have argued about who is greatest.
Forgive us when we have looked down on others who serve in Jesus' name.
Forgive us when we have treated sin lightly.
Help us listen to Your Son.
Help our unbelief.
Teach us to depend on You in prayer.
Make us servants of all.
Give us courage to cut off whatever leads us into sin.
And help us live at peace with one another.
“I believe! Help my unbelief!”
In Jesus' name, Amen.

Key Verse

“Immediately the boy's father cried out, “I believe! Help my unbelief!”” — Mark 9:24

Central Truth

Jesus is the glorious, beloved Son of God whom we must listen to, and those who follow Him are called to trusting faith, dependent prayer, humble service, and serious holiness as they walk the road to the cross.

Mark 9 in One Sentence

Jesus is transfigured in glory as the Father commands, “Listen to Him,” then frees a suffering boy when his father cries, “I believe; help my unbelief,” predicts His death again, teaches that true greatness is found in serving, and warns His followers to deal decisively with sin and live at peace with one another.

CRAWFORD BIBLE COMMENTARY

BIBLE STUDY

Mark Chapter 10 — Teaching on Marriage, Wealth, Humility, and Faith

A Verse-by-Verse Bible Study from the Crawford Standard Bible

Introduction

Mark Chapter 10 takes place on the road to Jerusalem.
Jesus has left Galilee for the last time.
He is heading toward the cross.
Along the way, He teaches about some of the most important areas of life.
Marriage.
Children.
Money.
Greatness.
The Pharisees test Him with a question about divorce.
Jesus points them back to God's design at creation.
Parents bring their children, and Jesus welcomes them in His arms.
A rich man asks how to inherit eternal life, but walks away sad because he loves his wealth.
Jesus predicts His death for the third time, in more detail than ever.
James and John ask for the best seats in His glory.
Jesus teaches that true greatness comes through serving.

“For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many.”
Finally, at Jericho, a blind beggar named Bartimaeus cries out for mercy.
Jesus heals him, and he follows Jesus on the road.
The chapter moves through six movements:

- Teaching on Divorce and Marriage (verses 1–12).
- Jesus Blesses the Children (verses 13–16).
- The Rich Young Ruler (verses 17–31).
- Jesus Predicts His Death a Third Time (verses 32–34).
- The Request of James and John (verses 35–45).
- Blind Bartimaeus Receives Sight (verses 46–52).

The central truth of Mark 10 is:
Jesus calls His followers to honor God's design for marriage, receive the kingdom like children, value Him above all wealth, and find true greatness in serving, because He came not to be served but to serve and give His life as a ransom for many.

I. ON THE ROAD TO JUDEA

Mark 10:1 — Teaching the Crowds

“Jesus left that place and went into the region of Judea and across the Jordan. Crowds gathered around Him again, and as was His custom, He taught them.”
“Jesus left that place.”
He left Galilee.
“And went into the region of Judea and across the Jordan.”
He was moving south, toward Jerusalem.
“Crowds gathered around Him again.”
Wherever He went, people came.
“And as was His custom, He taught them.”
Teaching was Jesus' regular habit.
Even on the road to the cross, He kept teaching.

Cross References

Matthew 19:1
When Jesus finished saying these things, He left Galilee and went into the area of Judea on the other side of the Jordan River.
John 10:40
Jesus went back across the Jordan to the place where John had first baptized, and He stayed there.
Matthew 4:23
Jesus went all over Galilee, teaching in the synagogues and preaching the good news.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus faithfully taught God's truth even on the road to suffering.

Key Truth

Jesus' faithfulness did not change with His circumstances.

II. A TEST ABOUT DIVORCE

Mark 10:2 — Is It Lawful?

“Some Pharisees came to test Him, asking, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?””
“Some Pharisees came to test Him.”
This was a trap.
They were in the territory of Herod, who had divorced his wife to marry Herodias.
John the Baptist was killed for speaking against this.
“Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?”
Religious teachers of that day disagreed about divorce.
Some allowed it only for serious sexual sin.
Others allowed it for almost any reason.
Whatever Jesus said, someone would be offended.

Cross References

Matthew 19:3
Some Pharisees came to Jesus and tried to trap Him. They asked, “Is it right for a man to divorce his wife for any reason?”
Matthew 5:31
It has been said, “Anyone who divorces his wife must give her a certificate of divorce.”
Deuteronomy 24:1
If a man marries a woman and later finds something shameful about her, he may write her a certificate of divorce, give it to her, and send her away from his house.

Spiritual Principle

Questions meant to trap are best answered with God's word.

Key Truth

Jesus did not avoid hard questions.

III. WHAT DID MOSES COMMAND?

Mark 10:3 — Back to Scripture

“He replied, “What did Moses command you?””
Jesus answered with a question.
He pointed them to God's word.
He wanted them to think about what Scripture actually said.

Cross References

Matthew 19:7
They asked Him, “Then why did Moses command us to give a certificate of divorce?”
Deuteronomy 24:1
If a man finds something wrong in his wife, he may give her divorce papers.

John 8:5
In the law, Moses told us to stone such women. What do You say?

Spiritual Principle

Every question about how to live must be brought back to God's word.

Key Truth

Jesus always went back to the Scriptures.

IV. A CERTIFICATE OF DIVORCE

Mark 10:4 — What Moses Permitted

“They said, “Moses permitted a man to write a certificate of divorce and send her away.””
The Pharisees answered with Deuteronomy 24.
Notice the word **permitted**.
Moses did not command divorce.
He allowed it and regulated it.
The certificate protected the wife.
It gave her legal proof she was free to remarry.
Without it, she could be left in a terrible situation.

Cross References

Deuteronomy 24:1
He may write her a certificate of divorce and send her away.
Matthew 19:7
Why then did Moses say a man could give his wife divorce papers and send her away?
Jeremiah 3:8
I gave faithless Israel her certificate of divorce and sent her away because of all her unfaithfulness.

Spiritual Principle

God's law sometimes regulated what was not His ideal in order to protect the vulnerable.

Key Truth

Permission is not the same as God's best plan.

V. HARD HEARTS

Mark 10:5 — Why Moses Allowed It

“Jesus answered, “It was because your hearts were hard that Moses wrote this commandment.”
“It was because your hearts were hard.”
The rule about divorce was given because of human sin.
People's hearts were stubborn and unloving.
Divorce was a concession to a broken world.
It was never God's original design.

Cross References

Matthew 19:8
Jesus said, “Moses allowed you to divorce your wives because your hearts were hard. But it was not this way from the beginning.”
Deuteronomy 10:16
So change your hearts, and stop being stubborn.
Hebrews 3:8
Do not make your hearts hard as you did when you turned against God in the desert.

Spiritual Principle

Divorce exists because of human sin, not because it is God's plan.

Key Truth

God's rules for a broken world point back to His perfect plan.

VI. MALE AND FEMALE

Mark 10:6 — From the Beginning

“But from the beginning of creation, ‘God made them male and female.’”
“But from the beginning of creation.”
Jesus went back further than Moses.
He went to creation itself.
“God made them male and female.”
Jesus quoted Genesis 1.
God created humanity as male and female.
Marriage is part of God's design from the very beginning.

Cross References

Genesis 1:27
God made people to be like Himself. He created them as men and women.
Matthew 19:4
Jesus answered, “Have you not read that in the beginning the Creator made them male and female?”
Genesis 5:2
He created them male and female and blessed them. He called them “human beings” when they were created.

Spiritual Principle

God's design for marriage goes back to creation.

Key Truth

To understand marriage, go back to the beginning.

VII. LEAVE AND BE JOINED

Mark 10:7 — A New Family

“For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife,”
“For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother.”
Marriage creates a new family.
The man leaves his parents' household.
“And be joined to his wife.”
The word means to stick or cling.
It describes a strong, lasting bond.

Cross References

Genesis 2:24
> That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united with his wife, and the two become one body.

Matthew 19:5
> For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife.

Ephesians 5:31
> As the Scriptures say, “A man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two will become one.”

Spiritual Principle

Marriage forms a new and lasting bond that takes priority over other family ties.

Application

If you are married, are you putting your spouse first?

VIII. ONE FLESH

Mark 10:8 — No Longer Two

“and the two shall become one flesh. So they are no longer two, but one flesh.”
“And the two shall become one flesh.”
Husband and wife are united completely.
Body, heart, and life.
“So they are no longer two, but one flesh.”
They are not two separate people living side by side.
They are one unit before God.

Cross References

Genesis 2:24
> The man is joined to his wife, and they become one.

Matthew 19:5
> The two will become one body.

1 Corinthians 6:16
Don't you know that anyone who joins himself to a prostitute becomes one body with her? The Scriptures say, “The two will become one body.”

Spiritual Principle

Marriage makes two people one in God's sight.

Key Truth

In marriage, “we” replaces “me.”

IX. WHAT GOD HAS JOINED

Mark 10:9 — Let No One Separate

“Therefore, what God has joined together, let no one separate.””
“What God has joined together.”
God Himself is the One who unites husband and wife.
Marriage is not only a human agreement.
It is God's work.
“Let no one separate.”
No person should tear apart what God has joined.
God's design is for marriage to last for life.

Cross References

Matthew 19:6
So they are no longer two, but one. What God has joined together, no one should separate.
Malachi 2:16
The Lord God of Israel says, “I hate divorce. I hate it when people do cruel things as easily as they put on clothes.”
1 Corinthians 7:10
To married people I give this command, not from me but from the Lord: a wife should not leave her husband.

Spiritual Principle

God intends marriage to be a lifelong union.

Key Truth

Marriage is God's work, and He means it to last.

X. IN THE HOUSE

Mark 10:10 — The Disciples Ask

“Later, when they were in the house again, the disciples asked Him about this.”
The disciples were surprised by Jesus' teaching.
It was stricter than what many rabbis taught.

So they asked Him privately.
Matthew tells us they even said it might be better not to marry.

Cross References

Matthew 19:10
His followers said, “If that is how it is between a husband and wife, it is better not to marry.”
Mark 4:34
When He was alone with His followers, He explained everything.
Matthew 13:36
Then Jesus went into the house, and His followers came to Him.

Spiritual Principle

Bring your questions about hard teachings to Jesus.

Key Truth

Hard teachings are best understood in quiet time with Jesus.

XI. COMMITTING ADULTERY AGAINST HER

Mark 10:11 — The Husband

“He said, “Anyone who divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery against her.”
“Anyone who divorces his wife and marries another woman.”
Many men in that day divorced their wives for small reasons.
“Commits adultery against her.”
This was a shocking statement.
Many thought adultery was only a sin against another man.
Jesus said the husband sins **against his wife**.
This raised the dignity and value of women.
Matthew records an exception for sexual unfaithfulness.
Paul also speaks about believers deserted by an unbelieving spouse.
Christians and churches hold different views on how these teachings apply today.

Cross References

Matthew 19:9
I tell you, whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual unfaithfulness, and marries another woman commits adultery.
Luke 16:18
Anyone who divorces his wife and marries another woman is guilty of adultery.
Matthew 5:32
I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for sexual sin, makes her guilty of adultery.

Spiritual Principle

Marriage vows are sacred, and breaking them wrongs a real person.

Key Truth

Jesus defended the dignity of women in a world that often did not.

XII. THE WIFE AS WELL

Mark 10:12 — Equal Responsibility

“And if a woman divorces her husband and marries another man, she commits adultery.””
In Jewish law, usually only men could divorce.
But in the Roman world, women could too.
Mark's readers lived in that world.
Jesus applied the same standard to both.
Husband and wife have equal responsibility before God.
A word of care:
Jesus' teaching upholds God's design for lifelong marriage.
It does not require anyone to stay in danger.
Anyone facing abuse should seek safety and help from trusted people, their church, and the proper authorities.
And those who have been through divorce are welcome in God's family and can find grace and healing in Christ.

Cross References

Luke 16:18
A man who marries a divorced woman is also guilty of adultery.
1 Corinthians 7:11
But if she does leave, she must stay unmarried or else make peace with her husband. And a husband must not divorce his wife.
Romans 7:3
If she marries another man while her husband is still alive, she is called an adulteress.

Spiritual Principle

God holds husbands and wives to the same standard of faithfulness.

Key Truth

God's high standard for marriage is joined with His grace for the broken.

XIII. BRINGING THE CHILDREN

Mark 10:13 — The Disciples Rebuked Them

“People were bringing children to Jesus for Him to place His hands on them, but the disciples rebuked them.”
“People were bringing children to Jesus.”
Parents wanted Jesus to bless their children.
“For Him to place His hands on them.”
Laying hands on someone was a way of blessing them.

“But the disciples rebuked them.”
The disciples thought Jesus was too busy.
Children seemed unimportant.
They had already forgotten the lesson of Chapter 9.

Cross References

Matthew 19:13
Then people brought their little children to Jesus so He could put His hands on them and pray. But His followers told them to stop.
Luke 18:15
People were even bringing babies to Jesus so He could touch them. When the followers saw this, they told them to stop.
Genesis 48:9
Joseph said to his father, “These are the sons God gave me here.” Israel said, “Bring them to me so I can bless them.”

Spiritual Principle

No one is too small or unimportant for Jesus.

Spiritual Warning

Be careful not to keep anyone from coming to Jesus.

XIV. LET THE CHILDREN COME

Mark 10:14 — Jesus Was Indignant

“When Jesus saw this, He was indignant. He said, “Let the children come to Me; do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.”
“When Jesus saw this, He was indignant.”
Only Mark tells us Jesus was angry.
He was upset with His disciples.
“Let the children come to Me.”
Jesus welcomed them.
“Do not hinder them.”
Do not stand in their way.
“For the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.”
Children have nothing to offer.
They simply receive.
That is how everyone must come to God.

Cross References

Matthew 19:14
Jesus said, “Let the little children come to Me. Do not stop them, because the kingdom of heaven belongs to people like them.”
Luke 18:16
But Jesus called for the children, saying, “Let the little children come to Me, and do not stop them.”

Matthew 18:3
I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus welcomes children and those with childlike hearts.

Application

How can you help children come to Jesus?

XV. LIKE A LITTLE CHILD

Mark 10:15 — Receiving the Kingdom

“Truly I tell you, anyone who does not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.””
“Anyone who does not receive the kingdom of God like a little child.”
How does a child receive?
With trust.
With humility.
With empty hands.
A child does not earn a gift.
A child simply receives it.
“Will never enter it.”
There is no other way.
We cannot earn God's kingdom.
We must receive it as a gift.

Cross References

Matthew 18:3
Unless you turn and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.
Luke 18:17
Anyone who will not receive God's kingdom like a child will never enter it.
Matthew 19:14
The kingdom of heaven belongs to people who are like these children.

Spiritual Principle

The kingdom of God is received as a gift, not earned as a reward.

Key Truth

We come to God with empty hands, like a child.

XVI. HE BLESSED THEM

Mark 10:16 — In His Arms

“And He took the children in His arms, placed His hands on them, and blessed them.”
“He took the children in His arms.”
Jesus hugged them.
“Placed His hands on them.”
He gave them what their parents had asked.
“And blessed them.”
The word suggests a warm, generous blessing.
The disciples tried to send them away.
Jesus gathered them close.

Cross References

Matthew 19:15
He put His hands on them and then left.
Genesis 48:14
Israel reached out his right hand and put it on Ephraim's head, and he put his left hand on Manasseh's head to bless them.
Psalm 127:3
Children are a gift from the Lord. They are a reward from Him.

Spiritual Principle

Children are precious to Jesus and should be precious to His people.

Key Truth

The arms of Jesus are always open to children.

XVII. A MAN RAN UP

Mark 10:17 — What Must I Do?

“As Jesus started on His way, a man ran up, knelt before Him, and asked, “Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?””
“A man ran up.”
He was eager.
Matthew tells us he was young.
Luke tells us he was a ruler.
“Knelt before Him.”
He showed respect and humility.
“Good Teacher.”
He honored Jesus.
“What must I do to inherit eternal life?”
The most important question anyone can ask.
But notice the word **“do.”**

He thought eternal life was something he could earn.

Cross References

Matthew 19:16
A man came to Jesus and asked, “Teacher, what good thing must I do to have eternal life?”
Luke 18:18
A certain leader asked Jesus, “Good Teacher, what must I do to receive life forever?”
Luke 10:25
An expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. He asked, “Teacher, what must I do to receive eternal life?”

Spiritual Principle

Eternal life is the most important question of all.

Key Truth

Right after Jesus taught about receiving like a child, a man asked what he could do.

XVIII. NO ONE IS GOOD BUT GOD

Mark 10:18 — Why Call Me Good?

“Jesus answered, “Why do you call Me good? No one is good except God alone.”
“Why do you call Me good?”
Jesus was not denying that He is good.
He was making the man think.
“No one is good except God alone.”
If the man called Jesus good, did he understand that Jesus is God?
And did he understand that no human is good enough to earn eternal life?
Jesus was challenging his view of goodness.

Cross References

Matthew 19:17
Jesus answered, “Why do you ask Me about what is good? Only God is good.”
Luke 18:19
Jesus said, “Why do you call Me good? Only God is good.”
Psalm 25:8
The Lord is good and right. He shows sinners the right way to live.

Spiritual Principle

True goodness belongs to God alone.

Key Truth

The man called Jesus good without realizing He was God.

XIX. YOU KNOW THE COMMANDMENTS

Mark 10:19 — The Second Half of the Law

“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.’””
Jesus listed commandments about how we treat others.

- Do not murder.
- Do not commit adultery.
- Do not steal.
- Do not lie.
- Do not cheat.
- Honor your parents.

Notice Jesus did not list the commands about loving God.
He would soon test that part of the man's heart.

Cross References

Exodus 20:12
Honor your father and your mother, so you will live a long time in the land the Lord your God is giving you.
Deuteronomy 5:16
Honor your father and mother, as the Lord your God commanded you.
Matthew 19:18
Jesus answered, “Do not murder. Do not commit adultery. Do not steal. Do not lie.”

Spiritual Principle

God's law shows us how far we fall short.

Key Truth

The law is a mirror, not a ladder.

XX. ALL THESE I HAVE KEPT

Mark 10:20 — Since I Was Young

“The man replied, “Teacher, all these I have kept since I was young.””
The man was sincere.
He had lived a moral life.
He had not murdered, stolen, or committed adultery.
By outward standards, he was a good man.
But he still sensed something was missing.
Matthew tells us he asked, **“What do I still lack?”**

Cross References

Matthew 19:20
The young man said, “I have obeyed all these things. What else do I need to do?”

Luke 18:21
The man said, “I have obeyed all these commands since I was a boy.”
Philippians 3:6
As for keeping the law, I was without fault.

Spiritual Principle

Outward goodness cannot fill the emptiness only God can fill.

Key Truth

A person can be very moral and still lack the one thing that matters most.

XXI. JESUS LOOKED AT HIM WITH LOVE

Mark 10:21 — One Thing You Lack

“Jesus looked at him with love and said, “One thing you lack: go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow Me.””
“Jesus looked at him with love.”
Only Mark records this.
Jesus loved this man.
What He was about to say came from love.
“One thing you lack.”
Jesus saw the one thing holding him back.
“Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor.”
His wealth was his god.
It ruled his heart.
This command was for this man, because his riches stood between him and God.
Jesus does not ask every believer to sell everything.
But He does ask every believer to put Him above everything.
“And you will have treasure in heaven.”
He would not lose; he would gain.
“Then come, follow Me.”
The real point was following Jesus.

Cross References

Matthew 19:21
Jesus answered, “If you want to be perfect, go and sell your possessions and give to the poor. You will have treasure in heaven. Then come and follow Me.”
Luke 18:22
When Jesus heard this, He said, “There is still one thing you need to do. Sell everything you own and give the money to the poor.”
Matthew 6:20
Put your treasure away in heaven. There, bugs and rust cannot ruin it, and no robber can break in and take it.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus lovingly asks us to give up whatever stands between us and Him.

Application

What is the “one thing” that might be holding you back from following Jesus fully?

XXII. HE WENT AWAY SAD

Mark 10:22 — Great Wealth

“At this the man's face fell. He went away sad, because he had great wealth.”
“At this the man's face fell.”
His expression changed.
He was disappointed.
“He went away sad.”
He walked away from Jesus.
He walked away from eternal life.
“Because he had great wealth.”
He did not own his wealth.
His wealth owned him.
This is the only person in Mark who was personally invited to follow Jesus and refused.

Cross References

Matthew 19:22
When the young man heard this, he left sadly, because he was very rich.
Luke 18:23
When the man heard this, he became very sad, because he was very rich.
Matthew 6:24
Nobody can work for two bosses at once. He will end up loving one and hating the other. You cannot give yourself to God and to money both.

Spiritual Principle

Wealth that rules the heart can keep a person from Jesus.

Spiritual Warning

It is possible to come running to Jesus and walk away sad.

XXIII. HOW HARD FOR THE RICH

Mark 10:23 — Jesus Looked Around

“Jesus looked around and said to His disciples, “How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God!””
“Jesus looked around.”
He watched the man go.
Then He turned to His disciples.
“How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God!”
Wealth brings comfort.
Comfort can make people feel they do not need God.

Riches can create a false sense of security.

Cross References

Matthew 19:23
Then Jesus said to His followers, “I tell you the truth, it will be hard for a rich person to enter the kingdom of heaven.”
Luke 18:24
Jesus looked at him and said, “It is very hard for rich people to enter the kingdom of God.”
Proverbs 11:28
Those who trust in their riches will fall, but good people will grow like green leaves.

Spiritual Principle

Riches can make it hard to depend on God.

Key Truth

The danger is not having money, but trusting in it.

XXIV. THOSE WHO TRUST IN RICHES

Mark 10:24 — Children, How Hard

“The disciples were amazed at His words. But Jesus said again, “Children, how hard it is for those who trust in riches to enter the kingdom of God!”
“The disciples were amazed at His words.”
In their culture, wealth was often seen as a sign of God's blessing.
If the rich could not be saved easily, who could?
“Children.”
Jesus spoke tenderly.
“How hard it is for those who trust in riches.”
Some ancient copies say simply, **“How hard it is to enter the kingdom of God.”**
Either way, the point is that anything we trust in instead of God keeps us out.

Cross References

1 Timothy 6:17
Tell people who have money in this world not to be stuck-up or to count on riches that can disappear. They should count on God, who generously gives us all we need to enjoy.
Proverbs 11:28
Whoever trusts in wealth will fall.
Psalm 62:10
Do not trust in taking things by force. Do not hope in stealing. If riches increase, do not set your heart on them.

Spiritual Principle

Whatever we trust in instead of God keeps us from His kingdom.

Application

What are you trusting in for security?

XXV. A CAMEL THROUGH A NEEDLE

Mark 10:25 — Impossible for Man

“It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.””
This is a vivid picture.
The camel was the largest animal in Israel.
The eye of a needle was the smallest opening.
It was humanly impossible.
Some later writers suggested a small gate called the “Needle's Eye,” but there is no good evidence for it.
Jesus meant something impossible.
No one can save themselves, rich or poor.

Cross References

Matthew 19:24
A camel could squeeze through the hole in a sewing needle more easily than a rich person could get into God's kingdom.
Luke 18:25
A camel can go through a needle's eye more easily than a rich person can enter God's kingdom.
Jeremiah 9:23
The Lord says, “The rich must not brag about their riches.”

Spiritual Principle

Salvation is humanly impossible for anyone.

Key Truth

The camel cannot squeeze through by trying harder.

XXVI. WHO THEN CAN BE SAVED?

Mark 10:26 — Even More Amazed

“The disciples were even more amazed and said, “Who then can be saved?””
The disciples were shocked.
If the rich could not be saved, who could?
This is exactly the right question.
It leads to the right answer.

Cross References

Matthew 19:25
When the followers heard this, they were very surprised and asked, “Then who can be saved?”
Luke 18:26
When the people heard this, they asked, “Then who can be saved?”

Acts 16:30
Then he brought them out and asked, “Men, what must I do to be saved?”

Spiritual Principle

Realizing we cannot save ourselves is the first step toward salvation.

Key Truth

The right question is “Who can be saved?” and the answer is God.

XXVII. WITH GOD ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE

Mark 10:27 — Jesus Looked at Them

“Jesus looked at them and said, “With man this is impossible, but not with God. With God all things are possible.””
“Jesus looked at them.”
He looked with love.
“With man this is impossible.”
No one can earn salvation.
“But not with God.”
God can do what we cannot.
“With God all things are possible.”
Salvation is God's work.
He can change even a heart that loves money.
He saves by grace.

Cross References

Genesis 18:14
Is anything too hard for the Lord? I will come back to you next year at this time, and Sarah will have a son.
Luke 1:37
There is nothing God cannot do.
Matthew 19:26
Jesus looked at them and said, “This is impossible for people, but for God everything is possible.”

Spiritual Principle

Salvation is impossible for us but possible with God.

Key Truth

God does what no one can do for themselves.

XXVIII. WE HAVE LEFT EVERYTHING

Mark 10:28 — Peter Speaks Up

“Then Peter spoke up, “We have left everything to follow You!””
Peter compared himself with the rich man.
The rich man would not leave his wealth.
But the disciples had left everything.
Their boats.
Their nets.
Their homes.
Peter wanted to know what it would mean for them.

Cross References

Matthew 19:27
Peter said to Jesus, “Look, we left everything we had and followed You. What will we have?”
Luke 18:28
Peter said, “Look, we have left everything we had and followed You.”
Luke 5:11
They brought their boats to the shore, left everything, and followed Jesus.

Spiritual Principle

Following Jesus means leaving behind whatever He asks.

Key Truth

The disciples did what the rich man would not.

XXIX. FOR ME AND THE GOSPEL

Mark 10:29 — No One Who Has Left

“Jesus replied, “Truly I tell you, no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for Me and the gospel”
“No one who has left.”
Jesus speaks of real sacrifice.
“House or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields.”
Home, family, and income.
Some believers have lost all of these because they follow Jesus.
“For Me and the gospel.”
The motive matters.
Not for reward, but for Jesus and His message.

Cross References

Matthew 19:29
Everyone who has left houses, brothers, sisters, father, mother, children, or fields for Me will get much more.

Luke 18:29

Jesus said, “I tell you the truth, everyone who has left home, wife, brothers, parents, or children for God's kingdom will receive much more.”

Luke 14:26

Anyone who wants to follow Me must love Me far more than father, mother, wife, children, brothers, sisters, and even his own life. Otherwise, he cannot be My disciple.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus is worthy of every sacrifice.

Key Truth

Nothing given up for Jesus is ever truly lost.

XXX. A HUNDREDFOLD

Mark 10:30 — Now and in the Age to Come

“will fail to receive a hundredfold in this present age—homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children, and fields—along with persecutions—and in the age to come eternal life.”
“Will fail to receive a hundredfold in this present age.”
God gives far more than we give up.
“Homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children, and fields.”
In the family of God, believers gain many brothers, sisters, and mothers.
Homes opened to them.
A worldwide family.
“Along with persecutions.”
Only Mark includes this.
Following Jesus brings blessing and suffering together.
“And in the age to come eternal life.”
The greatest gift of all.
This is not a promise of earthly riches.
It is a promise of a new family now and eternal life to come.

Cross References

Matthew 19:29

They will receive a hundred times more and will have life forever.

Luke 18:30

They will receive much more in this life, and in the age to come they will have life forever.

Luke 6:38

Give, and you will receive. Your gift will return to you in full, and even more.

Spiritual Principle

God gives back far more than we give up, including a new family and eternal life.

Key Truth

Persecution and blessing travel together for the disciple.

XXXI. FIRST AND LAST

Mark 10:31 — The Great Reversal

“But many who are first will be last, and the last first.””
This sums up the whole section.
The rich man seemed first.
The disciples seemed last.
In God's kingdom, everything is turned upside down.
Those who seem important now may be least in God's eyes.
Those who give up everything for Jesus will be honored.

Cross References

Matthew 19:30
Many who are first now will be last, and many who are last now will be first.
Matthew 20:16
So the last will be first, and the first will be last.
Luke 13:30
Some who are last will be first, and some who are first will be last.

Spiritual Principle

God's kingdom reverses the world's values.

Key Truth

In God's eyes, the way up is down.

XXXII. ON THE WAY TO JERUSALEM

Mark 10:32 — Jesus Leading the Way

“They were on their way up to Jerusalem, with Jesus leading the way. The disciples were amazed, while those who followed were afraid. Again He took the Twelve aside and told them what was going to happen.”
“They were on their way up to Jerusalem.”
Jerusalem was on a hill, so people always went “up” to it.
“With Jesus leading the way.”
Jesus walked ahead.
He was not dragged to the cross.
He led the way there.
“The disciples were amazed, while those who followed were afraid.”
They sensed something serious was coming.
“Again He took the Twelve aside and told them what was going to happen.”
Jesus prepared them once more.

Cross References

Matthew 20:17
While Jesus was going up to Jerusalem, He took the twelve followers aside privately.
Luke 18:31
Jesus took the Twelve aside and said, “We are going to Jerusalem. Everything the prophets wrote about the Son of Man will happen.”
Luke 9:51
When the time was coming near for Jesus to be taken up to heaven, He was determined to go to Jerusalem.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus willingly led the way to the cross.

Key Truth

Jesus did not run from the cross; He walked toward it.

XXXIII. DELIVERED AND CONDEMNED

Mark 10:33 — The Third Prediction

““We are going up to Jerusalem,” He said, “and the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and the scribes. They will condemn Him to death and hand Him over to the Gentiles,”
This is the third and most detailed prediction.
“The Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and the scribes.”
He would be betrayed to the religious leaders.
“They will condemn Him to death.”
They would sentence Him.
“And hand Him over to the Gentiles.”
The Romans would carry out the sentence.
Jesus knew exactly what was coming.

Cross References

Matthew 20:18
We are going up to Jerusalem. The Son of Man will be handed over to the leading priests and teachers of the law, and they will sentence Him to death.
Luke 18:32
He will be handed over to the Gentiles.
Isaiah 53:3
He was looked down on and rejected by people. He knew pain and suffering.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus knew every detail of His suffering and still went forward.

Key Truth

Jesus' death was not a surprise to Him.

XXXIV. MOCKED, SPAT ON, FLOGGED, KILLED

Mark 10:34 — After Three Days He Will Rise

“who will mock Him, spit on Him, flog Him, and kill Him. After three days He will rise.””
Jesus described what would happen.

- **Mock Him.**
- **Spit on Him.**
- **Flog Him.**
- **Kill Him.**

Every one of these came true.
“After three days He will rise.”
But again, Jesus ended with victory.
Death would not hold Him.

Cross References

Matthew 20:19
> They will hand Him over to the Gentiles to be mocked, beaten, and crucified. But on the third day He will be raised to life.

Luke 18:33
> They will beat Him and kill Him, but on the third day He will rise again.

Isaiah 50:6
> I let them beat my back. I let them pull out my beard. I did not hide my face from their insults and spitting.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus endured terrible suffering so that we might be saved.

Key Truth

Every prediction of suffering ended with a promise of resurrection.

XXXV. WHATEVER WE ASK

Mark 10:35 — James and John's Request

“Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to Him. “Teacher,” they said, “we want You to do for us whatever we ask.””
Right after Jesus spoke of His suffering, James and John made a request.
Matthew tells us their mother came with them.
“We want You to do for us whatever we ask.”
They wanted a blank check.
They were thinking about themselves.
They had not understood what Jesus just said.

Cross References

Matthew 20:20
Then the mother of Zebedee's sons came to Jesus with her sons. She knelt down and asked Him for something.
Matthew 20:21
Jesus asked, “What do you want?” She said, “Promise that one of my sons will sit at Your right and the other at Your left in Your kingdom.”
Mark 9:35
Whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all.

Spiritual Principle

Selfish ambition blinds us to the way of the cross.

Spiritual Warning

It is possible to walk beside Jesus and still be thinking only of yourself.

XXXVI. WHAT DO YOU WANT?

Mark 10:36 — Jesus Asks

“He asked, “What do you want Me to do for you?””
Jesus did not refuse to listen.
He asked them to say it.
Jesus will ask this same question to Bartimaeus later in this chapter.
Two very different answers.

Cross References

Matthew 20:21
Jesus asked her, “What do you want?”
Mark 10:51
Jesus asked him, “What do you want Me to do for you?”
Matthew 20:32
Jesus stopped and called them. “What do you want Me to do for you?” He asked.

Spiritual Principle

Our requests reveal what we truly value.

Application

If Jesus asked you, “What do you want Me to do for you?” what would you say?

XXXVII. YOUR RIGHT AND YOUR LEFT

Mark 10:37 — In Your Glory

“They replied, “Let one of us sit at Your right and the other at Your left in Your glory.””
They wanted the highest places of honor.

The right and left of a king were seats of power.
They believed Jesus would reign.
That was right.
But they did not understand the path to that glory.
Ironically, the ones at Jesus' right and left at the cross would be two criminals.

Cross References

Matthew 20:21
Let one of my sons sit at Your right and the other at Your left in Your kingdom.
Matthew 19:28
When the Son of Man sits on His glorious throne, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones.
Revelation 3:21
I will let everyone who wins the victory sit with Me on My throne, just as I won and sat down with My Father on His throne.

Spiritual Principle

The way to glory in God's kingdom is not through grasping for position.

Key Truth

The places at Jesus' right and left on the cross were filled by criminals.

XXXVIII. THE CUP AND THE BAPTISM

Mark 10:38 — You Do Not Know What You Are Asking

“Jesus said, “You do not know what you are asking. Can you drink the cup I drink or be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with?””
“You do not know what you are asking.”
They did not understand.
“Can you drink the cup I drink?”
In the Old Testament, a **cup** often pictured suffering and God's judgment.
“Or be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with?”
Here **baptism** means being overwhelmed, plunged into suffering.
Jesus was speaking of His death.

Cross References

Matthew 20:22
Jesus said, “You don't know what you are asking. Can you drink the cup I am about to drink?”
Luke 12:50
I have a baptism to go through, and I am very troubled until it is finished.
John 18:11
Jesus said to Peter, “Put your sword away! Shouldn't I drink the cup the Father has given Me?”

Spiritual Principle

The path to glory with Jesus passes through suffering.

Key Truth

The cup Jesus drank was the cup of our judgment.

XXXIX. WE CAN

Mark 10:39 — You Will Drink the Cup

“We can,” they answered. Jesus said to them, “You will drink the cup I drink and be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with,”
“We can.”
They answered confidently.
They did not really understand.
“You will drink the cup I drink.”
Jesus told them they would suffer too.
James became the first apostle to die for Jesus.
John suffered exile and persecution for his faith.

Cross References

Matthew 20:23
Jesus said, “You will drink from My cup.”
Acts 12:2
Herod had James, the brother of John, killed with a sword.
John 21:18
When you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go.

Spiritual Principle

Following Jesus may lead to suffering, but He is faithful through it.

Key Truth

The brothers who asked for glory were given a share in His suffering.

XL. NOT FOR ME TO GRANT

Mark 10:40 — Prepared Places

“but to sit at My right or left is not for Me to grant. These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared.””
“To sit at My right or left is not for Me to grant.”
Jesus humbly submitted to the Father's plan.
“These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared.”
The Father decides these things.
Honor in the kingdom is God's gift, not something we grab.

Cross References

Matthew 20:23
But I cannot choose who will sit at My right or left. Those places belong to those for whom My Father has prepared them.
Matthew 25:34
Come here, you whom My Father has blessed. Take the kingdom He has had ready for you ever since He made the world.
John 14:2
My Father's home has plenty of room. I am going ahead to get a place ready for you.

Spiritual Principle

Places of honor in God's kingdom are God's to give.

Key Truth

We serve; God rewards.

XLI. THE TEN WERE INDIGNANT

Mark 10:41 — Angry with James and John

“When the ten heard this, they became indignant with James and John.”
The other disciples were angry.
Why?
Probably because they wanted those places too.
Their anger showed the same pride.
Selfish ambition always leads to division.

Cross References

Matthew 20:24
When the other ten followers heard this, they were angry with the two brothers.
Luke 22:24
Then the followers began to argue about which of them was the most important.
Galatians 5:26
Let us not get puffed up, stir each other up, or envy one another.

Spiritual Principle

Selfish ambition divides God's people.

Spiritual Warning

Anger at another's pride may reveal our own.

XLII. LORDING IT OVER THEM

Mark 10:42 — The Way of the World

“Jesus called them together and said, “You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them.”
“Jesus called them together.”
He gathered all twelve.
“Those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them.”
The world's leaders use power to control others.
“And their high officials exercise authority over them.”
In the world, greatness means power over others.
That was the Roman way.
It is still the way of the world.

Cross References

Matthew 20:25
Jesus called them together and said, “You know that the rulers of the non-Jewish people love to show their power over them.”
Luke 22:25
The kings of the world rule over their people, and those in power want to be called friends of the people.
1 Peter 5:3
Do not be like a ruler over people you are responsible for, but be good examples to them.

Spiritual Principle

The world defines greatness as power over others.

Key Truth

The kingdom of God works in the opposite direction.

XLIII. NOT SO WITH YOU

Mark 10:43 — Be a Servant

“Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant,”
“Not so with you.”
Three powerful words.
God's people must be different.
“Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant.”
In God's kingdom, greatness is measured by service.
Not by how many serve you.
But by how many you serve.

Cross References

Matthew 20:26
It must not be like that with you. Whoever wants to be important must become your servant.
Matthew 23:11
The person who serves you is the greatest among you.
Luke 22:26
But you must not be like that. The greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the leader should be like a servant.

Spiritual Principle

In Christ's kingdom, greatness is measured by service.

Application

Are you seeking to be served or to serve?

XLIV. SLAVE OF ALL

Mark 10:44 — The Way to Be First

“and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all.”
Jesus went even further.
A **servant** worked for others.
A **slave** belonged completely to others.
The first in God's kingdom is the one who gives himself fully to serving everyone.

Cross References

Matthew 20:27
Whoever wants to be first must become your slave.
Mark 9:35
Whoever wants to be first must be last of all and the servant of all.
Matthew 23:11
The greatest among you will be your servant.

Spiritual Principle

The highest place in God's kingdom belongs to the one who serves all.

Key Truth

The way to the top is to go to the bottom.

XLV. A RANSOM FOR MANY

Mark 10:45 — Why Jesus Came

“For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many.””
This may be the key verse of Mark's Gospel.

“For even the Son of Man.”
The Son of Man from Daniel 7 was to be served by all nations.
“Did not come to be served, but to serve.”
But Jesus came to serve.
“And to give His life.”
His service would go all the way to death.
“As a ransom.”
A **ransom** was the price paid to set a slave or prisoner free.
Jesus paid the price for our freedom with His life.
“For many.”
He died in our place.
This verse explains the cross.

Cross References

Matthew 20:28
The Son of Man did not come to be served. He came to serve others and to give His life to pay the price that frees many people.
Isaiah 53:10
It was the Lord's will to crush Him and make Him suffer. He made His life an offering for sin.
1 Timothy 2:6
He gave Himself to pay for the freedom of all people. This message was told at the right time.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus came to serve and to give His life to set us free.

Key Truth

The greatest servant of all paid the highest price of all.

XLVI. BARTIMAEUS BY THE ROADSIDE

Mark 10:46 — Leaving Jericho

“They came to Jericho. As Jesus and His disciples, together with a large crowd, were leaving the city, Bartimaeus (son of Timaeus), a blind beggar, was sitting by the roadside.”
“They came to Jericho.”
Jericho was about fifteen miles from Jerusalem.
The last stop before the city.
“Bartimaeus (son of Timaeus).”
Mark gives his name.
He may have been known to the early church.
“A blind beggar, was sitting by the roadside.”
He could not work.
He depended on others' kindness.
Matthew mentions two blind men, and Luke places the healing as Jesus approached Jericho.
Many Bible students explain these differences in several ways, such as old and new Jericho being two nearby towns.

Cross References

Matthew 20:29
As Jesus and His followers were leaving Jericho, a large crowd followed Him.
Luke 18:35
As Jesus came near Jericho, a blind man was sitting by the road, begging.
Luke 19:1
Jesus was going through the city of Jericho.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus notices those sitting at the side of the road.

Key Truth

The crowd passed by, but Jesus would stop.

XLVII. SON OF DAVID, HAVE MERCY!

Mark 10:47 — He Cried Out

“When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!””
“When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth.”
He heard the crowd.
“He began to cry out.”
He shouted.
“Jesus, Son of David.”
This is a title for the Messiah.
The promised King from David's family.
The blind man saw what many with eyes did not.
“Have mercy on me!”
He did not ask for money.
He asked for mercy.

Cross References

Matthew 20:30
Two blind men sitting by the road heard that Jesus was passing by, so they shouted, “Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us!”
Luke 18:38
The blind man shouted, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!”
Matthew 9:27
Two blind men followed Him, calling out, “Have mercy on us, Son of David!”

Spiritual Principle

A cry for mercy is the beginning of faith.

Key Truth

The blind man saw who Jesus was before he could see anything else.

XLVIII. HE SHOUTED ALL THE MORE

Mark 10:48 — Refusing to Be Silenced

“Many rebuked him and told him to be quiet, but he shouted all the more, “Son of David, have mercy on me!””
“Many rebuked him and told him to be quiet.”
The crowd tried to silence him.
He was just a beggar.
He was making noise.
“But he shouted all the more.”
He would not give up.
He knew this was his chance.
Persistent faith does not let others silence it.

Cross References

Matthew 20:31
The crowd told them to be quiet, but they shouted even louder, “Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us!”
Luke 18:39
The people in front told him to be quiet, but he shouted even more.
Matthew 15:23
His followers said, “Send her away. She keeps shouting after us.”

Spiritual Principle

Persistent faith keeps calling out to Jesus even when others try to stop it.

Application

What voices are trying to silence your cry to Jesus?

XLIX. HE IS CALLING YOU

Mark 10:49 — Jesus Stopped

“Jesus stopped and said, “Call him.” So they called to the blind man, “Cheer up! Get up; He is calling you.””
“Jesus stopped.”
Jesus was on His way to the cross.
Yet He stopped for one blind beggar.
“Call him.”
Jesus invited him.
“Cheer up! Get up; He is calling you.”
The same crowd that told him to be quiet now encouraged him.
What beautiful words.
He is calling you.

Cross References

Matthew 20:32
Jesus stopped and called the blind men.
Luke 18:40
Jesus stopped and ordered the blind man to be brought to Him.
John 11:28
Martha went back and called her sister Mary. She said quietly, “The Teacher is here, and He is asking for you.”

Spiritual Principle

Jesus stops for those who call to Him.

Key Truth

The sweetest words anyone can hear: “He is calling you.”

L. THROWING HIS CLOAK ASIDE

Mark 10:50 — He Jumped Up

“Throwing his cloak aside, he jumped to his feet and came to Jesus.”
“Throwing his cloak aside.”
For a beggar, the cloak was precious.
It kept him warm.
It may have been spread out to collect coins.
He left it behind.
“He jumped to his feet.”
He did not hesitate.
“And came to Jesus.”
What a contrast with the rich man.
The rich man would not leave his wealth.
The beggar left his only possession to come to Jesus.

Cross References

Luke 18:40
When he came near, Jesus asked him.
Isaiah 35:5
Then the blind will see again.
Hebrews 12:1
So let us drop every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that tangles our feet, and keep running the race God has marked out for us.

Spiritual Principle

Throw aside whatever holds you back from coming to Jesus.

Application

What “cloak” do you need to throw aside to come to Jesus?

LI. I WANT TO SEE

Mark 10:51 — What Do You Want?

““What do you want Me to do for you?” Jesus asked him. The blind man said, “Rabbi, I want to see.””
“What do you want Me to do for you?”
The same question Jesus asked James and John.
They asked for power and position.
“Rabbi, I want to see.”
Bartimaeus asked for sight.
He knew his need.
The disciples were spiritually blind.
Bartimaeus was physically blind but spiritually seeing.

Cross References

Matthew 20:32
Jesus asked, “What do you want Me to do for you?”
Luke 18:41
“What do you want Me to do for you?” He said, “Lord, I want to see again.”
Mark 10:36
He asked them, “What do you want Me to do for you?”

Spiritual Principle

Those who know their need receive what they ask for.

Key Truth

Two disciples asked for glory; a beggar asked for sight.

LII. YOUR FAITH HAS HEALED YOU

Mark 10:52 — He Followed Jesus

“Jesus said, “Go, your faith has healed you.” Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus along the road.”
“Go, your faith has healed you.”
The word **healed** can also mean saved.
Bartimaeus was healed in body and soul.
“Immediately he received his sight.”
Instant healing.
“And followed Jesus along the road.”
Jesus said, “Go.”
But Bartimaeus chose to follow.
The road was the road to Jerusalem.
The road to the cross.
Bartimaeus is a picture of a true disciple.

He saw clearly, and he followed.

Cross References

Matthew 20:34
Jesus felt sorry for them and touched their eyes. Right away they could see, and they followed Him.
Luke 18:43
At once he could see, and he followed Jesus, praising God.
Luke 17:19
Then Jesus said to him, “Get up and go. Your faith has made you well.”

Spiritual Principle

True faith sees Jesus clearly and follows Him on the road.

Key Truth

The man who could not see became the man who followed.

LIII. SIX GREAT LESSONS FROM MARK 10

1. Marriage Is God's Design

“What God has joined together, let no one separate.”

Principle:

What God joins, people must not separate.

2. Childlike Faith Is Essential

“Anyone who does not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.”

Principle:

The kingdom belongs to those who come with the humility and trust of children.

3. Wealth Can Hinder Salvation

“How hard it is for those who trust in riches to enter the kingdom of God!”

Principle:

Trust in riches blinds the heart, but with God all things are possible.

4. True Discipleship Requires Surrender

“We have left everything to follow You!”

Principle:

Following Jesus may cost much now, but eternal life awaits.

5. Greatness Comes Through Service

“The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve.”

Principle:

Jesus modeled servant leadership, even to the point of giving His life.

6. Faith Brings Healing

“Go, your faith has healed you.”

Principle:

Like Bartimaeus, persistent faith in Christ brings restoration.

LIV. GOD'S DESIGN FOR MARRIAGE

Verses 1–12 show Jesus' high view of marriage.

Marriage Begins with God

“From the beginning of creation.”

Marriage Is Between Male and Female

“God made them male and female.”

Marriage Creates a New Family

“A man shall leave his father and mother.”

Marriage Makes Two One

“The two shall become one flesh.”

Marriage Is Meant to Last

“What God has joined together, let no one separate.”

Grace for the Broken

- God's design is high, but His grace is deep.
- Those who have been through divorce can find forgiveness, healing, and a place in God's family.
- No one should stay in a situation of abuse; seek safety and help.
- Churches should apply this teaching with both truth and compassion.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Honor God's design for marriage, and extend His grace to all who are hurting.

LV. THE RICH MAN AND THE BLIND BEGGAR

Mark 10 shows two men who met Jesus.

The Rich Man

- Had great wealth.
- Came running to Jesus.
- Asked what he could do.
- Would not let go of his riches.
- Went away sad.

Bartimaeus

- Had nothing but a cloak.
- Sat by the roadside.
- Cried out for mercy.
- Threw his cloak aside.
- Followed Jesus on the road.

Key Truth

The man who had everything walked away; the man who had nothing followed.

LVI. THE SERVANT KING

Verses 35–45 show the heart of Jesus' mission.

The World's Way

- Seek the best seats.
- Rule over others.
- Use power for yourself.

Jesus' Way

- Serve others.
- Be the slave of all.
- Give your life for others.

What Jesus Did

“To give His life as a ransom for many.”
He paid the price to set us free.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The King of kings came as the Servant of all.

LVII. WHAT MARK 10 TEACHES ABOUT JESUS

He Teaches God's Truth

“As was His custom, He taught them.”

He Upholds God's Design

“From the beginning of creation.”

He Welcomes Children

“Let the children come to Me.”

He Loves Seekers

“Jesus looked at him with love.”

He Makes the Impossible Possible

“With God all things are possible.”

He Walks Toward the Cross

“Jesus leading the way.”

He Came to Serve

“Did not come to be served, but to serve.”

He Is the Ransom

“To give His life as a ransom for many.”

He Is the Son of David

“Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!”

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Jesus is the Servant King who gave His life to set us free.

LVIII. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR PERSONAL STUDY

Question 1

Why did the Pharisees ask Jesus about divorce?
To test Him and trap Him, since teachers disagreed and Herod had divorced to remarry.

Question 2

Why did Moses allow divorce?
Because of the hardness of people's hearts, not because it was God's plan.

Question 3

Where did Jesus go to explain God's plan for marriage?
Back to creation, where God made them male and female and joined them as one.

Question 4

Why were the disciples wrong to stop the children?
Because the kingdom of God belongs to those who are like children.

Question 5

What does it mean to receive the kingdom like a child?
To receive it humbly and trustingly as a gift, not to earn it.

Question 6

What did the rich man lack?
A heart that put God above his wealth.

Question 7

Must every Christian sell everything?
Jesus gave this command to this man because his wealth ruled him; He calls every believer to put Him above everything.

Question 8

What does the camel and the needle mean?
Salvation is humanly impossible, but with God all things are possible.

Question 9

What did Jesus promise those who leave everything for Him?
A hundredfold now, with persecutions, and eternal life in the age to come.

Question 10

What did James and John ask for?
The seats of honor at Jesus' right and left in His glory.

Question 11

What does “a ransom for many” mean?
Jesus paid the price with His life to set us free from sin.

Question 12

What should Mark 10 change about the way Christians live today?
Mark 10 should cause believers to live:

- Honoring God's design for marriage.
- Welcoming and blessing children.
- Receiving God's kingdom with childlike trust.
- Refusing to let wealth rule their hearts.
- Willing to leave anything for Jesus.
- Seeking to serve rather than to be served.
- Remembering the ransom Jesus paid.
- Crying out to Jesus with persistent faith.

LIX. PERSONAL APPLICATION

Mark 10 asks several important questions.

Am I Honoring God's Design for Marriage?

In my own life and in how I speak of it?

Am I Showing Grace to the Hurting?

Including those who have been through divorce?

Am I Helping Children Come to Jesus?

Or standing in their way?

Am I Receiving God's Kingdom Like a Child?

Or trying to earn it?

What Is My “One Thing”?

What stands between me and following Jesus fully?

Do I Trust in Riches?

Where does my sense of security come from?

Am I Seeking Position or Service?

Do I want the best seat or the lowest place?

Am I Like Bartimaeus?

Do I cry out to Jesus and follow Him on the road?

LX. A CRAWFORD BIBLE STUDY PRINCIPLE

“Not to Be Served, but to Serve”

James and John wanted the best seats.
The ten were angry because they wanted them too.
All twelve were thinking about greatness.
Jesus gathered them together.
He showed them how the world works.
Rulers who lord it over others.
Officials who use power to control.
Then He said, **“Not so with you.”**
In His kingdom, the great serve.
The first become slaves of all.
And then Jesus pointed to Himself.
The Son of Man, who deserved to be served by every nation, came to serve.
He came to give His life as a ransom.
He did not just teach servanthood.
He lived it, all the way to the cross.
This creates a powerful principle.
If the King of kings came to serve, no follower of His is too important to serve.

Principle:

Follow the Servant King by giving your life in service to others.

LXI. FINAL APPLICATION

Mark Chapter 10 shows the values of God's kingdom.
It honors God's design for marriage.
It welcomes little children.
It warns about the danger of riches.
It promises reward for those who leave everything.
It shows Jesus walking toward the cross.
It defines greatness as service.
It reveals Jesus as the ransom for many.
And it shows a blind beggar who saw clearly and followed.
Mark 10 therefore reminds us:
Never treat marriage lightly.

Never keep children from Jesus.
Never let wealth rule your heart.
Never seek greatness by grasping.
Never forget the ransom Jesus paid.
The church does not need people seeking the best seats.
It needs:
Faithful husbands and wives.
Childlike hearts.
Disciples who leave everything for Jesus.
And servants who follow the Servant King.
The same Jesus still calls:
Tell people that God's design is good.
Tell people that the kingdom is a gift for those who receive it like children.
Tell people that with God all things are possible.
Tell people that Jesus gave His life as a ransom for many.
And as you live:
Receive like a child.
Let go of what holds you back.
Serve others.
Follow Jesus on the road.

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father,
Thank You for Your good design for marriage and family.
Thank You for Your grace for all who are broken and hurting.
Thank You that Jesus welcomes children in His arms.
Thank You that Your kingdom is a gift we receive with empty hands.
Thank You that what is impossible for us is possible with You.
Thank You that Jesus walked willingly toward the cross.
Thank You that He came not to be served, but to serve.
Thank You that He gave His life as a ransom for many.
Forgive us when we have treated Your design lightly.
Forgive us when we have kept others from coming to Jesus.
Forgive us when we have trusted in riches instead of You.
Forgive us when we have sought the best seats instead of the lowest place.
Help us receive Your kingdom like little children.
Show us anything that stands between us and following You.
Make us servants of all.
Give us persistent faith like Bartimaeus.
And help us follow Jesus on the road, wherever it leads.
“For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many.”
In Jesus' name, Amen.

Key Verse

“For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many.” — Mark 10:45

Central Truth

Jesus calls His followers to honor God's design for marriage, receive the kingdom like children, value Him above all wealth, and find true greatness in serving, because He came not to be served but to serve and give His life as a ransom for many.

Mark 10 in One Sentence

On the road to Jerusalem, Jesus upholds God's design for lifelong marriage, welcomes children as models of the kingdom, lovingly calls a rich man to leave his wealth, predicts His death a third time, teaches that true greatness is service because He came to give His life as a ransom for many, and heals blind Bartimaeus, who follows Him on the road.

CRAWFORD BIBLE COMMENTARY

BIBLE STUDY

Mark Chapter 11 — The Triumphal Entry, Cleansing the Temple, and the Power of Faith

A Verse-by-Verse Bible Study from the Crawford Standard Bible

Introduction

Mark Chapter 11 begins the final week of Jesus' earthly life.
For ten chapters, Jesus has been moving toward Jerusalem.
Now He arrives.
The last six chapters of Mark cover only about one week.
This shows how important the events of that week were.
Jesus rides into Jerusalem on a young donkey.
Crowds spread cloaks and branches on the road.
They shout, **“Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!”**
He enters as the promised King.
But He is a humble King, riding on a donkey, not a warhorse.
The next day, Jesus curses a fig tree that has leaves but no fruit.
Then He enters the temple and drives out those who were buying and selling.
“My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations.”
The fig tree and the temple are connected.
Both looked alive on the outside.
But both lacked the fruit God was looking for.
The next morning, the fig tree has withered.
Jesus teaches about faith, prayer, and forgiveness.
Finally, the religious leaders challenge His authority.
Jesus answers with a question they cannot answer.
The chapter moves through five movements:

- The Triumphal Entry (verses 1–11).
- The Fig Tree Cursed (verses 12–14).
- Jesus Cleanses the Temple (verses 15–19).
- The Lesson of the Withered Fig Tree (verses 20–26).
- The Authority of Jesus Questioned (verses 27–33).

The central truth of Mark 11 is:
Jesus is the humble King who comes to His people, looks for true fruit and pure worship, calls His followers to believing prayer and forgiving hearts, and speaks with divine authority that no one can overturn.

I. APPROACHING JERUSALEM

Mark 11:1 — Bethphage and Bethany

“As Jesus and His disciples approached Jerusalem, near Bethphage and Bethany at the Mount of Olives, He sent two disciples ahead.”
“As Jesus and His disciples approached Jerusalem.”
The long journey was nearly over.
“Near Bethphage and Bethany.”
Two small villages just east of Jerusalem.
Bethany was the home of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus.
“At the Mount of Olives.”
A hill overlooking Jerusalem from the east.
Zechariah prophesied that the Lord would stand on the Mount of Olives.
“He sent two disciples ahead.”

Jesus was in charge of every detail.

Cross References

Matthew 21:1
As Jesus and His followers came near Jerusalem, they stopped at Bethphage on the Mount of Olives. Jesus sent two of His followers ahead.
Luke 19:29
As He came near Bethphage and Bethany at the hill called the Mount of Olives, He sent out two of His followers.
Zechariah 14:4
On that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus was in full control as He approached the cross.

Key Truth

Jesus did not drift into Jerusalem; He arrived on purpose.

II. A COLT NO ONE HAS RIDDEN

Mark 11:2 — Go into the Village

“He told them, “Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately as you enter it you will find a colt tied there, one that no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here.”
“You will find a colt tied there.”
Jesus knew exactly what they would find.
A **colt** was a young donkey.
“One that no one has ever ridden.”
In the Old Testament, animals set apart for holy use had never been used before.
This colt was set apart for the King.
“Untie it and bring it here.”
Jesus was fulfilling Zechariah's prophecy.

Cross References

Matthew 21:2
Go to the town ahead of you. As soon as you enter it, you will find a donkey tied there with her colt. Untie them and bring them to Me.
Luke 19:30
Go into the town ahead. When you enter it, you will find a colt tied there that no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here.
Zechariah 9:9
Rejoice greatly, people of Jerusalem! Your King is coming to you. He does what is right and brings salvation. He is humble and riding on a donkey, on a young donkey.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus knows every detail before it happens.

Key Truth

The King chose a humble colt for His royal entry.

III. THE LORD NEEDS IT

Mark 11:3 — If Anyone Asks

“If anyone asks, ‘Why are you doing this?’ say, ‘The Lord needs it and will send it back shortly.’””
“The Lord needs it.”
Simple words with great authority.
Jesus called Himself **the Lord**.
“And will send it back shortly.”
Jesus promised to return it.
He was not taking it unfairly.
Some think the owner already knew Jesus.
Either way, Jesus' word was enough.

Cross References

Matthew 21:3
> If anyone asks why you are taking them, say, “The Master needs them,” and he will send them right away.

Luke 19:31
> If anyone asks why you are untying it, say, “The Lord needs it.”

John 12:14
> Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it, just as the Scriptures say.

Spiritual Principle

Whatever we have belongs to the Lord when He needs it.

Application

What do you have that the Lord might need?

IV. TIED AT A DOORWAY

Mark 11:4 — Just as He Said

“They went and found the colt tied outside in the street at a doorway, and as they untied it,”
They found everything exactly as Jesus said.
The colt was tied outside in the street.
At a doorway.
Jesus' words were perfectly accurate.
His disciples learned again that they could trust Him completely.

Cross References

Matthew 21:6
The followers went and did what Jesus told them to do.
Luke 19:32
The two followers went and found everything just as Jesus had told them.
Genesis 49:11
He ties his donkey to a vine and his young donkey to the best branch.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus' word always proves true.

Key Truth

When Jesus speaks, it happens just as He says.

V. WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

Mark 11:5 — The Bystanders Ask

“some people standing there asked, “What are you doing, untying the colt?””
People noticed.
Two strangers were untying someone's donkey.
Of course they asked questions.
Jesus had prepared His disciples for this exact moment.

Cross References

Matthew 21:6
They did as Jesus had told them.
Luke 19:33
As they were untying the colt, its owners asked, “Why are you untying the colt?”
John 12:16
His followers did not understand at first. But after Jesus was glorified, they remembered these things.

Spiritual Principle

Obeying Jesus may raise questions, but He prepares us for them.

Key Truth

Jesus never sends His people out unprepared.

VI. THEY LET THEM GO

Mark 11:6 — As Jesus Had Told Them

“They answered as Jesus had told them, and the people let them go.”
The disciples repeated Jesus' words.
And it worked.

The people let them take the colt.
Simple obedience to Jesus' instructions opened the way.

Cross References

Matthew 21:6
The followers went and did exactly what Jesus told them.
Luke 19:34
They answered, “The Lord needs it.”
Mark 14:16
The followers left, went into the city, and found everything just as Jesus had said.

Spiritual Principle

Simple obedience to Jesus opens doors.

Key Truth

We do not need clever words; we need His words.

VII. HE SAT ON IT

Mark 11:7 — Cloaks on the Colt

“They brought the colt to Jesus, threw their cloaks over it, and He sat on it.”
“They brought the colt to Jesus.”
They obeyed.
“Threw their cloaks over it.”
They made a saddle from their own clothes.
This was an act of honor.
“And He sat on it.”
Jesus rode the colt into Jerusalem.
For the first time in Mark, Jesus openly presents Himself as King.
But He came in peace and humility.
Kings riding to war came on horses.
Kings coming in peace rode donkeys.

Cross References

Matthew 21:7
They brought the donkey and the colt to Jesus and laid their coats on them, and Jesus sat on them.
Luke 19:35
They brought it to Jesus, threw their coats on the colt, and put Jesus on it.
Zechariah 9:9
Your King comes to you, humble and riding on a donkey.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus comes as a humble King who brings peace.

Key Truth

The King of kings rode a borrowed donkey.

VIII. CLOAKS AND BRANCHES

Mark 11:8 — Spread on the Road

“Many people spread their cloaks on the road, while others spread branches they had cut from the fields.”
“Many people spread their cloaks on the road.”
This was how people welcomed a king.
When Jehu became king, people spread their cloaks for him.
“While others spread branches they had cut from the fields.”
John tells us they were palm branches.
Palm branches were a symbol of victory and celebration.
The people were giving Jesus a royal welcome.

Cross References

Matthew 21:8
> A very large crowd spread their coats on the road. Others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road.

John 12:13
> They took branches of palm trees and went out to meet Him.

2 Kings 9:13
> The officers quickly took off their coats and spread them on the steps in front of Jehu. Then they blew a trumpet and shouted, “Jehu is king!”

Spiritual Principle

Jesus deserves our honor and our best.

Application

How do you welcome Jesus as King in your life?

IX. HOSANNA!

Mark 11:9 — Blessed Is He

“The crowds went ahead of Him and those who followed shouted, “Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!”
“Hosanna!”
This Hebrew word means **“Save now!”** or **“Please save!”**
Over time it became a shout of praise.
“Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!”
They quoted Psalm 118.
Pilgrims sang this psalm on the way to Jerusalem.
But now they sang it to Jesus.
They recognized Him as the One sent by God.

Cross References

Matthew 21:9
The crowds shouted, “Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest heaven!”
Psalm 118:26
Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord. We bless you from the house of the Lord.
John 12:13
They shouted, “Hosanna! Blessed is the One who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the King of Israel!”

Spiritual Principle

Jesus is the One sent by God to save His people.

Key Truth

The crowd cried “Save now!” and Jesus was about to do exactly that.

X. THE KINGDOM OF DAVID

Mark 11:10 — Hosanna in the Highest

“Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David! Hosanna in the highest!””
“Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David!”
The people expected the kingdom of David to be restored.
God had promised David a descendant who would reign forever.
They saw Jesus as that King.
They were right.
But many expected a political kingdom.
Jesus' kingdom would come through the cross.
“Hosanna in the highest!”
Praise to God in the highest heaven.

Cross References

Luke 19:38
They said, “God bless the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory to God!”
Isaiah 9:7
His power and peace will keep growing. He will rule on David's throne and over his kingdom forever.
Luke 1:32
He will be a great man, known as the Son of God Most High. The Lord God will make Him king on the throne that once belonged to David, His ancestor.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus is the promised King from David's line who will reign forever.

Key Truth

The crowd was right about who Jesus was, but not about how He would reign.

XI. HE LOOKED AROUND AT EVERYTHING

Mark 11:11 — Into the Temple

“Jesus entered Jerusalem and went into the temple courts. He looked around at everything, but since it was already late, He went out to Bethany with the Twelve.”
“Jesus entered Jerusalem and went into the temple courts.”
The King went to the house of God.
“He looked around at everything.”
Jesus inspected the temple.
He saw what was happening there.
This prepared for what He would do the next day.
“Since it was already late, He went out to Bethany.”
Jesus spent the nights that week in Bethany, outside the city.

Cross References

Matthew 21:17
Then Jesus left and went out of the city to Bethany, where He spent the night.
Luke 19:45
Jesus went into the temple.
Malachi 3:1
The Lord you are looking for will suddenly come to His temple.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus sees everything that happens in His house.

Key Truth

The Lord came to His temple and looked carefully.

XII. JESUS WAS HUNGRY

Mark 11:12 — Leaving Bethany

“The next day as they were leaving Bethany, Jesus was hungry.”
A simple detail.
Jesus was truly human.
He got hungry.
He knew the needs of the human body.
He shares in our weaknesses.

Cross References

Matthew 21:18
Early the next morning, as Jesus was going back to the city, He was hungry.

Matthew 4:2
After Jesus fasted for forty days and nights, He was very hungry.
Hebrews 4:15
Jesus knows what it is like to be weak. He faced every kind of test we face, and He never sinned.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus fully shared our human experience.

Key Truth

The Lord of all knew what it was to be hungry.

XIII. NOTHING BUT LEAVES

Mark 11:13 — Not the Season for Figs

“Seeing a fig tree in leaf from a distance, He went to find out if it had any fruit. When He reached it, He found nothing but leaves, because it was not the season for figs.”
“Seeing a fig tree in leaf from a distance.”
The tree looked healthy.
“He went to find out if it had any fruit.”
Fig trees often produced small early buds along with their leaves.
Leaves suggested there might be something to eat.
“He found nothing but leaves.”
It looked promising but gave nothing.
“Because it was not the season for figs.”
This puzzles many readers.
Why would Jesus expect fruit out of season?
Jesus was doing an acted parable.
The tree was a picture of Israel's religious life at that time.
It had the leaves of religious activity.
But it lacked the fruit of true faith and obedience.

Cross References

Matthew 21:19
Seeing a fig tree by the road, He went to it, but found nothing on it except leaves.
Luke 13:6
A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard. He came looking for fruit on it but found none.
Jeremiah 8:13
There will be no grapes on the vine and no figs on the fig tree. Even the leaves will dry up.

Spiritual Principle

God looks for real fruit, not just the appearance of life.

Spiritual Warning

Religious leaves without fruit do not satisfy God.

XIV. MAY NO ONE EAT FROM YOU

Mark 11:14 — The Disciples Heard

“Then He said to the tree, “May no one ever eat fruit from you again.” And His disciples heard Him say it.”
“Then He said to the tree.”
Jesus spoke to the tree.
“May no one ever eat fruit from you again.”
This was a word of judgment.
It was the only miracle of judgment Jesus performed.
And it was on a tree, not on a person.
“And His disciples heard Him say it.”
This detail matters.
The lesson would come the next morning.

Cross References

Matthew 21:19
He said to the tree, “You will never produce fruit again!” Right away the fig tree dried up.
Luke 13:7
So he said to the gardener, “For three years I have looked for fruit on this tree and found none. Cut it down!”
Jude 1:12
They are like trees in autumn that have no fruit and are pulled up by the roots. They are dead twice.

Spiritual Principle

Fruitlessness brings judgment.

Key Truth

Jesus judged a tree to warn people.

XV. DRIVING OUT THE SELLERS

Mark 11:15 — Overturning the Tables

“When they arrived in Jerusalem, Jesus entered the temple courts and began driving out those who were buying and selling. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves,”
“Jesus entered the temple courts.”
This was the large outer court, the Court of the Gentiles.
It was the only place where non-Jews could come to pray.
“And began driving out those who were buying and selling.”
Animals were sold for sacrifices.
It had become a busy marketplace.
“He overturned the tables of the money changers.”
Visitors had to exchange their money for the special temple coins.

Many believe the exchange rates were unfair.
“And the benches of those selling doves.”
Doves were the offering of the poor.
Even the poor were being taken advantage of.
John records a similar cleansing at the start of Jesus' ministry.
Many Bible students believe Jesus cleansed the temple twice.

Cross References

Matthew 21:12
Jesus went into the temple and threw out all the people who were buying and selling there. He turned over the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves.
Luke 19:45
Jesus went into the temple and began to throw out the people who were selling things there.
John 2:15
He made a whip out of cords and drove everyone out of the temple, along with the sheep and cattle. He poured out the coins of the money changers and turned over their tables.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus is zealous for the purity of God's house.

Key Truth

The King came to His temple and set it right.

XVI. NO MERCHANDISE THROUGH THE TEMPLE

Mark 11:16 — Not a Shortcut

“and would not allow anyone to carry merchandise through the temple courts.”
Only Mark records this detail.
People were using the temple courts as a shortcut.
They carried their goods through the holy place.
It had become a busy street instead of a house of prayer.
Jesus stopped it.
God's house deserves reverence.

Cross References

Zechariah 14:21
On that day there will no longer be any traders in the house of the Lord who rules over all.
Matthew 21:12
Jesus threw out everyone who was buying and selling in the temple.
John 2:16
He told those selling doves, “Get these out of here! Stop turning My Father's house into a market!”

Spiritual Principle

God's house should be treated with reverence, not as a place of business.

Application

Do you treat worship with reverence?

XVII. A HOUSE OF PRAYER FOR ALL NATIONS

Mark 11:17 — A Den of Thieves

“He taught them, saying, “Is it not written: ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations’? But you have made it a den of thieves.””
“Is it not written.”
Jesus pointed to Scripture.
“My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations.”
He quoted Isaiah 56.
Only Mark includes **“for all nations.”**
The court where this market stood was the place where Gentiles came to pray.
The noise and business kept them from worshiping.
“But you have made it a den of thieves.”
He quoted Jeremiah 7.
A **den** was where robbers hid.
The temple had become a hiding place for people who cheated others while appearing religious.
This warning applies to religious people in every age, including churches today.

Cross References

Isaiah 56:7
> I will bring them to My holy mountain and make them joyful in My house of prayer. My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations.

Jeremiah 7:11
> Has this house, which is called by My name, become a hideout for robbers to you?

Matthew 21:13
> He said to them, “It is written, ‘My house will be called a house of prayer.’ But you are making it a hideout for robbers.”

Spiritual Principle

God's house is meant to be a place of prayer for people of every nation.

Spiritual Warning

Religion can become a hiding place for greed if hearts are not right.

XVIII. LOOKING FOR A WAY TO KILL HIM

Mark 11:18 — They Feared Him

“The chief priests and teachers of the law heard this and began looking for a way to kill Him, for they feared Him, because the whole crowd was amazed at His teaching.”

“The chief priests and teachers of the law heard this.”
The leaders in charge of the temple were offended.
Jesus had challenged their authority and their profits.
“And began looking for a way to kill Him.”
Their plan to kill Jesus grew stronger.
“For they feared Him.”
They were afraid of His influence.
“Because the whole crowd was amazed at His teaching.”
The people loved to hear Him.
This made the leaders even more nervous.

Cross References

Matthew 21:46
They wanted to arrest Him, but they were afraid of the crowds, because the people thought He was a prophet.
Luke 19:47
Jesus taught in the temple every day. The leading priests, teachers of the law, and leaders of the people wanted to kill Him.
John 11:53
From that day on, they planned how to kill Him.

Spiritual Principle

Exposing sin often brings opposition from those who profit from it.

Key Truth

The leaders were more afraid of losing power than of opposing God.

XIX. OUT OF THE CITY

Mark 11:19 — When Evening Came

“When evening came, Jesus and His disciples went out of the city.”
Each evening that week, Jesus left Jerusalem.
He went back to Bethany or the Mount of Olives.
The city was not safe for Him at night.
His time had not yet come.

Cross References

Matthew 21:17
He left them and went out of the city to Bethany and spent the night there.
Luke 21:37
Each day Jesus taught in the temple, and each night He went out and stayed on the Mount of Olives.
John 8:1
Jesus went to the Mount of Olives.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus followed the Father's timing, not the plans of His enemies.

Key Truth

No one could take Jesus' life before the Father's appointed hour.

XX. WITHERED FROM THE ROOTS

Mark 11:20 — The Next Morning

“The next morning, as they went along, they saw the fig tree withered from the roots.”
“The next morning, as they went along.”
The disciples passed the same tree.
“They saw the fig tree withered from the roots.”
Not just a few dried leaves.
The whole tree was dead, from the roots up.
This was the picture of judgment on fruitless religion.
The fig tree story wraps around the temple story.
Mark does this on purpose.
Each story helps explain the other.

Cross References

Matthew 21:20
> When the followers saw this, they were amazed. They asked, “How did the fig tree dry up so quickly?”

Hosea 9:16
> Israel is like a plant whose roots have dried up. They will produce no fruit.

Jude 1:12
> They are like trees without fruit at harvest time, pulled up by the roots and completely dead.

Spiritual Principle

Religion without real fruit will wither from the roots.

Key Truth

What looks alive on the outside can be dead on the inside.

XXI. LOOK! IT HAS WITHERED!

Mark 11:21 — Peter Remembered

“Peter remembered and said, “Rabbi, look! The fig tree You cursed has withered!””
Peter remembered Jesus' words.
He was amazed.
What Jesus said had come true.
Peter may have been the one who told Mark this story.

Cross References

Matthew 21:20
The followers were amazed and asked, “How did the fig tree dry up so fast?”
Luke 13:6
A man had a fig tree in his vineyard, but when he looked for fruit, he found none.
Habakkuk 3:17
Even though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines, I will still rejoice in the Lord.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus' words always come to pass.

Key Truth

What Jesus says, happens.

XXII. HAVE FAITH IN GOD

Mark 11:22 — The Answer

“Jesus answered, “Have faith in God.”
Jesus did not explain the tree.
He turned to a lesson about faith.
“Have faith in God.”
Not faith in faith.
Not faith in ourselves.
Faith in God.
The temple system had failed.
But God had not.
His people could trust Him directly.

Cross References

Matthew 21:21
Jesus answered, “I tell you the truth, if you have faith and do not doubt.”
Hebrews 11:6
Without trust, there is no way to please God. Anyone who draws near to Him must believe that He is there and that He is good to those who look for Him.
Mark 9:23
Everything is possible for the one who believes.

Spiritual Principle

The object of our faith is God Himself.

Key Truth

Faith is only as strong as the One we trust.

XXIII. THIS MOUNTAIN

Mark 11:23 — Thrown into the Sea

“Truly I tell you, if anyone says to this mountain, ‘Be lifted up and thrown into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart but believes what he says will happen, it will be done for him.”
“If anyone says to this mountain.”
They may have been standing on the Mount of Olives.
Moving mountains was a common way to describe doing something impossible.
“Be lifted up and thrown into the sea.”
Jesus used a dramatic picture.
“And does not doubt in his heart but believes.”
Faith that trusts God fully.
“It will be done for him.”
God can do what seems impossible.
Jesus is not teaching that we can control God by our words.
He is teaching that no obstacle is too great for God when we trust Him and seek His will.

Cross References

Matthew 21:21
If you have faith and do not doubt, you can tell this mountain, “Go and fall into the sea,” and it will happen.
Matthew 17:20
If your faith is as small as a mustard seed, you can tell this mountain to move, and it will move.
1 Corinthians 13:2
Even if my faith could shove mountains out of the way, without love I would be worth nothing.

Spiritual Principle

No obstacle is too great for God when we trust Him.

Key Truth

Faith in God can face mountains.

XXIV. BELIEVE THAT YOU HAVE RECEIVED IT

Mark 11:24 — Whatever You Ask

“Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.”
“Whatever you ask for in prayer.”
A bold promise about prayer.
“Believe that you have received it.”
Pray with confident trust.
“And it will be yours.”

God answers believing prayer.
This promise must be read with the rest of Scripture.
Jesus Himself prayed, **“Not what I will, but what You will.”**
John teaches that God hears what we ask according to His will.
This is not a blank check for selfish wishes.
It is an invitation to trust God boldly as we pray for what pleases Him.

Cross References

Matthew 21:22
If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer.
Matthew 7:7
Keep asking, and you will be given what you need. Keep looking, and you will find. Keep knocking, and the door will be opened.
John 14:13
Whatever you ask for in My name, I will do, so that the Son can bring honor to the Father.

Spiritual Principle

God invites us to pray with bold faith for what pleases Him.

Application

Do you pray with confident trust in God?

XXV. FORGIVE THEM

Mark 11:25 — When You Stand Praying

“And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive them, so that your Father in heaven may also forgive your sins.”
“And when you stand praying.”
Standing was a common posture for prayer.
“If you hold anything against anyone.”
Unforgiveness blocks our prayers.
“Forgive them.”
Let it go.
Release the debt.
“So that your Father in heaven may also forgive your sins.”
A forgiven heart becomes a forgiving heart.
Faith that moves mountains must be joined with love that forgives.

Cross References

Matthew 6:14
When you let go of the wrongs others have done to you, your heavenly Father will let go of yours.
Ephesians 4:32
Treat one another with kindness and a tender heart. Forgive one another, the same way God forgave you because of Christ.

Matthew 18:21
Peter came and asked Jesus, “Lord, how many times should I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Seven times?”

Spiritual Principle

Prayer and forgiveness go together.

Application

Is there anyone you need to forgive before you pray?

XXVI. IF YOU DO NOT FORGIVE

Mark 11:26 — A Serious Warning

“But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your sins.””
This verse is not found in some of the oldest copies of Mark.
But Jesus teaches the same truth clearly in Matthew 6.
A person who refuses to forgive shows they have not truly understood God's forgiveness.
Those who have been forgiven much will forgive others.
Forgiveness does not mean pretending wrong did not happen.
It does not mean trusting someone who is still dangerous.
It means releasing the desire for revenge and leaving justice to God.

Cross References

Matthew 6:15
But if you refuse to forgive people, your Father will not forgive your wrongs.
Matthew 18:35
My Father in heaven will do the same to you if you do not forgive your brother from your heart.
James 2:13
People who show no mercy will be judged without mercy. But mercy is stronger than judgment.

Spiritual Principle

A heart that refuses to forgive cannot fully enjoy God's forgiveness.

Spiritual Warning

Unforgiveness is too costly to keep.

XXVII. BACK TO THE TEMPLE

Mark 11:27 — The Leaders Come

“They returned once again to Jerusalem, and while Jesus was walking in the temple courts, the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders came to Him.”
“While Jesus was walking in the temple courts.”
Jesus returned to the very place He had cleansed.
“The chief priests, the scribes, and the elders came to Him.”

These three groups made up the Sanhedrin, the ruling council.
The top religious authorities came to confront Him.

Cross References

Matthew 21:23
Jesus went into the temple. While He was teaching, the leading priests and older leaders came to Him.
Luke 20:1
One day Jesus was teaching the people in the temple and telling them the good news. The leading priests, teachers of the law, and older leaders came up to Him.
Acts 4:7
They had Peter and John stand before them and asked, “By what power or by whose name did you do this?”

Spiritual Principle

Jesus did not hide from those who opposed Him.

Key Truth

The King returned boldly to His Father's house.

XXVIII. BY WHAT AUTHORITY?

Mark 11:28 — Who Gave You This Authority?

“They asked, “By what authority are You doing these things? Who gave You this authority?””
“By what authority are You doing these things?”
These things meant the cleansing of the temple and His teaching.
“Who gave You this authority?”
They were in charge of the temple.
They had not given Him permission.
They wanted to trap Him.
If He claimed God's authority, they could accuse Him of blasphemy.

Cross References

Matthew 21:23
They asked, “What authority do You have to do these things? Who gave You this authority?”
Luke 20:2
Tell us what authority You have to do these things. Who gave You this authority?
John 2:18
The Jewish leaders asked, “What miracle can You show us to prove You have the right to do this?”

Spiritual Principle

Jesus' authority comes from God, not from human institutions.

Key Truth

The question of Jesus' authority is the question of who He is.

XXIX. ONE QUESTION

Mark 11:29 — Answer Me

“Jesus replied, “I will ask you one question. Answer Me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things.”
Jesus answered with a question.
This was a common way for rabbis to debate.
But it was more than clever.
His question went right to the heart of the matter.

Cross References

Matthew 21:24
Jesus answered, “I will ask you one question too. If you answer it, I will tell you what authority I have to do these things.”
Luke 20:3
Jesus answered, “I will also ask you a question. Tell Me.”
Mark 12:34
After that, no one dared to ask Jesus any more questions.

Spiritual Principle

Wise questions can reveal the true condition of the heart.

Key Truth

Jesus' question was really an invitation to honesty.

XXX. FROM HEAVEN OR FROM MEN?

Mark 11:30 — John's Baptism

“John's baptism—was it from heaven, or from men? Answer Me!””
“John's baptism.”
John had prepared the way for Jesus.
John had pointed to Jesus as the One coming after him.
“Was it from heaven, or from men?”
Was John sent by God or not?
If John was from God, then his testimony about Jesus was true.
And Jesus' authority came from the same source.
“Answer Me!”
Jesus demanded an honest answer.

Cross References

Matthew 21:25
Tell Me, was John's baptism from God or from people?
Luke 20:4
Was the baptism of John from heaven or from people?

Luke 7:30
> But the Pharisees and experts in the law refused God's plan for themselves by not being baptized by John.

Spiritual Principle

How we respond to God's messengers reveals how we respond to God.

Key Truth

John's ministry and Jesus' authority came from the same source.

XXXI. IF WE SAY FROM HEAVEN

Mark 11:31 — Their Dilemma

“They discussed it among themselves and said, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ He will ask, ‘Why didn't you believe him?’”
The leaders were trapped.
They did not discuss what was true.
They discussed what was safe to say.
“If we say, ‘From heaven,’ He will ask, ‘Why didn't you believe him?’”
They had not believed John.
Admitting John was from God would expose their unbelief.

Cross References

Matthew 21:25
> They argued among themselves, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ He will say, ‘Then why didn't you believe him?’”

Luke 20:5
> They discussed it and said, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ He will ask, ‘Why didn't you believe him?’”

John 5:35
> John was a lamp that burned and gave light, and you were happy to enjoy his light for a while.

Spiritual Principle

Those who seek safety instead of truth are trapped by their own choices.

Spiritual Warning

Asking “What is safe?” instead of “What is true?” leads to spiritual blindness.

XXXII. IF WE SAY FROM MEN

Mark 11:32 — They Feared the People

“But if we say, ‘From men’…” they feared the people, for everyone held that John truly was a prophet.”
“But if we say, ‘From men.’”
They could not finish the sentence.

“They feared the people.”
The crowds believed John was a prophet.
Saying otherwise would make the people angry.
“For everyone held that John truly was a prophet.”
The ordinary people saw what the leaders refused to see.
The leaders feared people more than they feared God.

Cross References

Matthew 21:26
But if we say, “From people,” we are afraid of the crowd, because they all think John was a prophet.
Luke 20:6
If we say, “From people,” the people will stone us, because they are sure John was a prophet.
Matthew 14:5
Herod wanted to kill John but was afraid of the people, because they considered him a prophet.

Spiritual Principle

The fear of people keeps many from following the truth.

Spiritual Warning

Fearing people more than God leads to spiritual cowardice.

XXXIII. WE DO NOT KNOW

Mark 11:33 — Neither Will I Tell You

“So they answered Jesus, “We do not know.” Jesus replied, “Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things.””
“We do not know.”
This was not honest.
They did not want to know.
They refused to answer.
“Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things.”
Jesus would not give more truth to those who rejected the truth they already had.
But His authority was already plain.
Anyone with an open heart could see where it came from.
In the next chapter, Jesus would answer them through a parable.

Cross References

Matthew 21:27
So they answered Jesus, “We don't know.” Jesus said, “Then I won't tell you by what authority I do these things.”
Luke 20:8
Jesus said, “Then I won't tell you what authority I have to do these things.”
John 2:18
They asked Him, “What sign can You show us to prove You have authority to do this?”

Spiritual Principle

Those who reject the light they have will not be given more.

Key Truth

Jesus' authority is clear to anyone willing to see it.

XXXIV. FIVE GREAT LESSONS FROM MARK 11

1. Jesus Is the True King

“Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!”

Principle:

The Triumphal Entry fulfills prophecy and declares Christ's authority.

2. Faith Is Powerful

“Have faith in God.”

Principle:

The withered fig tree reminds us that God honors believing prayer.

3. Forgiveness Is Essential

“If you hold anything against anyone, forgive them.”

Principle:

Prayer is tied to forgiving others, as God has forgiven us.

4. God's House Is Holy

“My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations.”

Principle:

Worship should be pure, not corrupted by greed or self-interest.

5. Jesus' Authority Is Divine

“By what authority are You doing these things?”

Principle:

His wisdom silenced His enemies and revealed His power.

XXXV. THE HUMBLE KING

The Triumphal Entry shows what kind of King Jesus is.

The World Expected

- A warrior on a horse.
- A king who would overthrow Rome.
- Political power.

Jesus Came

- Riding a humble donkey.
- Bringing peace, not war.
- On His way to a cross.

What the Crowd Got Right

- He is the Son of David.
- He comes in the name of the Lord.
- He brings salvation.

What the Crowd Missed

- His kingdom would come through suffering.
- His victory would be over sin and death.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Welcome Jesus as King on His terms, not yours.

XXXVI. THE FIG TREE AND THE TEMPLE

Mark wraps the temple story inside the fig tree story.

The Fig Tree

- Looked alive with leaves.
- Had no fruit.
- Was judged and withered.

The Temple

- Looked alive with activity.
- Lacked true prayer and worship.
- Was cleansed by Jesus, and would later be destroyed.

The Lesson for Us

- God looks for fruit, not just leaves.
- Religious activity is not the same as true faith.
- A church or a life can look busy and still be fruitless.

Key Truth

Jesus looks past the leaves for the fruit.

XXXVII. FAITH, PRAYER, AND FORGIVENESS

Verses 22–26 give three keys for prayer.

1. Faith in God

“Have faith in God.”
Trust the One who can move mountains.

2. Believing Prayer

“Believe that you have received it.”
Pray with confidence for what pleases Him.

3. A Forgiving Heart

“Forgive them.”
Do not let unforgiveness block your prayers.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Mountain-moving faith must be joined with a forgiving heart.

XXXVIII. WHAT MARK 11 TEACHES ABOUT JESUS

He Knows Every Detail

“You will find a colt tied there.”

He Is the Lord

“The Lord needs it.”

He Is the Humble King

“He sat on it.”

He Is the Son of David

“Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David!”

He Is Truly Human

“Jesus was hungry.”

He Judges Fruitlessness

“May no one ever eat fruit from you again.”

He Is Zealous for God's House

“My house shall be called a house of prayer.”

His Authority Is from God

“By what authority are You doing these things?”

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Jesus is the humble King who has every right to rule His Father's house.

XXXIX. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR PERSONAL STUDY

Question 1

Why did Jesus ride into Jerusalem on a colt?
To fulfill Zechariah's prophecy and show He was a humble King who came in peace.

Question 2

What does “Hosanna” mean?
“Save now!” It became a shout of praise.

Question 3

What did the crowd expect from Jesus?
Many expected a political king who would restore David's kingdom.

Question 4

Why did Jesus curse the fig tree?
It was an acted parable about religion that has leaves but no fruit.

Question 5

Why did Jesus drive out the sellers from the temple?
They had turned the house of prayer into a marketplace and kept others from worshiping.

Question 6

Why is “for all nations” important?
The market was in the court where Gentiles came to pray; God's house was meant for everyone.

Question 7

How did the religious leaders respond?
They looked for a way to kill Him.

Question 8

What did Jesus teach about faith?
To have faith in God, who can do what seems impossible.

Question 9

Does verse 24 mean God will give us anything we want?
No. It invites bold faith in prayer for what pleases God, in line with His will.

Question 10

Why did Jesus connect prayer with forgiveness?
Because an unforgiving heart blocks our relationship with God.

Question 11

Why did Jesus ask about John's baptism?
Because John was sent by God, and John pointed to Jesus; the leaders' answer would reveal their hearts.

Question 12

What should Mark 11 change about the way Christians live today?
Mark 11 should cause believers to live:

- Welcoming Jesus as King.
- Giving Him what He needs.
- Bearing real fruit, not just leaves.
- Keeping worship pure.
- Making room for all nations to pray.
- Praying with faith in God.
- Forgiving others from the heart.
- Answering truthfully about who Jesus is.

XL. PERSONAL APPLICATION

Mark 11 asks several important questions.

Have I Welcomed Jesus as King?

On His terms or mine?

Is There Anything the Lord Needs from Me?

Am I willing to give it?

Is My Life Bearing Fruit?

Or only leaves?

Is My Worship Pure?

Or has it been mixed with selfish motives?

Am I Keeping Others from Worship?

Is my church welcoming to all nations?

Do I Pray with Faith in God?

Or do I doubt Him?

Is There Someone I Need to Forgive?

Am I holding anything against anyone?

Am I Honest About Who Jesus Is?

Or do I avoid the question?

XLI. A CRAWFORD BIBLE STUDY PRINCIPLE

“Leaves Without Fruit”

From a distance, the fig tree looked great.
It had green leaves.
It looked healthy.
It looked like it would satisfy a hungry traveler.
But when Jesus came close, He found nothing.
Only leaves.
The temple was the same.
It was busy.
It was crowded.
It looked like the center of religious life.
But when Jesus came close, He found a marketplace instead of a house of prayer.
This creates a powerful principle.
It is possible to look spiritually alive and still be fruitless.
Busy religion is not the same as true faith.
Jesus is not impressed by leaves.
He is looking for fruit.

Principle:

Jesus looks past the appearance of religion for the fruit of a changed life.

XLII. FINAL APPLICATION

Mark Chapter 11 begins the final week of Jesus' life.
He enters Jerusalem as the humble King.
He curses a fruitless fig tree.
He cleanses the temple.
He teaches about faith, prayer, and forgiveness.
He silences those who question His authority.
Mark 11 therefore reminds us:
Never forget that Jesus is King.
Never be content with leaves without fruit.
Never turn worship into business.
Never pray with an unforgiving heart.
Never avoid the question of who Jesus is.
The church does not need people who only look busy.
It needs:
Believers who welcome Jesus as King.
Lives that bear real fruit.
Worship that is pure and open to all.
And hearts that pray with faith and forgive freely.
The same Jesus still calls:
Tell people that Jesus is the humble King.
Tell people that God's house is a house of prayer for all nations.
Tell people to have faith in God.
Tell people that forgiveness is found in Jesus.
And as you live:
Welcome the King.
Bear fruit.
Pray with faith.
Forgive.

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father,
Thank You for Jesus, the humble King who came riding on a donkey.
Thank You that He came in Your name to save us.
Thank You that He knows every detail of our lives.
Thank You that He cares about the purity of Your house.
Thank You that Your house is a house of prayer for all nations.
Thank You that we can have faith in You, who can move mountains.
Thank You for forgiving us so freely.
Forgive us when we have wanted Jesus on our terms instead of His.
Forgive us when our lives have had leaves but no fruit.
Forgive us when our worship has been mixed with selfish motives.
Forgive us when we have held grudges against others.
Help us welcome Jesus as King of our lives.
Make our lives fruitful for Your glory.
Keep our worship pure and our churches open to all.

Teach us to pray with faith.
And give us forgiving hearts, as You have forgiven us.
“Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!”
In Jesus' name, Amen.

Key Verse

“He taught them, saying, “Is it not written: ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations’? But you have made it a den of thieves.”” — Mark 11:17

Central Truth

Jesus is the humble King who comes to His people, looks for true fruit and pure worship, calls His followers to believing prayer and forgiving hearts, and speaks with divine authority that no one can overturn.

Mark 11 in One Sentence

Jesus enters Jerusalem as the humble King to shouts of “Hosanna,” curses a fruitless fig tree, cleanses the temple so it can be a house of prayer for all nations, teaches His disciples about faith, prayer, and forgiveness, and silences the leaders who question His authority.

CRAWFORD BIBLE COMMENTARY

BIBLE STUDY

Mark Chapter 12 — The Parable of the Vineyard, The Greatest Commandment, and the Widow’s Offering

A Verse-by-Verse Bible Study from the Crawford Standard Bible

Introduction

Mark Chapter 12 takes place in the temple courts during Jesus' final week.
The religious leaders have just questioned His authority.
Now Jesus answers with a parable.
A vineyard owner sends servants to collect fruit.
The tenants beat and kill them.
Finally he sends his beloved son, and they kill him too.
The leaders knew Jesus was speaking about them.
Then, one group after another comes to test Him.
The Pharisees and Herodians ask about taxes.
The Sadducees ask about the resurrection.
A scribe asks about the greatest commandment.
Each time, Jesus answers with wisdom no one can match.
“Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.”
Then Jesus asks His own question about the Messiah, showing He is David's Lord, not only David's son.
He warns against religious leaders who seek honor and take advantage of widows.
And the chapter ends with a poor widow who gives everything she has.
The chapter moves through seven movements:

- The Parable of the Wicked Tenants (verses 1–12).
- Taxes to Caesar (verses 13–17).
- The Sadducees and the Resurrection (verses 18–27).
- The Greatest Commandment (verses 28–34).
- David's Lord (verses 35–37).
- Warning Against the Scribes (verses 38–40).
- The Widow's Offering (verses 41–44).

The central truth of Mark 12 is:
Jesus is God's beloved Son and David's Lord, whose wisdom silences every challenge, and He calls us to give God what belongs to Him, to trust the God of the living, to love God and neighbor with everything we have, and to give with wholehearted devotion.

I. A MAN PLANTED A VINEYARD

Mark 12:1 — The Owner Goes Away

“Jesus began to teach the people with parables: “A man planted a vineyard. He put a fence around it, dug a pit for the winepress, and built a watchtower. Then he rented the vineyard to some farmers and went away on a journey.”
“A man planted a vineyard.”
Jesus' listeners would think of Isaiah 5.
There, God's vineyard was Israel.
“He put a fence around it, dug a pit for the winepress, and built a watchtower.”
The owner did everything needed.
He protected it.
He prepared it to produce.
“Then he rented the vineyard to some farmers and went away on a journey.”

The **tenants** were responsible to care for it.
In the parable, the owner is God.
The vineyard is God's people.
The tenants are the religious leaders who were supposed to care for them.

Cross References

Isaiah 5:2
> He dug up the ground, cleared away the stones, and planted the best vines. He built a watchtower in the middle and dug a winepress. He waited for good grapes, but it produced only wild ones.

Matthew 21:33
> Listen to another story. A landowner planted a vineyard, put a wall around it, dug a winepress, and built a tower. Then he rented it to farmers and left on a trip.

Luke 20:9
> Jesus told the people this story: “A man planted a vineyard, rented it to some farmers, and went away for a long time.”

Spiritual Principle

God has given His people everything needed to bear fruit.

Key Truth

Those entrusted with God's people are accountable to God.

II. AT HARVEST TIME

Mark 12:2 — A Servant Sent

“At harvest time he sent a servant to collect his share of the fruit.”
“At harvest time.”
When the fruit should be ready.
“He sent a servant to collect his share of the fruit.”
The owner had a right to the fruit.
The servants represent the prophets God sent to Israel.
God sent them to call His people to bear the fruit of faith and obedience.

Cross References

Matthew 21:34
> When it was time for the grapes to be picked, he sent his servants to the farmers to get his share.

Luke 20:10
> When it was time to harvest the grapes, he sent a servant to the farmers to get some of the grapes.

2 Chronicles 36:15
> The Lord, the God of their ancestors, sent His messengers to them again and again, because He had pity on His people.

Spiritual Principle

God rightly expects fruit from those He has blessed.

Key Truth

God patiently sends messengers to call His people back.

III. SENT AWAY EMPTY-HANDED

Mark 12:3 — Beaten

“But the tenants seized him, beat him, and sent him away empty-handed.”
The tenants refused to give the owner his fruit.
They beat his servant.
They sent him back with nothing.
This is how many of God's prophets were treated.

Cross References

Matthew 21:35
The farmers grabbed the servants. They beat one, killed another, and stoned a third.
Luke 20:10
But the farmers beat him and sent him away with nothing.
2 Chronicles 36:16
But they made fun of God's messengers, hated His words, and laughed at His prophets.

Spiritual Principle

Rejecting God's messengers is rejecting God Himself.

Key Truth

God's servants have often been mistreated by those they came to help.

IV. TREATED SHAMEFULLY

Mark 12:4 — Another Servant

“He sent another servant; they struck him on the head and treated him shamefully.”
The owner was patient.
He sent another servant.
This one was treated even worse.
Struck on the head.
Humiliated.
The tenants grew bolder in their rebellion.

Cross References

Matthew 21:36
Then he sent more servants than before, and the farmers treated them the same way.
Luke 20:11
He sent another servant, but they beat him, insulted him, and sent him away with nothing.
Jeremiah 20:2
Pashhur had Jeremiah the prophet beaten and put in chains at the Upper Gate of Benjamin.

Spiritual Principle

God is patient, even with those who keep rejecting Him.

Key Truth

Each time the tenants rejected a servant, their hearts grew harder.

V. MANY OTHERS

Mark 12:5 — Some Beaten, Some Killed

“He sent still another, and they killed him. He sent many others; some they beat, others they killed.”
“He sent still another, and they killed him.”
The rebellion turned to murder.
“He sent many others.”
God's patience is astonishing.
He kept sending messengers.
“Some they beat, others they killed.”
Throughout history, God's prophets were rejected.

Cross References

Matthew 21:36
> He sent other servants, more than the first time, and they did the same to them.

Luke 20:12
> He sent a third servant, and they hurt him and threw him out.

Matthew 23:37
> O Jerusalem, you murder God's prophets and throw stones at the messengers He sends. So many times I longed to pull your people close, the way a mother hen tucks her chicks under her wings. But you refused.

Spiritual Principle

God's patience and mercy go far beyond what people deserve.

Key Truth

God kept reaching out, even when His messengers were killed.

VI. HIS BELOVED SON

Mark 12:6 — They Will Respect My Son

“Finally, he had one left to send—his beloved son. He sent him last of all, saying, ‘They will respect my son.’”
“Finally, he had one left to send.”
The owner had one more.
“His beloved son.”
These words echo what the Father said at Jesus' baptism and transfiguration.

“This is My beloved Son.”
Jesus was telling them who He was.
“He sent him last of all.”
The Son is God's final word.
“They will respect my son.”
The owner hoped they would honor his son.

Cross References

Matthew 21:37
Finally he sent his son, thinking, “They will respect my son.”
Luke 20:13
The owner said, “What will I do? I will send my son, whom I love. Maybe they will respect him.”
Hebrews 1:2
Now, at the end of the ages, God has spoken to us by His Son. He made the Son the owner of everything, and through Him He created the universe.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus is God's beloved Son and His final messenger.

Key Truth

After many servants, God sent His Son.

VII. THIS IS THE HEIR

Mark 12:7 — Let's Kill Him

“But the tenants said to one another, ‘This is the heir. Come, let's kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.’”
“This is the heir.”
They knew who he was.
“Come, let's kill him.”
These words echo what Joseph's brothers said about him.
“And the inheritance will be ours.”
They wanted to take the vineyard for themselves.
The leaders wanted control of God's people.
They did not want to give God what belonged to Him.

Cross References

Matthew 21:38
But when the farmers saw the son, they said to each other, “This is the son who will own the vineyard. Let's kill him and take it for ourselves.”
Luke 20:14
When the farmers saw the son, they said, “This is the heir. Let's kill him so the vineyard will be ours.”
Genesis 37:20
Come on, let's kill him and throw him into one of these wells. We can say a wild animal ate him.

Spiritual Principle

The desire to control what belongs to God leads to rebellion against Him.

Spiritual Warning

Wanting God's blessings without God Himself is a dangerous path.

VIII. THROWN OUT OF THE VINEYARD

Mark 12:8 — Killed

“So they seized him, killed him, and threw him out of the vineyard.”
“So they seized him, killed him.”
The son was murdered.
Jesus was predicting His own death.
“And threw him out of the vineyard.”
They did not even bury him.
Jesus would be crucified outside the city walls of Jerusalem.

Cross References

Matthew 21:39
So the farmers took the son, threw him out of the vineyard, and killed him.
Luke 20:15
So they threw the son out of the vineyard and killed him.
Hebrews 13:12
Jesus also suffered outside the city gate to make His people holy with His own blood.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus knew He would be rejected and killed.

Key Truth

The Son was thrown out so that we could be brought in.

IX. WHAT WILL THE OWNER DO?

Mark 12:9 — Give the Vineyard to Others

“What will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come, destroy those tenants, and give the vineyard to others.”
“What will the owner of the vineyard do?”
Jesus asked His listeners to decide.
“He will come, destroy those tenants.”
Judgment would come on those who rejected the Son.
“And give the vineyard to others.”
The care of God's people would be given to new leaders.
This is often understood as the apostles and the church, including both Jews and Gentiles.
This parable was aimed at the leaders who rejected Jesus, not at the Jewish people as a whole.

Jesus Himself, the apostles, and the first believers were all Jewish.
And Paul teaches that God has not rejected His people.

Cross References

Matthew 21:41
They answered, “He will destroy those evil men and rent the vineyard to other farmers who will give him his share at harvest time.”
Luke 20:16
He will come and kill those farmers and give the vineyard to others.
Romans 11:11
Did Israel trip and fall for good? Certainly not! Their stumble opened the way for Gentiles to be saved, and that will stir Israel to want it too.

Spiritual Principle

Those who reject God's Son face His judgment.

Key Truth

God's vineyard will bear fruit, even if the tenants change.

X. THE REJECTED STONE

Mark 12:10 — The Cornerstone

“Haven't you read this Scripture: “The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone;”
“Haven't you read this Scripture?”
Jesus pointed to Psalm 118.
The same psalm the crowds had sung when He entered Jerusalem.
“The stone the builders rejected.”
The builders were the religious leaders.
They rejected Jesus as useless.
“Has become the cornerstone.”
The **cornerstone** was the most important stone in a building.
It held everything together.
The rejected One would become the foundation of God's new temple, His people.

Cross References

Psalm 118:22
The stone that the builders threw away has become the most important stone of all.
Matthew 21:42
Jesus said, “Have you never read in the Scriptures: ‘The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone’?”
Acts 4:11
Jesus is “the stone that you builders rejected, which has become the cornerstone.”

Spiritual Principle

The One the world rejects, God makes the foundation.

Key Truth

Jesus was rejected by men but chosen by God.

XI. MARVELOUS IN OUR EYES

Mark 12:11 — The Lord Has Done This

“the Lord has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes”?”
“The Lord has done this.”
The exaltation of Jesus is God's work.
What people meant for evil, God used for good.
“And it is marvelous in our eyes.”
The resurrection of the rejected Son would amaze the world.

Cross References

Psalm 118:23
The Lord did this, and it is wonderful to us.
Matthew 21:42
This was the Lord's doing, and it is amazing to see.
1 Peter 2:7
This stone is precious to you who believe. But to those who do not believe, “the stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.”

Spiritual Principle

God turns rejection into glory.

Key Truth

The cross that looked like defeat became God's marvelous victory.

XII. THEY KNEW HE MEANT THEM

Mark 12:12 — Afraid of the Crowd

“The religious leaders knew Jesus was speaking this parable against them. They wanted to arrest Him but were afraid of the crowd, so they left Him and went away.”
“The religious leaders knew Jesus was speaking this parable against them.”
They understood exactly.
“They wanted to arrest Him.”
Instead of repenting, they wanted to get rid of Him.
They were proving the parable true.
“But were afraid of the crowd.”
They feared people, not God.
“So they left Him and went away.”
For now.

Cross References

Matthew 21:46
They wanted to arrest Him, but they were afraid of the people, who thought Jesus was a prophet.
Luke 20:19
The teachers of the law and the leading priests wanted to arrest Jesus right away because they knew the story was about them. But they were afraid of the people.
John 7:30
They tried to seize Him, but no one laid a hand on Him, because His time had not yet come.

Spiritual Principle

Understanding the truth is not enough; we must respond to it.

Spiritual Warning

They understood the warning and still went their own way.

XIII. A TRAP

Mark 12:13 — Pharisees and Herodians

“Later they sent some Pharisees and Herodians to trap Him with His words.”
“They sent some Pharisees and Herodians.”
An unusual team.
The Pharisees disliked Roman rule.
The Herodians supported Herod, who ruled with Rome's approval.
They were usually on opposite sides.
But they joined together against Jesus.
“To trap Him with His words.”
Like hunters setting a snare.

Cross References

Matthew 22:16
They sent some of their followers along with the Herodians.
Luke 20:20
So they watched Jesus closely and sent spies who pretended to be sincere. They wanted to trap Him with His words.
Mark 3:6
The Pharisees went out and began planning with the Herodians how to kill Jesus.

Spiritual Principle

Enemies of the truth often unite against it.

Key Truth

Former rivals become partners when they share a common enemy.

XIV. SHOULD WE PAY TAXES?

Mark 12:14 — Flattery and a Question

“They came and said, “Teacher, we know You are a man of integrity. You aren't swayed by others and teach the way of God truthfully. Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar or not? Should we pay or shouldn't we?””
“Teacher, we know You are a man of integrity.”
They began with flattery.
What they said was true, but they did not mean it.
“Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar or not?”
This was the trap.
If Jesus said “Yes,” the people would be angry.
They hated Roman taxes.
If Jesus said “No,” the Herodians could report Him to Rome as a rebel.

Cross References

Matthew 22:17
Tell us what You think. Is it right to pay taxes to Caesar or not?
Luke 20:22
Is it right for us to pay taxes to Caesar or not?
Romans 13:7
Pay whatever you owe. Pay your taxes to those who collect them, and show respect to those who should be respected.

Spiritual Principle

Flattery is often a tool of those with hidden motives.

Spiritual Warning

Be careful when praise comes before a trap.

XV. WHY ARE YOU TRYING TO TRAP ME?

Mark 12:15 — Bring Me a Denarius

“But Jesus knew their hypocrisy. He asked, “Why are you trying to trap Me? Bring Me a denarius and let Me look at it.””
“But Jesus knew their hypocrisy.”
He saw through their flattery.
“Why are you trying to trap Me?”
Jesus exposed their motives.
“Bring Me a denarius.”
A **denarius** was a Roman silver coin.
It was the coin used to pay the tax.
Interestingly, Jesus asked them to bring one.
They had one with them, even in the temple.

Cross References

Matthew 22:19
Show Me the coin used to pay the tax. They brought Him a denarius.
Luke 20:24
Show Me a coin.
Matthew 22:18
But Jesus knew their evil plans and said, “You hypocrites! Why are you trying to trap Me?”

Spiritual Principle

Jesus sees through every hidden motive.

Key Truth

No trap can catch the One who knows every heart.

XVI. WHOSE IMAGE?

Mark 12:16 — Caesar's

“They brought the coin, and He asked, “Whose image is this? And whose inscription?” They replied, “Caesar's.””
“Whose image is this?”
The coin had the face of the emperor.
“And whose inscription?”
It probably described Caesar as the son of a god.
“They replied, ‘Caesar's.’”
The coin belonged to Caesar.
It bore his image.
But Jesus was about to make a deeper point.
People bear the image of God.

Cross References

Matthew 22:20
Jesus asked, “Whose picture and name are on this coin?”
Luke 20:24
Whose picture and words are on it?
Genesis 1:27
God created people in His own image. In God's image He created them.

Spiritual Principle

What bears an image belongs to the one whose image it carries.

Key Truth

The coin bore Caesar's image; we bear God's.

XVII. GIVE TO GOD WHAT IS GOD'S

Mark 12:17 — They Were Amazed

“Then Jesus said to them, “Give back to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's.” And they were amazed at Him.”
“Give back to Caesar what is Caesar's.”
Paying taxes is right.
Believers have duties to the government.
“And to God what is God's.”
But God's claim is greater.
The coin had Caesar's image, so it belonged to Caesar.
We have God's image, so we belong to God.
Give Caesar your coins.
Give God your whole self.
“And they were amazed at Him.”
His answer escaped the trap and taught a deep truth.

Cross References

Matthew 22:21
Give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar, and give to God what belongs to God.
Luke 20:25
Then give Caesar what is Caesar's, and give God what is God's.
Romans 13:1
Each person should respect those in charge of the government, since all authority exists only because God permits it.

Spiritual Principle

Give earthly authorities their due, but give God your whole life.

Application

Are you giving God what belongs to Him?

XVIII. THE SADDUCEES

Mark 12:18 — Denying the Resurrection

“Then the Sadducees, who deny there is a resurrection, came to Him with a question:”
“Then the Sadducees.”
This is the only time the Sadducees appear in Mark.
They were a group of wealthy, powerful priests.
They controlled the temple.
“Who deny there is a resurrection.”
They accepted only the first five books of the Bible as fully authoritative.
They did not believe in angels, spirits, or life after death.

Cross References

Matthew 22:23
That same day some Sadducees came to Jesus. They say there is no rising from the dead.
Luke 20:27
Some Sadducees, who say people will not rise from the dead, came to Jesus.
Acts 23:8
The Sadducees say there is no resurrection, no angels, and no spirits. But the Pharisees believe in all of them.

Spiritual Principle

Denying the resurrection leaves people without hope beyond this life.

Key Truth

The question of life after death is one of the most important questions of all.

XIX. MOSES WROTE FOR US

Mark 12:19 — The Brother's Duty

“Teacher, Moses wrote for us that if a man's brother dies and leaves a wife but no children, the man must marry the widow to raise up offspring for his brother.”
They pointed to a law from Deuteronomy 25.
If a man died without children, his brother married the widow.
Their first son would carry on the dead brother's name.
This protected widows and kept families going.

Cross References

Deuteronomy 25:5
If brothers live together and one dies without a son, his widow must not marry outside the family. Her husband's brother must marry her and do his duty to her.
Matthew 22:24
Teacher, Moses said that if a man dies without children, his brother must marry the widow and have children for him.
Luke 20:28
Moses wrote that if a man's brother dies and leaves a wife but no children, the man must marry the widow and have children for his brother.

Spiritual Principle

God's law cared for widows and families.

Key Truth

The Sadducees used God's caring law to mock God's promise.

XX. SEVEN BROTHERS

Mark 12:20 — The First Died

“Now there were seven brothers. The first married and died without children.”
The Sadducees made up a story.
Seven brothers.
The first married and died without children.
The story was meant to make belief in the resurrection look foolish.

Cross References

Matthew 22:25
There were seven brothers among us. The first married and died. Since he had no children, his brother married the widow.
Luke 20:29
There were seven brothers. The first married and died without children.
Genesis 38:8
Judah said to Onan, “Marry your brother's widow and have a child for your brother.”

Spiritual Principle

Some questions are asked to mock, not to learn.

Key Truth

A made-up puzzle cannot defeat God's truth.

XXI. THE SECOND AND THE THIRD

Mark 12:21 — The Same Happened

“The second married her but also died without children. The same happened with the third.”
The story continued.
The second brother married her.
He died too.
Then the third.
The Sadducees thought the problem was getting bigger and more impossible.

Cross References

Matthew 22:26
The same thing happened to the second and third brothers.
Luke 20:30
Then the second brother married her.
Genesis 38:9
Onan knew the child would not be his.

Spiritual Principle

Human puzzles do not limit God.

Key Truth

The bigger they made the puzzle, the more they showed they did not know God's power.

XXII. NONE LEFT CHILDREN

Mark 12:22 — The Woman Died Too

“In fact, none of the seven left any children. Last of all, the woman died too.”
All seven brothers died.
None had children.
Then the woman died.
The story ended in a graveyard.
That was the Sadducees' view of life.
It all ends in death.

Cross References

Matthew 22:27
Finally, the woman died.
Luke 20:32
Finally, the woman died too.
Ruth 1:5
Then Mahlon and Kilion also died, and Naomi was left without her husband and her two sons.

Spiritual Principle

Without the resurrection, every story ends in the grave.

Key Truth

But God's story does not end in a graveyard.

XXIII. WHOSE WIFE WILL SHE BE?

Mark 12:23 — At the Resurrection

“At the resurrection, whose wife will she be, since all seven were married to her?””
Here was their trick question.
If there is a resurrection, whose wife will she be?
They thought this proved the resurrection was impossible.
They assumed life after death would be just like life now.

Cross References

Matthew 22:28
At the resurrection, whose wife will she be? All seven were married to her.
Luke 20:33
So in the resurrection, whose wife will she be?

1 Corinthians 15:12
If we preach that Christ was raised from the dead, how can some of you say the dead will not be raised?

Spiritual Principle

The life to come is not simply a copy of this life.

Key Truth

The Sadducees imagined heaven too small.

XXIV. YOU DO NOT KNOW

Mark 12:24 — The Scriptures and the Power of God

“Jesus replied, “Are you not in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God?”
“Are you not in error?”
Jesus said plainly they were wrong.
“Because you do not know the Scriptures.”
They knew the words, but they missed the meaning.
“Or the power of God.”
They did not believe God could raise the dead or create a new kind of life.
Two causes of error.
Not knowing God's word.
Not knowing God's power.

Cross References

Matthew 22:29
Jesus answered, “You are wrong because you do not know the Scriptures or God's power.”
Luke 24:25
Jesus said, “You are foolish and slow to believe everything the prophets said.”
John 5:39
You dig into the Scriptures because you believe they lead to eternal life. But they are pointing to Me the whole time.

Spiritual Principle

Error comes from not knowing God's word or God's power.

Application

Are you growing in your knowledge of God's word and His power?

XXV. LIKE THE ANGELS

Mark 12:25 — Neither Marry Nor Are Given in Marriage

“When the dead rise, they will neither marry nor be given in marriage; they will be like the angels in heaven.”
“When the dead rise.”
Jesus affirmed the resurrection.
“They will neither marry nor be given in marriage.”
Life in the resurrection will be different.
Marriage is a gift for this life, including the purpose of having children.
In the resurrection, no one dies, so that purpose is complete.
“They will be like the angels in heaven.”
Not that people become angels.
But like angels, they will not marry or die.
This does not mean love between husbands and wives will be lost.
In God's presence, all relationships will be made complete and perfect.

Cross References

Matthew 22:30
In the resurrection people do not marry. They are like the angels in heaven.
Luke 20:36
They cannot die anymore. They are like angels and are children of God because they have been raised from death.
1 Corinthians 15:42
It is the same with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is planted will decay, but it is raised to a life that cannot be destroyed.

Spiritual Principle

The resurrection life will be far greater than this life.

Key Truth

Heaven will not take away anything good; it will make everything complete.

XXVI. THE GOD OF ABRAHAM

Mark 12:26 — At the Burning Bush

“And about the resurrection of the dead—have you not read in the book of Moses, in the account of the burning bush, how God said to him, ‘I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob’?”
“Have you not read in the book of Moses?”
Jesus used the books the Sadducees accepted.
“In the account of the burning bush.”
Exodus 3.
“I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.”

God said **I am**, not **I was**.
Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had died long before.
But God was still their God.
That means they were still alive to Him.

Cross References

Exodus 3:6
He said, “I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.” Moses hid his face, because he was afraid to look at God.
Matthew 22:32
I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.
Luke 20:37
Even Moses showed that the dead are raised when he wrote about the burning bush and called the Lord “the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.”

Spiritual Principle

God's faithfulness to His people does not end at death.

Key Truth

God still calls Himself the God of those who died long ago.

XXVII. THE GOD OF THE LIVING

Mark 12:27 — Badly Mistaken

“He is not the God of the dead but of the living. You are badly mistaken!””
“He is not the God of the dead but of the living.”
God's relationship with His people is so strong that death cannot break it.
Those who belong to God live to Him.
“You are badly mistaken!”
Jesus ended firmly.
Denying the resurrection is a serious error.

Cross References

Matthew 22:32
He is not the God of the dead but of the living.
Luke 20:38
He is the God of the living, not the dead, because all people are alive to Him.
Romans 14:8
Our lives are lived for the Lord, and our deaths are for the Lord too. Living or dying, we are His.

Spiritual Principle

Those who belong to God are alive to Him forever.

Key Truth

Death cannot end what God has begun.

XXVIII. WHICH IS THE MOST IMPORTANT?

Mark 12:28 — A Scribe's Question

“One of the scribes came and asked Him, “Of all the commandments, which is the most important?””
“One of the scribes came.”
This scribe was different.
He had listened to Jesus answer the others.
Mark tells us he noticed Jesus answered well.
“Of all the commandments, which is the most important?”
Religious teachers counted 613 commands in the law.
They often debated which was greatest.
This seems to have been an honest question.

Cross References

Matthew 22:36
Teacher, which command in the law is the most important?
Luke 10:25
An expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. He asked, “Teacher, what must I do to get eternal life?”
Matthew 22:35
One of the Pharisees, an expert in the law, asked Jesus a question to test Him.

Spiritual Principle

Honest questions about God's will deserve honest answers.

Key Truth

Not every religious leader opposed Jesus; some were truly seeking.

XXIX. THE LORD IS ONE

Mark 12:29 — Hear, O Israel

“Jesus replied, “The most important one is this: Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one.”
“Hear, O Israel.”
Jesus quoted Deuteronomy 6:4.
This is called the **Shema**, from the Hebrew word for “hear.”
Faithful Jews prayed it every morning and evening.
“The Lord our God, the Lord is one.”
There is only one true God.
All love and loyalty begin with knowing who God is.

Cross References

Deuteronomy 6:4
Listen, Israel: The Lord is our God. The Lord is the only God.
Matthew 22:37
Jesus answered, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and mind.”
1 Corinthians 8:6
We know there is one God, the Father, who made all things and for whom we live. And there is one Lord, Jesus Christ.

Spiritual Principle

Our love for God begins with knowing that He alone is God.

Key Truth

There is one God, and He deserves all of us.

XXX. WITH ALL YOUR HEART

Mark 12:30 — Love the Lord Your God

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.’”
“Love the Lord your God.”
The greatest command is not a rule to keep.
It is love to give.
“With all your heart.”
Your desires and affections.
“With all your soul.”
Your whole life and being.
“With all your mind.”
Your thoughts and understanding.
“And with all your strength.”
Your energy and abilities.
Notice the word **all**, repeated four times.
God wants everything.
Not part of us.
All of us.

Cross References

Deuteronomy 6:5
Love the Lord your God with your whole heart, your whole being, and all your strength.
Matthew 22:37
Love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind.
Luke 10:27
He answered, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, strength, and mind. And love your neighbor as you love yourself.”

Spiritual Principle

God deserves our whole-hearted love.

Application

Is there any part of your life you are holding back from God?

XXXI. LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR

Mark 12:31 — The Second Command

“The second is this: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no commandment greater than these.””
“The second is this.”
Jesus was asked for one.
He gave two.
They belong together.
“Love your neighbor as yourself.”
He quoted Leviticus 19.
Care for others the way you naturally care for yourself.
“There is no commandment greater than these.”
All of God's law is summed up in love.
Love for God shows itself in love for people.

Cross References

Leviticus 19:18
> Do not take revenge or hold a grudge against your people. Love your neighbor as yourself. I am the Lord.

Matthew 22:39
> The second command is like the first: Love your neighbor as you love yourself.

Romans 13:9
> Commands like “Do not commit adultery” and “Do not steal,” and every other command, all come down to this: “Love others the way you love yourself.”

Spiritual Principle

Love for God and love for neighbor cannot be separated.

Application

Who is the neighbor God is calling you to love this week?

XXXII. WELL SAID, TEACHER

Mark 12:32 — The Scribe Agrees

“The scribe said to Him, “Well said, Teacher. You are right in saying God is one and there is no other but Him.”
“Well said, Teacher.”

The scribe agreed with Jesus.
“You are right in saying God is one and there is no other but Him.”
He repeated the truth back.
Only Mark records this friendly exchange.
In the middle of so much hostility, here was an open heart.

Cross References

Deuteronomy 4:35
You were shown these things so that you would know the Lord is God. There is no other god besides Him.
Deuteronomy 6:4
The Lord our God is the one and only Lord.
Isaiah 45:5
I am the Lord. No one else is God. There is no other God but Me.

Spiritual Principle

An open heart recognizes truth when it hears it.

Key Truth

God has seekers even among those you might not expect.

XXXIII. MORE THAN SACRIFICES

Mark 12:33 — Love Above Ritual

“To love Him with all your heart, understanding, soul, and strength, and to love your neighbor as yourself is more important than all burnt offerings and sacrifices.””
The scribe saw something deep.
Love is more important than religious ritual.
He was standing in the temple, where sacrifices were offered every day.
Yet he understood that God wants hearts more than offerings.
The prophets had taught this long before.

Cross References

Hosea 6:6
What I want from you is loyal love, not animal offerings. I would rather you know Me than burn sacrifices to Me.
1 Samuel 15:22
The Lord is not pleased by offerings more than by doing what He says. Obeying Him is better than any sacrifice.
Micah 6:8
The Lord has already shown you what is good. Be fair, love showing kindness, and live humbly before your God.

Spiritual Principle

God values love and obedience above religious ritual.

Key Truth

God would rather have your heart than your offering.

XXXIV. NOT FAR FROM THE KINGDOM

Mark 12:34 — No More Questions

“When Jesus saw that he had answered wisely, He said, “You are not far from the kingdom of God.” From then on, no one dared ask Him any more questions.”
“When Jesus saw that he had answered wisely.”
Jesus noticed his understanding.
“You are not far from the kingdom of God.”
He was close.
He understood the truth.
But being close is not the same as being in.
He still needed to follow Jesus.
“From then on, no one dared ask Him any more questions.”
Every challenge had been answered.
His enemies gave up trying to trap Him with words.

Cross References

Matthew 22:46
> No one could answer Him a word, and from that day on no one dared to ask Him any more questions.

Luke 20:40
> No one dared to ask Him another question.

Acts 26:28
> Agrippa said to Paul, “Do you think you can persuade me to become a Christian so quickly?”

Spiritual Principle

Being near the kingdom is not the same as entering it.

Application

Are you close to the kingdom, or have you entered it by following Jesus?

XXXV. THE SON OF DAVID

Mark 12:35 — Jesus Asks a Question

“While Jesus was teaching in the temple courts, He asked, “Why do the scribes say that the Messiah is the son of David?”
Now Jesus asked a question.
“Why do the scribes say that the Messiah is the son of David?”
Everyone agreed the Messiah would come from David's family.
That was true.
But Jesus wanted them to see that the Messiah is more than David's son.

Cross References

Matthew 22:42
What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is He? They answered, “The son of David.”
Luke 20:41
Jesus said to them, “Why do people say the Christ is the son of David?”
Romans 1:3
The good news is about His Son, who came from the family of David as a human.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus is more than anyone expected Him to be.

Key Truth

The Messiah is David's son, but also far more.

XXXVI. THE LORD SAID TO MY LORD

Mark 12:36 — David Spoke by the Spirit

“David himself, speaking by the Holy Spirit, said: ‘The Lord said to my Lord: Sit at my right hand until I put Your enemies under Your feet.’”
“David himself, speaking by the Holy Spirit.”
Jesus affirmed that Scripture is inspired by the Spirit.
“The Lord said to my Lord.”
He quoted Psalm 110.
The Lord is God the Father.
My Lord is the Messiah.
David called the Messiah his Lord.
“Sit at my right hand until I put Your enemies under Your feet.”
The Messiah would sit in the place of highest honor beside God.
Psalm 110 is the Old Testament passage most often quoted in the New Testament.

Cross References

Psalm 110:1
The Lord said to my Lord, “Sit at My right side until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet.”
Matthew 22:44
The Lord said to my Lord: Sit at My right side until I put Your enemies under Your feet.
Acts 2:34
David did not go up to heaven, but he said, “The Lord said to my Lord: Sit at My right side.”

Spiritual Principle

The Messiah shares the throne of God.

Key Truth

The Scriptures, spoken by the Spirit, point to Jesus as Lord.

XXXVII. HOW CAN HE BE HIS SON?

Mark 12:37 — The Crowd Listened with Delight

“David himself calls Him ‘Lord.’ How then can He be his son?” The large crowd listened to Him with delight.”
“David himself calls Him ‘Lord.’”
In that culture, a father would not call his son “Lord.”
“How then can He be his son?”
The answer is that the Messiah is both.
He is David's son as a human.
And David's Lord as the Son of God.
Jesus is both fully human and fully God.
“The large crowd listened to Him with delight.”
The ordinary people loved to hear Him.

Cross References

Matthew 22:45
If David calls Him “Lord,” how can He be David's son?
Luke 20:44
David calls Him “Lord.” So how can He be David's son?
Revelation 22:16
I am the Root and the Descendant of David, the bright Morning Star.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus is both David's son and David's Lord.

Key Truth

Jesus is the root of David's family and its descendant.

XXXVIII. BEWARE OF THE SCRIBES

Mark 12:38 — Flowing Robes and Greetings

“As He taught, Jesus said, “Beware of the scribes. They like to walk around in flowing robes and receive greetings in the marketplaces,”
“Beware of the scribes.”
Not all scribes were bad.
Jesus had just praised one.
But many were proud.
“They like to walk around in flowing robes.”
Long robes showed importance.
“And receive greetings in the marketplaces.”
They loved being recognized.
They wanted people to notice them.
This warning applies to religious leaders in every age.

Cross References

Matthew 23:6
They love to have the most important seats at feasts and in the synagogues.
Luke 20:46
Beware of the teachers of the law. They like to walk around in long robes and love to be greeted with respect in the marketplaces.
Matthew 6:5
When you pray, do not act like the fakes who love to pray standing up in the synagogues and on the street corners where everyone can see them.

Spiritual Principle

Seeking honor from people is a sign of a proud heart.

Spiritual Warning

Religious leadership can become a stage for pride.

XXXIX. THE BEST SEATS

Mark 12:39 — Places of Honor

“they love the most important seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at banquets.”
“They love the most important seats in the synagogues.”
The front seats faced the people.
Everyone could see them.
“And the places of honor at banquets.”
The seats closest to the host.
They loved to be seen as important.
Jesus had just taught that the first must be last.
These leaders wanted to be first.

Cross References

Matthew 23:6
They love the places of honor at banquets and the best seats in the synagogues.
Luke 20:46
They love the most important seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at feasts.
Luke 14:7
When Jesus noticed how the guests chose the places of honor at the table, He told them a story.

Spiritual Principle

God's people should seek to serve, not to be honored.

Application

Do you seek the best seat or the place of service?

XL. DEVOURING WIDOWS' HOUSES

Mark 12:40 — Long Prayers for a Show

“They devour widows' houses and for a show make lengthy prayers. These men will be punished most severely.””
“They devour widows' houses.”
This is a terrible charge.
Some took advantage of widows.
Perhaps by managing their property dishonestly.
Or by expecting gifts from those who could not afford them.
“And for a show make lengthy prayers.”
Their long prayers were for show.
They covered their greed with religion.
“These men will be punished most severely.”
Using religion to harm the weak brings the heaviest judgment.

Cross References

Matthew 23:14
> How terrible for you, teachers of the law and Pharisees! You take away widows' houses and make long prayers to show off.

Luke 20:47
> They take the homes of widows and make long prayers to look good. They will be punished even more.

Isaiah 10:2
> They take what belongs to the poor and rob widows and orphans.

Spiritual Principle

God judges most severely those who use religion to exploit the weak.

Spiritual Warning

Long prayers cannot hide a greedy heart from God.

XLI. WATCHING THE OFFERINGS

Mark 12:41 — The Rich Gave Large Amounts

“Jesus sat down opposite the place where the offerings were put and watched the crowd putting their money into the temple treasury. Many rich people threw in large amounts.”
“Jesus sat down opposite the place where the offerings were put.”
In the temple there were offering boxes shaped like trumpets.
“And watched the crowd putting their money into the temple treasury.”
Jesus watched how people gave.
He still does.
“Many rich people threw in large amounts.”
The rich gave a lot.

Their coins may have made a loud sound in the metal boxes.

Cross References

Luke 21:1
Jesus looked up and saw rich people putting their gifts into the temple offering box.
2 Kings 12:9
Jehoiada the priest took a chest, bored a hole in its lid, and placed it beside the altar.
Deuteronomy 16:17
Each of you must bring a gift in proportion to how the Lord your God has blessed you.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus sees not only what we give but how we give.

Key Truth

God measures giving by the heart, not the amount.

XLII. TWO SMALL COINS

Mark 12:42 — A Poor Widow

“But a poor widow came and put in two very small copper coins, worth only a fraction of a penny.”
“But a poor widow came.”
Right after Jesus warned about those who devour widows' houses.
“And put in two very small copper coins.”
These were the smallest coins in use.
“Worth only a fraction of a penny.”
Almost nothing by the world's measure.
But she could have kept one coin for herself.
She gave both.

Cross References

Luke 21:2
He also saw a poor widow putting in two very small copper coins.
2 Kings 4:2
Elisha asked, “How can I help you? Tell me, what do you have in your house?” She said, “I have nothing except a small jar of olive oil.”
1 Kings 17:12
She answered, “As surely as the Lord your God lives, I have no bread, only a handful of flour and a little oil.”

Spiritual Principle

The smallest gift given with a whole heart is precious to God.

Key Truth

She could have kept one coin, but she gave both.

XLIII. SHE HAS PUT IN MORE

Mark 12:43 — Jesus Calls His Disciples

“Calling His disciples to Him, Jesus said, “Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others.”
“Calling His disciples to Him.”
This was an important lesson.
“This poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others.”
How could two tiny coins be more?
Because God does not measure gifts by amount.
He measures them by sacrifice and love.

Cross References

Luke 21:3
He said, “I tell you the truth, this poor widow gave more than all of them.”
2 Corinthians 8:12
If you are willing to give, God accepts your gift based on what you have, not on what you do not have.
2 Corinthians 9:7
Each person should give what he has made up his mind to give, not with regret or because he feels forced. God loves people who give gladly.

Spiritual Principle

God values the heart and sacrifice behind a gift more than its size.

Key Truth

In God's accounting, two small coins can outweigh a fortune.

XLIV. ALL SHE HAD TO LIVE ON

Mark 12:44 — Out of Her Poverty

“They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, gave everything—all she had to live on.””
“They all gave out of their wealth.”
The rich gave what they could spare.
It did not change their lives.
“But she, out of her poverty, gave everything.”
She gave what she needed.
“All she had to live on.”
She trusted God completely.
She held nothing back.
She is a picture of loving God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength.
And in a few days, Jesus would give everything too.

Cross References

Luke 21:4
All these people gave out of what they had left over. But she gave out of her poverty, all she had to live on.

2 Corinthians 8:2
They have been tested by great troubles, and they are very poor. But their great joy made them give generously.

1 Kings 17:13
Elijah said to her, “Don't be afraid. Go home and do as you said. But first make a small loaf of bread for me from what you have.”

Spiritual Principle

Wholehearted giving trusts God with everything.

Key Truth

The widow gave everything she had, and soon Jesus would give everything He had.

XLV. SIX GREAT LESSONS FROM MARK 12

1. God's Son Is the Heir

“Finally, he had one left to send—his beloved son.”

Principle:

The parable of the tenants points directly to Jesus, rejected yet exalted.

2. We Owe Ultimate Loyalty to God

“Give back to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's.”

Principle:

Earthly duties are real, but God's claim on us is greater.

3. God of the Living

“He is not the God of the dead but of the living.”

Principle:

The resurrection is real, for God rules over life, not death.

4. The Greatest Commandments

“Love the Lord your God… Love your neighbor as yourself.”

Principle:

Love God fully and love others selflessly.

5. True Giving

“This poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others.”

Principle:

God values sacrifice from the heart, not the amount given.

6. Beware of Hypocrisy

“Beware of the scribes.”

Principle:

Outward religion without love and humility brings judgment.

XLVI. THE PARABLE OF THE VINEYARD EXPLAINED

Verses 1–12 tell the story of God's dealings with His people.

The Owner

God.

The Vineyard

God's people.

The Tenants

The religious leaders entrusted with caring for God's people.

The Servants

The prophets God sent again and again.

The Beloved Son

Jesus.

The Rejected Stone

Jesus, rejected by men but made the cornerstone by God.

A Word of Caution

This parable was spoken against the leaders who rejected Jesus.
It must never be used to look down on the Jewish people.
Jesus and His first followers were Jewish, and God's love for Israel continues.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

God has been patient and generous, sending servant after servant, and finally His own beloved Son.

XLVII. FOUR QUESTIONS, FOUR ANSWERS

Mark 12 records several challenges to Jesus.

1. About Taxes

Question: Should we pay taxes to Caesar?
Answer: Give Caesar his coin, but give God yourself.

2. About the Resurrection

Question: Whose wife will she be?
Answer: You do not know the Scriptures or the power of God; He is the God of the living.

3. About the Greatest Command

Question: Which command is most important?
Answer: Love God with everything, and love your neighbor as yourself.

4. Jesus' Own Question

Question: How can the Messiah be both David's son and David's Lord?
Answer: Because He is both human and divine.

Key Truth

Every challenge to Jesus revealed more of His wisdom and glory.

XLVIII. TWO KINDS OF RELIGION

Verses 38–44 show a sharp contrast.

The Proud Scribes

- Wore flowing robes.
- Loved greetings and the best seats.
- Prayed long prayers for show.
- Took advantage of widows.
- Will be judged severely.

The Poor Widow

- Had almost nothing.
- Went unnoticed by the crowd.
- Gave two small coins.
- Gave all she had to live on.

- Was honored by Jesus.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

God is not impressed by religious show, but He notices every act of humble devotion.

XLIX. WHAT MARK 12 TEACHES ABOUT JESUS

He Is God's Beloved Son

“His beloved son.”

He Is the Rejected Cornerstone

“The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.”

He Knows Every Heart

“Jesus knew their hypocrisy.”

He Knows the Scriptures and the Power of God

“You do not know the Scriptures or the power of God.”

He Teaches the Heart of God's Law

“There is no commandment greater than these.”

He Is David's Son and David's Lord

“David himself calls Him ‘Lord.’”

He Notices the Overlooked

“This poor widow has put more.”

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Jesus is the beloved Son and the Lord of David, whose wisdom silences every challenge.

L. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR PERSONAL STUDY

Question 1

Who do the tenants represent in the parable?
The religious leaders who were supposed to care for God's people but rejected His messengers.

Question 2

Who is the beloved son?
Jesus, the Son of God.

Question 3

What does the rejected stone becoming the cornerstone mean?
Jesus, rejected by people, would become the foundation of God's people.

Question 4

What was the trap in the question about taxes?
If Jesus said yes, the people would be angry; if no, Rome would see Him as a rebel.

Question 5

What did Jesus mean by giving to God what is God's?
We bear God's image, so we belong to Him completely.

Question 6

What did the Sadducees believe?
They denied the resurrection, angels, and spirits.

Question 7

How did Jesus prove the resurrection from the book of Moses?
God said, “I am the God of Abraham,” showing they are still alive to Him.

Question 8

What are the two greatest commandments?
Love God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength, and love your neighbor as yourself.

Question 9

Why did Jesus say the scribe was “not far” from the kingdom?
He understood the truth, but still needed to follow Jesus.

Question 10

How can the Messiah be both David's son and David's Lord?
He is fully human, descended from David, and fully God, Lord over David.

Question 11

Why did Jesus warn against the scribes?
They sought honor, took advantage of widows, and prayed for show.

Question 12

What should Mark 12 change about the way Christians live today?
Mark 12 should cause believers to live:

- Bearing fruit for God.
- Honoring Jesus as God's beloved Son.
- Being responsible citizens while giving God their whole lives.
- Living with hope in the resurrection.
- Loving God with all their heart, soul, mind, and strength.
- Loving their neighbors as themselves.
- Avoiding religious pride and show.
- Giving to God with wholehearted devotion.

LI. PERSONAL APPLICATION

Mark 12 asks several important questions.

Am I Giving God the Fruit He Deserves?

Or keeping the vineyard for myself?

Have I Received the Beloved Son?

Or rejected Him?

Am I Giving God What Is His?

Is my whole life His?

Do I Live with Hope in the Resurrection?

Does it change how I face death?

Do I Love God with All of Me?

Heart, soul, mind, and strength?

Whom Am I Called to Love?

Who is my neighbor today?

Am I Seeking Honor from People?

Or serving humbly?

How Do I Give?

Out of my extra, or with my whole heart?

LII. A CRAWFORD BIBLE STUDY PRINCIPLE

“Two Small Coins”

The temple was full of people giving.
Rich men poured in large amounts.
Their coins made a loud noise in the metal boxes.
People noticed.
Then a poor widow came.
She dropped in two tiny copper coins.
They barely made a sound.
No one noticed.
No one except Jesus.
He called His disciples and said she had given more than all the others.
How?
The others gave what they could spare.
She gave what she could not spare.
She gave everything.
This creates a powerful principle.
God does not measure our gifts by their size.
He measures them by what they cost us and the love behind them.
And a few days later, Jesus would give everything He had for us.

Principle:

God sees and treasures the gifts that come from a wholehearted love.

LIII. FINAL APPLICATION

Mark Chapter 12 is full of wisdom and challenge.
It shows God's patience in sending His Son.
It calls us to give God what belongs to Him.
It assures us that God is the God of the living.
It reveals the greatest commandments.
It shows Jesus as both David's son and David's Lord.
It warns against religious pride.
And it honors the wholehearted gift of a poor widow.
Mark 12 therefore reminds us:
Never reject God's beloved Son.
Never hold back what belongs to God.
Never lose hope in the resurrection.
Never separate love for God from love for neighbor.
Never use religion for show.
The church does not need people who only look religious.
It needs:
Believers who bear fruit.

Hearts that belong wholly to God.
Lives that love their neighbors.
And givers who give with their whole hearts.
The same Jesus still calls:
Tell people that God sent His beloved Son.
Tell people that God is the God of the living.
Tell people that the greatest command is to love.
Tell people that God sees every humble gift.
And as you live:
Give God what is His.
Love Him with everything.
Love your neighbor.
Give your all.

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father,
Thank You for Your patience in sending servant after servant to Your people.
Thank You for sending Your beloved Son.
Thank You that the stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.
Thank You that we bear Your image and belong to You.
Thank You that You are the God of the living, and that death cannot hold Your people.
Thank You for calling us to love You and to love our neighbors.
Thank You that You see every humble gift given with a whole heart.
Forgive us when we have kept for ourselves what belongs to You.
Forgive us when we have loved You with only part of our hearts.
Forgive us when we have failed to love our neighbors.
Forgive us when we have sought honor from people.
Forgive us when we have given only what we could spare.
Help us give You our whole lives.
Fill us with hope in the resurrection.
Teach us to love You with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength.
Teach us to love our neighbors as ourselves.
And make us wholehearted givers like the poor widow.
“Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.”
In Jesus' name, Amen.

Key Verse

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.” — Mark 12:30

Central Truth

Jesus is God's beloved Son and David's Lord, whose wisdom silences every challenge, and He calls us to give God what belongs to Him, to trust the God of the living, to love God and neighbor with everything we have, and to give with wholehearted devotion.

Mark 12 in One Sentence

Jesus tells the parable of the tenants who killed the owner's beloved son, answers challenges about taxes and the resurrection, names love for God and neighbor as the greatest commandments, reveals the Messiah as David's Lord, warns against proud religious leaders, and honors a poor widow who gave all she had.

CRAWFORD BIBLE COMMENTARY

BIBLE STUDY

Mark Chapter 13 — The End of the Age and the Coming of the Son of Man

A Verse-by-Verse Bible Study from the Crawford Standard Bible

Introduction

Mark Chapter 13 is the longest speech of Jesus in Mark's Gospel.
It is often called the **Olivet Discourse**, because Jesus gave it on the Mount of Olives.
It begins with a disciple admiring the beautiful temple.
Jesus answers with a shocking prediction.
“Not one stone here will be left on another.”
The disciples ask when this will happen and what signs will come first.
Jesus speaks about wars, earthquakes, and famines.
He warns of false messiahs and persecution.
He speaks of a time of great distress.
And He promises that the Son of Man will come in the clouds with great power and glory.
Most of all, Jesus calls His followers to **watch**.
The word appears again and again.
Watch out for deception.
Watch yourselves in persecution.

Watch and be ready for His return.
A note on interpretation:
This is one of the most debated chapters in the Bible.
Jesus seems to speak about two great events.
The destruction of the temple, which happened when the Romans destroyed Jerusalem in A.D. 70.
And His second coming at the end of the age.
Bible students disagree about which verses refer to which event.
Some see most of the chapter fulfilled in A.D. 70.
Some see most of it pointing to the future.
Many see both, with the first event as a preview of the second.
This study presents these views fairly.
All agree on the main message: do not be deceived, stand firm, and stay ready.
The chapter moves through seven movements:

- The Temple Will Be Destroyed (verses 1–2).
- Signs of the End (verses 3–8).
- Persecution of the Believers (verses 9–13).
- The Great Tribulation (verses 14–23).
- The Coming of the Son of Man (verses 24–27).
- The Lesson of the Fig Tree (verses 28–31).
- Keep Watch (verses 32–37).

The central truth of Mark 13 is:
Earthly things will pass away and hard times will come, but Jesus will return in power and glory, so His followers must refuse deception, stand firm in trials, spread the gospel to all nations, and stay watchful and ready.

I. LOOK AT THESE STONES

Mark 13:1 — A Disciple's Admiration

“As Jesus was leaving the temple, one of His disciples said to Him, “Teacher, look at these massive stones and magnificent buildings!””
“As Jesus was leaving the temple.”
This was Jesus' last time leaving the temple in Mark.
“Look at these massive stones and magnificent buildings!”
The temple was one of the wonders of the ancient world.
King Herod had rebuilt and expanded it.
Some of its stones were enormous, many tons each.
Its white stone and gold shone in the sun.
The disciples were impressed.

Cross References

Matthew 24:1
As Jesus left the temple and was walking away, His followers came to show Him the temple buildings.
Luke 21:5
Some people were talking about how beautiful the temple was, decorated with fine stones and gifts offered to God.

1 Kings 6:7
The stones used to build the temple were cut at the quarry, so no hammer, chisel, or iron tool was heard at the building site.

Spiritual Principle

Earthly beauty can impress us, but it does not last.

Key Truth

The disciples looked at the stones; Jesus looked at the future.

II. NOT ONE STONE LEFT

Mark 13:2 — Thrown Down

“Jesus replied, “Do you see all these great buildings? Not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down.””
“Do you see all these great buildings?”
Jesus acknowledged their greatness.
“Not one stone here will be left on another.”
A stunning prediction.
This magnificent temple would be completely destroyed.
“Every one will be thrown down.”
About forty years later, in A.D. 70, the Roman army destroyed Jerusalem and burned the temple.
Jesus' words came true.

Cross References

Matthew 24:2
Jesus asked, “Do you see all these buildings? I tell you the truth, not one stone will be left on top of another. Every one will be torn down.”
Luke 21:6
The time is coming when all you see here will be destroyed. Not one stone will be left on another.
Micah 3:12
Because of you, Jerusalem will be plowed like a field and become a pile of ruins, and the temple hill will be covered with bushes.

Spiritual Principle

Even the most impressive earthly things will one day pass away.

Key Truth

Only God's word and God's kingdom last forever.

III. ON THE MOUNT OF OLIVES

Mark 13:3 — Four Disciples Ask Privately

“Later, as Jesus sat on the Mount of Olives across from the temple, Peter, James, John, and Andrew asked Him privately,”
“As Jesus sat on the Mount of Olives.”
From there they could look across the valley at the temple.
“Across from the temple.”
The temple was in full view.
“Peter, James, John, and Andrew.”
The first four disciples Jesus called.
“Asked Him privately.”
They wanted to understand.

Cross References

Mark 1:16
As Jesus walked along the Sea of Galilee, He saw Simon and his brother Andrew throwing a net into the lake.
Matthew 24:3
Later, as Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, His followers came to Him privately.
Luke 21:7
They asked Him, “Teacher, when will these things happen?”

Spiritual Principle

Bring your questions about the future to Jesus.

Key Truth

Jesus' first disciples were the first to hear His teaching about the end.

IV. WHEN WILL THESE THINGS HAPPEN?

Mark 13:4 — Their Questions

“Tell us, when will these things happen? What will be the sign that they are about to be fulfilled?””
“When will these things happen?”
They wanted to know the timing.
“What will be the sign?”
They wanted to know how to recognize it.
They probably thought the destruction of the temple would mean the end of the world.
Matthew records their question as including Jesus' coming and the end of the age.

Cross References

Matthew 24:3
Tell us, when will these things happen? And what will be the sign of Your coming and of the end of the age?
Luke 21:7
What will be the sign that these things are about to take place?
Acts 1:6
When the apostles came together, they asked Him, “Lord, are You now going to give the kingdom back to Israel?”

Spiritual Principle

God's people have always longed to know the future.

Key Truth

Jesus answered their questions, but His main concern was how they would live.

V. WATCH OUT

Mark 13:5 — Do Not Be Deceived

“Jesus said, “Watch out that no one deceives you.”
Jesus' first words were a warning.
Not a timeline.
Not a list of dates.
A warning against being deceived.
The greatest danger was not the coming troubles.
It was being led astray.

Cross References

Matthew 24:4
Jesus answered, “Be careful that no one fools you.”
Luke 21:8
Jesus said, “Be careful so you are not fooled.”
Ephesians 5:6
Do not let anyone fool you with empty words. God's anger comes on those who disobey Him because of such things.

Spiritual Principle

Guarding against deception is the first priority for Christ's followers.

Spiritual Warning

Curiosity about the end can make people easy targets for false teachers.

VI. MANY WILL COME IN MY NAME

Mark 13:6 — False Christs

“Many will come in My name, claiming, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will deceive many.”
“Many will come in My name.”
People would claim to speak for Jesus or to be the Messiah.
“Claiming, ‘I am the Christ.’”
False messiahs did appear before A.D. 70.
They have kept appearing throughout history.
“And will deceive many.”
Many would be fooled.

Cross References

Matthew 24:5
Many will come using My name, saying, “I am the Christ,” and they will fool many people.
Luke 21:8
Many will come in My name, saying, “I am the One,” and “The time is near.” Do not follow them.
1 John 2:18
Dear children, this is the last hour. You heard that the enemy of Christ is coming, and even now many such enemies have come.

Spiritual Principle

Not everyone who uses Jesus' name truly speaks for Him.

Spiritual Warning

Test every claim against the true Jesus of Scripture.

VII. WARS AND RUMORS OF WARS

Mark 13:7 — The End Is Not Yet

“You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but don't be alarmed. These things must happen, but the end is not yet.”
“You will hear of wars and rumors of wars.”
Conflicts would continue.
“But don't be alarmed.”
Do not panic.
Wars are not necessarily signs that the end has arrived.
“These things must happen.”
God is still in control.
“But the end is not yet.”
Jesus warned against jumping to conclusions.
Every generation has seen wars.
Many have wrongly thought the end had come.

Cross References

Matthew 24:6
You will hear about wars and stories of wars that are coming, but do not be afraid. These things must happen, but the end is not yet.
Luke 21:9
When you hear of wars and riots, do not be afraid. These things must happen first, but the end will not come right away.
Daniel 2:28
There is a God in heaven who explains secrets, and He has shown King Nebuchadnezzar what will happen in the days to come.

Spiritual Principle

God remains in control even when the world is in turmoil.

Key Truth

Do not panic and do not set dates.

VIII. BIRTH PAINS

Mark 13:8 — Only the Beginning

“Nation will rise against nation, kingdom against kingdom. There will be earthquakes and famines in many places. These are only the beginning of birth pains.””
“Nation will rise against nation, kingdom against kingdom.”
Wars between nations.
“There will be earthquakes and famines in many places.”
Natural disasters and hunger.
“These are only the beginning of birth pains.”
Birth pains are painful.
But they lead to new life.
The suffering of this world points toward God's new creation.
They are the beginning, not the end.

Cross References

Matthew 24:7
Nations will fight against other nations, and kingdoms against other kingdoms. There will be famines and earthquakes in different places.
Luke 21:10
Nation will fight against nation, and kingdom against kingdom.
Isaiah 19:2
I will make the Egyptians fight against each other, brother against brother, neighbor against neighbor, city against city, kingdom against kingdom.

Spiritual Principle

The suffering of this world is like birth pains leading to God's new creation.

Key Truth

Birth pains hurt, but they lead to something new.

IX. BE ON YOUR GUARD

Mark 13:9 — Before Councils and Kings

““Be on your guard. You will be handed over to councils, beaten in synagogues, and brought before rulers and kings because of Me, as a testimony to them.”
“Be on your guard.”
Another call to watch.
“You will be handed over to councils, beaten in synagogues.”
Followers of Jesus would face persecution.
The book of Acts records this happening.
“And brought before rulers and kings because of Me.”
Paul stood before governors and kings.
“As a testimony to them.”
Even persecution would become an opportunity to tell about Jesus.

Cross References

Matthew 24:9
> Then you will be arrested, handed over to be hurt, and killed. All nations will hate you because you follow Me.

Luke 21:12
> But before all this happens, people will arrest you and treat you badly. They will hand you over to synagogues and prisons and bring you before kings and governors because of My name.

John 16:2
> People will put you out of their synagogues. The time is coming when those who kill you will think they are serving God.

Spiritual Principle

Persecution can become an opportunity to testify about Jesus.

Key Truth

Courtrooms became pulpits for the early believers.

X. TO ALL NATIONS

Mark 13:10 — The Gospel First

“And the gospel must first be preached to all nations.”
In the middle of warnings, Jesus gave a mission.
“The gospel must first be preached.”
The word **must** shows this is God's plan.
“To all nations.”
Every people group.

Before the end comes, the good news will go everywhere.
Persecution would not stop it.
In fact, persecution would help spread it.
This gives believers a clear task while they wait.

Cross References

Matthew 24:14
> This good news about the kingdom will be preached in all the world, as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.

Matthew 28:19
> Go to every nation and help people become My followers. Baptize them into the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Romans 10:18
> Their voice has gone out into all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world.

Spiritual Principle

The church's task until Jesus returns is to take the gospel to all nations.

Application

What part are you playing in taking the gospel to the nations?

XI. DO NOT WORRY ABOUT WHAT TO SAY

Mark 13:11 — The Holy Spirit Will Speak

“When you are arrested and brought to trial, don't worry beforehand about what to say. Just say whatever is given you at the time, for it is not you speaking, but the Holy Spirit.”
“When you are arrested and brought to trial.”
Not “if,” but “when.”
“Don't worry beforehand about what to say.”
Do not be anxious.
“Just say whatever is given you at the time.”
God would give them the words.
“For it is not you speaking, but the Holy Spirit.”
The Spirit would speak through them.
This is not permission to skip studying God's word.
It is a promise of help in moments of persecution.

Cross References

Matthew 10:19
> When you are arrested, do not worry about what to say or how to say it. At that time you will be given the words.

Luke 21:15
> I will give you words and wisdom that none of your enemies will be able to stand against or argue with.

Luke 12:12
> At that time the Holy Spirit will teach you what you must say.

Spiritual Principle

The Holy Spirit helps believers speak when they are on trial for Christ.

Key Truth

You are never alone when you stand for Jesus.

XII. FAMILIES DIVIDED

Mark 13:12 — Brother Against Brother

“Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child. Children will rise against parents and have them put to death.”
This is one of the most painful parts of persecution.
Families would turn against each other.
Following Jesus could divide even the closest relationships.
This has happened throughout history.
It still happens in many places today.

Cross References

Matthew 10:21
Brothers will hand over their own brothers to be killed, and fathers will hand over their children.
Luke 21:16
Even your parents, brothers, relatives, and friends will turn against you and have some of you killed.
Micah 7:6
A son will insult his father, a daughter will turn against her mother. A person's enemies will be members of his own family.

Spiritual Principle

Following Jesus may cost even close relationships.

Application

Pray for believers around the world who are rejected by their own families.

XIII. STAND FIRM TO THE END

Mark 13:13 — Hated, Yet Saved

“All men will hate you because of Me, but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved.””
“All men will hate you because of Me.”
Followers of Jesus would be hated.
Not for doing wrong.
But because of Jesus.
“But the one who stands firm to the end will be saved.”
Endurance is the mark of true faith.
Those who truly belong to Jesus will hold on.

God gives the strength to endure.

Cross References

Matthew 24:9
All nations will hate you because you follow Me.
Matthew 10:22
Everyone will hate you because of Me. But whoever keeps going until the end will be saved.
John 15:18
When the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated Me before it hated you.

Spiritual Principle

True faith endures to the end.

Key Truth

The world may hate you, but Jesus will keep you.

XIV. THE ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION

Mark 13:14 — Flee to the Mountains

““When you see ‘the abomination of desolation’ spoken of by the prophet Daniel standing where it does not belong (let the reader understand), then those in Judea must flee to the mountains.”
“The abomination of desolation.”
This phrase comes from the book of Daniel.
It means something so evil and unholy that it brings ruin to a holy place.
In 167 B.C., a foreign king set up a pagan altar in the temple.
Many saw that as an early fulfillment.
“Standing where it does not belong.”
Bible students understand this in different ways.
Many connect it with the Roman armies that surrounded and destroyed Jerusalem in A.D. 70.
Luke's Gospel records Jesus saying, **“When you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies.”**
Others also see a future fulfillment before Jesus returns.
“Let the reader understand.”
Mark tells his readers to pay attention.
“Then those in Judea must flee to the mountains.”
Early Christian writers say believers in Jerusalem remembered this warning and fled before the city was destroyed.

Cross References

Daniel 9:27
He will set up a horrible thing that destroys, until the end that God has decreed is poured out on the destroyer.
Daniel 11:31
His armed forces will make the temple unholy. They will stop the daily sacrifice and set up the horrible thing that causes destruction.

Daniel 12:11
From the time the daily sacrifice is stopped and the horrible thing that destroys is set up, there will be 1,290 days.

Spiritual Principle

God warns His people ahead of time so they can respond wisely.

Key Truth

Jesus' warnings are given in love to protect His people.

XV. DO NOT GO BACK INTO THE HOUSE

Mark 13:15 — On the Housetop

“Let no one on the housetop go down to take anything out of the house.”
Houses had flat roofs.
People often spent time on them.
Jesus said, when the moment comes, do not even go inside to grab belongings.
Flee immediately.
There would be no time to lose.

Cross References

Matthew 24:17
Anyone on the roof must not go down to get things out of the house.
Luke 17:31
On that day, someone on the roof should not go down to get his belongings.
Genesis 19:17
Run for your lives! Do not look back or stop anywhere in the valley. Run to the mountains, or you will be destroyed.

Spiritual Principle

When God warns, respond immediately.

Key Truth

Possessions are not worth your life.

XVI. DO NOT RETURN FOR YOUR CLOAK

Mark 13:16 — In the Field

“Let no one in the field return to get his cloak.”
Workers in the fields often took off their outer cloaks.
Jesus said, do not even go back for it.
The danger would be so urgent.
Like Lot's family fleeing Sodom.
Looking back could be deadly.

Cross References

Matthew 24:18
Anyone in the field must not go back to get his coat.
Luke 17:31
Someone in the field should not go back for anything.
Genesis 19:26
But Lot's wife looked back, and she became a pillar of salt.

Spiritual Principle

Do not let attachment to things slow your obedience.

Key Truth

Remember Lot's wife.

XVII. PREGNANT WOMEN AND NURSING MOTHERS

Mark 13:17 — How Terrible

“How terrible it will be for pregnant women and nursing mothers in those days!”
Jesus showed compassion.
He thought about those who would find it hardest to flee.
Women carrying babies.
Mothers with infants.
Jesus cared about the most vulnerable in the coming suffering.

Cross References

Matthew 24:19
How terrible it will be in those days for women who are pregnant or nursing babies!
Luke 21:23
How terrible it will be for women who are pregnant or have nursing babies! Great trouble will come on the land.
Luke 23:29
The time is coming when people will say, “Blessed are the women who could not have children, and the bodies that never gave birth.”

Spiritual Principle

Jesus cares deeply for the most vulnerable in times of suffering.

Key Truth

Even in warnings of judgment, Jesus' compassion shines through.

XVIII. PRAY IT IS NOT WINTER

Mark 13:18 — Pray

“Pray that this will not happen in winter.”
Winter brought cold weather and heavy rains.
Rivers flooded.
Roads became hard to travel.
Fleeing in winter would be much harder.
Jesus told them to pray.
Even in the face of coming trouble, prayer matters.

Cross References

Matthew 24:20
Pray that you will not have to run away in winter or on a Sabbath day.
Genesis 19:17
Run to the mountains, or you will be destroyed.
Amos 3:15
I will tear down the winter house and the summer house.

Spiritual Principle

Prayer matters, even when trouble is coming.

Key Truth

Pray about the details of hard times.

XIX. UNEQUALED DISTRESS

Mark 13:19 — Never to Be Equaled

“For those will be days of distress unequaled from the beginning of creation until now—and never to be equaled again.”
Jesus described a time of terrible suffering.
The siege and destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 brought horrible suffering, as the historian Josephus recorded.
Many Bible students also see these words pointing beyond that event to a final time of great tribulation before Jesus returns.
Either way, Jesus' point is clear.
Hard times will come.
But God remains in control.

Cross References

Matthew 24:21
At that time there will be great suffering, worse than any that has happened since the world began, and nothing as bad will ever happen again.

Daniel 12:1
There will be a time of trouble worse than any since nations began.
Joel 2:2
It will be a dark and gloomy day. There has never been anything like it, and there will never be again.

Spiritual Principle

God's people may face great distress, but God never abandons them.

Key Truth

No suffering is beyond God's control.

XX. FOR THE SAKE OF THE ELECT

Mark 13:20 — The Days Shortened

“If the Lord had not shortened those days, no one would survive. But for the sake of the elect, whom He has chosen, He has shortened them.”
“If the Lord had not shortened those days, no one would survive.”
The suffering would be terrible.
“But for the sake of the elect, whom He has chosen.”
The elect means God's chosen people.
“He has shortened them.”
God sets limits on suffering.
He is merciful even in judgment.
He protects His people.

Cross References

Matthew 24:22
If God had not made those days short, no one would survive. But because of His chosen people, those days will be shortened.
Isaiah 65:8
The Lord says, “When there is still juice in a bunch of grapes, people say, ‘Do not destroy it; there is good in it.’ I will do the same for My servants.”
2 Peter 3:9
The Lord is not dragging His feet about His promise. He is being patient, because He wants no one to perish. He wants everyone to turn back to Him.

Spiritual Principle

God limits suffering for the sake of His people.

Key Truth

God's mercy sets boundaries even on the darkest days.

XXI. DO NOT BELIEVE IT

Mark 13:21 — Look, Here Is the Christ!

“At that time if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here is the Christ!’ or, ‘Look, there He is!’ do not believe it.”
Jesus warned again about deception.
In times of crisis, people are especially easy to fool.
Some would claim the Messiah had come secretly.
Jesus said, do not believe it.
When He returns, everyone will know.

Cross References

Matthew 24:23
If anyone tells you, “Look, here is the Christ!” or “There He is!” do not believe it.
Luke 17:23
People will say, “Look, there He is!” or “Here He is!” Do not go running after them.
Luke 21:8
Do not follow them.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus' return will not be secret.

Spiritual Warning

Anyone who claims Jesus has returned in secret is a false teacher.

XXII. SIGNS AND WONDERS TO DECEIVE

Mark 13:22 — Even the Elect

“For false messiahs and false prophets will appear and perform signs and wonders to deceive—even the elect, if that were possible.”
“False messiahs and false prophets will appear.”
Deceivers would come.
“And perform signs and wonders to deceive.”
Miracles alone do not prove someone is from God.
False teachers can perform signs too.
“Even the elect, if that were possible.”
The deception would be powerful.
But God would keep His own.
Truth must be tested by God's word, not by miracles alone.

Cross References

Matthew 24:24
False christs and false prophets will come and do great signs and wonders to fool even God's chosen people, if that were possible.

2 Thessalonians 2:9
The coming of the man of lawlessness will be the work of Satan, with all kinds of false miracles, signs, and wonders.
Deuteronomy 13:1
A prophet or someone who explains dreams may come and promise a sign or a miracle. Even if it happens, do not follow him if he leads you to other gods.

Spiritual Principle

Miracles alone do not prove truth; God's word does.

Spiritual Warning

Test every sign by the Scriptures.

XXIII. I HAVE TOLD YOU AHEAD OF TIME

Mark 13:23 — Be on Your Guard

“So be on your guard; I have told you everything ahead of time.””
“So be on your guard.”
Again, Jesus called them to watch.
“I have told you everything ahead of time.”
Jesus prepared them.
When these things happened, they would not be surprised.
They would remember His words.
And their faith would be strengthened.

Cross References

Matthew 24:25
See, I have told you this before it happens.
John 14:29
I have told you this before it happens, so that when it does happen, you will believe.
John 16:4
I have told you these things now, so that when the time comes, you will remember that I warned you.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus prepares His people for what lies ahead.

Key Truth

Forewarned is forearmed.

XXIV. THE SUN DARKENED

Mark 13:24 — After That Tribulation

““But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun will be darkened, the moon will not give its light,”
“But in those days, after that tribulation.”
Jesus now turns to cosmic events.
“The sun will be darkened, the moon will not give its light.”
The prophets used this kind of language.
Sometimes it described God's judgment on nations.
It also points to the final shaking of creation when the Lord returns.
Bible students differ on whether this is mainly picture language, literal events, or both.
Either way, it shows God stepping into history in power.

Cross References

Matthew 24:29
Right after the trouble of those days, the sun will grow dark, and the moon will not give its light.
Isaiah 13:10
The stars and constellations will not shine. The sun will be dark when it rises, and the moon will not give light.
Joel 2:31
The sun will become dark, and the moon will become red as blood before the great and terrible day of the Lord comes.

Spiritual Principle

God rules over all creation, and history will reach its climax at His command.

Key Truth

When God acts in final judgment, all creation will feel it.

XXV. THE HEAVENS SHAKEN

Mark 13:25 — Stars Will Fall

“the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly powers will be shaken.”
“The stars will fall from the sky.”
The things that seem most fixed and permanent will be shaken.
“And the heavenly powers will be shaken.”
Even the powers in the heavens will tremble.
Nothing will stand in the way of Christ's coming.
Everything that can be shaken will be shaken.
Only God's kingdom will remain.

Cross References

Matthew 24:29
The stars will fall from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.
Isaiah 34:4
The sky will be rolled up like a scroll, and all the stars will fall like dead leaves from a vine.
Haggai 2:6
The Lord says, “In a little while I will once more shake the heavens and the earth, the sea and the dry land.”

Spiritual Principle

Everything that can be shaken will be shaken, but God's kingdom will stand.

Key Truth

Build your life on what cannot be shaken.

XXVI. COMING IN THE CLOUDS

Mark 13:26 — Great Power and Glory

“Then they will see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory.”
“Then they will see.”
Everyone will see.
This will not be a secret.
“The Son of Man coming in the clouds.”
Jesus quoted Daniel 7.
The Son of Man comes with the clouds to receive everlasting authority.
“With great power and glory.”
The One who was humbled will come in majesty.
The One who was rejected will be revealed as King.
This is the great hope of every believer.

Cross References

Daniel 7:13
I saw someone like a son of man coming with the clouds of heaven. He came to the Ancient One and was led into His presence.
Matthew 24:30
Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky. All the peoples of the earth will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds with power and great glory.
Revelation 1:7
Watch! He is coming in the clouds, and everyone will see Him, even the people who drove the nails into Him.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus will return visibly in power and glory.

Key Truth

The suffering Servant will return as the glorious King.

XXVII. GATHERING HIS CHOSEN ONES

Mark 13:27 — From the Four Winds

“And He will send His angels to gather His chosen ones from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.””
“He will send His angels.”
Angels will serve Him.
“To gather His chosen ones.”
Jesus will gather His people.
“From the four winds.”
From every direction.
“From the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.”
No believer will be forgotten.
Wherever they are, Jesus will bring them home.

Cross References

Matthew 24:31
> He will send His angels with a loud trumpet, and they will gather His chosen people from every direction, from one end of the sky to the other.

Deuteronomy 30:4
> Even if you have been sent to the farthest land under heaven, the Lord your God will gather you and bring you back.

Zechariah 2:6
> The Lord says, “I scattered you to the four winds of heaven.”

Spiritual Principle

Jesus will gather all His people to Himself.

Key Truth

No believer will be left behind or forgotten.

XXVIII. THE FIG TREE

Mark 13:28 — Summer Is Near

““Now learn this lesson from the fig tree: As soon as its branches become tender and sprout leaves, you know that summer is near.”
Jesus used a simple picture from nature.
In Israel, most trees stay green all year.
But the fig tree loses its leaves in winter.
When new leaves appear, everyone knows summer is coming.
Signs point to what is ahead.

Cross References

Matthew 24:32
Learn a lesson from the fig tree. When its branches become green and soft and new leaves appear, you know summer is near.
Luke 21:29
Then Jesus told them this story: “Look at the fig tree and all the other trees.”
Habakkuk 3:17
Even if the fig tree does not bloom and there is no fruit on the vines, I will still be glad in the Lord.

Spiritual Principle

God gives signs so His people can be ready.

Key Truth

Read the signs, but trust the Lord.

XXIX. RIGHT AT THE DOOR

Mark 13:29 — He Is Near

“In the same way, when you see these things happening, you know that He is near, right at the door.”
“When you see these things happening.”
The signs Jesus described.
“You know that He is near, right at the door.”
Some translations say **“it is near.”**
Either way, the time is close.
The disciples should live with expectation.

Cross References

Matthew 24:33
In the same way, when you see all these things happening, you will know that the time is near, right at the door.
James 5:9
Brothers and sisters, do not complain against each other, or you will be judged. The Judge is standing at the door.
Luke 21:31
In the same way, when you see these things happening, you will know that God's kingdom is near.

Spiritual Principle

Believers should live as if the Lord could come at any time.

Key Truth

The Judge is standing at the door.

XXX. THIS GENERATION

Mark 13:30 — All These Things

“Truly I tell you, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened.”
This is one of the most discussed verses in Mark.
What did Jesus mean by **“this generation”**?
Bible students give several answers.
Many believe it refers to the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in A.D. 70, which happened within about forty years.
Some believe “generation” here means the kind of people, unbelieving humanity, which will remain until the end.
Others believe it means the generation that sees the final signs will also see Jesus return.
Many hold that both A.D. 70 and the final return are in view, with the first a preview of the second.
Whatever view one takes, Jesus' words are trustworthy.

Cross References

Matthew 24:34
I tell you the truth, all these things will happen while some of the people now living are still alive.
Luke 21:32
I tell you the truth, all these things will happen before this generation is gone.
Matthew 16:28
Some people standing here will see the Son of Man coming with His kingdom before they die.

Spiritual Principle

God's prophetic word will be fulfilled exactly as He intends.

Key Truth

Where faithful believers differ, we hold firmly to what is clear: Jesus will return.

XXXI. MY WORDS WILL NEVER PASS AWAY

Mark 13:31 — Heaven and Earth Will Pass Away

“Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will never pass away.””
“Heaven and earth will pass away.”
The temple would fall.
The sun and stars would be shaken.
Even heaven and earth would pass away.
“But My words will never pass away.”
Jesus' words are more lasting than the universe.
This is an amazing claim.
Only God's word lasts forever.

Jesus was saying His words are God's words.

Cross References

Matthew 24:35
Heaven and earth will be destroyed, but My words will remain forever.
Luke 21:33
The earth and sky will be destroyed, but My words will never be destroyed.
Isaiah 40:8
Grass turns brown and flowers wilt, but what our God says stands forever.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus' words are more lasting than heaven and earth.

Application

Are you building your life on the words of Jesus?

XXXII. NO ONE KNOWS THE DAY

Mark 13:32 — Only the Father

““But about that day or hour no one knows—not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.”
“But about that day or hour no one knows.”
No one knows when Jesus will return.
Not religious teachers.
Not prophecy experts.
“Not even the angels in heaven.”
“Nor the Son.”
This is surprising.
While on earth, Jesus willingly limited His own knowledge as part of becoming human and serving the Father.
“But only the Father.”
This truth should end all date-setting.
Anyone who claims to know the date is wrong.

Cross References

Matthew 24:36
No one knows when that day or time will be, not the angels in heaven, not even the Son. Only the Father knows.
Acts 1:7
Jesus answered, “It is not your business to know the times or dates. The Father alone has the right to set them.”
Zechariah 14:7
It will be a day known only to the Lord.

Spiritual Principle

The time of Jesus' return belongs to the Father alone.

Spiritual Warning

Do not trust anyone who claims to know the date of Christ's return.

XXXIII. BE ON GUARD! STAY ALERT!

Mark 13:33 — You Do Not Know When

“Be on guard! Stay alert! You don't know when that time will come.”
“Be on guard! Stay alert!”
Two urgent commands.
“You don't know when that time will come.”
Since we do not know when, we must always be ready.
The point of prophecy is not to calculate.
It is to prepare.

Cross References

Matthew 24:42
Stay on the lookout, because you cannot know which day your Lord is coming.
Luke 21:36
Be ready all the time. Pray that you will be strong enough to escape all these things and to stand before the Son of Man.
1 Thessalonians 5:6
So we should not be like others who are sleeping. We should be awake and have self-control.

Spiritual Principle

Since we do not know when, we must always be ready.

Application

If Jesus returned today, would you be ready?

XXXIV. A MAN GOING AWAY

Mark 13:34 — Each with an Assigned Task

“It is like a man going away: He leaves his house and puts his servants in charge, each with their assigned task, and tells the gatekeeper to keep watch.”
“It is like a man going away.”
Jesus told a short parable.
“He leaves his house and puts his servants in charge.”
Jesus would leave, and His followers would be in charge.
“Each with their assigned task.”
Every believer has work to do.
“And tells the gatekeeper to keep watch.”
Waiting for Jesus does not mean doing nothing.
It means being faithful in the work He gave us.

Cross References

Matthew 25:14
The kingdom of heaven is like a man going on a trip. He called his servants and gave them his property to take care of.
Luke 19:13
He called ten of his servants, gave each a coin, and said, “Do business with this until I come back.”
Matthew 24:45
Who is the faithful and wise servant the master has put in charge of his household?

Spiritual Principle

Watching for Jesus means working faithfully while we wait.

Application

What task has Jesus given you while you wait for Him?

XXXV. KEEP WATCH

Mark 13:35 — Evening, Midnight, Rooster's Crow, Dawn

“Therefore keep watch, because you do not know when the master of the house will return—whether in the evening, at midnight, at the rooster's crow, or at dawn.”
“Therefore keep watch.”
Stay awake.
“You do not know when the master of the house will return.”
“Whether in the evening, at midnight, at the rooster's crow, or at dawn.”
These were the four night watches in Roman time.
Interestingly, these same times appear in the next chapters.
Evening: the Last Supper.
Midnight: Jesus' arrest in Gethsemane.
Rooster's crow: Peter's denial.
Dawn: Jesus handed over to Pilate.
The disciples would fail to watch in those very hours.

Cross References

Matthew 24:42
Keep your eyes open, since the day of your Lord's coming is unknown to you.
Luke 12:38
The master might come at midnight or later. But those servants will be happy if he finds them ready.
1 Thessalonians 5:2
You already know that the Lord's day will arrive without warning, the way a burglar shows up in the night.

Spiritual Principle

Believers must stay spiritually alert at all times.

Key Truth

The hours Jesus named were the hours His disciples would soon fail.

XXXVI. DO NOT BE FOUND SLEEPING

Mark 13:36 — If He Comes Suddenly

“If He comes suddenly, do not let Him find you sleeping.”
“If He comes suddenly.”
His return will be unexpected.
“Do not let Him find you sleeping.”
Spiritual sleep means being careless, distracted, or unfaithful.
In the next chapter, the disciples would fall asleep in Gethsemane.
Jesus calls us to stay awake spiritually.

Cross References

Matthew 24:44
> So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at a time you do not expect.

Luke 12:40
> You also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at a time you do not expect Him.

Revelation 16:15
> Listen! I will come as unexpectedly as a thief. Happy is the person who stays awake and keeps his clothes ready, so he will not be caught naked and embarrassed.

Spiritual Principle

Do not let spiritual carelessness catch you unprepared.

Spiritual Warning

Spiritual sleep is dangerous because it does not feel dangerous.

XXXVII. WATCH!

Mark 13:37 — To Everyone

“What I say to you, I say to everyone: Watch!””
“What I say to you.”
Jesus was speaking to four disciples.
“I say to everyone.”
But His words are for every believer in every generation.
“Watch!”
The final word of the chapter.
The summary of everything Jesus taught here.
Stay alert.
Stay faithful.
Stay ready.

Cross References

Matthew 25:13
So watch, because you do not know the day or the hour.
Luke 21:36
Always be alert and pray.
1 Corinthians 16:13
Stay awake. Hold on tight to your faith. Have courage and be strong.

Spiritual Principle

Every believer is called to live watchfully, ready for Jesus' return.

Key Truth

The last word of Jesus' great teaching on the future is “Watch!”

XXXVIII. SEVEN GREAT LESSONS FROM MARK 13

1. Earthly Glory Fades

“Not one stone here will be left on another.”

Principle:

Even the grand temple would not last; only God's word endures.

2. Spiritual Deception Is Real

“Watch out that no one deceives you.”

Principle:

Many false messiahs will rise; believers must cling to Christ.

3. Persecution Is Part of the Mission

“It is not you speaking, but the Holy Spirit.”

Principle:

Followers of Jesus will face trials, but the Spirit will speak through them.

4. The Gospel Must Go Global

“The gospel must first be preached to all nations.”

Principle:

Before the end, the message of Christ will reach all nations.

5. The Tribulation Will Be Severe

“For the sake of the elect, whom He has chosen, He has shortened them.”

Principle:

Yet God shortens the days for the sake of His chosen ones.

6. Christ's Return Will Be Unmistakable

“They will see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory.”

Principle:

Unlike false prophets, His coming will be cosmic, glorious, and visible to all.

7. Always Be Watchful

“What I say to you, I say to everyone: Watch!”

Principle:

Since no one knows the hour, every believer must live ready for His return.

XXXIX. HOW CHRISTIANS UNDERSTAND MARK 13

Faithful Bible students read this chapter in different ways.

View 1: Mostly Fulfilled in A.D. 70

- Most of the chapter describes the Roman destruction of Jerusalem.
- “This generation” means the people alive in Jesus' day.
- Verses about the Son of Man coming are often seen as picture language for God's judgment, or as pointing to His final return.

View 2: Mostly Future

- Most of the chapter describes events just before Jesus returns.
- The abomination and great tribulation are still to come.
- “This generation” means the generation that sees these final signs.

View 3: Both Near and Far

- Jesus speaks of A.D. 70 and the end of the age together.
- The destruction of Jerusalem is a preview of the final judgment.
- Some prophecies have more than one fulfillment.

What All Agree On

- Jesus predicted the destruction of the temple, and it happened.
- False teachers and persecution will come.

- The gospel must go to all nations.
- Jesus will return in power and glory.
- No one knows the day or hour.
- Every believer must watch and be ready.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Hold your views on prophecy humbly, but hold your hope in Christ's return firmly.

XL. FIVE WARNINGS FOR THE WAITING CHURCH

Mark 13 gives clear warnings for believers.

1. Do Not Be Deceived

“Watch out that no one deceives you.”

2. Do Not Be Alarmed

“Don't be alarmed.”

3. Do Not Worry About What to Say

“Don't worry beforehand about what to say.”

4. Do Not Believe False Claims

“Do not believe it.”

5. Do Not Be Found Sleeping

“Do not let Him find you sleeping.”

Key Truth

Jesus' teaching about the future is meant to make us faithful, not fearful.

XLI. HOW TO WATCH

Jesus' call to watch is practical.

Watch Your Beliefs

Test every teaching by God's word.

Watch Your Faithfulness

Keep doing the work Jesus gave you.

Watch Your Witness

Keep sharing the gospel with all nations.

Watch Your Prayers

Stay close to God in prayer.

Watch Your Heart

Do not grow spiritually sleepy or careless.

Watch with Hope

Look forward to His coming with joy, not fear.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Watching for Jesus means living faithfully today.

XLII. WHAT MARK 13 TEACHES ABOUT JESUS

He Knows the Future

“Not one stone here will be left on another.”

He Warns in Love

“I have told you everything ahead of time.”

He Sends the Spirit to Help

“It is not you speaking, but the Holy Spirit.”

He Protects His People

“For the sake of the elect… He has shortened them.”

He Will Come in Glory

“Coming in the clouds with great power and glory.”

He Will Gather His People

“He will send His angels to gather His chosen ones.”

His Words Last Forever

“My words will never pass away.”

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The Jesus who knows the future holds His people safely through it.

XLIII. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR PERSONAL STUDY

Question 1

What did Jesus predict about the temple?
That not one stone would be left on another.

Question 2

When was the temple destroyed?
In A.D. 70, by the Roman army.

Question 3

What was Jesus' first warning?
“Watch out that no one deceives you.”

Question 4

Why did Jesus say not to be alarmed by wars?
Because these things must happen, but the end is not yet.

Question 5

What are “birth pains”?
Sufferings that point toward the coming of God's new creation.

Question 6

What must happen before the end?
The gospel must be preached to all nations.

Question 7

What did Jesus promise those on trial for His name?
That the Holy Spirit would give them the words to say.

Question 8

What is the abomination of desolation?
Something evil set up in a holy place; many connect it with A.D. 70, and some also see a future fulfillment.

Question 9

How will Jesus' return be different from false claims?
It will be visible to all, in great power and glory.

Question 10

What does “this generation” mean?
Christians understand it in different ways, but all agree Jesus' words are trustworthy.

Question 11

Who knows the day or hour of Jesus' return?
Only the Father.

Question 12

What should Mark 13 change about the way Christians live today?
Mark 13 should cause believers to live:

- Building on what lasts, not on what fades.
- Testing every teaching by Scripture.
- Staying calm in troubled times.
- Standing firm in persecution.
- Taking the gospel to all nations.
- Refusing to set dates for Christ's return.
- Working faithfully at the tasks Jesus gave them.
- Watching and ready for His coming.

XLIV. PERSONAL APPLICATION

Mark 13 asks several important questions.

What Am I Building My Life On?

Things that will fall, or words that will last?

Could I Be Deceived?

Do I know God's word well enough to recognize error?

How Do I Respond to Frightening News?

With panic, or with trust?

Am I Ready to Stand for Jesus?

Even if it costs me?

Am I Helping the Gospel Reach the Nations?

Through prayer, giving, or going?

Am I Faithful in My Assigned Task?

What work has Jesus given me?

Am I Spiritually Awake?

Or have I grown sleepy?

Am I Looking Forward to Jesus' Return?

With hope and joy?

XLV. A CRAWFORD BIBLE STUDY PRINCIPLE

“Watch!”

The disciples wanted dates.
They wanted signs.
They wanted to know when.
Jesus gave them warnings and promises.
But He refused to give them a date.
“No one knows.”
Instead, He gave them one word.
“Watch!”
Not watch the skies.
Not watch the news.
Watch your heart.
Watch your faith.
Watch your work.
Like servants left in charge of a house.
Each with an assigned task.
Ready for the Master to walk through the door at any moment.
This creates a powerful principle.
The best way to prepare for the future is to be faithful today.

Principle:

Live every day as though Jesus could return today, because He could.

XLVI. FINAL APPLICATION

Mark Chapter 13 looks to the future.
It predicts the fall of the temple.
It warns of deception, wars, and persecution.
It promises the help of the Holy Spirit.
It calls the church to take the gospel to all nations.
It describes a time of great distress.

It promises that the Son of Man will come in power and glory.
And it calls every believer to watch.
Mark 13 therefore reminds us:
Never build your hope on things that will fall.
Never let anyone deceive you.
Never panic in troubled times.
Never stop sharing the gospel.
Never fall asleep spiritually.
The church does not need people who are obsessed with dates.
It needs:
Believers who know the truth.
Witnesses who stand firm.
Servants who work faithfully.
And watchers who are ready for His return.
The same Jesus still calls:
Tell people that Jesus is coming again.
Tell people that His words will never pass away.
Tell people that He will gather His people from the ends of the earth.
Tell people to be ready.
And as you live:
Do not be deceived.
Stand firm.
Spread the gospel.
Watch!

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father,
Thank You that Jesus knows the future and holds it in His hands.
Thank You that His words will never pass away.
Thank You for warning us ahead of time.
Thank You for the Holy Spirit, who helps us when we stand for Jesus.
Thank You that You shorten the days of distress for the sake of Your people.
Thank You that Jesus will return in great power and glory.
Thank You that He will gather all His people to Himself.
Forgive us when we have built our lives on things that will not last.
Forgive us when we have been careless about false teaching.
Forgive us when we have been fearful instead of faithful.
Forgive us when we have neglected the task You gave us.
Forgive us when we have fallen asleep spiritually.
Keep us from deception.
Give us courage to stand firm.
Use us to take the gospel to all nations.
Keep us faithful in our work.
And keep us watching and ready for the return of our Lord Jesus Christ.
“What I say to you, I say to everyone: Watch!”
In Jesus' name, Amen.

Key Verse

“Then they will see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory.” — Mark 13:26

Central Truth

Earthly things will pass away and hard times will come, but Jesus will return in power and glory, so His followers must refuse deception, stand firm in trials, spread the gospel to all nations, and stay watchful and ready.

Mark 13 in One Sentence

Jesus predicts the destruction of the temple, warns His disciples about deception, wars, persecution, and great distress, promises that the gospel will reach all nations and that the Son of Man will come in the clouds with great power and glory, and calls everyone to stay alert because no one knows the day or hour.

CRAWFORD BIBLE COMMENTARY

BIBLE STUDY

Mark Chapter 14 — The Betrayal, the Supper, and the Arrest of the King

A Verse-by-Verse Bible Study from the Crawford Standard Bible

Introduction

Mark Chapter 14 is one of the longest and most moving chapters in the Gospels.
It covers just two days before Jesus' death.
It is full of contrasts.
A woman pours out costly perfume in love.
A disciple sells out his Master for money.
Jesus shares the Passover meal and gives His disciples bread and a cup.
He tells them it is His body and His blood of the new covenant.
In Gethsemane, Jesus prays in deep anguish.
“Yet not what I will, but what You will.”
His closest friends fall asleep.
Judas arrives with a kiss and an armed crowd.
All the disciples run away.
Jesus stands before the religious council.
False witnesses cannot agree.
Then Jesus openly declares who He is.
“I am.”
Meanwhile, in the courtyard below, Peter denies Him three times.
The rooster crows, and Peter weeps.
The chapter shows human weakness at its worst.
But it also shows Jesus' faithfulness at its best.
A note on the people in this chapter:
The leaders who condemned Jesus acted wrongly.
But Scripture teaches that Jesus died for the sins of all people, and that He gave His life willingly.
No group of people should ever be blamed for His death.
The chapter moves through nine movements:

- The Plot to Kill Jesus (verses 1–2).
- The Anointing at Bethany (verses 3–9).
- Judas Agrees to Betray Jesus (verses 10–11).
- The Last Supper (verses 12–26).
- Jesus Predicts Peter's Denial (verses 27–31).
- Jesus Prays in Gethsemane (verses 32–42).
- Jesus Arrested (verses 43–52).
- Jesus Before the Sanhedrin (verses 53–65).
- Peter Denies Jesus (verses 66–72).

The central truth of Mark 14 is:
While people betray, sleep, flee, and deny, Jesus willingly gives His body and blood for many, submits to the Father's will, and declares Himself the Son of God, and His grace is greater than human failure.

I. TWO DAYS BEFORE THE PASSOVER

Mark 14:1 — A Secret Plot

“It was two days before the Passover and the Festival of Unleavened Bread. The chief priests and teachers of the law were looking for a way to secretly arrest Jesus and kill Him.”
“Two days before the Passover.”

Passover remembered how God rescued Israel from Egypt.
A lamb was killed, and its blood protected each household.
“And the Festival of Unleavened Bread.”
A week of eating bread made without yeast.
“Looking for a way to secretly arrest Jesus and kill Him.”
The leaders had made up their minds.
They wanted to act in secret.
At the very time Israel remembered the Passover lamb, the true Lamb of God would be sacrificed.

Cross References

Matthew 26:3
Then the leading priests and older leaders met at the palace of the high priest, Caiaphas.
Luke 22:2
The leading priests and teachers of the law were trying to find a way to kill Jesus, because they were afraid of the people.
John 11:53
So from that day on they made plans to kill Jesus.

Spiritual Principle

God's plan unfolds even through the evil plans of people.

Key Truth

Jesus would die at Passover as the true Passover Lamb.

II. NOT DURING THE FESTIVAL

Mark 14:2 — Fear of a Riot

“But they said, “Not during the festival, or the people may riot.””
The leaders were careful.
Jerusalem was full of pilgrims.
Many people liked Jesus.
The leaders feared a riot.
So they planned to wait.
But God's timing was different.
Jesus would die exactly during the feast.

Cross References

Matthew 26:5
They said, “We must not do it during the feast, or the people may cause a riot.”
Luke 22:2
They were afraid of the people.
Psalm 2:1
Why are the nations so angry? Why are the people making useless plans?

Spiritual Principle

People make their plans, but God's plan prevails.

Key Truth

The leaders chose their time, but God had already chosen His.

III. AN ALABASTER JAR

Mark 14:3 — Perfume Poured on His Head

“While Jesus was in Bethany at the home of Simon the leper, a woman came with an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume, made of pure nard. She broke the jar and poured it on His head.”
“At the home of Simon the leper.”
Perhaps a man Jesus had healed.
“A woman came.”
John tells us she was Mary, the sister of Martha and Lazarus.
“With an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume, made of pure nard.”
Nard came from a plant grown in India.
It was extremely costly.
“She broke the jar.”
She did not hold any back.
“And poured it on His head.”
Kings were anointed on the head.
She was honoring Jesus as King.

Cross References

Matthew 26:7
> A woman came to Him with an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume. She poured it on His head while He was eating.

John 12:3
> Mary took about a pint of very expensive perfume made from pure nard. She poured it on Jesus' feet and wiped them with her hair, and the whole house was filled with the smell.

Luke 7:38
> She stood behind Him at His feet, crying. Her tears wet His feet, and she wiped them with her hair. She kissed His feet and poured perfume on them.

Spiritual Principle

Love for Jesus gives its very best without holding back.

Application

What costly gift of love can you give to Jesus?

IV. WHY THIS WASTE?

Mark 14:4 — Some Were Indignant

“Some of those present were indignant. “Why this waste of perfume?”
“Some of those present were indignant.”
John tells us Judas led the complaint.

“Why this waste of perfume?”
They saw it as foolish.
But what looks like waste to some is worship to God.

Cross References

Matthew 26:8
When the followers saw this, they were upset and said, “Why waste that perfume?”
John 12:4
But Judas Iscariot, one of His followers, the one who would later betray Him, said.
John 12:5
This perfume could have been sold for a year's pay and the money given to the poor.

Spiritual Principle

Nothing given to Jesus in love is wasted.

Spiritual Warning

Be careful of criticizing what others give in worship.

V. A YEAR'S WAGES

Mark 14:5 — They Rebuked Her Harshly

“It could have been sold for more than a year's wages and the money given to the poor.” And they rebuked her harshly.”
“It could have been sold for more than a year's wages.”
Three hundred denarii.
About a year's pay for a worker.
“And the money given to the poor.”
This sounded good.
But John tells us Judas was a thief who stole from the money bag.
“And they rebuked her harshly.”
They scolded her.
Her act of love was met with criticism.

Cross References

Matthew 26:9
This perfume could have been sold for a lot of money and given to the poor.
John 12:5
Why wasn't this perfume sold for a year's wages and the money given to the poor?
Deuteronomy 15:11
There will always be poor people in the land. So I command you to be generous to your brothers and sisters who are poor and needy.

Spiritual Principle

Criticism can disguise itself as concern for others.

Key Truth

The loudest critic in the room was the one who loved money most.

VI. A BEAUTIFUL THING

Mark 14:6 — Leave Her Alone

“Jesus said, “Leave her alone. Why are you bothering her? She has done a beautiful thing for Me.”
“Leave her alone.”
Jesus defended her.
“Why are you bothering her?”
He stopped the critics.
“She has done a beautiful thing for Me.”
The word means good, noble, lovely.
What they called waste, Jesus called beautiful.

Cross References

Matthew 26:10
Jesus knew what they were thinking and said, “Why are you bothering this woman? She has done a good thing for Me.”
John 12:7
Jesus answered, “Leave her alone. She has saved this for the day of My burial.”
1 Samuel 16:7
People look at the outside, but the Lord looks at the heart.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus defends those who worship Him with sincere love.

Key Truth

What others criticize, Jesus may call beautiful.

VII. YOU WILL NOT ALWAYS HAVE ME

Mark 14:7 — The Poor Always With You

“The poor you will always have with you, and you can help them anytime you want. But you will not always have Me.”
“The poor you will always have with you.”
Jesus was not saying poverty does not matter.
He was quoting Deuteronomy, which commands generosity to the poor.
“And you can help them anytime you want.”
Caring for the poor is always right.
“But you will not always have Me.”
This was a unique moment.
Jesus would soon die.

She seized the moment to honor Him.

Cross References

Matthew 26:11
You will always have the poor with you, but you will not always have Me.
John 12:8
The poor will always be with you, but I will not always be with you.
Deuteronomy 15:11
There will always be people in need in your land, so open your hand wide to them.

Spiritual Principle

Some moments to honor Jesus come only once.

Key Truth

Caring for the poor and worshiping Jesus are not enemies.

VIII. SHE DID WHAT SHE COULD

Mark 14:8 — Anointed for Burial

“She did what she could—she anointed My body beforehand for burial.”
“She did what she could.”
She did not do everything.
But she did what was in her power.
That is all God asks.
“She anointed My body beforehand for burial.”
Bodies were anointed with spices after death.
She anointed Jesus before His death.
Perhaps she understood more than the disciples about what was coming.

Cross References

Matthew 26:12
When she poured this perfume on My body, she did it to prepare Me for burial.
John 12:7
She kept this perfume for the day of My burial.
John 19:40
They took Jesus' body and wrapped it in strips of linen with the spices, as the Jews did when they buried people.

Spiritual Principle

God asks us to do what we can, not what we cannot.

Application

What can you do for Jesus today?

IX. IN MEMORY OF HER

Mark 14:9 — Told Throughout the World

“Truly I tell you, wherever the gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will be told in memory of her.””
“Wherever the gospel is preached throughout the world.”
Jesus knew the gospel would spread worldwide.
“What she has done will be told in memory of her.”
And it has been.
Right now, as you read this, Jesus' promise is coming true.
Her simple act of love is remembered everywhere.

Cross References

Matthew 26:13
Wherever this good news is told in all the world, what this woman has done will be told to remember her.
Matthew 24:14
This good news about the kingdom will be preached in all the world.
Psalm 112:6
Good people will always be remembered.

Spiritual Principle

Acts of love for Jesus are remembered forever.

Key Truth

This study is part of the fulfillment of Jesus' promise.

X. JUDAS GOES TO THE CHIEF PRIESTS

Mark 14:10 — One of the Twelve

“Then Judas Iscariot, one of the Twelve, went to the chief priests to betray Jesus to them.”
“Then Judas Iscariot.”
Right after the woman's act of love comes Judas' act of betrayal.
“One of the Twelve.”
Mark stresses this.
He was a close friend, not an outsider.
“Went to the chief priests to betray Jesus.”
He went on his own.
Luke and John tell us Satan entered him.
Yet Judas made his own choice.

Cross References

Matthew 26:14
Then one of the twelve followers, Judas Iscariot, went to the leading priests.

Luke 22:4
Judas went to the leading priests and the soldiers who guarded the temple and talked with them about how he could hand Jesus over to them.
John 13:2
The devil had already decided that Judas Iscariot, son of Simon, would turn against Jesus.

Spiritual Principle

Being close to Jesus is not the same as truly loving Him.

Spiritual Warning

Betrayal can come from within the circle of friends.

XI. THEY PROMISED MONEY

Mark 14:11 — Watching for an Opportunity

“They were delighted to hear this and promised to give him money. So he watched for an opportunity to hand Him over.”
“They were delighted to hear this.”
Their problem was solved.
“And promised to give him money.”
Matthew tells us it was thirty pieces of silver.
The price of a slave.
“So he watched for an opportunity to hand Him over.”
Judas looked for a quiet time to betray Jesus.
Away from the crowds.

Cross References

Matthew 26:15
He asked, “What will you pay me for giving Jesus to you?” They gave him thirty silver coins.
Luke 22:5
They were pleased and agreed to give him money.
Zechariah 11:12
So they paid me thirty pieces of silver.

Spiritual Principle

Love of money can lead to terrible betrayal.

Spiritual Warning

Judas sold the One who was priceless for the price of a slave.

XII. PREPARING THE PASSOVER

Mark 14:12 — Where Do You Want Us to Go?

“On the first day of the Festival of Unleavened Bread, when the Passover lamb was sacrificed, the disciples asked Jesus, “Where do You want us to go and make preparations for You to eat the Passover?””
“When the Passover lamb was sacrificed.”
On this day, thousands of lambs were killed at the temple.
Families ate the Passover meal that evening.
“Where do You want us to go and make preparations?”
The disciples wanted to prepare the meal.
They did not yet know it would be Jesus' last meal with them.

Cross References

Matthew 26:17
> On the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the followers came to Jesus and asked, “Where do You want us to prepare the Passover meal for You?”

Luke 22:8
> Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, “Go and prepare the Passover meal for us to eat.”

Exodus 12:6
> Keep the animals until the fourteenth day of the month. Then all the people of Israel must kill them at twilight.

Spiritual Principle

God's timing for Jesus' death matched the Passover perfectly.

Key Truth

While lambs were dying in the temple, the Lamb of God was preparing to die.

XIII. A MAN CARRYING A JAR OF WATER

Mark 14:13 — Follow Him

“He sent two of His disciples, saying, “Go into the city, and a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him.”
“He sent two of His disciples.”
Luke tells us they were Peter and John.
“A man carrying a jar of water will meet you.”
This would stand out.
Women usually carried water jars.
A man doing it would be easy to spot.
“Follow him.”
Jesus may have arranged this secretly to keep Judas from knowing the place ahead of time.

Cross References

Luke 22:8
He sent Peter and John to prepare the Passover meal.
Luke 22:10
When you go into the city, a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him into the house he enters.
Matthew 26:18
Go into the city to a certain man and tell him, “The Teacher says: My time is near.”

Spiritual Principle

Jesus prepares the way for what He calls us to do.

Key Truth

Jesus was in control of every detail of His final night.

XIV. WHERE IS MY GUEST ROOM?

Mark 14:14 — The Teacher Asks

“Say to the owner of the house he enters, ‘The Teacher asks, Where is My guest room, where I may eat the Passover with My disciples?’”
“The Teacher asks.”
The owner seemed to know who “the Teacher” was.
“Where is My guest room?”
Notice **“My”** guest room.
Jesus spoke with authority.
“Where I may eat the Passover with My disciples?”
Jesus wanted to share this meal with His closest friends.

Cross References

Luke 22:11
Tell the owner of the house, “The Teacher asks: Where is the room where I can eat the Passover with My followers?”
Matthew 26:18
I will celebrate the Passover at your house with My followers.
Exodus 12:11
This is how you must eat it: dressed for travel, with your sandals on and your walking stick in your hand. Eat it quickly. It is the Lord's Passover.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus desires close fellowship with His followers.

Key Truth

Jesus chose to spend His last evening sharing a meal with His friends.

XV. A LARGE UPPER ROOM

Mark 14:15 — Furnished and Ready

“He will show you a large room upstairs, furnished and ready. Make preparations for us there.””
“A large room upstairs.”
Many believe this same upper room became the meeting place of the early church.
“Furnished and ready.”
Already prepared with couches for reclining at the table.
“Make preparations for us there.”
The disciples would prepare the food.

Cross References

Luke 22:12
He will show you a large room upstairs that is ready. Prepare the meal there.
Acts 1:13
When they entered the city, they went to the upstairs room where they were staying.
Acts 20:8
There were many lamps in the upstairs room where we were meeting.

Spiritual Principle

God provides the places where His people meet with Him.

Key Truth

The upper room was ready because Jesus had made it ready.

XVI. JUST AS HE HAD TOLD THEM

Mark 14:16 — They Prepared the Passover

“The disciples went, found things just as Jesus had told them, and prepared the Passover.”
Everything happened just as Jesus said.
Just like the colt in Chapter 11.
They prepared the lamb, the bread, the wine, and the bitter herbs.

Cross References

Luke 22:13
They went and found everything as Jesus had said, and they prepared the Passover meal.
Matthew 26:19
The followers did what Jesus told them and prepared the Passover meal.
Mark 11:4
They went and found a young donkey tied in the street near a door.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus' words always prove true.

Key Truth

Obedience to Jesus always finds things as He said.

XVII. WHEN EVENING CAME

Mark 14:17 — With the Twelve

“When evening came, Jesus arrived with the Twelve.”
The Passover meal was eaten after sunset.
Jesus came with all twelve.
Including Judas.
John tells us Jesus loved His own to the end.

Cross References

Matthew 26:20
In the evening Jesus was sitting at the table with the twelve followers.
Luke 22:14
When the time came, Jesus and the apostles were sitting at the table.
John 13:1
Jesus knew His time had come to leave this world and go to the Father. He had always loved His own people in the world, and He loved them to the very end.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus loved His disciples to the very end.

Key Truth

Jesus shared a meal even with the one who would betray Him.

XVIII. ONE OF YOU WILL BETRAY ME

Mark 14:18 — One Eating with Me

“While they were reclining at the table eating, He said, “Truly I tell you, one of you will betray Me—one who is eating with Me.””
“While they were reclining at the table.”
At Passover, people reclined on couches.
It was a meal of freedom.
“One of you will betray Me.”
A shocking announcement.
“One who is eating with Me.”
Sharing a meal was a sign of friendship and trust.
Betraying someone you ate with was a terrible act.

Cross References

Matthew 26:21
As they were eating, Jesus said, “I tell you the truth, one of you will turn against Me.”

Luke 22:21
But the hand of the one who will turn against Me is on the table with Mine.
John 13:21
After Jesus said this, He was very troubled. He said openly, “I tell you the truth, one of you will turn against Me.”

Spiritual Principle

Jesus knows what is in every heart, even at His own table.

Key Truth

Jesus was not surprised by betrayal.

XIX. SURELY NOT I?

Mark 14:19 — One by One

“They were saddened, and one by one they said to Him, “Surely You don't mean me?””
“They were saddened.”
The news hurt them.
“One by one they said to Him, ‘Surely You don't mean me?’”
Each one asked.
Not, “Is it him?”
But, “Is it me?”
They were honest about their own weakness.
Each knew he was capable of failing.

Cross References

Matthew 26:22
The followers were very sad. Each one began to say, “Surely I am not the one, Lord?”
Luke 22:23
Then they began to ask each other which one of them would do that.
John 13:22
The followers looked at each other, not knowing whom He meant.

Spiritual Principle

Humility asks, “Is it I?” before asking, “Is it him?”

Application

Do you examine your own heart before judging others?

XX. ONE WHO DIPS WITH ME

Mark 14:20 — One of the Twelve

““It is one of the Twelve,” He replied, “one who dips bread into the bowl with Me.”
“It is one of the Twelve.”

Not an outsider.
“One who dips bread into the bowl with Me.”
They shared the same dish.
This fulfilled Psalm 41.
A close friend who shared bread would turn against Him.

Cross References

Matthew 26:23
Jesus answered, “The one who has dipped his hand into the bowl with Me will turn against Me.”
John 13:26
Jesus answered, “He is the one I will give this bread to after I dip it.” Then He dipped the bread and gave it to Judas.
Psalm 41:9
Even my close friend, someone I trusted, who ate my bread, has turned against me.

Spiritual Principle

The pain of betrayal is deepest when it comes from a friend.

Key Truth

Jesus knows the pain of being betrayed by someone close.

XXI. WOE TO THAT MAN

Mark 14:21 — Better Not Born

“The Son of Man will go just as it is written about Him. But woe to that man who betrays the Son of Man! It would be better for him if he had not been born.””
“The Son of Man will go just as it is written about Him.”
Jesus' death was part of God's plan, foretold in Scripture.
“But woe to that man who betrays the Son of Man!”
God's plan does not excuse Judas.
He was still responsible for his choice.
“It would be better for him if he had not been born.”
A terrible warning.
God's sovereignty and human responsibility stand side by side.

Cross References

Matthew 26:24
The Son of Man will die, as the Scriptures say. But how terrible it will be for the person who hands Him over! It would be better for him if he had never been born.
Luke 22:22
The Son of Man will do what God has planned, but how terrible it will be for that man who turns against Him.
Psalm 41:9
My trusted friend who ate with me has turned against me.

Spiritual Principle

God's sovereign plan does not remove human responsibility.

Spiritual Warning

God can use evil choices for good, but those who make them are still accountable.

XXII. THIS IS MY BODY

Mark 14:22 — Take It

“While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks, broke it, and gave it to His disciples, saying, “Take it; this is My body.””
“Jesus took bread, gave thanks, broke it, and gave it.”
The same four actions as the feeding of the crowds.
“Take it; this is My body.”
Jesus gave new meaning to the Passover bread.
His body would be broken for them on the cross.
This became the meal Christians call the **Lord's Supper**, **Communion**, or the **Eucharist**.
Christians understand Jesus' words in different ways.
Some believe the bread becomes Christ's body.
Some believe Christ is truly present in a spiritual way.
Others see the bread as a sacred symbol and memorial of His body.
All agree that Jesus gave His body for us and that this meal is precious.

Cross References

Matthew 26:26
> While they were eating, Jesus took bread, thanked God, broke it, and gave it to His followers. He said, “Take this and eat it. This is My body.”

Luke 22:19
> Jesus took some bread, thanked God for it, broke it, and handed it to them. He said, “This is My body, which I give for you. Do this in memory of Me.”

1 Corinthians 11:24
> He thanked God, broke the bread, and said, “This is My body, given for you. Do this so you will remember Me.”

Spiritual Principle

Jesus gave His body for us on the cross.

Key Truth

Every time believers share the bread, they remember the body given for them.

XXIII. THE CUP

Mark 14:23 — They All Drank

“Then He took a cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, and they all drank from it.”

“Then He took a cup.”
The Passover meal included several cups of wine.
“Gave thanks.”
The word for giving thanks is where the word **Eucharist** comes from.
“And gave it to them, and they all drank from it.”
All of them.
Even those who would soon run away.

Cross References

Matthew 26:27
Then Jesus took a cup, gave thanks, and gave it to the followers. He said, “Each of you drink some of this.”
Luke 22:20
In the same way, after supper, Jesus took the cup.
1 Corinthians 11:25
In the same way, after they ate, Jesus took the cup.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus offers His grace to all who come to His table.

Key Truth

Even those who would fail Him drank from His cup.

XXIV. MY BLOOD OF THE NEW COVENANT

Mark 14:24 — Poured Out for Many

““This is My blood of the new covenant, poured out for many,” He said to them.”
“This is My blood of the new covenant.”
A **covenant** is a binding agreement between God and His people.
The old covenant at Mount Sinai was sealed with the blood of animals.
Jeremiah promised a new covenant, written on hearts, with sins forgiven.
Jesus' blood would seal that new covenant.
“Poured out for many.”
His death would be for others.
In their place.
For their forgiveness.

Cross References

Matthew 26:28
This is My blood, which begins the new agreement God makes with His people. It is poured out for many to forgive their sins.
Exodus 24:8
Moses took the blood, sprinkled it on the people, and said, “This is the blood that seals the agreement the Lord has made with you.”

Jeremiah 31:31
The Lord says, “The time is coming when I will make a new agreement with the people of Israel and the people of Judah.”

Spiritual Principle

Jesus' blood seals the new covenant and brings forgiveness of sins.

Key Truth

The new covenant was sealed not with animal blood but with the blood of God's Son.

XXV. UNTIL THAT DAY

Mark 14:25 — New in the Kingdom

““Truly I tell you, I will not drink again from the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God.””
“I will not drink again from the fruit of the vine.”
This was Jesus' last meal before His death.
“Until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God.”
A promise of hope.
Jesus looked beyond the cross to a future celebration.
One day He will share a feast with His people in His kingdom.
Every time believers take Communion, they look forward to that day.

Cross References

Matthew 26:29
I will not drink from this fruit of the vine again until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom.
Luke 22:18
From now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until God's kingdom comes.
1 Corinthians 11:26
Whenever you eat this bread and drink from this cup, you are announcing the Lord's death until He returns.

Spiritual Principle

The Lord's Supper looks back to the cross and forward to the kingdom.

Key Truth

Jesus promised a reunion feast in His Father's kingdom.

XXVI. THEY SANG A HYMN

Mark 14:26 — To the Mount of Olives

“When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.”
“When they had sung a hymn.”

The Passover meal ended with singing Psalms 113–118.
Jesus sang praise to God on the night before He died.
Imagine Him singing, **“Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.”**
“They went out to the Mount of Olives.”
Out into the night.
Toward Gethsemane.

Cross References

Matthew 26:30
After singing a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.
Luke 22:39
Jesus left the city and went to the Mount of Olives, as He often did, and His followers went with Him.
Psalm 118:26
Blessed is the One who comes in the name of the Lord.

Spiritual Principle

Worship can rise even in the darkest night.

Key Truth

Jesus sang praises on His way to suffering.

XXVII. YOU WILL ALL FALL AWAY

Mark 14:27 — The Shepherd Struck

““You will all fall away,” Jesus told them, “for it is written: ‘I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.’””
“You will all fall away.”
Not just Judas.
All of them.
“For it is written.”
Jesus quoted Zechariah 13.
“I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.”
When the Shepherd was struck down, His followers would run.
Notice: **“I will strike.”**
God Himself was behind the striking.
The cross was God's plan to save.

Cross References

Matthew 26:31
Jesus told His followers, “Tonight you will all stumble because of Me. The Scriptures say, ‘I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will scatter.’”
Zechariah 13:7
Strike the shepherd, and the sheep will scatter.

John 16:32
> The time is coming, and is already here, when you will be scattered, each one to his own home, and you will leave Me alone. But I am not alone, because the Father is with Me.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus knew His followers would fail Him, and He loved them anyway.

Key Truth

The Shepherd was struck so that the sheep could be saved.

XXVIII. I WILL GO AHEAD OF YOU

Mark 14:28 — After I Have Risen

“But after I have risen, I will go ahead of you into Galilee.””
“But after I have risen.”
Right after predicting their failure, Jesus gave a promise.
He would rise.
“I will go ahead of you into Galilee.”
He would meet them again.
Like a shepherd gathering scattered sheep.
Their failure would not be the end of the story.

Cross References

Matthew 26:32
> But after I rise from the dead, I will go ahead of you into Galilee.

Mark 16:7
> Go and tell His followers and Peter, “He is going ahead of you into Galilee. You will see Him there.”

Matthew 28:7
> Go quickly and tell His followers, “He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee.”

Spiritual Principle

Jesus' grace is greater than our failures.

Key Truth

Before they failed, Jesus had already planned to restore them.

XXIX. EVEN IF ALL FALL AWAY

Mark 14:29 — Peter's Boast

“Peter declared, “Even if all fall away, I will not.””
Peter was confident.
Too confident.

He compared himself to the others.
He thought he was stronger.
But pride comes before a fall.

Cross References

Matthew 26:33
Peter said, “Even if everyone else stumbles because of You, I never will.”
Luke 22:33
But Peter said, “Lord, I am ready to go with You to prison and even to die with You!”
John 13:37
Peter asked, “Lord, why can't I follow You now? I am ready to give my life for You!”

Spiritual Principle

Self-confidence is a poor substitute for dependence on God.

Spiritual Warning

Be careful when you think you are stronger than others.

XXX. BEFORE THE ROOSTER CROWS TWICE

Mark 14:30 — Three Denials

““Truly I tell you,” Jesus answered, “today—yes, tonight—before the rooster crows twice you yourself will disown Me three times.””
“Today—yes, tonight.”
Very soon.
“Before the rooster crows twice.”
Only Mark mentions the rooster crowing twice.
This detail likely came from Peter himself.
“You yourself will disown Me three times.”
Not once.
Three times.
The one who claimed to be strongest would fail most openly.

Cross References

Matthew 26:34
Jesus said, “I tell you the truth, tonight before the rooster crows, you will say three times that you do not know Me.”
Luke 22:34
But Jesus said, “Peter, before the rooster crows today, you will say three times that you do not know Me.”
John 13:38
Jesus answered, “Will you really give your life for Me? I tell you the truth, before the rooster crows, you will say three times that you do not know Me.”

Spiritual Principle

Jesus knows our weaknesses better than we do.

Key Truth

Jesus knew Peter would fail, and still chose him.

XXXI. I WILL NEVER DISOWN YOU

Mark 14:31 — All Said the Same

“But Peter insisted emphatically, “Even if I have to die with You, I will never disown You.” And all the others said the same.”
“But Peter insisted emphatically.”
He argued with Jesus.
“Even if I have to die with You, I will never disown You.”
He meant it.
But he did not know his own heart.
“And all the others said the same.”
All of them promised.
All of them would fail.

Cross References

Matthew 26:35
> But Peter said, “Even if I have to die with You, I will never say I do not know You!” And all the other followers said the same thing.

Luke 22:33
> Lord, I am ready to go to prison and to die with You.

John 13:37
> I would die for You!

Spiritual Principle

Good intentions are not enough without God's strength.

Key Truth

Sincere promises can still be broken by weak hearts.

XXXII. GETHSEMANE

Mark 14:32 — Sit Here While I Pray

“They went to a place called Gethsemane, and Jesus said to His disciples, “Sit here while I pray.””
“A place called Gethsemane.”
Gethsemane means “oil press.”
It was an olive garden on the Mount of Olives.
Olives were crushed there to make oil.

And there, Jesus would be crushed in sorrow.
“Sit here while I pray.”
Jesus went to pray before the greatest trial of His life.

Cross References

Matthew 26:36
Then Jesus went with His followers to a place called Gethsemane. He said to them, “Sit here while I go over there and pray.”
Luke 22:40
When He reached the place, He said to them, “Pray that you will not fall into temptation.”
John 18:1
After Jesus finished praying, He went with His followers across the Kidron Valley. There was a garden there.

Spiritual Principle

In the hardest moments, Jesus turned to prayer.

Application

Where do you turn first when you face great trials?

XXXIII. DEEPLY TROUBLED

Mark 14:33 — Peter, James, and John

“He took Peter, James, and John along with Him, and He began to be deeply troubled and distressed.”
“He took Peter, James, and John along with Him.”
The same three who saw His glory on the mountain.
Now they would see His agony in the garden.
“He began to be deeply troubled and distressed.”
Strong words.
Jesus was overwhelmed with horror and anguish.
He was about to bear the sin of the world.

Cross References

Matthew 26:37
He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee with Him, and He began to be very sad and troubled.
Luke 22:44
Being in great pain, He prayed even harder. His sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground.
Hebrews 5:7
While Jesus lived on earth, He prayed to God, who could save Him from death. He prayed with loud cries and tears, and God heard Him because of His deep respect for God.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus felt the full weight of what He was about to bear.

Key Truth

Jesus' suffering began in the garden before it reached the cross.

XXXIV. OVERWHELMED WITH SORROW

Mark 14:34 — Stay Here and Keep Watch

““My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death,” He said. “Stay here and keep watch.””
“My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death.”
Jesus' sorrow was so heavy it felt like it could kill Him.
He shared His heart honestly.
“Stay here and keep watch.”
He asked His friends to stay awake with Him.
In His humanity, He wanted their company.

Cross References

Matthew 26:38
He said to them, “My heart is so sad that I feel like I am dying. Stay here and watch with Me.”
Psalm 42:5
Why am I so sad? Why am I so upset? I should put my hope in God.
John 12:27
Now My heart is troubled. Should I say, “Father, save Me from this hour”? No, this is the very reason I came.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus understands deep sorrow and the need for companionship.

Key Truth

Jesus knows what it feels like to be overwhelmed.

XXXV. HE FELL TO THE GROUND

Mark 14:35 — If Possible

“Going a little farther, He fell to the ground and prayed that if possible the hour might pass from Him.”
“Going a little farther.”
Jesus went on alone.
“He fell to the ground.”
Not kneeling politely.
Falling down in anguish.
“And prayed that if possible the hour might pass from Him.”
The hour meant His suffering and death.
Jesus honestly asked if there was another way.

Cross References

Matthew 26:39
He walked a little farther, fell face down on the ground, and prayed.
Luke 22:41
He went about a stone's throw away from them, knelt down, and prayed.
Hebrews 5:7
Jesus prayed with loud cries and tears to the One who could save Him from death.

Spiritual Principle

It is right to bring our deepest fears honestly to God.

Key Truth

Jesus' prayer was honest before it was surrendered.

XXXVI. ABBA, FATHER

Mark 14:36 — Not What I Will

““Abba, Father,” He said, “everything is possible for You. Take this cup from Me. Yet not what I will, but what You will.””
“Abba, Father.”
Abba is an Aramaic word for father.
It speaks of close, trusting love.
Only Mark records Jesus using it here.
“Everything is possible for You.”
Jesus believed in the Father's power.
“Take this cup from Me.”
The cup was the cup of suffering and God's judgment on sin.
“Yet not what I will, but what You will.”
This is the greatest prayer of surrender ever prayed.
Jesus chose the Father's will over His own desire.
Because of this prayer, we are saved.

Cross References

Matthew 26:39
He prayed, “My Father, if it is possible, do not give Me this cup of suffering. But do what You want, not what I want.”
Luke 22:42
He prayed, “Father, if You are willing, take this cup away from Me. But do what You want, not what I want.”
Romans 8:15
God did not give you a Spirit that makes you fearful slaves again. He gave you the Spirit who makes you His children, so we call out to Him, “Abba, Father.”

Spiritual Principle

True prayer ends in surrender to the Father's will.

Application

Can you pray, “Not what I will, but what You will”?

XXXVII. COULDN'T YOU KEEP WATCH?

Mark 14:37 — Found Sleeping

“Then He returned to His disciples and found them sleeping. “Simon,” He said to Peter, “are you asleep? Couldn't you keep watch for one hour?””
“Then He returned to His disciples and found them sleeping.”
In His greatest need, His friends slept.
“Simon.”
Jesus used his old name.
Not Peter, the rock.
“Are you asleep?”
Peter, who had promised to die with Jesus, could not stay awake.
“Couldn't you keep watch for one hour?”
Remember Jesus' teaching in Chapter 13: **“Do not let Him find you sleeping.”**

Cross References

Matthew 26:40
> Then Jesus went back to His followers and found them asleep. He said to Peter, “You men could not stay awake with Me for one hour?”

Luke 22:45
> When He finished praying, He went to His followers and found them asleep because of their sadness.

1 Thessalonians 5:6
> So we should not be sleeping like others, but we should be awake and have self-control.

Spiritual Principle

Spiritual alertness requires effort and God's help.

Key Truth

The man who promised to die for Jesus could not stay awake for Him.

XXXVIII. THE SPIRIT IS WILLING

Mark 14:38 — Watch and Pray

“Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.”
“Watch and pray.”
Two keys to resisting temptation.
Stay alert.
Depend on God.
“So that you will not fall into temptation.”

Temptation was coming that night.
“The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.”
Jesus understood their struggle.
They wanted to do right.
But human weakness pulled them down.
This is the struggle of every believer.

Cross References

Matthew 26:41
Stay awake and pray for strength against temptation. The spirit wants to do what is right, but the body is weak.
Galatians 5:17
Our sinful nature pulls one way and the Spirit pulls the other. They fight against each other.
Romans 7:18
I know my sinful nature has nothing good in it. I want to do right, but I cannot seem to carry it out.

Spiritual Principle

Watchfulness and prayer are our defense against temptation.

Key Truth

Jesus understands the gap between what we want to do and what we actually do.

XXXIX. THE SAME PRAYER AGAIN

Mark 14:39 — He Prayed Again

“Once more He went away and prayed the same thing.”
Jesus prayed again.
The same prayer.
This was not empty repetition.
It was the struggle of a soul surrendering again and again to the Father's will.
Sometimes surrender is not a single moment.
It is a battle fought more than once.

Cross References

Matthew 26:42
Then Jesus went away a second time and prayed, “My Father, if this cup cannot be taken away unless I drink it, then do what You want.”
Luke 22:42
Father, not My will, but Yours be done.
Hebrews 5:7
He prayed with loud cries and tears.

Spiritual Principle

Surrender to God's will may require repeated prayer.

Key Truth

It is not wrong to pray the same prayer more than once.

XL. THEIR EYES WERE HEAVY

Mark 14:40 — They Did Not Know What to Say

“When He came back, He again found them sleeping, because their eyes were heavy. They did not know what to say to Him.”
“He again found them sleeping.”
A second time.
“Because their eyes were heavy.”
It was late.
They were exhausted and grieving.
“They did not know what to say to Him.”
They were ashamed.
Just like Peter on the mountain of Transfiguration.

Cross References

Matthew 26:43
He went back and found them asleep again, because their eyes were heavy.
Luke 22:45
He found them sleeping, exhausted from sorrow.
John 18:1
There was a garden there, and Jesus and His followers went into it.

Spiritual Principle

Human weakness repeatedly fails, but Jesus remains faithful.

Key Truth

The disciples kept falling asleep; Jesus kept praying.

XLI. THE HOUR HAS COME

Mark 14:41 — Delivered to Sinners

“Returning the third time, He said, “Are you still sleeping and resting? Enough! The hour has come. Look, the Son of Man is delivered into the hands of sinners.””
“Returning the third time.”
Three times Jesus prayed.
Three times they slept.
“Enough! The hour has come.”
The time for prayer was over.
The time for the cross had begun.
“The Son of Man is delivered into the hands of sinners.”
Jesus was ready.

He had prayed through.

Cross References

Matthew 26:45
Then He came back and said, “Are you still sleeping and resting? The time has come for the Son of Man to be handed over to sinners.”
Luke 22:47
While Jesus was speaking, a crowd came up.
John 17:1
Jesus looked toward heaven and prayed, “Father, the time has come. Give glory to Your Son so that the Son can give glory to You.”

Spiritual Principle

Prayer prepared Jesus to face the cross with courage.

Key Truth

Jesus came out of Gethsemane ready; His disciples came out unprepared.

XLII. RISE! LET US GO!

Mark 14:42 — Here Comes My Betrayer

“Rise! Let us go! Here comes My betrayer!””
“Rise! Let us go!”
Jesus did not run away.
He went forward to meet His enemies.
“Here comes My betrayer!”
Jesus saw Judas coming.
He faced it head-on.

Cross References

Matthew 26:46
Get up, let us go. Here comes the man who has turned against Me.
Luke 22:47
Judas, one of the Twelve, was leading them.
John 18:2
Judas knew where this place was, because Jesus often met there with His followers.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus willingly went to meet His suffering.

Key Truth

Jesus was not captured; He gave Himself up.

XLIII. SWORDS AND CLUBS

Mark 14:43 — Judas Appeared

“Just as He was speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, appeared. With him was a crowd armed with swords and clubs, sent from the chief priests, the teachers of the law, and the elders.”
“Judas, one of the Twelve, appeared.”
Mark repeats it again: **one of the Twelve.**
“With him was a crowd armed with swords and clubs.”
An armed mob for a man of peace.
“Sent from the chief priests, the teachers of the law, and the elders.”
The leaders had sent them.

Cross References

Matthew 26:47
> While Jesus was still speaking, Judas, one of the twelve, came up with a large crowd carrying swords and clubs.

Luke 22:47
> While He was still speaking, a crowd came up, led by Judas.

John 18:3
> So Judas came there with a group of soldiers and some guards from the leading priests and Pharisees. They were carrying torches, lanterns, and weapons.

Spiritual Principle

Evil often comes armed against the innocent.

Key Truth

They came with weapons against the Prince of Peace.

XLIV. A SIGNAL

Mark 14:44 — The One I Kiss

“Now the betrayer had arranged a signal with them: “The one I kiss is the man; arrest Him and lead Him away under guard.””
“The one I kiss is the man.”
A kiss was a normal greeting between a student and his teacher.
Judas turned a sign of love into a tool of betrayal.
“Arrest Him and lead Him away under guard.”
He made sure they would not let Him escape.

Cross References

Matthew 26:48
> Judas had planned to give them a signal: “The man I kiss is Jesus. Arrest Him.”

Luke 22:47
> He came close to Jesus to kiss Him.

2 Samuel 20:9
Joab said to Amasa, “How are you, my brother?” Then he took Amasa by the beard with his right hand to kiss him.

Spiritual Principle

Hypocrisy can disguise betrayal as love.

Spiritual Warning

A kiss can hide a knife.

XLV. RABBI!

Mark 14:45 — The Kiss

“Going at once to Jesus, Judas said, “Rabbi!” and kissed Him.”
“Judas said, ‘Rabbi!’”
Teacher.
A respectful title.
“And kissed Him.”
The word suggests a warm, lingering kiss.
The greatest act of betrayal was disguised as the warmest greeting.

Cross References

Matthew 26:49
At once Judas went to Jesus and said, “Greetings, Teacher!” and kissed Him.
Luke 22:47
Judas came near Jesus to kiss Him.
Proverbs 27:6
The wounds from a friend can be trusted, but an enemy multiplies kisses.

Spiritual Principle

Outward signs of love mean nothing without a loyal heart.

Key Truth

Judas kissed the face of the One he had sold.

XLVI. ARRESTED

Mark 14:46 — They Seized Him

“The men seized Jesus and arrested Him.”
They grabbed Jesus.
He did not resist.
The One who calmed storms and drove out demons allowed Himself to be taken.
He could have stopped them.
But He chose not to.

Cross References

Matthew 26:50
Then the men came and grabbed Jesus and arrested Him.
Luke 22:54
They arrested Jesus, led Him away, and brought Him into the house of the high priest.
John 18:12
Then the soldiers, their commander, and the Jewish guards arrested Jesus and tied Him up.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus' arrest shows His willing surrender, not His weakness.

Key Truth

No one took Jesus' life; He laid it down.

XLVII. A SWORD DRAWN

Mark 14:47 — A Servant's Ear

“Then one of those standing near drew his sword and struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his ear.”
“One of those standing near drew his sword.”
John tells us it was Peter.
“And struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his ear.”
Peter tried to defend Jesus by force.
Luke tells us Jesus healed the man's ear.
Even in His arrest, Jesus showed mercy to an enemy.

Cross References

Matthew 26:51
One of Jesus' followers reached for his sword, pulled it out, and struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his ear.
Luke 22:50
One of them struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his right ear.
John 18:10
Simon Peter had a sword. He pulled it out and struck the high priest's servant, cutting off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus' kingdom does not advance by the sword.

Key Truth

Peter used a sword; Jesus used mercy.

XLVIII. AM I LEADING A REBELLION?

Mark 14:48 — Swords and Clubs

““Am I leading a rebellion,” said Jesus, “that you have come out with swords and clubs to capture Me?””
Jesus questioned their methods.
He was not a violent rebel.
He had taught openly.
Yet they came at night with weapons, as if He were a dangerous criminal.

Cross References

Matthew 26:55
Then Jesus said to the crowd, “You came to get Me with swords and clubs as if I were a criminal.”
Luke 22:52
Am I a criminal that you come with swords and clubs?
John 18:20
Jesus answered, “I have spoken openly to everyone. I always taught in synagogues and in the temple. I said nothing in secret.”

Spiritual Principle

Truth works in the open; evil hides in darkness.

Key Truth

They treated the Prince of Peace like a violent rebel.

XLIX. THE SCRIPTURES MUST BE FULFILLED

Mark 14:49 — Every Day in the Temple

“Every day I was with you, teaching in the temple courts, and you did not arrest Me. But the Scriptures must be fulfilled.””
“Every day I was with you, teaching in the temple courts.”
They had many chances to arrest Him in public.
“And you did not arrest Me.”
They were afraid of the crowds.
“But the Scriptures must be fulfilled.”
This was happening according to God's word.
Jesus saw God's plan at work even in His arrest.

Cross References

Matthew 26:56
All this happened so that what the prophets wrote would come true.

Luke 22:53
Every day I was with you in the temple, and you did not arrest Me there. But this is your hour, when darkness rules.
Luke 24:44
Everything written about Me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the Psalms had to come true.

Spiritual Principle

God's word is fulfilled even through the actions of His enemies.

Key Truth

The darkest night was still under God's control.

L. EVERYONE DESERTED HIM

Mark 14:50 — They Fled

“Then everyone deserted Him and fled.”
A short, painful verse.
Everyone.
All the disciples who had promised to die with Him.
They ran away.
Exactly as Jesus had said.
The Shepherd was struck, and the sheep were scattered.

Cross References

Matthew 26:56
Then all of Jesus' followers left Him and ran away.
John 16:32
You will be scattered, each going home, and you will leave Me all alone.
Zechariah 13:7
Strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus faced His suffering alone so that we would never be alone.

Key Truth

Everyone left Jesus, so that Jesus would never leave us.

LI. A YOUNG MAN IN A LINEN GARMENT

Mark 14:51 — Following Jesus

“A young man, wearing nothing but a linen garment, was following Jesus. When they seized him,”
Only Mark tells this strange story.
Who was this young man?

Mark does not say.
Many Bible students think it may have been Mark himself.
Perhaps the Last Supper was in his family's home.
If so, this is Mark's quiet way of saying, “I was there too.”

Cross References

Genesis 39:12
She grabbed his coat and said, “Come to bed with me!” But Joseph left his coat in her hand and ran out of the house.
Amos 2:16
On that day even the bravest soldiers will run away naked.
Mark 16:5
As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man dressed in a white robe sitting on the right side.

Spiritual Principle

Everyone, even the bravest follower, failed Jesus that night.

Key Truth

Mark may be humbly telling us he too ran away.

LII. HE FLED NAKED

Mark 14:52 — Leaving His Garment Behind

“he fled naked, leaving his garment behind.”
He escaped by leaving his clothing.
It was a picture of shame and complete abandonment.
Not one follower stayed.
The prophet Amos had said even the brave would flee naked in that day.

Cross References

Genesis 39:12
Joseph ran out of the house, leaving his coat behind.
Job 1:21
I had nothing when I was born, and I will have nothing when I die.
Mark 16:5
They saw a young man wearing a white robe.

Spiritual Principle

When fear takes over, people will leave everything behind.

Key Truth

The one who fled in shame may later have written this Gospel by God's grace.

LIII. TO THE HIGH PRIEST

Mark 14:53 — The Council Gathered

“They took Jesus to the high priest, and all the chief priests, elders, and teachers of the law came together.”
“They took Jesus to the high priest.”
His name was Caiaphas.
“All the chief priests, elders, and teachers of the law came together.”
This was the **Sanhedrin**, the highest Jewish council.
It was meeting at night.
This was unusual and probably against their own rules.
The trial was rushed and unfair.

Cross References

Matthew 26:57
> Those who arrested Jesus led Him to the house of Caiaphas, the high priest, where the teachers of the law and older leaders had gathered.

Luke 22:54
> They arrested Jesus and brought Him into the high priest's house.

John 18:24
> Then Annas sent Jesus, still tied, to Caiaphas the high priest.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus submitted even to an unjust trial.

Key Truth

The Judge of all the earth stood trial before human judges.

LIV. AT A DISTANCE

Mark 14:54 — Peter in the Courtyard

“Peter followed Him at a distance, right into the courtyard of the high priest. There he sat with the guards and warmed himself at the fire.”
“Peter followed Him at a distance.”
Peter had not completely given up.
He followed.
But from a distance.
“Right into the courtyard of the high priest.”
He took a risk.
“There he sat with the guards and warmed himself at the fire.”
He sat with Jesus' enemies.
Following at a distance often leads to sitting with the wrong crowd.

Cross References

Matthew 26:58
Peter followed far behind to the courtyard of the high priest. He went in and sat with the guards to see what would happen.
Luke 22:55
They started a fire in the middle of the courtyard and sat together. Peter sat with them.
John 18:18
It was cold, so the servants and guards had made a fire and were standing around it to warm themselves. Peter was standing with them.

Spiritual Principle

Following Jesus at a distance makes us vulnerable to falling.

Spiritual Warning

Distance from Jesus often leads to closeness with the world.

LV. LOOKING FOR EVIDENCE

Mark 14:55 — They Found None

“The chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin were looking for evidence against Jesus so they could put Him to death, but they did not find any.”
“Looking for evidence against Jesus so they could put Him to death.”
The verdict was decided first.
They searched for evidence afterward.
“But they did not find any.”
Jesus was innocent.
No real charge could be found.

Cross References

Matthew 26:59
The leading priests and the whole council tried to find something false against Jesus so they could kill Him.
Psalm 35:11
Cruel witnesses come forward. They ask me about things I know nothing about.
Psalm 27:12
False witnesses have risen against me, breathing out violence.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus was completely innocent.

Key Truth

The sinless One was condemned without a single true charge.

LVI. FALSE TESTIMONY

Mark 14:56 — Their Statements Did Not Agree

“Many testified falsely against Him, but their statements did not agree.”
Many lied.
But their stories did not match.
God's law required two or three witnesses to agree.
The trial fell apart under its own lies.

Cross References

Matthew 26:60
Many people came forward and lied about Him, but the council could find no real reason to kill Him.
Psalm 35:11
Lying witnesses stand up against me.
Psalm 27:12
People lie about me and threaten me with violence.

Spiritual Principle

Lies cannot stand against the truth.

Key Truth

The false witnesses could not even agree with each other.

LVII. SOME STOOD UP

Mark 14:57 — False Testimony

“Then some stood up and gave this false testimony:”
More witnesses came.
They also lied.
They twisted something Jesus had said.

Cross References

Matthew 26:60
Finally two people came forward.
Psalm 27:12
False witnesses rise up against me.
Deuteronomy 19:15
One witness is not enough to accuse someone. Every matter must be proven by two or three witnesses.

Spiritual Principle

Twisting someone's words is a form of lying.

Key Truth

Half-truths can be as dangerous as lies.

LVIII. I WILL DESTROY THIS TEMPLE

Mark 14:58 — A Twisted Quote

““We heard Him say, ‘I will destroy this temple made with human hands and in three days will build another, not made with hands.’””
They twisted Jesus' words.
John tells us Jesus had said, **“Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days.”**
He was speaking of His body.
His body would be destroyed and raised in three days.
The irony is that their false charge was pointing to the truth.
Jesus would be killed and rise again.

Cross References

Matthew 26:61
This man said, “I can destroy the temple of God and build it again in three days.”
John 2:19
Jesus answered, “Destroy this temple, and I will raise it up again in three days.”
John 2:21
But the temple Jesus meant was His own body.

Spiritual Principle

Even false accusations cannot stop God's truth.

Key Truth

They accused Jesus of something He was actually about to do: rise again in three days.

LIX. STILL NO AGREEMENT

Mark 14:59 — Their Testimony Did Not Agree

“Yet even then their testimony did not agree.”
Again, the witnesses contradicted each other.
The case against Jesus had no legal basis.
Everything was falling apart.

Cross References

Matthew 26:60
But they found nothing.
Deuteronomy 19:15
A matter must be proven by two or three witnesses.
Psalm 35:11
Wicked witnesses accuse me of things I know nothing about.

Spiritual Principle

God's truth stands even when people try to tear it down.

Key Truth

The case against Jesus collapsed because He was innocent.

LX. ARE YOU NOT GOING TO ANSWER?

Mark 14:60 — The High Priest Stands

“Then the high priest stood up before them and asked Jesus, “Are You not going to answer? What is this testimony that these men are bringing against You?””
The high priest was frustrated.
He stood up.
He tried to get Jesus to speak.
Perhaps Jesus would say something they could use.

Cross References

Matthew 26:62
Then the high priest stood up and said to Jesus, “Aren't You going to answer?”
Isaiah 53:7
He was beaten down and punished, but He did not open His mouth. He was like a lamb led to be killed.
Mark 15:5
But Jesus still did not answer, and Pilate was amazed.

Spiritual Principle

Sometimes silence is the strongest answer.

Key Truth

Jesus did not need to defend Himself against lies.

LXI. HE REMAINED SILENT

Mark 14:61 — Are You the Messiah?

“But Jesus remained silent and gave no answer. Again the high priest asked Him, “Are You the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One?””
“But Jesus remained silent.”
Like a lamb before its shearers.
Isaiah 53 was being fulfilled.
“Are You the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One?”
The high priest asked directly.
The Blessed One was a respectful way of saying God.
This was the central question.

Cross References

Matthew 26:63
But Jesus said nothing. The high priest said, “I command You by the living God: Tell us if You are the Christ, the Son of God.”
Isaiah 53:7
Like a sheep that is silent before its shearers, He did not open His mouth.
Luke 22:67
They said, “If You are the Christ, tell us.”

Spiritual Principle

Jesus fulfilled Scripture even in His silence.

Key Truth

The Lamb of God was silent before His accusers.

LXII. I AM

Mark 14:62 — The Son of Man Coming

““I am,” said Jesus. “And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven.””
“I am.”
For the first time in Mark, Jesus openly declared He was the Messiah.
And He used the words **“I am,”** the name of God.
“And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One.”
Jesus combined Psalm 110 and Daniel 7.
He would sit beside God in power.
“And coming on the clouds of heaven.”
He would return as Judge.
The prisoner was telling His judges that one day they would stand before Him.

Cross References

Daniel 7:13
I saw someone like a son of man coming with the clouds of heaven.
Psalm 110:1
The Lord said to my Lord, “Sit at My right side.”
Matthew 26:64
Jesus answered, “You have said it. But I tell you, in the future you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right side of God and coming on the clouds.”

Spiritual Principle

Jesus openly declared Himself the Messiah and Son of God.

Key Truth

The One on trial is the Judge of all.

LXIII. HE TORE HIS CLOTHES

Mark 14:63 — No More Witnesses Needed

“The high priest tore his clothes. “Why do we need any more witnesses?” he asked.”
“The high priest tore his clothes.”
This was a sign of grief and outrage.
It showed he considered Jesus' words blasphemy.
“Why do we need any more witnesses?”
Jesus' own words became the charge.
The high priest got what he wanted.

Cross References

Matthew 26:65
When the high priest heard this, he tore his clothes and said, “He has spoken against God! We don't need any more witnesses.”
Leviticus 21:10
The high priest must not let his hair be uncombed or tear his clothes.
Acts 14:14
When Barnabas and Paul heard this, they tore their clothes and ran into the crowd.

Spiritual Principle

Truth spoken plainly will be rejected by hardened hearts.

Key Truth

Jesus was condemned for telling the truth about who He is.

LXIV. WORTHY OF DEATH

Mark 14:64 — Condemned

““You have heard the blasphemy. What do you think?” They all condemned Him as worthy of death.”
“You have heard the blasphemy.”
They believed Jesus had dishonored God.
But He had only spoken the truth.
“They all condemned Him as worthy of death.”
The verdict was death.
The only One who never deserved death was condemned to die.
And He accepted it, so that we who deserve death could live.

Cross References

Matthew 26:66
What do you think? They answered, “He deserves to die.”
Leviticus 24:16
Anyone who speaks against the name of the Lord must be put to death.

Luke 22:71
Then they said, “Why do we need any more witnesses? We heard it from His own mouth.”

Spiritual Principle

The innocent One was condemned so the guilty could go free.

Key Truth

Jesus was condemned in our place.

LXV. PROPHESY!

Mark 14:65 — Spit On and Beaten

“Then some began to spit at Him; they blindfolded Him, struck Him with their fists, and said, “Prophesy!” And the guards took Him and beat Him.”
“Then some began to spit at Him.”
A sign of complete contempt.
“They blindfolded Him, struck Him with their fists, and said, ‘Prophesy!’”
They mocked Him as a false prophet.
They demanded He tell who hit Him.
“And the guards took Him and beat Him.”
Jesus endured it all in silence.
Ironically, at that very moment, His prophecy about Peter was coming true.

Cross References

Matthew 26:67
Then they spit in His face and hit Him with their fists. Others slapped Him.
Isaiah 50:6
I let them beat my back and pull out my beard. I did not hide my face from their insults and spitting.
Luke 22:64
They blindfolded Him and said, “Prove You are a prophet! Who hit You?”

Spiritual Principle

Jesus endured shame and abuse for our sake.

Key Truth

While they mocked Him as a false prophet, His prophecy about Peter was being fulfilled.

LXVI. A SERVANT GIRL

Mark 14:66 — Below in the Courtyard

“While Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant girls of the high priest came by.”
“While Peter was below in the courtyard.”
Mark shifts the scene.

Upstairs, Jesus confessed the truth.
Downstairs, Peter was about to deny it.
“One of the servant girls of the high priest came by.”
Not a soldier.
Not a leader.
A servant girl.

Cross References

Matthew 26:69
Peter was sitting in the courtyard, and a servant girl came to him.
Luke 22:56
A servant girl saw Peter sitting by the fire.
John 18:17
The girl at the door said to Peter, “Aren't you also one of that man's followers?”

Spiritual Principle

Temptation often comes in unexpected and small ways.

Key Truth

Jesus confessed upstairs while Peter denied downstairs.

LXVII. YOU WERE WITH JESUS

Mark 14:67 — She Looked Closely

“When she saw Peter warming himself, she looked closely at him. “You also were with Jesus of Nazareth,” she said.”
“When she saw Peter warming himself.”
In the firelight, his face could be seen.
“She looked closely at him.”
She recognized him.
“You also were with Jesus of Nazareth.”
It was true.
What a wonderful thing to be said about someone.
But for Peter, in that moment, it was terrifying.

Cross References

Matthew 26:69
She said, “You also were with Jesus of Galilee.”
Luke 22:56
She looked closely at him and said, “This man was also with Him.”
John 18:17
Aren't you one of His followers?

Spiritual Principle

Being known as someone who has been with Jesus is a high honor.

Application

Can people tell that you have been with Jesus?

LXVIII. I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU ARE TALKING ABOUT

Mark 14:68 — The First Denial

“But he denied it. “I don't know or understand what you're talking about,” he said, and went out into the entryway.”
“But he denied it.”
The first denial.
“I don't know or understand what you're talking about.”
He pretended to be confused.
“And went out into the entryway.”
He tried to get away from the light.
Some ancient copies add that a rooster crowed at this point.

Cross References

Matthew 26:70
But Peter said in front of everyone, “I don't know what you are talking about.”
Luke 22:57
But Peter denied it: “Woman, I don't know Him.”
John 18:17
Peter answered, “No, I am not.”

Spiritual Principle

Fear can make us deny what we love most.

Spiritual Warning

The first step away from Jesus makes the next one easier.

LXIX. THIS FELLOW IS ONE OF THEM

Mark 14:69 — The Girl Spoke Again

“When the servant girl saw him there, she said again to those standing around, “This fellow is one of them.””
The girl would not let it go.
Now she told the others.
The pressure grew.

Cross References

Matthew 26:71
When he went out to the gate, another girl saw him and said, “This man was with Jesus of Nazareth.”
Luke 22:58
A little later someone else saw him and said, “You are one of them too.”
John 18:25
They asked him, “Aren't you also one of His followers?”

Spiritual Principle

Pressure to deny Jesus often grows when we give in the first time.

Key Truth

One compromise invites the next challenge.

LXX. YOU ARE A GALILEAN

Mark 14:70 — The Second Denial

“Again he denied it. After a little while, those standing near said to Peter, “Surely you are one of them, for you are a Galilean.””
“Again he denied it.”
The second denial.
“Surely you are one of them, for you are a Galilean.”
Matthew tells us his accent gave him away.
People from Galilee spoke differently.
He could not hide where he came from.

Cross References

Matthew 26:73
Those standing there said to Peter, “Surely you are one of them. The way you talk gives you away.”
Luke 22:59
About an hour later, another man insisted, “Certainly this man was with Him, because he is from Galilee.”
John 18:26
One of the high priest's servants, a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, said, “Didn't I see you with Him in the garden?”

Spiritual Principle

Our lives give away whom we belong to.

Key Truth

Peter could not hide that he had been with Jesus.

LXXI. CALLING DOWN CURSES

Mark 14:71 — The Third Denial

“He began to call down curses, and he swore to them, “I don't know this man you're talking about.””
“He began to call down curses.”
Peter called curses on himself if he was lying.
“And he swore to them.”
He took an oath.
“I don't know this man you're talking about.”
He would not even say Jesus' name.
“This man.”
The third and worst denial.

Cross References

Matthew 26:74
Then Peter began to curse and swear, “I don't know the man!” Right away a rooster crowed.
Luke 22:60
Peter said, “Man, I don't know what you are talking about!” At once, while he was still speaking, a rooster crowed.
John 18:27
Again Peter said it wasn't true. At that moment a rooster crowed.

Spiritual Principle

Even strong believers can fall terribly when they trust their own strength.

Spiritual Warning

The man who said he would die for Jesus now would not even say His name.

LXXII. HE BROKE DOWN AND WEPT

Mark 14:72 — The Rooster Crowed

“Immediately the rooster crowed the second time. Then Peter remembered the word Jesus had spoken to him: “Before the rooster crows twice you will disown Me three times.” And he broke down and wept.”
“Immediately the rooster crowed the second time.”
Just as Jesus said.
“Then Peter remembered the word Jesus had spoken to him.”
The rooster's crow brought back Jesus' words.
“And he broke down and wept.”
Peter was crushed.
He saw his failure.
This was the godly sorrow that leads to repentance.
Unlike Judas, Peter did not run from Jesus in despair.

He would come back.
And Jesus would restore him.
Peter's story did not end in this courtyard.
It ended with him leading the church and finally giving his life for Jesus.

Cross References

Matthew 26:75
Peter remembered what Jesus had told him: “Before the rooster crows, you will say three times that you don't know Me.” Then Peter went outside and cried bitterly.
Luke 22:62
Peter went outside and cried with great sorrow.
John 18:27
Peter denied it again, and right then a rooster crowed.

Spiritual Principle

Failure is not final when it leads to repentance.

Key Truth

Peter's tears were the beginning of his restoration.

LXXIII. SEVEN GREAT LESSONS FROM MARK 14

1. Jesus Is Anointed for Burial

“She has done a beautiful thing for Me.”

Principle:

What seems like waste to some is worship to God.

2. Betrayal Can Come from Within

“Judas Iscariot, one of the Twelve.”

Principle:

Judas was among the Twelve, yet turned against Christ.

3. The Supper Points to the Cross

“This is My blood of the new covenant, poured out for many.”

Principle:

The bread and the cup point to His body and blood given for many.

4. Prayer Is Essential in Trial

“Yet not what I will, but what You will.”

Principle:

Even Jesus sought the Father's will in Gethsemane.

5. Human Weakness and God's Strength

“The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.”

Principle:

The disciples slept, Peter denied, but God's plan stood firm.

6. Christ Is the True Son of God

“I am.”

Principle:

Condemned as a blasphemer, He is declared Lord of heaven.

7. Failure Is Not Final

“And he broke down and wept.”

Principle:

Peter wept, but he was later restored to service.

LXXIV. THE WOMAN AND JUDAS

Mark places these two stories side by side.

The Woman

- Gave something extremely valuable.
- Poured it all out for Jesus.
- Was criticized for wasting money.
- Was praised by Jesus.
- Is remembered for love.

Judas

- Received money.
- Sold Jesus for silver.
- Pretended to care for the poor.
- Was warned by Jesus.
- Is remembered for betrayal.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

What we are willing to give for Jesus shows what He is worth to us.

LXXV. THE LORD'S SUPPER

Verses 22–25 give the meaning of the meal Jesus left for His church.

The Bread

“This is My body.”
Jesus' body broken on the cross.

The Cup

“This is My blood of the new covenant.”
Jesus' blood poured out for forgiveness.

Looking Back

To the cross where Jesus died.

Looking Around

At the family of believers who share one table.

Looking Forward

“Until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God.”

A Word About Different Views

Christians understand the Lord's Supper in different ways.
But all agree it is a holy meal that points to Jesus' sacrifice and His return.

Key Truth

At the Lord's Table, we remember His death, share His life, and wait for His coming.

LXXVI. LESSONS FROM GETHSEMANE

Jesus' prayer in the garden teaches us how to face our hardest hours.

Bring Your Friends

“He took Peter, James, and John along with Him.”

Be Honest About Your Sorrow

“My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow.”

Pray to Your Father

“Abba, Father.”

Trust His Power

“Everything is possible for You.”

Ask Honestly

“Take this cup from Me.”

Surrender Completely

“Yet not what I will, but what You will.”

Keep Praying

“Once more He went away and prayed the same thing.”

Rise and Go Forward

“Rise! Let us go!”

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The way through our Gethsemane is honest prayer that ends in surrender.

LXXVII. PETER AND JUDAS

Both failed Jesus on the same night.

Judas

- Betrayed Jesus for money.
- Felt regret.
- Did not return to Jesus.
- His story ended in despair.

Peter

- Denied Jesus out of fear.
- Wept bitterly.
- Returned to Jesus.
- Was restored and became a leader of the church.

Key Truth

The difference was not the size of the failure, but whether they came back to Jesus.

LXXVIII. WHAT MARK 14 TEACHES ABOUT JESUS

He Receives Our Worship

“She has done a beautiful thing for Me.”

He Knows the Future

“One of you will betray Me.”

He Gives His Body and Blood

“This is My body… This is My blood.”

He Makes a New Covenant

“My blood of the new covenant.”

He Prays in Anguish

“Abba, Father… Take this cup from Me.”

He Submits to the Father

“Not what I will, but what You will.”

He Goes Willingly

“Rise! Let us go!”

He Is the Son of God

“I am.”

He Will Come Again

“Coming on the clouds of heaven.”

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Jesus willingly gave Himself for us, even when everyone else failed Him.

LXXIX. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR PERSONAL STUDY

Question 1

Why did the woman pour perfume on Jesus?
To honor Him and, as Jesus said, to anoint His body ahead of time for burial.

Question 2

Why did some call it a waste?
They thought the money should have gone to the poor, though Judas was really a thief.

Question 3

How much was Judas paid?
Matthew tells us thirty pieces of silver, the price of a slave.

Question 4

Why was the timing of Passover important?
Jesus died as the true Passover Lamb at the time the lambs were being sacrificed.

Question 5

What did Jesus say about the bread and the cup?
The bread is His body, and the cup is His blood of the new covenant, poured out for many.

Question 6

What is the new covenant?
God's promise to forgive sins and write His law on hearts, sealed by Jesus' blood.

Question 7

What did Jesus pray in Gethsemane?
“Abba, Father… Take this cup from Me. Yet not what I will, but what You will.”

Question 8

Why did the disciples keep falling asleep?
They were tired and grieving, and their flesh was weak.

Question 9

Who may the young man who fled naked have been?
Many think it may have been Mark himself.

Question 10

What did Jesus say when the high priest asked if He was the Messiah?
“I am,” and He said they would see Him at God's right hand and coming on the clouds.

Question 11

How did Peter's failure differ from Judas'?
Peter wept and returned to Jesus; Judas did not.

Question 12

What should Mark 14 change about the way Christians live today?
Mark 14 should cause believers to live:

- Giving their best to Jesus in love.
- Guarding against love of money.
- Remembering Jesus' death at His table.
- Praying honestly and surrendering to God's will.
- Watching and praying against temptation.
- Confessing Jesus openly.
- Not following Jesus at a distance.
- Returning to Jesus after failure.

LXXX. PERSONAL APPLICATION

Mark 14 asks several important questions.

What Costly Love Can I Give Jesus?

Is there anything I am holding back?

Is There Any Judas in Me?

Is anything more valuable to me than Jesus?

How Do I Approach the Lord's Table?

With remembrance, gratitude, and hope?

Do I Pray Like Jesus in Gethsemane?

Honestly and with surrender?

Am I Spiritually Awake?

Or sleeping when I should be praying?

Am I Following Jesus at a Distance?

Where am I sitting by the world's fire?

Have I Denied Jesus?

In words, actions, or silence?

Have I Come Back After Failure?

Do I believe Jesus still wants me?

LXXXI. A CRAWFORD BIBLE STUDY PRINCIPLE

“Not What I Will”

In the garden, Jesus faced the hardest choice ever made.
The cross was before Him.
The weight of the world's sin.
The cup of God's judgment.
He fell to the ground.
He cried out, **“Abba, Father.”**
He asked honestly if there was another way.
And then He prayed the words that saved the world.
“Yet not what I will, but what You will.”
Meanwhile, His friends slept.
Judas came with a kiss.
Peter denied Him by a fire.
Everyone failed.
But Jesus did not.
He stayed faithful to the Father's will.
This creates a powerful principle.
Our salvation rests not on our faithfulness, but on His.
And because He said, “Not My will,” we can learn to say it too.

Principle:

The prayer that saved the world is the prayer that shapes every disciple: “Not what I will, but what You will.”

LXXXII. FINAL APPLICATION

Mark Chapter 14 shows Jesus' last hours of freedom.
A woman's love.
A disciple's betrayal.
A sacred meal.
A prayer of surrender.
A kiss of betrayal.
Friends who flee.
An unjust trial.
A bold confession.

A broken denial.
And through it all, a faithful Savior.
Mark 14 therefore reminds us:
Never think love for Jesus is wasted.
Never let money take His place.
Never forget the body and blood He gave.
Never stop praying in your Gethsemane.
Never think your failure is the end.
The church does not need people who boast of their strength.
It needs:
Worshipers who pour out their best.
Disciples who watch and pray.
Believers who confess Christ openly.
And sinners who return to Jesus after they fall.
The same Jesus still calls:
Tell people that Jesus gave His body and blood for many.
Tell people that He surrendered to the Father's will for us.
Tell people that He is the Son of God who will return.
Tell people that failure is not final for those who come back to Him.
And as you live:
Love Him lavishly.
Remember His sacrifice.
Watch and pray.
Come back when you fall.

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father,
Thank You for the woman who poured out her love on Jesus.
Thank You that nothing given to Him in love is ever wasted.
Thank You for the bread and the cup that remind us of His body and blood.
Thank You for the new covenant sealed in His blood.
Thank You that in Gethsemane Jesus said, “Not what I will, but what You will.”
Thank You that He went willingly to the cross for us.
Thank You that He is the Son of God who will come again in glory.
Thank You that Peter's failure was not the end of his story.
Forgive us when we have held back our love from Jesus.
Forgive us when we have loved money more than Him.
Forgive us when we have slept instead of praying.
Forgive us when we have followed Him at a distance.
Forgive us when we have denied Him by our words, our actions, or our silence.
Help us give Jesus our very best.
Help us remember His sacrifice every time we come to His table.
Teach us to watch and pray.
Give us courage to confess Him openly.
And when we fall, bring us back to Him in repentance.
“Abba, Father… not what I will, but what You will.”
In Jesus' name, Amen.

Key Verse

““Abba, Father,” He said, “everything is possible for You. Take this cup from Me. Yet not what I will, but what You will.”” — Mark 14:36

Central Truth

While people betray, sleep, flee, and deny, Jesus willingly gives His body and blood for many, submits to the Father's will, and declares Himself the Son of God, and His grace is greater than human failure.

Mark 14 in One Sentence

As the leaders plot and Judas betrays Him, Jesus is anointed for burial, shares the Passover and gives His body and blood of the new covenant, prays in Gethsemane, “Not what I will, but what You will,” is arrested and abandoned, declares before the council that He is the Son of God, and is denied three times by Peter, who weeps bitterly.

CRAWFORD BIBLE COMMENTARY

BIBLE STUDY

Mark Chapter 15 — The Trial, Crucifixion, and Burial of the King

A Verse-by-Verse Bible Study from the Crawford Standard Bible

Introduction

Mark Chapter 15 tells the most important day in history.
The day Jesus died.
It begins early in the morning, when the council hands Jesus over to Pilate, the Roman governor.
Pilate asks, **“Are You the King of the Jews?”**
That title appears again and again in this chapter.
The crowd chooses a murderer named Barabbas instead of Jesus.
The soldiers mock Him with a purple robe and a crown of thorns.
He is crucified between two criminals.
People pass by and insult Him.
Darkness covers the land.
Jesus cries out, **“My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?”**
He breathes His last.
The temple curtain is torn from top to bottom.
And a Roman soldier says, **“Surely this man was the Son of God!”**
Faithful women watch.
And a council member named Joseph buries Jesus in a tomb.
Throughout the chapter, Jesus is mocked as a king.
But in truth, He is the King, giving His life for His people.
A word of care: Mark shows that Jewish leaders, a crowd, and Roman rulers and soldiers all played a part.
Scripture teaches that Jesus died for the sins of the whole world, and that He laid down His life willingly.
No people group should ever be blamed for His death.
The chapter moves through eight movements:

- Jesus Before Pilate (verses 1–5).
- The Crowd Chooses Barabbas (verses 6–15).
- The Soldiers Mock Jesus (verses 16–20).
- The Crucifixion of Jesus (verses 21–28).
- Mocked on the Cross (verses 29–32).
- The Death of Jesus (verses 33–39).
- The Women at the Cross (verses 40–41).
- The Burial of Jesus (verses 42–47).

The central truth of Mark 15 is:
Jesus, the true King, was rejected, mocked, crucified, and forsaken in our place, and through His death the way to God was opened, so that even a Roman soldier confessed Him as the Son of God.

I. HANDED OVER TO PILATE

Mark 15:1 — Early in the Morning

“Early in the morning, the chief priests, elders, and teachers of the law met together, and they bound Jesus and handed Him over to Pilate.”
“Early in the morning.”
The council met again at dawn to make their decision official.
“They bound Jesus.”
The One who sets captives free was tied up like a prisoner.

“And handed Him over to Pilate.”
Pilate was the Roman governor of Judea.
Only Rome had the power to carry out the death penalty.
So the council needed Pilate's approval.

Cross References

Matthew 27:2
They tied Him up, led Him away, and handed Him over to Pilate, the governor.
Luke 23:1
Then the whole group stood up and led Jesus to Pilate.
John 18:28
Early in the morning they led Jesus from Caiaphas' house to the governor's palace.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus allowed Himself to be bound so that we could be set free.

Key Truth

The One who holds the universe allowed Himself to be tied with ropes.

II. ARE YOU THE KING?

Mark 15:2 — You Have Said So

“Pilate asked Him, “Are You the King of the Jews?” Jesus replied, “You have said so.””
“Are You the King of the Jews?”
Pilate's question was political.
A king could be seen as a threat to Rome.
“You have said so.”
Jesus did not deny it.
But He answered carefully.
He was a King, but not the kind Pilate feared.
His kingdom was not of this world.

Cross References

Matthew 27:11
Jesus stood before the governor, who asked Him, “Are You the King of the Jews?” Jesus said, “You have said it.”
Luke 23:3
Pilate asked Jesus, “Are You the King of the Jews?” Jesus answered, “Yes, it is as you say.”
John 18:33
Pilate went back into the palace, called Jesus, and asked Him, “Are You the King of the Jews?”

Spiritual Principle

Jesus is the true King, though His kingdom is not of this world.

Key Truth

The prisoner standing before Pilate was the King of kings.

III. MANY ACCUSATIONS

Mark 15:3 — The Chief Priests Accused Him

“The chief priests accused Him of many things.”
The leaders piled up charges.
Luke tells us they claimed He stirred up the people and opposed paying taxes to Caesar.
Neither was true.
But they wanted Pilate to see Him as a political threat.

Cross References

Matthew 27:12
When the leading priests and older leaders accused Him, He said nothing.
Luke 23:2
They began to accuse Him: “We found this man leading our people the wrong way, telling them not to pay taxes to Caesar, and saying He is the Christ, a king.”
Isaiah 53:7
He was mistreated and punished, but He did not say a word.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus endured false accusations without defending Himself.

Key Truth

Lies piled up, but Jesus stood in silent truth.

IV. AREN'T YOU GOING TO ANSWER?

Mark 15:4 — Pilate Asks Again

“Again Pilate asked, “Aren't You going to answer? See how many things they accuse You of.””
Pilate was puzzled.
Most accused people defended themselves loudly.
But Jesus said nothing.
Pilate wanted Him to speak.

Cross References

Matthew 27:13
So Pilate said to Jesus, “Don't You hear them accusing You of all these things?”
Isaiah 53:7
Like a lamb led to be killed, He did not open His mouth.
John 19:10
Pilate said, “Will You not speak to me? Don't You know I have power to set You free or to crucify You?”

Spiritual Principle

Jesus' silence was strength, not weakness.

Key Truth

Jesus did not need to argue; the truth was on His side.

V. PILATE WAS AMAZED

Mark 15:5 — No Reply

“But Jesus made no reply, and Pilate was amazed.”
“But Jesus made no reply.”
Isaiah 53 was being fulfilled.
The Servant was like a lamb before its shearers.
“And Pilate was amazed.”
Pilate had never seen a prisoner like this.
Calm.
Silent.
Unafraid.

Cross References

Matthew 27:14
But Jesus did not answer even one charge, so the governor was very surprised.
Isaiah 53:7
He was silent like a sheep before its shearers.
John 19:9
Pilate went back into the palace and asked Jesus, “Where do You come from?” But Jesus gave him no answer.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus' calm silence revealed a peace no accuser could shake.

Key Truth

The judge was amazed by the prisoner.

VI. A CUSTOM AT THE FESTIVAL

Mark 15:6 — One Prisoner Released

“It was Pilate's custom at the festival to release one prisoner chosen by the people.”
Each Passover, Pilate released one prisoner.
It was a way to gain favor with the people.
Passover celebrated freedom from slavery.
This custom fit that theme.

Cross References

Matthew 27:15
Every year at the Passover Feast, the governor would free one prisoner whom the people chose.

Luke 23:17
Pilate had to release one prisoner to them at the feast.
John 18:39
It is your custom that I free one prisoner for you at Passover.

Spiritual Principle

God uses even human customs to accomplish His purposes.

Key Truth

At the feast of freedom, the people were offered a choice.

VII. BARABBAS

Mark 15:7 — A Rebel and Murderer

“A man called Barabbas was in prison with rebels who had committed murder during an uprising.”
“A man called Barabbas.”
His name means **“son of the father.”**
Interesting, since Jesus is the true Son of the Father.
“In prison with rebels who had committed murder during an uprising.”
Barabbas was a violent rebel.
He was guilty.
He deserved death.

Cross References

Matthew 27:16
At that time there was a well-known prisoner named Barabbas.
Luke 23:19
Barabbas was in prison because of a riot in the city and for murder.
John 18:40
Barabbas was a robber.

Spiritual Principle

Barabbas pictures every sinner who deserves judgment.

Key Truth

The guilty “son of the father” stood beside the innocent Son of the Father.

VIII. THE CROWD CAME

Mark 15:8 — Asking for the Custom

“The crowd came and asked Pilate to do what he usually did.”
A crowd gathered at Pilate's palace.
They asked for the yearly release.

This was probably a different crowd from those who welcomed Jesus into Jerusalem.
Many were likely gathered by the leaders.

Cross References

Matthew 27:15
The governor would release one prisoner the crowd wanted.
Luke 23:17
Pilate was supposed to free one prisoner at the feast.
John 18:39
You have a custom that I release someone at Passover.

Spiritual Principle

Crowds can be easily influenced for good or for evil.

Key Truth

A crowd is not always right.

IX. THE KING OF THE JEWS?

Mark 15:9 — Pilate's Offer

““Do you want me to release to you the King of the Jews?” Pilate asked.”
Pilate offered to release Jesus.
He probably thought the people would choose Jesus.
He used the title **“King of the Jews.”**
Perhaps to mock the leaders.
Perhaps because he saw Jesus was innocent.

Cross References

Matthew 27:17
Pilate asked the crowd, “Whom do you want me to set free: Barabbas, or Jesus who is called the Christ?”
John 18:39
Do you want me to free the King of the Jews?
Luke 23:20
Pilate wanted to let Jesus go, so he spoke to them again.

Spiritual Principle

Even those who know the truth can fail to act on it.

Key Truth

Pilate knew Jesus was innocent but lacked the courage to free Him.

X. OUT OF ENVY

Mark 15:10 — Pilate Knew

“He knew it was out of envy that the chief priests had handed Jesus over.”
“He knew.”
Pilate saw through the leaders.
“It was out of envy.”
They were jealous of Jesus.
Jealous of His popularity.
Jealous of His authority.
Envy is a powerful and destructive sin.
Joseph's brothers sold him out of envy.
The leaders handed Jesus over for the same reason.

Cross References

Matthew 27:18
Pilate knew they had handed Jesus over because they were jealous.
Genesis 37:11
Joseph's brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept thinking about what he said.
Psalm 69:4
Those who hate me for no reason are more than the hairs on my head.

Spiritual Principle

Envy can lead to terrible evil.

Spiritual Warning

Envy can poison even religious hearts.

XI. STIRRING UP THE CROWD

Mark 15:11 — Release Barabbas

“But the chief priests stirred up the crowd to have Pilate release Barabbas instead.”
The leaders worked the crowd.
They persuaded them to choose Barabbas.
A murderer instead of the Giver of life.
Peter later said, **“You asked for a murderer to be released to you.”**
Humanity, in every generation, chooses sin over the Savior.

Cross References

Matthew 27:20
But the leading priests and older leaders convinced the crowd to ask for Barabbas to be freed and for Jesus to be killed.
Luke 23:18
But all the people shouted together, “Take this man away! Release Barabbas to us!”

Acts 3:14
You turned away the One who was holy and good, and you asked to have a killer released to you.

Spiritual Principle

People often choose what destroys over the One who saves.

Key Truth

The choice between Barabbas and Jesus is the choice every heart must make.

XII. WHAT SHALL I DO WITH HIM?

Mark 15:12 — Pilate's Question

“Pilate asked, “What shall I do, then, with the one you call the King of the Jews?””
This is the question every person must answer.
What shall I do with Jesus?
Pilate tried to give the question to the crowd.
But it was his decision.
No one can avoid this question.

Cross References

Matthew 27:22
Pilate asked, “Then what should I do with Jesus, the one called the Christ?”
Luke 23:20
Pilate wanted to free Jesus, so he called out to them again.
John 19:15
Pilate asked them, “Do you want me to crucify your king?”

Spiritual Principle

Every person must decide what to do with Jesus.

Application

What have you done with Jesus?

XIII. CRUCIFY HIM!

Mark 15:13 — The Crowd Shouts

““Crucify Him!” they shouted.”
Two terrible words.
Crucifixion was the cruelest Roman execution.
It was used for slaves and rebels.
It was slow, painful, and shameful.
The crowd demanded the worst death for the best man who ever lived.

Cross References

Matthew 27:22
They all answered, “Crucify Him!”
Luke 23:21
But they kept shouting, “Crucify Him! Crucify Him!”
John 19:15
They shouted, “Take Him away! Take Him away! Crucify Him!”

Spiritual Principle

Sinful hearts can turn violently against the innocent.

Key Truth

The crowd demanded the cross, and God used it to save the world.

XIV. WHAT CRIME?

Mark 15:14 — They Shouted Louder

““Why? What crime has He committed?” asked Pilate. But they shouted louder, “Crucify Him!””
“Why? What crime has He committed?”
Pilate could find nothing wrong.
Jesus was innocent.
“But they shouted louder, ‘Crucify Him!’”
They had no answer.
Only louder shouting.
When there is no reason, people often just get louder.

Cross References

Matthew 27:23
Pilate asked, “Why? What wrong has He done?” But they shouted even louder, “Crucify Him!”
Luke 23:22
A third time Pilate said, “Why? What evil has He done? I find no reason to kill Him.”
John 19:6
Pilate said, “Take Him and crucify Him yourselves. I find nothing to charge Him with.”

Spiritual Principle

Jesus was completely innocent of any crime.

Key Truth

The only One who never sinned was condemned as a criminal.

XV. TO SATISFY THE CROWD

Mark 15:15 — Barabbas Released, Jesus Flogged

“Wanting to satisfy the crowd, Pilate released Barabbas and had Jesus flogged, then handed Him over to be crucified.”
“Wanting to satisfy the crowd.”
Pilate chose popularity over justice.
“Pilate released Barabbas.”
The guilty man went free.
“And had Jesus flogged.”
Roman flogging used whips with pieces of bone and metal.
It tore the flesh.
Some people died from flogging alone.
“Then handed Him over to be crucified.”
Barabbas went free because Jesus took his place.
That is the gospel.
The guilty go free because the innocent One takes their place.

Cross References

Matthew 27:26
Then he set Barabbas free. He had Jesus beaten with whips and handed Him over to be crucified.
Luke 23:25
He freed the man who was in prison for riot and murder, and he handed Jesus over to do what they wanted.
Isaiah 53:5
He was pierced because of our rebellion and crushed because of our sins. He took the punishment that made us whole, and His wounds healed us.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus took the place of the guilty so the guilty could go free.

Key Truth

We are all Barabbas, set free because Jesus took our place.

XVI. THE WHOLE COMPANY

Mark 15:16 — Into the Praetorium

“The soldiers took Jesus into the palace (the Praetorium) and called together the whole company of soldiers.”
“Into the palace (the Praetorium).”
The governor's headquarters.
“Called together the whole company of soldiers.”
A company could be hundreds of soldiers.
They gathered to make fun of Jesus.

He was surrounded by enemies.

Cross References

Matthew 27:27
The governor's soldiers took Jesus into the governor's palace, and they all gathered around Him.
John 19:2
The soldiers made a crown of thorny branches and put it on His head. They put a purple robe on Him.
Psalm 22:16
Evil people have surrounded me like a pack of dogs.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus endured mockery from many to save many.

Key Truth

He was surrounded by enemies so we could be surrounded by grace.

XVII. A PURPLE ROBE AND A CROWN OF THORNS

Mark 15:17 — Dressed as a Mock King

“They put a purple robe on Him, twisted a crown of thorns, and set it on His head.”
“They put a purple robe on Him.”
Purple was the color of royalty.
They dressed Him as a fake king.
“Twisted a crown of thorns.”
A painful mock crown.
“And set it on His head.”
Thorns came into the world through the curse of sin.
Jesus wore the curse on His head.

Cross References

Matthew 27:29
They made a crown of thorny branches, put it on His head, and put a stick in His right hand.
John 19:2
The soldiers twisted thorns into a crown and put it on His head.
Genesis 3:18
The ground will grow thorns and weeds for you.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus bore the curse of sin, pictured by the crown of thorns.

Key Truth

The King of kings wore a crown of thorns so we could wear a crown of life.

XVIII. HAIL, KING OF THE JEWS!

Mark 15:18 — Mocking Salute

“They mocked Him, shouting, “Hail, King of the Jews!””
The soldiers saluted Him the way they saluted the emperor.
But they meant it as a joke.
They had no idea they were speaking the truth.
He was the King.

Cross References

Matthew 27:29
They knelt before Him and made fun of Him, saying, “Hail, King of the Jews!”
John 19:3
They came to Him again and again and said, “Hail, King of the Jews!” and slapped Him.
Psalm 22:7
Everyone who sees me makes fun of me. They stick out their tongues and shake their heads.

Spiritual Principle

Even mockers unknowingly proclaim the truth about Jesus.

Key Truth

They mocked Him as King, and He truly was.

XIX. STRUCK AND SPAT ON

Mark 15:19 — Mock Worship

“They struck Him on the head with a staff, spit on Him, and knelt down in mock worship.”
“They struck Him on the head with a staff.”
Driving the thorns deeper.
“Spit on Him.”
Total contempt.
“And knelt down in mock worship.”
They pretended to bow.
One day every knee will truly bow.

Cross References

Matthew 27:30
They spit on Him, took the stick, and kept hitting Him on the head.
Isaiah 50:6
I gave my back to those who beat me and my cheeks to those who pulled out my beard. I did not hide my face from insults and spitting.
John 19:3
They hit Him in the face.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus suffered humiliation willingly for our sake.

Key Truth

They knelt in mockery before the One every knee will one day bow to in truth.

XX. LED AWAY TO BE CRUCIFIED

Mark 15:20 — His Own Clothes Back On

“After mocking Him, they took off the robe, put His own clothes back on Him, and led Him away to crucify Him.”
“They took off the robe, put His own clothes back on Him.”
The mockery was over.
“And led Him away to crucify Him.”
Like a lamb led to the slaughter.
Jesus walked toward the cross.

Cross References

Matthew 27:31
> After they finished making fun of Him, they took off the robe, put His own clothes on Him, and led Him away to be crucified.

John 19:16
> Then Pilate handed Jesus over to them to be crucified. So the soldiers took Jesus away.

Isaiah 53:7
> He was led like a lamb to be killed.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus went to the cross as the Lamb of God.

Key Truth

The Lamb was led out to be sacrificed for the sins of the world.

XXI. SIMON OF CYRENE

Mark 15:21 — Forced to Carry the Cross

“A man named Simon of Cyrene, the father of Alexander and Rufus, was forced to carry His cross.”
“A man named Simon of Cyrene.”
Cyrene was in North Africa.
Simon may have come to Jerusalem for Passover.
“The father of Alexander and Rufus.”
Only Mark mentions his sons.
This suggests they were known to Mark's readers.
A Rufus is greeted in Paul's letter to the Romans.

Perhaps Simon's family became believers.
“Was forced to carry His cross.”
Jesus was too weak from the beating.
Simon literally took up the cross and followed Jesus.

Cross References

Matthew 27:32
> As the soldiers were going out of the city, they met a man from Cyrene named Simon and forced him to carry the cross for Jesus.

Luke 23:26
> They grabbed Simon of Cyrene, who was coming in from the country, put the cross on him, and made him carry it behind Jesus.

Romans 16:13
> Greet Rufus, who is a special servant of the Lord, and greet his mother, who has been like a mother to me too.

Spiritual Principle

An encounter with Jesus' cross can change a whole family.

Key Truth

Simon carried the cross behind Jesus, the picture of every disciple.

XXII. GOLGOTHA

Mark 15:22 — The Place of the Skull

“They brought Jesus to the place called Golgotha (which means “The Place of the Skull”).”
“They brought Jesus.”
The word suggests they had to carry or support Him.
“Golgotha.”
An Aramaic word.
In Latin it is **Calvary**.
“The Place of the Skull.”
Perhaps the hill looked like a skull.
Or perhaps it was a place of execution.
It was outside the city walls.

Cross References

Matthew 27:33
> They came to a place called Golgotha, which means the Place of the Skull.

Luke 23:33
> When they came to the place called the Skull, they crucified Jesus there.

John 19:17
> Carrying His own cross, Jesus went out to the place called the Skull, which in Hebrew is Golgotha.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus died outside the city, bearing our shame.

Key Truth

At the place of death, Jesus won life for us.

XXIII. WINE WITH MYRRH

Mark 15:23 — He Did Not Take It

“They offered Him wine mixed with myrrh, but He did not take it.”
“They offered Him wine mixed with myrrh.”
This drink may have dulled pain.
Some women in Jerusalem offered it to those being crucified.
“But He did not take it.”
Jesus refused.
He chose to face the full suffering with a clear mind.
He drank the full cup the Father gave Him.

Cross References

Matthew 27:34
They gave Jesus wine mixed with gall to drink. He tasted it but refused to drink it.
Psalm 69:21
They gave me poison for food, and when I was thirsty, they gave me vinegar to drink.
Proverbs 31:6
Give beer to people who are dying and wine to those who are sad.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus chose to bear the full weight of suffering for us.

Key Truth

Jesus refused anything that would dull His sacrifice.

XXIV. THEY CRUCIFIED HIM

Mark 15:24 — Dividing His Clothes

“They crucified Him and divided His clothes by casting lots.”
“They crucified Him.”
Mark describes it simply.
Everyone in his day knew the horror of crucifixion.
Nails through hands and feet.
Hours of agony.
Struggling to breathe.
“And divided His clothes by casting lots.”
Soldiers gambled for His clothing.
This fulfilled Psalm 22.
Jesus was stripped of everything.

Cross References

Matthew 27:35
When the soldiers had crucified Him, they gambled to divide His clothes.
Psalm 22:18
They split up my clothes among themselves and gamble to see who gets my robe.
John 19:24
So they said, “Let's not tear it, but throw lots to see who will get it.” This happened so that the Scripture would come true.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus gave up everything, even His clothing, for us.

Key Truth

Every detail of the cross fulfilled Scripture.

XXV. THE THIRD HOUR

Mark 15:25 — Nine in the Morning

“It was the third hour (9 a.m.) when they crucified Him.”
Mark gives the time.
About nine o'clock in the morning.
The time of the morning sacrifice at the temple.
John mentions a different time for an earlier part of the trial.
Bible students explain this in different ways, such as the use of different ways of counting hours or general rather than exact times.
The point is that Jesus suffered for many hours.

Cross References

John 19:14
It was about noon on Preparation Day of the Passover week.
Matthew 27:45
At noon the whole country became dark, and the darkness lasted for three hours.
Psalm 22:16
They have pierced my hands and feet.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus endured hours of suffering for our salvation.

Key Truth

The true sacrifice was offered at the hour of the morning offering.

XXVI. THE KING OF THE JEWS

Mark 15:26 — The Written Charge

“The written charge against Him read: The King of the Jews.”
A sign was posted above the cross stating the crime.
“The King of the Jews.”
Rome meant it as a warning to anyone who claimed to be a king.
But it told the truth.
The King was dying for His people.

Cross References

Matthew 27:37
They put a sign above His head with the charge against Him: “This is Jesus, the King of the Jews.”
Luke 23:38
There was a sign above Him that said, “This is the King of the Jews.”
John 19:19
Pilate wrote a sign and put it on the cross. It read, “Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.”

Spiritual Principle

Even the charge against Jesus proclaimed the truth about Him.

Key Truth

The sign meant as an insult was a declaration of truth.

XXVII. ONE ON HIS RIGHT, ONE ON HIS LEFT

Mark 15:27 — Two Rebels

“Two rebels were crucified with Him, one on His right and one on His left.”
“Two rebels.”
Perhaps men like Barabbas.
“One on His right and one on His left.”
Remember James and John asked to sit at His right and left in His glory.
This was His glory.
The cross.
And those beside Him were criminals.

Cross References

Matthew 27:38
Two robbers were crucified with Him, one on the right and one on the left.
Luke 23:33
They crucified Him there, along with the criminals, one on His right and one on His left.

Isaiah 53:12
He was counted among sinners. He carried the sins of many and prayed for those who sinned against Him.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus was numbered with sinners so sinners could be saved.

Key Truth

The places James and John wanted were filled by criminals.

XXVIII. COUNTED AMONG THE TRANSGRESSORS

Mark 15:28 — Scripture Fulfilled

“This fulfilled the Scripture: “He was counted among the transgressors.””
Isaiah 53 said the Servant would be counted with sinners.
Jesus was crucified between criminals.
This verse is not found in many of the oldest copies of Mark.
But Luke records Jesus quoting the same verse.
The truth is the same.
Jesus took the sinner's place.

Cross References

Isaiah 53:12
He was treated like a criminal.
Luke 22:37
It is written, “He was treated like a criminal,” and this must come true about Me.
Luke 23:33
They crucified Him there with the criminals.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus was counted as a sinner so sinners could be counted righteous.

Key Truth

The sinless One was numbered with sinners.

XXIX. INSULTS FROM PASSERSBY

Mark 15:29 — Shaking Their Heads

“Those who passed by hurled insults at Him, shaking their heads and saying, “So! You who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days,””
“Those who passed by hurled insults at Him.”
The cross was near a road.

People walking by mocked Him.
“Shaking their heads.”
Exactly as Psalm 22 described.
“You who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days.”
They repeated the twisted charge from His trial.
They did not know that in three days He would rise.

Cross References

Matthew 27:40
They said, “You said You could destroy the temple and build it again in three days. Save Yourself!”
Psalm 22:7
Everyone who sees me laughs at me. They insult me and shake their heads.
Lamentations 2:15
All who pass by clap their hands at you. They hiss and shake their heads.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus endured mockery while fulfilling the very words they mocked.

Key Truth

They mocked Him for words He was about to fulfill.

XXX. SAVE YOURSELF!

Mark 15:30 — Come Down

“come down from the cross and save Yourself!””
This was the same temptation Satan offered.
Use Your power for Yourself.
Avoid the cross.
Jesus could have come down.
But if He saved Himself, He could not save us.

Cross References

Matthew 27:40
Come down from that cross if You are the Son of God!
Luke 23:35
Let Him save Himself if He is the Christ.
Psalm 22:8
He trusts in the Lord. Let the Lord rescue him.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus stayed on the cross to save others.

Key Truth

Love kept Jesus on the cross, not nails.

XXXI. HE SAVED OTHERS

Mark 15:31 — But He Can't Save Himself

“In the same way, the chief priests and teachers of the law mocked Him among themselves. “He saved others,” they said, “but He can't save Himself!””
“He saved others.”
Even they admitted it.
“But He can't save Himself!”
They meant it as an insult.
But it was the deepest truth of the cross.
He could not save Himself and save us at the same time.
He chose to save us.

Cross References

Matthew 27:42
He saved others, but He cannot save Himself!
Luke 23:35
He saved others. Let Him save Himself.
Psalm 22:8
He trusted the Lord. Let the Lord save him.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus did not save Himself so that He could save us.

Key Truth

The mockers spoke the gospel without knowing it.

XXXII. THAT WE MAY SEE AND BELIEVE

Mark 15:32 — Even the Criminals Insulted Him

“Let this Messiah, the King of Israel, come down now from the cross, that we may see and believe.” Even those crucified with Him insulted Him.”
“Let this Messiah, the King of Israel, come down now from the cross.”
They demanded a sign.
“That we may see and believe.”
But they would not have believed.
Jesus did something greater.
He did not come down.
He rose from the dead.
“Even those crucified with Him insulted Him.”
Luke tells us one of them later repented.

Cross References

Matthew 27:42
He is the King of Israel! Let Him come down from the cross, and we will believe in Him.
Luke 23:35
The leaders made fun of Him.
Psalm 22:8
Since he delights in the Lord, let the Lord deliver him.

Spiritual Principle

Faith that demands signs on its own terms is not true faith.

Key Truth

Jesus gave them a greater sign than coming down: He came out of the tomb.

XXXIII. DARKNESS AT NOON

Mark 15:33 — Over the Whole Land

“At noon, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon.”
“At noon.”
The brightest time of day.
“Darkness came over the whole land.”
God covered the land in darkness.
The prophet Amos spoke of the sun going down at noon on the day of judgment.
“Until three in the afternoon.”
Three hours of darkness.
The darkness pictured God's judgment on sin.
Jesus was bearing that judgment for us.

Cross References

Matthew 27:45
From noon until three o'clock, the whole land was dark.
Luke 23:44
It was about noon, and the whole land became dark until three o'clock, because the sun stopped shining.
Amos 8:9
The Lord God says, “On that day I will make the sun go down at noon and make the earth dark in broad daylight.”

Spiritual Principle

At the cross, God's judgment against sin fell on Jesus.

Key Truth

The Light of the world entered darkness so we could walk in light.

XXXIV. WHY HAVE YOU FORSAKEN ME?

Mark 15:34 — Eloi, Eloi

“At three o'clock Jesus cried out in a loud voice, “Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?” which means, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?””
“Jesus cried out in a loud voice.”
The only words from the cross in Mark.
“Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?”
Aramaic, the language Jesus spoke.
“My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?”
Jesus quoted Psalm 22:1.
This is the deepest mystery of the cross.
Jesus, who always had perfect fellowship with the Father, experienced being forsaken.
He bore the separation that our sin deserves.
He was forsaken so that we would never be.
Psalm 22 begins in agony but ends in victory and praise.
Jesus may have been pointing to the whole psalm.

Cross References

Psalm 22:1
> My God, my God, why have You walked away from me? Why do You stay so far off when I groan and cry out for help?

Matthew 27:46
> About three o'clock Jesus cried out in a loud voice, “Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?” which means, “My God, My God, why have You abandoned Me?”

Isaiah 53:4
> He picked up our sickness and carried our sorrows. Yet we thought God was the One striking Him down.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus was forsaken so that we could be forever accepted.

Key Truth

The cry of abandonment was the cost of our adoption.

XXXV. HE'S CALLING ELIJAH

Mark 15:35 — Misunderstood

“Some who heard this said, “Listen, He's calling Elijah.””
Some misunderstood.
Eloi sounded like **Elijah**.
Many believed Elijah would come to help the righteous in trouble.
They mocked Jesus even in His cry of agony.

Cross References

Matthew 27:47
Some of those standing there heard this and said, “He is calling Elijah.”
Malachi 4:5
I will send you the prophet Elijah before that great and terrible day of the Lord.
John 1:21
They asked him, “Then who are you? Are you Elijah?” He said, “No, I am not.”

Spiritual Principle

Those far from God often misunderstand His work.

Key Truth

They waited for Elijah, not knowing Elijah had already come in John.

XXXVI. SOUR WINE ON A SPONGE

Mark 15:36 — Let's See If Elijah Comes

“Someone ran, filled a sponge with vinegar, put it on a staff, and offered it to Jesus to drink.
“Leave Him alone now. Let's see if Elijah comes to take Him down,” they said.”
“Filled a sponge with vinegar.”
Cheap sour wine that soldiers drank.
“And offered it to Jesus to drink.”
This fulfilled Psalm 69.
“Let's see if Elijah comes to take Him down.”
More mockery.
Elijah would not come.
But God would raise Jesus up.

Cross References

Matthew 27:48
One of them quickly ran and got a sponge, filled it with vinegar, put it on a stick, and gave it to Jesus to drink.
Psalm 69:21
When I was thirsty, they gave me vinegar to drink.
John 19:29
There was a jar full of vinegar there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put it on a branch, and lifted it to His mouth.

Spiritual Principle

Every detail of Jesus' suffering fulfilled Scripture.

Key Truth

Jesus tasted the bitterness of death for us.

XXXVII. HE BREATHED HIS LAST

Mark 15:37 — A Loud Cry

“With a loud cry, Jesus breathed His last.”
“With a loud cry.”
Crucifixion usually left victims too weak to shout.
But Jesus cried out loudly.
John tells us He said, **“It is finished.”**
Luke tells us He said, **“Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit.”**
“Jesus breathed His last.”
Jesus died.
He gave up His life.
No one took it from Him.
He laid it down.

Cross References

Matthew 27:50
Jesus cried out again in a loud voice and died.
Luke 23:46
Jesus cried out, “Father, I put My spirit into Your hands.” After He said this, He died.
John 19:30
When Jesus had tasted the vinegar, He said, “It is finished.” Then He bowed His head and died.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus laid down His life willingly for us.

Key Truth

His loud cry was a shout of victory, not defeat.

XXXVIII. THE CURTAIN TORN

Mark 15:38 — From Top to Bottom

“The curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom.”
“The curtain of the temple.”
A huge, thick curtain separated the Most Holy Place from the rest of the temple.
Only the high priest could go behind it, once a year.
It showed that sin separated people from God.
“Was torn in two.”
At the moment Jesus died.
“From top to bottom.”
Not from the bottom up, as a human might tear it.
From the top down.
God tore it.
The way into God's presence was now open through Jesus.

Remember Mark 1, where heaven was **torn open** at Jesus' baptism.
Mark uses the same word here.

Cross References

Matthew 27:51
At that moment the curtain in the temple was torn into two pieces, from the top to the bottom.
Luke 23:45
The curtain in the temple was torn in two.
Hebrews 10:20
Jesus made a brand-new, living path for us to come to God. He opened the curtain for us by giving His own body.

Spiritual Principle

Through Jesus' death, the way to God is open to all.

Key Truth

God tore the curtain from top to bottom to say, “Come in.”

XXXIX. SURELY THIS MAN WAS THE SON OF GOD

Mark 15:39 — The Centurion's Confession

“When the centurion, who stood there in front of Jesus, saw how He died, he said, “Surely this man was the Son of God!””
“When the centurion.”
A Roman officer in charge of the crucifixion.
A Gentile.
“Who stood there in front of Jesus.”
He watched everything up close.
“Saw how He died.”
It was the way Jesus died that convinced him.
“Surely this man was the Son of God!”
This is the climax of Mark's Gospel.
Mark 1:1 began, **“Jesus Christ, the Son of God.”**
Now, at the cross, the first human in Mark to confess Jesus as God's Son is a Roman soldier.
The cross reveals who Jesus is.

Cross References

Matthew 27:54
When the army officer and those guarding Jesus saw the earthquake and everything that happened, they were very afraid and said, “He really was the Son of God!”
Luke 23:47
When the army officer saw what happened, he praised God, saying, “Surely this was a good man!”

Romans 1:4

> When He rose from the dead by the power of the Holy Spirit, He was shown in power to be the Son of God. He is Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Spiritual Principle

The cross reveals Jesus as the Son of God.

Key Truth

A Roman soldier saw the Son of God in a dying man.

XL. WOMEN WATCHING

Mark 15:40 — From a Distance

“Some women were watching from a distance. Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James the younger and of Joses, and Salome.”
“Some women were watching from a distance.”
The male disciples had fled.
But the women stayed.
“Mary Magdalene.”
Jesus had freed her from seven demons.
“Mary the mother of James the younger and of Joses.”
“And Salome.”
Perhaps the mother of James and John.
These women would be witnesses of His death, burial, and resurrection.

Cross References

Matthew 27:56

> Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of Zebedee's sons.

Luke 23:49

> All those who knew Jesus, including the women who had followed Him from Galilee, stood at a distance and watched.

John 19:25

> Standing near His cross were His mother, His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene.

Spiritual Principle

Faithful love stays when others flee.

Key Truth

The women who stayed became the first witnesses of the resurrection.

XLI. THEY HAD FOLLOWED HIM

Mark 15:41 — Caring for His Needs

“These women had followed Him in Galilee and cared for His needs. Many other women who had come with Him to Jerusalem were also there.”
“These women had followed Him in Galilee.”
They were true disciples.
“And cared for His needs.”
They supported His ministry with their own money and service.
“Many other women who had come with Him to Jerusalem were also there.”
Women played a vital role in Jesus' ministry.
At the cross, they showed more courage than the men.

Cross References

Luke 8:3
Joanna, Susanna, and many other women helped support Jesus and His followers with their own money.
Matthew 27:55
Many women who had followed Jesus from Galilee to care for Him were watching from a distance.
Luke 23:49
The women who had followed Him from Galilee stood watching.

Spiritual Principle

Faithful service and courageous love honor Jesus.

Key Truth

The women served Jesus in life and stayed with Him in death.

XLII. PREPARATION DAY

Mark 15:42 — The Day Before the Sabbath

“It was Preparation Day (the day before the Sabbath).”
Friday.
The Sabbath began at sunset.
No work could be done on the Sabbath.
Bodies could not be left on crosses over the Sabbath.
So Jesus had to be buried quickly.

Cross References

Matthew 27:62
The next day, the day after Preparation Day.
John 19:31
This day was Preparation Day, and the next day was a special Sabbath. The Jewish leaders did not want the bodies on the crosses on the Sabbath.

John 19:42
Because it was the Jewish Preparation Day and the tomb was nearby, they put Jesus there.

Spiritual Principle

God's timing governed even the burial of Jesus.

Key Truth

Jesus rested in the tomb on the Sabbath.

XLIII. JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA

Mark 15:43 — He Went Boldly

“Joseph of Arimathea, a respected member of the council who was waiting for the kingdom of God, went boldly to Pilate and asked for Jesus' body.”
“Joseph of Arimathea.”
A town in Judea.
“A respected member of the council.”
A member of the Sanhedrin.
Luke tells us he did not agree with their decision.
Not all the leaders were against Jesus.
“Who was waiting for the kingdom of God.”
He was a seeker.
“Went boldly to Pilate.”
This took courage.
He risked his reputation.
“And asked for Jesus' body.”
While the disciples hid, Joseph stepped forward.

Cross References

Matthew 27:58
Joseph went to Pilate and asked for Jesus' body. Pilate ordered that it be given to him.
Luke 23:52
Joseph went to Pilate to ask for the body of Jesus.
John 19:38
Joseph of Arimathea, a secret follower of Jesus because he was afraid of the leaders, asked Pilate for Jesus' body.

Spiritual Principle

God raises up unexpected people with courage at the right time.

Key Truth

A secret disciple became a bold one at the cross.

XLIV. ALREADY DEAD?

Mark 15:44 — Pilate Surprised

“Pilate was surprised to hear that He was already dead. Summoning the centurion, he asked if Jesus had already died.”
Crucified people often lived for days.
Pilate was surprised Jesus died so soon.
He checked with the centurion.
This detail matters.
It confirms that Jesus truly died.
He did not faint or pretend.

Cross References

Matthew 27:58
Pilate ordered the body to be given to him.
John 19:33
When the soldiers came to Jesus, they saw He was already dead, so they did not break His legs.
John 19:38
Pilate gave permission.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus' death was real and confirmed.

Key Truth

The Roman officer confirmed what the resurrection would overturn.

XLV. THE BODY GIVEN TO JOSEPH

Mark 15:45 — It Was So

“When he learned from the centurion that it was so, he gave the body to Joseph.”
The centurion confirmed it.
Jesus was dead.
Pilate released the body to Joseph.
An official Roman witness confirmed Jesus' death.

Cross References

Matthew 27:58
Pilate gave orders that the body be given to Joseph.
John 19:38
With Pilate's permission, he came and took the body away.
Luke 23:52
Joseph asked for the body.

Spiritual Principle

God provides witnesses to confirm the truth.

Key Truth

Jesus' death was certified by Rome itself.

XLVI. LAID IN A TOMB

Mark 15:46 — A Stone Rolled

“Joseph bought some linen, took the body down, wrapped it in the linen, and placed it in a tomb cut out of rock. He rolled a stone against the entrance.”
“Joseph bought some linen.”
He provided a burial cloth.
“Took the body down.”
Tenderly, Joseph took Jesus' body from the cross.
“Wrapped it in the linen.”
“And placed it in a tomb cut out of rock.”
Matthew tells us it was Joseph's own new tomb.
Isaiah said the Servant would be with the rich in His death.
“He rolled a stone against the entrance.”
A large stone sealed the tomb.
It seemed final.
But not for long.

Cross References

Matthew 27:60
> He put it in his own new tomb that he had cut out of rock. He rolled a large stone in front of the entrance and went away.

Luke 23:53
> He took the body down, wrapped it in cloth, and put it in a tomb cut in rock, where no one had been buried.

Isaiah 53:9
> He was buried with wicked people, and He was with the rich in His death, though He had done nothing wrong.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus was truly buried, so His resurrection would be truly victorious.

Key Truth

The stone that sealed the tomb would soon be rolled away.

XLVII. THEY SAW WHERE HE WAS LAID

Mark 15:47 — Two Marys

“Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses saw where He was laid.”
The women watched.
They saw exactly where Jesus was buried.
This matters.
On Sunday morning, they would go to the right tomb.
And they would find it empty.
The women saw Him die, saw Him buried, and would see that He had risen.

Cross References

Matthew 27:61
Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were sitting across from the tomb.
Luke 23:55
The women who had come with Jesus from Galilee followed Joseph and saw the tomb and how Jesus' body was laid.
Mark 16:1
When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices to anoint Jesus' body.

Spiritual Principle

God provides faithful witnesses to His great acts.

Key Truth

The women knew exactly where the body was, which made the empty tomb undeniable.

XLVIII. SEVEN GREAT LESSONS FROM MARK 15

1. Jesus Is the True King

“Hail, King of the Jews!”

Principle:

Though mocked with a crown of thorns, He reigns as Lord of all.

2. The Crowd Chose Barabbas over Christ

“Pilate released Barabbas.”

Principle:

It is a picture of humanity choosing sin over the Savior, and of the guilty set free because Jesus took their place.

3. The Cross Fulfills Prophecy

“He was counted among the transgressors.”

Principle:

Jesus was numbered with sinners and bore our shame.

4. The Darkness Shows God's Judgment

“Darkness came over the whole land.”

Principle:

The weight of sin fell on Christ at the cross.

5. The Temple Curtain Torn

“The curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom.”

Principle:

Access to God is now open through Jesus' sacrifice.

6. The Centurion's Confession

“Surely this man was the Son of God!”

Principle:

Even a Roman soldier recognized Him as the Son of God.

7. The Faithful Women

“Some women were watching.”

Principle:

They remained when many disciples fled.

XLIX. THE KING IN MARK 15

The word **king** appears again and again in this chapter.

Pilate Asked

“Are You the King of the Jews?”

Pilate Offered

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

Pilate Questioned

“What shall I do, then, with the one you call the King of the Jews?”

The Soldiers Mocked

“Hail, King of the Jews!”

The Sign Declared

“The King of the Jews.”

The Leaders Taunted

“Let this Messiah, the King of Israel, come down.”

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Everyone mocked Jesus as King, but the cross was His throne.

L. BARABBAS AND US

Barabbas is a picture of every sinner.

Barabbas Was Guilty

So are we.

Barabbas Deserved to Die

So do we.

Barabbas Was Set Free

So are we.

Jesus Took His Place

Jesus took ours.

Key Truth

Every believer can say, “I am Barabbas, and Jesus died in my place.”

LI. WHAT HAPPENED AT THE CROSS

Mark 15 shows what Jesus accomplished.

He Took Our Place

The innocent for the guilty.

He Bore Our Curse

The crown of thorns pictured sin's curse.

He Bore God's Judgment

The darkness covered the land.

He Was Forsaken for Us

“My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?”

He Opened the Way to God

The curtain was torn from top to bottom.

He Revealed Who He Is

“Surely this man was the Son of God!”

Crawford Bible Study Principle

At the cross, Jesus did everything needed to bring us to God.

LII. WHAT MARK 15 TEACHES ABOUT JESUS

He Is the King

“The King of the Jews.”

He Is the Silent Lamb

“Jesus made no reply.”

He Is the Innocent One

“What crime has He committed?”

He Is Our Substitute

“Pilate released Barabbas.”

He Bore Our Sin

“Counted among the transgressors.”

He Was Forsaken for Us

“Why have You forsaken Me?”

He Opened the Way to God

“The curtain… was torn.”

He Is the Son of God

“Surely this man was the Son of God!”

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Jesus is the King who died in our place and opened the way to God.

LIII. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR PERSONAL STUDY

Question 1

Why did the council take Jesus to Pilate?
Only the Roman governor had the power to carry out the death penalty.

Question 2

Why was Jesus silent before His accusers?
He fulfilled Isaiah 53 and did not need to defend Himself against lies.

Question 3

Who was Barabbas?
A violent rebel and murderer who was set free instead of Jesus.

Question 4

Why did the leaders hand Jesus over?
Pilate knew it was out of envy.

Question 5

Why did Pilate hand Jesus over to be crucified?
He wanted to satisfy the crowd, even though he knew Jesus was innocent.

Question 6

What did the crown of thorns symbolize?
Mockery of His kingship, and also the curse of sin that Jesus bore.

Question 7

Who was Simon of Cyrene?
A man from North Africa forced to carry Jesus' cross, whose sons were likely known to the early church.

Question 8

What did Jesus mean when He cried, “Why have You forsaken Me?”

He was bearing the separation our sin deserves, quoting Psalm 22.

Question 9

What does the torn curtain mean?
The way into God's presence is now open through Jesus.

Question 10

What did the centurion confess?
“Surely this man was the Son of God!”

Question 11

Why is it important that the women saw where Jesus was buried?
It confirmed they went to the right tomb on Sunday and found it empty.

Question 12

What should Mark 15 change about the way Christians live today?
Mark 15 should cause believers to live:

- Worshiping Jesus as the true King.
- Remembering that Jesus took their place.
- Choosing Jesus over sin.
- Coming boldly to God through the torn curtain.
- Confessing Jesus as the Son of God.
- Staying faithful when others flee.
- Being courageous like Joseph.
- Never blaming any people group for Jesus' death, but seeing their own sin at the cross.

LIV. PERSONAL APPLICATION

Mark 15 asks several important questions.

What Will I Do with Jesus?

Pilate's question is my question.

Have I Chosen Barabbas or Jesus?

Am I choosing sin over the Savior?

Do I See Myself as Barabbas?

Do I know Jesus took my place?

Do I Worship Jesus as King?

Or do I mock His rule by how I live?

Am I Willing to Carry the Cross?

Like Simon, following Jesus?

Do I Come Boldly to God?

Through the curtain Jesus opened?

Have I Confessed Jesus as the Son of God?

Like the centurion?

Am I Faithful When Others Flee?

Like the women at the cross?

LV. A CRAWFORD BIBLE STUDY PRINCIPLE

“He Saved Others”

The leaders stood at the foot of the cross.
They laughed.
They shook their heads.
“He saved others, but He can't save Himself!”
They meant it as an insult.
But they spoke the deepest truth of the gospel.
Jesus could have come down.
He could have called angels.
He could have saved Himself.
But if He saved Himself, He could not save us.
So He stayed.
Through the mockery.
Through the darkness.
Through the cry of forsakenness.
Until He breathed His last.
This creates a powerful principle.
Love does not save itself.
Love gives itself away.

Principle:

Jesus did not save Himself, because He was saving you.

LVI. FINAL APPLICATION

Mark Chapter 15 brings us to the foot of the cross.
Jesus stands silent before Pilate.

A murderer goes free.
The King wears a crown of thorns.
He is crucified between criminals.
He is mocked by all.
Darkness covers the land.
He cries out in forsakenness.
He dies.
The curtain is torn.
A soldier confesses Him as the Son of God.
Faithful women watch.
And He is laid in a tomb.
Mark 15 therefore reminds us:
Never forget that Jesus took your place.
Never choose sin over the Savior.
Never treat the cross lightly.
Never stay outside when the curtain is open.
Never be ashamed to confess Him.
The church does not need people who only admire the cross.
It needs:
People who know they are Barabbas.
People who follow Jesus carrying the cross.
People who come boldly to God through Jesus.
And people who confess, "Surely this man was the Son of God!"
The same Jesus still calls:
Tell people that Jesus died in their place.
Tell people that the way to God is open.
Tell people that the crucified King is the Son of God.
Tell people that the tomb would not hold Him.
And as you live:
Remember the cross.
Come to God through Jesus.
Confess Him as the Son of God.
Stay faithful.

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father,
Thank You for sending Jesus, the true King, to die for us.
Thank You that He stood silent before His accusers like a lamb.
Thank You that He took our place, as He took the place of Barabbas.
Thank You that He wore the crown of thorns and bore the curse of our sin.
Thank You that He was forsaken so that we would never be forsaken.
Thank You that the curtain was torn and the way to You is open.
Thank You for the confession, "Surely this man was the Son of God."
Thank You for the faithful women and for Joseph's courage.
Forgive us when we have chosen sin over the Savior.
Forgive us when we have mocked His kingship by how we live.
Forgive us when we have been ashamed of the cross.

Forgive us when we have fled instead of staying faithful.
Help us never forget that Jesus took our place.
Help us come boldly to You through the way He opened.
Make us faithful like the women at the cross.
Make us courageous like Joseph.
And help us confess with all our hearts that Jesus is the Son of God.
“Surely this man was the Son of God!”
In Jesus' name, Amen.

Key Verse

“When the centurion, who stood there in front of Jesus, saw how He died, he said, “Surely this man was the Son of God!”” — Mark 15:39

Central Truth

Jesus, the true King, was rejected, mocked, crucified, and forsaken in our place, and through His death the way to God was opened, so that even a Roman soldier confessed Him as the Son of God.

Mark 15 in One Sentence

Jesus stands silent before Pilate, is rejected in favor of Barabbas, is mocked as King and crucified between criminals, cries out “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” and dies as the temple curtain is torn and a centurion confesses Him as the Son of God, and then He is buried while faithful women watch.

CRAWFORD BIBLE COMMENTARY

BIBLE STUDY

Mark Chapter 16 — The Risen Lord

A Verse-by-Verse Bible Study from the Crawford Standard Bible

Introduction

Mark Chapter 16 is the last chapter of Mark's Gospel.
It is the chapter of victory.
Jesus had been crucified and buried.
The stone had been rolled across the tomb.
His followers were grieving.
But early on Sunday morning, everything changed.
Women came to the tomb with spices.
They found the stone rolled away.
A young man in white told them the greatest news ever spoken.
“He has risen! He is not here.”
Then Jesus appeared to Mary Magdalene, to two followers on the road, and to the eleven.
He sent them into all the world with the good news.
And He was taken up into heaven, where He sits at the right hand of God.
A note about the ending of Mark:
Some of the oldest and most respected copies of Mark end at verse 8.
Most later copies include verses 9–20, which this Bible includes.
Bible students hold different views about these verses.
Some believe Mark's original ending was lost.
Some believe Mark ended at verse 8 on purpose, leaving readers to respond.
Many believe verses 9–20 were added early to summarize resurrection appearances found in the other Gospels and Acts.
Almost everything in verses 9–20 is also taught elsewhere in the New Testament.
This study explains these verses carefully, comparing them with the rest of Scripture.
The chapter moves through four movements:

- The Empty Tomb (verses 1–8).
- Appearances of the Risen Christ (verses 9–14).
- The Great Commission (verses 15–18).
- The Ascension of Jesus (verses 19–20).

The central truth of Mark 16 is:
Jesus Christ, who was crucified, has risen from the dead, appeared to His followers, sent them into all the world with the good news, and now reigns at the right hand of God, working with His people as they proclaim Him.

I. WHEN THE SABBATH WAS OVER

Mark 16:1 — Buying Spices

“When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices to anoint Jesus' body.”
“When the Sabbath was over.”
The Sabbath ended at sunset on Saturday.
“Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome.”
The same faithful women who watched Jesus die and saw where He was buried.
“Bought spices to anoint Jesus' body.”
They came to honor His body.
They expected to find Him dead.

They came in love, not expecting a miracle.

Cross References

Matthew 28:1
After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb.
Luke 23:56
The women went home and prepared spices and perfumes. On the Sabbath they rested, as the law commanded.
John 19:40
They wrapped Jesus' body in strips of linen with the spices, as was the Jewish custom of burial.

Spiritual Principle

Faithful love serves Jesus even when hope seems lost.

Key Truth

The women came to anoint a dead body and found a living Lord.

II. VERY EARLY ON THE FIRST DAY

Mark 16:2 — Just After Sunrise

“Very early on the first day of the week, just after sunrise, they went to the tomb.”
“Very early on the first day of the week.”
Sunday morning.
The day after the Sabbath.
This became the day Christians gather to worship, remembering the resurrection.
“Just after sunrise.”
As the sun rose, the Son had already risen.
“They went to the tomb.”
They went to the place of death.

Cross References

Matthew 28:1
At dawn on the first day of the week, the women went to the tomb.
Luke 24:1
Very early on the first day of the week, the women came to the tomb, bringing the spices they had prepared.
John 20:1
Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been moved away.

Spiritual Principle

The resurrection marks a new beginning, a new first day.

Key Truth

The first day of the week became the first day of new creation.

III. WHO WILL ROLL AWAY THE STONE?

Mark 16:3 — A Worried Question

“On the way, they asked each other, “Who will roll away the stone from the entrance of the tomb?””
The women had a problem.
The stone was huge.
They could not move it themselves.
They were worried about something God had already taken care of.
How often we worry about stones God has already moved.

Cross References

Matthew 28:2
> There was a strong earthquake. An angel of the Lord came down from heaven, rolled the stone away, and sat on it.

Luke 24:2
> They found the stone rolled away from the tomb.

John 20:1
> She saw that the stone had been taken away from the entrance.

Spiritual Principle

God often removes obstacles before we reach them.

Application

What “stone” are you worrying about that God may have already moved?

IV. ALREADY ROLLED AWAY

Mark 16:4 — A Very Large Stone

“But when they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had already been rolled away.”
“When they looked up.”
They lifted their eyes.
“They saw that the stone… had already been rolled away.”
The problem was already solved.
“Which was very large.”
Mark emphasizes its size.
No one could have moved it easily.
The stone was not rolled away to let Jesus out.
It was rolled away to let the witnesses in.

Cross References

Matthew 28:2
> An angel rolled back the stone and sat on it.

Luke 24:2
The stone had been rolled away from the entrance.
John 20:1
The stone had been removed from the tomb.

Spiritual Principle

What seems impossible to us is already done by God.

Key Truth

The stone was moved so the world could see the tomb was empty.

V. A YOUNG MAN IN WHITE

Mark 16:5 — They Were Alarmed

“As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man dressed in a white robe sitting on the right side, and they were alarmed.”
“They saw a young man dressed in a white robe.”
Matthew calls him an angel.
White robes showed heavenly glory.
“Sitting on the right side.”
A place of honor and good news.
“And they were alarmed.”
They were shocked and afraid.
They expected a body, not a messenger from heaven.

Cross References

Matthew 28:3
The angel's face was bright like lightning, and his clothing was snow-white.
Luke 24:4
While they were wondering about this, two men in shining clothes suddenly stood beside them.
John 20:12
She saw two angels dressed in white, sitting where Jesus' body had been, one at the head and one at the feet.

Spiritual Principle

God sends His messengers to announce His mighty works.

Key Truth

Heaven came to the tomb to tell the good news.

VI. HE HAS RISEN!

Mark 16:6 — He Is Not Here

“He said to them, “Do not be afraid. You are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid Him.”
“Do not be afraid.”
Good news replaces fear.
“You are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified.”
Yes, the same Jesus.
The One who died.
“He has risen!”
The greatest news in history.
Death could not hold Him.
“He is not here.”
The tomb was empty.
“See the place where they laid Him.”
They could see for themselves.
The resurrection is not a myth.
It is a fact witnessed by real people.

Cross References

Matthew 28:6
> He is not in this place. He was raised, just as He promised. Come look at the spot where He was lying.

Luke 24:6
> He is not here; He has come back to life! Think back to what He told you while He was still in Galilee.

1 Corinthians 15:4
> He was put in a grave, and on the third day God brought Him back to life, just as the Scriptures had said.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus truly rose from the dead, conquering death forever.

Key Truth

The crucified One is the risen One.

VII. AND PETER

Mark 16:7 — Go Tell His Disciples

“But go, tell His disciples and Peter, ‘He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see Him, just as He told you.’”
“But go, tell His disciples.”
The women became the first messengers of the resurrection.

“And Peter.”
Only Mark includes these two words.
Peter had denied Jesus three times.
He must have thought he was finished.
But Jesus named him especially.
Peter was not forgotten.
He was still wanted.
“He is going ahead of you into Galilee.”
Just as Jesus promised in Chapter 14.
“There you will see Him, just as He told you.”
Jesus keeps His promises.

Cross References

Matthew 28:7
> Go quickly and tell His followers, “He has risen from the dead. He is going into Galilee ahead of you, and you will see Him there.”

Mark 14:28
> But after I rise from the dead, I will go ahead of you into Galilee.

John 21:1
> Later, Jesus showed Himself to His followers again by Lake Galilee.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus seeks out those who have failed Him and calls them back.

Key Truth

Two words, “and Peter,” carry a world of grace.

VIII. TREMBLING AND BEWILDERED

Mark 16:8 — They Were Afraid

“Trembling and bewildered, the women ran from the tomb. They said nothing to anyone at first, because they were afraid.”
“Trembling and bewildered.”
They were overwhelmed.
This was too great to understand.
“The women ran from the tomb.”
“They said nothing to anyone at first.”
At first, they were silent.
“Because they were afraid.”
This was holy fear and amazement.
But the other Gospels tell us they soon told the disciples.
Fear gave way to faith.
As noted, some of the oldest copies of Mark end here.
If so, it leaves every reader with a question.
Will you stay silent, or will you tell the news?

Cross References

Matthew 28:8
The women left the tomb quickly. They were afraid, but they were also very happy. They ran to tell the followers what had happened.
Luke 24:9
The women left the tomb and told all these things to the eleven and to the others.
John 20:2
So she ran to Simon Peter and the other follower whom Jesus loved and said, “They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have put Him!”

Spiritual Principle

The resurrection is overwhelming, but it must be told.

Key Truth

Fear at the tomb turned into the world's greatest message.

IX. FIRST TO MARY MAGDALENE

Mark 16:9 — Seven Demons Cast Out

“When Jesus rose early on the first day of the week, He appeared first to Mary Magdalene, from whom He had cast out seven demons.”
“When Jesus rose early on the first day of the week.”
Sunday morning.
“He appeared first to Mary Magdalene.”
The first person to see the risen Jesus was a woman.
In that culture, women's testimony was often not trusted.
No one would invent a story like that.
This is a mark of truth.
“From whom He had cast out seven demons.”
Jesus had set her free.
Now He honored her as the first witness.

Cross References

John 20:16
Jesus spoke her name: “Mary.” She turned to Him and cried out in Aramaic, “Rabboni!” (that is, “Teacher”).
Luke 8:2
Some women were also with Him, including Mary Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out.
John 20:18
Mary Magdalene went and told the followers, “I have seen the Lord!”

Spiritual Principle

Jesus honors those whom others might overlook.

Key Truth

The woman once held by seven demons was the first to see the risen Lord.

X. MOURNING AND WEEPING

Mark 16:10 — She Told Them

“She went and told those who had been with Him, who were mourning and weeping.”
“She went and told those who had been with Him.”
Mary became a messenger.
“Who were mourning and weeping.”
The disciples were grieving.
They thought it was over.
They did not yet know their tears were about to turn to joy.

Cross References

John 20:18
She told them, “I have seen the Lord!” and she told them what He had said.
Luke 24:10
It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women who told the apostles.
Matthew 28:8
The women ran to tell His followers.

Spiritual Principle

Good news is meant to be shared with those who are grieving.

Key Truth

Mary brought resurrection news into a room full of tears.

XI. THEY DID NOT BELIEVE

Mark 16:11 — Unbelief

“But when they heard that Jesus was alive and that she had seen Him, they did not believe it.”
“They heard that Jesus was alive.”
The best news ever.
“And that she had seen Him.”
An eyewitness.
“They did not believe it.”
The disciples were not easily fooled.
They doubted.
This shows the resurrection was not something they invented.
They had to be convinced.

Cross References

Luke 24:11
But the apostles thought the women's story was foolish talk, and they would not believe it.
John 20:25
Thomas said, “Unless I see the nail marks in His hands and put my finger where the nails were, I will not believe.”
Luke 24:24
Some of our group went to the tomb and found it just as the women said, but they did not see Jesus.

Spiritual Principle

The disciples' doubts make their later faith even more convincing.

Key Truth

The first witnesses to the resurrection were doubters who became believers.

XII. IN A DIFFERENT FORM

Mark 16:12 — Two Walking in the Country

“Later, Jesus appeared in a different form to two of His followers as they were walking in the country.”
“Jesus appeared in a different form.”
His resurrection body was real.
But they did not recognize Him at first.
“To two of His followers as they were walking in the country.”
Luke tells this story in detail.
Two followers walking to Emmaus.
Jesus walked with them and explained the Scriptures.
They recognized Him when He broke bread.

Cross References

Luke 24:13
That same day two of Jesus' followers were going to a town called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem.
Luke 24:16
But something kept their eyes from knowing who He was.
Luke 24:31
Suddenly their eyes were opened and they knew it was Jesus. Then He vanished from in front of them.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus walks with His people even when they do not recognize Him.

Key Truth

The risen Lord meets people on ordinary roads.

XIII. STILL THEY DID NOT BELIEVE

Mark 16:13 — Reported to the Others

“They returned and reported it to the others, but they still did not believe them.”
The two hurried back to Jerusalem.
They told the others.
But the disciples still struggled to believe.
Luke tells us that by the time they arrived, some had begun to believe because Jesus had appeared to Peter.
Faith was growing slowly, one witness at a time.

Cross References

Luke 24:33
> They got up at once and went back to Jerusalem. There they found the eleven and others gathered together.

Luke 24:35
> Then the two told what had happened on the road and how they recognized Jesus when He broke the bread.

Luke 24:41
> They were filled with joy and amazement and still could not believe it.

Spiritual Principle

God is patient with slow and struggling faith.

Key Truth

Faith in the resurrection grew one witness at a time.

XIV. HE APPEARED TO THE ELEVEN

Mark 16:14 — Rebuked for Unbelief

“Finally, Jesus appeared to the eleven as they were eating. He rebuked them for their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they had not believed those who saw Him after He had risen.”
“Finally, Jesus appeared to the eleven.”
Judas was gone.
Eleven remained.
“As they were eating.”
He came to them in an ordinary moment.
“He rebuked them for their unbelief and hardness of heart.”
Jesus corrected them.
They should have believed the witnesses.
But His rebuke was followed by a commission.
He did not give up on them.

Cross References

Luke 24:36
While they were still talking, Jesus was suddenly standing in the middle of them. He said, “Peace to you.”
John 20:19
That Sunday evening the followers had locked themselves in a room. Jesus came, stood in the middle of them, and said, “Peace to you!”
John 20:26
A week later the followers were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus corrects His followers, but He does not abandon them.

Key Truth

The same men Jesus rebuked, He then sent out to change the world.

XV. GO INTO ALL THE WORLD

Mark 16:15 — Preach the Good News

“He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the good news to everyone.””
“Go.”
The church is a sending people.
“Into all the world.”
Not just Israel.
Every nation.
“And preach the good news.”
The gospel.
The message that Jesus died and rose again.
“To everyone.”
No one is left out.
This is called the **Great Commission**.
It is the task of every believer.

Cross References

Matthew 28:19
So go out to every nation and make followers for Me. Baptize them into the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
Luke 24:47
In His name, the message that people should turn from sin and be forgiven must go out to every nation, beginning in Jerusalem.
Acts 1:8
When the Holy Spirit comes upon you, He will fill you with power. Then you will tell people about Me, starting in Jerusalem, then through Judea and Samaria, and all the way to the farthest places on earth.

Spiritual Principle

Every believer is called to share the good news with the world.

Application

Who in your world needs to hear the good news?

XVI. WHOEVER BELIEVES

Mark 16:16 — Saved or Condemned

“Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.”
“Whoever believes.”
Faith in Jesus is the heart of salvation.
“And is baptized.”
In the New Testament, believers were baptized as a public sign of their faith and new life in Christ.
“Will be saved.”
Rescued from sin and judgment.
“But whoever does not believe will be condemned.”
Notice that the condemnation is for not believing.
It does not say “not baptized.”
Christians and churches understand the role of baptism in different ways.
Some see baptism as the moment God applies salvation to a believer.
Others see it as an outward sign of salvation already received by faith.
All agree that Jesus commands baptism and that saving faith in Him is essential.

Cross References

John 3:16
> God's love for the world was so great that He gave His one and only Son. Anyone who trusts in Him will not perish. Instead, that person will live forever with God.

John 3:18
> No one who trusts in the Son is condemned. But anyone who refuses to trust Him stands condemned already, because he has not put his faith in God's one and only Son.

Acts 2:38
> Peter answered, “Every one of you must change your hearts and turn from sin, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ so your sins will be forgiven. Then God will give you the Holy Spirit as a gift.”

Spiritual Principle

Salvation comes through faith in Jesus, expressed in obedience to Him.

Key Truth

Unbelief, not lack of opportunity, is what condemns.

XVII. SIGNS WILL ACCOMPANY

Mark 16:17 — Demons Driven Out, New Tongues

“These signs will accompany those who believe: in My name they will drive out demons, they will speak in new tongues,”
“These signs will accompany those who believe.”
God would confirm the message with signs.
“In My name they will drive out demons.”
The book of Acts records this happening.
“They will speak in new tongues.”
This happened at Pentecost and later.
The power comes from Jesus' name, not from the believer.
Christians hold different views about whether these signs continue today in the same way as in the early church.
But all agree that God still works powerfully through His people.

Cross References

Acts 2:4
The Holy Spirit filled every one of them, and they began speaking in languages they had never learned, as the Spirit made them able.
Acts 10:46
They heard them speaking in other languages and praising God.
Acts 16:18
Paul turned and said to the spirit, “In the name of Jesus Christ I command you to come out of her!” And it left her at that moment.

Spiritual Principle

God confirms His message through His power at work in His people.

Key Truth

The power is in Jesus' name.

XVIII. SNAKES, POISON, AND HEALING

Mark 16:18 — They Will Recover

“they will pick up snakes with their hands, and if they drink deadly poison, it will not harm them; they will place their hands on the sick, and they will recover.””
“They will pick up snakes with their hands.”
In Acts, Paul was bitten by a poisonous snake by accident and was not harmed.
“And if they drink deadly poison, it will not harm them.”
These are promises of God's protection for His messengers as they carry the gospel.
They are not commands to test God.
Jesus Himself refused to test God by throwing Himself from the temple.
No believer should handle snakes or drink poison to prove their faith.

“They will place their hands on the sick, and they will recover.”
God still heals in answer to prayer.
Believers should pray for the sick and also use the good gifts of medicine.

Cross References

Acts 28:5
Paul shook the snake off into the fire and was not hurt.
Luke 10:19
Listen, I have given you authority to step on snakes and scorpions and to defeat every power the enemy has. Nothing will be able to harm you.
James 5:15
When people pray with faith, the sick person will be made well, and the Lord will lift him up. And any sins he has done will be forgiven.

Spiritual Principle

God protects and empowers His messengers, but we must never test Him.

Spiritual Warning

These are promises of protection, not invitations to deliberately put ourselves in danger.

XIX. TAKEN UP INTO HEAVEN

Mark 16:19 — At the Right Hand of God

“After the Lord Jesus had spoken to them, He was taken up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God.”
“After the Lord Jesus had spoken to them.”
This is the only time Mark calls Him **“the Lord Jesus.”**
A fitting title at the end.
“He was taken up into heaven.”
This is called the **Ascension**.
Luke tells us it happened forty days after the resurrection.
“And sat down at the right hand of God.”
Exactly as Psalm 110 said.
Exactly as Jesus told the high priest.
The rejected King now reigns.
His work of salvation is finished.
He rules and prays for His people.

Cross References

Luke 24:51
As He was blessing them, He was parted from them and lifted up into heaven.
Acts 1:9
When He had said these things, He was lifted up as they looked on, and a cloud covered Him so they could no longer see Him.

Psalm 110:1

> The Lord said to my Lord, “Take Your seat at My right hand, until I put Your enemies under Your feet like a footrest.”

Spiritual Principle

Jesus reigns now at the right hand of God.

Key Truth

The One who was condemned now sits on the throne.

XX. THE LORD WORKED WITH THEM

Mark 16:20 — Preached Everywhere

“Then the disciples went out and preached everywhere, and the Lord worked with them, confirming His word with miraculous signs. Amen.”
“Then the disciples went out.”
They obeyed.
The scattered, frightened disciples became bold messengers.
“And preached everywhere.”
The gospel spread across the world.
“And the Lord worked with them.”
Jesus was in heaven.
But He was still working on earth through His people.
“Confirming His word with miraculous signs.”
God backed up their message.
“Amen.”
So be it.
The Gospel of Mark ends not with an ending, but with a beginning.
The story continues through every believer who carries the good news.

Cross References

Acts 14:3

> Paul and Barnabas stayed there a long time and spoke bravely for the Lord. He showed that their message about His grace was true by giving them power to do signs and wonders.

Hebrews 2:4

> God backed up their message with signs, wonders, all kinds of miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, handed out just as He chose.

Romans 15:19

> Christ worked through me by the power of signs and miracles and the power of the Holy Spirit.

Spiritual Principle

The risen Lord works with His people as they share the gospel.

Key Truth

Mark's Gospel ends, but the work of the gospel goes on through us.

XXI. SIX GREAT LESSONS FROM MARK 16

1. The Tomb Is Empty

“He has risen! He is not here.”

Principle:

Jesus has risen just as He promised, proving His victory over death.

2. Fear Turned to Faith

“Trembling and bewildered, the women ran from the tomb.”

Principle:

Those who trembled at first became witnesses of the greatest truth in history.

3. The Great Commission Is for All Believers

“Go into all the world and preach the good news to everyone.”

Principle:

Every believer is called to take the gospel to the whole world.

4. Faith Brings Salvation

“Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved.”

Principle:

Saving faith in Christ, shown through obedience such as baptism, is the pathway to eternal life.

5. God Empowers His People

“The Lord worked with them, confirming His word.”

Principle:

God's power over evil and sickness confirms the message of Christ.

6. Jesus Reigns Forever

“He was taken up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God.”

Principle:

He is seated at the right hand of God, interceding for His people.

XXII. THE EVIDENCE OF THE RESURRECTION

Mark 16 gives us strong reasons to believe Jesus truly rose.

The Empty Tomb

“See the place where they laid Him.”
The tomb was empty, and anyone could check it.

The Women Witnesses

In that culture, no one inventing a story would choose women as the first witnesses.
Their testimony is a mark of honesty.

The Doubting Disciples

“They did not believe it.”
The disciples were not expecting a resurrection.
They had to be convinced.

The Many Appearances

Mary, the two on the road, the eleven, and later more than five hundred people.

The Changed Lives

Frightened, hiding men became bold preachers who would not stop, even when threatened with death.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The resurrection is not wishful thinking; it is history witnessed by people who first doubted it.

XXIII. “AND PETER”: GRACE FOR THOSE WHO FAIL

Peter had boasted, **“Even if all fall away, I will not.”**
Then he denied Jesus three times.
He wept bitterly.
He must have wondered whether Jesus would ever want him again.
Then came the message from the empty tomb.
“Go, tell His disciples and Peter.”

Jesus Remembered Him

Peter was named.

Jesus Wanted Him

Peter was invited to Galilee with the others.

Jesus Restored Him

John 21 shows Jesus asking Peter three times, “Do you love Me?”

Jesus Used Him

Peter preached at Pentecost, and thousands believed.

Key Truth

Your failure is not the end of your story when the risen Jesus calls your name.

XXIV. THE GREAT COMMISSION

The risen Jesus gave His followers their mission.

The Command

“Go.”

The Scope

“Into all the world.”

The Message

“Preach the good news.”

The Audience

“To everyone.”

The Response

“Whoever believes… will be saved.”

The Power

“The Lord worked with them.”

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Jesus does not send His people alone; He works with them as they go.

XXV. LOOKING BACK OVER THE GOSPEL OF MARK

Mark 16 completes the story that began in Mark 1.

It Began with Good News

“The beginning of the good news about Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God.” (Mark 1:1)

Jesus Came to Serve

“The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many.” (Mark 10:45)

Jesus Told Them He Would Rise

Three times He said He would be killed and rise again after three days.

Jesus Died as He Said

Mark 15 shows the cross.

Jesus Rose as He Said

“He has risen… just as He told you.”

The Good News Goes On

“The disciples went out and preached everywhere.”

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The Gospel of Mark begins with good news and ends by sending that good news into all the world.

XXVI. WHAT MARK 16 TEACHES ABOUT JESUS

He Is Risen

“He has risen!”

He Keeps His Word

“Just as He told you.”

He Restores the Fallen

“And Peter.”

He Honors the Overlooked

“He appeared first to Mary Magdalene.”

He Is Patient with Doubters

“They still did not believe.”

He Sends His People

“Go into all the world.”

He Saves Those Who Believe

“Whoever believes… will be saved.”

He Reigns as Lord

“He… sat down at the right hand of God.”

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Jesus is the risen Lord who keeps His word, restores the fallen, sends His people, and reigns forever.

XXVII. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR PERSONAL STUDY

Question 1

Why did the women go to the tomb?
To anoint Jesus' body with spices. They expected to find Him dead.

Question 2

What were the women worried about on the way?
Who would roll the large stone away from the entrance.

Question 3

What did the young man in white tell them?
“He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid Him.”

Question 4

Why are the words “and Peter” important?
Peter had denied Jesus, but Jesus made sure he knew he was still wanted.

Question 5

Why were the women afraid?
The news was overwhelming and holy. Their fear soon turned to joyful witness.

Question 6

Who was the first person to see the risen Jesus?
Mary Magdalene, from whom He had cast out seven demons.

Question 7

How did the disciples first respond to the news?
They did not believe it.

Question 8

Why does the disciples' doubt strengthen the case for the resurrection?
It shows they did not invent the story. They had to be convinced by seeing Jesus.

Question 9

What is the Great Commission?
Jesus' command to go into all the world and preach the good news to everyone.

Question 10

What does verse 16 teach about salvation?
Salvation comes through faith in Jesus, and believers are called to be baptized. Condemnation comes from unbelief.

Question 11

Should Christians handle snakes or drink poison to prove their faith?
No. These are promises of God's protection, not commands to test God. Jesus Himself refused to test God.

Question 12

What should Mark 16 change about the way Christians live today?
Mark 16 should cause believers to live:

- Rejoicing that Jesus is alive.
- Trusting that God has already moved the stones they fear.
- Believing that failure is not the end.
- Sharing the good news with everyone.
- Obeying Jesus in faith and baptism.
- Trusting God's power to work through them.
- Being patient with those who struggle to believe.
- Living under the reign of the risen King.

XXVIII. PERSONAL APPLICATION

Mark 16 asks several important questions.

Do I Believe Jesus Is Alive?

Not just as history, but as my living Lord?

What Stone Am I Worried About?

Have I trusted God with it?

Do I Believe Jesus Still Wants Me?

Even after I have failed Him, like Peter?

Am I Silent or Sharing?

Am I telling others the good news?

Am I Slow to Believe?

Have I hardened my heart like the eleven?

Have I Obeyed Jesus?

Have I trusted Him and followed Him in baptism?

Who Needs to Hear?

Who in my world has not heard the good news?

Do I Live Under His Reign?

Is Jesus truly Lord of my life?

XXIX. A CRAWFORD BIBLE STUDY PRINCIPLE

“He Is Not Here”

The women came to the tomb with spices.
They came to anoint the dead.
They came with grief.
They came worried about a stone.
But the stone was already moved.
And the tomb was already empty.
“He is not here.”
These may be the most hopeful words ever spoken in a graveyard.
Jesus is not among the dead.
He is not held by the grave.
He is not a memory to be honored.
He is a living Lord to be followed.

This creates a powerful principle.
Do not look for the living among the dead.
Do not live as if Jesus were still in the tomb.

Principle:

Because Jesus is not in the tomb, death does not have the last word for anyone who trusts Him.

XXX. FINAL APPLICATION

Mark Chapter 16 brings us to the empty tomb.
Women come with spices.
The stone is rolled away.
A young man in white announces, “He has risen!”
Peter is named.
The women tremble.
Jesus appears to Mary Magdalene.
He walks with two on the road.
He appears to the eleven.
He sends them into all the world.
He is taken up into heaven.
And the disciples go out and preach everywhere.
Mark 16 therefore reminds us:
Never live as if Jesus were still dead.
Never think your failure has disqualified you.
Never keep the good news to yourself.
Never test God to prove your faith.
Never forget that Jesus reigns.
The church does not need people who only visit the empty tomb.
It needs:
People who believe He is alive.
People who have been restored like Peter.
People who go into all the world.
And people who live under the reign of the risen King.
The same Jesus still calls:
Tell people that the tomb is empty.
Tell people that failure can be forgiven.
Tell people that whoever believes will be saved.
Tell people that Jesus reigns.
And as you go:
Believe.
Obey.
Go.
Trust the Lord to work with you.

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father,
Thank You that Jesus has risen from the dead.

Thank You that the tomb is empty and death has been defeated.
Thank You that You roll away stones we cannot move.
Thank You for the words “and Peter,” and for grace that calls us back after we fail.
Thank You for honoring Mary Magdalene as the first witness.
Thank You for being patient with doubting hearts.
Thank You for sending us into all the world with the good news.
Thank You that Jesus sits at Your right hand and prays for us.
Forgive us when we have lived as if Jesus were still in the tomb.
Forgive us when we have stayed silent out of fear.
Forgive us when our hearts have been slow to believe.
Forgive us when we have kept the good news to ourselves.
Help us believe with all our hearts.
Help us obey Jesus in all things.
Send us into our world with the good news.
Work with us, Lord, as You worked with the first disciples.
And help us live every day under the reign of the risen King.
“He has risen! He is not here.”
In Jesus' name, Amen.

Key Verse

“He said to them, “Do not be afraid. You are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid Him.”” — Mark 16:6

Central Truth

Jesus Christ, who was crucified, has risen from the dead, appeared to His followers, sent them into all the world with the good news, and now reigns at the right hand of God, working with His people as they proclaim Him.

Mark 16 in One Sentence

Women find the tomb empty and hear that Jesus has risen, the risen Lord appears to Mary Magdalene, to two followers, and to the eleven, sends them into all the world with the good news, and is taken up to the right hand of God, while His disciples go out preaching everywhere and the Lord works with them.

Epilogue

The Gospel of Mark ends where every faithful encounter with Jesus Christ must end—with a decision.

We have watched Him teach with authority.

We have seen Him heal the sick.

We have heard Him confront hypocrisy.

We have watched demons tremble at His command.

We have seen storms become still at His word.

We have followed Him through villages, synagogues, roads, crowds, opposition, betrayal, suffering, crucifixion, and finally to the empty tomb.

And through it all, one truth has remained unmistakable:

Jesus Christ is the Servant-King.

He came with all the authority of heaven, yet He chose the path of humility.

He possessed power beyond anything the world had ever seen, yet He used that power to serve.

He deserved worship, yet He washed the feet of broken humanity through a life of compassion and sacrifice.

He could have called down judgment, yet He willingly walked toward the cross.

He was mocked as a king, but He truly was the King.

He was treated as powerless, yet He was accomplishing the greatest victory in human history.

The cross looked like defeat.

It was not.

The tomb looked final.

It was not.

Death appeared to have spoken the last word.

It had not.

The resurrection declared that Jesus is exactly who He said He is.

The Servant was vindicated.

The sacrifice was accepted.

The grave was defeated.

And the King lives.

That truth changes everything.

Christianity is not built upon the memory of a dead teacher. It rests upon the reality of a risen Savior.

Jesus Christ is alive.

His words still carry authority.

His gospel still saves.

His Spirit still transforms.

His call still demands an answer.

And His kingdom is still advancing.

The question Mark leaves before us is not merely, “What do you think about Jesus?”

The deeper question is:

Will you follow Him?

That is where the Gospel becomes personal.

It is possible to admire Jesus without surrendering to Him.

It is possible to study His miracles without trusting His power.

It is possible to quote His words without obeying them.

It is possible to know facts about Christ while never actually following Christ.

Mark will not allow us to remain comfortable with that kind of distance.

Jesus calls for more than interest.

He calls for discipleship.

He calls us to deny ourselves.

He calls us to take up the cross.

He calls us to surrender pride.

He calls us to abandon false security.

He calls us to trust Him when the road is difficult.

He calls us to serve when the world tells us to seek recognition.

He calls us to faithfulness when obedience costs something.

He calls us to follow Him all the way.

That is not the path of convenience.

It is the path of the cross.

But it is also the path of life.

The Gospel of Mark shows us that the true measure of greatness in the kingdom of God is not status, applause, wealth, or influence.

It is service.

The greatest is the servant.

The first becomes last.

The one who loses life for Christ discovers true life.

The one who gives receives.

The one who humbles himself is lifted up.

The kingdom of God overturns the values of the world because its King does not rule like earthly kings.

Jesus leads through sacrifice.

He conquers through suffering.

He triumphs through obedience.

He reigns through righteousness.

And He saves through the giving of His own life.

That is why Mark 10:45 remains the heartbeat of this Gospel.

The Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve and to give His life as a ransom for many.

Everything points back to that mission.

Every miracle shows His compassion and authority.

Every confrontation reveals the seriousness of truth.

Every parable exposes the condition of the heart.

Every prediction of suffering points toward Calvary.

Every step toward Jerusalem moves closer to the cross.

And every promise of resurrection points beyond the grave.

The Servant-King came to rescue sinners.

That means there is hope for the broken.

There is forgiveness for the guilty.

There is restoration for the fallen.

There is strength for the weak.

There is direction for the confused.

There is mercy for the repentant.

There is life for those who were spiritually dead.

There is salvation for all who come to Christ in faith.

But there is also a warning.

The same Jesus who offers mercy also speaks truth.

He warns against unbelief.

He warns against hypocrisy.

He warns against spiritual blindness.

He warns against empty religion.

He warns against following the crowd while ignoring the narrow path of obedience.

Mark makes clear that proximity to Jesus is not the same as discipleship.

Crowds followed Him.

Not all believed.

Religious leaders heard Him.

Many rejected Him.

Judas walked beside Him.

Yet he betrayed Him.

The issue is not whether a person has heard about Jesus.

The issue is whether that person has surrendered to Him.

That challenge is just as urgent today as it was in the first century.

The church must never become content with a Christianity of words without obedience.

We must not settle for religion without transformation.

We must not confuse activity with faithfulness.

We must not confuse knowledge with surrender.

We must not confuse public appearance with private devotion.

The Servant-King calls His people to something deeper.

He calls us to become like Him.

To serve.

To sacrifice.

To love.

To forgive.

To stand for truth.

To endure hardship.

To remain faithful.

To proclaim the gospel.

To carry the cross.

And to keep following Him.

The world desperately needs Christians who do more than speak the name of Jesus.

It needs believers who reflect His character.

It needs churches that serve instead of seeking status.

It needs disciples who choose obedience over popularity.

It needs men and women who are willing to stand when truth is costly.

It needs followers of Christ who understand that greatness in God's kingdom is measured by faithfulness.

The Gospel of Mark does not end with passive reflection.

It sends us forward.

The risen Christ entrusted His followers with a mission.

The gospel is to be proclaimed.

The lost are to be reached.

Disciples are to be made.

The church is to move.

The message is to continue.

The story that began in Galilee was never intended to remain there.

It moved from village to village.

From Jerusalem to the nations.

From generation to generation.

And now that responsibility belongs to us.

We have received the message.

Now we must carry it.

We have heard the truth.

Now we must live it.

We have seen the Servant-King.

Now we must follow Him.

One day, the Jesus Mark describes will no longer be seen only through the written testimony of Scripture.

Faith will become sight.

The crucified and risen Christ will return in glory.

The Servant-King will be revealed openly as King of kings and Lord of lords.

Every knee will bow.

Every tongue will confess.

Every hidden thing will be exposed.

Every promise will be fulfilled.

And every faithful act of service done in His name will be seen by the One who never overlooked it.

Until that day, the call remains simple.

Follow Jesus.

Serve faithfully.

Stand firmly.

Love deeply.

Speak truth.

Carry the cross.

Proclaim the gospel.

And never forget that the One we follow is not merely a servant and not merely a king.

He is the Servant-King.

The One who gave Himself for us.

The One who rose for us.

The One who reigns over us.

And the One who is coming again.

May we be found faithful when He does.

Note from the Author

Writing *The Servant-King* has been more than a study of the Gospel of Mark. It has been a renewed encounter with Jesus Christ.

Mark presents Jesus with urgency, power, compassion, and purpose. He is constantly moving—teaching, healing, confronting, serving, suffering, and ultimately giving His life for sinners. Yet beneath the fast-moving narrative is a profound truth: the One with all authority chose the path of humility.

That truth is what drew me again and again to the title *The Servant-King*.

Jesus was never weak.

His service was not weakness.

His humility was not defeat.

His suffering was not failure.

He served because He chose to serve. He gave because He chose to give. He went to the cross because redemption required a sacrifice, and He willingly became that sacrifice.

Mark 10:45 stands at the center of this Gospel: the Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve and to give His life as a ransom for many.

My desire in writing this commentary has been to treat the text seriously, carefully, and practically. Verse by verse, I have tried to explain what the passage says, what it means, what it reveals about Christ, and how it speaks to the believer today.

A commentary should do more than provide information.

It should drive us back to Scripture.

It should deepen our understanding of Christ.

It should confront sin.

It should strengthen faith.

It should challenge shallow religion.

It should encourage obedience.

And it should leave us with a greater desire to follow Jesus.

That is my prayer for this book.

I do not want the reader merely to finish the Gospel of Mark knowing more facts. I want the reader to see Jesus more clearly.

To see His authority.

To see His compassion.

To see His courage.

To see His holiness.

To see His sacrifice.

To see His victory.

And then to ask the question every disciple must eventually answer:

What does following Him require of me?

The Gospel of Mark does not present a comfortable Christianity.

Jesus calls people to deny themselves, take up the cross, and follow Him.

That kind of discipleship costs something.

It requires surrender.

It requires humility.

It requires obedience.

It requires faith when circumstances do not make sense.

It requires courage when truth is unpopular.

It requires perseverance when the road becomes difficult.

But it also leads to life.

The same Christ who calls us to carry the cross is the Christ who conquered the grave.

The same Christ who calls us to serve is the Christ who serves us with grace.

The same Christ who calls us to follow is the Christ who promises never to abandon His people.

As you read these pages, I encourage you not to rush.

Open your Bible.

Read the verses carefully.

Pray over them.

Examine your own heart.

Allow the Holy Spirit to convict, strengthen, correct, and encourage you through the Word.

Do not merely ask, “What does this passage mean?”

Also ask:

“What does God want me to do with it?”

That is where Bible study becomes discipleship.

I am grateful for every reader who takes this journey through Mark with me. My prayer is that this commentary will help you understand the Gospel more deeply, love Jesus more fully, trust Him more completely, and follow Him more faithfully.

The Servant-King still calls.

His Word still speaks.

His cross still saves.

His empty tomb still gives hope.

And His command remains the same:

Follow Me.

Dr. Paul Crawford

A Closing Prayer

“Father, I thank You for every reader who has walked through these pages. For the one who does not yet know You, I pray they would hear Your voice and receive Your Son, Jesus, as Lord and Savior. For the one who already believes, I pray You would set their heart ablaze with urgency—to speak, to share, to love, and to never be silent. May we all live as faithful watchmen, sounding the trumpet until the day You call us home. In Jesus’ mighty name, Amen.”

THE BIBLE WAY TO HEAVEN

1. Admit you are a sinner.

"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." (Romans 3:23)

No one is good enough to go to Heaven on his own merit.

No matter how much good we do, we still come short.

2. Realize the penalty for sin.

"For the wages of sin is death..." (Romans 6:23a)

Just as there are wages for good, there is punishment for wrong.

The penalty for our sin is eternal death in a place called Hell.

3. Believe that Jesus Christ died, was buried, and rose again for you.

"That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." (Romans 10:9)

4. Trust Christ alone as your Saviour.

"...But the gift of God is eternal life though Jesus Christ our Lord." (Romans 6:23b)

"For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." (Romans 10:13)

Eternal life is a gift purchased by the blood of Jesus and offered freely to those who call upon Him by faith.

Anyone who believes on the Lord Jesus Christ will be saved forever. Being saved is a one-time event.

Dr. Paul Crawford is more than just a Christian Author; His books are a source of inspiration and guidance on your spiritual journey. His books are created with a deep sense of faith and a desire to uplift and inspire all who read.

THE SERVANT-KING

The Power, Passion, and Purpose of Jesus Christ

A Comprehensive Verse-by-Verse Commentary
on the Gospel of Mark

The Gospel of Mark is a fast-moving, powerful, and urgent account of Jesus Christ—the Son of God who came not to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many.

In *The Servant-King*, Dr. Paul Crawford provides a comprehensive, verse-by-verse commentary on the Gospel of Mark, showing how every passage reveals the authority, compassion, mission, suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus—and what it means to follow Him today.

IN THIS COMMENTARY, YOU WILL:

- ✓ Gain a clear and faithful explanation of each verse in Mark.
- ✓ See how Jesus fulfills God's plan of redemption.
- ✓ Understand the call to true discipleship: deny self, take up the cross, and follow Christ.
- ✓ Discover the heart of Jesus' mission—to serve and to give His life.
- ✓ Learn practical, life-changing lessons for personal faith and daily obedience.

"The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give His life as a ransom for many."

MARK 10:45

More than a study, *The Servant-King* is an invitation to know Jesus more deeply, love Him more fully, and follow Him more faithfully—the Servant who gave Himself for us, the King who reigns forever.

DR. PAUL CRAWFORD