

Love Letters

Reading Through the Gospels



Reading Guide
Week #7

Mark 9-14



NEW HORIZON
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Love Letters Reading Guide for Week #7 Mark 9-14

A Week in Review. Immediately and without hesitation, Jesus steps into His mission of preaching, teaching, touching and healing. The crowds swoon and are amazed. The disciples follow in bewilderment. His opponents are offended and conspire. Mark skillfully and confidently presents a Savior Who wields power and authority, and Who pushes every conceivable envelope.

This Week's Reading. Mark is rapidly revealing the focal point of his writing: *Jesus has come to die for the sin of the world.* Already, Jesus has already predicted His death. It seems like we just began and Jesus is already looking to His cross. Throughout the remainder of the Gospel Jesus will work to help His followers understand. Will they? Will we?

○ MONDAY—MARK 9

Consider. How do you personally reconcile verses that seem to contradict one another? Consider v.40 compared to Matthew 12:30. How do you explain?

Read.

- As with His baptism, during the Transfiguration we hear a voice from Heaven. At the baptism, the Voice addressed Jesus directly: *"You are My Son...With You I am well pleased"* (1:11). Now the voice addressed the disciples: *"This is my Son, Whom I love. Listen to Him!"* (v.7). What does each statement speak to you about God's relationship with His Son?
- Some scholars believe Mark uses "disciples" to refer to the larger group of people who follow Jesus. He reserves the phrase "the Twelve" (v.35) to refer to those whom Jesus has selected as leaders. To which group does Jesus intend for you to belong?

Reflect. v.24 is unique to Mark: *"I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!"* This man recognizes His feeble faith and asks for help in believing. Have you ever asked in this way?

○ TUESDAY—MARK 10

Consider. As we begin today's reading, consider the words of Werner Kelber (Mark's Story of Jesus, p.53): "It may well be the single-most important message the author (Mark) wishes to convey: there is no life without death, and no Easter without crucifixion." How does that statement strike you?

Read.

- v.25 is unique to Mark: *"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."* When have "riches" been a distraction for you in your walk with Jesus?
- When Jesus asks, *"can you drink the cup I drink or be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with?"* (v.38), the disciples are confident. They don't realize the cup and baptism represent "dying" to their own agenda and following Jesus. What has following Jesus cost you?

Reflect. In v.30, Jesus makes promises to those who leave all to follow Him. Along with blessings, they are also promised "persecutions." What struggles have you encountered because of your commitment to follow Jesus?

○ WEDNESDAY—MARK 11

Consider. Today's reading is a display of Mark's powerful authorship. Here we find Jesus making three trips into the Temple in Jerusalem over a three day period. Wedded among the trips is the Cursing of the Fig tree. Scholars suggest that this chapter represents Jesus challenging, disqualifying, and predicting the end of the Temple era in Judaism. It has become barren and fruitless. The Messiah's day has come.

Read.

- Who marches into Jerusalem with Jesus on Palm Sunday? The townspeople? The children? v. 9, *"Those who went ahead and those who followed shouted..."* Jesus is not met by throngs from Jerusalem, but is accompanied merely by those who have traveled with Him. What is Mark suggesting with this less-than-dramatic entrance?
- In v.17, Jesus says of the Pharisees and the Temple, *"But you have made it a den of*

robbers.” Jesus is accusing the Pharisees of using the Temple as a means for personal gain. Are there times your faith in Christ is more about your needs than God’s purposes?

Reflect. We’ve already seen Mark’s emphasis on Jesus bringing together Jews and Gentiles for God’s Kingdom. This is reinforced with Jesus’ statement in v.17, unique to Mark: “*My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations.*” Jesus’ appeal is to all. Is that emphasis apparent in the ministries of your church?

○ THURSDAY—MARK 12

Consider. In Jerusalem Jesus encounters the best, brightest, and most influential of the religious community. But they are no match for His wisdom and responses. In the end, it is the poor widow and her meager offering (vv.41-44) whom Jesus received and blesses. How does that make you feel?

Read.

- After predicting the end of the Temple era in chapter 11, Jesus delivers a blow: “*The Stone the builders rejected has become the Cornerstone*” (v.10). Jesus is establishing Himself as the “Cornerstone” of God’s Kingdom. Is it your intention that Jesus also be the “Cornerstone” of your life?
- In v.28-34, one of the teachers of the law stands out among his peers. When Jesus recognizes the man’s discretion, Jesus responds, “*You are not far from the Kingdom of Heaven*” (v.34). Can Jesus say the same of you?

Reflect. As Jesus leaves the temple for the last time, the religious leaders and the disciples are confused. They were taught that the Messiah would establish His Kingdom among them, yet Jesus disassociates Himself from the Jewish Temple religion. What were they missing? Around what aspects of following Christ could you use some clarity?

○ FRIDAY—MARK 13

Consider. Kelber makes an astonishing observation in chapter 13. In v.14, Mark leaves his narrative voice and speaks directly to the

reader: “*Let the reader understand.*” Kelber suggests that Mark’s audience was reading these words even as the Romans were bringing the Jewish Temple to the ground in 70 AD. This book, therefore, was a contemporary commentary for early believers who were trying to make sense of current events. How has your walk with Christ helped you make sense of events in our day?

Read.

- Jesus makes another extremely accurate prediction about the Temple: “*Not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down*” (v.20). Historians and archeologists have discovered this to be literally true when the Romans destroyed the temple in 70 AD. Given the accuracy of Jesus’ predictions, how reliable are His words regarding His soon return? What does this thought provoke in your heart?
- In v. 10, Jesus says, “*The Gospel must first be preached to all nations.*” In what ways are you intentionally involved in the Church’s mission to insure others hear the Gospel?

Reflect. We might imagine Christ’s return being a joyful reunion for believers and their Savior. Do we also consider how frightful His return will be for others? How does this notion strike you regarding the souls of those you love?

○ SATURDAY—MARK 14

Consider. We are only in our second full week in Mark, and we’re already at the Last Supper. Jesus continues with His predictions: “*A man carrying a jar of water will meet you*” (v.13); “*One of you will betray Me*” (v.18); “*This is My blood...which is poured out for many*” (v.24); “*I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered*” (v.27). There are no surprises for Jesus. All is going as the Father has planned, and Jesus will submit Himself to the end.

Read.

- Following the Last supper, Jesus and His disciples “*sing a hymn*” before going to the Mount of Olives (v.26). Do you ever picture Jesus worshipping? How does the thought of Jesus singing hymns of praise to the Father strike you?

- Notice the intimacy of the Father and His Son as Jesus is dying: “*Abba (Papa/Daddy), Father*” (v.36). Jesus, tortured for crimes He did not commit, clings to His Father with His dying breath. Are you able to follow Jesus’ example in calling out to your Heavenly Father in your struggles?

Reflect. Notice the significance of the woman pouring oil over Jesus’ head in v.3. This is the way in which Biblical kings are coroneted. Permit the irony to grip you: Rather than being crowned Kings of the Jews in the Temple, Jesus will be enthroned on a cross amid thieves. With astounding grace and power, our Savior has worked salvation for all who will believe. Have you placed your faith and trust in Christ our Lord?

Notes:



New Horizon United Methodist Church
3002 W. Bloomington Rd.
Champaign, IL 61822
217-359-8909
www.newhorizonchurch.org