

ADULT BIBLE STUDY IN SIMPLIFIED ENGLISH

STUDY GUIDE

Mark: The Gospel in Motion

Includes Bonus Christmas Lesson

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Adult Bible Study in Simplified English Study Guide

Mark: The Gospel in Motion

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Mark: The Gospel in Motion

Introduction

Get ready for an amazing ride!

The Gospel of Mark is an action-packed story of Jesus' ministry. This book tells about Jesus as a miracle worker, teacher, healer, and servant. He teaches His special followers how to share God's love with the world.

Mark focuses on Jesus' actions. He tells about 18 of Jesus' miracles. These miracles show Jesus was sent by God. Jesus had God's power, because *Jesus is God!*

Jesus was "on the move." He moved to different towns so He could help people. He healed people's bodies so they could move. He changed their hearts so they would know about God's forgiveness. And He still does!

The Gospel of Mark was probably the first Gospel to be written. Bible experts believe it was written about 35 years after Jesus' death and resurrection. The early Christians had preached about Jesus. Mark wrote down their messages. And Christians have been reading the Gospel of Mark for almost 2,000 years.

A study of Mark's Gospel helps us think about how to keep "the gospel in motion." What can we do to tell others about Jesus? What can we do to serve God more

fully? What parts of our lives do we need to give over to God's control?

Jesus put the gospel in motion. Let's join Him on the journey!

About the Writers

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Janet Roberts wrote Lessons 11-13 and the Christmas Lesson. She has taught ESL since 1976, trains teachers in Plano, Texas, and teaches English in other countries. She has four children, two granddaughters, and one grandson. She attends Prestonwood Baptist Church in Plano.

Mark: The Gospel in Motion

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Mark: The Gospel in Motion

Word List

Lesson 1

authority: the ability to command; complete power or control

Messiah: God's promised Savior

persecuted: to treat cruelly because of one's race or religion

synagogues: Jewish places of worship

Lesson 2

attention: the act of thinking or focusing on something

distract: to take a person's mind away from something else.

jostled: to push roughly

obstacles: things that get in the way

miracles: an amazing event that can't be explained without God's power

surprising: unexpected or unusual; causing surprise

Lesson 3

accused: charged with wrong doing

carpenter: one who builds with wood

misunderstood: thought of incorrectly

ordinary: simple or plain; normal or usual

purpose: the reason for doing something

recognize: to be able to identify something or someone

Lesson 4

cemetery: a place where dead people are buried

isolation: a state of being alone

separation: being kept apart from someone or something

submission: the act of accepting someone else's authority or control

vulnerable: open to being easily hurt or harmed

Lesson 5

familiar: commonly seen, heard, or experienced

rejected: refused to believe or accept

suspicious: a feeling that someone is guilty

Lesson 6

accuse: to blame someone for something wrong

motive: a reason for doing something

tradition: a way of thinking, acting, or doing something that has been passed down by a group of people for many years

Lesson 7

challenge: something that is hard to do

flawed: having a mistake or weakness

influence: to affect someone in an important way

shudder: to shake because of fear or cold

tempt: to cause someone to want to do something that is wrong or bad

Lesson 8

celebration: the act of showing joy, thankfulness

doubt: feeling unsure, failure to believe

embarrass: to make someone look foolish

negative: thinking about the bad qualities, not hopeful

torment: to cause someone extreme pain

Mark: The Gospel in Motion

Word List

Lesson 9

baptize: to dip someone in water to show they have a new life.

determined: having a strong feeling that you are going to do something and that you will not allow anyone or anything to stop you

salvation: the gift of being saved from sin

Lesson 10

erode: to wear away; to gradually destroy

expensive: costing a lot of money

Gentiles: people who are not Jews

God's judgment: decision based on His holiness

sacrifice: the act of killing an animal to please God

Lesson 11

betray: to give information about someone to their enemies or to hand someone over to their enemies

imagine: to think of or create a picture or idea in your mind of something that is not real

symbol: a thing used to show the importance of something else

Lesson 12

arrested: to use the power of the law to take and keep someone

condemn: to give someone a bad punishment after saying they are wrong or guilty

cruel: to be hurtful to others but not feel bad about doing it; to cause others to suffer greatly

denial: to say that something is not true or real

torches: long sticks that burn brightly to give light

Lesson 13

sacrifice: to give up something to help someone; to die to save others

tomb: a grave cut out of the rock, like a cave

torture: to cause very bad pain as punishment; to cause painful suffering

Christmas Lesson

ancestors: all the people in your family who were born before you

crisis: a big problem that feels terrible and makes people worry about what they should do

miracle: a powerful work that only God can do and that people cannot explain

pattern: when something is done in a regular and repeated way

Mark: The Gospel in Motion

Memory Verses

Lesson 1

“Jesus came and said to them, ‘All power has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.’”
(Matthew 28:18)

Lesson 2

“I am doing this so you may know the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins.”
(Mark 2:10)

Lesson 3

“Whoever does what My Father wants is My brother and My sister and My family.”
(Mark 3:35)

Lesson 4

“The light shines in the darkness. The darkness has never been able to put out the Light.” (John 1:5)

Lesson 5

“Jesus said to them, ‘One who speaks for God is respected everywhere but in his own country and among his own family and in his own house.’” (Mark 6:4)

Lesson 6

“It is not what goes into a man’s mouth from the outside that makes his mind and heart sinful. It is what comes out from the inside that makes him sinful.” (Mark 7:15)

Lesson 7

“Jesus called the people and His followers to Him. He said to them, ‘If anyone wants to be My follower, he must give up himself and his own desires. He must take up his cross and follow Me.’” (Mark 8:34)

Lesson 8

“Jesus said to him, ‘Why do you ask Me that? The one who has faith can do all things.’”
(Mark 9:23)

Lesson 9

“For the Son of Man did not come to be cared for. He came to care for others. He came to give His life so that many could be bought by His blood and be made free from sin.”
(Mark 10:45)

Lesson 10

“He taught them saying, ‘Is it not written, ‘My house is to be called a house of prayer for all nations’? You have made it a place of robbers.’” (Mark 11:17)

Lesson 11

“Then Jesus took bread and gave thanks and broke it in pieces. He gave it to them, saying, ‘This is My body which is given for you. Do this to remember me.’” (Luke 22:19)

Lesson 12

“Then all His followers left Him and ran away.” (Mark 14:50)

Lesson 13

“But God raised Him up. He allowed Him to be set free from the pain of death. Death could not hold its power over Him.”
(Acts 2:24)

Christmas Lesson

“...They will give Him the name Immanuel. This means God with us.” (Matthew 1:23b)

Adult Bible Study

in Simplified English

Mark: The Gospel in Motion

Lesson 1: Jesus' Authority

Bible Text

Mark 1:21-34

Memory Verse

"Jesus came and said to them, 'All power has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.'"
(Matthew 28:18)

Word List

authority: the ability to command; complete power or control

Messiah: God's promised Savior

persecuted: to treat cruelly because of one's race or religion

synagogues: Jewish places of worship

The Gospel of Mark is different from the other Gospels. Matthew and Luke begin by showing that Jesus was from the family of King David. John starts with Jesus the Creator. Mark does not begin with Jesus' family tree. He does not start at creation. Mark begins with Jesus' healing and strong teaching. People could tell that Jesus had the right and power to teach. Jesus was not like any other teacher.

Do you know people who have a lot of power? Who is boss of your life? Who tells you what to do? Who teaches you? The president has power over the country. A governor runs a state. Principals lead schools. Bosses direct workers. Parents lead their families. Every city has police officers and leaders who have **authority**. What gives someone power over other people? Where do people get their power and authority?

We can understand why Mark wrote about Jesus' power. Many people today do not trust people with power. The people who heard Jesus also felt this way. They lived under cruel leaders from Rome. The people did not vote for them. The Romans took the power by force. They used their power freely. They hurt the Jews in many ways. They also hurt followers of Jesus. Christians refused to worship the gods of the Romans. So the Romans **persecuted** them. They tried to stop people from following this new leader, Jesus.

But Jesus was more powerful than the Romans. His power came from God. And He used His power to do good for people, not to harm them. People needed to know about Jesus' power. They needed to trust Him. Mark knew this. So he told powerful stories about Jesus. He showed that Jesus has power over every authority on earth. Jesus has power because He is the Son of God.

Power to Teach (Mark 1:21-22)

Capernaum was a small fishing village. It sat on the northern coast of the Sea of Galilee. Jews built **synagogues** in cities with ten or more Jewish families. The synagogue in Capernaum became an important place. Jesus showed His power there.

Men went to the synagogue on the Day of Rest each week. They gathered to pray and hear teaching. There were several leaders. Any respected Jewish man could explain the Scriptures. Sometimes the leaders invited a visitor to teach.

Jesus began to teach. Everyone wondered Who this man was. He taught as “One Who had the right and the power to teach” (1:22). He was different from other teachers. His ideas were fresh and new. He spoke powerful words.

Most teachers in the synagogue told what they had heard other teachers say. But Jesus spoke from His own authority. He did not use the words of other Jewish teachers to explain things. Jesus knew the meaning of God’s Word because He is God. The people were surprised by what Jesus taught. They wondered about the way He taught. They knew His teaching would change their lives.

Power Over Evil (Mark 1:23-28)

Jesus’ teaching was a big surprise. But Jesus’ actions were an even bigger surprise. A

man who had a demon came to the Jewish place of worship that day. It was unusual for this man to be there. The Jews said people who were sick in body or mind were unclean. They said unclean people could not come close to God. They could not go into the Temple in Jerusalem. They would not usually be welcomed in a synagogue either.

The demon inside this man knew Jesus had great power. This demon called out to Jesus. He knew Who Jesus was. He feared Jesus’ power. He was only one demon, but he knew Jesus would end the power of all demons. He knew Jesus was the Holy One of God. And the demon was right to be afraid. With eight short words, Jesus commanded the demon to come out of the man.

Jesus told the demon not to speak. Why did He do this? The demon spoke the truth about Jesus. But Jesus knew the people were not ready for the truth. Jesus did not want the people to learn Who He was from a demon. So He demanded silence. Then Jesus sent the demon away.

The people in worship that day did not understand what happened. They were not brave enough to talk to Jesus. But they spread the word about Jesus through the entire city. They left worship and continued to talk about it. Soon many people wanted to know more about this man with such power.

Power to Heal (Mark 1:29-34)

The people believed in the power Jesus showed. His followers were also amazed at His power. They took Him to Simon's house. They were probably going to have the big meal of the Day of Rest. But Simon's mother-in-law was so sick she had gone to bed. They told Jesus about her sickness. Jesus was more interested in healing than in eating. He took the hand of the woman and helped her up. She stood up completely well! She was not weak and tired. She felt good. And now she wanted to serve Jesus. She knew that Jesus had power that others did not have.

After the Day of Rest had ended, all the sick people in the village came to Simon's house. The entire town came looking for Jesus. They brought people who had demons. They brought sick people. Jesus healed everyone. He cast out all the demons. The

people trusted Jesus on this day. And the whole town was changed.

Things to Remember

Jesus surprised people when He began teaching and healing. He showed He had great power. But Jesus' power did not surprise the demons. They knew Jesus had power over them.

The people did not understand Jesus. They wondered Who He was. They were not ready to accept Him as the promised **Messiah**. Jesus was not what they expected the Messiah to be. But Jesus knew why He had come to earth (1:38). He came to save people from the power of sin and evil. He did not come to be what people wanted. He came to be what people needed. His authority came from God. His power was greater than any other. And He used it to teach and to heal. He used His power to point people to God's plan.

Things to Think About

1. Name some authorities you deal with in your life each day.
2. What do you think about people in power? Do you have an attitude of trust or distrust toward them? Why?
3. Do you think of Jesus as a powerful leader? Why or why not?
4. What can you do to experience the power of Jesus working in your life?
5. Who in your life needs to see Jesus' power for themselves? How can you pray for them this week?

Mark 1:21-34

21 Jesus and His followers went to the city of Capernaum on the Day of Rest. They went to the Jewish place of worship where Jesus taught the people.

22 The people were surprised and wondered about His teaching. He taught them as One Who had the right and the power to teach and not as the teachers of the Law.

23 There was a man in the Jewish place of worship who had a demon. The demon cried out,

24 “What do You want of us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have You come to destroy us? I know Who You are. You are the Holy One of God.”

25 Jesus spoke sharp words to the demon and said, “Do not talk! Come out of the man!”

26 The demon threw the man down and gave a loud cry. Then he came out of him.

27 The people were all surprised and wondered. They asked each other, “What is this? Is this a new teaching? He speaks with power even to the demons and they obey Him!”

28 At once the news about Jesus went through all the country around Galilee.

29 Jesus and His followers came out of the Jewish place of worship. Then they went to the house of Simon and Andrew. James and John went with them.

30 They told Jesus about Simon’s mother-in-

law who was in bed, very sick.

31 He went and took her by the hand and raised her up. At once her sickness was gone. She got up and cared for them.

32 In the evening as the sun went down, the people took all who were sick to Jesus. They took those who had demons to Him.

33 All the town gathered at the door.

34 Jesus healed those who were sick of many kinds of diseases. He put out many demons.

Jesus would not allow the demons to speak because they knew Who He was.

and put out demons.

Adult Bible Study

in Simplified English

Mark: The Gospel in Motion

Lesson 2: Jesus Is God

Bible Text
Mark 2:1-12

Memory Verse

“I am doing this so you may know the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins.” (Mark 2:10)

Word List

attention: the act of thinking or focusing on something

distract: to take a person’s mind away from something else.

jostled: to push roughly

obstacles: things that get in the way

miracles: an amazing event that can’t be explained without God’s power

surprising: unexpected or unusual; causing surprise

A college pastor knew how to attract students. He offered them free food! Once a week, the students gathered for a lunch he prepared. A large crowd came each time. While they ate, a speaker talked about Jesus.

Some of the students wanted to hear about Jesus. Other students only wanted the free food. Some listened carefully. Others talked loudly, even when the speaker was

talking. Students walked back and forth to the kitchen. The speaker kept on telling about Jesus. Some students would leave as soon as they finished eating. They even left while the speaker was talking! The lunch only lasted a short time. Many students had to hurry to their next class. It was a noisy and busy scene.

Can God work in a noisy, busy crowd of people? Of course, He can!

Jesus Speaks (Mark 2:1-2)

Jesus knew what it was like to speak to a noisy, busy crowd. Ever since He taught in the Jewish place of worship, people followed Him (1:37). Everyone was talking about Him. They talked about the **miracles** He did. They talked about the sick people He healed. They talked about His teaching and His power.

Jesus had everyone’s **attention**. People knew He was different. Crowds gathered wherever He went. This happened especially in Capernaum, the place where He first taught. At a home in Capernaum, a very large group gathered. So many people came that there was no room left in the house. People flowed out the door of the house into the yard. Jesus spoke to them from inside the house.

It was a noisy, busy crowd. Some truly wanted to learn about Jesus. Others were just curious to see this new teacher. Some probably listened carefully. Others may have talked while He was talking. Maybe some

people struggled to hear Him in the noise of the crowd. Maybe some people pushed and **jostled** one another. All these **obstacles** might have kept people from hearing Jesus.

But no obstacles stopped Jesus. Jesus spoke the Word of God to all the people. He taught them from the Scriptures. He spoke in the middle of all the noise. He did not wait until everything was quiet. He did not wait until everyone was calm and still. He spoke in the middle of all the obstacles.

Sometimes we face obstacles in our lives, too. Our obstacles can keep us from hearing Jesus. They can **distract** us from giving our attention to Jesus. Our lives are noisy and busy, too. But Jesus always speaks. We should be like the people who tried to listen to Jesus. We should not let obstacles stop us from hearing Jesus.

Jesus Sees (Mark 2:3-5a)

The noisy, busy crowd did not keep Jesus from speaking. Neither did it keep Him from seeing a small group of men. Four friends came to Jesus. They carried another man who could not move. They worked hard to make a bed to carry the man. Perhaps the weight hurt their hands. Maybe their backs ached. They used all their strength to carry the bed. They struggled to carry their friend through the crowd. They had faith that Jesus could help this man.

The crowd was very thick. The four men could not find a way to get the man through to Jesus. But they did not give up. They went to the roof of the house. They lowered the man through the roof on his bed! Jesus saw the faith these men had. He saw how they had put their hope in Him. He saw that they believed in His power to heal.

Sometimes it is hard to act in faith. We struggle sometimes to rise above the obstacles in our lives. And sometimes it seems like no one notices our struggle. But Jesus sees when we act in faith! He sees us even in our noisy, busy lives. Our obstacles do not stop Him from seeing us. Jesus sees every hard thing we do in faith. He notices when we do not give up. He sees our faith!

Jesus Heals and Forgives (Mark 2:5b-12)

Jesus honored the faith of these men. But He did it in a **surprising** way. He said, “Son, your sins are forgiven” (2:6). The men and the crowd were shocked. The men had not come to Jesus for forgiveness. And they knew that only God could forgive. People in the crowd wondered what Jesus was doing. They understood that true forgiveness came from God alone. They did not understand why Jesus would say these words.

Many were angry. The religious teachers were especially angry. Was this teacher comparing Himself to God? They did

not understand Who Jesus was. They thought He was a just another man. And men should never try to take God's place.

Jesus knew what they were thinking. He knew what was in their hearts. Jesus also knew what the crowd expected. They had seen Him heal many people. They were waiting for Jesus to heal the man who could not move.

Jesus spoke to them plainly. He used this moment to show Who He was. It was one thing to heal the sick. Special teachers like Elisha had healed the sick before with power from God. But no one had ever declared forgiveness from sin except God Himself!

The crowds and religious teachers did not understand about Jesus. Jesus *is* God! He can heal *and* forgive. The sick man got up from his bed and walked away. No one had seen anything like this before. The crowd was surprised and wondered at Jesus' power.

Things to Remember

Many people came to see Jesus and His power. But not everyone was truly interested in Jesus. Still, many pushed past great obstacles to learn about Him. And nothing stopped Jesus from speaking to those who wanted to know Him.

Jesus saw those who came to Him in faith. And He saw those who questioned Him in their hearts. He showed Himself to all who had eyes to see. But still, those without faith in their hearts became very angry.

Jesus' power to teach, heal and forgive helps us understand Who He is. *Jesus is God!* He can do things that people cannot do. Jesus goes beyond our expectations of Him. He alone can forgive sins. He sees every person who comes to Him in faith. Push past every obstacle and come to Jesus today!

Things to Think About

1. In what ways is your life noisy and busy like the crowd?
2. What obstacles keep you from hearing the things Jesus wants to speak to you?
3. Do you know someone who needs help getting to Jesus? Who?
4. Has Jesus ever done something that surprised you?
5. Do you believe that Jesus is God? If yes, what convinced you this is true? If *no*, what keeps you from believing that Jesus is God?

Mark 2:1-12

1 After some days Jesus went back to the city of Capernaum. Then news got around that He was home.

2 Soon many people gathered there. There was no more room, not even at the door. He spoke the Word of God to them.

3 Four men came to Jesus carrying a man who could not move his body.

4 These men could not get near Jesus because of so many people. They made a hole in the roof of the house over where Jesus stood. Then they let down the bed with the sick man on it.

5 When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the sick man, “Son, your sins are forgiven.”

6 Some teachers of the Law were sitting there. They thought to themselves,

7 “Why does this Man talk like this? He is speaking as if He is God! Who can forgive sins? Only One can forgive sins and that is God!”

8 At once Jesus knew the teachers of the Law were thinking this. He said to them, “Why do you think this in your hearts?”

9 Which is easier to say to the sick man, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Get up, take your bed, and start to walk?’

10 I am doing this so you may know the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins.” He said to the sick man who could not move his body,

11 “I say to you, ‘Get up. Take your bed and go to your home.’”

12 At once the sick man got up and took his bed and went away. Everybody saw him. They were all surprised and wondered about it. They thanked God, saying, “We have never seen anything like this!”

Adult Bible Study

in Simplified English

Mark: The Gospel in Motion

Lesson 3: Jesus' Purpose

Bible Text
Mark 3:20-35

Memory Verse

"Whoever does what My Father wants is My brother and My sister and My family." (Mark 3:35)

Word List

accused: charged with wrong doing
carpenter: one who builds with wood
misunderstood: thought of incorrectly
ordinary: simple or plain; normal or usual
purpose: the reason for doing something
recognize: to be able to identify something or someone

A young married couple met Jesus. Together, they gave their lives to Him. And their lives began to change. Everyone could see the change. Jesus had made a huge difference in their lives! He changed how they talked to each other. He changed how they spent money. He changed how they spent their time. He changed the things they watched on television. He changed the places they chose to go.

This couple surprised their friends when they changed so much. Their friends did not understand their new actions. The friends did not understand their new decisions. The man and woman were like new people. And their friends did not **recognize** who they were anymore. They did not understand this couple's new life.

In the same way, many people did not understand Jesus. They did not understand the things He said. They did not understand the things He did. Even His own family did not understand Him. They did not understand Jesus because they did not know His **purpose**.

Jesus' Family Does Not Understand (Mark 3:20-21)

Jesus' parents knew what the angel had told them about Him. They knew that Jesus was no **ordinary** child. They knew He was born of the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:35). They knew that He was sent to save God's people from sin. But they did not know how He would do that. They did not know what His life would be like.

When Jesus was a child, He was like most others. He grew and learned (Luke 2:52). He had friends. He practiced Jewish ways. Mary and Joseph did not know when or how their Son would become the Savior. They did not know when He would begin His special work (John 2:4).

Then Jesus began to teach and heal with power. Everyone was surprised! After all, they saw Him as just an ordinary **carpenter's** son (Matthew 13:55). Even Jesus' family wondered at His power. His teaching surprised them. They did not understand what He was doing. They were shocked to learn how many people followed Him. They said, "He must be crazy" (Mark 3:21). They had known Jesus for His whole life. But they did not understand the things He did now. They did not understand why so many people came to Him. They did not truly know God's purpose for Jesus.

Religious Teachers Do Not Understand (Mark 3:22-30)

Jesus' mother and brothers did not understand Him. But they were not the only ones. The Teachers of the Law **misunderstood** Him, too. They saw Him heal people. They heard Him teach with authority. They also heard Him declare forgiveness of sins. They knew Jesus was saying that He was God. And they became angry.

The Teachers of the Law controlled the Jewish religion. They had a lot of power. Maybe they were afraid of losing their power. They could see that Jesus was bringing change. He was teaching people to think in new ways. They did not want Jesus to be the promised Savior. They did not want the

Messiah to look and act like Him. They did not want a Savior who would make them change. So they refused to believe that Jesus' power came from God.

They **accused** Jesus of using power from Satan. Jesus was not afraid of what they said. He called them over to Him. He asked them to think about power. Why would Satan use his powers against himself? He would not. Only someone more powerful than Satan could control Satan's demons. Only God is stronger than Satan. Jesus showed the people that their thinking was wrong.

Jesus showed that His accusers were wrong. Then He accused the Teachers of the Law. He said they were speaking against God's Holy Spirit. God's Holy Spirit points people to the truth about Jesus. God's Holy Spirit leads people to know that Jesus is God. The Teachers of the Law were speaking against the Holy Spirit's truth. They were keeping others from knowing the truth. Jesus said they were guilty of sin. Anyone who rejects the truth about Jesus is guilty of sin.

Jesus Explains His Purpose (Mark 3:31-35)

The crowds surrounded Jesus. They did not understand what He said to the Teachers of the Law. They still did not understand that Jesus is God.

Jesus' family came from Nazareth. His mother and brothers came to take Him home. The crowds saw Jesus with His family. Now they were confused. *Who was this carpenter's son? How did He teach with power? How did He heal the sick?*

Jesus knew that the people did not understand Him. God had a plan to save them from the punishment of sin. Jesus was using God's power to complete God's plan. Jesus wanted to help the people understand. He was doing what His Father wanted. They needed to understand God's purpose for Him.

Jesus pointed to the people around Him. He called them His family. He was more than a brother. He was more than a son. God's plan for Him was much bigger than one family. God's purpose for Jesus would touch every person in history. Anyone can be part of the family of God.

Once again, Jesus pointed people to God, His heavenly Father. Jesus' relationship with God was stronger than His relationship with His family. He was more than a simple

carpenter's son. He came to be a Savior for all people.

Things to Remember

All that Jesus did and said pointed people to God the Father. Through God's power, Jesus showed that He is God. So many people misunderstood Jesus. His family thought He was crazy. The Teachers of the Law thought He was a dangerous teacher. The crowds were just curious to see what He would do next. But none of them recognized that Jesus is God.

What do you think of Jesus? Is He a good teacher? A liar? A stern judge? A magician? People misunderstand Jesus in all kinds of ways. Jesus had only one purpose in coming to live on earth. He came to be a perfect sacrifice for our sins. He came to die for our sins so that we can be forgiven.

Are you confused about Jesus? Ask Him in faith to show you Who He is. Believe that He will lead you to the truth. Know that God loves you and wants you for His very own. That is why He sent Jesus. Jesus' purpose is to bring you back to God the Father. Follow Him today!

Things to Think About

1. Why did the crowds follow Jesus?
2. Why were the Teachers of the Law angry with Jesus?
3. How did Jesus prove that the Teachers of the Law were wrong about Him?
4. Why do you think that Jesus' family didn't understand Him?
5. Who is Jesus to you?

Mark 3:20-35

20 When Jesus came into a house, many people gathered around Him again. Jesus and His followers could not even eat.

21 When His family heard of it, they went to take Him. They said, “He must be crazy.”

22 Teachers of the Law came down from Jerusalem. They said, “Jesus has Satan in Him. This Man puts out demons by the king of demons.”

23 Jesus called them to Him and spoke to them in picture-stories. He said, “How can the devil put out the devil?

24 A nation cannot last if it is divided against itself.

25 A family cannot last if it is divided against itself.

26 If the devil fights against himself and is divided, he cannot last. He will come to an end.

27 No man can go into a strong man’s house and take away his things, unless he ties up the strong man first. Only then can he take things from his house.

28 For sure, I tell you, all sins will be forgiven people, and bad things they speak against God.

29 But if anyone speaks bad things against the Holy Spirit, he will never be forgiven. He is guilty of a sin that lasts forever.”

30 Jesus told them this because they said, “He has a demon.”

31 Then His mother and brothers came and stood outside. They sent for Jesus.

32 Many people were sitting around Him. They said, “See! Your mother and brothers are outside looking for You.”

33 He said to them, “Who is My mother or My brothers?”

34 He turned to those sitting around Him and said, “See! My mother and My brothers!

35 Whoever does what My Father wants is My brother and My sister and My mother.”

Adult Bible Study

in Simplified English

Mark: The Gospel in Motion

Lesson 4: Jesus' Power Over Darkness

Bible Text
Mark 5:1-20

Memory Verse

"The light shines in the darkness. The darkness has never been able to put out the Light."
(John 1:5)

Word List

cemetery: a place where dead people are buried
isolation: a state of being alone
separation: being kept apart from someone or something
submission: the act of accepting someone else's authority or control
vulnerable: open to being easily hurt or harmed

A small child is often afraid of the dark. At bedtime, my five-year-old wants a small light left on. Why? Because she is afraid in the dark. She cannot see in the dark. She is easily confused. She feels alone. She cannot identify what is around her. She imagines monsters and bad guys in the room with her. She feels **vulnerable** in the darkness.

Even as adults, the darkness can make us uneasy. We are cautious when walking

through a dark parking lot at night. We are careful when we enter a dark, unfamiliar place. We know that people who do wrong love to work in darkness. They want to keep their evil actions unseen. They use the darkness to cover up their evil deeds.

Satan loves the darkness. It is the perfect place for him to work his evil acts. A kind of spiritual darkness follows Satan wherever he works. But Jesus has power over Satan. Only the power of Jesus' light can break the darkness of evil. Jesus has strong power over the darkness.

Darkness and Death (Mark 5:1-2)

Jesus regularly showed His power and authority. He proved His power on the Sea of Galilee. He simply spoke and calmed a strong storm (Mark 4:39). His followers saw that Jesus had power over nature. Soon, His followers would learn that Jesus' power was stronger yet. Jesus had control over the dark powers of evil in this world, too.

Jesus and His followers were on the Sea of Galilee. They were coming to the country of the Gerasenes. A man with an evil spirit came to meet Jesus. The man met him as He got out of the boat. This man had a demon and lived among the graves.

A **cemetery** was a good place for demons. The demons felt at home among the graves. They love destruction and death.

Death causes **separation**. Demons are separated from God. And they love to separate people from God. They use fear and pain to make people feel alone. They want to hide God's love from people. God's love brings healing and wholeness. But the dark powers of evil seek to kill and destroy (John 10:10).

Darkness Seeks to Destroy (Mark 5:3-5)

The man with the demon was separated from God. But he was also separated from people. He was strong and powerful. The people feared him. They tried to tie him up. They tried again and again. But he always broke the chains. So the people sent him away. Now he lived alone in a place for dead people. The demons used their power to make this man a prisoner. The demons were destroying him with their power.

Many things in this world can make us feel powerful. Money brings power. Titles or jobs can bring power. Being friends with important people can make us more powerful. Fame brings power, too. But power can also destroy us. Satan is always looking for ways to destroy us. He will use anything he can. Only God's power seeks our good. Only God's power keeps us free.

The man with the demon was not free. The demons were using strong powers of darkness against him. The man suffered greatly. The demons were destroying him.

And the man knew it. He cried out all day and night. He began to cut himself. In his pain, the man felt hopeless. Only Jesus can bring hope in the midst of such darkness.

Jesus Destroys the Darkness (Mark 5:6-20)

The demon inside this man saw Jesus from far away. The demon moved through the man he controlled. He ran to worship Jesus. The man with the demon fell down at Jesus' feet. But he did not worship out of love or devotion. He worshipped Jesus as an act of **submission**. He worshipped Jesus because he could not stop himself. Even demons know that Jesus has authority over them. Even demons must bow before the Lord.

The demon spoke through the man. He begged Jesus not to hurt him. The demon understood the great power Jesus had over him. He knew Jesus could destroy him.

Jesus called the demon to come out of the man. Jesus asked the demon's name. The name was Many, for many demons controlled the man. Then Jesus commanded the demons to enter a herd of pigs. The pigs rushed down a steep hill into a lake and drowned.

What power Jesus showed! All the people in the nearby town heard what Jesus had done. They came to see for themselves. They saw the man that they had feared. Now they saw a man who was healthy and safe. He was no longer dangerous or frightening. They

could not believe that this was the man they had tried to tie and chain many times. They were amazed at what they saw.

And they were afraid. Like so many other people, they did not understand Jesus. They asked Jesus to leave. But the man understood. He had been freed from evil. Jesus has saved his life. He understood Jesus' great power over darkness. He saw that Jesus was sent by God. And he wanted to go with Jesus. But Jesus had another plan for this man who was freed from the demon.

Jesus sent this man home to tell about God's power. Jesus sent him home to tell his story to others. Jesus gave him a new purpose. This man had been alone, in pain, and without hope. Jesus' power over darkness changed everything. Now he would use his freedom to tell about Jesus. He could tell everyone in his land about Jesus' power to destroy evil and darkness.

Things to Remember

Evil and darkness are very real forces in this world. These forces seek to cause pain. They seek to cause **isolation** and fear. They want to separate people from God. And they want to separate people from one another. These evil powers seek to kill all that is good. They delight in evil. They bring a deep darkness to people's lives. This darkness might affect the body or the mind. It might bring emotional or spiritual pain. This darkness holds the power to destroy.

But Jesus brings light and hope. He brings help and healing. He has authority over darkness. He can change lives. His power is available today. And His power is beyond all others. He has power to break the darkness! Reach out to Him today.

Things to Think About

1. Have you witnessed the power of darkness in your life or in someone else's?
2. What are some things people seek to give them power in this life?
3. Have you witnessed Jesus' power over darkness in your life or in someone else's?
4. What things in your life need to come under the power of Jesus?
5. Where is God sending you to tell about His power?

Mark 5:1-20

1 Jesus and His followers came to the other side of the sea to the country of the Gerasenes.

2 He got out of the boat. At once a man came to Him from among the graves. This man had a demon.

3 He lived among the graves. No man could tie him, even with chains.

4 Many times he had been tied with chains on his feet. He had broken the chains as well as the irons from his hands and legs. No man was strong enough to keep him tied.

5 Night and day he was among the graves and in the mountains. He would cry out and cut himself with stones.

6 When the man with the demon saw Jesus a long way off, he ran and worshiped Him.

7 The man spoke with a loud voice and said, "What do You want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I ask You, in the name of God, do not hurt me!"

8 At the same time, Jesus was saying, "Come out of the man, you demon!"

9 Jesus asked the demon, "What is your name?" He said, "My name is Many, for there are many of us."

10 The demons asked Jesus not to send them out of the country.

11 There were many pigs feeding on the mountain side.

12 The demons asked Him saying, "Send us

to the pigs that we may go into them."

13 Then Jesus let them do what they wanted to do. So they went into the pigs. The pigs ran fast down the side of the mountain and into the sea and died. There were about 2,000.

14 The men who cared for the pigs ran fast to the town and out to the country telling what had been done. People came to see what had happened.

15 They came to Jesus and saw the man who had had the demons. He was sitting with clothes on and in his right mind. The men were afraid.

16 Those who had seen it told what had happened to the man who had had the demons. They told what had happened to the pigs.

17 Then they asked Jesus to leave their country.

18 Jesus got into the boat. The man who had had the demons asked to go with Him.

19 Jesus would not let him go but said to him, "Go home to your own people. Tell them what great things the Lord has done for you. Tell them how He had pity on you."

20 The man went his way and told everyone in the land of Decapolis what great things Jesus had done for him. All the people were surprised and wondered.

Adult Bible Study

in Simplified English

Mark: The Gospel in Motion

Lesson 5: Jesus Is Rejected

Bible Text
Mark 6:1-13

Memory Verse

“Jesus said to them, “One who speaks for God is respected everywhere but in his own country and among his own family and in his own house.”
(Mark 6:4)

Word List

familiar: commonly seen, heard, or experienced
rejected: refused to believe or accept
suspicious: a feeling that someone is guilty

Many things change in life. We attend a new school. We start a new job. We move to a new place. Our children move away from home. A marriage ends. A friend or loved one dies. Change can be hard. Sometimes it is painful. And sometimes change frightens us.

We often like the way things are. We don't want them to change. We like **familiar** things. When things change, we don't always know what to expect. We are unsure of what might happen. We feel unsafe. And sometimes we respond in fear and anger.

Rejected at Home (Mark 6:1-6)

Jesus began the work God had for Him. He left home. He began preaching and teaching. Jesus' family did not understand this change in Jesus. He was doing things they did not expect. He was saying things they did not understand. He was not the obedient Son Who grew up in their house. He was breaking religious traditions. He was acting with power they had never seen. They could not understand why Jesus had changed.

Jesus healed a sick woman who simply touched the hem of His clothing (Mark 5:25-34). He raised a young girl from the dead (Mark 5:35-42). These were shocking acts. They wondered how an ordinary man who makes things from wood could do such things (Mark 6:3). Jesus returned home after doing these things. And the people of Nazareth wondered about Him.

Everyone was talking about Jesus. People expected great things from Jesus. But the people in Nazareth did not. They just thought of Jesus as a son returning home. They expected Jesus to return to His role in the village. They expected Him to return to His family's business.

But Jesus' life had changed. He was a man now, not a boy. His time of getting ready was over. Now it was time to do the job He was sent to do. He came to save people from sin. Now He had to get to work. Jesus' life

was a miracle from the start. He had always had a special purpose. He had always been filled with God's power. But now people were starting to realize it. People at home in Nazareth did not respond well to this change.

Jesus had become an important teacher. Now He had many followers. But people in Nazareth doubted Him. They did not think He was a qualified teacher. After all, He was a poor carpenter's Son. Even so, they invited Jesus to teach in the Jewish place of worship on the Day of Rest. Maybe this was the first time they heard Him preach. Like people in other places, they were amazed at the things He said (6:2).

But the surprise and wonder soon turned to anger and shame. How could a carpenter have the boldness to say such things? Had He forgotten Who He was? They did not welcome this bold, new Jesus Who returned home. They thought He had no right to speak in such a way. They were **suspicious** of Jesus. They did not trust Him. They did not have faith in Him. And so they turned away from Jesus (6:3).

The people of Nazareth showed the hardness in their hearts. They were upset by Jesus. They thought He was wrong to say what He said. They spoke out against Him. They plainly **rejected** Him. Jesus had known the people of Nazareth for all of His life. He loved them. And now they rejected Him. He

knew their hearts. He saw their unbelief. How their rejection must have hurt Him!

The people in Nazareth could not see that Jesus was sent by God. They lacked faith. They thought He was just a carpenter. Even His family thought this way. Their lack of faith kept them from seeing Jesus' power at work. In fact, "Jesus could do no powerful works there" (Mark 6:5). Surely Jesus wanted to help the people He loved. He wanted to heal the sick. He wanted to do for them what He did for so many others. But they rejected Him. So He left His home and went into other villages to teach. We do not know if Jesus ever returned. The people of Nazareth refused to accept change. And so they refused the truth and healing that only Jesus could bring.

Sent Out to Tell (Mark 6:7-13)

Jesus called His followers to go out with Him from Nazareth. They went where He went. They listened to all He said. They watched what He did. They saw Him as He was rejected. Maybe they wondered if they would be rejected, too.

Now Jesus sent them out as His workers (6:7). The disciples followed a common Jewish custom. Jesus sent them out in groups of two. Jesus did this for three reasons. First, He sent them in pairs to help people believe them. When two people said the same thing, they were easier to believe.

One would tell about Jesus. And the other would act as a witness that he was telling the truth. Second, working together would keep them from pride. No one person could become the center of attention. Third, working in pairs would give them more safety and support. Being alone could be dangerous and discouraging.

Jesus gave the workers careful instructions. He told them not to take money or supplies with them. Instead, they would need to rely on God for their needs. Jesus knew that material things might slow them down. The workers were an important part of God's plan. They had people to meet and stories to tell.

Jesus also prepared them for rejection. The people in Nazareth had rejected Him. Now His workers would be rejected, too. He told them to expect rejection. They should not stay where they were not received in faith.

Things to Think About

1. What do you expect from Jesus? How do you respond when Jesus breaks out of your expectations?
2. What is in the heart of someone who rejects faith in Jesus?
3. Have you ever been rejected for obediently doing what Jesus calls you to do?
4. Are you willing to depend on God to provide for all your needs in following Him?
5. Who are you working with to tell others about Jesus' power?

They had no time to waste. Many people needed to hear about Jesus.

Furthermore, Jesus told them to shake the dust from their feet. This was an important image. It meant that the workers should not carry the faithlessness of people with them to the next place. They should not allow a lack of faith to stick to them like dust. Instead, Jesus urged them to press on in His power. They would put out many demons and heal the sick with His power. These miracles would bring people to faith in Jesus. This was God's plan.

Things to Remember

Mark often wrote about the importance of faith. He showed what it looked like to put faith into action. He told about the powerful things that Jesus did. He explained how some people responded to Jesus' power in faith. And he explained how others responded by rejecting Jesus.

Faith is a personal choice. You can choose to believe that Jesus is God. When you respond to Jesus in faith, God will use you to tell others about His great love and power. Still some choose to reject Jesus. What is your choice? How will you respond? Choose faith.

Mark 6:1-13

1 Jesus went from the house of Jairus and came to His home town. His followers came after Him.

2 On the Day of Rest He began to teach in the Jewish place of worship. Many people heard Him. They were surprised and wondered, saying, “Where did this Man get all this? What wisdom is this that has been given to Him? How can He do these powerful works with His hands?”

3 Is He not a Man Who makes things from wood? Is He not the Son of Mary and the brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon? Do not His sisters live here with us?” The people were ashamed of Him and turned away from Him.

4 Jesus said to them, “One who speaks for God is respected everywhere but in his own country and among his own family and in his own house.”

5 So Jesus could do no powerful works there. But He did put His hands on a few sick people and healed them.

6 He wondered because they had no faith. But He went around to the towns and taught as He went.

7 Jesus called the twelve followers to Him and began to send them out two by two. He gave them power over demons.

8 He told them to take nothing along with them but a walking stick. They were not to

take a bag or food or money in their belts.

9 They were to wear shoes. They were not to take two coats.

10 He said to them, “Whatever house you go into, stay there until you leave that town.

11 Whoever does not take you in or listen to you, when you leave there, shake the dust off your feet. By doing that, you will speak against them. For sure, I tell you, it will be easier for the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah on the day men stand before God and are judged than for that city.”

12 Then they left. They preached that men should be sorry for their sins and turn from them.

13 They put out many demons. They poured oil on many people that were sick and healed them.

Adult Bible Study

in Simplified English

Mark: The Gospel in Motion

Lesson 6: Clean Inside and Outside

Bible Text

Mark 7:1-8, 14-23

Memory Verse

“It is not what goes into a man’s mouth from the outside that makes his mind and heart sinful. It is what comes out from the inside that makes him sinful.” (Mark 7:15)

Word List

accuse: to blame someone for something wrong

motive: a reason for doing something

tradition: a way of thinking, acting or doing something that has been passed down by a group of people for many years

My mother told me, “Never put your coat on the bed.” I thought this rule was about coats and beds. Sometimes I would put my coat over a chair. I thought I was following Mother’s rule because I didn’t put my coat on the bed. I did not understand her **motive** for this rule. It was not about coats and beds at all. Mother wanted me to hang up my coat before I started another job. She knew that a small job could become bigger if I did not finish one at a time.

God has given us Laws to live by. The reason for the Law is to create in us a heart like God’s heart. When we read His Word we see what God is like. Then we want to be like Him. He wants us to love Him, love others and to have loving families because God is love. He wants us to forgive others because God is forgiving. He wants us to be kind because He is kind and merciful. The Jews added many more rules to God’s Law. These manmade rules were meant to make people act right. But rules alone cannot give us a heart like God’s heart.

Dirty Hands and Dirty Motives

(Mark 7:1-8)

The religious leaders made up special rules about keeping clean. Before eating, Jews poured a small amount of water over each hand. This kind of washing did not remove dirt. They thought that touching someone who was not a Jew made them dirty. So they sprinkled a little water on themselves when they came home from shopping. This was not like taking a shower. It didn’t really clean anything. But it was a show. They said certain foods were dirty. There were rules about how to wash their dishes. The reason for these rules was to make a show of being holy, but they did not bring anyone closer to God.

Jesus was not keeping these manmade rules. He lived by God’s Law. He loved

sinners. He was kind to sick people and healed them. He even healed on the day of rest. Crowds were coming to hear what Jesus said and be healed. The religious leaders were not happy with Jesus' way of doing things. They wanted things to stay the same as they had always been. They wanted to keep their places of power in Jewish culture.

So these Law keepers and teachers traveled from Jerusalem to Galilee to see Jesus. They came a long way but they did not come to learn from Him. They had dirty motives. They wanted to catch Him doing something wrong. If they could prove that Jesus was a false teacher or a sinner, maybe the people would stop following Him. So they had to find a way to change the opinion people had of Jesus.

The Law keepers and the teachers of the Law found just what they wanted. Jesus' followers were not following the manmade rules. They were eating bread without making the special show of washing their hands first. The followers did not have dirty hands. The leaders were not worried about how clean they were. They wanted to shame Jesus in front of all the people. They said if Jesus' own followers did not follow the rules, then Jesus was not a good teacher. So the leaders **accused** Jesus in front of all the people.

Jesus was not afraid of what the leaders said. He knew their true motives. He said they

were like the religious leaders of Isaiah's day. They only pretended to love God. They loved their own rules more than they loved God. He said they had put away God's Law and put their rules in its place. Their worship was empty. They followed rules on the outside, but their hearts were not close to God. They had made following the rules more important than loving God and living for Him.

Dirty Hearts and Dirty Thoughts

(Mark 7:14-20)

Most of the people of that day thought that sin was like a germ. You could catch sin from touching someone or something dirty. Jesus said sin is something that comes from inside us and makes us dirty. It is like a cancer growing inside. When we sin, the cancer grows. Romans 6:23 says "You get what is coming to you when you sin. It is death! But God's free gift is life that lasts forever. It is given to us by our Lord Jesus Christ."

Just like cancer, sin leads to death. But there is a way to heal this cancer. God gives us the gift of forgiveness through Jesus so we can live with Him forever. What we think about Jesus matters today just as it did for these leaders. If our hearts are far from God, we will have evil thoughts and will act on those evil thoughts. When we believe in Jesus, we are forgiven and cleaned from all our sin.

What we eat does not change our hearts

and thoughts. But what we say and do changes us. Jesus explained that we can eat any food and still be right with God. And we can be very careful about what food we eat and still be sinful. When we do or say something unkind, that is sin and it makes us dirty. One sin leads to another and our hearts grow cold toward God.

Dirty Thoughts and Dirty Lives (Mark 7:21-23)

All people can identify with the sins Jesus listed. Bad thoughts come from the inside. Evil thoughts bring about evil actions. Our sex lives matter to God. Sex sins start as evil thoughts in our hearts. We must guard our thoughts to be pure inside so that our actions will also be pure.

The way we treat other people matters to God. When we are always thinking about sin, we will act on those evil thoughts.

Wanting what belongs to someone else can lead to stealing. Pride is thinking we are better than we really are. When we are full of pride, we cannot tell the difference in right and wrong. This kind of thinking can lead to foolish actions. The most foolish thing we can do is to speak against God who loves us and gave Himself up for us.

Things to Remember

Not all traditions are bad. If a tradition causes us to come closer to God, it is good. If a tradition ever goes against what God says, it is wrong. A practice is dangerous if it blinds us to who God is.

Jesus came to live among us and bring us to God. We cannot change our evil hearts or minds by following rules. But when we come to Jesus and surrender our lives to Him, He changes us from the inside out.

Things to Think About

1. What traditions in the Christian church are considered important today that are not required by God?
2. Are there traditions you have followed without really knowing why?
3. How can manmade traditions mask a right relationship with God?
4. What limits should believers today place on where we go, what we see and do?
5. Are there sins you need to repent of and receive forgiveness that God freely offers?

Mark 7:1-8, 14-23

1 The proud religious law-keepers and some of the teachers of the Law had come from Jerusalem. They gathered around Jesus.

2 They had seen some of His followers eat bread without washing their hands.

3 The proud religious law-keepers and all the Jews never eat until they wash their hands.

They keep the teaching that was given to them by their early fathers.

4 When they come from the stores, they never eat until they wash. There are many other teachings they keep. Some are the washing of cups and pots and pans in a special way.

5 Then the proud religious law-keepers and the teachers of the Law asked Jesus, “Why do Your followers not obey the teaching given to them by their early fathers? They eat bread without washing their hands.”

6 He said to them, “Isaiah told about you who pretend to be someone you are not. Isaiah wrote, ‘These people honor Me with their lips, but their hearts are far from Me.

7 Their worship of Me is worth nothing. They teach what men say must be done.’

8 You put away the Laws of God and obey the laws made by men.”

...

14 Jesus called the people to Him again. He said, “Listen to Me, all of you, and understand this.

15 It is not what goes into a man’s mouth from the outside that makes his mind and heart sinful. It is what comes out from the inside that makes him sinful.

16 You have ears, then listen!”

17 He went into the house away from all the people. His followers began to ask about the picture-story.

18 He said to them, “Do you not understand yet? Do you not understand that whatever goes into a man cannot make him sinful?

19 It does not go into his heart, but into his stomach and then on out of his body.” In this way, He was saying that all food is clean.

20 He said, “Whatever comes out of a man is what makes the man sinful.

21 From the inside, out of the heart of men come bad thoughts, sex sins of a married person, sex sins of a person not married, killing other people,

22 stealing, wanting something that belongs to someone else, doing wrong, lying, having a desire for sex sins, having a mind that is always looking for sin, speaking against God, thinking you are better than you are and doing foolish things.

23 All these bad things come from the inside and make the man sinful.”

Adult Bible Study

in Simplified English

Mark: The Gospel in Motion

Lesson 7: Right Answer, Flawed Understanding

Bible Text

Mark 8:27-38

Memory Verse

“Jesus called the people and His followers to Him. He said to them, ‘If anyone wants to be My follower, he must give up himself and his own desires. He must take up his cross and follow Me.’” (Mark 8:34)

Word List

challenge: something that is hard to do

flawed: having a mistake or weakness

influence: to affect someone in an important way

shudder: to shake because of fear or cold

tempt: to cause someone to want to do something that is wrong or bad

Ken knew he had a gift for languages. He could easily learn a new language and explain it. One day, his teacher asked him, “Ken, where does this ability come from?” Ken knew the answer. God gave him that gift. But Ken thought God’s gift was just for him. Ken wanted to use his gift to get rich and be important.

Ken had the right answer. But his understanding of God’s ways was **flawed**. One day, God showed Ken how to use his gift to share the Good News. Today, the Bible is being translated into 22 languages because of Ken’s work. God is blessing over one million people through Ken. He isn’t rich in money, but Ken’s life is rich in the things of God. His life has eternal purpose. He is at peace with the way he has spent his life. He is free from the selfish life he might have led.

The Right Answer (Mark 8:27-30)

Jesus wanted His followers to know and understand why He had come. He led them to Caesarea Philippi. For many years this city had been a center of worship of many false gods. Long ago people worshiped the false god of good luck. Later, this was where the Greeks worshipped nature. The Romans had a temple for a Roman Caesar here. People were told that the Caesars were gods. Would people be more **influenced** by the culture around them or the truth of Jesus?

In this place, Jesus asked His followers what the people were saying about Him. The followers of Jesus knew the answer to that question. But Jesus wanted them to think for themselves. So He asked, “But what about you? Who do you say I am?” Peter quickly answered, “You are the Christ.” He got the

right answer. Jesus warned His followers not to tell everyone this great truth. Maybe He wanted everyone to find Jesus for themselves.

A Flawed Understanding (Mark 8:31-33)

The Jews had been waiting for the Christ for many years. But their understanding of the work of Christ was wrong. They expected Him to lead an army and fight to make Israel a great nation. They wanted to be set free from Roman rule. They thought the Christ would bring freedom, peace, riches and purpose to their nation. But they did not understand what that meant. They thought they would finally have peace with other nations. They thought riches such as gold and silver would be theirs. They thought their purpose was to be a powerful nation.

Jesus wanted His followers to understand His work as the Christ. He spoke very plainly. He would suffer and be killed. The leaders of the Jews would have nothing to do with Him. In fact, Jesus would die because of the leaders. But Jesus also told His followers Good News. Three days later, He would rise from the grave. Jesus came to bring peace in every heart. The riches of God's kingdom would come to each person who believed. The purpose of every believer is to do the will of God. He frees us from sin.

Peter did not hear the Good News of Jesus coming back to life after He died. All he

heard was the bad news that Jesus would suffer and die. He did not understand this was God's way of setting us free from sin. He wanted Jesus to be the kind of king he had been looking for.

Peter knew that Jesus' troubles would be his troubles, too. He thought he had a better idea. He spoke very plainly to Jesus. Maybe he wanted to influence Jesus to do things his way. He might have said Jesus should make friends with the leaders. Maybe he thought their power and riches would help Jesus throw the Romans out. Maybe Peter had an idea about how Jesus could be king without dying.

Jesus had been **tempted** like this before. Satan had tried to influence Him to do things the wrong way when He was in the desert. (Mark 1:12-13) Jesus knew that Satan was using Peter to tempt Him again. But Jesus always did the Father's will. He refused to hear Peter's ideas. "Get behind Me, Satan!" He said. "Your thoughts are not thoughts from God but from men."

A Challenge to Follow (Mark 8:34-38)

Everyone was focusing on what they wanted. Peter was not focusing on the will of God. Jesus wanted everyone to understand how to follow Him. So He called a crowd of people and his followers together. Everyone

needed to hear this important message. Following Jesus is not just for His close followers. What Jesus said was a **challenge** for all His followers.

First, we must give up ourselves and our own desires. Jesus did not say we only give up a thing or a thought. Jesus expects His followers to give up their selfish ways. Just like Peter, He wants us to put God in control of our lives and stop wanting things our way. True followers will say, “Not my will, but Yours.”

Second, Jesus said, “Take up your cross.” Jesus’ hearers knew about crosses. They **shuddered** at the thought of a cross. Jesus wants us to remember what He did on the cross for us. He wants us to face every day of our lives with courage to live for Him. Like Jesus, we carry whatever God has given us and move forward into His plan for our lives. Peter would one day die for Christ.

Things to Think About

1. What is there in your life that you need to give up for Christ?
2. What do you face in your life that requires courage and determination?
3. How would Jesus handle the challenges of your situation?
4. How can you follow Jesus in your life today?
5. Have you decided for yourself who Jesus is?
6. Are you more influenced by your culture or the truth of Christ?

Jesus wants us all willing to carry our load.

Third, we must follow after Jesus. He rose from death to live forever in glory. He offers us that same blessing. Nothing is more valuable than our souls. Even if we are the richest and most powerful person in the world, we cannot have enough power or money to buy back our souls. We can only have the riches and purpose of Christ by doing things His way. The challenge is to get to know Jesus closely. When we do that we can live in our world the way He would live.

Things to Remember

What Peter thought and believed mattered to Jesus. How we think and what we understand matters to God today. God’s ways and thoughts are not like ours. When we focus on men’s ways, we cannot see God’s ways. Like Peter, we have a choice. We can live for ourselves and lose everything. Or we can live for Christ and have a life of riches, purpose and freedom.

We will we have the riches of God’s kingdom only if we follow Jesus. Our lives have eternal purpose when we do things His way. We can only find peace in our hearts when Jesus rules as king of our lives.

Mark 8:27-38

27 Jesus and His followers went from there to the towns of Caesarea Philippi. As they went, He asked His followers, “Who do people say that I am?”

28 They answered, “Some say John the Baptist and some say Elijah and others say one of the early preachers.”

29 He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” Peter said, “You are the Christ.”

30 He told them with strong words that they should tell no one about Him.

Jesus Tells of His Death for the First Time

31 He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things. He told them that the leaders and the religious leaders of the Jews and the teachers of the Law would have nothing to do with Him. He told them He would be killed and three days later He would be raised from the dead.

32 He had said this in plain words. Peter took Him away from the others and began to speak sharp words to Him.

33 Jesus turned around. He looked at His followers and spoke sharp words to Peter. He said, “Get behind Me, Satan! Your thoughts are not thoughts from God but from men.”

Giving Up Self and One’s Own Desires

34 Jesus called the people and His followers to Him. He said to them, “If anyone wants to be My follower, he must give up himself and

his own desires. He must take up his cross and follow Me.

35 If anyone wants to keep his own life safe, he will lose it. If anyone gives up his life because of Me and because of the Good News, he will save it.

36 For what does a man have if he gets all the world and loses his own soul?

37 What can a man give to buy back his soul?

38 Whoever is ashamed of Me and My Words among the sinful people of this day, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when He comes in the shining-greatness of His Father and His holy angels.”

Adult Bible Study

in Simplified English

Mark: The Gospel in Motion

Lesson 8: A Cure for Weak Faith

Bible Text

Mark 9:14-29

Memory Verse

“Jesus said to him, ‘Why do you ask Me that? The one who has faith can do all things.’”
(Mark 9:23)

Word List

celebration: the act of showing joy, thankfulness

doubt: feeling unsure, failure to believe

embarrass: to make someone look foolish

negative: thinking about the bad qualities, not hopeful

torment: to cause someone extreme pain

His son was born completely blind. The baby’s eyes did not respond to light. They took him from doctor to doctor, but no one could help. The doctors said he was born with no optic nerves. These nerves send messages from the eye to the brain. They said nothing could be done. But the father had faith. He asked everyone to pray because, “God makes optic nerves every day.” He knew this problem was not too big for God. His friends

and family all begged God to help. Today, his son can see.

Prayer changes things. God is always at work. When we put our faith in Jesus, He hears and He acts in ways that please Him.

Weak Faith (Mark 9:14-19)

Jesus had been on the mountain praying. Peter, James and John had seen a great change come over Jesus while He prayed. They were able to see Him as we will see Him in heaven one day. Jesus told them not to tell anyone about this great change. But Peter, James and John would never forget the time they spent on the mountain with Jesus. It was a wonderful time for them.

There were nine of Jesus’ followers in the valley below. They did not spend time in prayer. They did not see Jesus in all His glory. They were in the middle of a crowd of people. All of these people wanted something. Many wanted to be healed. The teachers of the Law were there too. They wanted to **embarrass** Jesus and His followers in front of all the people. No one was praying in the valley.

One man came with his son who had a terrible problem. There was a demon inside of him. It **tormented** the boy. The demon would not let the boy speak. Sometimes it threw him down and attacked his body. He was getting weaker and weaker. The father’s heart broke

for his son. He needed help. Surely he had gone to the healers, but no one could help him. He knew his son's problem came from an evil spirit. He was not sure but he thought maybe Jesus could help his son.

But Jesus was on the mountain when the man arrived. The father did not have enough faith to wait. He was in a hurry. He told the followers of Jesus to put the demon out of his boy. They had put demons out before. We do not know why they could not do it this time. Maybe they were so busy with the people, they did not take time to pray. But in front of that crowd of people and the teachers of the Law, the followers could not get the demon out of the boy.

All the people began to argue. Maybe the teachers of the Law said, "See, they do not have any power. God does not listen to them." Maybe the people all had ideas of what to do for the boy. Just then, the people were surprised to see Jesus. We do not know why they were surprised. Maybe He looked different because He had spent time with His Father. Maybe they had forgotten about Jesus. Maybe they were too busy thinking about demons.

Jesus asked them what they were talking about. He probably already knew the answer, but God always wants to listen to us. So the father explained what had been happening.

Jesus was troubled by what He heard. He wondered how long it would take for His followers to learn to call on Him first. He wondered how long it would take for the people to understand that Jesus is the only way to be healed.

Faith in Jesus Alone (Mark 9:20-23)

Jesus said, "Bring him to Me." When the demon saw Jesus, it knew that it would not be able to **torment** the boy anymore. Satan loves to embarrass us. He wanted the boy to be hurt in front of all those people. So he attacked again.

Jesus asked how long this had been going on. He knew the father had much to say about the pain of his son. The father poured out his broken heart to Jesus. Then he said, "If You can." He had been told so many times that nothing could be done. It is hard to believe with so many **negative** messages around us. Jesus wanted the father to think about what he had just said. Then Jesus gave him hope. "The one who has faith can do all things."

Active Faith (Mark 9:25-29)

Hearing his own words of **doubt** made the father sad. But hearing Jesus' offer of hope moved him to action. With tears in his eyes he begged Jesus to heal both the son and the father. He knew that it was not just

the boy that needed Jesus. He told Jesus, “I do believe.” But he knew his faith was weak. He begged Jesus, “Help my weak faith.” This father did not want Jesus to feel sorry for him. He wanted the love of God poured out on both the son and his father.

So Jesus loved them both. God’s love is always active. He spoke to the demon. He called it by name and he told that demon to get out of the boy and to never come back! The demon had no choice. It had to obey Jesus. But it wanted to hurt the boy one last time. This time the attack was so strong the boy looked like he was dead. Jesus touched him and lifted him up. The boy stood up alive and healed.

Mark did not tell us about the **celebration** that must have taken place. He does not tell us how happy the father and the boy were. He doesn’t tell us the first words the boy spoke to his father. We can only imagine how they hugged and danced for joy. Surely their faces glowed. They thanked

Things to Think About

1. Has your prayer life changed you? If so, how?
2. Have you ever made things worse by trying to fight evil before you spent time in prayer?
3. Do you have a problem in your life that no one can solve? Have you gone to Jesus in prayer?
4. Have you celebrated what God has done in your life? Tell about a time God answered prayer.
5. Is there an area in which you struggle with doubt?

Jesus over and over again.

The followers of Jesus went with Him into a house to be alone. They had a sad question. “Why could we not put out the demon?” They were sorry they couldn’t help the boy. They wanted to know how they could have power over evil. Jesus said prayer is the only way to fight evil. Only when we bring our problems to Jesus can we have His power. These nine followers had faith in Jesus, but their prayer life was not strong. They believed but they did not ask God to act. God always wants to hear our prayers. When we pray, He acts.

Things to Remember

We can trust God to answer when we pray in faith. Sometimes, His answer is, “Wait.” The father needed to wait for Jesus. Sometimes, God does not answer our prayers the way we want. God knows we need to tell Him all about our troubles. Talking to God changes us. We leave the answer and the action up to God. And He works to change us, heal us and mend our broken hearts.

Sometimes we go to other people or things before we come to Jesus. Sometimes we put our trust in our own strength. It is dangerous to try to fight evil without preparing by prayer first. God’s power in medicine and doctors heals us. We only bring more hurt into our lives when we fail to go to God.

Satan wants to **embarrass** us. He wants to torment our lives. He is happy when we do things that do not honor God. When we are in pain, he is joyful. But Satan has no choice. He has to obey God. God will help us when we bring all our troubles to Him. He gives us power over evil. He loves us and heals our broken hearts.

Mark 9:14-29

14 When Jesus came back to His followers, He saw many people standing around them. The teachers of the Law were arguing with them.

15 The people saw Jesus and were surprised and ran to greet Him.

16 Jesus asked the teachers of the Law, “What are you arguing about with them?”

17 One of the people said, “Teacher, I brought my son to You. He has a demon in him and cannot talk.

18 Wherever the demon takes him, it throws him down. Spit runs from his mouth. He grinds his teeth. He is getting weaker. I asked Your followers to put the demon out but they could not.”

19 He said, “You people of this day have no faith. How long must I be with you? How long must I put up with you? Bring the boy to Me.”

20 They brought the boy to Jesus. The

demon saw Jesus and at once held the boy in his power. The boy fell to the ground with spit running from his mouth.

21 Jesus asked the boy’s father, “How long has he been like this?” The father said, “From the time he was a child.

22 Many times it throws him into the fire and into the water to kill him. If You can do anything to help us, take pity on us!”

23 Jesus said to him, “Why do you ask Me that? The one who has faith can do all things.”

24 At once the father cried out. He said with tears in his eyes, “Lord, I have faith. Help my weak faith to be stronger!”

25 Jesus saw that many people were gathering together in a hurry. He spoke sharp words to the demon. He said, “Demon! You who cannot speak or hear, I say to you, come out of him! Do not ever go into him again.”

26 The demon gave a cry. It threw the boy down and came out of him. The boy was so much like a dead man that people said, “He is dead!”

27 But Jesus took him by the hand and helped him and he stood up.

28 When Jesus went into the house, His followers asked Him when He was alone, “Why could we not put out the demon?”

29 He said to them, “The only way this kind of demon is put out is by prayer and by going without food so you can pray better.”

Adult Bible Study

in Simplified English

Mark: The Gospel in Motion

Lesson 9: Jesus Shows How to be Great

Bible Text

Mark 10:32-45

Memory Verse

“For the Son of Man did not come to be cared for. He came to care for others. He came to give His life so that many could be bought by His blood and be made free from sin.” (Mark 10:45)

Word List

baptize: to dip someone in water to show they have a new life.

determined: having a strong feeling that you are going to do something and that you will not allow anyone or anything to stop you

salvation: the gift of being saved from sin

Herod, who was the king when Jesus was born, chose to add “the Great” to his name. He was given the name “King of the Jews” but he was not a Jew. He demanded that people serve him. He was proud and mean and cruel. Everyone was afraid of Herod. When Jesus was born, Herod ordered all the boy babies in Bethlehem to be killed. No one wants to be like Herod the Great.

Jesus used the name “Son of Man.”

Crowds followed Him wherever He went. He was kind and loving. He cared for people. He fed them, healed them, and served them.

People are still learning from what Jesus said. Millions of people want to be like Jesus. He modeled what it means to be great. He rules today at the right hand of God.

A Great Example (Mark 10:32-34)

Jesus was on His way to Jerusalem. It was a 20-mile walk uphill, but Jesus was not walking slowly. He was walking ahead of everyone. Those following Him were surprised. Maybe Jesus was walking more quickly than usual. Maybe He usually walked with them, not ahead of them. But this day, Jesus was determined to get to Jerusalem. He had work to do that would save the world from sin and death. Maybe they were afraid of the changes that were coming. They may have wanted things to stay the same. Maybe they were afraid of the trouble that lay ahead. They needed to follow Jesus’ example.

Jesus knew what He did in Jerusalem would bring salvation to all who believed. He was prepared to die for the sin of the world. He wanted His followers to be prepared, too. Someone would hand Jesus over to the leaders of the Jews. Judas was one of the Twelve who heard Jesus say this. Did he

understand that he would be the one? The leaders would send Jesus to His death. They would hand Him over to the Romans to be killed. They would all make fun of Him, spit on Him and beat Him. He would die, but three days later God would raise Jesus back to life.

It is amazing that no one asked Jesus what they should do. Surely someone should have had a question. No one asked where they should go. Should they fight? Would they be taken too? Were they going to die with Jesus? Jesus set the example of how to face trouble. They needed follow Jesus' example.

A Great Teacher (Mark 10:35-40)

Maybe James and John were not listening very closely when Jesus explained what would happen in Jerusalem. They asked Jesus to “do for us whatever we ask.” Jesus asked them to explain what they wanted.

They knew Jesus was God. They knew He would one day sit on a throne. They knew glory and honor belonged to Jesus. John and James wanted glory and honor, too. They wanted everyone to know they were special to Jesus. They wanted Jesus to give them these special places.

Jesus said His followers would suffer. No one is given a place of greatness in God's kingdom. We cannot let honor be our goal. Jesus could not promise seats of importance in

heaven for James and John. God is the One to decide those things.

Jesus knew the hearts of these two followers. He knew they did not really understand. So Jesus questioned them. Jesus asked them if they were ready to follow His example.

They answered, “Yes, we are.” But He made sure they understood. He said they would suffer and be baptized like He was. Everything about Jesus would be covered in suffering. Jesus died for our sins. His body suffered because of the pain. His spirit suffered because of our sin. Jesus was dead and buried. But He did not stay dead. God raised Him up in a new body three days later. His new body was different from the old one.

To be baptized is a picture of what happened to Jesus. We go under the water to show that we have died to our old lives. That old life is dead and buried. Then the pastor brings us up out of the water to show that we are raised to a new life in Christ. We live a new life by the power of Christ in us. Just like every part of us gets wet, every part of our lives is changed in Christ. We are made new by God's power, not our own.

Jesus wanted James and John to understand that every part of their lives belonged to Him. They could not be thinking about honor. He wanted them to think about serving Him by serving others.

James and John were faithful servants of God after Jesus went back to heaven. They both suffered. The son of Herod the Great killed James (Acts 12:2). James' death made believers bolder. God used James' life and death to help believers. John lived a long life, but he also suffered for Christ. He was beaten and put to shame. He was sent away to live on a lonely island. But John never gave up on Jesus. God gave him five books of the New Testament to write.

A Great Servant (Mark 10:41-45)

Jesus turned the value system of the world upside down. Power is not the same as being a great man or woman for God. Too many leaders demand that others do what they say. They want to be honored and respected. They become full of pride and selfishness. They want many people to serve them.

To be great in God's kingdom is to serve others like a slave. Jesus did not come

to earth so that we could serve and care for Him. He came to serve and care for us. Jesus paid the price for our sin. It cost Him a cruel death. He bought us back from sin and death. He set us free to live great lives of service for Him. Jesus did for us what we could never do for ourselves.

Things to Remember

We are only great when we are determined to follow Jesus' example. We know that things will not always be easy. But great followers never turn back. They are eager to do what God calls them to do. The example they set teaches others. Our actions should always match what we say. Great leaders want to serve more than they want to be served.

Things to Think About

1. What makes someone great?
2. What do you wish God would do for you? Why?
3. Have you made a decision to live for Christ? Have you been baptized to show you have a new life in Him?
4. Is there someone whose example makes you live more fully for Christ? How has that changed you?
5. How do you serve God by serving others? What are you doing to serve others in the name of Jesus?

Mark 10:32-45

32 They were on their way to Jerusalem. Jesus walked in front of them. Those who followed were surprised and afraid. Then Jesus took the twelve followers by themselves. He told them what would happen to Him.

33 He said, “Listen, we are going to Jerusalem. The Son of Man will be handed over to the religious leaders of the Jews and to the teachers of the Law. They will say that He must be put to death. They will hand Him over to the people who are not Jews.

34 They will make fun of Him and will beat Him. They will spit on Him and will kill Him. But three days later He will be raised from the dead.”

35 James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to Jesus. They said, “Teacher, we would like to have You do for us whatever we ask You.”

36 He said to them, “What would you like to have Me do for you?”

37 They said to Him, “Let one of us sit by Your right side and the other by Your left side when You receive Your great honor in heaven.”

38 Jesus said to them, “You do not know what you ask. Can you take the suffering I am about to take? Can you be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?”

39 They said to Him, “Yes, we can.” Jesus said to them, “You will, for sure, suffer the way I will suffer. You will be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with.

40 But to sit on My right side or on My left side is not for Me to give. It will be given to those for whom it has been made ready.”

41 The other ten followers heard it. They were angry with James and John.

42 Jesus called them to Him and said, “You know that those who are made leaders over the nations show their power to the people.

Important leaders use their power over the people.

43 It must not be that way with you. Whoever wants to be great among you, let him care for you.

44 Whoever wants to be first among you, must be the one who is owned and cares for all.

45 For the Son of Man did not come to be cared for. He came to care for others. He came to give His life so that many could be bought by His blood and be made free from sin.”

Adult Bible Study

in Simplified English

Mark: The Gospel in Motion

Lesson 10: Jesus Acts on God's Judgment

Bible Text
Mark 11:12-25

Memory Verse

"He taught them saying, 'Is it not written, "My house is to be called a house of prayer for all nations"? You have made it a place of robbers.'" (Mark 11:17)

Word List

erode: to wear away; to gradually destroy
expensive: costing a lot of money
Gentiles: people who are not Jews
God's judgment: decision based on His holiness
sacrifice: the act of killing an animal to please God

Rain water flows over grassy fields into creeks and rivers and on to the oceans of the world. The grass holds the dirt in place. Plowed fields around creeks and rivers leave bare soil that cannot hold the water back. The rains **erode** the fields. The soil is washed away. The water cuts a new place for the creek to flow. Farmers do not want the creeks and rivers to change.

God chose the Jews to carry His truth

through the temple to all the nations of the world. But the Jews followed their traditions without thinking of God. Their traditions eroded true worship. The leaders did not want temple worship to change. God chose a new way to get His truth to all the nations.

A Lesson About God's Judgment (Mark 11:12-14)

On this day, Jesus acted out a lesson about God's **judgment**. He used a fig tree and the temple in Jerusalem to show how God judges. His followers had seen Jesus do many good things. He taught about God's love and forgiveness. This day Jesus taught a different lesson. He taught about God's judgment. He cursed a fig tree and upset the temple. God loves all people. But God expects fruit in all our lives.

As Jesus walked to Jerusalem He saw a fig tree full of leaves. Around Jerusalem, fig trees have all their leaves in June. When the trees are full of leaves, they have fruit. But this was early spring. It was too early for figs. This tree had all the signs of life, but it was not giving fruit.

Jesus did not heal the tree. He cursed it. He said no one would ever eat figs from this tree again. The fig tree stands for Israel. The leaves stand for signs of life. The fruit is like the worship and changed lives that God expects to find in His people.

The Jews had many traditions of worship. The traditions made it look like worship was alive in Jerusalem. But God could see that there was no fruit. Many of the Jews did not really respect and honor God. Like the leaves their religion made a show of serving God. What happened at the temple did not bear the fruit of changed lives and real worship.

A Lesson About Worship (Mark 11:15-19)

Jesus and His followers went on to Jerusalem where the Jews were doing things to remind them of how God brought them out of Egypt. The temple was crowded with people. They came to offer animal **sacrifices** and pay the temple tax. It was a big show of serving God. But some people followed the traditions without thinking about God.

The leaders thought more about themselves than about the people or God. They said people had to buy the animals at the temple. They could not bring lambs from home or buy them in the city. The animals in the temple were very **expensive**. The leaders got rich by cheating the people. The people had to use a special coin to pay the temple tax. They had to change their money to that coin.

The temple was built for worship not for money changers and animals. So the leaders of the temple decided to use the court

of the **Gentiles**. This was the place for the people who were not Jews to worship God. The people of the city used this court as a shorter way to get to the markets in the city. It was too noisy and busy in the court to pray or worship with all that activity.

In God's eyes, true worship was not about how many people, sacrifices or money came to the Temple. He judged by the hearts of the people. He knew this was not real worship. There was no fruit of holy living. No one was praying in the temple. Jesus was angry at what was happening in the temple. He turned over the tables of the money changers. He drove the animals out of the temple. Jesus repeated what God had said: "My house is to be called a house of prayer for all the nations."

They had made the temple a place for robbers to hide out. They robbed people who came to worship. They robbed the Gentiles of a place to pray. They robbed God of worship. They robbed the whole world of God's love. They were not bearing fruit.

The leaders decided that Jesus was a danger. They were afraid of change. The people might follow Jesus and stop coming to the temple. They decided the only way to stop Him was to kill Him. But how could they kill Jesus without upsetting the crowds?

A Lesson About the Future

(Mark 11:20-25)

The next morning, Jesus and His followers passed that fig tree again. It was dead from the roots. It would never come back to life. Jesus used this tree to teach that God had judged the Jews and chosen new people to share His message with the world. The Jews paid a very high price for serving themselves. Their traditions and the temple would never come back to life. The special place in God's plan to save the world was taken away from the Jews. Jesus' followers would share His message with the world.

The job Jesus gave His followers must have seemed like a big mountain to climb. He knew their fears and gave them hope. He said faith would move that mountain. When they faced a difficult time they were to pray in faith and God would help them. God held their future in His strong hands. God would make them strong enough to do His work.

Things to Think About

1. Have true worship and prayer been eroded by new methods of worship in our churches?
2. Are your church and its services designed to give you a time and place to pray?
3. Could Jesus' warning to the temple leaders be a warning for churches today?
4. Is your life bearing the fruit God expects to see because of what Christ has done for you?
5. What attitudes and actions show that God is alive and active in your life?

Jesus also reminded his followers that God wants His people to forgive each other the same way God forgives sins.

God is pleased when His people honor Him with faithful prayer and loving, forgiving hearts.

Things to Remember

God expects to see the fruit of changed lives and real worship today. His ways never change. We can never improve on what God expects. We must be very sure that our new ways are true worship.

God still wants our churches to be places of prayer. He wants us to believe that He hears and answers our prayers. Even today it still seems like a big mountain to get the Word to all the world. But God still answers prayer.

If we pray in faith, God does great things in His kingdom. But if we pray selfish or foolish prayers, God sees our hearts and judges us. Real prayer comes from hearts that know God has forgiven us. This opens ways for us to share God's forgiveness with all the world.

Mark 11:12-25

12 They came from Bethany the next morning. Jesus was hungry.

13 Along the road He saw a fig tree with leaves on it. He went over to see if it had any fruit. He saw nothing but leaves. It was not the right time for figs.

14 Jesus said to the tree, "Let no one ever again eat fruit from you." His followers heard Him say it.

15 Then they came to Jerusalem. Jesus went into the house of God. He began to make the people leave who were selling and buying in the house of God. He turned over the tables of the men who changed money. He turned over the seats of those who sold doves.

16 He would not allow anyone to carry a pot or pan through the house of God.

17 He taught them saying, "Is it not written, 'My house is to be called a house of prayer for all the nations'? You have made it a place of robbers."

18 The teachers of the Law and the religious leaders of the Jews heard it. They tried to find some way to put Jesus to death. But they were afraid of Him because all the people were surprised and wondered about His teaching.

19 When evening came, Jesus and His followers went out of the city.

20 In the morning they passed by the fig tree. They saw it was dried up from the roots.

21 Peter remembered what had happened the day before and said to Jesus, "Teacher, see! The fig tree which You spoke to has dried up!"

22 Jesus said to them, "Have faith in God.

23 For sure, I tell you, a person may say to this mountain, 'Move from here into the sea.' And if he does not doubt, but believes that what he says will be done, it will happen.

24 Because of this, I say to you, whatever you ask for when you pray, have faith that you will receive it. Then you will get it.

25 When you stand to pray, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him. Then your Father in heaven will forgive your sins also.

Adult Bible Study

in Simplified English

Mark: The Gospel in Motion

Lesson 11: Promises and Pride

Bible Text

Mark 14:12-31

Memory Verse

“Then Jesus took bread and gave thanks and broke it in pieces. He gave it to them, saying, ‘This is My body which is given for you. Do this to remember me.’” (Luke 22:19)

Word List

betray: to give information about someone to their enemies or to hand someone over to their enemies

imagine: to think of or create a picture or idea in your mind of something that is not real

symbol: a thing used to show the importance of something else

Eating together is a wonderful way to share time together. We learn more about friends and family. We talk and enjoy listening to stories. We make new memories.

Jesus did this with His special followers. They met together because it was a special Jewish holiday called Passover. They were remembering the time when the Jews (called Hebrews back then) left Egypt. They

had been slaves in Egypt. God set them free. It was a great day, a day to remember forever! They remembered this day with a special supper. It was an interesting supper because it was eaten in a way to show that the people were in a hurry to leave.

Jesus wanted to remember, but He also wanted to make new memories for His followers. He knew that this was the last meal He would eat with them. He wanted them to always remember because He knew what was going to happen next. He told them about the future and made promises. Many of them did not understand these promises. They were full of pride and thinking mostly about themselves.

Make Ready and Tell the Future

(Mark 14:13-21)

Jesus told two of His followers to go and find a place for them to eat their special meal. He told them to find a man carrying a jar of water. This man would have a special room where Jesus and His followers could meet, eat, and pray. The two men found the man with the water jar, just as Jesus had told them. This man had a room upstairs where the group could meet. Everything happened exactly as Jesus said it would.

Eating together was a **symbol** of friendship and love. That is why His followers were so sad to hear Jesus say that one of them would **betray** Him, handing Him

over to be killed. It must have been so hard for them to believe. How could any of His special followers do such a terrible thing?

Jesus was talking about being betrayed during the special family meal. It was an odd thing to talk about during such an important meal! But Jesus knew the time of His betrayal was near. His followers needed to know what was coming.

Judas left the meal early to go talk to the rulers. Judas will always be remembered as the one who betrayed Jesus. But Judas was not the only one. Jesus told the group that they all would betray Him before the night was over. They would all be afraid to be called a follower of Jesus.

In some ways, these followers are like us. They were good people who loved Jesus. But they ended up betraying Him. We love Jesus and follow Him. But there are times when we all disobey God. The truth is that we have all betrayed Jesus in some way.

Take Care and Live as Family (Mark 14:22-26)

Jesus started something new. He told His special followers that the bread was a symbol for His body. He broke apart the bread. He said His body would be broken, too.

The drink was also a special new symbol. As Jesus poured, He told them that His blood would be poured out, too. He also

told them that this was about a new way to worship. In the book of Luke, Jesus said to “do this to remember Me” (Luke 22:19).

Now, churches all over the world eat the bread and drink the cup during the Lord’s Supper. This is one way that Christians remember what Jesus did for them.

Jesus gave thanks to God for the bread and then for the drink. He also said that His body and blood were “given for many” (Mark 14:24). He was telling His followers that He was going to die for everyone in the world. He gave His body and blood for everyone who has ever disobeyed God. He would hang on a cross to pay the price for all we have done wrong. Later, we will read how His followers did not understand these things.

Today, the Lord’s Supper helps us to remember what Jesus did for us when we eat the bread and drink the cup. We remember the cross and thank God for His forgiveness.

The Lord’s Supper helps us to look at ourselves. We remember how the followers acted that night. We remember how Jesus gave bread and wine even to the one who would soon betray Him. We thank God that Jesus died so we can be forgiven for all the wrong things we do.

The Lord’s Supper helps us to look at those around us. We eat the bread and drink the cup with our brothers and sisters in the family of God. It helps us remember the

family of followers who ate with Jesus that night. It is a symbol of the love and care for each other as we live like family.

Lastly, the Lord's Supper helps us to look to the future. Jesus was talking about the future when He said that He would "drink it new in the holy nation of God" (Mark 14:25). This means the next time He drinks with His followers, it will be at the end of time when He is ruler of the holy nation of God. Then we will share a big dinner together that will be better than we can **imagine**. It helps us think about what that will be like.

Promises and Pride (Mark 14:27-31)

Jesus knew what would happen next. He told His followers that they would all leave Him and even be ashamed of Him. He said the words of an early preacher. Zechariah 13:7 talks about a dead shepherd and sheep that go everywhere. Jesus knew He was the shepherd who would be killed and

they were the sheep who would run away.

Jesus told them where He would go after He was raised from the dead. They did not understand what Jesus was saying. We know they did not understand because they were surprised when these things happened. They all said they would not leave Him.

Peter was the first to say that he would not leave Jesus. He used the word "never" but Jesus had more to say to Peter. Jesus told Him exactly what he would do and when. Peter would not just run away, he would say that he did not know Jesus. He would say this not just once but three times. He would do this before the morning, before the rooster crowed twice.

Peter told Jesus that he would die with Him. But later that night, Peter ran away. So did the other followers. They had been so full of pride. Now all their promises were empty. It was all as Jesus said it would be.

Things to Think About

We wonder how the followers could say they would stay and then leave. We wonder how Peter could make a promise, but then not do it. What were they thinking?

Then we have to look at our own lives. How many times do we promise one thing, but do another? How many times do we tell God that we will never make that mistake again, and then we do? We are no better than Peter. We are no better than those who ran away and left Jesus alone in His darkest hour.

Things to Think About

1. What are the bread and the drink symbols of? Why is this important to followers of Jesus?
2. In what ways do you feel you have betrayed Jesus or others? How do you know you are forgiven?
3. Have you been part of the Lord's Supper at your church in the past? What are your thoughts about it?
4. Do you have pride? How can pride be bad?
5. Why do people say one thing and then do something else?

Yes, we are like them. We often have too much pride. Like Jesus' followers, we are all people who need Jesus to save us from all our sins. This is why Jesus died for us. His death gives us God's forgiveness. Instead of running away from Jesus, let us run to Him today.

Mark 14:12-31

12 The first day of the supper of bread without yeast was the day to kill an animal. It was for the special religious gathering to remember how the Jews left Egypt. His followers said to Jesus, "What place do You want us to make ready for You to eat this special supper?"

13 Jesus sent two of His followers on ahead and said to them, "Go into the city. There a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him.

14 He will go into a house. You say to the owner of the house, 'The Teacher asks, "Where is the room you keep for friends, where I can eat this special supper with My followers?"'

15 He will take you to a large room on the second floor with everything in it. Make it ready for us."

16 The followers went from there and came into the city. They found everything as Jesus had said. They made things ready for the special supper.

17 In the evening He came with the twelve followers.

18 They sat at the table and ate. Jesus said, "For sure, I tell you, one of you will hand Me over to be killed. He is eating with Me."

19 They were very sad. They said to Him one after the other, "Is it I?"

20 He said to them, "It is one of the twelve followers. It is the one who is putting his hand with mine into the same dish.

21 The Son of Man is going away as it is written of Him. But it will be bad for that man who hands the Son of Man over to be killed! It would have been better if he had not been born!"

22 As they were eating, Jesus took a loaf of bread. He gave thanks and broke it in pieces. He gave it to them and said, "Take, eat, this is My body."

23 Then He took the cup and gave thanks. He gave it to them and they all drank from it.

24 He said to them, "This is My blood of the New Way of Worship which is given for many.

25 For sure, I tell you, that I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the holy nation of God."

26 After they sang a song, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

27 Jesus said to them, "All of you will be ashamed of Me and leave Me tonight. For it is written, 'I will kill the shepherd and the sheep of the flock will spread everywhere.'

28 After I am raised from the dead, I will go before you into the country of Galilee."

29 Peter said to Him, "Even if all men are ashamed of You and leave You, I never will."

30 Jesus said to him, "For sure, I tell you, that today, even tonight, before a rooster crows two times, you will say three times you do not know Me."

31 Peter spoke with strong words, "Even if I have to die with You, I will never say that I do not know You." All the followers said the same thing.

Adult Bible Study

in Simplified English

Mark: The Gospel in Motion

Lesson 12: Betrayed, Arrested, Condemned

Bible Text

Mark 14:43-50, 53-55, 63-72; 15:1-15

Memory Verse

“Then all His followers left Him and ran away.”
(Mark 14:50)

Word List

arrested: to use the power of the law to take and keep someone

condemn: to give someone a bad punishment after saying they are wrong or guilty

cruel: to be hurtful to others but not feel bad about doing it; to cause others to suffer greatly

denial: to say that something is not true or real

torches: long sticks that burn brightly to give light

People can be **cruel**. When I was young, people said cruel things to me because I was very thin. They said I looked like a boy, not a girl. When my son was young, people said cruel things to him because he was not very thin. He went to a swimming party and left feeling terrible about himself. He never went swimming with friends again. Think of a time when people have said cruel things to you or betrayed you.

Jesus knows how you felt. There were hard times coming for Him. He had eaten a special meal with His followers, sang a song with them, and went to a garden to pray with them. He needed to talk to His Father about what was coming next.

Kissed in the Dark (Mark 14:43-54)

Jesus prayed and asked God if there was another way to do what God wanted. The idea of being put on a cross must have made Jesus very afraid. But there was no other way. He decided to stay with God’s plan and obey His Father in heaven.

After praying alone, Jesus went back to where He had left His followers. But they were not praying. They were asleep! He had to wake them to tell them the time had come. He was being betrayed right then, right there.

Judas came walking up just as Jesus was talking. But he was not alone. It was late night, and they were carrying **torches** and swords. Judas had told them to arrest the man he kissed. Judas went straight to Jesus, called Him “teacher,” and kissed Him.

A kiss is usually a symbol of love. In some countries, a kiss (or two or more kisses) is given as a way to greet a friend or even a stranger. How terrible that one of Jesus’ own followers would betray Him with a kiss. This kiss was a symbol of betrayal, not love.

Judas' betrayal hurt Jesus and the other followers, too. We think our enemies may betray us but the betrayal of a friend is a cruel surprise. But Jesus did not fight those who came for Him. He talked to them.

Then all of Jesus' followers, including Peter, ran away. Jesus' "sheep" left, just as He said they would. Now, Jesus was left alone to face the angry crowd.

But Jesus did not try to leave. He went with the men to stand in front of the religious leaders who arrested Him. Peter left with the others but then came back to see what would happen. He stayed far back so no one would see him.

Trial and Denial (Mark 14:55, 63-72)

When Jesus stood in front of the religious leaders, the trial began. They had decided Jesus was guilty, and they wanted to kill Him. In the trial, they had to find a reason to give the Roman government for why Jesus should die. The law said the leaders could not kill a man. Only Rome could do that. But the religious leaders could **condemn** a man to death and let Roman soldiers do the rest.

At first, they found nothing. But after many questions, they got what they were looking for. Some people began to say false things about Jesus, but their stories did not agree with each other.

But Jesus told the truth about Who He was. The head religious leader asked Him, "Are You the Christ, the Son of the Holy One?" Jesus said, "I am!" (Mark 14:61-62). This made the head religious leader angry.

All the religious leaders said Jesus was guilty of speaking as if He were God, and He must die. They spit on Him and hit Him.

All this time, Peter was outside the place where the trial was happening. Twice, a servant girl said that Peter was with Jesus and was one of His followers. Both times, Peter lied and said he did not even know Jesus. This was the first two **denials**.

Then, some people heard Peter talking and said he talked like a person from Galilee. So he must be with Jesus because Jesus was from Galilee. A third time, Peter denied knowing Jesus. This was the last of the three denials that Jesus had said would happen.

Then the rooster crowed, just as Jesus had said. Peter remembered Jesus' words. Only a few hours before, Peter had told Jesus that he would never run and never deny Him. Now, he had done just that. Peter cried.

Questioned and Condemned (Mark 15:1-15)

The religious leaders had condemned Jesus to die but they could not kill Him. Only the government of Rome could do that. So the religious leaders tied up Jesus and took Him

to the Roman governor named Pilate. Pilate could have Jesus killed.

But Pilate was not sure why Jesus should be killed. He asked Jesus questions about the things the religious leaders had condemned Him for. Jesus told him the truth. His answers surprised Pilate. Jesus did not cry or yell. He knew all of this must happen because of God's plan.

Now, Pilate began to understand why the religious leaders had brought Jesus to him. They were jealous of Jesus. Pilate did not want to kill Jesus. He decided to ask the people if they wanted to free Jesus or another man in prison. He knew the other man, Barabbas, had killed people and worked against the government. Surely the people would rather have Jesus free than let Barabbas out of prison. But the religious

leaders told the people to shout for Barabbas to be freed.

Pilate tried again to help Jesus. He asked the people what they wanted him to do with Jesus. Again, the people listened to the religious leaders and yelled that they wanted Him to be nailed to a cross. Finally, Pilate gave up. He let the religious leaders and the people have their way. He gave them Barabbas. He handed Jesus over to be nailed to a cross. Jesus said nothing. Everyone knew the cross was the most painful way to die.

Things to Think About

One of the questions that Pilate asked Jesus was if He was the King of the Jews. Pilate knew the Jews did not have a king at that time. They were under Roman rule. But Jesus simply told Pilate that what he said was true—He was King of the Jews. What did Jesus mean? He was not a king on an earthly throne. No, Jesus was much more than that. He was born to be the King of the Jews—and of the whole world!

Jesus is our King. We obey and follow Him. When hard times come and terrible things happen, we sometimes forget this. Sometimes we want to fight like Peter tried to do. Sometimes we want to run and hide like all His followers did.

Jesus showed us how to trust God and His plan, even when bad things happen to us.

Things to Think About

1. What does it look like to betray Jesus today? Why would someone betray Him?
2. What have you done when times were hard? Did you fight? Did you run? What would Jesus have done?
3. How can you know God's plan? How did Jesus know God's plan?
4. Why did Pilate decide to nail Jesus to a cross when he knew Jesus had done nothing wrong? Did Pilate make that choice to please others? Do you know someone who makes decisions only to please others?
5. What can you do when trials come to you?

We know that Jesus understands what it is like to be hated, condemned, and treated badly.

If we remember that God has a plan, then we can be more like Jesus when we have trials and problems in our lives. Truly, we can trust God and His plan.

(Note: The underlined verses are the most important verses for this lesson.)

Mark 14:43-50, 53-55, 63-72; 15:1-15

14:43 At once, while Jesus was talking, Judas came. He was one of the twelve followers. He came with many other men who had swords and sticks. They came from the head religious leaders of the Jews and the teachers of the Law and the leaders of the people.

44 The man who was going to hand Jesus over gave the men something to look for. He said, “The Man I kiss is the One. Take hold of Him and take Him away.”

45 At once Judas went straight to Jesus and said, “Teacher!” and kissed Him.

46 Then they put their hands on Him and took Him.

47 One of the followers of Jesus who stood watching took his sword. He hit the servant owned by the head religious leader and cut off his ear.

48 Jesus said to them, “Have you come with swords and sticks to take Me as if I were a

robber?

49 I have been with you every day teaching in the house of God. You never took hold of Me. But this has happened as the Holy Writings said it would happen.”

50 Then all His followers left Him and ran away.

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53 They led Jesus away to the head religious leader. All the religious leaders and other leaders and the teachers of the Law were gathered there.

54 But Peter followed a long way behind as they went to the house of the head religious leader.

He sat with the helpers and got warm by the fire.

55 The religious leaders and all the court were looking for something against Jesus. They wanted to find something so they could kill Him. But they could find nothing.

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63 Then the head religious leader tore his clothes apart. He said, “Do we need other people to speak against Him?”

64 You have heard Him speak as if He were God! What do you think?” They all said He was guilty of death.

65 Some began to spit on Him. They covered Jesus’ face, and they hit Him. They said, “Tell us what is going to happen.” Soldiers hit Him with their hands.

66 Peter was outside in the yard. One of the servant-girls of the head religious leader came.

67 She saw Peter getting warm. She looked at

him and said, “You were with Jesus of Nazareth.”

68 Peter lied, saying, “I do not know Jesus and do not understand what you are talking about.”

As he went out, a rooster crowed.

69 The servant-girl saw him again. She said to the people standing around, “This man is one of them.”

70 He lied again saying that he did not know Jesus. Later, those who stood around said to Peter again, “For sure you are one of them. You are from the country of Galilee. You talk like they do.”

71 He began to say strong words and to swear. He said, “I do not know the Man you are talking about!”

72 At once a rooster crowed the second time. Peter remembered what Jesus had said to him, “Before a rooster crows two times, you will say three times you do not know Me.” When he thought about it, he cried.

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15:1 Early in the morning the head religious leaders of the Jews and other leaders and the teachers of the Law and all the court gathered together to talk about Jesus. Then they tied up Jesus and led Him away. They handed Him over to Pilate.

2 Pilate asked Jesus, “Are You the King of the Jews?” He said to Pilate, “What you say is true.”

3 The religious leaders spoke many things

against Him. Jesus did not say a word.

4 Pilate asked Him again, “Have You nothing to say? Listen to the things they are saying against You!”

5 Jesus did not say a word. Pilate was much surprised and wondered about it.

6 Each year at the special supper Pilate would let one person who was in prison go free. It would be the one the people asked for.

7 The name of one of those in prison was Barabbas. He, together with others, had killed people while working against the leaders of the country.

8 All the people went to Pilate and asked him to do as he had done before.

9 Pilate said, “Do you want me to let the King of the Jews go free?”

10 He knew the religious leaders had handed Jesus over to him because they were jealous.

11 The religious leaders talked the people into thinking that Pilate should let Barabbas go free.

12 Pilate said to them again, “What do you want me to do with the Man you call the King of the Jews?”

13 They spoke with loud voices again, “Nail Him to a cross.”

14 Then Pilate said to them, “Why? What bad thing has He done?” They spoke with loud voices all the more, “Nail Him to a cross!”

15 Pilate wanted to please the people. He gave Barabbas to them and had Jesus beaten. Then he handed Him over to be nailed to a cross.

Adult Bible Study

in Simplified English

Mark: The Gospel in Motion

Lesson 13: Death Is Destroyed!

Bible Text

Mark 15:33-41; 16:1-8

Memory Verse

“But God raised Him up. He allowed Him to be set free from the pain of death. Death could not hold its power over Him.” (Acts 2:24)

Word List

sacrifice: to give up something to help someone; to die to save others

tomb: a grave cut out of the rock, like a cave

torture: to cause very bad pain as punishment; causing very painful suffering

The symbol seen on most churches is the cross. Crosses stand on top of churches and inside churches. Some are very beautiful. We see cross necklaces, bracelets, and earrings. We see crosses on shirts and in paintings. Crosses can be very beautiful.

But the truth is that the cross was not beautiful at all. It was ugly, bloody, and a very painful way to die. Doctors say that death on a cross is **torture**. We do not make jewelry out of other things that bring torture

and death. We do not place such objects in our churches or on our ears. Why do we do that with the cross? The cross is different.

The cross has become a symbol of God’s love for everyone. Jesus died on the cross to save us and give us a new life that lasts forever. John 3:16 says:

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son. Whoever puts his trust in God’s Son will not be lost but will have life that lasts forever. For God did not send His Son into the world to say it is guilty. He sent His Son so the world might be saved from the punishment of sin by Him.”

The cross is a symbol of the **sacrifice** that Jesus made for everyone in the world.

Hebrews 12:2 says:

“Let us keep looking to Jesus.... He did not give up when He had to suffer shame and die on a cross. He knew of the joy that would be His later. Now He is sitting at the right side of God.”

The cross is a symbol of God’s power. It is not easy to understand, but Jesus’ death on the cross shows the power of God to save. First Corinthians 1:18 says:

“Preaching about the cross sounds foolish to those who are dying in sin. But it is the power of God to those of us who are being saved from the punishment of sin.”

God showed His power after Jesus’ death on the cross, too. Death was destroyed!

The Death of Jesus (Mark 15:33-41)

After Jesus' trial and Peter's denial, Jesus suffered torture from the Roman soldiers. He was beaten, hurt, hit, spit on, and cruelly made fun of (Mark 15:15-20). All this was done, yet He had done nothing wrong. But the worst was yet to come.

After this torture, Jesus was nailed to the cross. They pounded nails through His hands. They pounded a big nail through His feet. This kind of torture caused people to die slowly. Sometimes they did not die for days. Jesus suffered and died in six hours.

From noon until three o'clock, Jesus was on the cross. The sky became dark. This should have been the brightest time of the day, but this was not a normal day. Jesus, the Light of the World, was dying for people's sins.

The world was dark. Darkness in the Bible is often a symbol of punishment for sin. God punished His Son on the cross. It was not a punishment for the sins of Jesus. Jesus was perfect; He never sinned. God was punishing Jesus for the sins of the whole world. God is so holy, He cannot look on sin, so He turned His back on Jesus while Jesus was on the cross. Jesus had never been so alone. He was separated from God for the first time.

This was the worst torture of all. Those who trust in Jesus and His work on the cross will never have to know this kind of pain — the pain of being separated from the love of

God. Jesus took that pain for us so we will never feel it. What great love!

It is hard to see God when it is dark in our lives. It is very hard to feel that God is there. But we know that He is always there for us because of what Jesus did that day on the cross. That is when we learn to trust Him. We can learn to trust God in the dark.

Finally, Jesus gave a loud cry. Then He gave up His spirit. This means that He gave His life; no one took it from Him. He was born for this moment in time. John 19:30 tells us He cried: "It is finished." The plan was complete. Jesus had done what He came to do.

At that moment, everything changed between God and people. God showed this was true by tearing the heavy, thick curtain in the special place of worship. It was torn from the top to the bottom. This curtain had only allowed special religious leaders to come to talk to God. Now, the price for sin had been paid. God would welcome anyone who would come to Him.

Anyone could be saved. The captain of the Roman soldiers was the first one at the cross to understand Who Jesus was (Mark 15:39). Many people standing around the cross were wrong. The religious leaders were wrong. Judas was wrong. Jesus' followers did not understand either. This Roman soldier became the first true follower of Jesus. God can save anyone.

Mark tells us about three women who did not leave Jesus. They stood by the cross and saw everything that happened. They had been with Him a long time and had cared for Him. Now, God would soon show them something wonderful.

Raised from the Dead (Mark 16:1-8)

After His death, Jesus' body was put in a **tomb**. The women who were at the cross knew where Jesus' body was buried. They had seen the big stone that was put in front of the tomb. They had to wait for the day of rest to be over before they could take care of the body in the special way of the Jews.

The day of rest ended, and the women went to the tomb to put spices on Jesus' body. When they got to the tomb, they saw that the stone had been rolled away. What a surprise!

Soon they saw an even bigger surprise. Jesus' body was not in the tomb. They did not

know what had happened to it. They saw a young man sitting in the tomb wearing a long white coat. It was an angel from God. He told them not to be afraid. He knew that they were looking for Jesus Who had been nailed to a cross. But Jesus was not there — He had risen from the dead. He was alive!

These faithful women were the first people to know that Jesus was no longer dead. The power of God had destroyed death.

Second Corinthians 13:4 says:

“Christ’s weak human body died on a cross. It is by God’s power that Christ lives today. We are weak. We are as He was. But we will be alive with Christ through the power God has for us.”

When Jesus was raised from the dead, He destroyed the power of death. That power can separate people forever from God and His love. Now, our bodies still die, but death has no power over the souls of those who become followers of Jesus. This is the hope we have in Jesus being raised from the dead.

The faithful women were also the first to be told to go and tell others. The angel told them to tell Jesus' followers that He would meet them in Galilee. They were to tell the good news to His followers, especially Peter. Peter may not have felt like a follower after his denial of Jesus. He may have lost hope.

Mark tells us that the women were too afraid to say anything when they ran from the tomb. Luke 24:9-11 tells us the women did tell

Things to Think About

1. Why did Pilate and Jesus agree that Jesus was the King of the Jews? How is He a king?
2. Why did Jesus feel such pain when He felt that God had left Him? Have you ever felt left by God?
3. Do you sometimes feel like you have no hope? Where does true hope come from?
4. Does faith in the death and rising of Jesus give hope? How does it change the way people live?
5. Have you put your faith and hope in the death and rising of Jesus from the dead? How can a person become a follower of Jesus? Are you one?

His followers later. Jesus was seen many times after that. The book of Acts tells us that “He showed Himself alive in many sure ways for forty days” (Acts 1:3b). Hope was alive!

Things to Remember

Today, there are many things that do not give the world much hope. We have war, hate, killings, and many sins that take away our hope. We know we will die someday, too. Everyone dies. But some people do not see any hope for a better life now or for life after death. Jesus’ followers did not understand how Jesus could give them hope and life.

Here is hope: God raised Jesus from the dead! Hope for life after death comes from Jesus dying for our sins and rising from the dead. The death and rising of Jesus gives us the hope of life that lasts forever. Do you have this hope? Follow Jesus!

Mark 15:33-41; 16:1-8

33 From noon until three o’clock it was dark over all the land.

34 At three o’clock Jesus cried with a loud voice, “My God, My God, why have You left Me alone?”

35 When some of those who stood by heard that, they said, “Listen! He is calling for Elijah.”

36 One of them ran and took a sponge and filled it with sour wine. He put it on a stick and gave it to Him to drink. He said, “Let Him alone. Let us see if Elijah will come and take Him down.”

37 Then Jesus gave a loud cry. He gave up His spirit and died.

38 The curtain in the house of God was torn in two from top to bottom.

39 The captain of the soldiers was looking at Jesus when He cried out. He saw Him die and said, “For sure, this Man was the Son of God.”

40 Women were looking on from far away.

Among them was Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of the younger James and of Joses, and Salome.

41 These cared for Him when He was in the country of Galilee. There were many other women there who had followed Him to Jerusalem.

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16:1 The Day of Rest was over. Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices. They wanted to put the spices on Jesus’ body.

2 Very early in the morning on the first day of the week, they came to the grave. The sun had come up.

3 They said to themselves, “Who will roll the stone away from the door of the grave for us?”

4 But when they looked, they saw the very large stone had been rolled away.

5 They went into the grave. There they saw a young man with a long white coat sitting on the right side. They were afraid.

6 He said, “Do not be afraid. You are looking for Jesus of Nazareth Who was nailed to a cross. He is risen! He is not here! See, here is the place where they laid Him.

7 Go and tell His followers and Peter that He is going ahead of you into Galilee. You will see Him there as He told you.”

8 They ran from the grave shaking and were surprised. They did not say anything to anyone because they were afraid.

Adult Bible Study

in Simplified English

Christmas Lesson: God Is With Us!

Bible Text

Matthew 1:1, 17–25

Memory Verse

“...They will give Him the name Immanuel. This means God with us.” (Matthew 1:23b)

Word List

ancestors: all the people in your family who were born before you

crisis: a big problem that feels terrible and makes people worry about what they should do

miracle: a powerful work that only God can do and that people cannot explain

pattern: when something is done in a regular and repeated way

A baby changes everything. The coming birth of a baby is usually a happy time for a family. They ask all kinds of questions. The family wants to know when the baby will be born. They want to know if the baby is a boy or a girl. They want to know what the parents will name the baby.

Sometimes the news that a baby will be born is not happy news for a family. If the man and woman are not married, their families may be worried about what will

happen. The news that a baby will be born may cause trouble in a family.

The wonderful news that Jesus was going to be born is the beginning of the Christmas story. But for Mary and Joseph and their families, this was not wonderful news at first. It was trouble. It was a problem until God told both Mary and Joseph that Jesus would be special. Jesus would be the child that God had promised to His people. God gave Jesus a name with a special meaning. Jesus means “The Lord saves.” This is the wonderful news of Christmas.

Family Tree (Matthew 1:1, 17)

Everyone has a family tree. A family tree shows the names of the people in that family. It lists the names of the fathers and mothers and all of their children. It can be drawn like a tree with branches and more branches. It can be very big. In the time of Jesus, family trees were important. Most people could remember far back in their family and could tell others about the many people who were in their family tree.

Matthew starts his book about Jesus with a family tree. He tells us about Jesus’ **ancestors**. He writes their names, starting with Abraham. There are many names. Some of them are hard to say. Most of the names are of the fathers. Sometimes Matthew tells us the names of the mothers, too.

The two most important names are given in the first verse. Matthew wanted his readers to understand that both Abraham and David were ancestors of Jesus. Jesus came through them. God made big promises to both men. God promised Abraham that “Good will come to all the families of the earth because of you” (Genesis 12:3). God promised David that he would be the ancestor of the Chosen One (2 Samuel 7:12–16).

In Jesus, God gave both men what He promised them. Jesus is the “good” that God promised would come to all the families of the earth. Jesus is the Chosen One, and David is His ancestor. Jesus is God with us!

Matthew also showed us a **pattern** with three sets of 14 families. Each set begins and ends with an important person or something important that happened. This pattern would help people to remember the story of Jesus’ ancestors. This pattern shows how important Jesus’ family tree was to the story of Israel and the promises of God. Jesus is God with us!

Family Trouble (Matthew 1:18–19)

Families have problems. Some problems are small, but some problems are big. The big problems can become a family **crisis**. Everyone in the family feels the pain of the problem.

The family tree of Jesus ended with Joseph. Joseph was not the real father of Jesus. Jesus did not have a human father. He had a human mother, Mary, but she had never been with a man. She would have a baby because of a **miracle**. Jesus would be fully God and fully man.

Mary and Joseph were in a crisis. Joseph worried about what would happen to Mary. It was a big problem for Mary to become a mother before she was married. It was a big problem that Joseph was not the father of her baby. What would his family say? What would her family do? She could be killed for this. That was the law.

Has your family ever had a crisis? My family has lived through a few of them. They are not easy to talk about. Life was hard. God helped us. We trusted God for the good and for the bad.

Joseph had to trust God for this crisis. Back then, a promise of marriage was more serious than an engagement today. It was a legal contract. The only way to get out of it was a divorce.

Joseph thought about how to make it better for Mary. He did not want to embarrass her in front of everyone. To help her, he would have to quietly break their marriage contract. But that would cause many problems, too. This was a problem he could

not fix. It was a crisis too big for him or any man.

The Family of God (Matthew 1:20–25)

As Joseph was thinking (and maybe praying) about this crisis, God sent help. Joseph fell asleep and had a dream. An angel came to him in this dream. Dreams were one way that God talked to His people. Joseph knew God had spoken to others before in dreams. He knew this angel was from God.

The angel called Joseph “Son of David.” This would help Joseph to remember his family tree. This would help him think about the importance of what the angel was going to say. Early preachers in the past had said David would be the ancestor of the Chosen One.

The angel told him not to be afraid to marry Mary. The angel told him that Mary’s baby was a miracle of God. She had not done anything wrong. The answer to this crisis was

for Joseph and Mary to get married right away. People would still talk, but it would not be a big problem for anyone.

When her baby was born, Mary still would not have been with a man. This was an important part of God’s plan. God had helped Joseph know that Mary would have a very special son. He did not have to worry anymore about Mary. He did not have to worry about their families.

The angel told Joseph that the baby would be a boy. The angel told Joseph to name the baby “Jesus.” This name means “The Lord saves.” The angel said why this name was right for God’s Son. “Save” can mean many things, but the angel said that Jesus would “save His people from the punishment of their sins.” This may have been a surprise to Joseph. Many people thought the Chosen One would save Israel from the Romans, the rulers of that day.

Many years before Jesus was born, a preacher said these things would happen. Now everything was coming true just the way Isaiah said it would. All Jewish men knew about Isaiah’s words. Joseph must have been glad to know why these things were happening. Isaiah said the baby would be called “Immanuel,” which means “God with us” (Isaiah 7:14).

When Joseph woke up, he believed and trusted the God who had sent the angel. He

Things to Think About

1. Do you have some special ancestors who have made you who you are today? Who are they? Did any of them tell you about Jesus?
2. Have you ever had a special dream from God? Do you know anyone who has had that kind of dream?
3. What does Joseph’s story show us about how to respond to God?
4. How does knowing that Jesus is “God with us” help you in your life?
5. God is with us, so why do bad things still happen?

obeyed God. He and Mary got married. He named the baby “Jesus” just as the angel told him to. Joseph would love Jesus and treat Him as his own son, but he would always know that this boy was a gift from God.

Jesus is God with us!

Things to Remember

God wants you to trust Him even when you are going through something hard. It may not make much sense at the time. You may not fully understand why it is happening. An angel probably will not explain things to you. But you can trust that God has a plan. You can also trust that God keeps His promises. You can read His promises in the Bible.

God sent His Son to save you. Because of Jesus, God is with you. Jesus will help you obey and do what is right, even when you have a problem.

Matthew 1:1, 17–25

1 These are the families through which Jesus Christ came. He came through David and Abraham.

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17 So the number of families from Abraham to David was fourteen. The number of families from David to the time the people were taken to Babylon was fourteen. The number of families after they were taken to

Babylon to the birth of Jesus Christ was fourteen.

18 The birth of Jesus Christ was like this: Mary His mother had been promised in marriage to Joseph. Before they were married, it was learned that she was to have a baby by the Holy Spirit.

19 Joseph was her promised husband. He was a good man and did not want to make it hard for Mary in front of people. He thought it would be good to break the promised marriage without people knowing it.

20 While he was thinking about this, an angel of the Lord came to him in a dream. The angel said, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife. She is to become a mother by the Holy Spirit.

21 A Son will be born to her. You will give Him the name Jesus because He will save His people from the punishment of their sins.”

22 This happened as the Lord said it would happen through the early preacher.

23 He said, “The young woman, who has never had a man, will give birth to a Son. They will give Him the name Immanuel. This means God with us.”

24 Joseph awoke from his sleep. He did what the angel of the Lord told him to do. He took Mary as his wife.

25 But he did not have her, as a husband has a wife, until she gave birth to a Son. Joseph gave Him the name Jesus.