

THE
PASSION
of JESUS

SERMON NOTES

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These sermon notes are to be used in conjunction with *The Passion of Jesus* by Kenneth Schenck (Indianapolis: Wesleyan Publishing House, 2013).

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ABOUT THESE NOTES

Kenneth Schenck's book, *The Passion of Jesus*, forms the basis of this six-week group study. Written in a conversational style, *The Passion of Jesus* is packed with biblical truth, inspiration, and practical application. You will also find that it raises some questions that will make you think hard about what you may have accepted as fact. As you and your group members read *The Passion of Jesus*, you will undoubtedly enter some uncharted waters and emerge better for the journey. Pray and anticipate six weeks of active learning and significant application!



Week 1

JESUS IS LORD AND KING

Mark 11:1–25

Jesus is Lord and King.

INTRODUCTION

We confess Jesus as our Savior, but do we gladly acknowledge that he is also our Lord and King? This acknowledgement should cause us to submit daily to his authority over us. Mark 11 reinforces the truth that Jesus possesses full authority as Lord and King.

SERMON OUTLINE

- I. His Authority over Nature (Mark 11:1–7, 20)
 - A. He Claimed an Unbroken Colt (11:1–7; see also 4:39–41)
 - B. He Cursed an Unproductive Tree (11:12–14, 20)

When Jesus observes our lives, does he see fruit?
- II. His Arrival as King (Mark 11:8–10)
 - A. It Was Public (11:8)
 - B. It Was Prophetic (11:9–10)

Jesus' entrance into Jerusalem fulfilled Psalm 118:25–26 and Zechariah 9:9.
- III. His Authority over Religion (Mark 11:11–19)
 - A. He Cleansed the Temple (11:15–17)

In *The Passion of Jesus*, Kenneth Schenck suggests Jesus' anger targeted the moneychangers and sellers of animals because they “were taking advantage of travelers from afar, perhaps charging more than they should” (pp. 17–18).
 - B. He Confounded the Religious Leaders (11:18–19)
 - C. He Commended Faith (11:21–25)

CONCLUSION

Jesus asked, “Why do you call me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not do what I say?” (Luke 6:46). If we acknowledge Jesus as Lord and King and obey him, we will never have to face this convicting question. Instead, we will hear our Lord say, “Well done!”



Week 2

DOWN ON THE FARM—A PARABLE

Mark 12:1–12

Jesus' kingdom priority.

INTRODUCTION

Jesus debated the religious leaders in Jerusalem and clearly won every debate. During one of the debates, He told a parable about a farm that revealed the religious leaders' wickedness.

SERMON OUTLINE

I. The Farm's Owner (Mark 12:1)

A. He Loved the Farm

The owner, who represents God in this parable, showed his love for the vineyard (Israel) by building a wall to protect it and a watchtower for its security.

B. He Leased the Farm

The owner leased the farm to some farmers, and then went on a journey. Schenck identifies these tenant farmers as “the leaders of Jerusalem, those mentioned at the end of Mark 11: chief priests, teachers of the law, and Jerusalem elders” (*Passion*, p. 28).

II. The Tenants' Wicked Behavior (Mark 12:2–8)

A. They Defrauded the Owner (12:3)

By refusing to pay rent to the owner, the tenants' illustrated Israel's failure to give God the glory that was due him. Christians must not defraud God, but instead glorify him by leading a holy life (1 Cor. 6:19–20; 1 Pet. 1:15–16).

B. They Rejected the Owner's Messengers (Mark 12:2–5)

They beat some messengers and killed others. The wicked religious leaders, represented by the tenants in the parable, had rejected God's messengers, the prophets. Jesus later wept over Jerusalem, and cried out, “Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you” (Matt. 23:37). How receptive are we to those who bring God's Word to us?

C. They Killed the Owner's Son (Mark 12:6–8)

The wicked tenants killed the owner's son. Perhaps they thought the owner had died and therefore the farm would legally belong to them if no heir remained to claim it. Schenck points out that “this parable was a foreshadowing of what was about to happen to Jesus,

and it showed that Jesus knew what they [the religious leaders] were planning” (*Passion*, p. 29).

III. The Justice That Lies Ahead (Mark 12:9)

A. The Owner Will Punish the Tenants (12:9)

Rejection of Jesus will result in eternal punishment (Rev. 20:11–15). Even religious people will perish unless they believe in Jesus as Savior.

B. The Son Will Be Exalted (Mark 12:10–11)

Someday every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus is Lord (Phil. 2:9–11).

CONCLUSION

According to Mark 12:12, the religious knew Jesus had spoken the parable against them, so they looked for a way to arrest him. However, because they were afraid the crowd might rise up against them, they went away. Conviction of sin should lead to repentance, but people under conviction may harden their hearts. Psalm 95:7–8 counsels, “Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts.”



Week 3

HOW TO STAY CALM IN SCARY TIMES

Mark 13:1–37

We serve Jesus daily while we wait for his return.

INTRODUCTION

Mark 13 is what Schenck calls the “little apocalypse” or the “eschatological discussion” (*Jesus—The Mission*, p. 150), and says we should “read most of Mark 13 in terms of the destruction of Jerusalem that took place in A.D. 70” (*Mission*, p. 150). Of course, many Bible teachers agree with the author’s viewpoint, but many others see the events of Mark 13 as future tribulation events. Regardless of the timing of the horrific events mention in Mark 13, everyone can agree that we can derive help from this chapter to face our own scary times calmly. Here’s what we can do.

SERMON OUTLINE

I. Realize That Nothing Takes Jesus by Surprise (Mark 13:1–27, 31)

A. He Knows What Will Take Place (13:1–27)

Our political leaders do not know what the outcome of world crises will be. Nor do they know what the next crisis or calamity will be, but Jesus knows.

B. His Predictions Will Not Fail (13:31)

The horrific events Jesus described for his disciples would surely come to pass because Jesus’ words will by no means pass away. The world is often unsettled, but Jesus’ words are settled and sure.

II. Expect Trouble (Mark 13:5–23)

A. Don’t Be Surprised When Problems Occur throughout the World

The god of this age, Satan, stirs hatred, strife, and unrest throughout the world. We should be surprised if there is lengthy world peace, but not surprised by ongoing problems.

B. Don’t Be Surprised When You Experience Persecution in the World

Jesus said, “If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first” (John 15:18), and Paul assured us that “everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted” (2 Tim. 3:12). In spite of receiving harsh treatment because of our faith in Jesus, we can count on the fact that persecution cannot separate us from God’s love (Rom. 8:35–36, 38–39). “We are more than conquerors through him who loved us” (Rom. 8:37).

III. Anticipate Jesus' Return (Mark 13:28–37)

A. Work Faithfully for Jesus

We are stewards of the good news that God has entrusted to us. We ought to be faithful in fulfilling our duty (13:34).

B. Watch Alertly for Jesus (13:28–37)

Like family members of soldiers who actively watch for their return, we should watch eagerly for our Commander-in-Chief's return. Are we waiting, working, and watching?

CONCLUSION

If the news events alarm us, we should look up. Jesus said, "I am coming soon" (Rev. 22:20). We have a choice. We can look only at scary events taking place in the world and be distressed, or we can look to Jesus and be at rest. What choice will you make?



Week 4

HOW TO PRAY

Mark 14:1–65

Jesus fully submitted to the Father's will.

INTRODUCTION

The computer is a wonderful device. It can help its owner perform a wide variety of operations—from staying in touch with friends to receiving news instantly to exchanging photos and videos to designing to composing documents. But a computer accomplishes nothing for the person who doesn't know how to use it or chooses not to use it. Prayer is far more useful than a computer if we choose to use it and know how to use it. As we study what transpired in the garden of Gethsemane we gain a good understanding about using prayer as God intended us to use it. We learn to do three main things.

SERMON OUTLINE

- I. Persevere When Circumstances Are Grim (Mark 14:18, 33–35; John 14:1–3)
 - A. They Were Grim for the Disciples

Jesus had told the disciples he would be betrayed (Mark 14:18). He had also told them he would leave them and go to the Father (John 14:1–3). Therefore, they needed to pray and not grow weary.
 - B. They Were Grim for Jesus (Mark 14:33–35)

Jesus knew the time of betrayal and crucifixion was approaching quickly. Therefore, he persevered in prayer.
- II. Stay Alert When You Pray (Mark 14:34, 37–38; Eph. 6:18)
 - A. Jesus Told the Disciples to Stay Alert (Mark 14:34, 37–38)

Have you ever fallen asleep during a prayer service or when you were praying at your bedside?
 - B. Paul Told the Ephesians to Be Watchful in Prayer (Eph. 6:18)

If we are alert to needs and challenging situations, we can pray effectively.
- III. Submit Every Prayer to the Will of God (Mark 14:36)
 - A. Not What I Will

So many prayers are “give-me” prayers. “Lord, give me a new car.” “Lord, give me a good doctor’s report.” “Lord, give me a better job.” “Lord, give me a raise at work.” We need to follow Jesus’ example. He prayed, “Not what I will . . .”

B. But What You Will

The Lord knows what is best for us in the long run and what will best serve his purposes. So we ought to pray as Jesus did, “Not what I will, but what you will” (14:36). The apostle James explained, “When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures” (James 4:3). He counseled us to refuse to follow our own will (James 4:13–14). “Instead, [we] ought to say, ‘If it is the Lord’s will . . .’” (James 4:15).

CONCLUSION

Schenck writes, “How we respond to the moment of crisis can reveal what we have been doing in the lead-up to that moment. Have we been so surrendered to God’s will that it is not difficult to surrender to him in the time of uncertainty? Have we been communicating so regularly with him that we don’t feel his absence in the time of trial?” (*Passion*, p. 70).

Let’s use prayer as God intended.



Week 5

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF JESUS' DEATH

Mark 14:25–31, 14:66—15:47

Jesus suffered and died for us.

INTRODUCTION

Sir Isaac Watts wrote, “When I survey the wondrous cross on which the Prince of glory died, my richest gain I count but loss, and pour contempt on all my pride.” As we contemplate Jesus’ death on the cross, we, too, are humbled by it, and it may seem the longer we behold the cross, the more significance we rightly attach to it. From Kenneth Schenck’s books, *The Passion of Jesus* and *Jesus—The Mission*, we derive several reasons Jesus died.

SERMON OUTLINE

I. Jesus Died to Defeat Death (Heb. 2:14)

A. He Removed the Penalty of Death (Rom. 6:23)

B. He Destroyed the Holder of the Power of Death (Heb. 2:14)

Jesus predicted that his death would drive out “the prince of this world” (John 12:31). In *Jesus—The Mission*, Schenck states. “The ‘Christus Victor’ view looks at Christ’s death primarily as the defeat of Satan and the evil powers that enslave the world” (p. 156).

C. He Removed the Fear of Death (Heb. 2:15)

II. Jesus’ Died to Demonstrate God’s Justice (Rom. 3:25)

A. God Is too Holy to Let Sin Go Unpunished Forever

B. God Gave Jesus to Be the Sacrifice—the Ransom—for Our Sins (Mark 10:45)

Barabbas typified what happens when we trust in Jesus as the Substitute for our sins. Barabbas, whose name means “son of the father,” should have died for his sins as an insurrectionist and murderer, but he went free because Jesus, the Son of the heavenly Father, took his place on the cross. Similarly, all the sons of our first father Adam deserve to die eternally for our sins, but Jesus, the Father’s Son, took our place and bore our sin and guilt. As Jesus said, “So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed” (John 8:36).

III. Jesus Died to Demonstrate God’s Grace and Love (Rom. 3:24; 5:8)

A. God’s Grace (3:24)

Jesus did for us what we did not deserve. His death brought salvation to us as a gift (Eph. 2:8–9). We cannot purchase our salvation any more than a destitute person can purchase Buckingham Palace.

B. God’s Love (Rom. 5:8)

God’s love for us, demonstrated by Jesus’ death on our behalf, was *agape* love—self-sacrificing love that had our interest at heart.

IV. Jesus Died to Provide a Model for Us to Follow

A. A Model of Love (1 John 3:16)

B. A Model of Obedience (Phil. 2:8, 15)

CONCLUSION

In Galatians 2:20, Paul identified himself with Jesus’ crucifixion and testified that he lived “by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.” Contemplating Jesus’ obedience to the point of death, Schenck prays, “May I be willing to do no less than give my all for you” (*Passion*, p. 90). Should we adopt this prayer as our own?



Week 6

BECAUSE HE LIVES

Mark 16:1–8

Jesus arose!

INTRODUCTION

As Christians, we can't picture life without knowing Jesus is alive. We wonder how unbelievers cope with loneliness, fear, trials, and death. Unlike our unbelieving contemporaries, we have indescribable joy, boundless hope, and firm assurance that Jesus is with us in every one of life's episodes.

SERMON OUTLINE

I. What Jesus' Resurrection Gives Us

A. Proof of Justification

The blood of Jesus justifies us (brings us into a right relationship with God), and Jesus' resurrection proves God accepted Jesus' sacrifice on our behalf (Rom. 4:25; 5:9).

B. Living Hope

Jesus said, "Because I live, you also will live" (John 14:19). Peter referred to this hope as "a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" (1 Pet. 1:3).

C. Constant Companionship

The risen Son of God promised he would be with us "always, to the very end of the age" (Matt. 28:20).

II. What Jesus Is Doing Now

In chapter 10 of *Jesus—The Mission*, author Kenneth Schenck mentions three things our risen, exalted Lord is doing now in heaven.

A. Waiting

Jesus is waiting until the time his enemies will be put under his feet (Heb. 10:12–13). Schenck points out that death is the most significant enemy to be vanquished at the end (1 Cor. 15:26) (p. 172).

B. Interceding for Us

He intercedes as our attorney. Based on Christ's blood, our Attorney argues that we cannot be found guilty (see Rom. 8:33–34; 1 John 2:1).

C. Preparing a Place for Us in Heaven

Jesus promised to prepare a place for us in the Father's house (John 14:2–3). Our current living quarters require constant upkeep, and left alone they would become unattractive and uncomfortable. However, the home that the risen carpenter of Nazareth is preparing for us will never require maintenance or lose its attractiveness. It is an eternal, beautiful home.

CONCLUSION

It has been said, "Let's not drive our stakes too far down in this life, because someday we'll be moving up." Jesus promised everlasting life in heaven for all who believe in him, and he sealed the promise by rising from the dead. Let's look forward to living with our Lord forever in our new bodies!